

JOURNEYING HOME: POETICS, SILENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

AYTAK AKBARI-DIBAVAR

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

May 2021

©Aytak Akbari-Dibavar 2021

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines silence as a form of language, rather than a lack or void in need of being captured or ratified. It explores untranslatability as an onto-epistemology in International Relations, rethinking how one can attend to that which refuses to be captured. This poetic ethnographic refusal, which does not fit into words, derives from my journey with my own and others' familial silences and in this way, I seek to understand how individuals' political identity (or their engagement with the political) have been shaped through the historical intersectional experiences of trauma and political oppression. My work provides a decolonial reading of silence through the pairing of Islamic Sufism with Quantum Physics and Methodological Hauntology in order to understand the effects that silence has on the transmission of political trauma intergenerationally – working/weaving the silenced narratives of Chilean and Haitian refugees in Canada, while actively refusing all claims to expertise that may be connected with the geographic locations associated with my co-travellers.

Writing through the limits of ontology and epistemology this dissertation shows that, what appears to be *nothingness*, inconsistencies that challenge assumptions, in fact has a non-identifiable *somethingness*. Yet, through these indeterminacies and tensions to translate, *nothingness* – or silence – ‘speaks’ and/or appears in the shape of its absence. Questions of ethics, justice, unknowing and uncertainty when encountering ‘the Other’ in silence offers opportunities to mediate on the relationship between self and the universe, between micro and macro and between particular and universal. I engage with these problematics through the Sufi philosophy of وحدت الوجود *Wahdat al-Vojud* – Oneness of Beings – and the notion of entanglement found in Quantum Physics. By diffractively reading these two philosophies, silence becomes a matter of ontological indeterminacy rather than a state of perpetual doubt or epistemological uncertainty. The questions that this labor opens up go beyond the methodological or empirical landscape that revolves around what becomes visible, when and how; rather, it pushes us to grapple with the manner in which that which has been silent or absent refuses to become translated as distinct.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *beginnings* are always pregnant with anticipation, with the expectations of yet to come.

What helps ease the pain of uncertainty is a promise. Promises make the beginnings bearable. Even though we mostly fall short in delivering them, we still seek promises. Promises of love, loyalty, honesty, truth-telling and concrete answers; the promise of certainty. These and many other promises help us ease the pain of uncertainties we are surrounded by. A promise is a link from a point in our present moment to an unknown point in the future. The beginnings demand promises.¹

The beginning of this dissertation, however, lacks the promise of determinacy. It does not guarantee delivering the answers to the questions it poses, nor does it offer a way out of the indeterminacies it occupies. This dissertation is messy, filled with silences, gaps, pauses and moments which will stay unclear to me, to the reader and perhaps even to the participants who have travelled this journey with me, my co-travellers. The research method that I will identify in this dissertation does not claim to understand what do silences, gaps and pauses mean, it will merely aim to illuminate their vocational value, not as a placeholder for something to come, but as a presence whose being is lived and felt in so many ways. This dissertation is a journey, a Sufi-esque سفر. Hence, the most important thing is to be on the path of seeking without an urge to ever arrive.

However, the path is not easy. Since I started this journey I have failed myself and others. I have lost and regained myself many times as I sought to shape a method of excavation that sees the location of silence as not merely void or empty but as a site of entry. As someone whose

¹ How else can one make sense of history, experience or transmission without the promise of coherence, teleology or knowing. What constitutes the beginning, or a beginning?

whole life has been molded and shaped by silences, my aim has always been to understand what does silence signify and how does it work politically and is entangled generationally?

This dissertation is co-constituted by entanglements. By the entanglements to all ‘the Others’ whose presence, love, silence and absence have both sustained and shattered my ‘self.’ I am not able to name all ‘the Others’ whom are entangled with me and this journey, for many reasons: personal and political. Therefore, they will be named in silence; they are present in every line of this dissertation in their absence. Of ‘the Others’ that I can name; first are my parents, to whom I am always and forever ultimately indebted: Afagh and Hussein, you are the centre from which my ripples enfold, your presence and absence are both my *home*. Arian, I have missed more than a decade of your life, a precious time in your journey from youth to adulthood, but your presence is so entangled in my being that time and space is reconfigured differently for us: you are, have always been, closer than the palpation under my skin, to me at every moment.

My journey has not been a straight forward path, however, one person who have stood by me from our very first encounter onwards, is my supervisor. Dr. Elizabeth Dauphinee; my thinking and writing is entangled with your love, care, trust and scholarship. You have illuminated a path for me through which many of these writings and thinking have become possible. Another co-traveler, with whom my journey is entangled and to whom I am immensely grateful is Dr. Richa Nagar. Dr. Nagar, thank you for your generosity, for your love, mentorship and guidance. While the lessons that I learn from you are ongoing, it is your mentorship which will carry me throughout life. Thank you for travelling this journey with me and for your trust in every step/every leap. The journey takes us in unpredictable directions and many co-travelers join us in different parts of the journey. The length of their presence by no means can measure

the value of their teachings and mentorship. Dr. Shannon Bell, thank you for agreeing to walk this path with me and for providing invaluable guidance. I am extremely grateful for your knowledge, empathy and kindness. Similarly, I would like to thank Dr. Karen Barad. Dr. Barad thank you for accepting to travel this journey with me through the entangled worlds of quantum field theory and Islamic Sufism and for your very kind and generous engagement with my thinking/writing/being. It was an honour to have your mentorship while re-visiting many aspects of this dissertation.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my friends, whose love and care supported me over the years. I am very much thankful to my partner, Paul Emiljanowicz, for standing by me, encouraging and holding me in every step of this journey. Thank you for your love, understanding and continuing support. Finally, to my Ela Zahra: I hope one day you read these words and know that your beating heart inside me had transformed me in inexplicable ways. You give me courage.

The messiness of each *beginning*, the waviest spot of the ocean is where I anchor my boat, taking in all the waves that enfold and touch me. Completely surrendered to the turmoil. The journey to find a location for silence to exist masks my own struggle to find my way back *home*.

So, let's *begin*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
INTRODUCTION: Shadows of Nothingness and International Relations.....	1
CHAPTER 1: الف Alef: The First Letter of the Alphabet.....	41
CHAPTER 2: Tracing the Untraceable: Researching Silence and Memory	51
CHAPTER 3: An Ocean in a Jug: Exploring Entanglements and Knowing through [Wahdat Al-Vojud] وحدت الوجود and Quantum Physics.....	93
CHAPTER 4: خانه دوست كجاست؟ Ethics, Home and Encounter.....	128
CHAPTER 5: Silence, French Colonialism and Le Devoir de Mémoire.....	156
CHAPTER 6: Chile, Silence and Political Trauma.....	188
CONCLUSION: The End and the Beginning of Journeying Home.....	219
REFERENCE LIST.....	226

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: Behjat Sadr	50
Illustration 2: Shannon Bell	192

ABBREVIATIONS

IR.....	International Relations
MIR.....	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria
MAPU.....	Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitario
CM98.....	Le comité Marche du Mai 1998

Introduction – Shadows of *Nothingness* and International Relations

هیچ اگر سایه پذیرد ما همان سایه ی هیچیم

If nothingness had a shadow, we all would be the dwellers of the shadows of nothingness.

Seyyed Khalil Alinejad ²

³ هیچ سایه ی *demands to be heard and that is politics.*⁴

Central to French philosopher Jacques Rancière’s politics is the notion of an aesthetic of the political where a process of disruption enables that which was previously invisible or inaudible to become seen and heard.⁵ Rancière argues that at the heart of *police* – who are arbiters of the status quo – is a certain manner of partitioning the sensible with clear cut boundaries that flattens

² Seyyed Khalil Alinejad was a Sufi sage of ‘Ahle Haqq’ or ‘the people of truth’ tradition. Born in 1957 in the western Iranian region of Kermanshah, this Kurdish Sufi Master, taught and played, Tanbour and Daf (spiritual music instrument). Seyyed Khalil created a musical group, the Baba Taher Ensemble, named after a classic Persian mystical poet. Please see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX_v0NLmkdk&t=2704s; and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzWOD_rHpPY for a spiritual performance by Seyyed Khalil and his musical group (Sufi students). Seyyed Khalil was an adherent of a Sufi movement ‘Ahle Haqq,’ which has millions of ‘hidden’ acolytes in Iran and Iraq. Followers of ‘Ahl-e Haqq,’ similar to some other Sufi traditions see music as a form of prayer and means of sacred devotion that transcends formal prayer. Seyyed Khalil left Iran and fled to live in Goteborg, Sweden, where he resided in a hostel for asylum seekers. He adopted a humble life-style, teaching classical Iranian and Kurdish instruments and song to adults and children. Those who knew Seyyed Khalil say that as a Sufi he was pleased to serve and thought nothing of the rewards of the ordinary world. He often donated instruments to students and spent many hours with the youngest among them. Seyyed Khalil was stabbed with a knife and then set on fire in a building he came for teaching on Nov 18, 2001. The perpetrators of his death have never been identified. It remains a ‘cold case’ in Goteborg police files, although this is not much of a mystery for Iranian Sufi community who have been living most of their lives in secret. Please see “The Enigmatic Death of an Iranian Émigré,” Centre for Islamic Pluralism, accessed May 1, 2018, <http://www.islamicpluralism.org/1454/the-enigmatic-death-of-an-iranian-emigre>; and “Mourning a Beloved Iranian Sufi Singer, 10 Years Later,” Huffpost, Last updated Jan 30, 2012, accessed 1, May 2018, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mourning-seyed-khalil-alinejad_b_1115697.

³ Shadow of Nothingness

⁴ Jacques Rancière claims that politics happens when parts of parts demand to be part of the sensible. See Jacques Rancière, *Disensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. James Corcoran (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010).

⁵ Nick Hewlet, *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière: Re-thinking Emancipation* (Bloomsbury, 2007), 101-102.

ambiguities. The *police* leaves little to no room for surprise, everything must be in its orderly place.⁶ *Politics*, then, is that which interrupts the smooth functioning of the ordinary – the *police*. *Politics* is what supplements the *police* “with parts of those who have no part [in altering] the perception of what is visible and audible.”⁷ *Police* demands an order that is materially and discursively tangible and categorizable and this order is predicated on certainty and determinacy. What spills out of the apparatus or refuses to be captured within its defined boundaries, remains invisible and inaudible; absent figures, silent voices and all that tends to constitute nothingness or that gets set aside as unimportant. However, what appears to be ‘nothingness,’ that which is left out of the sensible – at the level of the political in all its inconsistencies and indeterminacies that challenge assumptions – does have a non-identifiable ‘somethingness.’⁸ A ‘somethingness’ that is apparent in the shape of absence and silence.

*Nous sommes rien, soyons tout.*⁹

1. Tomb of Al-Adeni: Silence, Absence and IR

On September 2, 1994, approximately two thousand men armed with weapons, shovels, rockets, grenades and other explosives, destroyed the tomb of Abu Bakr al-Aydarus al-Adeni, a Master Sufi and the holy Saint of Aden, Yemen. Al-Adeni’s sanctuary and the tomb of his companions were located under a cupola in a Crater, the old center of the city nestled within the rim of an

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2007). Please also see Karen Barad “What is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, Justice / Was ist das Maß des Nichts? Unendlichkeit, Virtualität, Gerechtigkeit,” *dOCUMENTA* (13): 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken | Book N°099 (English & German edition, 2012) for an elaborated conversation on ‘nothingness.’

⁹ “We are nothing, let us be everything,” Jacques Rancière, quoted in Hewlett, *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière*, 102.

extinct volcano.¹⁰ The armed men on Al-Adeni's tomb exhumed the graves and burnt the bones. The flames from the burnt bones hit the wooden ark built over the Master Sufi's grave, setting the 500-years-old holy sanctuary on fire.¹¹ The destruction of the Saint's tomb, the graves of his companions, and those of the common people buried in the same graveyard, generated international attention. The first thing noted by commentators was that this destruction was not a rampage, it was not a single act of violence, but rather an organized action motivated by economic, political and religious rivalries in the region.¹²

The controversies over the destruction were related to colonialism and the politics of the Cold War in the region. Since the occupation of Aden in 1839 by the British, Northern and Southern Yemen were divided into two separate states, and they remained separated even after the independence of Southern Yemen from the British Empire. During the Cold War, when the Middle East and West Asia were the bloody battlefields of geopolitical rivalries, the division between the Northern, U.S leaning Republic of Yemen and the Soviet ally, the Southern People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, were deepened. Carrying the baggage of colonialism and Cold War politics, the two agreed to reunite in 1994, only to separate again when a civil war broke out a few months later in May of 1994. The city of Aden, one of the epicentres of the civil war, which was besieged during the war, became the last battleground. In July 1994, the Northern forces surrounded the city with tanks that ended the siege and consequently the civil war. Al-Adeni's tomb, however, was destroyed two months later in September, which for many seemed like a final act of retaliation. In that, the destruction of Al-Adeni's tomb resided within the

¹⁰ Engseeng Ho, *The graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (University of California Press, 2006).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

politics of post-war nation building, a so-called ‘collateral damage’ perhaps on the way to building a nation-state that finally would settle the long-lasting separation and rivalries.¹³

During the civil war between Northern and Southern Yemen, the Northern fighters were backed by Islamic fundamentalist groups, including Mujahidin who had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Moreover, the destruction of the tomb of Al-Adeni was backed by the Saudi-Wahhabis. In fact, Sulaymán Fahd, supported the attack on the Adeni’s tomb as indicated by his sermons in Rhidyah. In Northern Yemen, Muqbil al-Wádii, the influential leader of a fundamentalist movement, had voiced his support for the action on cassette tapes, which were widely circulated.¹⁴ The division between the fundamentalist and mystic Islamic doctrine is nothing new. This division stems from those who advocate for a literal reading of the holy text that reflects a narrow view of fundamental sources and their meaning, and those who advocate for a wide latitude of textual and semantic interpretation of holy texts and sources, including poetic, musical and performative readings of the texts. The Sufis, who are an essential part of the second category, are regarded as a threat to a universe dominated by the first. At this level, then, the destruction of Adeni’s tomb was another symbolic act of attempting to erase Sufism.¹⁵

This final attack from the Northern forces brought in many regional and international actors. Reports from international governments and media remarked on the geopolitical

¹³ Please see Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2010); and also, Emily Gilbert, “The Gift of War: Cash, Counterinsurgency, and ‘collateral damage,’” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 5 (October 2015): 403–21 for problematization of the concept of collateral damage.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For more information on attempts to destroy Sufism see: Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Curzen, Richmond, Surrey, 1999); Frederic De Jong and Bernd Radtke, *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Ulrike Freitag and William Clarence-Smith ed., *Hadrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); and Muhammed Umar Memon, *Ibn Taimiya's Struggle Against Popular Religion: With an Annotated Translation of His Kitab iqtida as-sirat al-mustaqim mukhalafat ashab al-jahim* (Mouton and Co, 1976).

importance of such an attack on a holy place and the ramifications for the nation to move forward united.¹⁶ However, even in signifying the politics behind the attack on a location of absence - a grave - what remained silent was the person whom the tomb belonged to: Al-Adeni. Al-Adeni indeed remained present only in the location of his absence. Where his grave, the center of this trans-regional conflict, played a host to such wide-ranging rivalries and contestation, Al-Adeni's life, his teachings and their significance remained silent yet incredibly important and present.

1.1 Tomb of Al-Adeni: The Sanctuary

On January 18, 1989, the Sepoys, led by English Major T. Bailie, were deployed to secure Aden, an important transition port and coaling station for British ships trading between Britain, British India and 'Far East.' In his report, Bailie described that ever since the Sepoy has entered/invaded Aden, all the inhabitants of the town, including not just the Muslim population but also town's large Jewish community and the Hindu merchants, had sought refuge in Al-Adeni's tomb. Hence, Al-Adeni's tomb quickly emerged as an important site for the Adeni community in 'colonial Aden,' providing a sacred sanctuary and a sense of continuity to Aden's pre-colonial spiritual sphere and its rich Sufi tradition.¹⁷ Aden's spiritual richness was due to the presence of many Sufi sages, who for centuries had run lodges and madrassas educating students from Island Southeast Asia to coastal East Africa. Many of the students of Sufi *tariqas* remained in the city to continue the traditions of their masters or journeyed to East and West carrying with them the

¹⁶ Ishaan Tharoor, "The beautiful, historic shrines that Islamists try to destroy," *The Washington Post* (July 25, 2014); Sam Hardy, "Landmark Sufi Shrine Destroyed by Islamists in Yemen," (February 11, 2015) and "Who Are Sufis and Why Do Islamists Hate Them?" *New York Times* (2017).

¹⁷ Scott S. Reese, *Imperial Muslims: Islam, Community and Authority in the Indian Ocean, 1939 – 1937* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

legacies of Aden's Sufi spirituality and knowledge.¹⁸ Even after their death, the Sufi sages remained to be powerful actors whose absences led to formation of many festivals and ceremonies in their honours, and to commemorate their life teachings many travelled from near and far. Scott S. Reese writes:

The ziyara of Sayyid Abu Bakr Aydarus Al-Adeni was certainly the city's most important local annual religious event. In addition to involving most of the town's inhabitants, the festival attracted hundreds of people from the near and distant Yemeni interior as well as large numbers of pilgrims from the nearby Somali and Eritrean coasts of East Africa.¹⁹

Al-Adeni's tomb and its significance can be understood from many perspectives. For example: Engseng Ho in *The Graves of Tarim* talks about the centrality of Sufism and the Sufi tradition in both creating and maintaining the social network between Yemen and the wider community of travellers and *tariqa* seekers.²⁰ Nile Green, in his book *Sufism: A Global History*, emphasizes on the significant role of Sufi shrines and *tariqa* in navigating the challenges introduced by British colonialism in one hand and the pressure of scripturalist conservative Muslim forces on the other.²¹ While these two perspectives shed light on how Sufi shrines such as Al-Adeni have gained such an important role in the region, they merely emphasize on the practical significance of such saintly presence. Albeit significant, the practical dimension of saintly locations and their veneration were not the sole reason behind the importance of the holy tombs. They also held very potent intangible significance in people's everyday lives.

¹⁸ Ho, *The graves of Tarim*.

¹⁹ Scott S. Reese, *Imperial Muslims*, 68.

²⁰ Ho, *The graves of Tarim*.

²¹ Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2012).

The Tomb of Al-Adeni gave people access to other dimensions of the Creator's universe. In Islamic cosmology the universe does not have "one single reality with a distant and somewhat imaginary divine realm inaccessible to the believer."²² Allah's universe is "a complex multiverse with various dimensions" consisting of the world we see, the final world *al-akhira*, and the world of the *jinn* [whose name shall not be uttered load], who are another of God's beings and their world intersects with ours.²³ There is no tangible separation between these parallel worlds. Hence, multiverses are accessible to the sages and masters who know how to journey and traverse the worlds following the *Nour* offered to the travellers of the *Tariqa al-Hagh*. However, "the ordinary Muslim could access the divine realm after death through the permeable membrane of *barzakh* if buried in the vicinity of the awliya where it was at its most porous."²⁴

In addition, the tombs such as Al-Adeni, opened up a cosmic discursive link between the earlier generations inhabited the port and 'the founding sages of Islam' through already established spiritual entanglements both across time and space.²⁵ Therefore, Al-Adeni, in his burial site, which acted as a testament to his absence in this realm, remained present by enabling even the most ordinary believers to connect to the Divine realm directly, sometimes merely by their presence on the site, or being buried next to the Master Sufi. Hence, Al-Adeni's tomb represented "an engagement with the unseen that was not simply about claims to puerile, temporal authority, but power in a much larger cosmic sense."²⁶

²² Reese, *Imperial Muslims*, 78.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The founding sages of Islam are people who are directly linked to the Prophet and his decedents.

²⁶ Reese, *Imperial Muslims*, 78.

However, as indicated above, international reports on the attack of September 2 1994, rarely acknowledged the importance of the tomb that was destroyed during the attack or even who this tomb belonged to. Even when named, Al-Adeni, his life and the importance of his mysticism for the city of Aden remained unacknowledged.²⁷ None of the reports indicated that Al-Adeni had paid visitations ever since his death to give instructions on how to rebuild his own sanctuary. Or, how the logs that were used to construct the wooden ark over Al-Adeni's grave, that caught fire, were sent by another Sufi in India, who after talking to Al-Adeni in his dreams had sent the logs across the Indian Ocean, all of which had found themselves at the shores of Yemen, with the instructions on where and how to use them.

The mysticism of Al-Adeni which holds an important meaning in the city of Aden, makes his grave a powerful actor amidst international politics and war-making. Its destruction and the silences around it, then, urge us to rethink our own visions of politics and justice: how does the shape of someone's silence, absence and *nothingness*, hardly identifiable and indetermined at times, can be certain and material. The indeterminacy or inaudibility does not indicate uncertainty.²⁸ In fact, silence and absence, examined within a phenomenon, enables materiality. The question remains: if silence can be material/ized, then what is the measurement of its material affect? What are the phenomenological boundaries of the materiality of silence? What are the ethical manifestations of its entanglements? In other words, how do we understand – if it is even to be understood – translate or chart the materialization(s) of silence or absence? What does a politics of silence signify? How does one research silence?

1.2 IR and the Question of Mastery

²⁷ Ho, *The graves of Tarim*.

²⁸ This point will be elaborated more in Chapters Three and Four.

One of the most desired objects of inquiry in the field of International Relations (IR hereafter) is order; an order predicated on mastering the unknown and eliminating ambiguities.²⁹ Maintaining order in IR requires knowing, which, in a Western-centric approach means giving each constituent concept (e.g., order, security or peace) a systematic power analogous to a given truth that is external to the concept itself. This is, indeed, a practice of representation. Karen Barad argues that;

liberal social and political theories and theories of scientific knowledge alike owe much to the idea that the world is composed of individuals — presumed to exist before the law, or the discovery of the law—awaiting or inviting representation. The idea that beings exist as individuals with inherent attributes, anterior to their representation, is a metaphysical presupposition that underlies the belief in political, linguistic, and epistemological forms of representationalism.³⁰

Reading through Neil Bohr’s questioning of concepts as “mere ideation,” Barad illustrates that the practices of knowing, theorizing and then presumably mastering in fields that assume scientific approaches towards studying a phenomenon resembles “a specter sport of matching linguistic representations to pre-existing things.”³¹

The desire to know, name, define and categorize in IR “is not born of idle curiosity alone, it is produced also by the desire to control, or at least to know if control is possible.”³² Making

²⁹ Jenny Edkins and Maja Zehfuss, “Generalising the international,” *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005).

³⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

³² Alison Howell, *Madness in International Relations: Psychology, Security and the Global Governance of Mental Health* (London: Routledge, 2011), 16.

the stranger familiar and seeking the truth of concepts, is required by IR in order to (remain a) discipline.³³ Concepts are seen as categories fixed in time and independent of the phenomenon in which they are manifested and thus concepts can be objectively defined and used to gather normative and theoretical insights into the world.³⁴ Knowing the concepts, eliminates ambiguity and provides security – “a principal device for constituting political order and for confining political imagination.”³⁵ Politics in IR, then, can be conceptualized as the ordering of a society by the virtue of mastering the unknown and controlling the sensible in pursuit of an objective understanding of the world. It is a quest to gain a full knowledge or a teleological archive of progress, to be able to predict the future, and therefore, leave no room for surprise. Additionally, IR theory seeks to predict and expand on World Order and the operation of power within an international system with a distaste for disorder and ambiguity.³⁶ This ‘will to order’ is the drive behind the politics of IR and also the parameters of modern politics – the Ranciérian *police*.³⁷ Criticizing IR’s obsession with order, Alison Howell argues that “it is doubtful whether any serious theory of political ends or values fail to attach some value to order”³⁸ and as such “they are animated by a will to closure.”³⁹ Hence, what is left behind in this theorization is all that which cannot be put into words, easily defined, captured or conceptualized. In fact, we often filter through the background noises “to get on with the task of inscribing factual information” or

³³ James Der Derian, “The value of security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard,” in *On Security* edited by Ronnie Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 24.

³⁴ Michael Dillon, “Sovereignty and Governmentality: From the Problematics of the New World Order, to the ethical problem of the world order,” *Alternatives: Global, local, political* 20, no. 3 (Sept 1995), 16.

³⁵ Howell, *Madness in international relations*, 29.

³⁶ See for example; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: a study of order in world politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977); and Kenneth Waltz, “Laws and Theories,” in Robert Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and its critics* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1986).

³⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the genealogy of morality and other writings [1887]*. Trans. Carol Diethe, Keith Ansell-Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁸ Howell, *Madness in international relations*, XII.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

our theorization.⁴⁰ Hence, the absence and silence which IR cannot explain gets brushed under the carpet of ‘imaginary wholeness’ and gets left out of the sensible.⁴¹ The possibility of unknowing and indeterminacy seems eerie for a field whose foundation is grounded in the pursuit of order.

However, such a view of theorizing or conceptualizing presented above functions on the fundamental metaphysics of representationalism: that the world ‘around us’ consist of “individual entities with separately determinate properties.”⁴² In questioning the representationalist view of words, things, concepts and their definition, Barad introduces an agential realist (will be elaborated shortly) understanding of theorizing as a material practice that co-constitutes both concepts and meaning.⁴³ One does not stand apart from the world one is observing, the observer and the observed are entangled in a dynamic practice. Therefore, theorizing is not a matter of representation than it is an “intra-acting.”⁴⁴ Hence, “knowing [comes] from a direct material engagement with the world.”⁴⁵

In the past two decades there has increasingly been a will “to embrace partiality” in IR and to let go of the urge to draw a complete picture of the world(s) we engage in so that we, as

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Dauphinee, “Writing as hope: Reflections on The Politics of Exile,” *Security Dialogue* 44, no.4 (2013).

⁴¹ Jenny Edkins, “Novel writing in international relations: Openings for a creative practice,” *Security Dialogue* 44, no.4 (2013).

⁴² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 55.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁴ ‘Intra-action’ is a term coined by Karen Barad and used in Agential Realist understanding of the world, where theorizing and experimenting is seen as actively participating in the production of phenomena under observation rather than intervening as if ‘observer’ can assume a position outside of the phenomenon. Intra-action and Agential Realism will be further discussed in this chapter and later in Chapter Three. Please see Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 379.

scholars of the field, can “[loosen] our grip on the entitlement to ‘truth.’”⁴⁶ Postcolonial and poststructuralist scholars have questioned, from different angles albeit, what it means to know, to be certain, to ‘master’ a knowledge or to have a definitive answer for questions previously proposed by the field. Patrick Jackson, for instance, argues that although IR from the outset has been devoted to epistemic ways of knowing, the other forms of knowing, such as technical, ethical or normative knowing have always been present within the field.⁴⁷ According to Jackson, these ways of knowing cannot claim a legitimate domination in or of the field. He argues:

In the absence of any definitive philosophical or logical argument for the superiority of any of these ways of knowing, and in light of the global importance of the issues with which we grapple in international studies, I am not convinced that we have any compelling grounds for closing the borders of the field around one form of knowing [...]. Instead of intending to produce one homogenous body of knowledge, the field of international studies and we scholars within it should work to become more comfortable with the irreducible plurality, plurivocality, and diversity of knowing.⁴⁸

A recognition of a plurality of knowing is central to postcolonial and decolonial theories in IR. That which privileges European experience and ways of knowing, being and living is identified by Anibal Quijano as a “specific rationality or perspective of knowledge that was made globally hegemonic.”⁴⁹ It functions alongside economic systems of imperialism and capitalism while

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Dauphinee, “Narrative voice and the limits of peacebuilding: rethinking the politics of partiality,” *Peacebuilding* 3, no. 3 (2015).

⁴⁷ Based on Aristotle’s definition, Jackson defines Epistemic Knowing as; “universal, invariable, context-independent and based on general analytical rationality,” Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, “Must International Relations Be a Science?” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2015), 947.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 964.

⁴⁹ Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000).

creating a hierarchy dominated by the colonizing cultural knowledge forms and knowledge-generating principles.⁵⁰ Knowledge, and the violence of knowledge, is central to colonial domination and in perpetuating racial capitalism and oppressions. Himadeep Muppidi,⁵¹ Olivia U. Rutazibwa,⁵² Ilan Kapoor,⁵³ Robbie Shilliam,⁵⁴ Sankaran Krishna⁵⁵ and many other decolonial/postcolonial IR scholars have argued that these colonial structures still persist and inform the foundations of IR.⁵⁶ The quest for Mastery/Domination is part of the coloniality of a Eurocentric knowledge.

Responding to these existing calls, I utilize methods and onto-epistemologies from multiple traditions that are entangled and analyzed diffractively to engage multiplicities as “cutting together-apart.”⁵⁷

2. Silence and IR

Joining the scholars who question IR’s quest for mastery and order, this dissertation on silence expands the parameters of such critiques.⁵⁸ At the same time, this work seeks to transmogrify

⁵⁰ Karen Tucker, “Unraveling Coloniality in International Relations: Knowledge, Relationality, and Strategies for Engagement,” *International Political Sociology* 12, no. 3 (May 2018).

⁵¹ Himadeep Muppidi, *Colonial Signs of International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵² Olivia Rutazibwa, “Hidden in plain sight: coloniality, capitalism and race/ism as far as the eye can see,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 48, no 2 (2020); also see *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics*; Olivia Rutazibwa (ed.) & Robbie Shilliam (ed.) (Oxon: Routledge, 2018).

⁵³ Ilan Kapoor, “The Queer Third World,” *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 9 (2015).

⁵⁴ Robbie Shilliam, *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2010); see also Robbie Shilliam, Alex Anievas and Nivi Manchanda, *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (London: Routledge, 2014).

⁵⁵ Sankaran Krishna, “The importance of being ironic: a postcolonial view on critical international relations theory,” *Alternatives* 18 (1993).

⁵⁶ Himadeep Muppidi, *Colonial Signs of International Relations*.

⁵⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 392.

⁵⁸ For more examples please see Elizabeth Dauphinee, *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia*. Manchester University Press, 2007); Inanna Hamati-Ataya, “Transcending objectivism, subjectivism, and the knowledge in-between: the subject in/of ‘strong reflexivity,’” *Review of International Studies* 40, no.1 (2014): 153-175; James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski,” in Thomas C. Heller,

the will for closure by analyzing and acknowledging the silences and absences that are unacknowledged or left out of IR theory and by chronically exploring the meanings and material markings of the silent and absent. I delve into the poetics of silence that are entangled with hauntings, and ask what such an exploration reveals, even as I recognize (a) how my own ordering of silence contributes to hermeneutics of critical IR and (b) how my own need to define or illustrate derives from the same basic need ‘to know.’ Silence in this sense is not an authoritarian concept in IR but rather it opens up the landscape of understanding, meaning and epistemological focus which allows for innovative and ethical approaches within IR. The poetics of silence is in fact the queering of interruptions; it introduces contradictions and gaps already existing and materialized as an attempt to engage and problematize IR’s understanding of the dichotomy between the hidden and visible. A commitment to delve into the poetics of silence implies that that which was supposed to remain on the periphery of order and absolute understanding – the absence, the gap, the void and the *nothingness* – becomes a centre, co-constitutive and entangled.⁵⁹

In order to explore the importance of silence for IR, I argue, one needs to understand the importance of absence: (a) absence that defines mobility, exile, aftermath and *afterlife* of political, historical and structural violence,⁶⁰ (b) absences of those who are deemed as missing,⁶¹

S. Morton and D. E. Wellbery ed., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, individuality, and the self in Western thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

⁵⁹ In many ways, this recognition of the boundaries of IR reflect Karen Barad’s argument on nothingness and the co-constitutive entanglement of matter, meaning and quantum physics. See Karen Barad, “Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-membering, and facing the incalculable,” *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics* 92 (2018): 56-86.

⁶⁰ I will define and expand on the concept of *afterlife* on Chapter 6; please see Sara Salem, *The afterlives of Colonialism in Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

⁶¹ Jenny Edkins, *Missing: Persons and Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2011).

of identities that are lost in the process of becoming a diasporas,⁶² (c) absences of generational knowledges that are lost due to colonial violence and through the denial of history and ontological density by Eurocentric archives of knowledge all the way from ‘enlightenment’ to the present,⁶³ (d) absence also at the level of localities of signification such as graveyards, which become sites of international contestations over meaning and understanding. Through a journey with Sufism and Quantum theory, this work invites IR Scholars to develop new sensibilities and expectations towards silence and absence. In so doing, this work seeks to contribute to the ongoing questions asked by critical IR scholars apropos silence and absence, while also offering a new perspective from which to interpret and think about these phenomena.

An openness to new sensibilities can enfold new possibilities for questioning, with no guarantee of delivering the answers to any of these questions, but nonetheless a will to walk the path of exploring.⁶⁴ Questions of ethics, justice, unknowing and uncertainty when encountered with the Other in silence offer opportunities to mediate on the ‘intra-action’ of self and the universe, micro and macro, particular and universal. I engage with these questions through the Sufi philosophy of وحدت الوجود *Wahdat al-Vojud* – Oneness of beings – and the notion of

⁶² Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” In Johnathon Rutherford ed., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998). See also Nancy Foner, “West Indian Identity in the Diaspora: Comparative and Historical Perspectives,” *Latin American Perspectives* 25 no. 3 (1998); and also Anindyo Roy, “Postcoloniality and the Politics of Identity in the Diaspora: Figuring ‘Home,’ Locating Histories,” in Gita Rajan and Radhika Mohanram eds., *Postcolonial Discourse and Changing Cultural Contexts: Theory and Criticism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995).

⁶³ Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “A World without Others? Specter of Difference and Toxic Identitarian Politics,” *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 2018); and also V.Y Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); See other decolonial texts which equate differences in ontological density to the Eurocentric project of colonialism and coloniality in the present, such as Walter D. Mignolo, *Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2012); N. Maldonado-Torres, “On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept,” *Cultural Studies* 21 no. 2, (2008); Patrick Chabal, *The end of conceit: Western rationality after postcolonialism* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2012).

⁶⁴ Richa Nagar, *Hungry Translations: Relearning the world through Radical Vulnerability* (University of Illinois Press, 2019).

entanglement in Karen Barad's reading of Quantum physics. By diffractively reading these two philosophies and being attuned to "patterns of difference that make a difference," silence becomes a matter of ontological indeterminacy rather than a state of perpetual doubt or epistemological uncertainty.⁶⁵ The questions that this labour opens up for IR go beyond the methodological or empirical landscape that revolves around what becomes visible, when and how; rather, it pushes us to grapple with the manner in which that which has been silent or absent refuses to become translated as distinct.

Conventional methodologies aim at capturing and textualizing the world through verbalization. Hence, remains outside of these boundaries, "which cannot be heard, seen, sensed, through words alone, especially when those words are written down and caged in a regularized structure, in familiar fonts, in a predictable sequence of black and white pages," such as non-verbal communications and gestures of solidarity, gratitude, companionship, of pains and dreams unspoken and of hopes held or crushed.⁶⁶ A break from such methodologies can be offered through methods that allows silence to be part of the textualization without verbalization. In other words, silence can only be engaged through methods that allow us to write, however inadequately, the pauses, the non-verbal communications, the textures, the gestures and the feelings that have been erased from disciplinary registers.⁶⁷ This methodology yearns to create a space for stories with "all the richness of what silence can convey."⁶⁸ In this case the question is not telling or un-telling of stories but telling of an incohesive story, where the co-travellers'

⁶⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 72. Please also see Barad, "What is the Measure of Nothingness?"

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁷ Dauphinee, "Writing as Hope," 349.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

silences, breaks and pauses can be considered as important as the ones that are verbalized and made cohesive.

2.1 Reading Silence and IR Diffractively

What does it mean to read or engage with IR diffractively?

Diffraction comes as an alternative to representationalism. Representationalism in its basic definition is the ontological belief in the separation between the objects of representation and their represented qualities.⁶⁹ In other words, representationalism – specifically objective representationalism – is often associated with a claim to objectivity. This claim to objectivity has been criticized in IR by post-positivist, critical, feminist science studies and decolonial scholars.⁷⁰

Writing on the criticism of objectivity in IR and the importance of the author and autobiography, Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker (2010) argue that the author should not be erased, that ontological and epistemological orientations of the author have profound influence on the objectivity of knowledge production and its concrete concerns in IR. They state that:

research should not be presented as if there had been no other possibility from the beginning, as if the facts lay out there, ready to be discovered and unveiled in their

⁶⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 46.

⁷⁰ For critiques of representationalism consult Kiran Asher, “Spivak and Rivera Cusicanqui on the Dilemmas of Representation in Postcolonial and Decolonial Feminisms,” *Feminist Studies* 43, no. 2 (2017); Henry Somers-Hall, *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference* (State University of New York Press, 2012); Elizabeth A. Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (Crow’s Nest, N. S. W.: Allen & Unwin, 2004); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Responsibility,” *boundary 2* (1994); Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Clifford, “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning”; and Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Objects* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

authentic meaning – the author a mere messenger, framing events at their time and place of occurrence and carrying them to a far-off destination, where they unwrap and shine in their original brightness. The voyage cannot be erased, and neither can the framing, the fading, the restoration work. To erase the author is to erase potentially important insights: it leaves us with less knowledge rather than more.⁷¹

The criticism against objectivity and positivism is important and transformative as this critique re-centres the author and autobiography in IR (a point to which I will return later in this chapter and Chapter Four). Alternative to representationalism, however is a methodological approach called ‘diffraction.’⁷²

2.2 Reading Diffractively: A Counterpoint to Reflection

Reflexivity as a critical method aims at taking account or being accountable for ones’ ‘impact’ or ‘bias’ in their writing or research by positioning oneself or turning the mirror back to oneself and the process of mirroring/representation. In other words, reflexivity turns the mirror back to the process of mirroring to highlight the location and means through which the process of reflecting or mirroring takes place: such as a photo of a photographer taking a photo or a painter that is painting the painter. The aim of reflexivity is to presuppose a critical scholarly practice that aims to reflect on and systematically take account of the investigators role as an instrument in the constitution of evidence.⁷³ Reflexive methodologies, in IR and social sciences in general, acknowledge the tripod arrangements between objects, their representations and the representor as opposed to less reflexive modes of investigation that leaves the representor or the process of

⁷¹ Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, "Autoethnographic International Relations: Exploring the Self as a Source of Knowledge," *Review of International Studies* 36 no. 3 (2010), 780.

⁷² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁷³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 86.

representation out of the equation.⁷⁴ Recording the subject recording or reflecting on a subject reflecting only creates a loop ever-present with no possibility of deep or connective engagement not just with one's own subjectivity but with the phenomenon being recorded. What would you get if you put a mirror in front of a mirror or look into a three-wings mirror; the infinite reflections of yourself reflecting. This infinite tunnel of reflection is only possible because of an assumed gap between the reflected and reflectée. Admittedly, mirroring only works because the part of the mirror that enables reflection remains un-reflected.⁷⁵ For reflection to take place something remains hidden or unspoken, therefore for the sake of clarity, something should always remain un-reflected. As such, the reflective approach still operates based on a pre-existing gap between the reflectée and their position in the world.

Reflection requires a gap, an invisible taint, that enables reflection: like seeing yourself in the mirror. Hence, attempting to criticize IR - or any field or discipline - as such for its shortcoming through reflective methodologies, or by turning the mirror back to it, only assumes that IR as a field has unfiltered access to its own reality. As if IR or any field as such can be independently and separately analyzed, reflected and represented.

However, using Diffraction as a counterpoint to reflection Haraway argues that seeing and thinking diffractively is all about making “a difference in the world” by paying attention to

⁷⁴ See for example; Xymena Kurowska, Benjamin C. Tallis. (2013) Chiasmatic crossings: A reflexive revisit of a research encounter in European security. *Security Dialogue* 44:1, pages 73-89; and Inanna Hamati-Ataya. (2013) Reflectivity, reflexivity, reflexivism: IR's 'reflexive turn' — and beyond. *European Journal of International Relations* 19:4, pages 669-694.

⁷⁵ See Rodolphe Gasche, *The Rain of the Mirror*, Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1986, where he argues that in a mirror taint makes reflection possible the light should be in trapped by taint for reflection to happen. However in order for mirroring to happen the taint itself should remain invisible it should remain an extruded, invisible, and undisclosed to make reflection possible. The invisible taint behind the mirror makes reflection possible, therefore, what remains unreflected is what enables reflection.

“the interference patterns on the recording films of our lives and bodies.”⁷⁶ Elaborating on this point Haraway poses that “both [reflection and diffraction] are optical metaphors, but whereas the metaphor of reflection reflects the themes of mirroring and sameness, diffraction is marked by patterns of difference.”⁷⁷ Diffraction works as more than just a metaphor for Barad, as they work with diffraction as an analytical tool that both attends and responds to difference, not where it appears but in the location of its affects: “we can understand diffraction patterns – as patterns of difference that make a difference – to be the fundamental constituents that make up the world.”⁷⁸ Building on Trinh Minh-ha’s work on ‘difference and alterity’⁷⁹ and Donna Haraway’s attempt to find “a way to figure the ‘difference’ as a ‘critical difference within,’ and not as special taxonomic marks grounding difference as apartheid,”⁸⁰ Barad defines diffraction as the methodological approach that “reads insights through one another in attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter.”⁸¹ Diffraction, for Barad, is a fine attunement to difference, one that allows resonance to play together with differentiations.

It is the quantum physics overview of diffraction “as the result of the superposition or interference of waves”⁸² that becomes pertinent in developing a methodology for Barad’s theory of Agential Realism and consequently in thinking through my *Homecoming* ethico-epistemo-methodology. The quantum physics overview of diffraction as entanglement will be gradually

⁷⁶ Donna Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others,” in *The Haraway Reader* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004/1992), 69.

⁷⁷ Donna Haraway quoted in Barad, *Meeting Universe Halfway*, 71.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷⁹ Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Not You/Like You: Postcolonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference,” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, 415-149. Ed., Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997/1998).

⁸⁰ Donna Haraway qtd in Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 72.

⁸¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 71.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 78.

introduced and elaborated throughout the dissertation, however it is important to emphasize on a few important notes about diffractive reading or methodology and the contribution it makes in reading IR diffractively.

First, is that diffractive reading does not imply reading multiple fields against one another. Meaning rather than insisting on the distinction and separation between fields, methods, literary traditions, theories and strands of thoughts, diffractive engagement argues for reading intellectual traditions ‘through one another’ which allows one to engage with a variety of approaches, ontologies and disciplines engendering creative and unexpected outcomes.⁸³ However, such an engagement must be accompanied by acknowledging and respecting the contextual and theoretical differences between the readings in question. Reading diffractively, therefore, is a boundary-crossing, trans/disciplinary methodology, as it brings about “respectful engagements with different disciplinary practices.”⁸⁴ Reflecting on difference and alterity in Trinh’s and Barad’s work, Beudelaine Pierre observes that diffractive reading:

collapses hierarchy and dichotomy and suggests that there is no teleology, no directionality in our being/be/coming. There’s no development from one point to the other. The body then does not turn into the body now; there’s no coordination or direct causality between here and there and now and then; all points on the spectrum interact. They are dis/entangled, spread apart, and re/configured into one another, from one another, separately, simultaneously, intermittently, one after the other dis/continuously dis/continuous.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 30.

⁸⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 93.

⁸⁵ Beudelaine Pierre, “Thinking De<=>coloniality through Haitian Indigenous Ecologies,” *Hypatia*, 35 (2020), 402.

Diffraction, therefore, counterpoints reflection as mirroring the same. In contrast, it shows that our entangled relations with ourselves and others are always already diffracted, as such we always navigate the world diffractively. These entanglements are the product of our multiple and multilayered identities and differently enacted agencies. We engage co-constitutively with the matter as the matter around us engages co-constitutively with us. We are touched and untouched simultaneously by many ripples passing through our wave circle and at any given moment we are participating in creating a ripple that is ‘touching’ other’s wave effect and rippling in both predictable and unpredictable ways. Navigating this world of co-constitution and co-dependence requires a method of reading and engagement that starts from the point of non-separateness: *وحدت الوجود*⁸⁶ and moves on to examine how the cuts in different disciplines and theories are made. Diffraction pays attention to difference but this difference is not being seen or understood in an absolute sense, rather the difference between fields and bodies of literature are seen in their entanglements. So that in diffractively reading insights from different fields through one another for new insights to emerge. It is seeing disciplines as always already in conversation with one another. It is reading these fields together knowing that by the end of it none of them will come out as the same. The patterning has been reconfigured by having them engage with one another.

2.3.2 The Philosophy of *وحدت الوجود*: Onto-epistemo- ethico-methodology

The infinitely other, is me, me and the other exist in me, the self and the other are co-constituted. The finite self becomes the infinite other when she reaches to “Fana’i haqiqi,”⁸⁷ where the self realizes that all the particles of the universe has existed in the

⁸⁶ *Wahdat Al-Vojud* is the Unity of Existence.

⁸⁷ Ultimate annihilation: Sufism, let us say, involves turning attention to the self for purification with the goal of an annihilation of the self in the infinite (presence of God). But what does this mean? Annihilation,

other and outside of the other simultaneously. You are not a jug in an ocean you are the entire ocean in a jug. Be still and you can hear.⁸⁸

Sufism is the mystical piety of Islam. The Sufiyya tradition developed as a convergence of many incongruent ideas and practices into a distinctive movement in Baghdad in the second half of the ninth century.⁸⁹ The philosophy of وحدت الوجود lies at the core of Sufis theology. I will be talking more about Sufism in the upcoming Chapters. However, suffice to say that as a tradition whose teachings are grounded on the philosophy of Unity of Existence; matters of being, doing and knowing (of ontology, epistemology and ethico-methodology), it presupposes the entanglement of ‘things,’ matters, meanings or elements that cannot be learned or observed without acknowledging entanglement and co-constitution. Therefore, Sufi tradition and spirituality is a phenomenon oriented rather than a ‘thing’ oriented ontology and when read diffractively with ‘ethico-ontoepistemology’ in Agential Realism an opportunity opens up to understand and visit a given phenomenon as a whole.⁹⁰

Being indebted to my spiritual learnings in Sufism and by grounding myself in these lifetime teachings in researching silence, I found myself moved by Naeem Inayatullah’s piece on

according to Azad Rasool, “is considered to be one of the most exalted goals of the spiritual journey” and success is closely aligned with the dhikr practices of the Sufi Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Order designed to cultivate continual remembrance of God.” Azad Rasool, *The Search for Truth: The Life and Teaching Methods of the Indian Sufi Shaykh Hazrat Maulvi Muhammad Sa’id Khan* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010), 47.

⁸⁸ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, *Mathnavi e Manavi*.

⁸⁹ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: the formative period, The new Edinburgh Islamic surveys* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2007). But they have other virtues: see esp. Tor Andrae, “In the garden of myrtles: studies in early Islamic mysticism,” trans. Birgitta Sharpe, SUNY ser. in *Muslim spirituality in South Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), Louis Massignon, *Essay on the origins of the technical language of Islamic mysticism*, trans. Benjamin Clark (Notre Dame, Ind.: University Press, 1997). On the emergence of mystical piety only in the mid-ninth century, see Christopher Melchert, “The transition from asceticism to mysticism,” *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996); and “Sufism: Origins and development,” ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, *Critical concepts in Islamic studies* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁹⁰ Barad argues that the agential realist ontology does not take separateness to be an inherent feature of the world.

Flow.⁹¹ Inayatullah brings together Marx, Hegel, Sufism and autobiographical IR without justifying his choices of literature or committing to any single perspective. Instead, he shows how an act of writing can flow in a ripple-like effect. This dissertation is also an act of flow. Inspired by Sufi philosophy of non-separateness, the chapters of these dissertation flow and build on one another; they build on journeys, encounters, and conversations without necessarily justifying the point of each entry or dialogue. My aim is not to ‘create’ or ‘identify’ the connections, rather the connections will be offered in their ‘differentiating-entangling: differentiations within entanglements.’⁹² I will be practicing a diffractive reading, which entails tracing entanglements and reading insight of multiple fields including Quantum Physics/Agential Realism, Post/De-colonial Theories, Sufism and Islamic Theology and Trauma Studies with and through Narrative IR. This method of reading will illuminate new patternings. It is understanding that these field are already entangled and have always been in conversation with one another. Therefore, my role is not to simply initiate a conversation between separate fields but to choreograph their dance together. It is reading these fields together knowing that by the end of it none of them will come out as the same. Their patterning reconfigures as they engage with one another in each dance. Hence, diffraction is a fine attunement to difference. It is allowing resonance to play together with differentiations. The following work requires a generosity of non-categorization and fluidity attested to Sufism and the Sufi tradition. However, I would like to emphasize again that fluidity is not uncertainty or non-materiality. Silence, furthermore, is at the center of these diffracted wave propagations, the multiple centres from which different waves

⁹¹ Naeem Inayatullah, “Flow: Uncovering the Language of Differentiated Oneness in Hegel, Marx, Sufi Teaching Stories, and Autobiography,” published on March 5, 2016 on Academia.edu.

⁹² See Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

ripple, interfere and ‘touch’ each other thereby creating new centres in unpredictable ways. Like Sufi سفر⁹³ this dissertation is a journey with its internal and external quests towards *home*.⁹⁴

3. The poetics of silence: Narrative, Language and Writing

One of the main questions explored in this dissertation is: how can one methodologically apprehend silence or absence? Although semasiographic as a system of communication, which is central in the Fine Arts, has been used to convey meaning without words, sounds or speech, within the boundaries of this dissertation, I am bound to explore words and speech to convey affect. However, such limitation does not prevent me from using pictures and icons and varied forms of textuality, to communicate meaning, and to explore the use of language to capture the affect of silence. Therefore, I will explore ways of writing that can convey affect, act as a signpost and/or platforms that can – not always but often – enable closure towards an indeterminacy of language in a way that inherently escapes nomination. As Naeem Inayatullah argues, if we are looking for a new language to explore or understand something we perhaps are looking for a new way of writing.⁹⁵

3.1 Poetics

⁹³ Mansure Rahmani, Ahad Faramarz Gharamaleki, and Hassan Arif state that: word ‘journey’ (safar) comes up frequently in ethical and mystical sources in the Islamic tradition. Journey in its basic and literal use, means transfer from one place to another. Journey not only was used literally in Sufism, but also used metaphorically to describe death, the transient nature of the life and changes of one’s states. The metaphorical use of the journey for changes of one’s states helped Sufis to solve one of the important problems of the mystical path, namely various stages of mystical transition. The concept of ‘the four journeys’ (al-asfar al-arba’a) that was introduced in the school of Ibn al-Arabi ordered different opinions concerning this problem, Mansure Rahmani, Ahad Faramarz Gharamaleki, and Hassan Arif, "Journey in Sufism: Literal or Metaphorical?" *Journal of Sufi Studies* 7, no. 1-2 (2018).

⁹⁴ In tradition of Ibn-Arabi ‘Home’ or ‘Manzal’ is a location of settlement, location of sitting which tends to mean a mutually agreed ground or also to meet someone (or oneself) half-way.

⁹⁵ Inayatullah, “Flow.”

The use of poetics will be discussed in Chapter Two. However, I briefly elaborate here on how writing silence is feasible through poetry.

According to structuralist poets, poetics is defamiliarized, foregrounded or self-referential language.⁹⁶ Habermas argues that we should think of poetry as foregrounding of the rhetorical elements of language at the expense of the normal, problem-solving mechanisms of communicative action.⁹⁷ Therefore, poetic language must preserve itself without attempting to become the same as quotidian language; it must escape that which is linear and easy to grasp. It must also force us to go back and read and re-read, at times creating or duplicating the trauma, and at others introducing a surd/absurd noise into a text that otherwise was moving in a linear and uninterrupted fashion. Writing silence into the practical discourse of lifeworld is impossible when one attempts at categorizing silence into a familiar language. Unless, a surd is introduced into a series of events making it impossible to carry on uninterrupted. Writing in fractures or writing in ways that allow a moving space for meaning is what constitutes the poetics of silence.

3.1.1 Poetics, Ambiguity, and Indeterminacy

In writing the poetics of silence the aim is not to deliberately obscure or make ambiguous or unintelligible an outcome or meaning that is otherwise tangible. Instead, the aim is to alter our relation to language, so that we can come closer to understanding a matter that is characterized not only by its resistance to translation, but by its compatibility to live in a state of indeterminacy. This point will be elaborated and discussed further in Chapters Three and Four, however, it is important to note that state of indeterminacy in this dissertation is based on Barad's reading of Neils Bohr's principle of indeterminacy in Agential Realism, where

⁹⁶ Joseph Keller, "Conversations, the Poetics Function, and Criticism," *Methods at Work* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1980).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

indeterminacy is different from uncertainty or the impossibility of ever fully knowing something. Indeterminacy, in Agential Realism, indicates that matter needs to be observed within a phenomenon, not as a fixed and unchangeable concept, but sometimes as unsettling of observation of established principles.⁹⁸ Silence is a matter and as any other matter, it has a significant role in how we perceive the world and its phenomena. When silence is observed within a phenomenon (whose boundaries are constantly being configured and re-configured), certainty can be achieved perhaps only for a fleeting moment. However, those short moments are the moments in which ethics, being and knowledge are tangible. Although fleeting, these moments within which the ethico-onto-epistemology of silence forms, can be repeated if the boundaries of the phenomenon in question remain open-ended, open-ended but not limitless. Hence, writing these moments needs a format that allows the constantly re-configuring (or becoming) boundaries to exist without fixation. Writing, according to Levinas, is a neutral space that defies totalization, “writing means to be done with it all, and is never done being done.”⁹⁹ Therefore, writing silence perturbs the predictability of the act of writing that IR and other fields have become accustomed to – writing ourselves and others diffractively then means descending into a non-clinical madness, which according to Foucault is death and life free from meaning-making.¹⁰⁰

3.1.2 Poetics and Madness

⁹⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁹⁹ Mole de Saint Cheron, *Conversations with Emanuel Levinas: 1983-1994*, trans. Gary Mole, (Duquesne, 2010), 151

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion about Madness please see Emmanuel Levinas, “an Exercise on the Madness of the Day,” *Filozofia* 64 (2009); James Phillips, “Madness of the Philosophers, Madness of the Clinic,” *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology*, 16, no. 4 (2009): 313-317; Jean-Max Gaudillière, “The Reasons of Madness,” *Diogenes*, 51, no. 2 (2004):33-44; and Alison Howell, “*Madness in International Relations*.”

Madness for Fanon is both the limitation of our freedom and the extension of it as it shatters our perception of sense.¹⁰¹ Hence, madness “lies in a holy locus of miracle” creating the openness of routes, bound in an infinite crossroads.¹⁰² The *nothingness* of existence, elevates madness, in which nothingness is no longer anything because it is already everything. It is death and life free from meaning-making.¹⁰³ Madness elevates the nothingness of existence, embarking all the existential anxieties: How come one can attach no meaning to life? How come one can be so free? Or, according to Levinas, the im/possibility of ethics is madness and requires engagement with the question: “is madness a way out, or is the way-out madness?”¹⁰⁴

A poetics of silence resonates with madness in that it is both the limitation of our understanding of what ...is and its absolute extension. It is freedom from meaning-making practices inverted into speech. It is elimination and the exacerbation of all the anxieties of getting the meaning wrong. It is accepting a travelling meaning and travelling ethics, along with the ramifications of that acceptance. It is always already, never fully, capturing or understanding the Other. It is the ultimate state of being accountable for oneself and the world in the absence of foundations that provided a definite meaning and hence security. The poetics of silence is an altered language, the one that leaves room for the experience. The poetics of silence is nomadic like poetry is for Paul Celan; being always on the move, in that its very nature refuses settlement, it is nomadic yet not interim.¹⁰⁵ The poetics of silence is not without violence. The poetics that

¹⁰¹ Nigel Gibson (ed), *Decolonizing Madness: The Psychiatric Writings of Frantz Fanon* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

¹⁰² Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History Of Insanity In The Age Of Reason* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1988), 10.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, “An Exercise on the Madness of the Day.” Also, I borrow ‘im/possibility’ from Karen Barad as they argue that the state of being im/possible is not simply an either/or duo, or both. It is rather cutting together apart. Please see Barad, “Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness.”

¹⁰⁵ I borrow the concept of Nomadic Ethics from Rosi Braidotti’s take on Deleuzian Nomadic Ethics. In her 2002 book; *Metamorphoses: Towards a Feminist Theory of Becoming*, Braidotti, claims subjectivity is always

alter our relation to language can in fact be violent, a point I return to in Chapters Two and Three.

3.1.3 Poetics, Language and Mediation

In Farsi, Nimaiee language, or the poetics that has been introduced to Persian Poetry by Nima Yushij,¹⁰⁶ historically shifted the structural rigidity of Persian poetry, altering the relationship of Farsi speakers to language. Before Nima, Iranian poetry was formal and had to submit to the approved phonetic forms guarded by the Iranian literary elite and the state. Nima's poetry was untamed. This phonemic shift in the poetry introduced by Nima, which stirred resistance and left many Iranian literary figures angry, questioned whether language is ever able to capture the essence of 'what is.' Nima also resisted the idea of language as mediator or mediation because mediation assumes two separate entities that need a mediator to come together as it sees the entities as separate from one another. In other words, mediation suggests the active facilitation of interactions. The medium is a thing through which something would work – for example, a wave moves through water, therefore water is a medium. However, an electromagnetic wave can exist without a medium, travelling through neither matter nor air but through the vacuum of space.¹⁰⁷ Mediation seems like the disturbance or change that a mediator creates in mediating an

already in motion and the materialization of bodies and spaces takes place in the act of becoming different or strange. Therefore, for Braidotti the most important task of a nomadic feminist ethics is to shape localised traces of becoming. Please see Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Feminist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); and also Rosi Braidotti (2006) *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹⁰⁶ Hamid Dabashi and Golriz Dahdel, "Nima Yushij and the Constitution of a National Subject," *Oriente Moderno*, 22, no. 83 (2003); please also see Yahya Ariyanpur, "Zendegi va Asar-e Nima Yushij," Padshah-e Fath. ed. Milad Azimi. (Tehran: Sokhan, 1387/2008), 23-48; and Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995) for more information on how Nima Yushij's poetry has changed the landscape of Iranian poetry.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on the nature of electromagnetic waves please see V. N. Soshnikov, *Interrelation of Fast and Slow Electron Waves at Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves in Maxwellian Collisionless Plasma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, arXiv.org, 2007).

independent object, perhaps translating it or maybe bringing in a mediating agent that is going to cause that translation to occur. Then think of the translation in motion as an object that can be placed in a hypothetically wooden box which would represent the medium through which the translation occurs and think of mediating as actually changing or disturbing the pre-existing object in some way to translate a represented in a medium. The poetics of silence is not mediation or translation.

3.2 Narrative and Storytelling

The narrative turn in IR expanded the intellectual boundaries of academic forms of writing and questioned the alienation between scholars, their work and the world.¹⁰⁸ The narrative turn has also acknowledged the ‘fractured self’¹⁰⁹ or the multilayered-ness of the motives in the ‘I’ of the researcher. In doing so, not only narrative and storytelling questioned and challenged the objectivity in IR but they also engaged with the world that can only be written about “intra-actively.”¹¹⁰ Dauphinee writes:

For me, narrative approaches allow us to think about the worlds we encounter differently. They allow us to encounter worlds that we normally don’t see. They give us different languages and different angles of vision. We are normally only able to hear one type of limited gesture – the autonomous speaker of words...[however]..., human

¹⁰⁸ See for example Dauphinee, “Writing as hope;” and also Edkins, “Novel writing in international relations;” Paulo Ravecca and Elizabeth Dauphinee, “Narrative and the Possibilities for Scholarship,” *International Political Sociology*, 12 no. 2 (2018); Roxanne Lynn Doty, “Maladies of our souls: identity and voice in the writing of academic international relations,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17 no. 2 (2004); and Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira, “Narrative IR, *Worldly IR*,” in *Postcolonial Maghreb and the Limits of IR*, (Palgrave MacMillan, 2020).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The term ‘intra-action’ is introduced by Barad to point to the ontological inseparability between determinate entities aiming to reject the metaphysics of individualism or the Cartesian duality. Please see Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 128.

communication is enframed by these elements that rarely make their way into the texts of our professional lives. And yet, it is this very social world within which our texts seek to produce meaning. Our writing – focused as it is on presence and speech – does not have an accepted way of expressing absence or silence.¹¹¹

Narrative writing and critical reflexivity can be considered diffractive reading in many ways. First, because it already questions the existence of an objective observer ‘out there’ denying that the ‘Truth’ can be accessed if one only reflects a little harder. Narrative reflexivity, according to Dauphinee and Paulo Ravecca, does not pretend to separate the knower from the object, or to objectify the objectifying subject as a site of representational inquiry.¹¹² Rather, it shows the impossibility of objectifying subjects in the first place. Narrative reflexivity is different from other simplified practices of reflexive methodologies that are still founded on representationalism.¹¹³ As the latter takes for granted the idea that the representative can reflect on a social or natural reality, and that practices of representation have no affect on the objects of investigation and that “we have a kind of access to the process of representations that we do not have to the objects themselves.”¹¹⁴ Simplified practices of reflexivity, like reflection, still hold the world at a distance; as such, they are unable to move past the social constructivist and post-positivist anxieties about the so-called “unbridgeable epistemological gap between knower and known.”¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ravecca and Dauphinee, “Narrative and the Possibilities for Scholarship.”

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 87.

¹¹⁵ Haraway, “The Promises of Monsters.”

However, narrative writing, like diffractive reading, illustrates that not only do we always know others ‘intra-actively’ but that we also know ourselves ‘intra-actively.’ We learn about ourselves in the process of engagements and entanglements with others. Thus, agency is only present within a given phenomenon and cannot be captured outside of it.¹¹⁶ Stories, therefore, survive partly because they remind us of what we know and partly because they call us back to what we consider significant.¹¹⁷ The narrative becomes a bundle in which we wrap truth, hope and dread.

However, one of the challenges of this narrative turn or story-telling IR is the ethical consequence of a present ‘I’ in the text. The effect of a self-referential ‘I’ in Western academia, so obsessed with its love, guilt, pleasure and innocence can run the risk of a claim to the creation of an authentic truth foreclosing any possibility of challenge. It also runs the risk of creating an ‘I’ so worried about its location and ethical presence that it almost denies itself any existence, assuming a state of coma or subconscious presence.¹¹⁸

4. A Response ¹¹⁹منطق شرق يا منطق غرب?

In reading diffractively I want to bring to the forefront and address the question about engaging Western traditions of thoughts and non-western philosophy and philosophers. The question of why one is/is not supposed to engage or bring to the fore White-Western scholarship especially in a Whitewashed Western academia that has systematically disengaged, ignored, plagiarized and dismissed non-Western forms of being, doing and knowing is an important ethico-political

¹¹⁶ I am using agential realist notions of agency and phenomenon and they will be further explained in chapters Three and Four.

¹¹⁷ Rob Fulford, *The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture* (Anansi, 1997), 7.

¹¹⁸ Please see Chapter Four.

¹¹⁹ Logic of East or Logic of West?

question. Therefore, I feel obliged to address this question by laying out my reasoning for engagement with my chosen traditions of thoughts and knowledge.

As much as I appreciate and value the forms of resistance that imply and work on becoming the opposite of the colonial centre of power (e.g. ignoring and disengaging with Western scholarship), I also think about potential alternative ways of resisting. Perhaps, a form of resistance that happens without becoming the dialectical opposite of the power/colonial centre that one is resisting. Operating within an either-or duo unsettles me not because it immediately creates other sets of (presumably) distinct boundaries that shall not be crossed but also that the nature of this question itself dialectically creates the problem. It confines, categorizes and delegates superiority to one while relegating the other powerless. In actuality, assuming an absolute separation between the Occidental and Islamic or Eastern philosophy (منطق شرق) attests to the superiority of one over the other, a superiority that needs to be restricted by being ignored.

There are multiple ways to interpret this ‘problematique’ or critique. First, is the assumption that there is a clear distinction or absolute separation between the Western and non-Western forms of knowing and that disengagement with White-Western scholarship will eventually diminish the power that it holds. This for me is a ‘peekaboo’ practice: that something disappears or loses power when it is invisible or not being looked at. I do not believe in this practice. For me, the question itself emerges from the dualism of Western academia: that to oppose something, in this case, the dominance of Western knowledge or the knowledge that is produced within the location assumed West, we need to become its dialectical opposite. Rather than operating from that locality of duality and separateness, I operate with and from the philosophy of *Wahdat-al Vojud* that assumes unity and conversations within the philosophical

thoughts and traditions of knowledge. If I boxed my thoughts and created separate boundaries between different bodies of knowledge I would be denying my whole project.

5. Am I Dead? On the Death of the Author and Beyond

The fear of overemphasis on the ‘I’ of the author in a narrative text has shaped some anxiety around how much ‘I’ is too much.¹²⁰ I argue that the claim to decenter or minimize the presence of oneself in one's own narrative is similar to asking the author to stay in a state of coma or to perhaps blame their presence on a state of sub-consciousness rather than a conscious decision to be present in their writing. To actively participate in orienting the conversation is also to be accountable, to take responsibility, to highlight one's shortcomings rather than removing the author, the principal signified, from the text and leaving it with free-flowing signifiers. The decision to actively remove the main signified is a decision to remove or minimize responsibility. Isn't it violent to be actively present in your own text? Yes, it is but so is removing the possibility of any judgment. But does this judgment lead to Justice? Absolutely not, but the act of judgment introduced by one other than the self seems more ethical to me than one done by oneself on oneself (i.e., the act of judging one's own presence as violent and hence removing oneself from the text). This is not self-reflexivity but the fear of being surprised by oneself.¹²¹ Taking one into one's own Court leaves one satisfied with their own decisions to remain omnipresent in their own text, هر که تنها برود قاضی برمیگردد راضی.¹²² Unlike deconstruction, I aim to practice Sufi ‘self-con-destruction,’¹²³ to be present and let the judgment

¹²⁰ These questions have come up many times in International Studies Association panels and after panel conversations.

¹²¹ This is an important distinction between Levinas and Hegel, the imperative comes from outside the self as a command of the other.

¹²² Persian proverb.

¹²³ This point will be explained in detail in Chapter Three.

of the reader deconstruct as opposed to non-critical IR's denial of this anxiety. After all, we all live and die through the judgment of others. That perhaps is the closest one can get to being ethical in their encounter with the other.

6. Chapter Outlines

The First Chapter of the dissertation is titled Alef. Alef is the first letter of Perso-Arabic alphabet and also the first Muqatta's letter by which Qur'an opens. حروف مقطعه [Muqatta Letters] or the mysterious letters of Qur'an are disconnected/disjoined letters (words in perso-arabic script are compiled of joined letters) figuring at the beginning of 29 out of the 114 surahs (sections) of the Qur'an. In this Chapter I am building on the Qur'an's attempt to tell its readers about the 'the secrets of universe' by first un/telling it through mysterious disjoined letters with no apparent meaning. In so doing, this Chapter argues for un/telling and un/writing, which are not the same as telling or not-telling but a state in which both happen simultaneously. Un/telling is sometimes the only way of telling, and un/writing is the only way to write untranslatability; to rethink how one can attend to that which refuses to be captured; to embrace the poetic ethnographic refusal that cannot be worded. This Chapter un/tells the entanglements that have haunted me in my writing and it is my diffracted attempt to silently locate myself in my research.

The Second Chapter of the dissertation delves deeply in the relationship between silence, poetics, language and un/writing. I attempt to look for places in which silence has existed and continues to exist without being captured or categorized. From Paul Celan's Poetry to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Sufism and writings of Ibn Arabi, Ayn al-Qudat al Hamadani, Ahmad al-Gazzali, Attar Neishabouri, and Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi this Chapter surveys multiple fields diffractively and argues that Logo-centricity of language poses one of the significant challenges to silence's resistance to translation. Logo-centricity is a term constructed by Jacques Derrida to

address the limitation of privileging words and speech over other ways of utterance. Gavin Hendricks defines Logocentrism as the “privileging of the ‘phone’ ‘a system of hearing and speaking’ over other modes of communication.”¹²⁴ Spoken words symbolise the thoughts, and writing symbolizes the spoken words, therefore, spoken words are inauthentic representations of thoughts. If the spoken words are symbols of mental experience, and written words symbols of spoken words, logocentricity makes it impossible to write silence without speaking. Despite Derrida’s belief that it is Western and Christian tradition that are uniquely challenged by logocentricity, Hamid Dabashi argues that logo and nomo centricity are also limitations within which Islamic theo-ontology functions.¹²⁵ The term Islamic theology or philosophy refers to a vast field of diverse schools of thought, doctrines and individual thinkers whose philosophical ideas spring from and are influenced by divergent theological tendencies. However, unlike Western logocentrism which is challenged by Derridean deconstruction with a specific focus on language, the challenge to Transcendental Logocentrism of Islam emerges from Sufism. Building on the history, philosophy and traditions of Sufism, this Chapter locates a place in which an annihilated self marks the point through which silence, void and *nothingness* can find a place to remain in their state of indeterminacy.

What does it mean to listen to someone’s silences, to ‘trace their entanglements,’¹²⁶ to acknowledge their past and to speak/listen to their memories? As part of an exercise in methodological imagining, the Third Chapter engages this question and contributes to a rethinking of the ways in which we engage and translate silence through, what I term as:

¹²⁴ Gavin P. Hendricks, “A Derridean critique of Logocentrism as opposed to Textcentrism in John 1v1,” *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 79, no. 1 (2014).

¹²⁵ Hamid Dabashi, “In the Absence of the Face,” *Social Research*, 67, no. 1 (2000).

¹²⁶ Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today*, 3 no.2 (2010)

affective positionality and an *agential realist account of relationality*. It is this move from uncertainty to indeterminacy, co-constitution and re-invention that situates the ‘real’ in the moment of encounter.¹²⁷ In finding the ‘real’ the task is not merely to reconstruct a narrative of the way it ‘truly’ ‘was’ but to respond and be responsible for that which is being shared.¹²⁸ This means putting oneself at risk and making oneself ‘radically vulnerable’¹²⁹ to the ‘real/ity’ of inheritance and entanglements – as “irreducible relations of responsibility” which are “never a given” but rather “always a task. It remains before us.”¹³⁰ By coming *home* in our approach to silence – in our approach to anything for that matter – the study of silence becomes open, if only for a fleeting contradictory moment which escapes standardization and theorization.

The narrative turn in IR has elaborated the ongoing conversation on ethics of research and encounter by providing a space for the ‘I’ of the author to exist in the writing with an attempt to acknowledge what is left behind or kept in private while transcribing research from the ‘field.’ Narrative and autobiographical turn in IR has opened up a space within which the ‘subjectivity’ of the researcher and their impact on the research can enter the field and be part of the fieldwork within which the encounters take place. In that, the self enters the apparatus, the location of encounter, as part of the setup and as an active agent whose presence is not masked under the scientific gaze or objective language but acknowledged as a participating agent whose presence,

¹²⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ I am borrowing this term from Richa Nagar, who defines ‘Radical Vulnerability’ as the encountering moment “when we do not think of ourselves as autonomous, sovereign, or independent social beings or actors. Rather, we see ourselves as intensely relational and co-constitutive with the other.” I will elaborate on this concept on Chapter Four, but for now please see; Nagar with Aslan, Hasan, Rahemtullah, Upadhyay, and Uzun, “Feminisms, Collaborations, Friendships: A Conversation,” *Feminist Studies* 42, no. 2 (2016), 512.

¹³⁰ Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today*, 3 no.2 (2010), 265.

affects, shortcomings and agency are felt, addressed and constantly negotiated.¹³¹ The author, hence, becomes responsible in their encounter with the other rather than hidden beneath the veil of proximity. With the unveiling of the 'I' in 'IR' comes questions of accountability: the unhidden self of the researcher, the self-reflecting 'I,' is now exposed to the questions formerly directed at the observer independent ontology, the 'objective research.' With the 'I' of 'IR' unveiled, the power relations and violence embedded within the act of encountering, researching and then leaving to write/publish/get recognized become important components of a dissertation. So, does carving a space for discussion about our role and responsibility as researchers in the field: How can we 'capture' a moment in time and present it as 'real' without essentializing 'the Others' whose life we are writing about? In Chapter Four, I attempt to answer these questions by calling an ethics that exist in our movement from *home* to *homecoming*. A circular ethics that is constituted intra-actively and constantly reconfigured in a moving movement: a journey.

The journey from *home* to *homecoming*, is an ethics defined in movement, and a movement defined in ethics: re/configured and un/settled in an encounter, apparatus or a journey. Situating my line of thoughts in the works of Ibn Arabi, Mohammad Reza Qumshahi, Seyyed Jalal al-din Ashtiyani, Emanuel Levinas and Alfred North Whitehead I use the metaphor of سفر [Journey], one of the core elements in Sufi teachings, to navigate ethical responsibility to the 'Other,' while acknowledging the onto-epistemological 'im/possibility,' to arrive to a determinant conclusion. I define apparatus, agency, mattering and response-ability to pave the way for the two final Chapters in which the encounters happen.

¹³¹ Post-positivism and the critique of objectivity has been extensively discussed in IR literature, please see, Megan Daigle, "Writing the Lives of Others: Storytelling and International Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 1 (09, 2016).

The last two Chapters of my dissertation are the Encounter Chapters taking place in the moments of conversations between me and my co-travellers; moments in which silence, absence and nothingness are both solidified and un/settled simultaneously. I ground my encounters in the experiences of Chilean and Haitian refugees, while actively refusing all claims to expertise that may be connected with the geographic locations associated with my co-travellers. The silences of Chile are similar to the silence and violence I have witnessed in the context of Iran. Chile has been a reference point throughout my life; allowing me to talk about political violence, trauma and silence abroad but not at home. Haiti, however, is more complicated. I have arrived to Haiti as a location organically; it happened through my ‘accidental’ encounters with the Haitian Canadian community in Montreal and it developed through learning, researching, being in travel with and talking to Haitians – activists, academics and community leaders – about silence, intergenerational trauma and political violence as experienced by Haitian refugees and immigrants in Canada. The point of connection threaded through these ‘encounters’ is silence and absence.

Chapter One – الف Alef: The First Letter of the Alphabet

الف لام ميم [Alef Laam Meem]

The Qur'an starts with these three Muqatta'a¹ letters, the meaning of which are completely oblivious for all the Islamic scholars. الف لام ميم joined or disjoined have no meaning in Arabic and as they have no semantic meaning they are called the opening letters of the Qur'an.

However, they are not the only Muqatta'a letters in the Qur'an. Other three disjoint letters appear at the beginning of 29 of 132 Qur'anic Surras. Some scholars believe that Muqatta'a letters are a secret code between God and Prophet Muhammad, and in that they are not meant to be understood by others. They argue that these are the first letters that point to God being Almighty. Scholars of Sufism have pointed out that God starts the Qur'an by these letters to show Scholars of Sharia that no matter how deep they read this holy book there will be words that they would not understand as these will only be revealed to the ones who have the ultimate permission to join the divine.

Nevertheless, these words, regardless of their meaning have been repeated, cited, versed, sang and included in the most significant sermons. Islam, the religion of two billion people, has three unknown letters in its beginning. Three letters that can be interpreted in many ways, depending on: the locations one is occupying/standing, the openness or closeness with which one is reading and what one believes or does not believe in. Perhaps that is the first miracle of Islam – the ambiguity that starts its holy text and the fluidity that embodies its textual richness while also allowing for the birth of its mysticism. In this mysticism, the ones who seek to be included

¹ Disjoined letters as words are compiled of joined letters in Perso-Arabic alphabet, for example if we consider [الف لام ميم] a word, then it should be written as الم.

in the divine circle must understand the language that the beloved [Allah] uses to talk to his lover [Prophet Muhammad].

The Qur'an from the beginning tells the reader, I have words that resist understanding and translation, only the one who seeks will know, the one who knows will never utter it out loud. Perhaps the birth place of Islamic mysticism is embedded in the first three letters of its holy text.

What does it mean to resist translation but still hold a significant and certain meaning for the ones who utter these words? Sufi sages tell us to repeat these words internally as they point to an inner path of knowledge, the affective knowledge. Allah, الرحمان و الرحيم,² tells the followers, you are not entitled to know everything, sometimes you need to be content with the three letters that I have uttered and sit with the affect of its unknowability.

1. Zong! An Un/telling

To sit and read through the discomfort of unknowing and undoing is something that NourbeSe Philips has made possible in her book, *Zong!*³ *Zong!* is about Zong, a merchant ship that sailed from the West Coast of Africa to Jamaica with four hundred and two enslaved Africans, seventeen crewmembers and captain Luke Collingwood. The journey which was supposed to be six to nine weeks lasted about eighteen weeks due to poor navigation which caused a shortage of water and food supplies on the ship and sickness among crew members and Africans on board. Hence, to conserve supplies and preserve the remaining African 'cargo,' the crew threw hundred and fifty slaves into the sea to drown them, a tactic that allowed the owners of Zong to make a

² The most compassionate and the most merciful creator.

³ NourbeSe Philips, *Zong!* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2008).

legal claim to the insurers for the loss of ‘goods.’ The owners of Zong, the Gregson family, made a claim to their insurer, Gilbert, to be compensated for the loss of their ‘cargo,’ referencing the lack of supplies to sustain the slaves on board. Philips’s *Zong!* is centred on the legal document for the King’s Bench hearing regarding the loss of slaves as property to be reimbursed.⁴ The document, a legal text embedded in official language, gets deconstructed and according to Philips, “gradually dislodges through the poetic excavation and untelling of the legal text.”⁵

Zong! untells the story of ‘Gregson v. Gilbert’ through:

fugal and counterpointed repetition to create a complex weaving of memories, polyphonies, and cacophonies, which respond to and sound the Zong massacre. *Zong!* becomes a chant, an undulation, a shouting, a honking, a groan, and song. It is a song that holds *Zong!*’s narrative together, which can only be told in its untelling, for what is there but a song when words risk enacting a second violence.⁶

Zong! is a dub chant, an echo from the past that haunts the living, a hauntology, “a work of haunting, a wake of sorts” – a work haunted by the silences of the drowned Africans.⁷ The massacre of Zong unfolds in Philips’s un/telling of this story, a story that resists the structure of language, and relies instead on phonetic chanting and disconnected use of letters, a story both forgotten and remembered. A story forgotten by the social amnesia that is carefully nurtured by Western Capitalism but that is remembered by people who have turned the spectre of slavery into a linear story that can be fully captured and understood. For NourbeSe Philips, amnesia and

⁴ Paul Watkins in conversations with NourbeSe Philips, “we can never tell the entire story of slavery,” (Toronto book reviews, 2014).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

remembering are both the product of the same desire toward the mastery of knowing and knowledge. She states:

We have been severed from indigenous cultures, names lost, spiritual practices outlawed; there is a sense in which you could say that shorn of all those things that make humans human, we become ghosts of ourselves, haunted by all that we know we know but can't remember, as well as by what we know we don't know and, simultaneously, spectral beings—duppies, zombies, or jumbies, inhabiting a world that is not truly ours—aware that somewhere out there in a parallel universe there is another world where we could become truly embodied, with embodied addresses, so to speak. When I perform *Zong!* the distance between these two worlds becomes smaller. The bones of the undead can find a resting place within us. Each time I perform *Zong!*, it manifests as Ceremony.⁸

Zong! is a story that can only be told by un/telling as it defies simple interpretation.⁹ In *A Genealogy of Resistance*, Philips writes “when the missing text is silence, what is the language with which you read the silence? [...] To deal in silence one must learn a new language.”¹⁰ This is to first challenge a norm present in Western academia where it is assumed that a researcher, regardless of their social-geographical location, is able to access and research about anything and everything. The same practices also solidify the untenable idea of mastery attached to knowledge: that everything including people, cultures or nature can be mastered and dominated by gathering enough information about it.¹¹ The assumption that anything and everything can be

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Of course, other texts and plays can defy simple interpretations and are layered with complexity, woven together and textured.

¹⁰ NourbeSe Philips, *Genealogy of Resistance* (The Mercury Press, 1999).

¹¹ NourbeSe Philips qtd in Watkins, *we can never tell the entire story of slavery*.

the subject of analysis highlights what postcolonial scholars describe as the knowledge-seeking gaze that differs from curiosity and instead reflects power hierarchies of knowledge production that are historically co-constituted in the present.¹² But what does a place of unauthority look like? What does the place of unknowing look like? What does it mean to unlearn mastery and be comfortable with unknowing?

Ilan Kapoor argues that the quest for mastery as part of the coloniality of Eurocentric knowledge is often justified by various forms of homophobia that has led to queering the Third World. Kapoor highlights that, “in the mainstream discourse of international development, the Third World comes off looking remarkably queer: under Western eyes, it has often been constructed as perverse, abnormal and passive. Its sociocultural values and institutions are seen as deviantly strange – backward, effete, even effeminate.”¹³ However, it is in embracing the Queerness attributed to the Third World, rather than purging the queer from its midst that one can move towards unmastery. It is in queering the knowability, authority, language and embracing disorderliness and awkwardness than one can undo mastery.¹⁴

Perhaps the first step as a researcher, writer and academic, then, is to “shed the cloak of our authority” and to utter out loud that we do not know that we are not an authority as such.¹⁵ In addition, readers also need to question the expectation of cohesion, understanding and knowing. Readers are not entitled to know everything; the discomfort of not knowing or of confusion is a step towards unlearning mastery. Some stories cannot be told in their entirety because there are lacunae and silences that if filled would deprive the whole text of its deeper

¹² Quijano, “Coloniality of Power”; also see Tucker, “Unraveling Coloniality in International Relations.”

¹³ Kapoor, “The Queer Third World,” 1612.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1621.

¹⁵ Dauphinee, “Narrative as Hope.”

meanings. Indeed, the very desire for a text as such to be told in its entirety should be questioned and problematized. The role of writers, authors, researchers, poets and artists is sometimes to be “keepers of secret” because not everything that is learned or produced can or should be shared.¹⁶ Sometimes words or stories are only entrusted to be held in the moment they are shared yet there is still an ethical choice to be made, which makes it even more critical to grapple with the ethical responsibility of un/telling.¹⁷ How then do we begin to read the silences around the monumental events that have shape shifted our lives, our cultures, our ways of thinking, not to mention the world defined by colonialism, imperialism, political violence, massacres, genocides and slavery? Why is the sound and speech of the silence surrounding these events traumatic?

It is in the unravelling and un/telling of silences that we can begin to approach a new awareness, while continuing to honour that larger Silence that the noise of Knowledge attempts to drown out. Trapped in our desire for mastery, locked in our historical verité, we, as the community of scholars, believe we can tell ‘the facts,’ the truth’ or even the truth, uninterrupted.¹⁸ Can we postulate less of a desire to know and more of a willingness to understand that we do not know, we cannot know, we will never know, we cannot ever know? If we can, then sitting with that willingness might instigate a possibility of finding new language(s) in which silences and absences can be seen and heard within the apparatus that instantiates their materiality and agency. Our attempts to tell and un/tell simultaneously are and must remain queered; they should demand room to breathe and contemplate.

2. Iran: an Un/telling

¹⁶ Watkins, “we can never tell the entire story of slavery.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Duke University Press, 2018).

In order for an apparatus to be observed it will need ‘spacetime-mattering configuration’ and I am writing from one.¹⁹ I am writing from a location and time; the spatiality and temporality of my work is part of the apparatus I set up and the ‘agential cuts’ I make to enfold a work that is possible in scope. The time and location from which these thoughts emerge are Iran of 1979. This does not mean that Iran of 1920s, the Iran of Coup of Mossadegh and so on are not part of this writing; as mentioned earlier, phenomena are not clearly separated from their exterior boundaries with clear divisions. Reconfiguration of exteriority and interiority is an open-ended process.²⁰

I have set spacetime-mattering boundaries to Iran of the late twentieth century in order to set up an apparatus in which silence is present/observed. Here, my narrative becomes diffracted through the history of Iran, reflected and deflected in myself and my family’s story, unspoken but present .

الف مثل آب
مثل آبادی
مثل آسمان

الف مثل ادب
مثل اصالت
مثل انسان

الف مثل ایران

Alef الف is the first letter in the Abjad alphabet [Preso-Arabic script], in one’s path to learn the alphabet one perhaps starts with Alef. Therefore, the Turkish Sufi and poet Yunus Emre writes:

Dört kitabın mânâsı Bellidir bir elifte
Sen elifi bilmezsin Bu nice okumaktır

¹⁹ According to Barad, no apparatus of inquiry can escape the contexts in which it is produced, performed or observed. The space, the time, and the matter are intra-actively constituted. These points will be further elaborated in /chapters 3 and four. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 234.

²⁰ Ibid., 182.

Yiğirmi dokuz hece Okursun uçtan uca
Sen elif dersin hoca Mânâsı ne demektir
Yunus Emre der hoca Gerekse bin var hacca
Hepisinden iyice Bir gönüle girmektir

The meaning of the holy book is evident in its first Alef,
If you don't know Alef
what type of a learner/reader are you?
You tell me that you have learned to read,
that you have read the Quran from beginning to the end
Then you ask me what's the meaning behind Alef
I will tell you that first step to know something,
Is to know it in your heart.

الف آب مثل
مثل آسمان مثل آبدی
مثل ادب الف اصالت
الف انسان مثل
الف ایران مثل
Iran is Today
Eternal Iran
Iran

is "other" the today

one who is no longer exactly the same
eternal Iran

And from this
lacerations,
Something remains

Elusive

Memory

انقلاب

نمیتوانم

بنویسم

Life

سالها

مردم

درک این موضوع

Exile

برای
تبعید

گاهی

راه گفتن

سکوت تنها

است و

ننوشتن تنها

راه نوشتن

Inside

that mirror

I

See

My cheerful

face of yesterday,
My clenched teeth of this morning,
And my eyes heavy with pain in the evening.
I observe them inside my notebooks.
The lines are the echoes of my voice,

Which crashes against the heavy wall of my loneliness,
And whirls between it and me.
The silence of my cry is illegible on this white wall of loneliness
I trace these illegible lines,
in the mirror of my notebooks²¹



22

²¹ Behjat Sadr, Notebooks are my mirrors, <https://behjat-sadr.com/en/>

²² Behjat Sadr (1982), I have obtained written permission to use Ms. Sadr art works.

Chapter 2 – Tracing the Untraceable: Researching Silence and Memory

'I am jealous of your view,' AAP tells me. 'Mine?' I reply.

'Yes, you can see the water,' he says.

I turned my head around to look at his view, trying to see what is surrounding us from his perspective. He is right, the boats are covering the lake from his angle, and he cannot see much of the water.

'I told you, water calms me down,' I tell him to justify picking the seat with the view.

'Nothing calms me down, he says,' his eyes locked on an object in distance. *I had N* trying to kill me at a young age, you know? Nothing calms me down.'*

He has a very deep but strangely calm voice, so softly spoken that it is hard for me to hear what he says sometimes.

'What is your research about?' AAP asks me.

'I am looking at how trauma, collective political trauma, travels through generations, even when people are silent about their experience, I am researching silence!' I say and then smile.

Expecting a reaction from him, I pause.

He says nothing and stares at me.

I stare back.

I wait.

I wait for what seems like a long time to me. I should give him an example, I think to myself.

Something that resonates with him and his family, so I say:

'Take transatlantic slavery, horrifying realities in French colonies and or Haitian revolution in 18th Century for example, the traumatic impacts of colonialism, of such massive and brutal violence continues, in families, private spheres, even if people in previous generations never opened up about those experiences.'

He is still looking at me.

Is he mad? Is he confused? Why is he not replying? It's hard to tell. His face is very calm. He is just staring back.

Finally, a smile forms on his lips. I take a deep breath of relief. He looks at me calmly and says, *'so, you said you research silence, right?!'*

*In chains
between gold and oblivion:
the night.
Both wanted to grab her.
Both gave time.*

*Laying,
you also lay there, as
next to the days wants to be born with the
twilight:
the word followed by the stars,
flooded by the seas.*

*To each word.
To each the word that sang to him,
when the suit fell on him -
to each the word that he sang and petrified.*

*To it, at night, the word
that the stars accompany and the seas flood,
to it the word bound by the silence, to*

*which the blood did not freeze, when
the syllables pierced the poisoned tooth.*

At night the word earned silence.

*Against those others who soon
- seduced and raped by prostituted ears –
even on time and time will rise,
it will finally be a witness,
finally, when only chains resonate,*

*witness of the night, which lies there
between gold and oblivion,
sister of both, always –*

*Because, tell me, where
will there be twilight,
if not in her, where her tear flows,
that shows only the ones who immerse themselves, sows
them,
but from time to time?*

Paul Celan, 'Argumentum e Silentio'¹

1. Poetics of Silence: An Impossible Translation

*In chains
between gold and oblivion:
the night.*

Gold in the first stanza of Paul Celan's poem 'Argumentum e Silentio' stands for silence, argues Rainulf A. Stelzman, though he acknowledges that Weissenberger's interpretation of it as memory is also acceptable. Either, or, he says, maybe even the combination of both: 'silent memory.'² Then the poem reads: "silence and forgetting are both grasping at night, which is chained between them."³

¹ Paul Celan, *Selected Poems*, trans. Michael Hamburger and Christopher Middleton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

² Rainulf A. Stelzmann, "Paul Celan's Argumentum e Silentio': An Interpretation," *Monatshefte* 67, no. 1 (1975).

³ Ibid.

Celan's poems are ambivalent and ambiguous, escaping the possibilities of easy translation.⁴ They emerge from the night of silence; the hidden side of survival, begging the question of how one can move on when no one else, nothing else, of one's familiar world has survived.⁵ Life after survival of traumatic events is a life wrapped in silence. It is this silence that speaks in Celan's poetry, louder than the chattering of the words. Though flirtatious with words, his poetry is always loyal to the unspeakable. Existing on the edges of language, delimited and paradoxical; his poems swing between speech and silence. "The speech of [Celan's] poem is the silencing of the speech," writes Andreas James Ado Michael.⁶ What enables this intermingling, this oscillation between the conditions of speaking and not-speaking, is the modality of his poem, the location it occupies, and his "interstitial mode of utterance," where he dances on the line between saying and not saying.⁷ Celan's poems allow for silence to exist, intangible and untranslatable, his poetry cuts through quotidian language, reminding us of the impossibility of translating survival. Even Adorno who declared "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,"⁸ praised Celan's poems for the way they "articulate unspeakable horror by being silent...[as] they emulate a language that lies below the helpless prattle of human beings-even below the level of organic life as such. It is the language of dead matter, of stone and stars."⁹ Here Adorno is not so much concerned with the 'barbarity' of expressing unspeakable horror, but about the inability of society to hear the poetry of Auschwitz.

⁴ Andreas James Ado Michael, *Paul Celan: a rhetoric of Silence* (Unpublished Dissertation Thesis: Queen Mary University of London).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Steven L. Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy, Literature, and Art* (The Netherlands; Boston: Brill-Rodopi, 2017).

Ado Michael attributes the poetic suspension in Celan to three categories which are mutually grounded: unfinality, disjunction and displacement.¹⁰ He defines unfinality as the avoidance of full stops or easy endings in Celan's poems. This allows for the readers' imagination to mingle with the poem. The poem negates its own closure, consisting of its own invalidation, exposition and vulnerable display of its disavowed limits.¹¹

*Because, tell me, where
will there be twilight,
if not in her, where her tear flows,
that shows only the ones who immerse themselves, sows
them,
but from time to time?*

The contrary forces, opposing words and "mutually exclusive connotations" characterize this disjunction in Celan's poems; "the opposing terms at once define and negate each other: The essence lies in the interstice they limit."¹²

*Laying,
you also lay there, as
next to the days wants to be born with the
twilight:
the word followed by the stars,
flooded by the seas.*

¹⁰ Ado Michael, *Paul Celan: a rhetoric of Silence*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

Celan's work rewards attention, care, and tolerance of ambiguity.¹³ Displacement is where this ambiguity emerges. Words are mis/dis/placed, deviating from the signified, creating "multiple grids of signification."¹⁴

*To it, at night, the word
that the stars accompany and the seas flood,
to it the word bound by the silence, to
which the blood did not freeze, when
the syllables pierced the poisoned tooth.
At night the word earned silence.*

Displacement in Celan resembles a Derridean "double movement."¹⁵ The interstice created by the synchronization and congruency between two opposing forces, avoiding finality, and multiplying the poles of signification are commitments that structure Celan's poems; allowing silence to speak, or according to Celan, to heal.¹⁶

The silence surrounding Celan's poetry, however, fails to provide healing, as he enduringly believed.¹⁷ His personal memories of the holocaust, his survival in a German culture and language; the weight of which cannot be said, ultimately led him to choose the irreversible silence, drowning himself in the Seine River on April 20th, 1970.¹⁸

1.2 Silence that Heals

سكوت: دم غنيمت است

¹³ Nicola Thomas, "Meridians: the poem as a place of encounter in Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne," *Tropos* (UCL, 2018).

¹⁴ Ado Michael, *Paul Celan: a rhetoric of Silence*.

¹⁵ Derridean double movement will be explained later on this Chapter.

¹⁶ Steven L. Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy, Literature, and Art* (The Netherlands; Boston: Brill-Rodopi, 2017).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Silence: the breath is precious

[Persian proverb]

Binderman in his book *Silence in Philosophy, Literature and Art*¹⁹ argues that silence is a mode of indirect discourse. He writes:

Silence [...] can provide us with access to important and hitherto inaccessible aspects of human experience. Even if silence is another language, it cannot speak to us directly for it contains nothing in itself but only reflects what surrounds it. Silence therefore, is an example of indirect discourse, analogous to Wittgenstein's 'showing', or Heidegger's 'poetic dwelling.'²⁰

Silence then, for Binderman, can be experienced in two forms: disruptive or healing.²¹ Disruptive silence has a practical agenda; taking place within "linear external time" it creates a possibility through which language can flow from one passage to another, remedying the limitation of language.²² Healing silence, however, takes place within "vertical internal time-consciousness, and is experienced in terms of heightened levels of emotional and spiritual intensity."²³ For Binderman, the healing silence brings with itself a sense of 'emptiness' within one's state of mind. Being present, now and here, not anywhere else is the characteristic of healing silence. When healing silence is experienced, one can be brought back to oneself, restoring the unity between the self and the world surrounding them.²⁴

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

²² Ibid., 3.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

The popularized binary exploration of silences and their easy categorization occupies the existing literature in IR (see Introduction). Hence, the question of why silence has to be either healing or disruptive (neither or both or more) becomes central.

1.3 Escaping Categorization

Disruptive or healing, passive or loud, empty or meditative, silence cannot be easily traced or translated into language or the aesthetic form of poetry in which the lifework of Celan provides an antidote. His life and work are not distinct or overlapping, but rather they are co-constitutively entwined and embodied in the tensions and enduring silences of his life. The silence in his poetry struggles within a limiting structure, as Shoshana Olidort notes, provoking “intense feelings of estrangement.”²⁵ In some sense, silence and language, particularly the German language, were hauntingly incompatible. Olidort continues:

...a Holocaust survivor, [who] wrote in German, his mother tongue and also the language of his mother's murderers ... As a German-speaking Jewish survivor living in France, Celan harbored feelings of intense estrangement from the language and thus set about creating his own language through what Joris eloquently describes as a ‘dismantling and rewelding.’²⁶

However, Celan was also aware of the power of language, its ability to form covenants and transform temporality, space and relationship to land and others through narrative.²⁷ It is poignant to recall that “there is no difference between a handshake and a poem,” each offers a

²⁵ Shoshana Olidort, Paul Celan, A poet in exile, Jewish literature.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Adib and Paul Emiljanowicz, “Colonial time in tension: Decolonizing temporal imaginaries,” *Time and Society* 28, no. 3 (2017), 6.

tensional encounter and vulnerability towards the possibility of change, disruption or healing.²⁸ Despite the irreconcilable tensions between language and the aesthetic form of poetry for Celan, the silences of his lifework permeate; silence was never empty despite operating within a limiting structure.

Sacrificing such tensions, ambiguities and complexity for simple categorization paves the way for ‘easy’ theorizations. I evoke easy as a descriptive term that recognizes academic labour, adherence to methodological standards relative to a given field, as well as the compulsory tradition of citing that which has already been recognized as knowledge. Somewhere between our stories and theories, silences get omitted into language and verbalized, so that the gaps within our stories wouldn’t make it to our theories. These gaps are essential to critical theorizing as they reveal a hitherto unexplored transdisciplinary field. What we further miss is the importance of dwelling in the messiness and in-cohesiveness of all that surrounds us. We miss the opportunity of listening to unsaid words. But why is it important for silence to speak, in texts, stories/theories? Or, a more pertinent question: what does it mean to hear or feel the *silence that already exists* and what alternative methods and receptors – which include the eyes, body and ears – can collaboratively engage or solicit an encounter, however fleeting or enduring, with silence?

1.4 Silence That Already Exists

“Whatever meaning there is to be found in silence,” argues Kleinberg-Levin, can only be interpreted through “the very language that interrupts it.”²⁹ In that case, the *silence that already*

²⁸ Emmanuel Levinas and S. Melville, “Being and the other: On Paul Celan,” *Chicago Review* 29 (1978): 16–21.

²⁹ Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy*, 8.

exists only finds meaning in language. Nothing exists beyond language as all events fall within the parameters of words and sounds. Yet as Derrida highlights in his understanding of text that it is not reducible to sounds and words, that silence can still be text.³⁰ Language, then, becomes the only vehicle through which meanings are transported, subjecting silence to a sense of passivity or lack. Unless it gets interrupted by language, silence becomes an absence. Caught between the duality of speaking and not speaking, silence becomes a dependent variable, whose existence is incomplete without words through which it can be translated. For Kleinberg-Levin, human imagination, “the creative capacity of human consciousness, delimits silence, providing the only way out of the nothingness that silence creates.”³¹

Admitting the origin of language in silence, Kleinberg-Levin argues that human imagination provides us with other forms of hearing; hearing embedded in our other senses.³² However, this still does not remedy the unknown silence, it can only remedy the known silences that we can penetrate. In a long-detailed passage, he goes on to give us examples of silences that are known and penetrable:

What comes to mind are these: the heavy silence of one going deep into her grief; the silence of one whom speakable horror has rendered speechless; the awkward silence of shame or embarrassment; the aggressive silence of one who is hiding his guilt; the benumbed silence of a deep depression; the silence of an anger which accuses and causes hurt by using silence as a weapon; withholding the kindness of speech; the heroic silence of a political prisoner, who refuses to surrender the names of his comrades even under

³⁰ Michael Strawser, “Gifts of silence from Kierkegaard AND Derrida,” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 89 (2006).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

extreme torture; the guarded silence of citizens who must endure constant surveillance under the rule of a police state; the silence of timidity; the silence of shyness; the silence of rapt attention; the silence of prayer; the silence of spellbound anticipation; the silence of a joy that needs to be deeply felt.³³

Hence, Kleinberg-Levin assumes that silences emerging from deep human emotions such as guilt, loyalty, shame, grief and happiness can be heard through open listening.³⁴ These ‘known’ silences, according to him, are penetrable via human imagination, leaving them open to interpretation. Although Kleinberg-Levin admittedly claims that known silences are also not fully graspable, the categories of known and unknown again create a false dichotomy, assuming an easy characterization; imprisoning silence to the limits of human imagination.³⁵ This reduces silence to a condition inside the language, which suffers from a lack that needs to be remedied rather than a form of communication that transcends beyond.

“In all language and linguistic creations,” Walter Benjamin claims, “there remains in addition to what can be conveyed something that cannot be communicated. ... It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongues, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work.”³⁶ In contrast to Kleinberg-Levin, silence exists for Benjamin as a remedy the shortcomings of language. Where words fall short, in an encounter with the unspeakable, silence becomes the source of meaning, addressing the impossibility of narration, of storytelling. When faced with trauma, violence, guilt and survival our ability to

³³ Ibid., 8.

³⁴ Ibid., 8-10.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Meera Atkinson and Michael Richardson, *Traumatic effect* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 23.

share experience is lost so as the possibility of narration. In the afterlives of violence, survivors live in an inexplicable relationship with trauma, “it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis.”³⁷ Building on Cathy Caruth³⁸ and Judith Herman,³⁹ Dinidu Karunanayake argues that survival does not put a closure to a horrific chapter but is a continuum, a slippage between life and death.⁴⁰ Trauma is what imprisons survivors to history, it is to experience non-linearly in a “repeated possession”⁴¹ in a state of “permanent duality”⁴² between the present and the past. Trauma time “does not have beginnings and ends, it does not make sense or allow the world to make sense.”⁴³

Hence, “less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale... It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us... were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences” Benjamin says, leaving us with no other option but to remain in silence; “in a world in which public discourse is usurped by the commercial aims and by the noise of information... trauma must remain a private matter that cannot be symbolized collectively. It cannot be exchanged, it must fall silent.”⁴⁴

³⁷ Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 9

³⁸ Ibid; see also Dori Laub, “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

⁴⁰ Dinidu Karunanayake, “Reclaiming Home and “Righting” Citizenships in Postwar Sri Lanka Internal Displacement, Memory, and Human Rights,” in *The subject of Human rights* Ed. Madeleine Thien (Temple University Press, 2019).

⁴¹ Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 5

⁴² Bessel Van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

⁴³ Edkins, “Novel Writing in International Relations.”

⁴⁴ Sigrid Weigel, *Body-and image-space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*, Translated by Georgina Paul with Rachel McNicholl and Jeremy Gaines (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Similarly, Merleau-Ponty posits that there is a significant realm of human dwelling and work, whose translation into words is an “absurd effort.”⁴⁵ In this translation, he argues, that which should escape solidification would become fixed, real and concrete, leaving its own world and unsolid nature behind.⁴⁶ For him, the being of the world both appears to us as present and absent, therefore we connect to the world surrounding us both in discourse and silence. The tension remains between one which can be said and one which cannot, and this intertwined relationship between coeval poles serves as the foundation for human relation. “Language realizes,” says Merleau-Ponty, “by breaking the silence, what the silence wished and did not obtain. Silence continues to envelop language; the silence of the absolute language, of the thinking language.”⁴⁷ Silence, untouched and untranslated, is the essence that also makes the dwelling of being, their facticity, in this world possible.

However, for Merleau-Ponty the relationship between speech and silence is not a dialogue between two contrary points but a dialogue between being and the being-in-the-world through which each of the participants connects with the other’s meanings.⁴⁸ Hence, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, “hearing in such dialogue plays as great a role as speaking, and both are understood to be part of the same effort to bring to light something that makes sense...to the extent that I understand, I no longer know who is speaking and who is listening.”⁴⁹ For instance, the relationship between a musician and a listener or a painter and a viewer resembles such

⁴⁵ Angus Alexander James McBlane, *Corporeal Ontology: Merleau-Ponty, Flesh, and Posthumanism* (Unpublished Dissertation Thesis, Cardiff University, September 2013).

⁴⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*. Trans. D. E. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴⁷ Bindeman, *Silence in Philosophy*, 58.

⁴⁸ For Merleau-Ponty, because others can see, touch and interact with us it is impossible to reduce ourselves or others to constituted unities in our own consciousness. Our being and the being of the world are immersed in one another. Therefore, we live in an entangled web of relations that makes it impossible for us to step back a bit and try to discover the webs that threaten our connections. Our being-in-the-world, our facticity, prevents us from ever being complete; please see Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*, 2012.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

dialogue where multiple modalities of silence are required. According to Agential Realism sounds engage in diffraction, hence hearing is not passive; it is intra-active.

Silence is not the only modality in a dialogue that is beyond translation, however. According to Merleau-Ponty our very limited hearing abilities also make speech and wording part of a delusional communication.⁵⁰ This is because the relationship between a body and sound is more complicated than imagined. Our ears are not the natural reflectors of sounds, instead they are transducers, meaning, they play a key role in making the sound rather than reflecting it. Whatever our perception of the sounds of speech is, it is not the mirror reflection of the actual sounds outside. Voice and the sounds that reflect words are imaginative, and absolutely dependent on our perceptions. For Merleau-Ponty, then, what is taken as inner silence, is in fact inner speech unheard by our hearing senses, a speech that is not embedded in sounds. In that sense, “silence serves as the foundation for speech.”⁵¹ Silence remains complementary rather than contrary to language. Silence is thus the flesh that demarcates and eradicates the boundaries between world and language.⁵² Language solidifies, silence escapes; it flows non-directionally, over the boundaries, irrespective of presuppositions, wants and desires.

1.5 Silence that Flows

*Why are you so afraid of silence,
silence is the root of everything.
If you spiral into its void,
a hundred voices will thunder
messages you long to hear*

*Molana Jalal al-din Rumi*⁵³

⁵⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, trans. Jonathan Star, *in the arms of the Beloved* (1997).

If silence is the essence that makes the dwelling of being in the world possible, then why do most scholars still dwell within narrowly defined categorizations of its meaning?⁵⁴ Why do we still remain within logo-centric boundaries of its ‘translation,’ still emphasizing on the importance of ‘putting it into words’ in order to make sense of it. Even Paul Celan, whose poems get close to reflecting on silence, points out that language is not simply a medium of something that happened but it is the event itself.⁵⁵ How can language – limited, perceptive and subjective – be the event itself? Why remain bound to the limits of logo-centricity, where nothing beyond language, where nothing beyond the outer speech, can exist? Why cannot language, though fundamental, be seen as a limited expression of an external event, one that is separate from the language that expresses it? What kind of a false sense of security emanates from logo-centricity so that even after knowing its limits, we still remain bound by it, both in theory and practice? In grappling with these key questions, this dissertation tries to move beyond logo-centricity in order to learn how it might let silence flow.

2- Logo-centricity and the Impossibility of Writing Silence

Logo-centricity is a term constructed by Jacques Derrida to address the limitations that come from privileging word and speech over other ways of utterance. Gavin Hendricks defines logocentrism as the “privileging of the ‘phone,’ ‘a system of hearing and speaking’ over other modes of communication.”⁵⁶ Derrida accuses logocentricity, in the Western socio-political

⁵⁴ Here I am referring to works such as Kyle Greyson, “Dissidence, Richard K. Ashley, and the politics of silence,” *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010); Danielle Drozdewski, “Knowing (or Not) about Katyn’: The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory,” *Space and Polity* 16, no. 3, (2012); Jayati Srivastava and Ananya Sharma, “International Relations Theory and World Order: Binaries, Silences and Alternatives,” *South Asian Survey* 21 no. 1&2 (March 2014); Walter B. Pedriali, “Towards a Topography of the Void: Adorno on Silence and Other Extremal Denkbilder,” *Dradek: Studies in Philosophy of Literature, Aesthetics, and New Media Theories* 2, no. 2 (2016).

⁵⁵ Ado Michael, *Paul Celan: a rhetoric of Silence*.

⁵⁶ Gavin P. Hendricks, “A Derridarean critique of Logocentrism as opposed to Textcentrism in John 1v1,” *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 79, no. 1 (2014).

thoughts, of constructing a dishonest reality; that truth-telling is possible and it is only possible through verbal communication.⁵⁷ There exists a violent suppression of written language and other modes of communication by the spoken word, based on the assumption that the proximity of the spoken to the utterance shields them from interpretation and preserves their meaning and essence. This suppression creates an illusion within which signifiers assume to have an independence from the signified, preserving the idea that an independent truth can exist to which language could be a testament.⁵⁸ Language can represent, among other things, ‘truth’ or any truth claim that testifies to the separation among knower, known and the knowledge. However, knowing is not a bounded or closed practice but an ongoing performance of the world.⁵⁹ This, for Derrida, is a central illusion of Western philosophy, where Logos or spoken word is a transcendental signifier that has its origin in reality and “relates to the meaning, it produces it, speaks it and composes it.”⁶⁰ Is this not, after all, the common-sense view of representationalism—that the truth can be represented via a mediator between knower and known, i.e. language? Such a view, with its inherent mistrust of matter [signified], prefers to hold the matter at a distance, “figuring it as passive, immutable and mute, in need of the mark of an external force like culture or history to complete it. Indeed, the representational belief in the power of words to mirror pre-existing phenomena is the metaphysical substrate that supports social constructivist, as well as traditional realist, beliefs, perpetuating the endless recycling of untenable options,” the examples to which are given in Chapter Two, i.e. the claim to mastery or expertise.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 149.

⁶⁰ Hendricks, “A Derridarean critique of Logocentrism,” 8.

⁶¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 133.

According to Derrida, in logocentrism, voice is the producer of the first symbol and has a direct relationship with the mind, where thoughts can only be symbolized by spoken words.⁶² Orality, then, can be the only ‘innocent’ or authentic way of communicating; anything else is a disruption of this direct relation and falls into the trap of interpretation, becoming inauthentic. “When I speak” Hendricks says, “my words seem to be one with my thoughts. Meaning is present both to the hearer and to the speaker. What can be clearly observed is that speech creates presence but also an authentic representation of meaning.”⁶³ Spoken words symbolise the thoughts, and writing symbolizes the spoken words, therefore, spoken words are inauthentic representations of thoughts in the sense that they are always a translation and have innate proximity to experience/the event. If the spoken words are symbols of mental experience and written words symbols of spoken words in logocentricity, then writing silence without speaking is almost impossible. Indeed, it is this impossibility that pushes Paul Celan to confess that even for him, nothing exists or can exist beyond language.

However, despite Derrida’s belief that it is Western and Christian tradition that are uniquely challenged by logocentricity, Hamid Dabashi argues that logo and nomo centricity are also limitations within which Islamic theo-ontology functions.⁶⁴ The term Islamic theology or philosophy refers to a vast field of diverse schools of thought, doctrines and individual thinkers whose philosophical ideas spring from and are influenced by divergent theological tendencies.⁶⁵ The Qur’an, as the sole centrepiece of Islamic civilization, is the direct spoken word of Allah to the prophet Muhammad, who memorizes the words received from the Archangel Gabriel and

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Hamid Dabashi, “In the Absence of the Face,” *Social Research* 67, no. 1 (2000).

⁶⁵ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Nazif Muhtaroglu, Detlev Quintern, *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue: The Logos of Life and Cultural Interlacing*, (Springer, 2014).

tells it to his followers. The entire Islamic civilization, hence, has been built on the Transcendental Logos, Allah's words:

As the inaugural moment of a culture, the Qur'an is the narrative manifesto of a globalizing abstraction when the particulars of a tribally diverse configuration of the real are aggressively transmuted to become the Transcendental Universals of a Cosmic Order. In the process of this globalizing abstraction of particulars, from tribal to Cosmic, from Patrimonial Gemeinschaft to Patriarchal Gesellschaft, the local iconic deities with identifiable Faces and as recognizable Signs yield collectively to a Supreme Abrahamic Monotheism over which presides an Absolute Deity, the Allah with no Face to see, Divinity the Unseen, and as the Decisive suppressor of the Sign.⁶⁶

It is this suppression of the sign, the de-facing of the transcendental signifier, that subjects Islamic faith to a Transcendental Logocentrism, Dabashi argues.⁶⁷ "Metalogosization" is what characterizes the Qur'anic attempt to signify the signified; "metamorphosed from Sign to Signifier, from sight to sound, from the visual focus to audible logos, from Face to Name."⁶⁸

However, unlike Western logocentrism which is challenged by Derridean deconstruction with a specific focus on language, the challenge to Transcendental Logocentrism of Islam emerges from Sufism. Sufism is classified as a mystic and powerful Islamic tradition of

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The absence of the face, Dabashi argues that; "Presuming and resuming the Biblical, the Qur'anic narrative begins in the "Name," absenting the Face. It is impossible to commence in the "Face." The Face is forbidden, concealed, absent, thus absented. In the absence of the Face of the Invisible, the Unseen, the Qur'an begins in the Name. In the absence of the Face, the Name casts a long and enduring shadow on the literariness of the Faith, on the concealing of the Face, on the substitution of a collection of Sacred Signatures for a constellation of Signs, on the collapsing of the Sign into the Signifier, so that it can point, ipso facto, to a Signified, and thus to implicate One Final Transcendental Signified, the Hermeneutic Center and Circle that hold the universe of the Qur'anic imagination together. The Qur'an, from qr', the ears." Please see Dabashi, "In the Absence of the Face," 128.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

knowledge and practice based on privatized transcendental experience and spirituality that brings proximity to the divine.⁶⁹ Sufi philosophers, masters and prophets such as Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, Mansur al-Hallaj, Bayazid Bastami, Ibn Arabi, Attar Neishabouri, Mohammad abu Hamed and Ahmad al-Ghazzali, and Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani and their teachings, writings and poetry have been instrumental in the establishment of Sufi tradition.⁷⁰ In challenging logocentrism of Islamic Theology, Sufism takes an intuitive approach to the microcosm, making it to yield access and display relevancy to the macrocosm, the transcendence. *Az çoğun delilidir*, as it is thought in the Mevlevi Sufi tradition: Micro is the proof of the existence of Macro.

Intuition refers to the knowledge that cannot be communicated or discovered via reason; it is an experiential form of knowledge. Just as revelation is special knowledge handed down to a chosen individual by God, intuition is direct experience and knowledge.⁷¹ Moreover, “while the microcosm has to be clearly intuited, with the intuitive grasp of it clarified, its formulation has to be sufficiently flexible, avoiding shape separation of concepts, to allow for all types of experience to be taken into account [...in doing so], the emphasis is not placed upon concepts, but rather upon the intuitive insights that they convey.”⁷² Therefore, an area of indeterminacy must surround words and concepts. This indeterminacy leaves room for movement and *reunion*.

⁶⁹ Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and Narrative: The Untimely Thoughts of Ayn al-Qudat Hamadhani* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999).

⁷⁰ Tymieniecka, Muhtaroglu, and Quintern, "Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology."

⁷¹ Margaret Smith, in *An Introduction to the History of Mysticism* defines intuition as having its roots in mysticism: “All Mysticism affirms that Reality, in its highest form, cannot be understood by intelligence, but only by something above it, that inner sense which is called intuition, by which a man can receive direct knowledge and revelations of God, and perceive things hidden from reason.” Please see Margaret Smith, *An Introduction to the History of Mysticism* (New York: Gordon Press, 1976; reprint, London, 1930), 4

⁷² Ibid.

2.1 Divine Reunion and the Philosophy of *Wahdat Al-Vojud*: Learning through the Teachings of Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi and Farid al-Din Attar Neishabouri

Sufi approaches to Divine Reunion and the philosophy of *Wahdat Al-Vojud* have historically been depicted as a form of pantheistic monism by the ‘orientalist’ perspectives. Joseph Von Hammer-Purgstall is among the earliest European sources that describes Rumi as a pantheist along with Farid al-Din Attar Neishabouri.⁷³ Soon after the publication of Hammer’s books and articles, vast literature on Persian mystical pantheism on Rumi, Attar and Umar al-Suhawardi emerged in the West⁷⁴ describing the bold pantheism of Sufi philosophers and criticizing them for their “blasphemous attempts to fathom the depths of the essence of God.”⁷⁵ It was ‘monomania,’ as Wilberforce Clarke called it, an intoxicating heresy, and native to the East.⁷⁶ Even recent attempts to define and conceptualize Sufism have perpetuated a distorted construction, which according to Alexander Kynsh is caused by a process of translating/transferring a complex foreign religion/culture/language into other cultural/religious codes and languages.⁷⁷ Writers who attempt to take on the act of translation/transferring of such complex system of belief and practice, regardless of whether they are from inside or outside of any given language/culture, are doomed to perpetuate very similar errors: omitting the teachings to fit their work/framework, code-switching and reducing the very diverse system of thoughts to make it flat and easily comprehensible for the non-Sufi audience. Kynsh argues that it is not

⁷³ Aydogan Kars, “Companionship, Human Perfection, and Divine Union in Thirteenth-Century Persian,” *Journal of Sufi studies* 7, no. 1 (2018).

⁷⁴ Examples of this can be found in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Divan* (1814-1819) and August Tholuck’s works (1821-1825), in Rumi and Attar are described as bold pantheist, intoxicating and fatal. Please see Kars, “Companionship, Human Perfection, and Divine Union,” for more information.

⁷⁵ Umar al-Suhrawardi, *The Awarifu-l-Maarif by Umar ibn Muhammad Suhrawardi*, trans. Wilberforce Clarke (London: Samuel Weiser, 1892), 2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Alexander Kynsh, *Sufism, a new history of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton, 2017).

possible to find “unbiased and authentic” accounts of Sufism, thus one should ask: “whose biases are more preferable? those of insiders or those of outsiders to the Sufi tradition?”⁷⁸

So, perhaps before taking on the task of writing on and through Sufism, I should acknowledge that as someone who has grown up in the Sufi tradition, I am neither concerned about the question of bias in my writing, nor I claim that my writing should be preferred or taken more seriously than people who do not follow this tradition. My lack of concern with the question of bias is not because I do not understand the extent of the damage that has been done to the reputation of such a diverse system of knowledge. Nor do I want to downplay how Sufism has been misunderstood in the West and reduced to inspirational Rumi quotes and ‘the religion of love’ without ever understanding that (a) Sufism is rooted in Islamic theology and (b) one cannot come close to comprehending it without knowing Islamic *Kalam and Mantegh* (Logic and Discourse). I am not concerned with the question of bias because bias is only a challenge when one makes claims to represent. Representationalism – which accords a separation among the knower, known and the knowledge – would embed bias in the clear division of this tripod. However, if we eliminate the assumed distinction between objects and ‘the agencies of observation’ within an apparatus (research), the clear division between objects and the agencies of the observation will also be eliminated and bias would become an inseparable part of our set up, the apparatus.⁷⁹ Representationalism is not what I seek; what I weave together through these chapters, readings and re-readings is, as mentioned in the introduction, a form of diffraction, a form of reading that eludes any imaginative act of representation.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

The moving waves on the surface of this chapter are caused by multiple grids, multicentered thoughts of knowing, of experience, of hearing, of learning and unlearning. It is the teachings that I remember from my youth, the quotes from decades ago that serendipitously come back to me while writing, the rhythms of incantations to which I danced and hymned in my childhood, and all the other accidental learnings that I have encountered and absorbed. Sometimes these waves merge to expand and sometimes they merge to cancel one another but nonetheless, they actively are intertwined with me and co-constitute me. My understanding of my own experience with Sufism reads differently now that I am half a world away from the location where I first received these teachings and from the first time I have read these writings. What one calls bias for me is just the ‘intra-actions’ and intra-connections of the waves in the ponds of our thoughts and beings: We are all reading these writings and teachings diffractively, we all are intertwined in this moment observing these gifts’ multilayered meanings. And This, for me, is the heart of Sufi philosophy: the philosophy of unity and co-constitution – *Wahdat al-Vojud*.

2.1.1 *Becoming ‘One’: The story of a separated reed*

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می‌کند
از جداییها حکایت می‌کند
کز نیستان تا مرا ببریده‌اند
در نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده‌اند
سینه خواهم شرحه شرحه از فراق
⁸⁰ تا بگویم شرح درد اشتیاق

⁸⁰ Rumi, Mathnavi – e – Ma’navi, اطلاعات: تهران: معنوی مثنوی معنوی تهران: 1372; see also Mawlana Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi, Mathnawi trans. by Reynold Nicholson (Gibb Memorial Trust) for English translation of Mathnavi.

[Mathnavi - e - Ma'navi]⁸¹ is one of the most influential Sufi books that consists of 25,000 verses of poetry written by Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi in Farsi, between the years 1258 and 1274. Due to the extent of its spiritual and pedagogical influence it has been referred to as 'the Quran in Farsi'.⁸² Mathanvi comprises collection of poetic stories and tales that aim at teaching Sufis: how to start their journey of 'Reunion' and becoming 'one' and how to help [Sufis or seekers of the way] find حقیقت [the Truth].⁸³ The opening tale of Mathnavi is the story of the separated reed, Rumi says:

[beshno een ney choun shekāyat meekonad]

Listen to this lament, my singing reed narrates⁸⁴

[az jodāyeehā hekāyat meekonad]

As it tells about its separation

[Kaz neyestān ta mara bobreede'and]

That ever since they have cut me from the reed farm⁸⁵

[Dar Nafeeram mardo zan naleede'and]

Many have cried for the pains of my aching heart

[Seeneh khāham sharheh sharheh az farāgh]

I need a heart that is also torn to pieces by the pains of separation

[Tā begooyam sharheh dardeh eshtiāgh]

So, I can feel the most at home telling them my desire for reunion

⁸¹ Literally translated to spiritual couplets.

⁸² Jawid Mojaddedi, *Rumi, Jalal al-Din. The Masnavi, Book One* (Oxford University Press, 2004), xix.

⁸³ جستجو در تصوف ایران، عبدالحسین زرینکوب، تهران: انتشارات امیرکبیر

⁸⁴ Reed has been used as the symbol of human spirituality in Sufism even before the Mathanvi was written. Ahmad Al Ghazzali in [Boragh] refers to human consciousness as reed. Also Sana'i in his book حقیقه refers to reed as the secret to human spirituality. See for example; [جستجو در تصوف ایران، عبدالحسین زرینکوب، تهران: انتشارات امیرکبیر ۱۳۸۵]

⁸⁵ Also translated as 'home,' a place that soul can rest, an ultimate location of reunion.

The desire to be ‘One’ and to become one with the beloved stems from an assumption that underlies the core of Sufi teachings: that we all are connected. Although the desire to be one sometimes gets interpreted and translated as becoming one with God, none of the Arabic or Persian terms used to describe the divine union--such as, *Wahdat*, *tawhid*, *ittisal*, *ittihad*, *jam*, *yaki shudan*, *imtizaj*, *ikhtilat*, *payvastagi*, or *āmikhtan*--are employed in Sufism solely to refer to the human desire for ontological or visionary unification with God.⁸⁶ This overflow of desire which is orchestrated by the Sufi institutions and their normative principles is pointed towards a communal form of Divine Union with multilayered subversive capacities. It is a desire to be united with all beings because the separation accorded by our own imagination is the negation of the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud*. It is important to emphasize that “this communicative, face-to-face union of divinized companions is an apophatic one, insofar as the institutions, discursive formations, human attributes, agencies, desires and bodies that cultivate it are perfected in their very dissolution and negation.”⁸⁷

با من صنما دل یک دله کن
 گر سر ننهیم آنگه گله کن
 سی پاره به کف در چله شدی
 سی پاره منم ترک چله کن⁸⁸

Come worshiper, come our heart is united, no reason to complain about your separation, when we are the only one denying our unity. You are in seclusion with the si-pareh [thirty-piece – reference to the Qur’an], I am si-pareh [I am both the text and the reference]; leave the seclusion and join me.

Why get shattered in the absence of the divine beloved, when all beings are the perfect embodied divine discourse, uniting all سی پاره [Si-Pareh], thirty pieces of the Qur’an, and all texts as such.

⁸⁶ Kars, “Companionship, Human Perfection, and Divine Union.”

⁸⁷ Ibid., 77

⁸⁸ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, *Divane Shams Tabrizi*, ghazal number 2094.

Attar Neishabouri, whose teachings preceded and influenced Rumi, also makes a similar observation in his famous book of poetry and teaching, *Conference of the Birds*. سيمرغ [Si-murgh] or Phoenix [literally translated in Farsi to Thirty-Birds] used as a metaphor to refer to the ‘thirty pieces of the Qur’an,’ or the ‘thirty companions,’ whose divine union coincides with their communal companionship.⁸⁹ In *Conference of the Birds*, Attar tells us that the divine beloved has no face other than that of the immediate, embodied peers. This is a direct interpretation of a popular Hadith that says; “whoever desires to sit next to God, let them sit with lovers of God.”⁹⁰ Notwithstanding its classical depictions as an internal journey towards ‘God,’ Attar’s *Conference* presents an important metaphor composed for a communal, embodied and communicative conception of divine union.⁹¹

2.2 Sufism and the Tradition of Love: Learning Through the Teachings of Ahmad al-Gazzali

Inspired by the Sufi teachings and the Philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud*, the Sufi scholar Ahmad al-Ghazzali initiated a reading of the Islamic Kalam that paved the way for the tradition of Love in Sufism to emerge as a distinct school of thoughts. Al-Ghazzali in his attempt to move away from the fixed *a priori* transcendental signified by multiplying the signifier made it impossible to identify one transcendental signifier, the beloved. In doing so, the beloved's face became every face that a Sufi encounters. Existing in the shadows of his elder brother, Mohammad al-Ghazzali, a man whom Montgomery Watt once famously referred to—and not entirely without

⁸⁹ Kars, “Companionship, Human Perfection, and Divine Union,” also Attar who saw Rumi once when he was still a child predicted the grand mastery of Rumi in their one and only encounter. Rumi and his father, while fleeing the pressure of Saljughian Empire and the Moghul attack, pass through Neishabour in Eastern Iran [the city Attar Neishabouri is from] Rumi was walking behind his dad as sign of respect, as his father was a very well-known Islamic scholar. Contemplating at this scene, Attar uttered, “I see an ocean walking behind a sea,” referring to the depth of Rumi’s knowledge and mastery in comparison to his dad.

⁹⁰ Rumi, *Fihi ma Fihi*, 166; Rumi, *Discourses*, #38, 261.

⁹¹ Farid al-Din Attar, *Mantiq al-Tayr*, 101.

justification—as the “greatest Muslim after Muhammad,” Ahmad did not receive the recognition he deserved for undertaking such a massive move in Islamic Kalam.⁹²

Despite this, the younger of the two Ghazzalis, Ahmad, left an indelible mark on Sufism in development of the ‘love tradition’ which moved away from the traditions of Ansari and Samani⁹³ before him and influenced Sufi sages after him such as Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani, Attar, Rumi and many more.⁹⁴ His main teachings, gathered in *Sawanih*,⁹⁵ was, in the words of Lombard, “the first recorded treatise in the history of Islam to present a full metaphysics of love.”⁹⁶ However, it is important to recognize that Ahmad al-Ghazzali’s metaphysics of love in Islam is assumed to be inspired by Rabi‘a al-Adawiyya of Basra, an early Sufi master and a saintly woman “who frequently contrasted the mercenary expectations of those who sought God’s paradise with those who yearned for the God of paradise—'first the neighbor then the house’ (*al-jār thumma al-dār*), she is reported to have said.”⁹⁷

According to Lombard, in the Love tradition initiated by Ahmad al-Ghazzali, we begin to see that the absoluteness of divine transcendent and the divine beloved comes pulling apart when the absolute is no longer held within the duality of the seeker and the sought, but in their *Wahdat*

⁹² See Joseph E.B. Lombard, *Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love* (SUNY Series in Islam. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2016); also see Salimeh Maghsoudlou, “Étude des doctrines du nom dans al-Maqṣad al-asna d’al-Ghazali et de leur origine théologique et grammaticale,” *Studia Islamica* 112, no. 1 (2017).

⁹³ For traditions of Sufism see Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Pre-Modern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Location, 2006); and also Ziauddin Sardar, *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁹⁵ Lombard, *Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love*.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

⁹⁷ Christopher Melchert, “Before ṣūfiyyāt: Female Muslim Renunciants in the 8th and 9th Centuries CE,” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 5 (2016).

al-Vojud [unity of being].⁹⁸ This unity [Wahdat] is a self-disclosure of love, a move beyond the illusionary duality towards a state of complete self-effacement in the transcendent and ineffable being of Love. In the words of Shaikh Ahmad, “the derivation of the lover and the beloved is from Love,”⁹⁹ and in that it is indeed an ‘intra-action.’¹⁰⁰

Love is important for methodology and pedagogy as it centers on the understanding of the co-constitution and entanglement of human experience thereby informing ethical practice, one that holds great promise for a field such as IR. The originating grammar of IR, however, has been to avoid such emotions, or as Véronique Pin-Fat describes IR as foundationally an “avoidance of love.”¹⁰¹ Love in this sense refers to the realization that the existence of the other is essential to one’s own life, they are not independent. IR’s origin is based on a distinction between inside and outside in which emotions are seen as internalized and subjective.¹⁰² Yet emotions can produce forms of encounter that annihilate the self and other in a disavowal of relationality.¹⁰³ In the context of IR, it is important to accept this underlying ontology of co-constitution and think about its application to (re)understanding core and new sites of inquiry. Or as Pin-Fat says “what such an epistemology expresses as a relation to the world and to those with whom we share it.”¹⁰⁴

2.3 Sufism and Silence

⁹⁸ Lumbard, *Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love*.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

¹⁰¹ Véronique Pin-Fat, “‘What’s love got to do with it?’ Ethics, emotions, and encounter in International Relations,” *Review of International Studies*, 45 no. 2 (2019): 181-200.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 109.

Islamic mysticism or Sufism works as a point of deconstruction, similar yet different from its Derridean counterpart. They both adopt a position of permanent inquiry into meaning and the limits of language and representation.¹⁰⁵ Like Derrida's thinking on both the impossibility of justice and the importance of the pursuit of justice, Sufism recognizes the importance of entanglement of the self with 'the Other,' the deconstruction and destruction of the Self, while attempting to formulate an ethical practice. Sufism provides insights into the silence hidden at the centre of one's being and as entangled with the world.¹⁰⁶ This hidden silence, seen as a movement of self towards the heart, can awaken us to the other through compassion. Silence is a form of music heard only by the ones who have learned to open the eyes of their heart, "it is a key given to man with which he can unlock the secret of his own existence and come to possess the forgotten and neglected treasure hidden within his being."¹⁰⁷

Hence, for Sufis, silence is a pure state of mind where humans are ultimately connected to the worlds surrounding them, cognitively recognizing the interconnection among self, Other, and the material-spiritual universe.¹⁰⁸ Although Sufis generally follow the lifeways of the Islamic tradition, such as Prayer (*salah*) and fasting during Ramadan, they also embrace other practices which they believe prepare their mind and soul for a direct connection with the divine, such as remembrance of God (*dhikr*), meditation while observing silence (*sokout*) and ritualized listening to music and poetry as a way to reach an ecstatic state.¹⁰⁹ Observing *sokout* for Sufis is a first step towards accessing the realities of both the outer world and the inner world. This silence, as a

¹⁰⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967).

¹⁰⁶ William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Pre-Modern Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

practiced meditation, works to calm the mind and soul, and bring it to the state of readiness where the divine can finally manifest itself. Silence, as one essential aspect of Sufism, “ought to be practiced day after day and year after year, as an ever-repeated spiritual exercise, it is an attempt to be quietly present. The purpose is to prevent falling into forgetfulness and to encourage the experience of being in-the-moment; neither regretting the past nor fearing the future, silence is the only place in which such a presence can be found.”¹¹⁰ Silence has a powerful effect, in that “it is not something one talks about, but it is there and exercises its beneficent power.”¹¹¹

However, the challenge to this philosophy of spirituality is its articulation and also its politics: How can we not destroy the spiritual potential of silence while talking or writing about it?¹¹² In answering this question Sufi sages such as Ziauddin Sardar points us to *iman*, which is defined as a faith position you know in your heart.¹¹³ *Iman* is turning one’s attention to removing the self, and this can be achieved when the self, نفس or ego is radically annihilated in the infinite presence of the divine beloved and has achieved the ultimate *Wahdat al-Vojud*.¹¹⁴ This is an ethical responsibility generated in the union with the other. However, the state of annihilation of the self in the infinite is only present in true silence; it is realized when someone is quietly present. The silence of tongue, heart and mind is said to give humans access to the centre of their being.¹¹⁵ A language grounded in silence, within this tradition, informs our inter-subjective experience. This form of silence achieves what no words can. Additionally, silence in

¹¹⁰Ibid., 195.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 191.

¹¹³ Ziauddin Sardar, *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), 285.

¹¹⁴ Sachiko Murata and William Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994), 37.

¹¹⁵ Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

Sufism makes possible a remarkable change from the dominant episteme to an individual, ‘innate’ and subjective intangibility.¹¹⁶ This is made possible through a shift from logocentrism to homo-centrism in Sufism which de-centres the fixed *a priori* transcendental signified by multiplying the signifier. The divine beloved exists in all matter, its presence is multiplied and therefore has made its signification impossible.¹¹⁷ When the divine beloved cannot be solidified, the ‘individual beloved’ who wonders the world also escapes such solidification. Beloved becomes every being we encounter in our journey of love; every matter becomes beloved. Logos are decent. The division between self/Other is deconstructed.

3. Moving beyond Logo-centrism: Enabling Silence to Exist

Derridean deconstruction consists of two readings of the text or a ‘double movement.’ The first reading, which Derrida calls a ‘doubling commentary’, reads a passage as written and tries to reconstruct the determinate meaning of it. The second reading, which he calls a ‘critical reading,’ tries to disseminate the determined and constructed meaning of the passage. In this double reading, Derrida shows that the literature itself reveals the contradictions of its own context which also helps the reader to question the classical interpretative norms, practices and the power structures that control/discipline the text. Identifying the aporias – contradictions – within the text helps the reader to disseminate the text into a series of undecidable meanings. Derrida notes that deconstructive reading situates itself in the gap between what an author aims to create within her text and what would be taken out of her text without her will.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and narrative. The Untimely Thoughts of ‘Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani* (1999).

¹¹⁷ Hamid Dabashi, “The Poetics of Politics: Commitment in Modern Persian Literature,” *Iranian Studies* xvIII, no. 2 (1985).

¹¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford University Press, 1993); see also Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

Hence, this gap produces an opening that leads to a deconstructive reading.¹¹⁹ However, to produce that opening, deconstructive reading must first reproduce what the author wants to say. This practice which has been referred to as an act of classical reproduction engages with the author's ideas within the context that the text has been written without transcending its boundaries. The second or negative reading, however, destabilizes some elements of the text-context relation that the positive reading produces.¹²⁰ In actuality, the second reading challenges the initial semantic determinacy and structurally organized context and helps the reader to produce several incompatible meanings which refuse the possibility of easy categorization.¹²¹ The second reading brings forth the undecidable nature of the texts in the sense that the reader lacks the secure ground to relate the context to the text and the meaning it produces. This insecurity challenges the semiotic pillars that help us understand and categorize the meaning of an event, therefore, challenging our understanding of the context.¹²²

Therefore, the first reading, which Derrida calls a 'doubling commentary,' reads a passage as written and tries to reconstruct the determinate meaning of it. The second reading, which he calls a 'critical reading,' tries to disseminate the determined and constructed meaning of the passage.¹²³ In this double reading, Derrida shows that the literature itself reveals the contradictions of its own context which also helps the reader to question the classical interpretative norms and practices and the power structures that control the text. Identifying the

¹¹⁹ Gerasimos Kakoliris, "Jacques Derrida's Double Deconstructive Reading: A Contradiction in Terms?" *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 35, no. 3 (2004).

¹²⁰ Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*.

¹²¹ Maja Zehfuss, *Wounds of Memory: The Politics of War in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

aporias within the text helps the reader to disseminate the text into a series of undecidable meanings. The undecidability of the meaning is what enables the Derridean deconstruction.

However, in contrast to Derridean deconstruction where the double movement is textological with a primary focus on the readings and interpretation of the text, the Sufi deconstruction is homocentric, as it focuses on the person as the primary point of reflection. Hence, instead of the double reading of the text, observing paradoxes and enabling an aporia, ‘Sufi self-con-destruction’ focuses on the hidden, unseen and silenced, privileging the unsaid while still requiring the said.¹²⁴ Whereas Derridean deconstruction remains mostly focused on epistemological uncertainty, ‘Sufi self-con-destruction’ operates both on epistemological and ontological indeterminacy. In order to achieve a place of *nothingness*, when void is not a vacuum but an existence of nothing, agential realism tells us what we need is ‘ontological indeterminacy,’ not ‘epistemological uncertainty.’¹²⁵

3.1 The journey to Annihilation of self: The encounter of Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani and Ahmad al-Ghazzali

O friend! If you want to reach the infinite, you must undertake (suluk) and give yourself entirely to it, become the infinite.

Ayn al-Qudat

Abu’l Ma’ali Abd Allah al-Miyanji, more commonly known as Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani, was born in the Western Iranian city of Hamadan in 1097 into a family of scholars; both his grandfather and his father were judges in Hamadan.¹²⁶ Ayn al-Qudat received his legal training

¹²⁴ Dabashi, *Truth and narrative*.

¹²⁵ This point will be elaborated further in the next Chapters. Please see; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 72. Please also see Barad, “What is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, and Justice”

¹²⁶ Salimeh Maghsoudlou, *La pensée de Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani (m. 525/1132), entre avicennisme et héritage gazâlien* (PhD diss., École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2016), also for more information see Nasrollah Pourjavady, *Ayn al-Qudat wa-ustadan-i u* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Asatir, 1995).

in the Shafi‘i tradition – one of the four schools of Islamic law in Sunni Islam – whereas his training in theology was in Ash‘arism [believing in 12 imams], the most widely available form of rational theology (*kalam*) of his time. As Ayn al-Qudat excelled in all the Islamic sciences and language, poetry and literary culture (*adab*), he soon received the title of distinction, ‘Ayn al-Qudat,’ literally, “the most eminent of judges.”¹²⁷

However, soon after achieving excellence in Islamic *Kalam va Mantegh* (Discourse and Logic), he went through a period of intellectual crisis on account of his preoccupation with rational theology. After a few years of abandoning his role and teachings, he fully immersed himself for four years in the writings of Mohammad al-Ghazzali, the *Ihya’ ‘ulum al-din* in particular. Ayn al-Qudat claims that Mohammad al-Ghazzali’s teachings rescued him from his predicament as it freed him from the rigidity of the Islamic Theology and introduced him to *Olum al-qeibiyeh* (the science of unseen and unheard) and compelled him to turn. Soon after, Ayn al-Qudat became the disciple of Mohammad al-Ghazzali’s younger brother and one of the foremost Sufi masters of his day, Ahmad al-Ghazzali, during one of the latter’s visits to Hamadan.¹²⁸ After explaining how Mohammad al-Ghazzali’s *Revival* led Ayn al-Qudat to “see many wonders,” he went on to recount his attendant spiritual situation and then eventual meeting with Ahmad al-Ghazali:

My excuse for plunging into every science is clear: the one drowning clings to all things, hoping for salvation. Had God, out of His bounty and generosity, not delivered me from it, I would have been on the edge of a pit of fire. This is because I used to study the books

¹²⁷ Mohammed Rustom, “Ayn al-Qudat between Divine Jealousy and Political Intrigue,” *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 7, no. 1 (2018), 50.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

of theology, seeking to lift myself from the lowland of blind-following (*taqlid*) to the summit of insight (*basira*). But I did not obtain my goal from these books. In fact, I became so confounded by the foundations of the schools of theology that I fell into predicaments which cannot be recounted.... After God's bounty, nothing other than a study of the books of the Proof of Islam Abu Ḥamid Muḥammad al-Ghazzali revived me from my down-trodden state. I studied his books for almost four years. In this period of my preoccupation with the sciences [of], I saw many wonders which are amongst the things that saved me on the path from unbelief, error, bewilderment, and blindness.¹²⁹

After years of training with Ahmad al-Gazzali, Ayn al-Qudat opened his own Sufi *khanqah* in Hamadan, where he would train his disciples. His conversations with his students are preserved in a precious collection of nearly 160 letters, collectively referred to as the *Nameha (Letters)* that he wrote to his students in response to their spiritual and intellectual questions. In one of these letters Ayn al-Qudat writes:

One night, I, my father, and a group of leaders from our city were present in the house of a certain Sufi *muqaddam*. We began to dance [sama, a traditional Sufi dance] while Abu Said Tirmidhi was reciting a few verses. My father carefully looked and said, "I saw Khwaja Imam Aḥmad Ghazali dancing with us. His garment was like this and like that." And he made some gestures. Shaykh Bu Said said, "I am unable to recite. I wish I were dead!" I said, "O' Bu Sa'id, die!" Immediately, he lost consciousness and died. A local mufti (*mufti-yi waqt*)—you know who he is—said, "Just as you caused the one who is living to die, so too cause the dead one to live." I said, "Who is dead?" He replied,

¹²⁹ Ibid., 52-53

“Mahmud, the jurist.” I said, “O God! Bring Mahmud the jurist back to life!”

Immediately, he came back to life.¹³⁰

To let live or let die, a power understood to only exist with God. Ayn al-Qudat did what Mansur al-Hallaj and many other Sufi sages before and after him did: He annihilated the self in beloved and beloved in the self, he pointed to the point of non-separateness. Nonetheless, he became subject to the same destiny that was bestowed on Mansur Hallaj and many other Master Sufis; Ayn al-Qudat was accused of ‘heresy,’ and then imprisoned and killed. When in prison, he wrote *Shakwa al-gharib* [*The Exile’s Complaint*] to defend himself against the charges brought to him by the Saljuqi government whose conservative views on Islam were backed by a traditional school of thought in Baghdad. The Saljuqi government accused Ayn al-Qudat with having a “problematic view concerning God’s being the ‘source’ (masdar) of existence while also not knowing particulars (juz’iyyāt) but only universals (kulliyyāt).”¹³¹ Ayn al-Qudat in his *Shakwa al-gharib* replies to these acquisitions by stating that universal exists in particular; that the smallest particle in this universe is connected to its greatest elements; everything is One and all beings are intertwined.¹³² And for these claims he was executed.

"انا الحق، انا الحق" [I am Him/The Truth, I am Him/The Truth], recited Mansour al-Hallaj and he was executed.¹³³

"هیچ اگر سایه پذیرد ما همان سایه ی هیچیم"¹³⁴ said Seyyed Khalil Alinejad and he too was set on fire.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 56-57

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ J. Fiegenbaum, "Al-Hallāj." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, March 22, 2020.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Hallaj>.

¹³⁴ Seyyed Khalil Alinejad

How dare you call God, *nothingness*? They bemoaned. Lest they know that *nothingness* has a non-identifiable somethingness, or perhaps an infinite everythingness.

3.2 Sufi Self-Con-Destruction

Ayn Al-Qudat al-Hamadani's writings created the necessary ground for deconstructing Islamic theo-ontology by "counter-imagining the Sacred."¹³⁵ "It is the force of that 'counter-
imagination,' the act of de-authorizing the world and all its routine acts of signification,"
Dabashi argues, "which define Ayn al-Qudat's unique presence in intellectual history."¹³⁶ The
subversive story of that transgressive imagination is to be told with its destructive forces and
implications fully in mind. Ayn al-Qudat's deconstructive moves in his writing start with the use
of biographical 'I.'¹³⁷ However, he does so without allowing the biographical 'I' to become an
authentic and/or authoritative voice as he constantly radically challenges his own authority in the
text.¹³⁸ In fact, the questions of the authority of text and author are central to Ayn al-Qudat's
'self-con-destruction' and his "radical confrontation with, and subversion of, faceless anonymity
in doctrinal and dogmatic writings are constitutional to the metaphysical foundations of all acts
of Truth-Telling."¹³⁹

When reading Ayn al Qudat, one finds itself in the middle of a self-doubting dialogue
where all certainties are suspended and the reader has no choice but to constantly function in a
state of 'causal doubts.'¹⁴⁰ The personalization of writing goes against Islam's Grand

¹³⁵ Andrew Davison and Himadeep Muppidi, *The world is My Home, A Hamid Dabashi Reader*, (Transaction Publishers, 2011).

¹³⁶ Dabashi, *Truth and narrative*, 318.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 240.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

abstraction.¹⁴¹ Doing so, while deconstructing any sense of authority or truth-telling creates an opening through which all acts of signification become multi-significatory.¹⁴² Dabashi argues that:

The result of the textual encounter between Ayn al-Qudat and his reader, on a one-on-one basis, is an effective and radical destruction of all assumptions of omnipotent and omniscient voices operative in de-authoring. Such de-authored texts (i.e., texts written by faceless and voiceless authors), whether written by a theologian/jurist like Shaykh al-Tusi, a philosopher like Avicenna, or a sufi like Shaykh Ahmad al-Ghazali, were the effective vehicles of “Islam” as a Grand Abstraction. The power and authority of all institutions of “Islam” have always rested on that Grand Abstraction.¹⁴³

Ayn al-Qudat’s presence in his own text is not an act of revelation of his own ‘real being’ or his ‘genuine disposition.’¹⁴⁴ His presence, in fact, is the result of “the text itself, the discourse that holds it together and the counter-narrativity of all its subversive intentions.”¹⁴⁵ An autobiographical ‘I’ sits at the centre of the subversive intentions and suspension of all those relations of power.¹⁴⁶ The possibility of an autobiographical presence is effectively eroded from both Islamic theology and philosophy, hence Ayn al-Qudat’s presence in his text is a deliberate strategy that subverts objectivity and author’s omniscience which was used to legitimize the metanarrative of Islamic doctrine. While Ayn al-Qudat’s use of personal ‘I’ in his writing

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and narrative*.

¹⁴³ Davison and Muppidi, *The world Is My Home*, 51

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 53

¹⁴⁵ Ibid 53-54

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

delegitimizes the authority bestowed on Islamic doctrine by the air of omnipotent, he still refuses to provide the reader any promise of the presence of a ‘genuine self.’¹⁴⁷ This suggests that:

relations of power have a decidedly political impact on the hermeneutic outcome, that the hermeneutical encounter is an effectively historical proposition, that the hermeneutical event always occurs in a communal set-up and in the context of a dialogical exchange, that all acts of interpretation are quintessentially subjective in the wide and open-ended possibility of readings that they propose, and finally that all versions of historically mediated claims to truth ought to be learnt and then abandoned for the next, are all specific features of a theory of understanding which in Ayn al-Qudat’s own narrative ultimately rests on the irreducibly individual encounter with the supreme metaphysics of ‘Truth-Telling’: a metaphysics which he effectively subverted via his own hermeneutics of counter-narrativity.¹⁴⁸

Ayn al-Qudat’s self-con-destruction does not centre the text, in fact, it is quite the opposite. He performs it in a way that unwrites the writing and attributes no other value (than basic materiality) to the writing, text or language in general. This takes away the phenomenological view of the text and language as ‘the event itself’ and strips it off of any act of truth-telling. He also hides and/or constantly changes the subject of his writing. An initial reading of Ayn al-Qudat suggests that he is writing about the divine and God. However, as one continues reading, one notices that the subject of his writing constantly and controversially changes. The reader and the divine get lost/intertwined in the process of reading, so that there remains no distinction between the outside and inside, between the divine and human.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 54

¹⁴⁸ Hamid Dabashi, *Truth and narrative*, 440.

Secondly, Ayn al-Qudat uses irony and paradox as mechanisms of deconstruction of both self and any imagined possibility of accessing Truth.¹⁴⁹ This deconstructive mode of engagement becomes effective through an act of unwriting; that is, by writing in a way that undoes the writing and appoints no other value to the writing than the basic materiality of simultaneously writing and not-writing. This, for example, is evident in his ‘letter’ writings as he does not give titles to his work and just refers to them as “preparations,” “letters,” or “complaints.”¹⁵⁰ The aversion to introducing a title stems from his radically material notion of language as he questions and undermines any transcendental idea regarding the origin or destination of writing. For example, in *Zubda* (collection of his letters and preparations) Ayn al-Qudat mentions that any form of writing is “socially constructed and communally created to correspond to realities encountered. There is nothing sacred or universally valid about writing, or language in general.”¹⁵¹ In one of his letters, he points out that the physician’s language has no use or value for the dog trainer just like the grammarian’s language and expressions are useless for the accountant.¹⁵²

Lastly, Ayn al-Qudat locates the individual rather than the text as the primary focus of deconstructive reflection. This fundamental shift from the abstract and dominant to a subjective and constantly self-doubting and contradicting individual is a major existential move in Islamic theo-ontology which makes this self-con-destruction in the work of a Master Sufis like Ayn al-Qudat possible, and this is where the shift towards ontological indeterminacy happens. “Radical self-narrative,” in the writing and teaching of Ayn al-Qudat, “which reveals an unbending

¹⁴⁹ Davison and Muppidi, *The world Is My Home*, 52.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 53

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

reliance on his personal existential anxieties” takes away any possibility of Truth-telling enforced by ‘megalosization’ in Islamic theology and perhaps in logocentrism broadly.¹⁵³ Disabling any point of reference in language for Truth, Sufism dismantles the hierarchy that puts spoken words above all other forms of communication, allowing silence to be. That is, it allows for silence to exist without the enforcement of a translation.

Going back to the question that I posed earlier, ‘what makes us scared of silence?’ I suggest that perhaps it is the ability of silence to keep us in a state of perpetual doubt, a state where the epistemological grounding of knowledge is no longer reliable in the sense of identifying Truth. However, if we move beyond the reality constructed by logo-centricity and its metaphysics of absolute certainties we realize that any form of a communicational contract between speaker and listener and viewer and visible is an agreement to enter a state of perpetual doubt. In that sense, a contract with silence is unique because it offers us and reveals to us that we, with our limited subjectivity, have subjected to a dependency on language all the events that are manifested in our lives: without language, the events cannot exist. However, language or any other expression of an event is neither a means through which an event can exist nor its mere representation; it is merely a point through which a self, and a hermeneutic of a self, projects and interprets the event vis-à-vis others.

4. The Fire and the Destroyed Self: Not a Concluding Conclusion

سخت چون عشقی که بر جانی فتاد	یک شب آتش در نیستانی فتاد
هر نی ای شمع مزار خویش شد	شعله تا سرگرم کار خویش شد
مر تو را زین سوختن مطلوب چیست	نی به آتش گفت: کاین آشوب چیست؟

¹⁵³ Ibid.

One night-time, the fire climbed–
to the farm of reeds, inside the wilds.

As the fires engaged–
in their ravaging spree,
alike the drops of tears of love that destroys the self

The flames carried on, in fervor and rave,
And the enduring reeds, each became–
a vigil lighting-on its own grave.

At last, the Reed,
reddened and in pain, complained:
'Why fire? Why this riot? Why this unrest?'

And The Fire said: I have not started these flames in vain –
By burning the meaningless layers of you, I am getting you closer to *Nothingness*.

Shall we utter some words about *nothingness*? What is there to say? How to begin? How can anything be said about nothing without violating its very nature, perhaps even its conditions of possibility? Isn't any utterance about *nothingness* always already a performative breach of that which one means to address? Have we not already said too much simply in pronouncing its name? Perhaps we should let the emptiness speak for itself. ¹⁵⁵

In writing about the limits of ontology and epistemologies – ways of knowing, documenting, reproducing, and discovering 'truth' – what appear to be *nothingness*, are in fact indeterminacies that challenge assumptions and have a non-identifiable somethingness. ¹⁵⁶ Yet, as evident in the lifework of Paul Celan and Sufi sages such as Ayn al-Qudat, Molana, Attar and Ahmad Al-Gazzali in the gaps created by the tensions in the inability to translate silence – *nothingness* is 'speaking,' or appearing. Silence, like *nothingness*, disturbs easy categorizations and

¹⁵⁴ Majzoub Tabrizi

¹⁵⁵ Karen Barad, "What is the measure of Nothingness, Infinity, Visuality, Justice," 100 notes – 100 thoughts (2018).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

theorizations; it resists translation in aesthetic and linguistic modalities; it comes through in ever-present flows. The poetics of silence, creeping and constituting, destructive and healing reflects the need for diverse ‘receptors’ in order to hear, feel and see silence speak.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Receptors is a term coined by Karen Barad to capture ways of working with and researching new materialisms.

Chapter 3 – An Ocean in a Drop: Exploring Entanglements and Knowing through [*Wahdat Al-Vojud*] وحدت الوجود and Quantum Entanglement

You are not a drop in the ocean, you are the entire ocean contained in a drop

Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi

A body holds the memory of all traces. Like an imperfect prose, full of mismatched and forgotten words, memories are written on our bodies. Reservoirs of deep seeded emotions, violence and trauma, our presence in the world is a memory. Our presence is written on other people's lives. Our imperfect prose touches their memory, in speech or in silence. We live with the affect of these traces, we carry on in their aftermath. We survive their violent disruption, we move on, we pass on these traces: to others, to loved ones. We mark their bodies by our own traumas; sometimes just by our silence. They feel the weight of our words in their absence.

Absent, yet present;

Argon is an element of the periodic table. An inactive and hidden gas in the air. An element whose being or not being cannot be detected easily. Its presence is only known if absent; *Argon* is also the title of the first chapter in Primo Levi's book, *Periodic Table*.¹ A book written to explore Levi's memories from childhood and familial relations to his imprisonment in Auschwitz. Elements in Levi's book gain agency, they tell stories and lead us through the micro dynamic of Levi's journey.²

Argon tells the first story.

¹ Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table* (London: Penguin, 2012).

² Ibid.

A story of invisible elements whose detectability becomes evident not based on their visible chemical disposition but by the impact they make on other's lives. Argon is an undetectable yet present element in the existential chemical impact it makes on the life forms of everything that surrounds it.³ Argon's impact can be detected through the behaviour of other gases and elements that live with it.

Argon resembles absences for Levi; people, words, places and actions that are absent. These absences are traceable through the reaction of people who are exposed to them. Argon atoms in Levi's life are not innate or dead matters waiting to be interpreted and brought to life. They hold spaces, they live with him, around him. Argon for Levi is accountable in the sense that it exists and is co-constitutive with all the other visible (and non-visible) elements in the Periodic Table.

Levi's Argon resembles silences to me. Silence, like Argon, is traceable. It leaves footprints. It marks our bodies and others' and the traces of its entanglement remain even if the location, objects and time have changed. Even an attempt to erase traces leaves traces. However, it takes effort to make silence's entanglements visible.⁴ Silence like power, operates through and within relationships and it is visible while observed in the context of these relations. Thinking about silence, as Levi's Argon, opens up a space where silence is not merely analysed by itself and through its own merits but through the traces that it leaves on others; how others are impacted by it and how others react to it.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Barad, "Troubling Time/s and Ecologies of Nothingness."

The traceability of silence is relational and its impact corporeal. It is felt by those who it most affects; even its non-effect is a trace. In order to trace silence's relationality and corporeality, we need a multilayered eclectic methodology, one that is able to address silences multilayered entanglement. In addition, such methodology should also reflect on the different layered as if these layers have never been separated from one another. Such Methodology is reflected in Sufi Philosophical traditions such as Ibn Arabi and Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi's *Wahdat al-Vojud*,⁵ where unlike dualism or holism that presumes an existence of separate two worlds – material and immaterial – “the philosophy of monism sanctions an image of reality wherein a variety of existing things – the whole as well as its constituents – can be commonly explained in terms of ‘one core reality.’”⁶ “The single hidden entity” as Rumi perceives materialism, is part of the fundamental “universal oneness.”⁷

I have put duality away;

I have seen that the two worlds are one;

One I seek,

One I know,

One I see,

One I call

Rumi⁸

1. Embodied Memory: Bodily Representation and Response as an ‘Affective Positionality’

⁵ Richard Wood, “Secrets and Aporias in Ibn Al-Arabi and Derrida: A Review Essay of Ian Almond's Sufism and Deconstruction - Milestones: Commentary on the Islamic World,” *Milestones* (Milestones: Commentary on the Islamic World, December 27, 2017), <https://www.milestonesjournal.net/reviews/2017/12/27/secrets-and-aporias-in-ibn-al-arabi-and-derrida-a-review-essay-of-ian-almonds-sufism-and-deconstruction>

⁶ Deepshikha Shahi, “Introducing Sufism to International Relations Theory: A Preliminary Inquiry into Epistemological, Ontological, and Methodological Pathways,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 25, no. 1 (March 2019).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Mathnawi* trans. by Reynold Nicholson (Gibb Memorial Trust), 127.

What does it mean to listen to someone's silence, to trace their entanglements, to acknowledge their past, to speak with their memories?

Being-in-the-world is not a matter of strictly measurable relationships. The body is not merely a body among many others; it is also our only means for gaining access to the world, to encountering.⁹ Our bodies are not empty vessels for our soul. There is no duality between our body and our mind; there is only 'one core reality.' The connections are not merely spiritual or metaphysical, they are also material. Our bodies organically connect; indeed, they are connected to the body of another from the time of their conception. Our bodies love deeply sometimes, sometimes they hate. Our bodies fear, they hurt and they carry memories of all these scars. Our bodies remember. Macarena Gómez-Barris argues that those most affected by the legacies of violence and trauma continue to live with the affect and effect of those experiences in their bodies.¹⁰ These bodily memories continue in their daily lives and mark the future of the next generation.¹¹ They are passed down to new bodies, translated, re-configured and felt.

Fearful memories can be passed down generationally, studies on epigenetic transgenerational inheritance illustrate; environmental factors and stresses experienced individually or collectively can pass down to the next generation through epigenetic factors.¹² In fact, some studies have illustrated that environmental factors can influence biology "through 'epigenetic' modifications, which alter the expression of genes, but not their actual nucleotide

⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*. Trans. D. E. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁰ Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and state violence in Chile* (University of California Press, 2009).

¹¹ Rachmi Diyah Larasati, *The Dance that Make You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia* (University of Minnesota Press 2013), 61.

¹² Irene Local and Rossella Ventura, "Epigenetic Inheritance: Concepts, Mechanisms and Perspectives", *Frontier in Molecular Neuroscience*, 11 (2018), 292.

sequence.”¹³ Kerry Ressler, a neurobiologist and psychiatrist at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, who worked with poor people living in inner cities, shows that cycles of drug addiction, neuropsychiatric illness and other problems often seem to recur in parents and their children through intergenerational transfer of risk.¹⁴

Given the corporeality of memory and violence,¹⁵ of imagined or lived truth, bodily representation becomes central in development of a methodology that seeks to understand the marks left on us.¹⁶ A methodology that does not seek the meaning behind one's silence or the truth about what is not being said, but that aims to understand how the existence, repetition and presence of those silences in families, collectives and other societal units have marked our gestures and perceptions. It is these marks that the silence has left on us, the long-duree, the affect of lingering and repetition of these silences that are focal to this research. The anti-method, a method which defies method, developed in this Chapter understands that the fixity of meaning is impossible, and that time is non-linear and remains open and intertwined with past, present and future.

¹³ Collin Lago and Divine Charura, “Working with transgenerational/intergenerational trauma: the implication of epigenetic considerations and transcultural perspectives in psychotherapy,” *The Psychotherapist*, 59 no. 3 (2011), 24.

¹⁴ Ewen Callaway, “Fearful memories haunt mouse descendants: genetic imprint from traumatic experiences carries through at least two generation”, *nature: International weekly journal of science* (2013).

¹⁵ While not an exhaustive list, for discussions about the corporeality of memory and violence in different contexts see: Christopher Lolyd, *Corporeal Legacies in the US South: Memory and Embodiment in Contemporary Culture* (Springer, 2018); Federica Guglielmo, “Medicalizing violence: victimhood, trauma and corporeality in post-genocide Rwanda,” *Critical African Studies*, 7, no. 2 (2015) and Erik Mueggler, “A Carceral Regime: Violence and Social Memory in Southwest China,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, no. 2 (1998).

¹⁶ In *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*. Trans. Dorothy S. Blair. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1985, Assia Djebar tells the reader that when they think about writing, what they imagine is usually a textual or written account of history but she reminds us that a body can be text too, a body is also capable of conveying the historical record generation after generation, on page 46 she mentions: “stripped, bare, unveiled my body reverberates with sounds from the endless landslide of generations of my lineage.”

For nothing is fixed,
forever, forever, forever,
it is not fixed;
the earth is always shifting,
the light is always changing,
the sea does not cease to grind down rock.
Generations do not cease to be born,
and we are responsible to them
because we are the only witnesses they have.¹⁷

The material reality of a past experience is unquestionable; it exists and its impact lingers. However, our interpretation of that material reality is threaded through not only the here and now, but an entangled past, present, future in all its material and non-material realities and possibilities. Therefore, rather than trying to categorize or fixate on a meaning attributed to past moments of encounter, the anti-method developed in this Chapter seeks to understand how the memories of the past lodge themselves onto our bodies and gestures through prolonged silences and absences and how such experiences haunt us in our day-to-day lives sometimes directly but often obliquely.¹⁸ It is the haunting of the past, “the over-and-done with,” the blind spots in our familial histories/stories and their connection to the political that I am concerned about in this writing.¹⁹

¹⁷ James Baldwin, *For Nothing is Fixed*, (Poem).

¹⁸ Avory Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Julian Wolfreys argues that “to be haunted by a ghost is to remember something you have never lived through; for memory is the past that has never taken the form of present.”²⁰ Ghosts that were part of our past memories make a presence in the present but that does not mean they belong to this temporal moment. They are the property of the past, they belong to not-here-and-not-now. They only make an appearance in our present, as their ‘re-turn’ marks their entanglement.²¹ However, unlike ‘the Derridean idea of return,’ the return of these phantoms is not always bound to language; memory is not always writing.²² Movement of the ghosts that belong to ‘not-here-and-not-now,’ can happen through silences; the phantoms of our imagination of the blind spots, a dynamic multi-temporal exigency. Memories can exist in our gestures; breathe in our bodies. Palpation, not writing, can prove their existence.

1.1 The Story of the King, the Maiden and the Healer in Rumi’s Mathnavi

In olden time there was a king to whom belonged the power, temporal and also the power spiritual. It chanced that one day he rode with his courtiers to the chase. On the king's highway the king espied a handmaiden: the soul of the king was enthralled by her. Forasmuch as the bird, his soul, was fluttering in its cage, he gave money and bought the handmaiden. After he had bought her and won to his desire, by Divine destiny she sickened.

A certain man had an ass but no pack-saddle: (as soon as) he got a saddle, the wolf carried away his ass! He had a pitcher, but no water could be obtained: when he found water, the pitcher broke!

²⁰ Julian Wolfreys, *Deconstruction – Derrida* (Macmillan education, 1998), 49.

²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Spectre of Marx*, defines return as the appearance or persistence of the elements from the past, in a form of a ghost, trans. By Peggy Kamuf, (Routledge edition, 1993). I am borrowing ‘re-turn’ from Barad to articulate the continuous and circular movement of turning and re-turning, rather than a linear onetime movement. Please see Barad, “Troubling time/s and ecologies of nothingness,” (2018).

²² Stephen Frosh, "Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmission," *American Imago*, 69, no. 2 (2012).

The king gathered the physicians together from left and right and said to them, 'The life of us both is in your hands. My life is of no account, (but) she is the life of my life. I am in pain and wounded: she is my remedy. Whoever heals her that is my life will bear away with him my treasure and pearls, large and small.' They all answered him, saying, 'We will hazard our lives and summon all our intelligence and put it into the common stock. Each one of us is the Messiah of a world (of people): in our hands is a medicine for every pain.'

In their arrogance they did not say, 'If God will;,' therefore, God showed unto them the weakness of Man. I mean (a case in which) omission of the saving clause is (due to) a hardness of heart; not the mere saying of these words, for that is a superficial circumstance. How many one has not pronounced the saving clause, and yet his soul is in harmony with the soul of it!

The more cures and remedies they applied, the more did the illness increase, and the need was not fulfilled. The sick girl became (thin) as a hair, (while) the eyes of the king flowed with tears of blood, like a river. By Divine destiny, oxymel produced bile, and oil of almonds was increasing the dryness. From (giving) myrobalan constipation resulted, relaxation ceased; and water fed the flames, like naphtha.

It became manifested to the King that the physicians were unable to cure the handmaiden, and how he turned his face towards God and dreamed of a holy man. When the king saw the powerlessness of those physicians, he ran bare-footed to the mosque. He entered the mosque and advanced to the mihrab (to pray): the prayer-carpet was bathed in the king's tears. On coming to himself out of the flood of ecstasy (Jana) he opened his lips in goodly praise and laud, saying, 'O Thou whose least gift is the empire of the world, what shall I say, in as much as Thou knowest of the hidden things? O Thou with whom we always take refuge in our need, once again we have missed the way. But Thou hast said, 'Albeit I know thy secret, nevertheless declare it forthwith in

thine outward act. When from the depths of his soul he raised a cry (of supplication), the sea of Bounty began to surge. Slumber overtook him in the midst of weeping: he dreamed that an old man appeared. And said, 'Good tidings, O king! Thy prayers are granted. If tomorrow a stranger come for thee, he is from me. Or, my pearls and coral. we will exert ourselves to the utmost, when he comes, he is the skilled physician: deem him veracious, for he is trusty and true. In his remedy behold absolute magic, in his temperament behold the might of God!'

When the promised hour arrived and day broke and the sun, (rising) from the east, began to burn the stars. The king was in the belvedere, expecting to see that which had been shown mysteriously. He saw a person excellent and worshipful a sun amidst a shadow, coming from afar, like the new moon (in slenderness and radiance): he was non-existent, though existence in the form of phantasy. In the spirit phantasy is as naught, (yet) behold a world (turning) on a phantasy! Their peace and their war (turn) on a phantasy, and their pride and their shame spring from a phantasy; (But) those phantasies which ensnare the saints are the reflection of the moon-faced ones of the garden of God. In the countenance of the stronger guest was appearing that fantasy which the king beheld in his dream. The king himself, instead of the chamberlains, went forward to meet his guest from the Invisible.

Both were seamen who had learned to swim, the souls of both were knit together without sewing. The king said, 'Thou wert my Beloved (in reality), not she; but in this world deed issues from deed. O thou who art to me (as) Mustafa (Mohammed), while I am like unto you 'Umar'- I will gird my loins to do these services.' Beseeking the Lord, who is our helper, to help observe self-control in all circumstances and explaining the harmful and pernicious consequences of indiscipline.

The meeting of the king with the divine physician whose coming had been announced to him in a dream. He (the king) opened his hands and clasped him to his breast and received him, like love, into his heart and soul and began to kiss his hand and brow and inquire concerning his home and journey. (So) with many questions he led him to the dais. 'At last,' said he, 'I have found a treasure by being patient.' He said (also), 'O gift from God and defence against trouble, (O thou who art) the meaning of Patience is the key of joy! O thou whose countenance is the answer to every question, by thee hard knots are loosed without discussion. Thou interpret all that is in our hearts, thou givest a helping hand to every one whose foot is in the mire. Welcome, O chosen one, O approved one! If thou vanish, Destiny will come (upon us) and the wide room will be straightened. Thou art the protector of the people. He that desires (thee) not hath gone to perdition. Nay, verily, if he does not refrain!"

The king led the physician to the bedside of the sick woman, so that he might see her condition.

When that meeting and bounteous (spiritual) repast was over, he took his hand and conducted him to the harem. He rehearsed the tale of the invalid and her illness and then seated him beside the sick woman. The physician observed the colour of her face, (felt) her pulse and (inspected) her urine; he heard both the symptoms and the (secondary) causes of her malady.

He said, 'none of the remedies which they have applied builds up (health): they (the false physicians) have wrought destruction. They were ignorant of the inward state. I seek refuge with God from that which they invent.'

Through palpation and the rhythm of her heart, the physician saw her pain and her secret became open to him, but he: concealed it and did not tell the king. Her pain was not from black or yellow bile: the smell of every firewood appears from the smoke. From her sore grief he

*perceived that she was heart-sore; well in body, but stricken in heart. Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart: then no sickness like heart-sickness. The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments: love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God.*²³

Indeed, memories of love and pain breathe in our bodies; neither language nor writing but palpation, the rhythm of our heart, can prove their existence.

1.2 Embodiment and Reflexivity: The Linguistic Turn

Since the rise of poststructuralism and its extensive focus on the text, talk and discursive, many scholars have argued that the body, flesh and materiality is left out or decentralized in the ‘critical’ research.²⁴ Barad observes that since the poststructuralist turn, “language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretive turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately everything’ – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation.”²⁵

Hence, what is being said and written has taken away from our ability to grapple with ‘matter’ beyond discourse or interconnected with discourse. These conversations have stimulated many theorists in social sciences to attempt at creating a few recent ‘affective’ or ‘extra-discursive’ turns, leading some of them to center on bodies in scholarly texts.²⁶ Thus, for some scholars, embodied methodology only means talking about bodies; far from creating a space in the text for the body to exist, the body merely becomes the sole ‘object’ of the research replacing the written text. As Arthur Frank posits, “no satisfactory solution has been found to avoid

²³ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, *Mathnavi*, Book I, second story, Richard Nicholson translation.

²⁴ Rachelle Chadwick, “Embodied Methodologies: Challenges, Reflections and Strategies,” *Qualitative Research* 17, no. 1 (February 2017).

²⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 132.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

reducing the body to a thing that is described” in qualitative research.²⁷ Even ‘Memory Work’ as an embodied methodology has extensively focused on the description of the impact of the memory on our bodies and articulation of such impact through writing.²⁸

Another suggested way of doing embodied methodology has been ‘embodied reflectivity’ as a way of embodying the research by the researcher and acknowledging their own positionality as ‘embodied selves’ in the text.²⁹ However, non-critical forms of reflexivity still dwell within the parameters of representationalism, assuming the existence of a polished surface through which the researcher has an unobstructed access to themselves that they do not have to the other ‘objects’ under observation. As if by turning the polished surface of our objectivity back to ourselves we can represent the process through which we are engaged with others and can illuminate our own positionality in the process of the dialogue or exchange.³⁰ Embodied reflectivity still works with the tripod arrangements between objects, their representations and the representor; however, instead of less reflexive modes of investigation that leaves the representor or the process of representation out of the equation, embodied reflexivity tends to acknowledge the existence of a ‘biased’ observer observing an observer-independent ‘reality.’³¹

How do we arrive at the place where we are situated? How do we even know where we are? Do we have to, or can we, even clearly distinguish whether we are writing because pain,

²⁷ Arthur Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 27.

²⁸ Rachelle Chadwick, *Embodied methodologies*.

²⁹ Margarete Sandelowski, “Reembodying Qualitative Inquiry,” *Qualitative Health Research* 12(1) (January 2002), 108.

³⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 86.

³¹ See for example: Xymena Kurowska, Benjamin C. Tallis. (2013) “Chiasmatic crossings: A reflexive revisit of a research encounter in European security,” *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 1 (2013) and Inanna Hamati-Ataya, Reflectivity, reflexivity, reflexivism: IR’s ‘reflexive turn’ — and beyond,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2013).

injustice or inequality has been inflicted on us, or are we motivated because we are the observer of the pain, injustice and inequality? What is lost when we get stuck in and operate through dualities: observer/observed, knower/known, subject/object and victim/perpetrator? And finally, how do we manage the contradictions, the messiness, the diffractions and unaligned dispositions? The articulation of researchers' positionality, although helpful in some contexts, usually stays at a very superficial level. Often, when authors and researchers acknowledge their positionality along the lines of race, sex, ability, sexuality and other forms of privilege or marginalization, they do so to either get on with the task of writing or to establish their legitimacy and to assert a certain authority over the research. This is a presumed problematique of the existence of a bias that needs to be dealt with either by acknowledgment or by proximity. However, the bias does not exist independent of our apparatus, we carry ourselves and our bodies in every apparatus we set to research. In fact, the phenomenon 'under observation' is created with our bodies and with all the materiality that falls within the interiority of a phenomenon. We are part of the research we do, we are one of its core elements.³² Although 'embodied reflexivity' or reflecting on one's 'embodied self' might be a starting point for a researcher to enter into a research or to wrestle with the location(s) they occupy 'critically' and 'historically,' it is only a beginning exercise, a warm up, for entering into the task which I call 'affective positionality.'

1.2 Affective Positionality

Affective positionality is where the researchers' locations, affects, emotions and life experience mark the place through which these positions enter an embodied and relational conversation,

³² Rachele Chadwick, *Embodied methodologies*.

understanding that just by acknowledging your position, you do not leave them at the door while you enter *home*. You carry your own memories, affect and bodily feelings with you in every minute of your research, although violent, although reductive, your body is the vessel of entry into the lives of others. It is how one researches. Therefore, to practice embodied methodology means looking for a place/process in the text that the bodily experiences of our research co-travellers can enter. A process that allows us to hear the palpation and the rhythm of a body. This is a research process in which the bodily experiences of violence and trauma, of both co-travellers, can find refuge by allowing their/our gestures to exist.

Embodied methodology in the form of *affective positionality* means moving beyond talk and text in search of other ways of listening, so that one can look for new vocabularies that can adequately evoke the living and lived silences in their historical and contextual frames. Frames that are defined by organized forces and violence. The ones that demand a confrontation in the intersections of the future and the past. Vocabulary through which we might be able to locate the remnants of the profound socio-political violence in one's thinking, being and acting generationally. And do so, with an understanding that one cannot revoke the violence of the past but one can trace its implications in the present and future with a hope of creating a Marcusean *historical alternatives*.³³ Marcuse argues that there is a dialectical relationship between human instincts and the socio-political, material and historical circumstances that have created those instincts.³⁴ Hence, by acknowledging the historical reality that has created those instincts or sensibilities one can offer a new historical alternative or different sensibilities that are fluid and

³³ In *One-dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse argues that; the task of social scientists is to find theories and practices that create a possibility for future possibilities, which he refers to them as historical alternatives; Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Beacon Press, 1964).

³⁴ Ibid.

capable of moving and transcending the clear divisions between past, present and future. This, then, is a search for *historical alternatives* that do not subjugate Eros to Logos, but it restates their wholeness.

This Chapter is also motivated by the need to find a method of writing and research that can illustrate the haunting, the damage, the violence, the betrayal and trauma through not so much of the present elements of an abusive power but in its un-seen existence and absences; in its hidden movement within relations.³⁵ A method which is not so concerned with grasping the meaning of silence ‘as it is,’ but which welcomes and accepts that silences existence, while narrating the haunting of its lingering effects. We are used to living with ghosts. It is the specters of our unspoken past that haunt our here and now.³⁶ Our responsibility is to acknowledge and be accountable for these specters.³⁷

The haunting of an abstract is forgettable.

When the ghosts of our past are nameless and faceless pains and sufferings, the haunting is subliminal; it lacks the acknowledgment and accountability Saidiya Hartman states.³⁸ In *Lose Your Mother*, Hartman journeys along a slave route to Ghana in the hope of finding connections to her ancestral land and retracing the history of the Atlantic slave trade from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.³⁹ She desires to travel to the past, as if it was a country one can return to, she claims. Her desires have stemmed from the silences that surrounds the topic of slavery both in her family and beyond: her grandparents’ refusal to talk about the subject and her parents and

³⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (MacMillan Press, 2008).

³⁹ Ibid.

brother's resistance to 'dwell in the past.' "The gaps and silences of my family were not unusual," says Hartman, other Ghanaians she encounters also are either in denial of slavery or are focused on survival; they want to leave the past in the past. Hartman also encounters the silences of archives and vanishing testimonies by former enslaved people. Hartman refers to these absences as "non-history" which motivates her "to fill in the blank spaces of the historical record and to represent the lives of those deemed unworthy of remembering," but she asks, "how does one write a story about an encounter with nothing?"⁴⁰ Slavery not only shattered lives forever, it erased personal histories and "made the past a mystery, unknown and unspeakable."⁴¹

Hartman's main focus in this book is to shatter the abstract perception of transatlantic slavery and the horrors inflicted upon nameless and faceless Africans. For Hartman to be accountable, is to feel the scale of this tragedy, and understand its impact on the bodies of people whose lives need to be remembered even though their stories remain nameless in many accounts. Haunting emerges as a call to accountability. Accountability begins in the moment when the ghosts of our past gain the recognition they deserve. One of the ways to engage with accountability is through "ontological immaterialism" in the Sufi tradition.⁴² Ontological immaterialism acknowledges "the multilayered reality wherein 'non-being/non-existence/nothingness' is the accepted originating point of 'being/existence' — as a precondition for knowledge acquisition."⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.,18

⁴¹ Ibid.,14.

⁴² Shahi, "Introducing Sufism to International Relations Theory."

⁴³ Ibid.

2. Micro Histories and Sensual Memories: An Agential Realist Account of Relationality

“Spooky entanglement” or “spooky action at a distance” is a phenomenon in quantum physics and it refers to the state when two particles are entangled, either from birth or historical interaction: no matter how far they get separated in space and/or time, measuring or experimenting on one particle can instantaneously influence the other particle despite the distance.⁴⁴ How can two particles, so far away from one another, physically impact each other? Such spooky action is possible if we understand that the quantum entanglement is a generalised quantum superpositions of more than one but fewer than two. It is, in fact, understanding that the particles are not individuals but one. Barad iterates that;

Quantum entanglements are not the intertwining of two (or more) states/entities/events, but a calling into question of the very nature of two-ness, and ultimately of one-ness as well. Duality, unity, multiplicity, being are undone. ‘Between’ will never be the same. One is too few, two is too many. No wonder quantum entanglements defy common sense notions of communication ‘between’ entities ‘separated’ by arbitrarily large spaces and times. Quantum entanglements require/inspire a new sense of a-count-ability, a new arithmetic, a new calculus of response-ability.⁴⁵

For Einstein, this “entanglement suggested the existence of hidden ‘elements of reality’” that some interpretations of quantum mechanics did not account for.⁴⁶ In other words, our understanding of various elements of matter and their connection to one another is incomplete – mechanical physics cannot tell us the whole story. What spooky entanglement in quantum

⁴⁴ Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglement and Hauntological Relations,” *Derrida Today* (October 2010), 251.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴⁶ Roger J Anderton, “Is spooky action-at-a-distance a misnomer?” *The General Science Journal* (May 2018),

physics suggests, however, is that essentially, everything in the universe can be entangled at some moment in time.⁴⁷

The tree is time
the bamboo is time
mountains are time
oceans are time
if time is annihilated
mountains and oceans are annihilated
time itself is being and all being is time
in essence everything in the entire universe is intimately linked with each other
as moments in time
continuous and separate.⁴⁸

In quantum physics, “time is not a succession of evenly spaced individual moments. It is not simply there as substance or measure, a background uniformly available to all beings as a reference,” in Barad’s agential realist account time and space are iteratively intra-actively materialized. relative rather than absolute.⁴⁹ And consequently, the relationship between time and history is rethought. Barad argues for the possibility of states that entails superpositions of times. To be in the state of superposition; however, does not mean to be here or/and there at the same time, “rather to be indeterminately here-there.”⁵⁰

Superposition and entanglement are fundamental principles of agential realist account of quantum physics, where particles or matter indeterminately present in the past, present, future,

⁴⁷ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁴⁸ Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (New York:Viking, 2013), 30.

⁴⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 180.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

here and there indeterminately and they can impact each through void or *nothingness*. The principle of superposition allows for not only spatial but temporal diffraction, meaning that “a single particle will indeterminately co-exist in multiple places and times in the context of diffraction. The diffraction pattern “can be accounted for by taking account of all possible space-time histories, understanding that each such possibility coexists with all others.”⁵¹ Spooky entanglement opens up a space where ethics and responsibility cannot be temporally or spatially limited. The temporal and spatial superposition of diffraction patterning indicates that each possible history co-exists with the other.⁵² Temporal and spatial indeterminacy are both manifestation of ontological indeterminacy,⁵³ which helps me in answering a meta question raised in this dissertation: when one’s nested notion of ethical accountability might seem impossible, how does one set the boundaries of agency, responsibility and moral judgment? How does one deal with onto-epistemo-ethical questions when faced with indeterminacy? Or, as Hartman asked earlier, “how does one write a story about an encounter with nothing?”⁵⁴

2.1 Principle of Uncertainty and the Theory of Indeterminacy: Copenhagen, 1941

Margarethe Bohr’s ghost: But why?

Niels Bohr ghost: You’re still thinking about it?

M.B: Why he’d come to Copenhagen?

N.B: Does it matter my love now that all three of us are dead and gone?

M.B: Some questions remain long after their owners have died

N.B: Some questions have no answers to find

M.B: Why did he [Werner Heisenberg] come? What was he trying to tell you?

⁵¹ Barad, “Troubling time and E/cologies of Nothingness,” 68.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 18.

N.B: He did explain later

M.B: He explained over and over again, each time he explained, it became more obscure

N.B: it was probably very simple, when you come right down to it, he wanted to have a talk

M.B: Talk?! To the enemy in the middle of a war?

N.B: Margarethe, my love, we were scarcely the enemy

M.B: It was 1941

N.B: He was one of our oldest friends

M.B: Heisenberg was German, we were Danes, we were under German occupation

N.B: It puts us under difficult position certainly

M.B: I've never seen you as angry with anyone as you were with Heisenberg

N.B: Not to disagree but I believe I remained remarkably calm

M.B: I know when you are angry

N.B: It was as difficult for him as it was for me

M.B: So, why did he do it?

N.B: I doubt if he ever really knew himself

M.B: And he wasn't a friend, not after that visit. That was the end of that famous friendship between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg

Werner Heisenberg ghost: Now we're all dead and gone, yes, and there are only two things the world remembers about me: one is the uncertainty principle, the other is my mysterious visit to Niels Bohr in Copenhagen in 1941. Everyone understands uncertainty or thinks he does, no one understands my trip to Copenhagen. Time and time again I explained it to Bohr himself and Margarethe, to interrogators and intelligence officers to journalists and historians the more I explained the deeper the uncertainties have become well I shall be happy to make one final attempt, now that we're all dead and gone now no one can be hurt, now no one can be betrayed.⁵⁵

This is the opening to Michael Frayn's award winning play *Copenhagen*. The play is about the mysterious last meeting between German physicist Werner Heisenberg and his Danish-Jewish mentor Niels Bohr that took place in German occupied Copenhagen in September of 1941. Heisenberg, a well-known physicist, was at the time the head of the German effort to

⁵⁵ Michael Frayn, *Copenhagen* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 1-2.

produce an atomic bomb. Bohr headed a world-renowned physics institute at the University of Copenhagen, the Niels Bohr Institute. Both physicists won the Nobel prize in quantum physics. Heisenberg won it in part for the uncertainty principle and Bohr won it long before for his atom model. The strong friendship, or rather father/son relationship, held between these two scientists, ended abruptly after Heisenberg's last visit to Bohr's household to discuss the prospect of Nazi Germany producing an atomic bomb. In Frayn's play, the ghosts of Margarethe and Niels Bohr meet with the ghost of Werner Heisenberg one last time to reconcile the events that took place in this last meeting. Why did Heisenberg come to see the Bohr family? What was he hoping to talk about?

Frayn attempts to conjure the reason behind Werner Heisenberg's last visit to Bohr's household and he proposes three possibilities for Heisenberg's unexpected visit: (1) Heisenberg was on a spy mission to know what Bohr and other allied scientists were doing to create an atomic bomb, (2) Heisenberg was visiting to persuade Bohr for a joint action to dissuade both sides not to get into the development of a nuclear based weapon or, (3) Heisenberg was looking for advice from his father figure regarding moral absolution for his actions in Germany.⁵⁶ Frayn's conclusion is that all or none of the above are possible. The play draws an analogy with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Frayn suggests that the mystery of Heisenberg's visit to Copenhagen in 1941 does not remain unresolved because of any shortcoming in the historical records or lack of clarifying insights, "but rather it is unresolvable in principle because uncertainty is an inherent feature of human thinking, and when all is said and done, no one, not even Heisenberg, understands why he came to Copenhagen."⁵⁷ It is Heisenberg's uncertainty

⁵⁶ Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*— Interplay of Science, History & Memory, Shashidhara Dongre. Accessed Online 2019.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

principle, or more so, it is Frayn's analogy based on the quantum principle of uncertainty in the play that "saves Heisenberg's tormented soul from the judgment of history [...] Uncertainty foils our effort to assign responsibility," Frayn concludes.⁵⁸ Here, judgment and responsibility refer to the destruction/violence produced by the Nazis' and Heisenberg's association with the regime.

What is Heisenberg's uncertainty principle? Barad interprets Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in quantum physics as "an epistemic principle – there is a limitation to what we can know. In other words, a determinant value of a particle's momentum is assumed to exist independently of measurement but we can't know it; we will remain uncertain about its values owing to the unavoidable disturbance caused by the measurement interaction."⁵⁹ Drawing his analogy from Heisenberg's principle, Frayn grapples with a pertinent meta ethical question: How can we act when all knowing is limited? Frayn puts it this way: "the moral issues always finally depend on the epistemological one, on the judgment of other people's motives, because if you can't have any knowledge of other people's motives, it's very difficult to come to any objective moral judgment of their behavior."⁶⁰ Therefore, on the basis of his own uncertainty principle, Frayn reasons, or perhaps moralizes, that because we can never really know why anyone does anything, moral judgments are suspended.⁶¹ But, how would this ethical ambiguity play out, Barad asks, when we are placed face-to-face with nothing less than the fate of humanity?

The answer for Frayn is clear; there is no way in principle that we can get around the limits of our own knowledge, therefore we are forever blocked from knowing the motives behind one's action, which consequently leads us to suspend any objective moral judgment. There is a

⁵⁸ Frayn qtd in Barad, *Meeting the Universe Half Way*, 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

recognition in critical IR that objectivity in questions of morality cannot exist, and that it is violent to assert objectivity.⁶² Nevertheless for Frayn, no historical fact triumphs psychological uncertainty; we are not accountable to history.⁶³ However, for Barad Frayn's answer is less than satisfying not simply because his interpretation is wrong, but that his reliance on his analogical reading of Heisenberg leads him to what he thinks is a clever justification of faulty ethics. Hence, Frayn misinterpretation of the theory of quantum uncertainty fails to suspend historical accountability.⁶⁴ According to Barad; "a more careful way of drawing the analogy does not in fact undermine any and all considerations of moral issues based on knowledge of the motivations behind a subject's actions, as long as those considerations do not require full and complete knowledge but can instead be based on partial understanding."⁶⁵ It is the play's ending which reveals the pursuit of absolution; Frayn claims being uncertain about the intentions of the last visit absolves Heisenberg from any accountability.

Another counter argument to this analogy comes from Niels Bohr's work on the principle of indeterminacy. Countering Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, according to Barad for Bohr the real issue of unknowing is one of indeterminacy rather than uncertainty, meaning the problematique proposed by Frayn is not that we cannot know something for certain or that we cannot determine all the variables [e.g. position and momentum] simultaneously, "rather that particles do not have determinate values of position and momentum simultaneously."⁶⁶ Therefore, the issue for Bohr is not one of unknowability rather Bohr is making an important

⁶² See for example; Neumann, Cecilie Basberg, and Iver B. Neumann. "Uses of the Self: Two Ways of Thinking about Scholarly Situatedness and Method," *Millennium* 43, no. 3 (June 2015).

⁶³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

point about the very nature of what is considered ‘real.’⁶⁷ For Bohr things do not exist somewhere out there with a complete set of properties such as momentum or position which can be disrupted through a measuring apparatus, rather for Bohr it is through a particular apparatus that some properties of a matter become determinate while others are excluded. The exclusion or inclusion of specific properties governed not by “the desires or will of the experimenter but rather by the specificity of the experimental apparatus.”⁶⁸ In other words, the indeterminate or fleeting nature of matter only becomes a problem if we assume an existence of an observation independent ontology. If we agree that the measurement, or the act of researching (setting an apparatus), is itself a phenomenon then we can trace the entanglements and contemplate questions of responsibility and accountability. The matter which is being observed is not separate from the set up through which it is being observed or from the apparatus as such. The matter and apparatus, particle and phenomenon, particular and universal, are co-constituted and co-determined.⁶⁹

2.2 Quantum Wholeness and [*Wahdat Al-Vojud*] وحدت الوجود

The onto-epistemological ground for Bohr’s critique of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle is “quantum wholeness”⁷⁰ or the lack of Cartesian objects/agencies of the observation duality.⁷¹ In fact, without an apparatus “there is no unambiguous way to differentiate between the object and the agencies of the observation: an apparatus must be introduced to resolve the ambiguity, but then the apparatus must be understood as part of what is being described.”⁷² The uncertainty

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 115-117.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 118.

⁷¹ Cartesian rationality regards the matter as a separate and independent entity from its surrounding environment.

⁷² Ibid.

principle, similar to representationalism, assumes an existence of an observation-independent-ontology or objective 'real' characteristics of a matter that can be studied using a neutral apparatus. In other words, according to Barad's interpretation of Heisenberg, the reason behind our epistemological uncertainty is Heisenberg's assumption on the existence of a Cartesian cut and consequently the separation between the object and apparatus. As if matter carries characteristics that exist out there, in the 'real,' and we are doomed from the beginning of space-time to be uncertain about these observation independent characteristics due to the limitations of our scientific examinations. Therefore, according to Frayn's analogy of uncertainty principle, the gap in our knowledge, and therefore the impossibility of moral judgment, dwells in the assumed gap between the observer, the observée, and the observer's access to the self.

The playwright acknowledges that Heisenberg himself does not know why he came to Copenhagen. This is where Bohr fundamentally disagrees. According to Barad's interpretation of Bohr's principle, uncertainty is only ever a problem if we assume that there is something to be independently certain about in the first place. Phenomenon, therefore, is introduced by Bohr as a way to move away from Cartesian duality towards a quantum wholeness. Moving away from particle-based observation towards phenomenon-based observation not only acknowledges and takes account of the particle, but it also takes account of the apparatus and all the matter set within the apparatus. Bohr posits "while, within the scope of classical physics, the interaction between object and apparatus can be neglected or, if necessary, compensated for, in quantum physics, the interaction thus forms an inseparable part of the phenomenon."⁷³ In order to read the quantum wholeness and the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud* diffractively one needs to

⁷³ Ibid., 119. Barad also describes phenomenon as exclusively the observations obtained under specific circumstances including an account of the whole experimental arrangements.

understand how in Sufism the meaning of ‘things,’ matters, meanings or elements cannot be learned or observed without acknowledging their entanglement. Therefore, epistemology is not separate from ontology, form is not separate from concept and discourse is not separate from matter. Unlike poststructuralism that focuses on identifying the gaps, both for quantum wholeness and the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud*, voids, gaps and *nothingness* are not separate entities to be identified but essential parts of the system under observation.

The gap, the void and the *nothingness*, the absence – silence is a location of intra-active agency. Here my aim is to read *Wahdat al-Vojud* and quantum wholeness diffractively and locating them as the centres of wave propagation in my own work: reading and understanding them through one another by emulating waves that are always moving, always becoming. This diffractive methodology, one that can read insights in relation to rather than against others in an effort “to make evident the always-already entanglement of specific ideas in their materiality.”⁷⁴ The point of this methodology as mentioned above is not to make analogies but rather to explore patterns of differentiating entanglements that not only sprout from specific material conditions but they unfold in the patterning.⁷⁵ It emerges to trouble binaries and categories such as macro/micro, nature/culture and centre/periphery.⁷⁶ So instead of asking for a direct correlation or causal relationship between A and B or, ‘what is the meaning/measure of void, silence or *nothingness*?’ I ask: what is void, silence or *nothingness*’s materiality and potentiality? What are ‘the conditions of their im/possibility?’⁷⁷ What would it take to hear the murmuring of silence?

⁷⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 180.

⁷⁶ Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney’s *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*, (New York: Routledge, 2004) is working in part toward this.

⁷⁷ Inspired by Karen Barad’s talk, *Troubling Time/s, Undoing the Future*, The School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Denmark, June 2, 2016.

There is no listening without relationality.

Relationality is also a call to responsibility to one which we love even in a “breaking moment.”⁷⁸ It is a “fleeting love”⁷⁹ in the face of the past historical legacies where “past collapses on present” Leane Betasamosake simpson says.⁸⁰ To be responsible is to honour the relations that exist that connect and tie us all together. To listen means to be in relation. Therefore, to be in relation means to be responsible.⁸¹

2.3 An Agential Realist Account of Relationality

An agential realist relational ontology is one that understands the phenomena are entanglements across spaces and times or rather in the iterative materialization of spacetime matters. This relational ontology advocates for “a relationality between specific material (re)configuring of the world through which boundaries, properties, and meanings are differently enacted.”⁸² This means that that concepts themselves only have determinate meaning as part of an apparatus – that is, they are specific material arrangements/(re)configurings of the world. This also means that the concept set to be defined is never separate from the defining agencies.⁸³ Hence, “phenomena are the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies’.”⁸⁴ Hence, in a phenomenon one should take seriously all its entangled elements; from structures and “social architectures”⁸⁵ of power such as capitalism, colonialism, racism, sexism, imperialism to structure of power that exists in a quiet room, inert furniture and framed picture not as separate

⁷⁸ Leane Betasamosake simpson, *the accident of being Lost*, songs and stories, 39.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4.

but entangled in different moments, while recognizing the limits of partiality. In fact, in order to conceptualize power that our past/future/present holds on us, we need to be able to move analytically between different spatialities and social units – public, collective, familial and personal –as these are inseparable. The important question, one which has produced fierce debate, arises over how to do this? Indeed, this labor must be embraced consciously and with an awareness of marginal histories and archival absences while respecting the specifics of historical context. It must be embraced with a consciousness of the complex fabrics of familial memories, where the interweaving is so strong that it is impossible for the memories to be erased or forgotten. In fact, we carry the remanences of such memories on our bodies. And finally, this labour must acknowledge the pivotal role that family and familial mechanism plays in constructing the socio-political identity of the next generation.

Walter Benjamin claims that “to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was’ (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.”⁸⁶ The being’s past identity and ontology are not fixed, they are open and ever changing.⁸⁷ Therefore, history and our memory cannot be reduced to a linear temporal frame. Memory is always non-progressive. The assemblages of little moments that belong to our past lives live in close proximity to our future. These phenomena and micro-histories co-constitute our lives.⁸⁸ Silences are a key part of these phenomena. But, the question is not what silence is. Definition is not what I seek; in a state of superposition and indeterminacy multiple possibilities exist. In the vacuum of discourse, there exist indeterminate murmurings of all

⁸⁶ Walter Benjamin, *On the concept of history/ Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940).

⁸⁷ Barad, “What Flashes Up: Theological-Political-Scientific Fragments” in *Entangled Worlds*, ed by Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein. Fordham University Press, 2017.

⁸⁸ Phenomena, as explicated in agential realism, are “the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-active ‘agencies’.” Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

possible sounds that are speaking (in) silence.⁸⁹ In Sufi philosophy the truth (al-haqq) moves beyond one singular essence, therefore it is impossible for it to assume one singular definition or form.⁹⁰ An early Sufi philosopher Sheikh Al-Akbar declares;

Were the Essence [Dhāt Allah] to make the loci of manifestation (mazahir) manifest, it would be known. Were it known, it would be encompassed (ihata). Were it encompassed, it would be limited (hadd). Were it limited, it would be confined (inhisar). Were it confined, it would be owned (mulk).⁹¹

And I add to that: when it is owned, it's not 'al-haqq' anymore as it becomes someone's 'haqq'. Such multiplicity of interpretation is an essential part of early Sufi Philosophy built on the ground-breaking works of Sahl Shushtari of Salimiyya school in Khuzestan, Iran in the seventh century. Shushtari's works explore an "openness to semantic and interpretative inversions, or reversals and transgress[ion]" in methods of understanding.⁹² The questions which I am seeking to explore through the relational method, then, are not concerned with explaining what the haunting of silence definitively is. Rather, I am concerned with questions such as: what is the onto-epistemic potential of hauntings that are entangled with silence, especially in the face of a collective violence that triggers a collective amnesia?⁹³

⁸⁹ Barad, What is the Measure of Nothingness."

⁹⁰ Richard Wood, "Secrets and Aporias in Ibn Al-Arabi and Derrida," *Milestones: Commentary on the Islamic World* (December 2017): <https://www.milestonesjournal.net/reviews/2017/12/27/secrets-and-aporias-in-ibn-al-arabi-and-derrida-a-review-essay-of-ian-almonds-sufism-and-deconstruction>

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In Andreas Huyssen, "Present Past: Media, Politics, Amnesia," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2000), 27, the author writes: "If the time consciousness of (high) modernity in the West sought to secure the future, one could argue that the time consciousness of the late twentieth century implies the no less perilous task of taking responsibility for the past. Both attempts inevitably are haunted by failure. Thus a second point must be made immediately. The turn toward memory and the past comes with a great paradox. Ever more frequently, critics accuse this very contemporary memory culture of amnesia—anesthesia or numbing. They chide its inability and unwillingness to remember, and they lament the loss of historical consciousness. The amnesia reproach is

For Gordon, haunting is the “domain of turmoil and trouble... when the cracks and rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving.”⁹⁴ Richa Nagar argues that by intertwining “the individual, the social, and the political,” Gordon turns haunting into method “in order to grapple with the social subjective matter to ‘richly . . . describe, narrate, and explain . . . the costs, the forfeits, . . . and the losses of modern systems of abusive power.’”⁹⁵ According to Nagar;

This methodology resists the assumed distinctions between subject and object of knowledge, between fact and fiction, between presence and absence, between past and present, between present and future, between knowing and not knowing and commits itself to learning from ‘that which is marginalized, trivialized, denied, disqualified, taxed, and aggrieved’.⁹⁶

Reading the remembrance that resides in Gordon’s hauntology, an agential realist interpretation of Quantum Entanglement and Sufi philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud’s insights* diffractively through one another offers new ways of thinking about a methodology that insists on remaining in the state of *becoming* and negotiation with a willingness to never arrive to any affirmative conclusion on the state of a ‘truth.’ In weaving this onto-epistemology, I argue for an anti-method through which the definitions and categories are always becoming. This anti-method is

invariably couched in a critique of the media, while it is precisely these media—from print and television to CD-ROMs and the Internet—that make ever more memory available to us day by day. But what if both observations were true, if the boom in memory were inevitably accompanied by a boom in forgetting? What if the relationship between memory and forgetting were actually being transformed under cultural pressures in which new information technologies, media politics, and fast-paced consumption are beginning to take their toll? After all, many of the mass-marketed memories we consume are “imagined memories” to begin with, and thus more easily forgotten than lived memories.”

⁹⁴ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4.

⁹⁵ Richa Nagar, “Storytelling and co-authorship in feminist alliance work: reflections from a journey,” *Gender, Place & Culture* 20, no. 1 (2013), 3

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

in the never-ending cycle of change, violence and un-becoming by threading the concepts through the movement, operating on the notions of encounter instead of case studies, understanding the journey as a process rather than aiming for an end or a destination.

However, never arriving does not mean never being responsible, rather, it is about re-negotiating the location/body through which we reach conclusions. It is about asking the reader/listener to re-consider their own location/body in interpreting the truth of others' life stories, to include themselves in the phenomenon, to see themselves as co-actors within a set apparatus rather than as passive bystanders. The intra-activity of reader/listener is essential if one researches the silences and unspoken experiences in historical reflections. The readerly response is central to illuminating a text: A text does not exist without a reader's body to signify it. In that, the aim is creating fluidity, flow and relationality without missing the importance of openness and surprise.⁹⁷ The aim is to argue for a method that appreciates disorderly order or orderly chaos. To embrace the place of 'dissidence' and to not sacrifice it for our request for 'order, logic and sequence.'⁹⁸ Dauphinee writes:

Human communication is enframed by these elements that rarely make their way into the texts of our professional lives. And yet, it is this very social world within which our texts seek to produce meaning. Our writing – focused as it is on presence and speech – does not have an accepted way of expressing absence or silence. It does not have a manner of expressing the gestures that comprise what Lingis calls 'the murmur of the world'. On the contrary, we normally filter the murmurings in order to get on with the task of inscribing factual information.

⁹⁷ Ravecca and Dauphinee, "Narrative and the Possibilities for Scholarship."

⁹⁸ Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011).

The backdrop against which we communicate is always murmuring, always noisy, often unruly, and also frequently conditioned by silence and by all the richness of what silence can convey. What is the procedure, then, through which we identify and privilege a speaking voice?⁹⁹

Questioning the importance of words in this heart or emotion-based experiential methodology of knowing reality, Rumi counsels: “Close the door of words, that the window of your heart may open; the moon’s kiss only comes through an open window.”¹⁰⁰ Promoting “silence” as a preferred mode of overcoming mind/intellect/rationality and proceeding along the spiritual trip to reality via “love,” Rumi illuminates:

Some commentary clarifies,
But with love silence is clearer.
A pen goes scribbling along,
But when it tries to write love, it breaks!
If you want to expound on love,
Take your intellect out and let it lie down in the mud.
These words are an alternate existence.
Hear the passage into silence and be that.¹⁰¹

The madness of constant truth-seeking produces the certainty of knowing which usually sacrifices complexities in order to create a cohesive narrative of events where there are no pauses or gaps. What we miss in this constant truth-seeking madness is the importance of dwelling in the messiness and in-cohesiveness of all the stories. Listening to unsaid words and feeling the

⁹⁹ Dauphine, “Writing as Hope.”

¹⁰⁰ Rumi, *In the arms of the Beloved*, 158

¹⁰¹ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, trans, Coleman Barks, (2003), 102.

never-ending hunger to connect more deeply as part of the (never achievable) ethic of relationality. In fact, identifying categories is not necessary; what is necessary is acknowledging and taking account of the silences rather than categorizing them through a method that allows the researcher to walk softly around the silences without necessarily going through the theoretical motions of translating them or verbalizing them.

However, the hardest task sometimes is to let go of the rigidity of truth seeking, to let go of one's demand for capturing the truth, to let go and understand that the meaning-making process is inherently moving, flowing. Not every answer is here to stay with us. Nor does it have to. The solution for insecurity, is not a demand for certainty of meaning, it is making peace with the fact that we are not entitled to know. Aasland claims meaning is a fragile thing, "the ethical for obvious reasons cannot be secured in knowledge," in fact it can be entirely absent in the face of the Other, the certainty lies in fragility itself.¹⁰² In Levinasian ethics meaning is never secure, real is always in a state of becoming. Meaning is always relational, always moving. Pain and indeterminacy are here to stay and knowing will not remedy that. Determinacy is an im/possible state. Sometimes you have a glimpse of it from the corner of your eye, a fleeting moment and flashing light, before it disappears.¹⁰³ Meaning is never secure, "the face of the Other is not a

¹⁰² Dag G. Aasland, "The Ethical Condition of Knowledge," A report from the 100 year anniversary of the Levinas Conference, (Kristiansand: Norway, June 19, 2006).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 26. Aasland writes; "in Levinas' writings, meaning is a fragile thing. The ethical cannot for obvious reasons be secured in knowledge. It is when the Other faces one that the meaning of the ethical is incontestable. When this happens, even the Cartesian cogito does not measure up in terms of certainty. But we are not always present in this relationship to the Other, and when this occurs, meaning may be entirely absent. There is then a risk with respect to meaning in Levinas, because he has destroyed all the idols that pretend to be a source of meaning while simultaneously pointing to a true site of meaning that is fragility itself when it comes to securing meaning. Meaning is never secure in Levinas. The face of the Other is not a constant, bright light, but rather a blinking star, which one may doubt ever blinked in the first place when the light is gone. The Cartesian question then comes to mind: Who will carry me between two sets of evidence? Who will carry meaning between faces? In Levinas the ambiguity of meaning is never clarified. However, ethics is dependent upon this clarification never taking place."

constant, bright light, but rather a blinking star which one may doubt ever blinked in the first place when the light is gone.¹⁰⁴ The Cartesian question then comes to mind: Who will carry me between two sets of evidence? Who will carry meaning between faces? In Levinas the ambiguity of meaning is never clarified. However, ethics is dependent upon this clarification never taking place.¹⁰⁵ Pain is here to stay.

3. ازدوست به یادگار دردی دارم/ کان درد به صد هزار درمان ندهم.

The cure for pain is the pain.

Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi

The poetics of silence is not separable from political theorizing of silence. Poetics demand disobedience of discursive rules by the author and the reader. It demands a move beyond a strict and formatted style of communication. It demands a move beyond certainty of meaning. Political theorization of silence demands the same flexibility; an openness to surprise. “Theoretical or methodological loyalty is untenable” Nagar claims “that surprise has theoretical and empirical value, that the journey itself is epistemologically relevant, and that pre-formulated, predictive proposals cannot fruitfully illuminate our way.”¹⁰⁶ The temporal disobedience of memories and the ethics of those particular experiences where silences are exactly the locations where we need to engage theoretically without falling into any sort of textual confinement. In that we need to separate the ability in what can be said from subjectivity and allow the specters that come to haunt us to exist beyond the forces and noises that aim to translate them. “This is poetry as

¹⁰⁴ Levinas calls God a blinking light in the darkness in “Of God Who Comes to Mind.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Editor’s Interview with Richa Nagar. *Journal of Narrative Politics* 2, no. 2 (2017): 73-80, 77-78.

illumination,” for Audre Lorde, where what has been felt for a long time but did not have a form to survive, will exist in poetry, “nameless and formless.”¹⁰⁷ Therefore, there is a need to create ‘an eclectic methodology’ which looks at history, truth-telling and memory work as the weaving of spoken and unspoken narratives, bodily representations, hauntings and relational connection against a complex fabric of background noises and dominant narratives. The aim of such methodology is to create a location in the text that silence can exist without an enforcement to replace or re-cover it.

Let’s call this location *home*.

¹⁰⁷ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 36.

Chapter 4 – Ethics, *Home* and Encounter: *؟* خانہ دوست کجاست

The questioning of the object/subject distinction and the importance of recognizing the biases and shortcomings inherent in the act of research and ‘observation’ in the field have been extensively discussed in IR.² The space which was created to question the objectivity of the researcher and the complete detachment of the observer from the observer independent ontology by post positivist, feminist and postcolonial scholars in IR, later extended to the hidden ‘I’ of IR by the narrative turn. The narrative turn in IR has elaborated the ongoing conversations by providing a space for the I of the author to exist in the writing in an attempt to acknowledge (a) what is left behind or kept in private while researching and (b) its impact on the researchers themselves.³ The narrative and autobiographical turn in IR has opened up a space within which the ‘subjectivity’ of the researcher and their impact on the research can enter the field and be part of the fieldwork within which the encounters take place.⁴ Hence, contrary to the discourse on objectivism “which has dislodged the body, affectivity and emotions from the public sphere, requiring a dispassionate subject to speak in the name of universality and impartiality,” bodily and affective experiences of the researchers are allowed to enter the apparatus as part of the setup and as an active agent whose presence is no longer masked in a scientific or ‘objective’ language.⁵ The self becomes a participating agent whose presence, affects, shortcomings and

¹ Where is the home of the Beloved?

² See for example; Neumann and Neumann, “Uses of the Self,” and also Wanda Vradi, “The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008); Paul Rabinow, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco Third Ed* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1977] 2007); Iver B. Neumann, “Autobiography, Ontology, Autoethnology,” *Review of International Studies*, 36, no. 4 (2010): 1051–55; Naeem Inayatullah (ed.) *Autobiographical International Relations: I, IR* (London: Routledge, 2011) and Elizabeth Dauphinee, “Writing as hope.”

³ Elizabeth Dauphinee, “The Ethics of Autoethnography,” *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010).

⁴ Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, “Autoethnographic International Relations: exploring the self as a source of knowledge,” *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010); see also Roxanne Doty, “Maladies of our Souls.”

⁵ Ruba Salih, “Bodies That Walk, Bodies That Talk, Bodies That Love: Palestinian Women Refugees, Affectivity, and the Politics of the Ordinary,” *Antipode* 49 no. 3 (2017), 742.

agency must be felt in the writing. The authors' responsibility, then, becomes apparent in their encounter with the other in every stage of the research rather than being hidden beneath the veil of proximity. The 'I' of the researcher, no longer hides behind the vantage point of neutrality. By doing so, the unhidden self of the researcher, the self-reflecting unveiled 'I,' is now exposed to lines of questioning. The questions that were previously directed at the observer independent ontology, the 'objective research' with the purpose of pursuing what Iris Marion Young calls "the correctness of things" are now directed at the 'I.'⁶ The power relations and the violence embedded within the act of encountering, researching and then leaving to write/publish/get recognized becomes part of the open too which raises important ethical questions.

Elizabeth Dauphinee identifies three of these ethical dilemmas that the researching 'I' encounters in the fieldwork: the first dilemma is of language; how to translate the fieldwork back to the academic world. This dilemma presents itself when the experience of the author in the fieldwork is set to remain within a 'private remembering' rather than 'public writing.' The second dilemma is tied to the unequal dynamic between the researcher and 'the informants' where the researcher takes on the role of 'observing,' analyzing and writing about the lived experiences of the others whose lives sit at the centre of researchers projects and career promotions. The third dilemma, identified by Dauphinee, is "the autodisciplinarity enacted by the writer of IR," where the researchers are expected to write in a manner that is classified as serious scholarship, to be able to be accepted or taken seriously in academia.⁷ While these challenges still persist for researchers, critiques such as those offered by Dauphinee have helped to create a space where researchers can acknowledge themselves as active agents rather than

⁶ Iris Marion Young, "Impartiality and the civic public: Some implications of feminist critiques of moral and political theory," *Praxis International* 5, no. 4, (1985), 385.

⁷ Dauphinee, "The Ethics of Autoethnography."

passive observers of what unfolds during the fieldwork. Hence, the ethical dilemmas confronted by the narrative turn in IR have opened up spaces of conversations about our roles and responsibilities as researchers in the field and whether we can ever achieve a location where our observation leaves the field ‘untouched’ or minimizes the violence of our encounters by somehow flattening or attempting to flatten the locus of interactions. How should we conduct ourselves as researchers? How can we ‘capture’ a moment in time and present it as ‘real’ without essentializing ‘the Others’ whom we are writing with/about? ⁸ And yet being aware that without essentializing, entrapped in uncertainty, we will be “left with the quandary of how to conceptualise and enact responsibility?”⁹ Below I attempt to answer such a quandary by calling an ethics that exist in our movement from home to *homecoming*. A circular ethics that is constituted intra-actively and constantly reconfigured in a moving movement, *a journey*. But, in order to conceptualize what I mean *by journey* and *home*, I need to talk about the nature of light.

1. On the Nature of Light: A Cosmological Shift on Matter and Duality

What is the ontological nature of light? This question occupied the minds of physicists for centuries. Some physicists who were still holding on to Newton’s ‘corpuscular’ theory of light argued that light is a particle, while others pointing to the new evidence produced by Thomas

⁸ I am locating this question in the already existing conversations in IR by scholars such as Quynh N. Phạm, see Quynh N. Phạm, Maria Jose Méndez, “Decolonial Designs: José Martí, Hồ Chí Minh, and Global Entanglements.” In a Special Issue on Race, De-coloniality and International Relations. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 40, no. 2 (2015), Richa Nagar, *Muddying the Waters: Coauthoring. Feminisms across Scholarship and Activism* (Urbana, Springfield, Chicago 2014), Elizabeth Dauphinee, *The Politics of Exile*, (Routledge 2013); Doerthe Rosenow, “Nomadic Life’s Counter-Attack: Moving beyond the Subaltern’s Voice,” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 11, 2013), Narendran Kumarakulasingam “Bloody Translations: The Politics of International Compassion and Horror,” *Journal of Narrative Politics* (April 12, 2016).

⁹ Emily Beausoleil, “Responsibility as Responsiveness: Enacting a Dispositional Ethics of Encounter,” *Political Theory* 45, no. 3 (2017), 1.

Young's two-slit experiment counter argued that light is a wave.¹⁰ However, by the end of the nineteenth century and "through a confluence of different factors, physicists were convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that light is a wave. The conclusion was well supported by key experimental evidence (e.g., diffraction and interference effects)" and also James Maxwell's "unified field theory" of magnetic and electric phenomenon.¹¹ The matter was settled then: Light is a wave.

But is it?

Contrary evidence started to emerge in the middle of the twentieth century with the development of the field of atomic and quantum physics. The new emerging evidence, however, was not countering the wave-like nature of light; more so it was hinting that light might have a indetermined ontology; meaning it "manifests particle-like characteristics under one set of experimental conditions and wavelike characteristics under other circumstances."¹² And if this was not confusing enough, the new emerging evidence and experiments indicated that matter also seems to manifest these dual characteristics. Hence, all matter can be particles and waves. These findings were ground-breaking; a seismic change in how humans understand the world. Before this shift happened, everything could be easily put into the categories of wave or particle. Every bit of nature either disclosed wave-like characteristics or was easily categorized as a particle. After all, these two were mutually exclusive phenomena with very distinctive characteristics; "particles are localized objects that occupy a given location at each moment in time."¹³ Waves on the other hand are not fixed entities. They have an entirely different nature:

¹⁰ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 99.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹² *Ibid.*, 99-100.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 100.

they are disturbances in a medium or field (e.g. waves in the ocean). In addition, “waves have extension in space, occupying more than one position at any moment of time, like ocean waves that move along stretches of beach,”¹⁴ overlapping and interfering with one another occupying multiple positions at any given moment. Hence, “the dual nature of light and matter presented a quandary of the first order: an object is either localized or extended; it can’t be both.”¹⁵

To resolve the matter once and for all, Niels Bohr suggested a thought experiment commonly called the ‘which-path’ experiment: a modified version of Thomas Young’s two-slit apparatus that had determined the wave-like nature of light. In Bohr’s ‘which-path’ experiment, the apparatus was slightly modified to detect whether electron passing through the slit showed wave-like characteristics or particle-like characteristics or both.¹⁶ The detection was made possible by watching the displacement of the diaphragm on springs. If electron goes through the upper slit it would displace the diaphragm and help us determine the path of the electron. The result was confusing: when a measurement device was used to detect the behaviour of an electron the interference pattern was destroyed meaning the result was a particle pattern. However, when the original two-slit apparatus was used the electron acted like a wave leaving wavelike pattern. Bohr called the result of this experiment ‘a real crisis,’ one which completely undermined any determinant logical scientific analysis.¹⁷ This was the reasoning behind Bohr’s indeterminacy principle. According to Bohr, “either we can find out which slit an electron goes through by using the which-path apparatus, in which case the resulting pattern will be that which characterizes particles, or we can forgo knowledge about which path an electron goes through

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

(using the original non-modified two-slit apparatus) and obtain a wave pattern – but we can't have it both ways at once."¹⁸ In other words; “the nature of the observed phenomenon changes with corresponding changes in the apparatus,”¹⁹ a position which ran contrary to both (a) the ontology assumed by science, wherein each entity is either a wave or a particle, independent of experimental circumstances, and (b) the epistemological assumption that experiments reveal the pre-existing determinate nature of the entity being measured. Everything lives in a state of indeterminacy until they are measured, not because measurements bring to light their nature but because the nature of ‘thing’ depends on the act measurement. Therefore, the apparatus is part of the phenomenon we set to observe, rather than a passive or objective instrument.²⁰

The problem, therefore, is not that the nature of the object under observation is always inherently fluid or that we can never understand the nature of something because the apparatus disturbs the nature of the object under observation (epistemological uncertainty as argued by Heisenberg). Rather, the problem emanates from the desire to observe the nature of matter as if it is fixed. However, “in an agential realist account, matter does not refer to a fixed substance; rather, matter is substance in its *intra-active becoming* – *not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency*.” The act of setting measurement, depending on the apparatus that is set up, captures a certain reality of the matter it is set to observe at the exclusion of others.²¹ What makes meaning making possible are boundaries or limits of the apparatuses; the agential cuts that creates such boundaries. Barad argues that;

¹⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 106.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 142

²¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 143.

Agential realism's conceptualization of materiality makes it possible to take account of material constraints and conditions once again without reinscribing traditional empiricist assumptions concerning the transparent or immediate givenness of the world and without falling into the analytical stalemate that simply calls for recognition of our immediate access to the world and then rests its case.²²

Therefore, the measurement is not necessarily fraud or uncertain. In fact, it is certain and real in what it has captured; it is determined in the moment of its individuation.²³ The realness of the apparatus creates the realness of ethics corresponding to it. Objectivity, then, is not about distancing but rather 'response-ability.'²⁴ In fact, every phenomenon created with any set system or apparatus demands a 'response-ability'; an ethical accountability.

1.1 Setting the Apparatus: Taking Pictures of the Wave

Let's go back to diffraction of the waves in the pond; the traveling waves, the enfolding waves. Imagine the movement of multiple waves, moving and colliding from an unknown point of origin. Now, let's add an observing eye to this example, in fact an observing eye of a photographer. Let's set our apparatus to capture 'a real' moment. The first question is what/who is included in our apparatus? The camera? The lens? The hand of a photographer pushing the button? The final product? The waves? The wind that facilitates the speed of movement? The shoulder joint that made the movement of the arm possible? The photographer? The answer is all, more and beyond. Neils Bohr argues that "apparatuses are macroscopic material arrangements through which particular phenomena with particular determinate physical

²² Ibid., 152

²³ Beausoleil, "Responsibility as Responsiveness."

²⁴ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

properties are produced [...] apparatuses are not passive observing instruments; on the contrary, they are productive of (and part of) phenomena.”²⁵ But the pressing question is: if everything can be included in the apparatus, how is it possible to even observe a phenomenon especially since the continuity of apparatus needs a start and an end for us to account for the phenomenon being observed. In other words, “what precisely constitutes the limits of the apparatus that gives meaning to certain concepts to the exclusion of others.”²⁶ Different phenomena can be materialized through different “agential cuts.”²⁷ Although it might seem like the agential cut is only attributed to the conscious and willful observer, the human, in an apparatus, but in fact “cuts are agentially enacted by larger material arrangements of which ‘we’ are a ‘part.’”²⁸ For example, in the apparatus that we set above, agential cuts that materialize a phenomena and mark their “material-discursive” boundaries can be enacted through “iterative intra-action”²⁹: imagine the moment of taking a camera shot when a fish jumps out of the water and disturbs the ripples that the photographer intended to take the shot of, or imagine a small stone that causes the photographer to trip over and break his camera.³⁰ These two examples illustrate how the boundaries of the phenomena in action can be momentarily affected by animate and inanimate objects alike since agency is configured and constituted intra-actively within the apparatus. This is, in fact, an elaboration on Judith Butler’s performativity theory, where the constitution of

²⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 142.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁰ This is similar to Franz Rosenzweig thinking which deviates from the assumptions around the nature of truth that dominated the philosophical tradition. Rosenzweig suggested that one does not attain truth by stepping out of the river of time, but rather that truth is that which “unfolds in time.” Thus, it is not enough to grasp what beings are *sub specie aeternitatis*; such beings must be grasped in the nexus of temporal relations in which we experience them Luc Anckaert and Martin Brassier, and Norbert Samuelson (eds.), *The Legacy of Franz Rosenzweig: Collected Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

meaning and matter simultaneously are only deemed as products of human agency within a discursive-material practice: a performance.³¹

Let me elaborate further with an example of something that happened during my conversations with one of my co-travellers. This event took place in Santiago de Chile in December 2019 when the anti-government protests were still ongoing. I was interviewing a former member of a communist party in a café of the Museum of Human Rights and Memory. I had a recording device to record our conversations, which to the best of my knowledge was recording everything from the moment I pushed the record button to the moment my co-traveller stopped it because he was not able to continue anymore. When I arrived back to Canada and finally was ready to listen to our conversation to transcribe it for my thesis I realized that the last 20 minutes of the recording was non-recognizable. Apparently, a military helicopter was circling in the air due to the massive protests in the city, and its loud sound made our voice non-recognizable. So, the recording had stopped way before my co-traveller pushed the stop button on my recording device. The active agent that enacted an agential cut materializing the phenomena being discussed was the helicopter. Something that made an appearance on an apparatus and set its boundaries. Some ‘thing’ neither me nor my co-traveller (as human agents) were planning to include in our conversations in the first place.

Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom* is full of such examples.³² In her book material and non-material, innate and non-innate objects are involved in meaning making practices. Like weaving a sweetgrass, her writing is dedicated to weaving

³¹ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

³² Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Mildweed Editions, 2013).

together three strands of knowledge; indigenous ways of knowing, scientific ways of knowing and the personal story of an indigenous scholar's reunion with her traditions. In her stories, agency is depicted as an enactment where a wild strawberry creates relations of responsibility in its circulation; from the moment it gets picked up from the field by her, transformed into a cheesecake by her mother and ends up as a gift to her father on his birthday, strawberry is an active agent in this journey of gifting and reciprocity. She writes:

In a way, I was raised by strawberries, fields of them. Not to exclude the maples, hemlocks, white pines, goldenrod, asters, violets, and mosses of upstate New York, but it was the wild strawberries, beneath dewy leaves on an almost-summer morning, who gave me my sense of the world, my place in it [...] Even now, after more than fifty Strawberry Moons, finding a patch of wild strawberries still touches me with a sensation of surprise, a feeling of unworthiness and gratitude for the generosity and kindness that comes with an unexpected gift all wrapped in red and green. "Really? For me? Oh, you shouldn't have." After fifty years they still raise the question of how to respond to their generosity. Sometimes it feels like a silly question with a very simple answer: eat them.³³

According to Kimmerer the nature of an object changes by the way it ends in our hands: it can be a commodity or a gift. If given as a gift, it creates an ongoing relation.³⁴

2. Re-configuring the Boundaries of an Apparatus: Embarking on a Journey, Finding *Home*

³³ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 35

³⁴ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 38

I mentioned momentarily, agency, exteriority and interiority and these all need further elaboration, but let's start by defining agency. Agency is often defined as an ability/power/momentum to move, act or respond. In that regard, agency is seen as an attribute of a subject or object that someone/something either has or lacks.³⁵ However, that is not how I perceive agency. For the purpose of this research I utilize Kimmerer and Barad's conceptualization of agency. Agency is not a 'thing' to be distributed but 'a matter of intra-acting,' or as Kimmerer exemplifies, agency is an 'enacting.' Therefore, agency is not a possession to be owned but "agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has."³⁶ Barad argues:

Agency is a matter of making iterative changes to particular practices through the dynamic of intra-activity (including enfolding and other topological reconfigurings).

Agency is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by these practices.

Barad here is proposing a constrained but not deterministic account of change [cause and effect intra-act within a phenomenon] when things iteratively change what is possible and then the changed nature of things iteratively allows further changes to happen, not in a linear temporal

³⁵ It is important to mention that there are different interpretations of agency within the field of critical IR; for positive interpretation of agency within Critical Security Studies please see Chris Rossdale, "Anarchy is what Anarchists make of it: Reclaiming the Concept of Agency in IR and Security Studies." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (12, 2010): 483-501; for the postcolonial interpretation of agency as the capacity to subvert and transform, although limited, please see Vivienne Jabri, "Disarming Norms: Postcolonial Agency and the Constitution of the International: A Journal of International Politics, Law and Philosophy." *International Theory* 6, no. 2 (07, 2014): 372-390; for a complicated view of collective agency imbedded in religion and cultural values please see a Islamic feminist interpretation of agency by Mounira Charrad, "Gender in the Middle East: Islam, State, Agency," *Annual Review of Sociology* no. 37 (0, 2011).

³⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 178.

causality where A causes B and then B causes C but where A, B and C are simultaneously reconfigured where all these points in time can affect one another. A causality without temporality is like putting dots on a piece of paper and calling them A, B and C and crumbling the paper. Each of the points marked on the paper can actively touch each other in multiple configurations and without the constraints of linearity.³⁷ It is also important to mention that prior to their intra-action, there is no A, B or C either. In this causality time is not given but co-constituted in intra-action, which can resemble memory as discussed by memory study scholars, where memories are produced iteratively and sometimes as a reversed causality, which is to say that one of the things that memory does is to reverse the manner in which we think about time.³⁸ The simultaneity of the production of time, space, agency and meaning points to a topology of all these entanglements, emphasizing the primacy of relations over relata which produces not only what is but also what is possible.

Boundaries of the apparatus are constituted but not settled; they are constantly moving and becoming. Apparatuses are open-ended but not boundary-less. The boundaries of apparatuses are configured and re-configured through agential cuts enacted by actors inside and outside those momentary boundaries; a moment of inclusion and exclusion that momentarily closes some possibilities while simultaneously opening up new possibilities of agency and responsibility. In this respect, apparatuses resemble a Sufi journey: circular movements where a

³⁷ For a radical take on both time and temporality in IR please see; Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian, *Time, Temporality and Violence in International Relations: (de)fatalizing the Present, Forging Radical Alternatives* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2016); also, please see Rahul Rao, "One Time, Many Times," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 47, no. 2 (01, 2019); and Nielsen, Morten. "A Wedge of Time: Futures in the Present and Presents without Futures in Maputo, Mozambique." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 20, (04, 2014).

³⁸ Laura Caicedo, "Memory is all that Matters: Queer Latinx Temporality and the Memory-Making Process," Wake Forest University, 2020.

Sufi embarks in an open-ended journey from themselves to *home*, a location closer to the beloved. In their journey, a Sufi refuses to locate the self as the agent. Instead, the self is an actor within the entangled relations of encounters.

2.1 What is *Home*?

I should mention that I am using *home* with a clear understanding of the ramifications and limitations of the concept of *home* and belonging. Home can be and considered to be a location of violence, an unsafe place whose privacy and interiority can be fatal.³⁹ However, *home* here in these writings is not merely a location or a physical structure. T. Shanaathanan, who is a Sri Lankan visual artist, explores the meaning of home in the context of displacement and migration through a 2011 art project entitled *The Incomplete Thombu*.⁴⁰ *The Incomplete Thombu* is a collection of arts and drawings by eighty internally displaced people representing the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities in the North of Sri Lanka on sketching a ground plan of what constitutes ‘home,’ followed by testimonies and narrated memories of what it means to be ‘home.’ Shanaathanan calls this activity “memory architecture” as his project unpacks the perception of home as “a concept that cannot be confined in one definitional possibility.”⁴¹ According to Dinidu Karunanayake, Shanaathanan’s project pursues the informants to illustrate what meanings they attribute to ‘home.’ For one of the informants’ home meant ‘brothers, sisters, relatives and friends,’ for another a nostalgic pre war sentiment; “I lost all my toys that

³⁹ Please see Amy E. Ritterbusch, Eliana Lizeth Pinzon Niño, Ricardo Antonio Reyes Páez, Pardo Triana Julie, Daniela Jaime Peña, and Catalina Correa-Salazar, "‘I Feel Safer in the Streets than at Home’: Rethinking Harm Reduction for Women in the Urban Margins." *Global Public Health* 15, no. 10 (10, 2020): 1479-1495; Judith Plant, "Revaluing Home - Feminism and Bioregionalism." In *Home! - a Bioregional Reader; Home!*, 21-25, for further elaboration on the concept of home, belonging and private sphere in feminist literature.

⁴⁰ Karunanayake, *Reclaiming Home*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 190.

I'd kept since I was a child and all the glass bangles that I had kept in wooden boxes. I have since rebuilt my house but there are no toys and bangles to call it home."⁴² Karunanayake concludes that "these accounts reveal that home is not merely a physical structure but a composite, kaleidoscopic entity that holds memories, emotional bonds, nostalgic attachments, and community together. Once the multidimensional pieces that hold home together are disseminated, it is not easy to reassemble them into the home's original shape."⁴³

In tradition of Ibn-Arabi 'Home' or 'Manzal' is a location of settlement, location of sitting which tends to mean a mutually agreed ground or to meet someone (or oneself) halfway. *Home* is not a physical location; it is a state of being in encountering the others' infinity. It is a location to which one arrives through a journey:

I am not from the East

or the West, not out of the ocean or up
from the ground, not natural or ethereal,
not composed of elements at all.

I do not exist,

am not an entity in this world or the next,

did not descend from Adam or Eve or any origin story.

My place is placeless, a trace of the traceless.

Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two worlds as one

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, 191

and that one call to and know,
first, last, outer, inner,
only that breath breathing being.⁴⁴

2.2 What is Journey?

سفر [*safar: Journey*] is an essential part of Sufi tradition⁴⁵ as the word سفر is used frequently in ethical sources in Islamic tradition. سفر in literal use, means travelling or transporting from one place to another. However, سفر also means to unveil, to scatter the clouds by the wind, to become manifested and it also means: *the daylight*.⁴⁶

Abu Bakr al-Kalabadhi posits that سفر is one of the ten pillars of Tassawuf (Sufi tradition). In *Ihya Ulum al-din*, Mohammad al-Ghazzali also teaches that سفر enables a capturing of a transcendental reality. He defines سفر as “a means of the liberation from which man intends to escape from or a means of achieving things sought by him.”⁴⁷ Al-Ghazazli’s definition has become a source of reference by many Sufis including Mohammad Reza Qumshahi and Seyyed Jalal al-din Ashtiyani, both of whom have defined سفر as a movement in moving and an open-ended becoming. Ibn al-Arabi saw سفر as a circular movement towards the beloved. A journey from *haqq (real)* to *haqq (real)*, only momentarily divided and separated but always moving.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi.

⁴⁵ Mansure Rahmani, 125.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁷ Ibid. This is similar to Levinas and Sarte who find such an escape impossible as what needs escaping is actually the self. Please see Emmanuel Levinas, *On Escape, Translated by Bettina Bergo* [1935] (Stanford University Press, 1985) and Jean Paul Sarte, *Being and Nothingness* (Routledge, 1956).

⁴⁸ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyya*, ed. ‘Uthmān Yaḥya, 14 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1994), 38. William C. Chitick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principals of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), xxxii.

To embark on a سفر is to manifest an essence of a matter momentarily in light of a journey. Apparatuses are journeys. A circular phenomenon in movement, captured in a single moment but always a movement in moving. Sufi journeys are not linear stories of causal relations, they are more intimate, more encompassing than that. Journeys do more than merely stating that there are consequences to our actions. Travellers are an intimate part of the universe, they are interconnected to each being in their journey (apparatus) with more than a linear chain of cause and effect. Like a wave enfolded on an ever moving, ever extending, ever merging and ever becoming سفر, the circles of the meaning-making apparatuses are constantly being configured and reconfigured. However, every moment in the movement of these ripples can materially manifest as real, holding us accountable in that moment intra-actively. The nature of a ripple captured in a moment of its circulation is nothing short of a 'real' in its intra-action with the matter within the same journey. Movements are stations of determinate and indeterminate intra-actions. When "we" participate in enacting an agential cut, "we" ultimately become responsible to that which is materialized through such enactment. In such moment, we are only encountered by one of many possibilities of how such a moment is formed and constituted; but, nevertheless a 'real' possibility; one that 'matters.'

Ethics are based on that 'real.' Being accountable to a real that is not an entity but a process fixated momentarily only to release and reconfigure again in a movement, "a superject." A "superject" happens, Whitehead argues, in the moment of individuation, a moment in which the 'I' becomes momentarily fixated to take account, to be accountable.⁴⁹ However, this does not make the 'I' the centre of this ethical configuration. Unlike the traditional ethics that centres self and the other at the centre for our ethics, "the process philosophy" brings to the relation or the

⁴⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

field of experience, the apparatus as a whole which neither starts nor ends with the human subject.⁵⁰ It is an apparatus within which an innate object, a souvenir, such as ‘a vase’ or ‘a bullet’ can also demand responsibility from us.⁵¹ The dissolution of the self through Sufi self-construction becomes necessary in creating a phenomenon-oriented ontology that holds the matter (things and nothings) within the circle of its movement.

Thus, unlike Frayn’s interpretation of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle in which we can never know something, and therefore, never be responsible for what we do not know, the moment of individuation is the moment which we can claim a momentary knowledge about. And in that moment of knowing, we are held accountable; we are response-*Able*.

3. Responding as Respons-ability: On Ethics of Encounter

Emily Beausoleil defines responsibility in the moments of movement as being responsive, as opposed to closed, so that: “to be responsible,” she argues, “is to remain receptive and responsive within the encounter.”⁵² Grounding her ethics on Levinasian proximity as responsibility, Beausoleil argues for moving away from subject-centred ontologies in realization that the self is always already relational, constantly configured and reconfigured, within an encounter (field of experience, سفر, apparatus). Levinas, in fact, rejects the metaphysics of the self, which has previously served as the foundation (ripple centre) for ethics. Hence, subjectivity is not so much a matter of individuality as it is a relation of responsibility. Significantly, through these relations the ethical subject becomes less of a disembodied ethical figure but an “embodied sensibility.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ These two examples are based on the conversations between me and my co-travellers and will be elaborated on Chapters Five and Six.

⁵² Beausoleil, “Responsibility as Responsiveness,” 2.

⁵³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 391.

3.1 What is sensible?

According to Whitehead, sensation is the second phase of our perception or “prehension,” which starts “not with a sensing subject, but with the force of a relational attunement (causal efficacy) [...] Relation and sensation are co-composing in experience, participatory in the direct experience of a world in-forming. The subject does not precede this experience, it is in-formed by it.”⁵⁴

The embodied sensibility is in the movement, not an always becoming but in “a complex intertwining between what is absolutely what it has become or is becoming (an actual occasion) and what is in the realm of potential and can express itself.”⁵⁵ Similar to Levinas, for whom the self is intertwined with the other and co-constituted in the moment of encounter, ‘I’ for Whitehead also is created within the field of experience. Erin Manning elaborates that “the I is in movement, active in a worlding, a taking-account of the world, co-composing with movement’s inflexions, attuning to its tendencies to form. The wonder is of the event’s capacity to create a bodying that is in excess of its-self, altering the very field of what ‘I’ might be.”⁵⁶ There is a moment within the field of experience, “the concrescence of the actual occasion,” where individuation occurs. That fleeting moment, which takes place within the apparatus, is ‘real.’ That moving moment, entangled between it ‘was’, ‘is’ and ‘becoming’, is the moment of ethics. Although fleetingly, what has been captured in that apparatus, is matter, it matters and it demands responsiveness. Manning poses:

⁵⁴ Erin Manning, “Wondering the world directly – or, How movement outruns the subject,” *Body & Society* 20 (2014), 164.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 166.

Movement moves, and in the moving, in the actualization of experience, inclinations occur. But these inclinations are not yet bodies, not yet forms – they are inflexions, directional forces through which a certain knot of tendencies begin to tie themselves together. This knot is the bodying. It is not ‘I’ except in the sense of Individuation. It is what ‘I’ will have become in the absolute timeliness of this... ‘Where am I?’ touches on the ungraspable quality of movement moving, reminding us that movement is always in the infinity of a crossroads between a where and a how, and never a who. Not me, not here, not there, where, in the middling of experience in-forming. Not ‘who’ but ‘how’ – not who the subject is but how it comes to experience (as event, as bodying). ‘Where am I?’ – an ontogenetic field of experience in the making... In the ontogenetic field of experience, there is not yet a category of self, of body, of external perceiver. To wonder the world directly is to have touched, momentarily, the unmooring ‘where’ of movement moving... Wondering the world directly, in movement, is to participate in an enfolding that challenges the centrality of the I.⁵⁷

The centrality of ‘I’ will be challenged with a dispositional shift in ethics that takes place when we move from disembodied to embodied ethical figure. Beausoleil argues that such a shift occurs in the ethics of encounter from epistemological to affective terms. The necessity of this ethical shift within an encounter is non-questionable. A shift in the location where ethics is situated is necessary because it moves the location of ethics away from the rational subject of the traditional ethics: the ‘I’. However, what falls short in Beausoleil’s arrangement is an inherent separation between onto-epistemology and ethics, where the moment of knowing and the moments of affect

⁵⁷ Ibid.

or ethics are separate from one another. To argue for a shift from epistemological to affective terms suggests this separation, a radical exteriority.

However, an encounter takes place within a field of experience, an apparatus, a سفر. Therefore, in any given ‘moment’ in this circular journey the essence (other), our knowledge about the essence, and our ethics to that which is known (although momentarily) are simultaneously reconfigured. This is a shift from Western cosmology (within which ontology, epistemology and ethics are separated) to a Sufi (spiritual) Cosmology where being, knowing and responsibility are entangled in a circular moving movement. The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud* means that we are always already responsible to the other (things, nothings, absences, presences, animate and inanimate) with which we are entangled.⁵⁸ Otherness is not simply a productive limit but it is an affirmation of oneness. The Sufi spiritual cosmology prioritizes relations and entanglements; the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Vojud* allows for relations to take over relata; for reciprocity to form as a gesture of creation, much like an agential realist account of ethics and responsibility. The value centre created by agential realism makes it possible for one to re-evaluate one’s intra-action in the moment of mattering. What is beyond the moment of knowing, however, is not separate from us, there is no gap between the point of knowing and the reconfiguration of the next moment (of knowing or unknowing).

Hence, what responsibility as responsiveness means is to be part of and never separate from the field of experience, and to always be present and accountable to all the others with whom we are entangled in all moments of mattering. It is to realize that there is “a delicate tissue of ethicality [running] through the marrow of being.”⁵⁹ There is no getting away from ethics, no

⁵⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 393.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

getting away from the violence our entanglement committed in their being and becoming. Being responsible is to meet the others *at home*, a delicate space-time (moment) of openness and “radical vulnerability” that “builds upon that sense of responsibility by requiring deep relationality [and] sustained entanglements defined by trust and friendships.”⁶⁰ Richa Nagar defines Radical vulnerability as,

when we do not think of ourselves as autonomous, sovereign, or independent social beings or actors. Rather, we see our self as intensely relational and co-constitutive with the other. Thus, i and I can only evolve through an openness to and an intimacy with the other. This implies dissolving our singular individualized egos: whatever we learn, whatever we come to be, becomes deeply contingent on what each one of us is prepared to give to the collective journey that brings the i/I and we together with the you and they.⁶¹

The vulnerability, however, “is not a weakness or denigration of the self.”⁶² It is the embracement of the dangers and risks of being open, dissolving the rigid boundaries of the ‘I’ and ‘you’ and letting go of the imaginative autonomous self or the radically different others.⁶³ It is being bound by *Wahdat al-Vojud*, the core reality of Oneness of Beings, Unity of All that exists. Nagar poses that a “praxis of radical vulnerability opens up the possibility of a

⁶⁰ Nagar with Aslan, Hasan, Rahemtullah, Upadhyay, and Uzun, “Feminism, Collaboration, Friendship,” 512.

⁶¹ Richa Nagar, *Hungry translations: Relearning the World through Radical Vulnerability* (University of Illinois Press, 2019), 212.

⁶² Nagar in conversation with Aslan, Hasan, Rahemtullah, Upadhyay, and Uzun, “Feminism, Collaboration, Friendship,” 512.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

togetherness ‘without guarantees’; it does not seek to know prior to the journey where the shared paths will lead us but it commits to walking together with the co-travelers over the long haul.”⁶⁴

4. Homecoming as Ethics of Researching Silence

I want to start by apologizing on not getting back to you on Saturday. You might not believe me at this point (understandably) but that’s not really who I am. I guess life can be very complicated and sometimes one finds oneself paralyzed by its messiness. Anyhow, not sure if this ambiguous message can help remedy any wrong-doing but just wanted to let you know that no disrespect was intended and I am sorry for my silence. Keep well.

‘خانه دوست کجاست؟’
در فلق بود که پرسید سوار
آسمان مکئی کرد
ر هگنر شاخه نوری که به لب داشت
به تاریکی شن ها بخشید و به انگشت
نشان داد سپیداری و گفت
نرسیده به درخت
کوچه باغی است که از خواب خدا
سبزتر است
و در آن عشق به اندازه پره‌های صداقت آبی است
میروی تا ته آن کوچه
که از پشت بلوغ سر به در می آرد
پس به سمت گل تنهایی می پیچی
دو قدم مانده به گل
پای فواره جاوید اساطیر زمین می مانی
و تو را ترسی شفاف فرا می گیرد

⁶⁴ Nagar, *Hungry Translations*, 30.

در صمیمیت سیال فضا، خش خش می‌شنوی
کودکی می‌بینی
رفته از کاج بلندی بالا
جوجه بردارد از لانه نور
و از او می‌پرسی
خانه دوست کجاست

'Where is the friend's home?'

*It was dawn
When the rider asked.
The sky paused.
The passerby bestowed the ray of light between his lips
Onto the darkness of sands.
And pointing his finger to a poplar tree, he said:
'Not far from the tree
There is an alley greener than the Slumber of God
Where love is as blue as the Feathers of Honesty.
Walk to the end of the alley emerging*

From beyond Maturity

Take a turn towards the Flower of Solitude.

*Two steps to the flower
Stay at the foot of eternal jet of the earth's myths.
Then a transparent fear will encompass you.
In the flowing intimacy of space, you will hear a rustle:
You will behold a child
On a tall plane tree picking a young bird
From the Nest of Light.
Ask him
Where the friend's home is. '65*

Home is a place where our 'complex personhood'⁶⁶ is most 'at home.' A place where we can bridge together our 'affective positionality' and 'agential realist account of relationality.'

Homecoming, then, is a way of telling stories about ourselves, others and our entangled troubles

⁶⁵ Sohrab Sepehri, Address Poem.

⁶⁶ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.

that accept our shortcomings and failures in the process. It is a method of engagement that acknowledges that we are perpetually entrapped by the symptoms of our own troubles in the companion of other's memories and stories. It is "a relationality embedded in radical vulnerability [which] strives to internalize that ourself is intensely co-constituted and entangled with the other."⁶⁷

Homecoming as a method admits that 'radical hospitality' is not just poetic but impossible, that self is always already entangled with the other in a journey; that self travels with the other without the possibility of totalizing justice.⁶⁸ The risk of mutual affinity takes away from this possibility. However, there is a possibility for radical love which arises from the interconnectedness of all beings; from being connected to others' silence and memory.

For Rumi, the merging of the 'self' and the 'other(s)' acts as a "culminating stage in the overall methodological journey of capturing the hidden core oneness of reality,"⁶⁹ as he writes;

I am not of the East, nor of the West, nor of the land, nor of the sea ...
My place is the placeless; my trace is the traceless; 'Tis neither body nor soul,
For I belong to the soul of the Beloved [read "other"].⁷⁰

In another poem he poses;

If you could get rid of yourself just once,
The secret of secrets would open to you.
The face of the unknown, hidden beyond the universe

⁶⁷ Nagar, *Hungry Translations*, 31.

⁶⁸ I am borrowing the concept of 'Radical Hospitality' from Derridean interpretation of Emmanuel Levinas's Ethics. Please see Jacques Derrida's fifth seminar of *Pas d'hospitalité* (January 17, 1996 for reference.

⁶⁹ Shahi, "Introducing Sufism to International Relations Theory," 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Would appear in the mirror of your perception!⁷¹

We have the ability to feel others' silences in our bodies. Our bodies react to others' silence depending on our previous engagement with silence and contingent on the marks the repetition of different memories, silences and the ghosts in our lives have engraved on our being. We react to other's silences through 'the mirror of our perceptions.' We know them, therefore, we recognize them in others. *Homecoming*, then, is an embodied methodology, it is affectual and sensual. It is a mode of being that we feel in every inch of our bodies, one that allows us to transcend historical and geographical differences while simultaneously acknowledging its violence and shortcomings.

Homecoming is to take someone's silence *home* with you, to sit with its rippling affects in a location where our complex personhood is most *at home*. *Homecoming* is to allow other's silence to sink in deep in our existence, so that when one tells you they have spent time in solitary confinement because they wanted to bury their father's body in a country that does not exist on the map anymore, you feel the pain in their eyes. *Homecoming* is to feel that pain almost as deeply as the times when your father told you about how he had been tortured in jail. How unethical to not be able to sit in front of someone who trusted you, listen deeply, and hear nothing but the repetition and lingering of the marks that silence has carved upon you? Violence and failure are an embedded part of this process, "a cutting together-apart."⁷²

The cure for pain is in the pain. Good and bad are mixed. If you don't have both, you don't belong to us.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

⁷³ Rumi, trans, Coleman Barks.

In order to tap into the ‘oneness of reality’, Rumi suggests that we need to comprehend the language of silence and recognize the limitation of language, while opening up our heart to love and pain.⁷⁴ Shah argues that:

Rumi’s grand eclectic methodology for realizing the oneness of reality — by means of abrogating mind, activating intense sensitivities of heart, surpassing the barriers of language, diving into silence, and ultimately losing one’s self and dissolving it in the other(s), thereby bringing alive an epistemologically monist knowledge-situation underlined by a subject–object merger — could be either experience-based (ma’rifah) or revelation-based (‘ilm).

Silence is not an empty canvas, a void. Silence holds space, it lives with us, around us.

Homecoming as an analytical tool helps us walk between these spaces of visibility, invisibility and complication without trying to reduce their complexion, however imperfectly.

But, homecoming does not end there. It does not end with the acknowledgement of the violence. The ethics of homecoming demand more than that. It demands us to revisit the shared moments constantly, recognizing our ‘affective positionality’ in those moments. Even if it is a failed process, *homecoming*, is a process of always-becoming, never arriving, always undoing. Hence, part of *homecoming* is to be able to critique *home*. Critique the location we feel the most comfortable with and through which we observe other’s stories.⁷⁵ This analytical tool also gives us access to the complexity of the space we call *home*, both in literal and non-literal senses.

Home is a space we consider ourselves to officially/unofficially belong. *Home* also as an

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ There are theories and approaches that deal with and also problematize the critique of self and the self’s habitus. See for example the critiques of self-critique. Hamati Ataya, Boudieu and Patrick Jackson.

imagined space that we have left behind. *Home* is our relationships with the people we feel most connected to. *Home* is structures that dictate or remind us of our past/future.⁷⁶

I took their memories *home* with me, their silence was so close to my heart; so close in fact, that I was not able to show up for our next meeting.

5. Narratives and Encounter: *Homecoming* as Ethics and Method

Homecoming is a weaving between the ‘real’ and becoming/enfolding. It is recognizing and leaning towards the understanding that our stories are interwoven and interconnected. Stories of our journeys with co-travellers are apparatuses. Their pasts are never closed, they do not always follow a straightforward temporality as they loop back constantly reconfiguring and enacting what has already happened. The past’s narratives are never closed even when one attempts to close them. Journeys are always moving, constituting and constantly being reconfigured simultaneously. Our journeys and their stories as apparatuses constitute and reconstitute temporalities of the events and their spaces of resettlement. Every story is co-constituted.

Through *coming home*, I now turn to the lived traumas and trans-generational silences in two specific contexts: Afro-Caribbean Atlantic slavery in the 18th-19th centuries and Chile from 1970s to the present. History and international relations have neatly categorized and created a narrative of events, contexts and critical sub-contexts which, depending on the problem-space and theory-problem the author is writing from, determines the ways in which silence is ignored – deemed ahistorical, non-quantitative or *untraceable* – or spoken for. Taking a different approach,

⁷⁶ My avoidance of using present is because I believe to capture present one must crystalizes a moment in time and space. Present is a combination of moving moments, every second turning to a past, every second stepping in the future. Present is the link connecting these passing moments. If we aim to call a moment ‘present,’ we are crystalizing such a moment in time. Living in present is impossible unless one lives at home. Home, however, is an un-temporal space.

I combine an ‘affective positionality’ and ‘an always-becoming relationality’ in my efforts to write the encounters that form intimate sites of memory and memorialization. In so doing, I refuse analytical frameworks by which silence comes to be delineated and categorized in violent ways in apparatuses defined by such methods as ‘qualitative interviews’ and ‘case studies.’ A hidden realm of indeterminacy lurks beneath dominant methodological promises.

I recall the question that is present in all four Chapters: ‘what does it mean to listen to someone’s silences, to trace their entanglements, to acknowledge their past and to speak with and listen to their memories?’ In searching for this question my task is not merely to reconstruct a story of the way it ‘truly’ ‘was’ but to respond and be responsible for that which is being shared. It is the reality of inheritance and entanglements – as “irreducible relations of responsibility” which are “never a given” but rather “always a task. It remains before us.”⁷⁷ By *coming home* in my approach to silence – in my approach to anything for that matter – the study of silence becomes open, if only for a fleeting contradictory moment which escapes standardization and theorization.

⁷⁷ Barad, “Troubling time/s and Ecologies of Nothingness.”

Chapter 5 – Silence, French Colonialism and Le Devoir de Mémoire

'French colonialism, I don't know, we don't talk about it much I guess. Obviously, we know about it but we do not like to talk about it,' AAP says.

'I remember reading in a book that in the case of slavery in French colonies, very few direct testimonies exist. There are songs, proverbs and oral poetry of Creole people and some archival documents but rarely a direct testimony about their horrifying reality,'¹ I say.

This time I try to remain conscious of his silent reply.

He takes a few deep breaths and before he is able to say something, our conversation gets interrupted by the server who is asking whether we like the food.

'It is good, thank you,' I reply.

'Why do they always do that?' AAP asks me when the server leaves, 'If I am eating it, it means it is ok. If it tasted horrible I would've told them!'

'I guess they need a verbal confirmation!' I answer.

'Why?' AAP asks.

'Why do they need a verbal confirmation?!' I ask confused.

'No, what you were saying about Creole people, why were they silent?' AAP asks with a very serious face.

¹ Françoise Vergès, "I am not the slave of slavery": The Politics of Reparation in (French) Postslavery Communities," in Anthony C. Alessandrini (ed), *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2005), 272.

*‘Vivienne Romana, who is a Guadeloupian psychotherapist, once said that slavery remained a ‘secret de famille,’ a ghost presence within Creole families, because of three reasons: first, they wanted to teach their children survival without actually telling them the traumatic reasons behind why they needed this skill. Second, they didn’t want to burden them with the pain of the past, and lastly, the dehumanization techniques used by colonizers paved the way for their isolation and silence.’*²

‘Secret de famille, j’aime ça! Mais je t’ai demandé ce que tu en penses!’ AAP says.

I sit back, take a deep breath and stare at the lake. He sits there patiently with a smile and stares at me. Another deep breath; I open my mouth with an effort to speak and close it again. He does not move, hands on the table, eyes locked on me, patiently waiting. His patience with my silence puts me to shame as I feel that this is a quality that comes with an experience that I am in the process of developing.

‘I can’t speak to the silences of Creole people. My perception of their silence is limited to what I have read and heard. But, I can speak to my experience and my family’s experience with silence, maybe.’

Another deep breath.

I am struggling.

I am trying to find words; how does one describe the silences in one’s family?

² Ibid., 273.

³ Family secrets, I like it. But I asked you what you think?

I have learned to speak in silence. I actually do think that silence is the language that I speak the best. It is perhaps more native to my tongue than my first language.

I have learned to speak with my eyes; by the way that I look and the way that I make, not make or sustain eye contact. I don't know, maybe that's why eyes are the first thing that I notice in people, maybe that's why I trust, like or dislike people by their eyes. What I am trying to say is that I firmly believe that silence is a potent way of communicating and it is for this reason that silence is capable of passing on the traumas of untold memories and experiences to others, even to those who are subjected to these silences.

So, to answer your question, I do not think that remaining silent about your experience is going to protect the next generations from the trauma. Silence is not an emptiness or an absence incapable of communication. Regardless of what causes people to remain silent, silence conveys much more than a lack. Maybe protection was never the priority, anyway. Maybe we just assume people are silent because they want to protect their loved ones; maybe we assume that's the only way they know how to communicate. What I know, however, is that many forms of language fall outside of the language, and one such form is silence. My dad, for example, remained silent about what he had gone through, but a look into his eyes was enough for me to feel some of what remained unworded.'

AAP is quiet and I am left with the heaviness of the air, thinking about my own experiences and what has been left unsaid. Or rather, how to listen when someone is speaking in silence. Some researchers might take this monologue as a chance to probe and question. I do neither. I dwell on what has been given, or even taken by my initial question and AAP's

response. It is a profound moment which reveals how silence informs the grammar of the spoken and the life course of an individual and a family – how silence structures and co-constitutes.

Today is Sunday.

I fear the crowd of my fellows with such faces of stone.

From my glass tower filled with headaches and impatient Ancestors,
I contemplate the roofs and hilltops in the mist.
In the stillness—somber, naked chimneys.
Below them my dead are asleep and my dreams turn to ashes.
All my dreams, blood running freely down the streets
And mixing with blood from the butcher shops.

From this observatory like the outskirts of town
I contemplate my dreams lost along the streets,

Crouched at the foot of the hills like the guides of my race
On the rivers of the Gambia and the Saloum
And now on the Seine at the foot of these hills.

Let me remember my dead!

Yesterday was All Saints' Day, the solemn anniversary of the Sun,
And I had no dead to honor in any cemetery.

O Forefathers! You who have always refused to die,
Who knew how to resist Death from the Sine to the Seine,
And now in the fragile veins of my indomitable blood,
Guard my dreams as you did your thin-legged migrant sons!

O Ancestors! Defend the roofs of Paris in this dominical fog,
The roofs that protect my dead. Let me leave this tower so dangerously secure
And descend to the streets, joining my brothers
Who have blue eyes and hard hands.⁴

⁴ Léopold Sédar Senghor, "In Memoriam," Translated, from the French, by Zack Rogow, *The American Poetry Review* 31, no. 2.

1- '*Devoir de Mémoire*' and the Ghosts of the Past

The specter must die before we can move on, Frantz Fanon claims.⁵ We are never free as long as we are bound to "*devoir de mémoire*."⁶ In fact, '*devoir de mémoire*' is nothing but a burden on the shoulders of our present, a ghost, who's being only weighs us down, prevents us from moving forward and imagining a future where no one is the slave of slavery. Fanon thought that the specter made the black Africans from colonies a slave of the memory of slavery. Therefore, celebration of these specters did nothing besides defeating a confirmation that a future is possible.⁷ Fanon feared the burden that the duty of memory offered, indicating that an independent person, a freed person, should be able to be their own self, not an individual who is bound to the specters of the past.⁸

One can sympathize with Fanon's notion of an "independent man,"⁹ a person who lives with "the fantasy of being born an adult,"¹⁰ who has no historical past. One can understand why the notion of a freed and independent man was so attractive for Fanon and why, for him, one would rather be a loner in the present than be in a collective that is imprisoned in the past: a "man among other men," free with no history.¹¹ Fanon's rage of the specters of the past finds an

⁵ Verges, "I am not the slave of slavery."

⁶ The duty of memory, qtd in *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*.

⁸ *ibid*.

⁹ *ibid*.

¹⁰ *ibid*.

¹¹ Françoise Verges, "I am not the slave of slavery," argues that Fanon tried to kill the specter, which Maurice Blanchot (1986) defines as the return of which cannot return, the return of an absence, in this case, the return of the slave, absent from history and present in history.

outlet in *Black Skins, White Masks*, he writes for the ones for whom “experience of solitude and rejection contain a dimension of [the] sublime.”¹²

The fantasy of having been born an adult, as Françoise Verges calls it, where self is in the full control of its own destiny and origin, where no strings are attached and no ghosts are haunting our presents, is effectively a self with no relations.¹³ For Fanon, one must get rid of some parts of the self; the haunted self, the one that only existed to serve and please the master, a self whose history is intertwined with the past of servitude, the colonized self. That self must be replaced by a self that is in a ‘pure’ conversation with the body and in full control of the mind. A self that is the master of its own thoughts and desires. A self that is not chained by the ghosts of the past. Specter, ‘the return of which cannot return,’ must die, for the self to be free.¹⁴

1.1 ‘Devoir de Mémoire’ et La Marche Silencieuse du Mai 1998 ¹⁵

For a long time, we haven’t remembered, and this is not a fair society anyway. A group of humans and their community cannot live in dignity because they cannot have the words they desire. There was such dignity in the air during the march, it was silent because we wanted it to be silent, we wanted to follow each other without uttering any words, we wanted to be like them, and wanted to tell our parents we are the same.

Serge Romana – on the silent march of May 23, 1998

On May 23, 1998, the anniversary of 150 years of abolition of slavery in the French colonies, for the first time in France, 40,000 people from Antillean, Guyanese and Reunion walked from la

¹² Ibid., 269.

¹³ Verges, “‘I am not the slave of slavery.’”

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁵ Silent March of May 1998. Comité pour une commémoration unitaire de l’abolition de l’esclavage des nègres dans les colonies françaises (CCUCAENCF), Centre d’Information, Formation, Recherche et Développement pour les Originaires d’Outre-Mer (Cifordom), and the Comité Marche du 23 mai 1998 - CM98.

Place de la République to La Nation in silence, without claiming a slogan, to honour the memories of the victims of slavery. The organizing committee insisted on the duty of memory of the descendants of slaves. To that effect, the organizers of the march created a committee, le comité Marche du Mai 1998 (CM98), an association that emerged within the context of the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery. This march was the beginning of a nuanced moment, an unprecedented event, in the politics of memory aimed at reversing the image that was associated with enslaved people and their descendants.¹⁶ In addition, the silent march of May 23, 1998 was a tribute to the slave ancestors in that it tried to get the dead out of the oblivion by walking silently through the streets of Paris.¹⁷

In the build-up to this landmark anniversary, over one hundred different associations and individuals responded to a call to organize an event to honour their slave ancestors and formally mark this historic occasion. They formed the 'Committee to Create a Combined Commemoration for the 150th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Enslavement of Negroes in the French Colonies' (Comité pour une Commémoration Unitaire du Cent cinquantième de l'Abolition de l'Esclavage des Nègres dans les Colonies Françaises', or CCUCAENCF), under the presidency of Serge Romana (the current President of the association Comité Marche du 23 mai - CM98). The Committee decided that they would hold a silent march across Paris (from République to Nation) in which some 40,000 people (mostly originating from France's overseas departments) participated. During the event, around 10,000 signatures were collected to petition the French government to recognize slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity. This march

¹⁶ CM98: Comité Marche du 23 mai 1998, www.CM98.fr

¹⁷ Ibid.

formed the cornerstone of the CM98, which was registered as an association a year later in 1999 and set itself the task of defending the memory of enslaved ancestors.

The shame associated with slavery and the fact that slaves were seen as indebted to the white saviour – French men – kept the descendent of slaves in France and in the overseas colonies silent for a long time.¹⁸ The silence emanated from the idea that the concepts of French fraternity and equality were extended to ‘their black brothers’ due the righteousness and grace of white French men and that black men from previous French colonies needed to be indebted to them for their freedom. Freedom was a burden, granted to the black man, who now had the obligation to work hard and prove that he deserves it. Understanding this does help contextualize Fanon’s argument of the burden of the past. Freedom came as a debt and it was hard to escape it while one was commemorating the past.

The silent march of 1998, however, claimed that *devoir de mémoire* was not towards the white French men who ‘saved’ the black slaves in the colonies but the freed slaves owed their freedom to the struggles and creativities of their ancestors. Commemoration was a way to get the ghosts of the past from the oblivion and move past “the forgetfulness of the damnation.”¹⁹ Fanon’s in *The Wretched of the Earth* understood the “forgetfulness of damnation” as “the process whereby a state of amnesia has led to murder, destruction, and the epistemic will to power—with a European good conscience.”²⁰ The duty to remember meant that one could not

¹⁸ Please see Malika Mansouri, Marion Feldman, Jonathan Lachal, Elisabetta Dozio, Mayssa' El Hussein, and Marie Rose Moro, "Silence, Rebellion, and Acting-Out of a Silenced Past: Understanding the French Riots from a Postcolonial and Transcultural Perspective," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 10 (Dec 18, 2019), see also Jose Lingna Nafafe, "Flora Comes's Postcolonial Engagement and Redefinition of Amilcar Cabral's Politics of National Culture in Nha Fala," *Hispanic Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (02, 2013); and R. D. Meadows, "Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment," *Nieuwe West - Indische Gids* 83, no. 3 (2009).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), 220.

talk about moving forward and imagining a future without addressing the amnesia and the invisibility of the damned. Moving forward was bound to the acknowledgement of what had remained invisible for centuries.²¹

In his conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon claims that forgetfulness might actually not be a negative concept but a way to move forward; “if we want humanity to advance a step farther, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries,” and for that he speaks of a location where forgetfulness can be the starting point for both thinking and action.²²

However, one can see the flaws in the above argument. Cartographies of the past and the ghosts of those histories sustain us, the politics of forgetfulness might be a way to claim independence and freedom. Forgetfulness is also built on the Promethean ideal. It affirms the mastery of ‘Man’ over the world, nature and living things as it plays on the limitless power of ‘Man’ to rule his life and the world. Forgetfulness is an ideology of progress, of moving forward, of individual emancipation resting on the dualism of spirit/matter, giving the individual the fantasy of being in full control of his own future. This ideology of forgetfulness assumes no interdependence and no debt to the past and current social environment and it is closely related to the idea of human mastery in which the individual is not only freed of all constraints, both human and natural, but also seeks to dominate them. Fanon dreamed of a moment of pure rupture from the past that was always to haunt the colonized. Decolonization for Fanon was a break through the ghosts of the past, a form of conjuring, militant conjuring perhaps, but one that freed

²¹ Following Fanon, decolonial thinkers have spoken of the “forgetfulness of coloniality” in both Western philosophy and contemporary social theory. A counter strategy has been to excavate forgotten maps, imagining new ones or valorizing those that have been marginalized. Historical and political cartographies mixed with personal cartographies build a multi-dimensional space of memories.

²² Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 241.

the colonized from their past of slavery. “The Negro,” Fanon wrote, “however sincere, is the slave of the past.”²³ However, today some activists in France conjure the ghosts of the past to claim they are ‘Negroes,’ in acknowledgment and to build a way forward.²⁴

1.2 ‘*Devoir de Mémoire*’ and Cumulative Genealogy

“Devoir de memoire” is the title of an interview with Primo Levi, which was conducted in 1982 as part of the series about the “memory of deportation.”²⁵ Levi in his interviews warns us against the threat of paling memories that get re-organized to fit our present. Memories whose symbolization always provokes hard questions; memories whose remembrance is entangled with the present. Yet, we have the duty to remember. There are disasters, traumas, betrayals, pains and irrevocable wrongs that call upon us to embrace the responsibility to remember: the duty of memory. The disaster, Blanchot reminds us, is “related to forgetfulness – forgetfulness without memory, the motionless retreat of what has not been treated – the immemorial perhaps.”²⁶ Silence and forgetfulness are other means of expressing the disaster. But forgetting, while sometimes an autonomous choice, is also subject to the politics of memory by the state and others who criminalize remembering, as well as the decay of the mind.

Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote about being asked what it meant to be in a camp:

²³ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 187; although on page 248 Fanon himself has acknowledges that “the word ‘Negro,’ is rehabilitated by the Black Interlligentia and thrown back at the European as the supreme weapon,” and he gives Aimé Césaire’s “Notebook of the Return to Native Land” as an example of such an attempt to reappropriate the negative term and give it possitive meaning.

²⁴ Verges, “‘I am not the slave of slavery.’”

²⁵ First published in 1989 in *Rassegna Mensile di Israel* and translated into French in 1996.

²⁶ Maurice Blanchot as quoted in Gerald Bruns, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 208.

As to questions, they stopped quickly because I never answered any. I hear their voices coming from a great distance. When they entered my room, my eyes clouded over. Their thickness intercepted the light. Through this veil, I saw them give me an encouraging smile, but I failed to understand their smile, their attitude, their kindness – later I assumed it was kindness. It was almost impossible, later, to explain with words what was happening in the period of time when there were no words.²⁷

The struggle for Levi as for many other survivors of the camps was to find a way to express the disaster beyond mere denunciation. And for some disasters, such as slavery in the French colonies, it is even much rarer to find direct testimonies, “the voices of the slaves are found in the police and justice archives, in the testament of the masters, in the songs, proverbs and oral poetry of the creole peoples.”²⁸ However, rarely is there a ‘direct’ conversation or testimony expressing it.²⁹

“Why did they [our grandparents, our parents] remain silent about slavery?” Romana asked during the Day of Reflection on the *Devoir de Memoire* among the Antillean, Guyanese and Reunionnais communities. This is not about the collective amnesia stated Romana, we cannot talk about the collective amnesia among post-slavery communities, for amnesia must be preceded by knowledge. There has been no teaching about slavery in French schools, and therefore no shared symbolized historical knowledge. Slavery

²⁷ Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After: Second Edition* (Yale University Press, 1995), 237.

²⁸ Françoise Vergès, “I am not the slave of slavery.”

²⁹ Ibid.

remained a “secret de famille” whose existence like any other family secret operates as a ghost or a living skeleton in an open cupboard.³⁰

The duty of memory demands a form of writing/remembering/conjuring of the ghosts that moves beyond fitting the past into present. A cumulative genealogy, perhaps, where the origin of the ghosts, silences and absences are not traced to a single signifier. Where the symbolization of the ghosts, silences and absences move beyond mere denunciation of pain or disaster. Perhaps this requires accepting the assertion that at the beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origins; it is the dissension of other things. It is a disparity. As Barthes notes:

In [an] ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signified; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable ... the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language.³¹

This cumulative genealogy can present us with a multi-temporal and disruptive impulse that rejects “a revision of conceptual systems based on the notions of fixity, linearity, center and hierarchy. It impels us to replace these systems with new foundations that privilege the conceptions of multi-linearity, nodes, links and networks.”³² The notion of the cumulative genealogy can help develop other strategies of remembrance, where the ghosts are evoked, but

³⁰ Ibid., 272.

³¹ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller (New York: Noonday P, 1974), 5.

³² Françoise Vergès, “The Slave in Le Louvre: An Invisible Humanity,” *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* 38 (2016).

not with the aim of tracing their origin or translating their existence into a unilateral track. The goal, rather, is to make their absences visible, to show it as a symptom of a society and economy that require our forgetfulness in order to thrive.³³ Bringing forward the politics of lives that are seen and heard means that absences matter beyond their origin. This provokes the seemingly impossible task of acknowledging silence and those “without whom the earth would never be the earth.”³⁴

2. Haiti, French-Canada and the Poetics of Exile

I have a habit of remembering places with their smell. It is the first thing I notice walking into a new place; someone’s home or a new city. Toronto, I remember, smelled very strange when I first came to Canada. I remember telling my mom on the phone that the houses here in Toronto smell like vanilla cupcakes! They do not smell like real houses, I feel like I am in a cartoon! Maybe that was how my brain dealt with the trauma of separation and exile, assuming that I have moved into a fantasyland that smelled like gummy bears and reminded me of vanilla cupcakes. When I got used to my surroundings and the reality sank in, the smells disappeared. Now, Toronto and its houses smell like emptiness.

Out of this habit of associating places with smells and feelings, I searched my smell buds when I walked in AAP’s mother’s house for a familiar smell so I could calm down my anxiety that gets provoked by being in a new space. AAP’s mother’s house smelled like old wood, tobacco and Nivea hand cream, or at least that is what my taste and smell buds told me.

She was sitting at the kitchen table, a tiny woman in her late sixties.

³³ Ibid., 8-13.

³⁴ Ibid.

'Thank you for having me,' I say, filled with immense gratitude for being invited to their house and their life narrative.

'No problem, do you want tea?' AAP's mother, GP, asks me.

'Yes please!' I reply.

'What is your name?' GP asks me while she gets up to make tea.

'Aytak,' I reply as slowly as possible knowing how hard it is for people to hear and understand my name on the first attempt.

'It is a hard name!' GP says smiling.

'Yes, it is!' I reply affirmatively.

GP puts her hand on her chest and says; *'I am GP'* and she points to the corner of the room where her other son is sitting; *'and that's WP, AAP's younger brother.'*

WP nods his head with a greeting gesture, I think. Since I have entered their house he is quietly observing my presence. To me he is the total opposite of AAP. He has short hair, no facial hair and is dressed like he is about to leave for a job interview. He is the younger brother by four years and I know from AAP that he holds a nine to five job in an office. He has his own apartment in Ottawa and sometimes visits his mother back in Laval and *'acts as if he knows everything but what does he know, he wasn't around for the hardship'*, as AAP told me in one of our initial meetings. AAP has long and tastefully woven and well-kept dreadlocks and long beard and he is dressed in a t-shirt and shorts. He looks like he can be the younger brother to WP. I initially think that the two brothers were in a state of displeasure with their surroundings, or at

least with me. However, having spent the past few weeks with AAP I know that this cannot be further from the truth.

In our second meeting AAP tells me, *'I put on a hard shell because that's how I learned to survive, you know.'* *'I know'* I reply back, not actually knowing what it means to survive as a child of an exiled Haitian family in one of Montreal's poorest and dangerous neighbourhoods. I do not know what it means to take cars apart at age six thinking it's just a game everyone plays – not knowing that they are stolen cars and what he does is labour – I don't know what it is like to be forced to sell drugs at ages twelve through seventeen and then get stabbed, almost to death, by a member of a rival gang. It was after he was attacked when he was seventeen that he got sent by his mom to stay with a family member in Ottawa and hide away from the *'red bandana gang members.'* That is when he finished high school and started a *'decent well-paid job that doesn't involve any illegal activity,'* he told me.

No, I do not know any of this, I just say *'I know'* because I feel an urge to reply without knowing what else to say.

The tea is ready. I am sitting around the table with all three of AAP's family and sipping on my tea in silence. In moments like this, when I feel very awkward in the presence of others' silence, I feel like a hypocrite; here to listen to your silence but, guess what, I cannot stand it anymore, so I am just begging quietly that someone says something.

I feel the weight of AAP's look on myself.

Please, someone say something.

'Why do you have such a negative perception of silence?' Konur Hoca asks me. He got me completely off guard. *'Do I?!'* I was surprised by his observation. *'Silences must've hurt you, everything you say about silence has a negative connotation attached to it.'* I was offended; *'I do not judge silences, I am trying to let them be, to listen without assuming.'* *'That's not what I am hearing'* he says to me, *'I am hearing someone who has experienced silences which have always carried hurtful conversations, but I just got to know you and I might be wrong!'* I have flown all the way to Izmir in the summer of 2019 to learn from him, a master Sufi, someone whose whole life has been spent teaching and learning Sufism and all I want to do at that point is to reject his observation of my thoughts on silence! *'I mean I probably am not explaining myself very well in Turkish,'* that's my defence! *'Maybe!'* he replies back smiling.

GA says something in Creole, I do not understand, but thank goodness for some sound. Now AAP's family members are talking in Creole, I cannot pick up even one word, but that is fine, I am more comfortable now. But why?!

'In Sufism, silence is the language of the ghosts,' Konur Hoca says, *'and by ghosts I do not mean only dead people from the past, I mean anything or anyone who uses other forms of talking that does not use sound. There is a language that does not use words, Rumi says, listen'* he points to his eyes.

A few weeks ago, AAP and I were walking on René-Lévesque Blvd. It was around eight pm that a police car passed by us, slowed down and then fully stopped. AAP turned to me with the same unimpressed expression permanently tattooed on his face and said, *'they stopped for me!'* *'Well they can go fuck themselves,'* I replied.

'I don't care, I have nothing to hide even if they want to search me,' his calmness took me by surprise. *'Searching you for what? Fuck that!'* I said again.

'Aytak,' for the first time ever he used my name to call me, *'if they get out of the car, don't say that to their face. Look at me; I am black and you...'* he paused contemplating on the ambiguity of my *'race/ethnicity/colour,'* *'you are not even white you're like fake white! So, we got no luck and I don't want to go to jail tonight!'* *'Fake white?!'* I started laughing.

'Yeah like you know you're either black, brown like Indian or Sri Lankan, or white, then there are some people like you, who are not white but not brown or black; you guys are fake whites.' I did not know what to say. I was smiling because I found his observation really funny, while I also was aware of being observed by the police, the complexity of racial profiling, his understanding of my positionality as *'fake white,'* and that he *'chooses'* silence as a response to racial profiling of Montreal police force.

Haitians in Quebec

Haitians began migrating to Quebec in increasing numbers in the late 1950s and 1960s with the political rise of François Duvalier. Although this particular time in history and the following two decades facilitated the migration and exile of millions of Haitians, separation and moving away from home was not something new in Haitian history. In the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), migration has formed part of Haitian life: whether in the journeys of Haitians who left to work in Sugar plantation in Cuba or the Dominican Republic in the first half of the

twentieth century or of Haitian elites who migrated to the United States or France in search of a better life.³⁵

Haitians uprising in August 1791 shook the world and launched the Haitian Revolution, the only anticolonial and antislavery revolution of the 18th century. Pierre writes that “the Lakou figures in Haiti’s stories of resistance as a living arrangement developed by former slaves in St. Domingue in opposition to the plantation system. It emerged as a space of resistance, an environment in which former slaves aspired to establish economic equality and self-sufficiency.”³⁶ Following years of struggle and resistance, finally on November 18, 1803, at the Battle of Vertières, the Haitians defeated French expeditionary forces sent by Napoléon.

However, the Haitian Revolution reinstated new pressures on this newly independent nation. Haiti, as a new nation was pressured to enter the global economy “through multilateral adjustment programs and development projects embedded within spiritually inflicted capitalist-catholic-protestant (neo)colonial registers.”³⁷ Building on the work of Haitian scholars such as Sauveur Pierre Etienne,³⁸ Paul Farmer³⁹ and Claudine Michel and Dante Bellegarde-Smith (2006),⁴⁰ Pierre argues that these newly imbedded pressures shaped many aspects of life in post-slavery Haiti:

³⁵ Louis HERN Marcelin, Toni Cela, et Henri Dorvil, *Les jeunes Haïtiens dans les Amériques/Haitian Youth in the Americas* (Presses de l’université du Québec, 2017).

³⁶ Pierre, “Thinking De<=>coloniality.”

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Etienne Sauveur Pierre, *Hai’ti: l’invasion des ONG* (Port-au-Prince, Hai’ti: Editions du CIDIHCA, 1997).

³⁹ Paul Farmer, “An anthropology of structural violence,” *Current Anthropology*, 45, no. 3 (2004); and Paul Farmer, *The uses of Haiti* (Monroe, Me: Common Courage Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ Claudine Michel and Dante Bellegarde-Smith, *Vodou in Haitian life and culture: Invisible powers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

a) the isolation of Haiti and the imposition of trade boycotts and embargoes by France and the United States following the revolution; b) a political culture based on the use of military force; c) the 1915–1934 United States occupation inscribing on Haiti’s social fabric the logic of colonial and neocolonial power relations leading to; d) sabotaging Haitians’ ability to shape their destiny [...] These pressures and interventions have constituted the material resources and provided the dominant frameworks that would structure living conditions in Haiti after independence, enabling a country to be understood within the terms set by neoliberal projects: a pained body, a site of endemic violence and monstrous poverty, or from the words of the 45th president of the United States, a shithole.⁴¹

With the rise of François Duvalier (Papa Doc) to power in 1957 emigration from Haiti took on new importance. Duvalier’s rise to power was on a *noiriste* platform, where he claimed to side his interest with the poor black majority against the lighter skinned *milat* elite.⁴²

Tontons Macoutes, Duvalier’s militia, unleashed a fierce force to repress the population, especially the educated class, with an aim of consolidating power.⁴³ Hence, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, many of the intellectuals and educated class as well as many elites were fleeing to exile and “forming the initial contours of a mass exodus that would take place in the 1970s and 1980s”⁴⁴ Although elite Haitians and those who belong to the intellectual community found the warm welcome from Quebec’s avant-garde writer and intellectual community initially, the poor,

⁴¹ Pierre, “Thinking De<=>coloniality through,” 394

⁴² Sean Mills, *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2016).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

less educated and urban residing exiles and migrants of the 1970s and 1980s, with little or no social capital or French, were greeted with threats of deportation and racism. The change in the composition of Haitian immigrants reflected the way they were perceived in the French-Canadian society, which itself was going through internal changes and the Quiet Revolution during the same period. The warmer welcome of the Haitians in the 1960s was the result of the kindness of one elite group towards another during a period when Quebec, due to its linguistic politics, needed Francophone thinkers, writers, professors and professionals.⁴⁵ This, however, was more of a parental relationship, where Quebecois intellectuals thought of Haitians as their distant cousins or immature children in need of guidance. Nevertheless, being Haitian, in a 1960s Montreal café, sipping on coffee and exploring politics of language was the new chic.⁴⁶

However, the less educated, Creole speaking and poor Haitian exiles of the late 1970s and early 1980s, who were fleeing the rise of Duvalier's Son (Baby Doc, who came to power after his father), changed the attitude of Quebecois against Haitian migrants. By the early 1980s, over a million Haitians had fled Haiti to settle in other countries. The majority of Haitian refugees in Canada settled in Quebec. As mentioned earlier most of the refugees of the 1980s were from poor backgrounds with limited French and worked in manufacturing and domestic services and later on in the taxi industry in Montreal and surrounding cities. However, as Sean Mills makes clear:

...amidst considerable racism and ongoing forms of dehumanization, including at times violent opposition, Haitians intervened and helped to open up new

⁴⁵ Marcelin , Cela , et Dorvil, *Les jeunes Haïtiens dans les Amériques*, 3.

⁴⁶ Sean Mills, *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2016).

debates about race, immigration, sexuality, and the relationship between the global north and south. They brought with them political traditions from Haiti, but they also adopted these ideas and reshaped them in their new environment.⁴⁷

Paul Dejean, a Haitian priest and community activist, articulated the ways in which the majority of the Haitian Diaspora were perceived, and how their conditions of living were determined by their gender and class. When researching the Haitian community, it is not only enough to listen to them, but to listen to the poorest of them “to understand the ideas and insights that they could offer about both their own condition and the world around them.”⁴⁸ Dejean argued “whereas educated Haitians demonstrated the potential Universality of French civilization, lower class Haitians are understood to be sexually deviant and childlike, devoid of complex thoughts and emotions,” occupying the place of “an absent presence.”⁴⁹ Like other black migrants in Quebec, under the “trying circumstances and often with only partial success, they put into question the very meaning of this political.”⁵⁰

AAP’s dad was a taxi driver, until he got fired from his job and a few years later he left his family.

A pervasive racism in Montreal's taxi industry which started in 1982 – although how can one really pinpoint the origin of racism – progressed into a full-blown crisis a year later when Haitian taxi drivers were being refused work or being fired en mass by companies catering to White clients who requested not to ride with black drivers.⁵¹ Many taxi companies, including

⁴⁷ Ibid., 7

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8

⁴⁹ Ibid., 9

⁵⁰ Ibid., 9

⁵¹ Ibid., 174.

Dorval Airport Taxi and SOS Taxi, changed their regulations banning Haitians from driving white clients and firing 220 Haitian drivers on the same day. Many taxi companies pointed fingers at other companies who only hired white taxi drivers saying they could not compete with them if they hired black drivers. Haitian taxi drivers formed collective hearing, art, poetry and philosophy nights and journal publications and claimed these as ways of asserting their basic humanity. “As for those who want to say that racial discrimination is a patient history,” Serge Lava wrote “I invited them to look at what's happening in South Africa or, closer to us, in the Southern United States or even closer, in our own city of Montreal, to see that there is a long and arduous road to travel before the black achieves genuine and full equality with other races.”⁵²

‘Do you know what your father did back in Haiti?’ I ask.

‘No,’ AAP replies. ‘He didn’t talk about the past, you know. He didn’t talk much at all.’

‘He was a decent man, he worked hard, then it was too much for him after he lost his job so he left,’ GA tells me.

‘He was an awful man,’ AAP told me in our second meeting, ‘I hated him.’

‘Hate is a big word,’ I said out loud, immediately regretting it. You are projecting again, I thought to myself, let him talk!

‘Definitely not big enough to capture the extent of my disgust,’ I could see the anger in AAP’s eyes. ‘I told him, you know, I told it to his face when he was in the hospital. My uncles hate me, they say you made our brother cry on his deathbed, I would’ve done more, I don’t care

⁵² Mills, *A Place in the Sun*.

about that man, he made our life miserable. He made me sit in silence for hours and watch him and his friend get high and make fun of me.'

'He was a good man,' GP says.

'No maman he wasn't,' AAP replies, *'il était horrible, il a fait beaucoup de choses horribles, tu sais maman, what are you talking about!'*

'But you don't know him as well as I do, he has seen bad things, he had a lot of pain.'

GA says while shaking her head.

'I do not know and don't want to know maman' c'est tout,' APP says.

When AAP is angry he twitches his eyes, now I know where this is coming from. GP's eyes are twitching in anger. The physical gestures we inherit from our parents are part of those embodied memories, where our bodies remember. These bodily memories surprise us when we least expect them. I walk back and forth when I am stressed. My mom used to tell my dad that our carpet in the living room has a permanent mark left on it from the traces of the exact place my dad walked back and forth on them.

Our bodies remember.

The relationship between a parent and child is one of forever undoing: from the moment the child gets independent as an adult she tries to undo in herself the things the parent(s) have done to her.⁵³ And in that it is an axiom. She destroys in herself what made her who she is, and gave her – wrapped in a wet blanket – the love and the suffering conjoined and disjoined together.

⁵³ Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* (Graywolf Press, 2015).

'When did you come to Canada?' I ask GP.

'1980, I was pregnant with this one, pointing at AAP, 'when we arrived in Montreal. It was hard, you know, leaving Haiti, coming to a new place, not knowing anything about it, not knowing if we would find a job and survive' GP answers.

'You left during Duvalier the son, right?' I ask.

'Yeah, life was getting really hard, Papa Doc was bad but Baby Doc was horrible. We couldn't take it anymore. No one could,'⁵⁴ GP says.

I wait a few minutes and then say *'you mentioned that your husband did go through so many hardships that AAP, and I am assuming his brother also, don't know anything about?'*

She nods her head yes with a deep breath that follows after.

I take a sip of my tea and stare blankly out from the kitchen window.

What is a conversation?

The encounter with P's family, especially with AAP, was/is to realize that a conversation without a sympathetic attachment is a fiction.

'Ask the question and let it be, don't expect an answer, this is the first principle in Sufism,' Konur Hoca tells me.

⁵⁴ Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) came to power after his father in 1971. He continued his fathers notorious legacy. During his presidency, individuals were arrested, killed, raped, and forced into exile. Throughout his presidency many individuals and groups resisted, but each wave of resistance led to Greater forms of violent repression, violence and Terror became a feature of everyday life. Maintaining a good relations with Western powers, especially with the United States, Duvalier was able to survive many uprising, until 1986 when he couldn't maintain power anymore and fled on a US Air Force plane to France and lived on Exile until 2011, when he made a surprise return to Haiti to be immediately arrested by Haitian Police. He died of a heart attack on 2014 before he was able to brought to justice.

3. Yellow Vase and the Lost Past

We are supposed to meet in a café in Montreal. I asked him to choose the place, as I ask all my co-travellers to pick the location they want to meet. He sends me the address and I Google it, look up the location and the menu and realize that he has chosen a Turkish café. I arrive thirty minutes early and while waiting, I order myself a Turkish coffee, then call my Turkish friend who lives in London now and ask him if he has time to read my fortune. He sends me a thumbs up on WhatsApp and I carefully place my hands on the coffee cup, put the saucer on top, hold a thought in my mind, just like how my grandmother taught me. Then putting my finger back on the saucer, I rotate the handle towards myself and turn the cup upside down so that the saucer is on the bottom now. I let the cup do its thing, forming my future and past in all forms; humans, animals and objects. Five minutes pass by and I slowly move the saucer away and place the cup on a napkin to soak the remaining juice and finally turn the cup back up. First, it is my turn to observe my future and past formed into different shapes. After a few minutes of observing all the messy forms in the cup and trying to interpret the coffee residue based on my own desires and fears, I take a picture and send it to my friend and then wait to see how he interprets all these intermingled forms. Five minutes later, I have a few long WhatsApp messages from him. He has written an elaborate interpretation but before I get to read them, CC, walks in the café. I put my phone down, quickly wipe the saucer and the cup, put them back together, and wash off the traces of me getting my future predicted.

He seems a little out of breath. So, I offer to get him a glass of water and ask him if he wants anything to drink. He asks for a Turkish coffee and before I even get to say anything he says he wants his fortune read as well, pointing to the reminiscence of my unsuccessful clean up on the table. I am embarrassed.

'Is this part of the research?' he asks when I sit back down with his coffee in my hand. I smile and say, *'No, I wish,'* an awkward pause follows my sentence. Why did I say I wish! The self-sabotaging voice in my head starts again, I do not wish to research people's fortunes, futures and pasts using a coffee cup. Wait a second, maybe that is exactly what I do, but without a cup. These traces of thoughts are now interrupted by him asking me so what exactly is my research and how can he help me.

After listening to my introduction, he asks; *'so you want to know if my parents have ever talked about their life in Haiti before they moved to Canada?'* I reply, *'yes, it is one of the questions that I am interested in but that's not all.'*

'No, they didn't and I never asked,' he says.

'Why?' I ask.

'Because they left that life behind, why would I want to remind them of something they clearly didn't want to remember?' He looks annoyed at this point.

'So, you respected their silence and took it as a sign that they want to forget something that has happened to them. Is that correct?' I ask to confirm.

'Look, my parents came here in 1984, they had to deal with racism, they had to deal with the fact that they only knew how to speak Creole and couldn't speak French. My parents had to deal with poverty. Maybe they didn't even have the time to think about their past, they just had to deal with life as it is. Immerse themselves in the new culture and try and make a living for their children. They didn't have the luxury of being sad or dwelling in their sadness.' He says and then starts playing with his coffee cup, swinging the coffee in it back and force.

I sit quietly.

'They had to work, they had to focus on the kids, they had to forget the past, so that's what they did.' He says and sits back with his hands crossed on his chest.

'I understand,' I reply after a few moments of silence.

I feel the anger in his voice but I cannot tell if it is directed at me, the hardships his parents have gone through, their past, or something else and possibly all of the above. All I know is I can sense his anger and it is hard not to take it personally. Of course, I am an outsider asking questions about very intimate experiences about him and his parents. He is right. He thinks I have no idea about the racism against the Haitian exiles and immigrants. He is right. I am another researcher digging something for their self-interest. He is also right. He did not ask me this but I think there might be a series of questions in his mind: *Why Haitians? Why not Rwandans? Why not Congolese? Vietnamese?* The world is filled with displaced people who have gone through political violence and trauma because of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, capitalism, theocracy and even democracy. Why don't you research your own community? I am thinking all these thoughts sitting across him in silence, thinking he might be thinking the same thoughts, or something else, who knows. We are the only ones who know when we are using the words to keep ourselves and our ego intact and when we are opening up and letting things fall apart, letting the uncertainties come to us as they are. We are the only ones who know. Yet, sometimes even we do not know.

'Actually, maybe I don't.' I say after what seems to me like forever.

'You don't what?' He asks confused.

'I don't understand not asking about your parents' past out of respect.'

Because I don't understand the relationship between writing and happiness, writing and healing, so I ask while writing:

Do you want to be right, or do you want to connect?

Do you want to be right, or do you want to listen?

Do you want to be right, or do you want to 'be' in conversation with someone's presence?

I ask but I have no intention of answering any of these questions. I think the answer to these questions vary. It varies because our answers develop relationally and they differ depending on the time/place and whom we encounter. But one cannot write without betraying oneself: if I do not betray myself and my own desire while writing, then my audience is none but my ego.⁵⁵ To betray is not the same as to denigrate. It is to remove one's ego as the shield that prevents one from connecting to the other. It is to participate in the ultimate Sufi self-destruction in order to reach a state where there is no 'You' or 'I', there is only 'او' [oou - a non-gendered third person, referring to beloved]: "the one who sees is 'او', the one who listens is 'او', the one who walks is 'او'. Then, what does remain from 'من' [Man - me] you might ask? What would 'you' expect to remain from 'you'? 'You' have never existed for 'you' to remain. It was 'او' all along, there was not 'you'." ⁵⁶

'I don't', I continue; 'because I didn't ask my dad about his past not because I was respectful of his silence but because I thought I could not bear what he had to tell me. Now, I am

⁵⁵ Nelson quotes Gilles Deleuze to remind us: "What other reason is there for writing than to be traitor to one's own reign, traitor to one's own sex, to one's class, to one's majority? And to be a traitor to writing. Please see Nelson, *The Argonauts*.

⁵⁶ Yunus Emre Ile Askin Yolculugu, [Yunus Emre: The journey of Love], Life Teachings and Biography of Turkish Sufi Sage, Yunus Emre, Season 2, Episode 22, 9'10 to 11'14 min.

not sure he would've answered if I asked him, but no matter how hard it is for me to admit, I preferred not having to listen, I guess. I am not sure which one is harder, listening to silence or the details of someone's torture.'

Moments of silence are adding.

'Your dad never told you what happened to him?' CC asks me.

'A few details here and there, but he didn't want to talk about it, I think', I say.

'So, is that why you're interested in silence?' He asks while he leans forward and puts his hands on the table.

I take a few deep breaths and stare at the table, to his coffee cup that now it is empty, his hands on the table, and then look up back at his face, at his eyes. The expression in his eyes has changed.

'My dad has this diary that he keeps,' CC says, continuing in words a conversation I felt we were already having in silence, *'once in a while he would go to it and write something. Once when he was outside, I went and opened his notebook to see what he'd written.'*

'And?' This is me being impatient because this story strikes a very familiar chord and I recognize that.

'Poems in Creole, maybe that's how he expressed his longing for home and everything else, I don't know.' He answers immediately, responding to the urgency I demanded from him.

'Did you ever bring up the diary with him? Or asked him about it?'

He shakes his head no.

'And I am assuming that was out of respect for his silence and privacy?' again, I ask to confirm.

'Maybe, I don't know,' He says, this time with less certainty in his voice.

'Well, I guess you let your parents' silence exist... It's hard to sit with someone's silence for years, especially someone you love, without demanding from them the type of certainty we seek that only words can offer,' I say it out loud not for him to hear, but to myself to remember. This conversation is coming home with me.

'My mom had this yellow vase that she brought with herself from Cap. That's one of the few things she brought with herself. Since I was a child, I remember seeing her talk to this vase of ours in creole. She talked to us in French, both practicing her French with us and also maybe wanting us to just adjust, assimilate I guess. After the earthquake in 2010 my mom learned that she had lost five relatives.⁵⁷ It was really hard for her, but again she did what she'd always done: just buried herself in her work. A few weeks after the news, my daughter accidentally broke the yellow vase. She was two at that time. She was running around the kitchen and the next thing we knew was a loud noise, boom. My mom was inconsolable! I haven't seen her like that ever, she was there on the floor hugging the pieces of the broken vase crying. She cried maybe for hours, we were so worried. When she was done, she got up, washed her face and turned to us and told us in creole, which was also surprising; she said, "that's it I have no past anymore."'

⁵⁷ From material and empirical standpoints, the catastrophe—which caused much despair as it resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and displaced millions of people precipitating migration that separated countless families—was a threshold event with imprints of a unique trauma signature not only in the country but also in the ethnoscape of Haitian diasporas in the world.

Reflecting

“What I seek in speech,” Lacan says,

the response of the other is what constitutes me as a subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.⁵⁸

Does silence demand the same response? Is a response from the other what we seek in silence? I believe, like speech, silence is also formed in view of what will be. Silence is also formed to be recognized by the other.

Forgetting and silence are the foundation of other layers of our experiences. Silence is the foundation not only for language but also for memory. Forgetting and silence are the sculptures of memory. Memories are written in multiple layers. Layers formed by silences and forgetting. Forgetfulness is not the opposite of remembering in the same way as silence is not the opposite of language. They both are in fact the bedrocks through which *memoire obscure* makes a move towards *memoire consient*. These only become possible through forgetfulness.⁵⁹ It is not through speaking out sometimes but through repetition of either the monotonous or the neurotic, that the memory of a violence becomes absorbed or transformed into an experience: into memory.

The patient labor of working through these stories tells us over and over again that the political does not exist in an abstract separation from the intimate and the private. Rather, the

⁵⁸ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, Sheridan A (ed) (New York and London: Norton, 1977), 86.

⁵⁹ Verges, “I am not the slave of slavery,” 270.

political manifests itself, as Greg Grandin writes in a different context, in the internal rounds of sexuality, faith, ethics and exile – indeed, and also in silence.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Chapter 6 – Chile, Silence and Political Trauma

While observing the night sky of the Atacama Desert,¹ PB asks me if I ever heard of ‘Red Giants,’ I reply ‘*no, are they stars?*’

‘*When stars are born they are bright blue*’ PB answers, ‘*they change colour as they age. Our sun, for example, is a younger star, because it is only yellow. When stars are really old and about to die, they turn red, so we call them Red Giants. That means they can explode any time; a supernova.*’ I nod to say that I understood what he said. ‘*Betelgeuse, for example*’ he points to a very bright star in the sky, ‘*if we are lucky we can see its supernova in our lifetime because astronomers think it probably is already dead. It might have already exploded and turned into a black hole.*’

‘*Already dead?*’ I ask surprised. ‘*Yes, we don’t know, because it takes years for the light to reach us,*’ PB answers.

‘*So, what we do see when we look at Betelgeuse is its past? You mean its past is our present?*’ I ask quite excitedly as I am genuinely intrigued by his teachings. Without even waiting for him to reply I continue, ‘*that puts time in perspective for us, doesn’t it? It definitely makes you question the illusion of present,*’ now I am thinking out loud.

‘*Yes, looking up at Atacama’s sky one only sees the past,*’ PB says; ‘*everything you see up there is in the past.*’

¹ The Atacama Desert is located in Chile covering around 128,000 km of land. The Atacama Desert is one of the driest point on the planet (the driest spots of our planet is within some valleys in Atacama) and also the only ‘true desert’ with the lowest point of humidity throughout the year, which makes it the most ideal place for astronomical research and experiments. For an overview of the Atacama Desert and discussion from an interdisciplinary perspective see Richard Francaviglia, *Imagining the Atacama Desert: A Five-Hundred-Year Journey of Discovery* (University of Utah Press, 2018).

'Looking down at Atacama's desert one only sees the past too', GM, his mother, replies.

1. Quieter than Silence: The Quantum Theory of the Missing

What percentage of human remnants, found and collected, can make a full human? How many pieces of bones? How many pieces of clothing? Is finding a broken watch enough for someone to call off the search for their loved ones? A pair of socks? Shoes? Finger bones? A full skeleton? What percentage of a body should be found for one to be satisfied with their search for their missing relatives, friends and loved ones? I ask these questions of myself as I board a flight to Calama, Atacama, to visit a family who has been searching for the body of their missing relative for the past 32 years.

“You took them away alive, we want them back alive,” proclaim the relatives of the disappeared according to Jenny Edkins.² Pictures of their loved ones in their hands, they insist that someone does not just go missing; someone does not just exist in one moment and disappear in another. This impossibility cuts through the homogeneous linear time and space. The ones who were present in a space in the past are still present, but with their absences. Their absence is a placeholder for their presence in the present moment. Their pictures and photographs insist on their being; they were here, alive, living. They are not here, not anymore.³

Death is the disappearance of the movements that makes one appear as alive, living;

Death is an end to responding,

Dead is the without-reply,

² Edkins, *Missing*, 1.

³ In ‘writing as hope: Reflection on the Politics of Exile’ Dauphinee writes: “The dead [...] are marked by their silence, and it is their very inability to speak, registered as a fundamental absence, that becomes their testimony,” 351.

Movements disappear when someone dies,
dead speaks in silence.

But the disappeared are not dead. They exist in a “time frozen in a moment that [is] neither present nor past, the person neither dead nor alive.”⁴ To look at the pictures of the missing is like looking at Betelgeuse in the sky; they might be dead, they might be alive; our vision of them is their past in our present. To learn to live with these absences is “to learn to inhabit a zone where past, present, life, death, lucidity, madness have changed, intermarried. At once present and absent, sustaining and sustained, [the disappeared] are there.”⁵ The disappeared have slipped into a black hole ⁶ created by the gravitational acceleration of their absence, similar to a vanishing point that exists in Francis Bacon’s paintings, ⁷ where time, space and being are suspended and condemned to an eternal entanglement.

This brings us back to agential realism, where in order for something to assume a determinate state an enactment of agency and boundary articulation is needed.⁸ ‘The cut between the observer’s gaze on the one hand and the ‘given-to-be-seen’ on the other, forces the being who is under observation to assume one of its many states.’⁹ Without a conscious observer and

⁴ Edkins, *Missing*, 2

⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶ In general relativity, Robert Wald describes a black hole as a ‘region of no escape’ in spacetime which exhibits such strong gravitational acceleration that nothing—no particles or even electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from it. Wald argues that based on the theory of general relativity a sufficiently compact mass can deform spacetime to form a black hole, please see Rober Wald, *General Relativity* (University of Chicago Press, 1984), 374

⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 17. Deleuze, observing Bacon’s paintings, claims that “it is the Figure that wants to pass through a vanishing point in the contour in order to dissipate into the material structure. The contour thus assumes a new function, since it no longer lies flat, but outlines a hollow volume and has a vanishing point. Then a body attempting to pass through the syringe and to escape through this hole or vanishing point functioning as a prosthesis-organ.”

⁸ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 178.

⁹ Lacan distinguishes a difference between the function of the eye and that of the gaze. For him this split is related to the pre-existence of what he calls ‘the stain,’ a subject chosen as such for its ‘location, facticity, and

their gaze, the ‘given-to-be-seen’ lives with the conditions of all possibilities; they assume all probabilities. Without the human remnants, due to the split between the observing gaze and the given-to-be-seen, missing people are in the state of superposition; they exist with probabilities of both death and life, indeterminately dead and alive. Once pinned into a structure – a picture, a frame, a commemoration site – and assumed a form which is observed and uttered out loud they assume a determined state. Without this enforcement (or the apparatus) or without introducing a measuring experiment, missing people, like the nature of light, are indeterminately wave and particle-like.

1.1 Atacama, Chile: The Search for the Missing



10

character.’ Thus, Lacan poses the pre-existence to the seen of a given-to-be-seen in relation to the function of the gaze. Therefore, Lacan formulates the gaze as the human being's subjectivity which is created through placing the subject under observation, through which the subject experiences themselves as an object which is seen. Jacques Lacan, "The Split between the Eye and the Gaze,"(1964), In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton (1978).

¹⁰ Shannon Bell, 2016, Atacama. The written permission to share this photograph has been obtained.

This is my first time in Atacama. I am travelling with GM and her son, who do this search in December of every year, around the same time that her brother went missing thirty-two years ago. Every December GM, her son PB, and a few other families gather in Calamata de Atacama and search for the bodies of their loved ones in the vastness of the Atacama Desert. Atacama has a dry climate which was used as the dumping ground for hundreds of political prisoners during Pinochet's dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹ Bodies buried in mass graveyards and displaced multiple times, Atacama's vast grounds of 105,000 km are filled with the scattered bones and remnants of many missing political prisoners, whose loved ones continue to search for their bodies (or anything left of one).

What counts as a body? What percentage of the body should be found for one to be satisfied with their search for their loved ones? These are questions which I recall from reading Damir Arsenijević on the ethics of the moment of naming of body parts: "Are a femur, a tooth, a rib and part of the skull enough for you?"¹²

GM tells me that she has been doing this 'ritualistic' search for the body of her older brother over the past 32 years. 'Ritualistic?' I ask, she says 'yes' because she has given up hope that she can actually find his body; 'Even if I find a bone, what am I going to do with it? They took him full, I want him back in full, in his brown shoes and green socks, like the last time I saw him,' GM says.

I cannot bring myself to inquire why she is drawn to remembering his feet. His shoes and his socks? What do his feet signify – if anything? His return?

¹¹ Patricio Guzmán, *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010).

¹² Damir Arsenijević, "Gendering the Bone: The Politics of Memory in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Journal of Cultural Research* 15, no. 2, (2011), 194.

What percentage of the body one should find for their search to be over? In the case of GM's brother: a hundred percent, a full body, even with his socks and shoes intact.

'I am also scared to find him,' GM tells me while we are walking back to her car to drive back to San Pedro de Atacama. We have spent an entire day under the sun, we both are sweaty, dehydrated, sunburned and covered in dust. The sun is so bright that I can blame the tears that drop down my cheeks and wash my sunburned face to its heat, and she, she blames it on the wind and dust. '*I can't believe how windy it is today, the dust is bothering my eyes,*' she says. '*Same,*' I reply.

"Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability," Elaine Scarry says, "and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language."¹³

We have driven in the desert for hours now, stopping in different locations to walk around the landscape. GM specifically has chosen those spots, as they were the areas where the majority of the bodies and a few mass graves were discovered, she mentions.

Walking through a vast dry and almost unearthly landscape to get to the car now for our final destination, GM says; '*I am scared that if we found him we would know what happened to him, we would know how he'd been tortured, we would know...*'

We drive in silence. It lingers.

Every so often GM rolls down the front windows. The air in the car is nice and cool but I feel her need to breathe, I also need to breathe into the dry and dusty air of the Atacama Desert. Every single time she rolls the windows down, she looks at me and smiles, I nod and smile back

¹³ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

and that is how we communicate. That is how we keep each other company the whole silent ride back to San Pedro. When we arrive in San Pedro, she stops the car in front of my hostel and sits there with her hands on her lap. She looks very tired, like the years have caught up with her, the tears are flowing down her cheeks again, and all I can do is sit there and watch; to practice what Shannon Bell refers to as the act of “just seeing,” during which “the eye, mind, and outside world are in the same place at the same time.”¹⁴

Journeying to Atacama with CONSTELACIONES performers as part of *Return Chile* project co-organized by Roewan Crowe, Helene Vosters, Monica Martinez, Christina Hajjar and Doris Difarnecio to witness “a ritual of return and remembrance in Atacama Desert,”¹⁵ Bell posits:

with each movement, stoppage, breath, and stillness, CONSTELACIONES telegraphed a past of horror, death, and terror into the present of active memory, respect, and responsibility [...] Of course, in witnessing the three hours of CONSTELACIONES walking, sweating, moving objects, and building, there were distractions—the wind, sun, human voices. As these distractions came and went, I returned to the breath—my breath—and in this return, I returned to the practice of contemplative photography: the practice of just seeing.¹⁶

¹⁴ Shannon Bell, “‘Dialectics at a Standstill’: CONSTELACIONES in the Atacama Desert,” 2018, <https://returnatacama.tome.press/chapter/dialectics-at-a-standstill-constelaciones-in-the-atacama-desert/>

¹⁵ Roewan Crowe and Helene Vosters in “Introduction,” 2018, <https://returnatacama.tome.press/chapter/introduction/> explain that “the performance, *Return Atacama*—a ritual of remembrance and witness—was performed in Chile’s Northern Atacama Desert, just outside of Calama. Our sojourn to the Atacama Desert was aligned with the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics’ 10th Encuentro—EX-céntrico: dissidence, sovereignties, performance—held in Santiago, Chile from July 17–23, 2016.”

¹⁶ Bell, “‘Dialectics at a Standstill.’”

In the moment of sitting across GM, witnessing her pain and her tireless search in the dry air of the Atacama Desert, I am a witness; I *just see*, and in ‘the practice of just seeing’ I represent her suffering. I represent the iconography of her tactile pain, her specific pain - where it seems like we have nothing in common other than “the accident of co-temporality.”¹⁷

The suffering of others, their image in pain, invites us either to be “spectators or cowards,” claims Sontag¹⁸; *which one am I, sitting across from her in the car? Which one are you reading her suffering through my writing?*

“Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined” declares Morrison, nonetheless.¹⁹ What we are in encountering the pain of others perhaps is beyond an either or.

‘What did happen to him? is a question that crosses my mind every day, but I am not sure if I can stomach the answer. I don’t want his story finished, I don’t want to know, I want to find him to prove that he existed but I don’t want to know what happened to him. I want to remember him with his smile, beautiful wide smile, I want to think that’s how he died, with that smile,’ GM tells me. Edkins on the other hand argues that:

People want to know what exactly happened to their relations, what they did, how it turned out for them. They want to know this even when there is no possibility of a reunion. In some cases they want to know – though may not want it publicly – even if shame accompanies the discovery. We want to know how things turned out for the people in the end, to complete their story and to help us in building our own. Initially there may be a reluctance – people have made new lives, concealing their past or not wanting to talk

¹⁷ Elizabeth Dauphinee, "Writing as hope."

¹⁸ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 42.

¹⁹ Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1987), 45.

about it because of the pain involved. Or sometimes just there is no one to talk to who will listen. But the questions remain and resurface later: people cannot be allowed to just disappear.²⁰

Yes, the questions remain, people are not allowed ‘to just disappear.’ However, the questions that remain are sometimes asked not with the aim of getting an answer but only to be repeated over and over so that we will not forget the lives lost, disappeared and abandoned in unknown graves. Sometimes the questions are asked so that we know or feel the answers to them is silence. They are asked to point to the absence. Not for the absence to be filled, not for the story to finish, not for the relations to complete the story of their own but just to show that there is a gap between where their loved ones existed beside them with their beautiful wide smiles and the time that they did not anymore. Silence, in fact, might be what they are seeking, or at least an acknowledgment of the fact that noises, pictures, remnants and fragments, although part of the person, are not ‘the person-as-such.’²¹ ‘The person-as-such,’ their non-substitutable place, remains intact with their green socks and brown shoes, in the memories of their loved ones, even without their stories uttered out loud.

‘I hate the pictures on the wall’ says RR, while we rush outside of the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos²² in Santiago. He looks pale, perhaps he is nauseous; *‘I hate seeing those pictures, I can’t stand them’*, he says while he is still shaking. I sit him down and

²⁰ Edkins, *Missing*, 4.

²¹ Jenny Edkins’ readings of Lacanian person-as-such: a particular person’s unsubstitutable being, in Edkins, *Missing*.

²² The Museum of Memory and Human Rights, <http://ww3.museodelamemoria.cl>

grab a water bottle for him from the café outside of the museum. He sits there slowly breathing, gradually catching his breath.

'Let's end this conversation here, I'll walk you back to your place,' I offer.

He shakes his head no; *'I am ok'* he insists, *'I just can't stand looking at the pictures on the walls.'*

'May I ask why?' I ask.

'They take up so much space on the wall but they don't tell us anything, they don't tell us what those people were like, what they liked, disliked and hated? They don't tell us they have lived a life, they just look sad, those pictures tell us that the person is dead but don't tell us that they have lived and they have lived a good life, a life of passion for the things they believed.... do you want to see the picture of AY on the wall? Do you need the picture on a wall of a human rights museum to remember him? [Referring to a personal story I mentioned to him previously] You don't! Because you don't need it, he lives in your memory, he is still alive and living in your memory, his picture on a wall would just tell you he is dead,' he answers.

There are some empty frames on the wall of the museum. Empty frames with no names and pictures. The ones whose pictures are on the wall have already assumed a determinate state: dead. The ones represented by an empty frame or no name exist through none existing, a memorialization for those who have not been found.

No, not everyone needs a 'complete' story, for some, intact silences are better than the certainty of knowing, better than noises that make one not able to hear the voices of their loved ones in their memories anymore. Perhaps the loved ones of the missing people do not need the pictures on the walls of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights that remind them that their

loved ones are dead. Their silences have already moulded into the shape of their stories; their stories are present in the shape of their absence.²³

I get out of GM's car, breathing into the dry air of the Atacama Desert. The sun is going down and the sky is red. Soon an impeccably beautiful night sky would appear, showcasing the past; our collective past.

'Why is the sky in Atacama so popular with astronomers?' I asked GM's son PB, during our first trip to the desert.

'Because the dry weather in Atacama makes it an ideal place for astronomers to observe the sky. You have a completely clear night sky over here 99 percent of the year, no humidity, no clouds', PB replies.

There are more than 15 scientific observatory locations and telescopes are built in Atacama by European and American scientists as well as scientists from South America. The telescopes are set up in Atacama, as it claims 330 clear nights per year. It is high, dry (one of the driest places in the world) and unpolluted.²⁴ Therefore, several top-level observatories have set up homes here to answer the most significant 'ethico-onto-epistemological' question present to human kind: What is the origin of life? And what is our 'past'?

Atacama's incredibly dry weather also makes it possible for the corpse to remain intact for a long time, hence the hope of finding the bodies of the political prisoners as they are remembered. Atacama, 'the landscape of the dead people,' and its clear sky and dry ground

²³ Inspired by Patricia Williams qtd in Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 6.

²⁴ Please see "What's so Special about the Atacama Desert?" *Live Science*, Date published February 2019, Date accessed May 2019, ; please also see "Places to observe the stars," *astroatacama*, date accessed March 2020, <https://www.astroatacama.com/english/atacama-wide-field-night-sky/places/>

preserve the past, perhaps better than any other location in the world, but where does that leave our present and future?²⁵

2. Los Muertos Están Vivos 1973/2019 ²⁶

...Colocado en un tránsito histórico, pagaré con mi vida la lealtad al pueblo. Y les digo que tengo la certeza de que la semilla que hemos entregado a la conciencia digna de miles y miles de chilenos, no podrá ser segada definitivamente. Tienen la fuerza, podrán avasallarnos, pero no se detienen los procesos sociales ni con el crimen ni con la fuerza. La historia es nuestra y la hacen los pueblos... Trabajadores de mi Patria, tengo fe en Chile y su destino. Superarán otros hombres este momento gris y amargo en el que la traición pretende imponerse. Sigán ustedes sabiendo que, mucho más temprano que tarde, de nuevo se abrirán las grandes alamedas por donde pase el hombre libre, para construir una sociedad mejor. ¡Viva Chile! ¡Viva el pueblo! ¡Vivan los trabajadores!²⁷

Salvador Allende, the first democratically elected president in South America, and his socialist project have been under constant scrutiny by both national and international forces. However, 9/11 of 1973 has initiated what Gomez-Borris calls “the beginning of the end of a political dream,” a dream “that involved millions of [Chileans] who had worked to create revolutionary and cultural change through poder popular.”²⁸ Bombing La Moneda, the Presidential Palace in Santiago de Chile, and the death of Allende marked the dramatic takeover of the country’s

²⁵ The Chinchorro people, the indigenous people who have lived on the northern coast of Chile and the southern coast of Peru, along the western edge of the Atacama Desert about 10,000 years ago, were the first in the history to mummify their dead as they realized that the dry weather conditions in Atacama, naturally preserved their dead’s hair and skin, as thousands of mummified bodies were scattered around the desert, Atacama came to be known as ‘the landscape of dead bodies.’

²⁶ “The ones who have died are still alive 1973/2019,” was written on the walls in Santa Lucia de Santiago on December 7 2019, during the 2019-2020 protests.

²⁷ “Placed in a historic transition, I will pay for loyalty to the people with my life. And I say to them that I am certain that the seeds which we have planted in the good conscience of thousands and thousands of Chileans will not be shriveled forever. They have force and will be able to dominate us, but social processes can be arrested by neither crime nor force. History is ours, and people make history. Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment when treason seeks to prevail. Keep in mind that, much sooner than later, great avenues will again open, through which will pass the free man, to construct a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!” Last speech given by Salvadore Allende’s - the first socially elected president in South America - on 11 Sept 1973, before the country went through a total shutdown and silence due to a US backed military coup.

²⁸ Macarena Gomez-Borris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (University of California Press, 2008).

democratic institutions and its socialist path.²⁹ American Imperialism and its cold war policies with a wide cast of characters including Nixon, Kissinger, the CIA and also Chilean elites and their puppets in the military, were the main actors in the coup de étate that brought about twenty years of dictatorship, gross human rights abuse, mass executions and collective graves, concentration camps, forced exiles, abductions and disappearances, torture and generalized climate of fear. The global ramifications of these were also felt within the broader leftist and socialist movements in other countries; even in my home country of Iran and in my immediate circles.

“Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my last words. I am sure that my sacrifice will not be in vain; I am sure that it will at least be a moral lesson which will punish felony, cowardice and treason,” Allende’s last words were broadcast by Radio Magallene before the complete radio silence embraced the capital of Chile and street fights, battles and arrests claimed the lives of many on the first day of the coup in Santiago.³⁰

Soon I realized that everyone I talked to about the coup, and specifically about Allende’s last words and the bombing of La Moneda, had a story of where they or their loved ones were when they heard Allende’s last words or the sirens. It was like a symbolic spectacle that had, in the words of an expatriate film maker Patricio Guzmán, turned into an “obstinate memory.”³¹

‘I was getting ready to go to the fish market near La Moneda when I heard that the military has taken over the palace’ MO says, ‘then Allende’s speech and then just silence, a silence that for some lasted only until six pm when the military claimed that they had successfully

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ James D. Cockcroft, *Salvador Allende Reader: Chile's Voice of Democracy* (Ocean Press, 2000), 242.

³¹ Guzmán, *Nostalgia for the Light*.

taken over the government, but for me this silence has lasted for twenty years, or maybe even till today' he continues.

'So, the silence for you is lingering ever since?' I ask. *'Not just for me, but for many,'* he answers.

'Can you explain a little more perhaps?' I ask again.

'Well, look, we had hopes, we never had a successful revolution but we had hopes during Allende. After his death we had nothing but crushed dreams,' MO tells me.

“This momentous time was a national, and perhaps global, historical shift and irrevocable breach, certainly not singular in its importance but at least pivotal at that particular juncture of world political change and collective social possibility,” argues Gomez-Borris, “Allende was a charismatic leader who offered, like Simón Bolívar, José Martí, and others, a hopeful if fully unrealized civil rights and economic agenda for the nation and a politically democratic revolutionary path for the Americas.”³² Therefore, his coup crushed the hopes of not only Chileans but the futurities of the broader political left globally in that it “marked the political perspectives, structural opportunities and social identities of subsequent generations.”³³ Between the years 1973 to 1990, many Chileans were subjected to concentration camps, random violent search, threats and ransacking and many more were forced to exile. In short, many families witnessed and bore the consequences of an extreme collective violence with its everlasting consequences on social and individual beings who lived them as well as on the subsequent generations to come.

³² Cockcroft, *Salvador Allende Reader*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*

2.1 Of Pain, Fear and Survival: El Gallo

'You might be able to, but your body never forgets. The violence that has been done to you remains a bodily memory,' RR tells me as we are sitting in a café right outside of Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos in Santiago. He seems calmer to me now in comparison to earlier when we had to leave the museum abruptly, when he could not stop shaking.

'Having lived violence, having gone through it, I know that I have been transformed in ways that I do not like. Luckily, I haven't killed anybody and I don't think I could live with that, because from an early age I've learned that I don't want to be responsible for anybody's death, you know. My cousin died when I was young during Pinochet, a police car ran the red light and killed him while he was riding a motorcycle. My family couldn't say anything. They couldn't complain or anything you know. That same cousin, his older brother died during the military occupation and again nobody could say anything.'

'When did this happen?' I ask RR.

'In mid 70s' he replies.

'So, you were really young when it happened?' I ask.

'Yes, I was but I saw how this impacted my family,' he replies patiently.

I remain quiet, partly because I am distracted by the presence of the protestors in the courtyard of the Museum, doing a sit-down protest near the air-stairs, which is built to signify forced exile of Chileans during Pinochet. After a few moments of observing the protestors and the noises of the sirens far away, I ask, *'was this also one of the reasons you joined MIR?'*³⁴

³⁴ MIR is a militant Chilean communist party.

'Not really, maybe, I don't know. Two of my friends' throats were slit in front of my eyes when we were leaving the high school. That's when I joined the youth sect of MIR organization,' RR answers, equally distracted by what is going on around us.

'What year was this?' I ask.

'March 9, 1985,' he replies.

'You remember the exact date!' I say surprise.

'How can I forget?! There was an earthquake that day in Santiago. I don't remember where I was during the earthquake but I know that it was the same day that my friends were murdered,' he says with a serious face.

I sit quietly for a while again, thinking how we remember and forget at the same time; weaving stories about ourselves based on what is “immediately available [to us] as a story and what [our] imagination is reaching towards”³⁵ and in so doing, we are permanently stuck with the symptoms of our own troubles, realizing there is no possibility of justice in the company of others.³⁶

'Your friends who were murdered that day, who were they? Why were they murdered?' I finally talk in words.

³⁵ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 4.

³⁶ In Chapter two I argued that “*Home-coming* then is a way of telling stories about ourselves, others and our troubles that accepts our shortcomings and failures in the process. It is a method of engagement that acknowledges that we are perpetually entrapped by the symptoms of our own troubles in the companion of other's memories and stories. Home-coming as a method admits that ‘radical hospitality’ is not just poetic but impossible. This is not only because the self reduces the other to the same but also because self gets consumed within the other. The self submits itself to the other without a possibility of justice.”

'They both were the sons of Pinochet's military members who had joined MIR's youth sect despite their families' connection to the military. Their death was a message to their fathers and other military members basically, get your kids in line or else we will kill them all'

Two weeks prior to this interview, we were walking in an old neighbourhood in Santiago where RR had lived and attended high school. This also was the neighborhood in which, when he first joined MIR, he had led a barricade against the military in 1985. During our walk he told me that his dad used to take him and his brother out for a walk near the river in Santiago and there would be dead bodies floating on the river. When asked about the bodies, his dad would reply that they were just a bunch of junkies who probably passed out and drowned themselves in the river. Later, RR realized that those were the bodies of political prisoners who were executed and dumped in the river. I remind him about that conversation and ask him, *'why do you think your dad lied about the bodies floating on the river? Do you think he was trying to protect you by not telling you the truth?'*

'Maybe,' he says, *'my dad pretended to be a very conservative guy my entire life. I grew up thinking he actually supported Pinochet. Although he would talk about politics, history and economy, he would do that in the context of other countries, never once Chile, never once about Pinochet.'*

'So, how did he react when you joined the MIR party?' I ask him.

The helicopters are flying above us and we can hear the sirens in the distance. Although the protests are happening in other parts of the city (other than the quiet sit-down protest in the

Museum)³⁷ and we are in a relatively quieter part of Santiago, every loud sound makes RR jump and check his surroundings. Every time this happens he stays quiet for a long time until I remind him of where we have left the conversation. His fear seems deeper than the disturbances caused by the sounds around us. He looks startled every time a loud sound interrupts us or even when someone walks or stands too close to us. I noticed his hypervigilance soon after I met him. He seemed to be on alert all the time, hushing me a few times pointing to a stranger who was either passing by or standing suspiciously close. He did not even tell me his name until our second meeting, until then I only knew him as *el gallo*.

‘That’s *el gallo*,’ said the guy who introduced us, pointing to a tall guy in his 50s, standing in an intersection. *El gallo* had long grey hair in a ponytail, dark complexion and angry eyes. The anger in his eyes was very familiar to me. It reminded me of someone, someone I know very closely. His clothes were very old with clear wear and tear marks on them and his shoes had holes, through them you could see his toes.

It strikes me at the moment of writing that I am drawn to make this observation, to fixate on such things in prose and thinking, in part because of my training in the social sciences, to make research a linear journey.

During the first three hours of our meeting, he interviews me. By this point, I am used to being counter-interviewed; it is only fair, is it not? Conversations do not belong to me. There was

³⁷ Anti-government protests in Santiago began on October 14, 2019 as a reaction to the increased metro fair and spread to the few big cities in Chile. The ongoing protests are reacting to the increased cost of living, privatization, lack of/or drained pensions and inequality that exist in the country. The protest is still ongoing as of the time this Chapter is being written. Santiago and Valparaíso are nothing but short of a war zone; both cities are divided into multiple front lines, with the ground zero being the site of direct conflict between members of the military and the protestors. So far, the protests have claimed the lives of about 40 people, with thousands injured and detained; this is the longest and most significant popular uprising since the end of Pinochet’s dictatorship.

not supposed to be a 'من' [me] in this journey. This journey was of co-travelling, of 'radical vulnerability.'

'Where are you from? No, where are you originally from? Why are you interested in Chile? Why right now? Why that time period? Isn't there enough research out there anyway? What do you think about what is going on in Chile right now? What do you know about the history of Chile? Are you a big fan of Allende?'

This last question was particularly surprising and challenging to answer! Am I a fan of Allende?! I clearly am; I grew up with a father who idealized Chilean left politics but also Allende, who was clearly a hero for him. So, I answer 'yes,' to which he replies, *'he was a womanizer, how can you be a fan of a womanizer?!'*

I have no answer to that. *'It is complicated'* I reply, and I mean it. It, in fact, is complicated, not just my attachment to Allende, but also to most of the protagonists in my life. I can love and hate in the same breath.

We are on the move during the whole interview, initially I thought he has a specific destination in mind, but then I realized that he does not trust me so he does not want to settle for one specific location. He is constantly checking our surroundings, every time someone is too close to us he stops, checks the person nearby and waits for them to pass. After about three hours of asking about me and my background, finally, he tells me that his current organization (an underground militant leftist party based in Santiago) has received threats from the government over the past few weeks due to their involvement in the current uprisings. Quietly pointing to a person that is standing right beside us, RR tells me that we are being followed for quite some

time now and ultimately offers to go to his place where he feels safer. He then follows up with, *'we can sit in front of my building, I am not asking you to come in, of course.'* I am relieved.

'So, how did he react when you joined the MIR party?' I repeat my question as RR is distracted by a loud voice that came from inside of the museum. *'Actually, the first time my father knew I was involved in politics was when I got arrested by the military and was questioned for 10 hours, he came and bailed me out and then right in front of the police station he beat me up.....he gave me an upper cut as soon as we walked out and those guys inside they had already beat me up but not on the face. My dad just smacked me out with one punch, with one punch he did more than those guys did in 10 hours. He threatened me, so the next day I left the house... "next time you get arrested I will kill you myself," he told me...so you see my life has been despite my dad...'* RR responds.

The silence between us has settled. I am getting better at sitting in silence with people.

'This is 1985?' I ask.

'Yes,' he replies.

'Did your dad ever tell you about his own political views? You told me he pretended to be a conservative guy, right?' I ask him, emphasizing on the word *'pretend.'*

RR says: *'you know, inside the museum, when I saw the pictures of the military members gathering people in front of La Moneda, I couldn't stop thinking of my dad. On September 11, 1973, he was just 25 years old and I was already born going on four years; my younger brother was two. The funny thing is I heard my father always tell the story of that day over and over again but always from a third person perspective. He made us believe that he heard this story from someone else and he is telling us someone else's experience. But I always had a feeling,*

you know, something I can't explain, that he was there that day. Anyway, a few years ago, per chance or serendipity, I don't know, maybe a higher power, I was talking to a cab driver after I returned from exile. It was winter, so I was wearing a hat, sunglasses and scarf so the driver wasn't really able to see my face. As always happens, the conversation with the driver went back to that day, the coup, [where were you when the coup happened?] is how our introductory conversations usually start. While passing from in front of La Moneda, the cab driver pointed at the Treasury Department which is on the other side of the street from La Moneda and said to me; I was there when the coup happened. The cab driver told me [to RR]: "on the morning of September 11 1973 when it became evident that the military was taking over, I was one of the people who took over the Treasury Department. Some of us boarded the windows so that the military couldn't see who was inside and some of us went to the roof and started shooting at the military. The way the military got us [the snipers on the roof of the Treasury Department] to stop was that they made people who were arrested on the streets that day, to lie down in the middle of the street. And then had the tanks ready to go at the head of this human pile. Then through the speakers the military announced that if they see one more shot coming from the top of the building they will run over the people who were lying down in front of the tanks". ' RR pauses to take a sip of his coffee and then continues;

'You know, I heard this story from my father but the way he would pick up this story was as if he heard it from someone else, like the way I am telling it to you right now. So, I am talking to this cab driver, who happens to be one of the snipers on the Treasury Department that day, and finally he tells me that I know who else was on the roof that day with me because we were

part of a communist organization called MAPU.³⁸ So, I don't know why but I asked him to stop the car and turn and look at me; then I removed my hat, glasses and scarf. The cab driver stopped the car and turned back. You should've seen his face. He said [RR's dad's name] is that you?! I am identical to my dad! I replied, I am his son! I knew he was there that day, I knew the story my dad told me in third person was his own story. My dad was part of MAPU, a Marxist Leninist organization that resisted the coup on September 11, 1973, he was a fucking sniper resisting the coup, and for the first time I felt close to someone I hated for such a long time.'

How can one love and hate in the same breath? The paradoxical irony of human connection.

Our relationship to our parents is one of forever undoing.

2.2 Of Un-doings and Dis-entanglements: The Afterlife

In 1985 I was a supernova, a massive explosion, the black hole that is my life right now is the result of that supernova. You asked me how the children of survivors survive – we don't, that's all. We all are caught in a black hole called the afterlife.

RR, in our last interview on Dec 15, 2019.

The afterlives of an event are often as revealing as the event itself, shedding light on pre-histories and futurities; on the multiple trajectories that could have been, and the one that eventually was.

Sara Salem, *Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt*.

³⁸ The popular unitary action movement was a small leftist party during Allende's government and part of the unitary forces that ruled the country from 1970-73. MAPU members were one of the most repressed during Pinochet.

Gomez-Borris defines afterlife as “the continuing and persistent symbolic and material effects of the original event of violence on people’s daily lives, their social and psychic identities and their ongoing wrestling with the past in the present.”³⁹ The afterlives of a violent event are shaped by the entangled cluster of discursive-material realities available to the people who have lived through political violence.⁴⁰ The meanings attributed to such violence and the collective grieving processes are mediated nationally through peace rallies and cultural and memorial sites such as museums. These sites selectively process the collective memory to re-inscribe the fragile national identity and to reinforce the hegemony of the state.⁴¹ The discussion of the afterlives of a violent event; such as war, revolution, political violence *en mass* or even natural disasters, has been medicalized and pathologized⁴² and reduced to a problem that must be governed and solved in an attempt to preserve the legitimacy of the “imagined community.”⁴³ It is assumed that the grieving is done once the testimonies are gathered, the public hearings heard and the perpetrators identified, and that the nation can move on like a good ‘neoliberal subject.’ The subject-hood that nations ultimately grant their subjects are not based on the people being accountable for their biological lives but depends on their productivity and resilience.⁴⁴

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁰ Based on Intra-active agencies, a concept coined by Karen Barad.

⁴¹ See Sara Salem on the concept of hegemony and its re-enforcement by the Nasserism Project in Egypt, see Salem, *Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt*; See also Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴² Jenny Edkins, “Forget Trauma? Responses to September 11,” *International Relations* 16(2) (2002): 243-256

⁴³ Benedict Anderson claims that the “nation is an imagined political community both imagined as sovereign and limited” as quoted in Charles Tilley, *Coercion, Capital and European States* (A. D.: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993). David Campbell, *Writing Security: US Foreign Policy and Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 11, claims that “national states [are] unavoidably paradoxical entities which do not possess pre-discursive stable identities.”

⁴⁴ Julian Reid, “The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience and the art of living dangerously,” *Revista Pléyade* (November, 2012).

In Chile, the symbolic state strategies that helped to facilitate the process of “smoothing over painful memories on the path towards national unity” after the end of Pinochet’s dictatorship was mediated with the ambition of legitimizing the capitalist project.⁴⁵ Chile was used as the laboratory of a neo-liberal experiment whose purpose was to create the ultimate neoliberal subject.⁴⁶ The goal was not to be free from danger anymore, it was in fact to take risks and be exposed, to be vulnerable. A population of ‘governable neoliberal subjects’ should act autonomously by making the most of their own vulnerability; it is not desirable for them to be secure from danger. This move from different epistemic regimes of security to the last episteme (novelty/surprise) has not only (de)problematized the occurrence of traumatic events, such as a military coup in Chile, but also perhaps normalized it as a part of a necessary past.⁴⁷

‘Wipe your tears, put your jacket on, we’re heading towards social reconstructions!’ recalls CS, *‘the narrative of progress, of getting over with, of moving forward was all you could hear after the referendum.’*⁴⁸ *That’s why my family moved to the UK, they couldn’t take all those noises anymore.’* She was sitting right beside me on a flight from Santiago to Toronto, a total stranger. I was reading a book called *Prisoner of Pinochet: My Year in a Chilean Concentration Camp*,⁴⁹ which is an autobiography written by Sergio Bitar, the Minister of Mining in Allende’s government. The book caught her attention; *‘what a light choice of reading for a flight, ha?!’* she asked with a smile. I smiled back. *‘What else do you read for fun?’* she asked again. The sarcasm in her tone was familiar. *‘Some light topics on political violence, silence, intergenerational*

⁴⁵ Gomez-Borris, *Where Memory Dwells*, 12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Claudia Aradau, *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* (Routledge, 2014).

⁴⁸ A national plebiscite was held on October 5, 1988 in which Chilean citizens voted to determine the de facto leader of the country. Nearly 56% voted to remove Pinochet from office, his government ended.

⁴⁹ Sergio Bitar, *Prisoner of Pinochet: My Year in a Chilean Concentration Camp* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2017).

trauma and so on!’ I replied. *‘Nice! Journalist or researcher?’* she asked, *‘Researcher I guess’* I replied back. *‘What’s the topic of your research?’*

Here we go again, here comes the hardest question for me to answer or even attempt to articulate. I know this should be an easy answer. I have been writing on this topic for a long time. What am I researching? I am researching things that are presumed to be nothing.

“There are different ways in which nothingness speaks,” claims Barad.⁵⁰ What is considered a vacuum or void, might be disruption of all the matters, entangled in life and manifested in the afterlife of violence. Such nothingness, which has significant overlaps with Avery Gordon’s “Ghostly Matters” produces haunting.⁵¹ Similar to the absences that take the shapes of subaltern existence, the power of nothingness, or a ghostly matter, can be traced on the ones whom are subjected to it and their social circles. How can one grieve nothingness, the void, the absence, the silence/d? This in/ability to grieve, perhaps, is the result of an epistemological pitfall, a lack of multivalent frame, one which can give us the ability to respond, ‘the respons-Ability’.

‘My mother was pregnant with me when she was arrested in Valparaíso in 1984.’ CR tells me. She pauses for a few minutes and asks; *‘did you know they used to put music on when they tortured the prisoners in Chile?’*

‘Yes, I heard that it is because some of the locations where they kept and tortured many political prisoners were in the city, some even in residential neighbourhoods, so they didn’t want the screams and cries of prisoners who were being tortured to be heard, right? That’s why they

⁵⁰ Karen Barad, “Troubling Time/s and Ecologies of Nothingness,” Saas Fee, Switzerland: The European Graduate School (August 2, 2017).

⁵¹ Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.

played loud music,’ I reply, recalling a conversation with RR while passing through an infamous torture house in Santiago.

‘Exactly’ she replies back, ‘so, my mom died when she gave birth to me in the prison they were keeping her and her comrades, or at least that’s what they told my grandparents and my father when they handed me to them. Then we moved to the UK after the fall of the dictatorship. I used to hate listening to this one particular song growing up, a very famous Chilean folk song. My grandmother would try to listen to it and I just couldn’t take it, there were a few times that I started screaming and asking her to turn it off. I didn’t know why. I just couldn’t listen to it. So, fast forward, a few years ago, after years of avoiding it, finally I decided to go back to Chile and find out what happened to my mother. I visited my mother’s old neighbourhood and got a hold of a few comrades of hers that were in the same prison with her and survived. One day, me and one of my mom’s comrades are sitting in a café in Bella Vista⁵² and the same song comes on and I go pale, telling my mom’s friend that I have always hated this song and never knew why. She tells me in tears that this was the song that they used to play when they were torturing my mother.’

Memory lingers in fractured places, sometimes entangled from birth, quietly existing, waiting to be erupted in the afterlife. Nothingness, the embodied memories that exist with no tactile trace, are threaded through the silence that surrounds us. Trauma exposes these fractures, causes disruptions, making what appears to be *nothingness* a non-identifiable multilayered ‘somethingness.’ Yet, through these indeterminacies and tensions in the inability to translate nothingness –silence speaks, or appears in the shape of what is absent. Silence is a wound that births.

⁵² A neighbourhood in Santiago.

'An abusive silent father, that's what I had growing up. An abusive silent father who always resorted to extreme violence. He would just look at me and I would tremble and I am not a small guy, he would just look and his angry eyes were enough for me to know what I was doing wrong and what I needed to do. Not even a word, just a stare. Me and my dad have identical faces, so you can imagine what I mean!' RR tells me.

'I understand exactly what you mean' I reply.

'But, I still admired him, his courage, his knowledge, everything about politics and history that I know, I know from him, and after that cab-driver encounter I even can say I love him now that I know his past. It's so weird to love someone you hate, you know?' RR says,

'I do, I know,' I answer.

'Make it snappy and with a smiling face, my dad used to say, and if I stared back or wasn't quick enough I would get beaten up, so needless to say when I got into politics I took on chores that were violent. I was the leader of a security apparatus, we were the ones who made barricades to hold the cops back because I was ready and daring to get physical and we went in fearless, we were brutal. By age 15, I couldn't take my dad anymore, so I left my parents place and started living at the house of the sub secretary general of the Christian left. Then I left that party and joined the more militant MIR and since then I haven't seen my dad or talked to him ever again.' RR says, while taking a puff of his cigarette and staring in a distance.

'So, you haven't been able to tell him that you figured out he was part of MAPU?' I say.

'No, I haven't talked to him in about thirty five years,' RR replies.

'Is he alive, do you know?' I ask again.

'I would've known if he was dead, I would've felt it, he has a grip on parts of me, I will feel it the day he lets me go.'

3. The Endings and Beginnings: Stories of Two Bullets

When we opened the envelope he left as his suicide note, there was the bullet inside. He had the same bullet we brought with us from Chile inside of his suicide note, no explanation, no nothing, just the bullet.⁵³

Interview with G family in Toronto Sept 2018.

'I had a friend, a comrade in Santiago, we were inseparable. Her name was L. We were the same age when we joined MIR and we have fought shoulder to shoulder for years. She got shot and paralyzed right before I left for exile in 1989. I left, you know, and she decided to stay. I ran away and she stayed. I blame myself for running away, but...' RR goes quiet for a while, finishing off his cigarette.

'I was in exile in the United States, one night me and my ex-wife were sitting outside and looking up at the sky. A shooting star passed and that friend's face came in front of my eyes, I had a feeling you know, I knew something was wrong. I called home, the connection was really bad and the voice was echoing, that's why I rarely called home, but I did that night. I called one of my friends back home and before I was able to say anything he told me that L is dead. She died at her place, taking a bunch of pills, she killed herself.' RR tells me. We are sitting outside his place. He opens a new pack of cigarettes and offers one to me, I grab one and thank him. *'I*

⁵³ Interview with G family in Toronto Sept 2018.

didn't think of you as a smoker!', he says laughingly despite the tears in his eyes. *'I wasn't until I started this research,'* I reply with a forced half-smile.

He lives in a very old apartment, a government subsidized housing which he was granted after he came back from exile and applied for compensation for psychological torture. Chile's Congress passed a bill in 2004 to compensate former political prisoners, most of them victims of physical and psychological torture during Pinochet.⁵⁴ The neighbourhood is old, filled with old but colourful houses with astonishing graffiti arts and political slogans (especially because of the ongoing protests in Santiago) on the walls. There are a few chairs set up outside of his apartment door, under the shade of a palm tree. It is the best way to escape the heat and sun, and we sit there for the rest of our conversation. I offer to compensate his time with whatever he sees fit, but he does not accept money and just asks for a pack of cigarettes and a dozen beers. We grab them on our way to his place.

He lights both our cigarettes, takes a sip of his beer and continues; *'when I came back a few years ago, I met up with my comrades and they told me that L has left me something and I should go pick it up from her old apartment. I went there, to her old place, it was dusty and piles of books were everywhere. No one had touched her place since she passed away. Anyway, I found this box on her coffee table, a small yellow box with my name on it and I opened it; inside, there was a bullet. I immediately knew what it was; it was the same bullet she was shot with and left her paralyzed. She handed that bullet to me.'*

⁵⁴ Lagos proposed the bill after disclosing a graphic report on torture and political imprisonment during Pinochet's 1973-90 regime. The commission that prepared the report heard testimony from more than 35,000 people and accepted 28,000 statements as true. The report described the main torture methods used at 1,131 detention centers set up throughout Chile after Pinochet seized power and the military cracked down on suspected dissidents. Methods included beatings, electric shock, sexual abuse, simulated firing squads and forcing people to watch relatives being tortured.

The tears are running down his cheeks now. I take a hit of my cigarette and watch it burn in between my fingers, trying so hard not to cry. After a few deep breaths, when I am sure I would not cry if I speak, I tell him that this is the second 'bullet as a suicide note' story that I have heard from my Chilean co-travellers. This gets his attention; *'What was the other one, tell me,'* he asks with a demanding voice.

'Last year, I was introduced to this wonderful Chilean family who were expelled from Chile in the late 1970s and have been living in Toronto ever since. The couple had a son MG, who was born in exile in Canada. The G family told me that they never talked about their experience in Chile with their son. They never told him what has happened to them. They did not want to. They wanted to have a blank slate. A new beginning and for that reason they didn't even bring anything with themselves from Santiago, other than a bullet. When I asked them if they ever discussed the story behind the bullet with anyone or their son, they said that they hadn't. The bullet sat with its silence on top of their fireplace for years. Three years ago, their son MG, who was part of a communist Party at a university in Canada, committed suicide. Everyone, including his comrades in the organization he was part of, were devastated. And his parents, I mean...

His mother told me that they did the best they could to never talk about anything that went down in Chile so that he wouldn't be impacted by it. I asked his parents whether he had left any note or explanation for his suicide behind. His dad said, and I would never forget, he said with a shaking voice that we found an envelope in his room. When we opened the envelope he left as his suicide note, he had the bullet inside of it. He had the same bullet we brought with us from Chile inside of his suicide note, no explanation, no nothing, just the bullet.'

RR stares at me for a while, then says; *'Can I ask you a question?'* to which I reply; *'of course.'*

'Why?' he asks and I know exactly what he means, but I ask him; *'Why what?'* to buy myself some time.

'Why do you do this work? I mean it must be so painful to constantly listen to these stories,' RR asks.

I reach out to the pack of cigarettes on the table, *'May I?'* I ask before grabbing another cigarette and lighting it. I take a few hits while staring in a distance, thinking how/whether I can actually verbalize the answer to this question. I am quiet and he is patient.

Finally, I reply; *'remember you told me you hate going to the dentist because you like the pain in your mouth. You said the guilt and self-hatred is such an overwhelming part of you that you don't think you deserve to live without pain. You told me that pain is somehow comforting. Remember? Yeah, you are right, pain is comforting.'*

هم به درد این درد را درمان کنم
هم به صبر این کار را اسان کنم
من نگویم شرح او خامش کنم
55 آنچه اندر شرح ناید ان کنم

The cure for pain is in pain,
sitting in patience with it might make it easy.
I cannot explain with words what it is that I am pursuing,
so, I rather remain silent,
because I pursue the things that cannot be explained.

⁵⁵ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, *Divane Shams Tabrizi*.

Conclusion - The End and the Beginning of Journeying *Home*

There is no catching, no pushing, no directing, no breaking through, no need for a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes. Time and space are not something entirely exterior to oneself, something one has, keeps, saves, wastes, or loses. The story never stops beginning or ending. It appears headless and bottomless for it is built on difference. Its (in)finitude subverts every notion of completeness and its frame remains a non-totalizable one.¹

This dissertation has explored the possibilities of utilizing narrative/postcolonial IR, Sufism and Agential realist account of Quantum Physics to help make sense of and think with, silence, absence and *Nothingness*. Building on Naeem Inayatullah's method of flow and Karen Barad's diffraction/intra-action, I use a transdisciplinary reading to argue for the importance of silence in IR. This work by its very nature is an exploration of the limits and potentials of the ethics of researching silence in the encounter with the other as the centre. Thinking about ethics as *homecoming*, the place where an 'an agential realist account of relationality' and 'affective positionality' reveal themselves, allows for an appreciation of underlying co-constitutive entanglements. Ethics is set within an apparatus, whose boundaries are constantly moving and becoming; that moving and becoming is a Sufi Journey. In many ways, this has also been my journey.

Homecoming is a soft dance between the 'real' and becoming, that which is enfolding. *Homecoming* hears and recognizes that our stories are interwoven and interconnected. Stories are apparatuses. For the purpose of my work I have used Barad's agential realist elaboration of Niels Bohr notion of apparatus: (1) apparatuses are beyond laboratory set ups, they are material-discursive practices, (2) apparatuses are boundary making practices within which a phenomena are produced, (3) apparatuses are material configurations, dynamic re-configurations of the

¹ Trinh, *woman, native, other*, 1-2.

world, (4) apparatuses are themselves both part of and co-constitutes the phenomena, and (5) apparatuses do not have intrinsic boundaries but are constantly being configured and reconfigured materially, spatially and temporally.²

Therefore, stories as apparatuses are never-ending. In an agential realist account, they are material-discursive practices, meaning they do not have an external relationship to one another. In fact, according to Barad, “the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-acting.”³ They do not always follow a straightforward temporality as they loop back constantly reconfiguring and enacting what has already happened. The past is never closed even when one attempts to close them. Stories are also always moving, constituting and constantly being reconfigured. Stories as apparatuses constitute and reconstitute the events and their spaces of resettlement. Every story is co-constituted.

Through *coming home*, in my work I turn to the lived traumas and trans-generational silences in the Afro-Caribbean Atlantic slavery in the 18th-19th centuries and Chile from 1970s to the present. History and international relations have neatly categorized and created a narrative of events, contexts, and critical sub-contexts which, depending on the problem-space and theory-problem the author is writing from, determines the ways in which silence is ignored – deemed ahistorical, non-quantitative or *untraceable* – or spoken for. Taking a different approach, I combine ‘affective positionality’ and an ‘always-becoming relationality’ in my efforts to write the encounters that form intimate sites of memory and memorialization.

In support of these findings, Chapter One is an un/telling of the story of Iran, of my story and the story of my loved ones. This short Chapter is a silent tribute to the ones whose story I

² Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 146.

³ *Ibid.*, 152.

‘chose’ not to tell. The Chapter opens with Muqattas letters which are disjointed, the disjointed letters which open the Qur’an. By reading these letters alongside the un/telling of the story of the slave ship Zong, I look into ways of writing without writing, and how silence might be expressed while also being kept secret. It ends with a picture that was taken by an Iranian artist living in exile, taken as a tribute to her memories and the feeling of nostalgia for a home she once knew. Threaded through these seemingly disparate examples is the flowing of silence, the haunting entanglements and ethics of trying to translate and make sense of silence within the field of IR. It is meant to be disruptive, like the Muqatta’a letters.

Following this line of disruptive argumentation, Chapter Two provides a literature review on silence, poetics and language using a transdisciplinary approach. It looks at how silence is interpreted, translated and understood in different bodies of thought. From Paul Celan’s poetry to Sufism and the writings of Ibn Arabi and Ayn-al-Qudat, I read silence through multiple fields diffractively – looking for ways that silence resists translation across fields/methods of inquiry. I further introduce my reading of the debates on logocentricity and homocentricity, arguing that homocentricity locates a place in which silence, void and *nothingness* remain in a state of indeterminacy. Through these readings I explore one method that disrupts dominant presuppositions about silence: Sufi deconstruction and its reorientation of the relationship between self, silence and the universe. As a holistic approach, Sufism situates silence as integrated, a state of clarity defined by perpetual doubt and attuned to transcendental interconnectedness of personal experience. Singing and dancing become modes of recognizing and encountering silence, meditating and reflecting. As Rumi remarks about the limits of

language, “a great silence overcomes me, and I wonder why I ever thought to use language.”⁴

How does one internalize these insights so that they can help one to ethically grapple with silences that are carried from traumatic experiences of state-led violence? Even the very act of writing this sentence (where I am attributing trauma to silence) demands an openness, a transdisciplinary epistemological and ethical sensitivity to the flows of ones’ silences.

In keeping with the central focus on silence and the entanglement of methodology and ethics, Chapter Three and Chapter Four explore the methodological possibilities and ethics of engaging with silence in IR and beyond. I introduce ‘affective positionality’ and its entanglement with agential realist account of relationality as an ethical methodology into researching silence. I define ‘affective positionality’ as a location where the researcher’s position, affects and emotions mark the place through which they enter an embodied relational conversation. Agential realist account of relationality rejects the relation of externality between material and discursive practices, rather it upholds “a specific material (re)configuring of the world through which boundaries, properties, and meanings are differently enacted.”⁵ Nonetheless, an agential realist account of quantum physics allows for mystification of the world by addressing sub-sensory places creating a possibility for a wholesale construction of an ethics that speaks to this mystification. As part of an exercise in methodological imagining, Chapter Three and Chapter Four contribute to a rethinking of the ways in which we engage and translate silence. I weave readings and teachings by many people who have travelled this road before me: Primo Levi, Saidiya Hartman, Emmanuel Levinas, Sahl al-Shushtari, Elizabeth Dauphinee, Richa Nagar, Avery Gordon, Karen Barad to re-orient the ontological presumptions of mainstream

⁴ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, *Divane Shams*.

⁵ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

frameworks. This then allows for an exploration of alternative onto-epistemic mode of engagement: *Homecoming*. This alternative onto-epistemic mode of engagement, *Homecoming*, does not make a claim to authority or to seek Truth (capital T); in fact, it assumes indeterminacy, co-constitution, re-invention and the impossibility of the ‘promise’ of understanding. In asking ‘what does it mean to listen to someone’s silences, to trace their entanglements, to acknowledge their past and to speak/listen with their memories?’ My task is not merely to reconstruct a narrative of the way it ‘truly’ ‘was’ but to respond and be respons-able for that which is being shared. It is the reality of inheritance and entanglements – as “irreducible relations of responsibility” which are “never a given” but rather “always a task. It remains before us.”⁶ By *coming home* as an approach to silence – as an approach to anything for that matter – the study of silence becomes open, if only for a fleeting contradictory moment which escapes standardization and theorization.

These findings and provocations are significant not just for the fields of IR and politics more generally, but because the normative insights could help inform policies of care, empathy and understanding. In the specific context of being a settler in Canada, exiled from my home country, I am aware of the responsibilities and weights – silent and non-silent in which people carry with them. By understanding the felt co-constitutive impacts of silence, policy makers could potentially divert the necessary resources to support people and initiatives. If silence becomes a recognized category, perhaps it could also be taken into consideration in the reformulation of the data and analytics which policy and lawmakers depend on. Furthermore, in the context of refugee resettlement, such an understanding would also contribute to nurturing

⁶ Barad, “Troubling time and E/cologies of Nothingness.”

empathy and understanding – a recognition of the layered journeys and experiences we are a part of. While this is not the aim of my journey, nor the ‘end goal’ of my politics, such an amelioration would be welcomed by many and lead to concrete changes within the existing carceral and racialized treatment of refugees/newcomers as the Other. It might also open the door for a more radical transformation in how individuals organize and express solidarities, incorporating and engaging with silence beyond the parameters set by the existing orthodoxy. It is in this distinct regard that I hope these lines of thought move beyond academia and policy circles.

The End was the Beginning

7 حاصل عمرم سه سخن بيش نيست / خام بدم ، پخته شدم ، سوختم

There is an old Sufi story which depicts Rumi towards the ends of his life. “Grand sage” a follower asks, “tell us about this journey that you have been on.” Rumi is said to have replied that his life journey could be summed up in three little phrases: “I used to be raw, then I was cooked, now I am on fire.”

We begin the journey of seeking to become what we already are; one with the One. However, perhaps we do not always live that way as we are still embodying the limitation imposed by our physical being. So, in some ways we need the journey in order to seek what it is we are trying to become; to be cooked in the fire of radical love. The edges of our ego need to be melted so that our sharp edges will not brush against others’ hearts. Love exists in the encounter. The journey of seeking love, will eventually cook us in the process.

⁷ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi, ‘My life journey can be summarized in three sentences / I used to be raw, then I was cooked, now I am on fire.’

The fire of love, like the fire that burnt the reeds in the field, will not only remove the egos of the self, it removes the self all together. سفر starts by one seeking what oneself is and it ends by one losing all the senses of oneself. It is this beautiful paradox that marks a Sufi سفر, the journey's beginning and end is tied back together. The traveller begins and ends with *nothingness*. She was in fact, dwelling in the shadows of *nothingness*, all along.

هیچ اگر سایه پذیرد ما همان سایه ی هیچیم

If nothingness had a shadow, we all would be the dwellers of the shadows of nothingness.

Seyyed Khalil Alinejad⁸

This noise of the reed is fire, it is not wind:
Whoever has not this fire, may he be nothing!

'Be Nothing' is a prayer, because only in recognizing *nothingness* one has the potential to feel somethingness, that somethingness is the radical love coming after the self-imposed destruction.

Where there is no من, there is no تو, there is a united One.

پیشتر آ پیشتر ای بو الوفا
از من و ما بگذر و زوتر بیا
پیشتر آ درگذر از ما و من
پیشتر آ تا نه تو باشی نه ما

“You and I should live as if you and I have never heard of a ‘you’ and an ‘I.’”⁹

It was in all the moments of recognition, of reading, of encounter, that I find myself back again – my journey has been towards *home*, it was my *homecoming*.

⁸ Seyyed Khalil Alinejad.

⁹ Molana Jalal Eddin Rumi.

REFERENCE LIST

- Aasland, Dag G. *The Ethical Condition of Knowledge, A report from the 100-year anniversary of the Levinas Conference* (Kristiansand, Norway, 2006).
- Abrahamov, Binyamin. *Ibn al- 'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam: An Annotated Translation of 'The Bezels of Wisdom'* (London and New York, Routledge, 2015).
- Adib, and Paul Emiljanowicz. "Colonial time in tension: Decolonizing temporal imaginaries." *Time & Society* 28, no. 3 (2019): 1221-1238.
- Adorno, Theodor W. "Introduction to Benjamin's *Schriften*." [1955] In *Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections*. edited by Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1988).
- Ado Michael, Andreas James. *Paul Celan: a rhetoric of Silence* (Unpublished Dissertation Thesis: Queen Mary University of London, 1987).
- Aflākī, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad. *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manāqeb Al- 'ārefīn*. trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
- Aflākī, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad. Ariflerin Menkibeleri, 2nd ed. and trans. Tahsin Yazıcı (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) 2, no. 38 (1995).
- Afrasiyabi, Ghulam Riḍa. *Sultān-i ushshaq* (Shiraz: Entesharat Daneshgah Shiraz, 1993).
- Agathangelou, Anna M. and Kyle D. Killian. *Time, Temporality and Violence in International Relations: (de)fatalizing the Present, Forging Radical Alternatives* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).
- Altmann, Simon. "The Illusion of Mirrors: Velazquez's Las Meninas." *European Review* 21, no. 1 (2013): 1-9.
- al-Aydarus, Abd al-Qadir b. Shaykh. *Ta'rikh al-nur al-safir 'an akhbar al-qarn al-'ashir* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al- Timiyya, 1985).
- al-Ghazālī, Ahmad. *Kitāb Savānih al- 'Ushshāq*. Noorsoft DVD, Tehran, #35, 19.
- al-Hibshi, Abd Allāh Muāammad. *al-Suñfiyya wa-l-fuqahā fi-l-Yaman*. Sana: al-Jil al-Jadid (1976).
- al-Suhrawardi, Umar. *The Awarifu-l-Maarif* (London: Samuel Weiser, 1892).
- al-Suhrawardi, Umar. *Sifat-a Khalvat va A dab an*, MS 2117 (Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya, Istanbul), folio 173a.

- Anckaert, Luc, Martin Brassier, and Norbert Samuelson (ed). *The Legacy of Franz Rosenzweig: Collected Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).
- Andrae, Tor, and Staffan Andrae. *In the Garden of Myrtles: Studies in Early Islamic Mysticism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).
- Anindyo Roy. "Postcoloniality and the Politics of Identity in the Diaspora: Figuring 'Home,' Locating Histories." In Gita Rajan and Radhika Mohanram eds., *Postcolonial Discourse and Changing Cultural Contexts: Theory and Criticism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995).
- Aradau, Claudia. *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* (Routledge, 2014).
- Āriyānpur, Yahya. "Zendegi va Āsār-e Nimā Yushij." Pādshāh-e Fath. ed. Milād 'Azimi (Tehran: Sokhan, 2008).
- Arsenijević, Damir. "Gendering the Bone: The Politics of Memory in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Journal of Cultural Research* 15, no. 2, (2011).
- Atkinson, Meera and Michael Richardson. *Traumatic affect* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).
- Attar, Farid al Din. *Mantiq al-Tayr*, trans. A. Darbandi and D. Davis (1984).
- Basberg, Cecilie and Iver B. Neumann. "Uses of the Self: Two Ways of Thinking about Scholarly Situatedness and Method." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2015): 798-819.
- Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801-833.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning* (United States, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007).
- Barad, Karen. "Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come," *Derrida Today* 3 no.2 (2010): 240–268.
- Barad, Karen. *What is the measure of Nothingness, Infinity, Visuality, Justice: 100 notes – 100 thoughts* (Kassel, Germany: Documenta Series 099, 2012).
- Barad, Karen. "What Flashes Up: Theological-Political-Scientific Fragments" in *Entangled Worlds*, ed by Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein. Fordham University Press, 2017.
- Barad, Karen. "Troubling time/s and E/cologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-memembering, and facing the incalculable," *new formations: a journal of culture/theory/politics* 92 (2018): 56-86.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller (New York: Noonday P, 1974).

- Beausoleil, Emily. "Responsibility as Responsiveness: Enacting a Dispositional Ethics of Encounter." *Political Theory* 45, no. 3 (2017): 291-318.
- Bell, Shannon. "'Dialectics at a Standstill': CONSTELACIONES in the Atacama Desert," 2018, <https://returnatacama.tome.press/chapter/dialectics-at-a-standstill-constelaciones-in-the-atacama-desert/>
- Bessel Van der Kolk, and Onno van der Hart. "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma." In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* edited by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 158–182.
- Bindeman, Steven. *Silence in philosophy, literature, and art* (Leiden, The Netherlands; Boston Brill, 2017).
- Bitar, Sergio. *Prisoner of Pinochet: My Year in a Chilean Concentration Camp* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2017).
- Braddock, Christopher. "Silence will Change the World: Kierkegaard, Derrida and Islamic Sufism." In *The Philosophy of Spirituality* (Brill Rodopi, 2018): 189-208.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Feminist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).
- Brigg, Morgan, and Roland Bleiker. "Autoethnographic international relations: Exploring the self as a source of knowledge." *Review of international studies* 36, no. 3 (2010): 779-798.
- Bruns, Gerald. *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (The John Hopkins University Press, 1997).
- Bull, Hedley. *The anarchical society: a study of order in world politics* (London: Macmillan international Higher education, 1977).
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).
- Callaway, Ewen. "Fearful memories haunt mouse descendants: genetic imprint from traumatic experiences carries through at least two generation." *Nature: International weekly journal of science* (2013), doi:10.1038/nature.2013.14272
- Caicedo, Laura. "'Memory is all that Matters;'" Queer Latinx Temporality and the Memory-Making Process' (Wake Forest University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2020).
- Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

- Celan, Paul. *Selected Poems*. Trans. by Michael Hamburger and Christopher Middleton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
- Chabal, Paul. *The end of conceit: Western rationality after postcolonialism* (London & New York: Zed Books, 2012).
- Chadwick, Rachelle. "Embodied Methodologies: Challenges, Reflections and Strategies." *Qualitative Research* 17, no.1 (2017): 54-74.
- Campbell, David. *Writing Security: US Foreign Policy and Politics of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
- Charrad, Mounira M. "Gender in the Middle East: Islam, State, Agency." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 417-437.
- Chittick, William C. *Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of Knowledge: The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).
- Chittick, William C. *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-^aArabî and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).
- Chittick, William C. *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principals of Ibn al-'Arabî's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).
- Chittick, William C. *Divine love: Islamic literature and the path to God* (Yale University Press, 2013).
- Clifford, James. "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski", in Thomas C. Heller, S. Morton and D. E. Wellbery (eds), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, individuality, and the self in Western thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986): 140–162.
- Clifford, James. "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski," in Thomas C. Heller, S. Morton and D. E. Wellbery ed., *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, individuality, and the self in Western thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).
- Cockcroft, James. *Salvador Allende Reader: Chile's Voice of Democracy* (Ocean Press, 2000).
- Cowell, E. B. "Medieval Persian Poets," in *The Universal Anthology: A Collection of the Best Literature*, vol. 10 edited by R. L. Garnett and A. Brandl Vallée (London: Clarke Company: 1899).
- Critchley, Simon. *The Ethics of Deconstruction: eraldida and Levinas* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

- Dabashi, Hamid. "The poetics of politics: commitment in modern Persian literature." *Iranian Studies* 18, no. 2-4 (1985): 147-188.
- Dabashi, Hamid. *Truth and Narrative. The Untimely Thoughts of 'Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999).
- Dabashi, Hamid. "In the Absence of the Face." *Social research* 67, no. 1 (2000): 127-185.
- Dabashi, Hamid and Golriz Dahdel. "Nima Yushij and the Constitution of a National Subject." *Oriente Moderno* 22, no. 83 (2003): 93-129.
- Daigle, Megan. "Writing the Lives of Others: Storytelling and International Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45 no. 1 (09, 2016): 25-42.
- Da Silva, Jessica. *Postcolonial Maghreb and the Limits of IR* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
- Davison, Andrew and Himadeep Muppidi. *The World is My Home: A Hamid Dabashi Reader* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2011).
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth. *The ethics of researching war: Looking for Bosnia* (Manchester University Press, 2007).
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth. *The ethics of autoethnography. Review of International Studies* 36, no. 3 (2010): 799-818.
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth. "Writing as hope: reflections on The Politics of Exile." *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 347-361.
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth. "Narrative voice and the limits of peacebuilding: Rethinking the politics of partiality." *Peacebuilding* 3, no. 3 (2015): 261-278.
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth. *The Politics of Exile* (Routledge, 2013).
- De Jonge, Huub. "Dutch Colonial Policy Pertaining to Hadhrami Immigrants." In *Hadrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean* edited by U. Freitag and W G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997).
- Delbo, Charlotte. *Auschwitz and After: Second Edition* (Yale University Press, 1995).
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith (University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
- Der Derian, James. The value of security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard." In *On Security* edited by Ronnie Lipshutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 24-45.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology* (Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967).

- Derrida, Jacques. "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep within a Shell: Paul De Man's War." *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 3 (1988): 590-652.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Fifth seminar of Pas d'hospitalité* (January 17, 1996).
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- Dillon, Michael. "Sovereignty and governmentality: From the Problematics of the New World Order, to the ethical problem of the world order." *Alternatives: Global, local, political* 20 (1995): 323 – 368.
- Dirac, Paul. *The Principles of Quantum Mechanics, 2nd edition* (Clarendon Press, 1947).
- Dirksmeier, Peter and Ilse Helbrecht. "Time, Non-representational Theory and the "Performative Turn"—Towards a New Methodology in Qualitative Social Research." *Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 2 (2009): <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0802558>.
- Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial encounters: the politics of representation in North-South relations* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- Doty, Roxanne Lynn. "Maladies of our Souls: Identity and Voice in the Writing of Academic International Relations." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2004): 377-392.
- Drozdzewski, Danielle. "Knowing (or Not) about Katyn': The Silencing and Surfacing of Public Memory." *Space and Polity* 16, no. 3 (2012.): 303–319.
- Edkins, Jenny. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Edkins, Jenny and Maja Zehfuss. *Generalising the international. Review of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005): 451-472.
- Edkins, Jenny. *Missing: Persons and Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2011).
- Edkins, Jenny. "Novel Writing in International Relations: Openings for a Creative Practice." *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 4 (2013): 281-297.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the other: How anthropology make its object* (Columbia University Press, 2014).
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, New York: 2004).
- Foner, Nancy. "West Indian Identity in the Diaspora: Comparative and Historical Perspectives." *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (1998): 173-188.
- Foucault, Michel. *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason* (Vintage, 1988).

- Frank, Arthur. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- Francaviglia, Richard. *Imagining the Atacama Desert: A Five-Hundred-Year Journey of Discovery* (University of Utah Press, 2018).
- Freitag, Ulrike and William Clarence-Smith. *Hadrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).
- Frosh, Stephen. “Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmission,” *American Imago* 69, no. 2 (2012): 241-64.
- Fulford, Robert. *The triumph of narrative: Storytelling in the age of mass culture* (House of Anansi, 1999).
- Gasché, Rodolphe. *The stain of the mirror: Derrida and the philosophy of reflection* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1986).
- Gaudillière, Jean-Max. “The Reasons of Madness,” *Diogenes* 51, no. 2 (2004): 33-44.
- Geerts, Evelien, and Iris van der Tuin. “Diffraction & reading diffractively.” *New materialism almanac*, (2016).
- Ghazali, Ahmad al. *Sawanih: Inspirations from the world of pure spirits*. Trans. by Nasrollah Pourjavady (London: Kegan Paul International, 1986).
- Gilbert, Emily. “The Gift of War: Cash, Counterinsurgency, and ‘collateral damage’.” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 5 (2012): 403-421.
- Gödel, Kurt. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (First published Tue Feb 13, 2007). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/goedel/>.
- Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and state violence in Chile* (University of California Press, 2009).
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
- Grandin, Greg. *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
- Green, Nile. *Sufism: A Global History* (Wiley-Blackwell Publications, 2012).
- Greyson, Kyle. “Dissidence, Richard K. Ashley, and the politics of silence.” *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010):1005–1019.

- Grosz, Elizabeth. *The nick of time: Politics, evolution, and the untimely* (Duke University Press, 2004).
- Guzmán, Patricio. *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010).
- Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011).
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," In Johnathon Rutherford ed., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998).
- Hamati-Ataya, Inanna. "Transcending objectivism, subjectivism, and the knowledge in-between: the subject in/of/strong reflexivity'." *Review of International Studies* 40, no. 1 (2014): 153-175.
- Hamati-Ataya, Inanna. "Reflectivity, reflexivity, reflexivism: IR's 'reflexive turn'—and beyond." *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2013): 669-694.
- Haraway, Donna. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
- Haraway, Donna. "The promises of monsters: a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others." In *Cultural Studies* by Lawrence Crossberg, Cary Nelson et Paula A Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992): 295-337.
- Hardy, Sam. "Landmark Sufi Shrine Destroyed by Islamists in Yemen." *New York Times* (February 11, 2015).
- Hardy, Sam. "Who Are Sufis and Why Do Islamists Hate Them?" *New York Times* (2017).
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (MacMillan Press, 2008).
- Haykel, Bernard. *Revival and Reform in Islam: the legacy of Muhammad al-Shawkani* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Heller, Thomas C., Morton Sosna, and E. David Wellbery, eds. *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought* (California: Stanford University Press, 1986).
- Hendricks, Gavin P. "A Derridarean critique of Logocentrism as opposed to Textcentrism in John 1v1." *Koers- Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 79, no. 1 (2014): 1-8.
- Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
- Hewlett, Nick. *Badiou, Balibar, Rancière: Re-thinking emancipation* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007).

- Ho, Engseng. *The graves of Tarim: genealogy and mobility across the Indian Ocean* (University of California Press, 2006).
- Hoelzel, Alfred. "The Suicidal Rhetoric of Silence." *The Jerusalem Post Magazine* (June 2, 1972).
- Howell, Alison. *Madness in international relations: Psychology, security, and the global governance of mental health* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
- Huysen, Andreas. "Present Past: Media, Politics, Amnesia." *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000.): 21-38.
- Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyya*, ed. ‘Uthmān Yaḥya, 14 vols (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1994).
- Inayatullah, Naeem and David Blaney. *International Relations and the Problem of Difference* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
- Inayatullah, Naeem. *Autobiographical International Relations: I, IR* (London: Routledge, 2011).
- Inayatullah, Naeem. "Flow: Uncovering the Language of Differentiated Oneness in Hegel, Marx, Sufi Teaching Stories, and Autobiography." *Academia.edu*. published (March 5, 2016).
- Jabri, Vivienne. *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).
- Jabri, Vivienne. "Disarming Norms: Postcolonial Agency and the Constitution of the International: A Journal of International Politics, Law and Philosophy." *International Theory* 6, no. 2 (2014): 372-390.
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. "Must International Relations Be a Science?" *Millennium* 43, no. 3 (2015): 963-964.
- Jong, Frederic and Bernd Radtke. *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).
- Kakoliris, Gerasimos. "Jacques Derrida's double deconstructive reading: A contradiction in terms?" *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 35, no. 3 (2004): 283-292.
- Kapoor, Ilan. "The Queer Third World," *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 9 (2015): 1611-1628.
- Karamustafa, Ahmet T. *Sufism: the formative period, The new Edinburgh Islamic surveys* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- Karimi-Hakkak, Ahmad. *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995).
- Kars, Aydogan. "Companionship, Human Perfection, and Divine Union in Thirteenth-Century Persian Sufism." *Journal of Sufi Studies* 7, no. 1-2 (2018): 74-101.

- Karunanayake, Dinidu. 'Reclaiming Home and "Righting" Citizenships in Postwar Sri Lanka: Internal Displacement, Memory, and Human Rights.' In *The subject of Human rights* edited by Madeleine Thien (Temple University Press, 2019).
- Keller, Joseph. "Conversations, the Poetics Function, and Criticism," *Methods at Work* 14, no. 4 (Fall 1980).
- Kiran, Asher. "Spivak and Rivera Cusicanqui on the Dilemmas of Representation in Postcolonial and Decolonial Feminisms." *Feminist Studies* 43, no. 2 (2017): 512-524.
- Knysh, Alexander. *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton University Press, 2017).
- Krishna, Sankaran. "The importance of being ironic: a postcolonial view on critical international relations theory." *Alternatives* 18 (1993): 385-417.
- Kumarakulasingam, Narendran. "Bloody Translations: The Politics of International Compassion and Horror." *Journal of Narrative Politics* 1, no.1 (2016): 61-75.
- Kurowska, Xymena and Benjamin C. Tallis. "Chiasmatic crossings: A reflexive revisit of a research encounter in European security." *Security Dialogue* 44, no.1 (2013): 73-89.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*, Sheridan A (ed) (New York and London: Norton, 1977).
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Split between the Eye and the Gaze,"(1964), In *the Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton (1978), 67-78.
- Lago, Collin and Divine Charura. "Working with transgenerational/intergenerational trauma: the implication of epigenetic considerations and transcultural perspectives in psychotherapy." *The Psychotherapist* 59, no. 3 (2011): 4-47.
- Larasati, Rachmi Diyah. *The Dance that Make You Vanish: Cultural Reconstruction in Post-Genocide Indonesia* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
- Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Edited by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 61-75.
- Leslie, Esther. "Souvenirs and Forgetting: Walter Benjamin's Memory-work." In *Material Memories*. Edited by Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1999): 107-122.
- Levi, Primo. *The Periodic Table* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).
- Levinas, Emmanuel. "An Exercise on the Madness of the Day." *Filozofia* 64 (2009): 229-237.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *On Escape, Translated by Bettina Bergo [1935]* (Stanford University Press, 1985).

- Lewisohn, Leonard. *In Quest of Annihilation: Imaginalization and Mystical Death in the Tamhidat of 'Ayn al-Quzat Hamadhani*, metaphysics and hermeneutics.
- Local, Irene, and Rossella Ventura. "Epigenetic Inheritance: Concepts, Mechanisms and Perspectives." *Frontier in Molecular Neuroscience*, 11 (2018.): 1-22.
- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).
- Lowenheim, Oded. "The 'I' in IR: an autoethnographic account." *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 1023-1045.
- Lumbard, Joseph EB. *Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2016).
- Maghsoudlou, Salimeh. *The thought of Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī (m. 525/1132): between Avicennism and gāzālīan heritage* (PhD dissertation, University of Paris, EPHE, 2016).
- Maghsoudlou, Salimeh. "Study of the doctrines of the name in al-Maqṣad al-asnā of al-Ghazālī and their theological and grammatical origin." *Studia Islamica* 112, no.1 (2017): 29-75.
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. "On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2008): 240–270.
- Manning, Erin. "Wondering the world directly – or, How movement outruns the subject." *Body & Society* 20, no. 3&4 (2014.): 162-174.
- Massignon, Louis. *Essay on the origins of the technical language of Islamic mysticism* (Paris: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
- Marcelin, Louis HERN, Toni Cela, et Henri Dorvil, *Les jeunes Haïtiens dans les Amériques/Haitian Youth in the Americas* (Presses de l'université du Québec, 2017).
- Matzner, Tobais. "Beyond data as representation: The performativity of Big Data in surveillance." *Surveillance and Performance* 14, no. 2 (2016).
https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/beyond_data
- Mauthner, Natasha. "The past was never simply there to begin with and the future is not simply what will unfold': a posthumanist performative approach to qualitative longitudinal research." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 18, no. 3 (2015): 321-336.
- Mawlana Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi, *Mathnawi* trans. by Reynold Nicholson (Gibb Memorial Trust).

- McBlane, Angus Alexander James. *Corporeal Ontology: Merleau-Ponty, flesh, and posthumanism* (PhD dissertation, Cardiff University, 2013).
- Melchert, Christopher. "The transition from asceticism to mysticism at the middle of the ninth century CE." *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 51-70.
- Melchert, Christopher. "Before *ṣūfiyyāt*: Female Muslim Renunciants in the 8th and 9th Centuries ce." *Journal of Sufi Studies* 5, no. 2 (2016): 115-139.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of perception*. Trans. D. E. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012).
- Memon, Muhammad Umar. *Ibn Taimiya's Struggle Against Popular Religion* (The Hague: Mouton. Messick, Brinkley, 1976).
- Mignolo, Walter. *Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2012).
- Milestones. Milestones: Commentary on the Islamic World (December 27, 2017)
<https://www.milestonesjournal.net/reviews/2017/12/27/secrets-and-aporias-in-ibn-al-arabi-and-derrida-a-review-essay-of-ian-almonds-sufism-and-deconstruction>.
- Mills, Sean. *A Place in the Sun: Haiti, Haitians, and the Remaking of Quebec* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2016).
- Mojaddedi, Jawid. *Beyond dogma: Rumi's teachings on friendship with God and early Sufi theories* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Mojaddedi, Jawid. "Introduction". Rumi, Jalal al-Din. *The Masnavi, Book One* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Mole de Saint Cheron. *Conversations with Emanuel Levinas: 1983-1994*, trans. Gary Mole. Duquesne (2010).
- Moro, Marie Rose. "Silence, Rebellion, and Acting-Out of a Silenced Past: Understanding the French Riots from a Postcolonial and Transcultural Perspective." *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 10 (Dec 18, 2019).
- Mudimbe, V.Y. *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
- Muppidi, Himadeep. *Colonial Signs of International Relations* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Murata, Sachiko and William C. Chittick. *The vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994).

- Nafafe, Jose Lingna. "Flora Comes's Postcolonial Engagement and Redefinition of Amilcar Cabral's Politics of National Culture in Nha Fala." *Hispanic Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (02, 2013): 33-48.
- Nagar, Richa. "Storytelling and co-authorship in feminist alliance work: reflections from a journey." *Gender, Place & Culture* 20, no. 1: 1-18 (2013).
- Nagar, Richa. *Muddying the Waters: Coauthoring. Feminisms across Scholarship and Activism* (Chicago, Springfield, 2014).
- Nagar, Richa., Özlem Aslan, Nadia Hasan, Omme-Salma Rahemtullah, Nishant Upadhyay, and Begüm Uzun. "Feminisms, Collaborations, Friendships: A Conversation," *Feminist Studies* 42, no. 2 (2016).
- Nagar, Richa., and Elizabeth Dauphinee, 2016, Editor's Interview with Richa Nagar: On Feminist and Postcolonial Thought. *Journal of Narrative Politics*, 2:2: 73-81.
<http://journalofnarrativepolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/JNP-Vol-22-Nagar.pdf>
- Richa Nagar (in journeys with Parakh Theatre and Sangtin Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan), 2019. *Hungry Translations: Relearning the World Through Radical Vulnerability*. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press.
- Nelson, Maggie. *The Argonauts* (Text Publishing Company, 2016).
- Neumann, Iver B. "Autobiography, Ontology, Autoethnology." *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 4 (2010): 1051-1055.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. [1887]. *Nietzsche: 'On the Genealogy of Morality' and Other Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. "A World without Others? Specter of Difference and Toxic Identitarian Politics." *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* 1, no. 1 (June 2018): 80-96.
- Olidort, Shoshana. *Paul Celan, A Poet in Exile*, Jewish literature.
- Ozeki, Ruth. *A Tale for the Time Being* (New York :Viking, 2013).
- Paipais, Vassilios. "Self and other in critical international theory: assimilation, incommensurability and the paradox of critique." *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 121-141.
- Papan-Matin, Firoozeh. *Beyond Death: The Mystical Teachings of 'Ayn Al-Quḍāt Al-Hamadhānī* (Brill, 2010).
- Park-Kang, Sungju. "Fictional IR and imagination: Advancing narrative approaches." *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 2 (2015): 361-381.

- Peskes, Esther. "The Wahhabiyya and Sufism in the eighteenth century." *Islamic Mysticism contested: Thirteen centuries of controversies and polemics* (1999): 145-61.
- Pedriali, Walter B. *Towards a Topography of the Void: Adorno on Silence and Other Extremal Denkbilder* (University of St. Andrews, 2018).
- Pierre, Beaudelaine. "Thinking De<=>coloniality through Haitian Indigenous Ecologies," *Hypatia* 35 (2020).
- Phạm, Quynh and Maria Jose Méndez. "Decolonial Designs: José Martí, Hồ Chí Minh, and Global Entanglements." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 40, no. 2 (2015): 156-173.
- Philips, NourbeSe. *Genealogy of Resistance* (The Mercury Press, 1999).
- Philips, NourbeSe. *Zong!* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2008).
- Phillips, James. "Madness of the Philosophers, Madness of the Clinic," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 16, no. 4 (2009): 313-317.
- Pin-Fat, Véronique. "'What's love got to do with it?' Ethics, emotions, and encounter in International Relations." *Review of International Studies* 45, no. 2 (2019): 181-200.
- Pourjavady, Nasrallah. *Ayn al-Qudat wa-ustadan-i u* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Asatir, 1995).
- Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 549-550.
- Rabinow, Paul. *Reflections on Field Work in Morocco, Third Ed* (Berkeley: University of California Press., 2007).
- Rahmani, Mansure, Ahad Faramarz Gharamaleki, and Hassan Arif. "Journey in Sufism: Literal or Metaphorical?" *Journal of Sufi Studies* 7, no. 1-2 (2018): 125-139.
- Ranciére, Jacque. *Disensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. James Corcoran (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010).
- Rao, Rahul. "One Time, Many Times." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 47, no. 2 (2019): 299-308.
- Rasool, Shaykh al-Tariqat Hazrat Azad. *The Search for Truth: The Life and Teaching Methods of the Indian Sufi Shaykh Hazrat Maulvi Muhammad Sa'id Khan* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010).
- Ravecca, Paulo and Elizabeth Dauphinee. "Narrative and the Possibilities for Scholarship." *International Political Sociology* 12, no. 2 (2018.): 125-138.

- Reese, Scott S. *Imperial Muslims: Islam, Community and Authority in the Indian Ocean, 1939 – 1937* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017).
- Reid, Julian. “The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience and the art of living dangerously.” *Revista Pléyade* (November, 2012).
- Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Sufism: Origins and development* (London: Routledge, 2008).
- Ritterbusch, Amy E., Eliana Lizeth Pinzon Niño, Ricardo Antonio Reyes Páez, Pardo Triana Julie, Daniela Jaime Peña, and Catalina Correa-Salazar. “‘I Feel Safer in the Streets than at Home’: Rethinking Harm Reduction for Women in the Urban Margins.’ *Global Public Health* 15, no. 10 (2020): 1479-1495.
- Rosenow, Doerthe. “Nomadic Life’s Counter-Attack: Moving beyond the Subaltern’s Voice,” *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (April 11, 2013).
- Rossdale, Chris. “Anarchy is what Anarchists make of it: Reclaiming the Concept of Agency in IR and Security Studies.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2010): 483-501.
- Roy, Anindyo. “Postcoloniality and the Politics of Identity in the Diaspora: Figuring ‘Home,’ Locating Histories,” in Gita Rajan and Radhika Mohanram eds., *Postcolonial Discourse and Changing Cultural Contexts: Theory and Criticism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995).
- Rumi, Jalāl al-Dīn. *Maktubat*, ed. A. R. Akyürek. Istanbul: Sebat Basımevi, 1937: #128, 134.
- Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn. *Mektubat*, ed. A. Gölpınarlı, Istanbul: İnkılap Basımevi, 1963: #130, 196.
- Rumi, Jalāl al-Dīn. *Kulliyat-i Divan-i Shams*, #2095, 785.
- Rumi, Jalāl al-Dīn. *Rumi: In the Arms of the Beloved*. Trans. by Jonathan Star, 1997.
- Rumi, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi. 1991. *Mathnawi*. Translated by Reynold Nicholson. Gibb Memorial Trust.
- Rumi, Molana Jalal Eddin. Trans, Coleman Barks (2003).
- Rumi, Jalaluddin. *Mathnawi of jalaluddin rumi* (Adam Publishers, 2006).
- Rustom, Mohammed. 2018. “Ayn al-Quḍāt between Divine Jealousy and Political Intrigue.” *Journal of Sufi Studies* 7(1-2): 47-73.
- Rutazibwa, Olivia. “Hidden in plain sight: coloniality, capitalism and race/ism as far as the eye can see.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 48, no. 2 (2020): 221-241.
- Rutazibwa, Olivia and Robbie Shilliam. *Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Politics* (Oxon: Routledge, 2018).

- Sadr, Behjat. *notebooks are my mirrors*, <https://behjat-sadr.com/en/>
- Safi, Omid. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- Salem, Sara. *The afterlives of Colonialism in Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).
- Salih, Ruba. "Bodies That Walk, Bodies That Talk, Bodies That Love: Palestinian Women Refugees, Affectivity, and the Politics of the Ordinary," *Antipode* 49 no. 3 (2017).
- Sandelowski, Margarete. "Reembodying Qualitative Inquiry." *Qualitative Health Research* 12, no. 1 (2002): 104–115.
- Sardar, Ziauddin. *Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015).
- Sarte, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness* (Routledge, 1956).
- Sauerländer, Willibald. The Painter's Painter: Velázquez After 350 Years (*The New York Review of Books*, September 30, 2010).
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford University Press, 1987).
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. "In Memoriam," Translated, from the French, by Zack Rogow, *The American Poetry Review* 31, no. 2.
- Singh, Julietta. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Duke University Press, 2018).
- Simpson, Leane Betasamosake. *The accident of being Lost, Songs and Stories* (Astoria, 2017).
- Sirriyeh, Elizabeth. *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond, Eng.: Curzon, 1999).
- Shahi, Deepshikha. "Introducing Sufism to International Relations Theory: A Preliminary Inquiry into Epistemological, Ontological, and Methodological Pathways." *European Journal of International Relations* 25, no. 1 (2019): 250-275.
- Shilliam, Robbie. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought: Imperialism, Colonialism and Investigations of Global Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- Shilliam, Robbie Alex Anievas and Nivi Manchanda. *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (London: Routledge, 2014).

- Somers-Hall, Henry. *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference* (State University of New York Press, 2012).
- Soshnikov, V. N. *Interrelation of Fast and Slow Electron Waves at Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves in Maxwellian Collisionless Plasma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2007).
- Smith, Margaret. *An Introduction to the History of Mysticism* (New York: Gordon Press, 1976; reprint, London, 1930).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Columbia University Press, 2010).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Responsibility." *boundary 21*, no. 3 (1994): 19–64.
- Srivastava, Jayati and Ananya Sharma. "International Relations Theory and World Order: Binaries, Silences and Alternatives." *South Asian Survey* 21, no. 1&2 (2014): 20–34.
- Stelzmann, Rainulf A. "Paul Celan's Argumentum e Silentio': An Interpretation." *Monatshefte*. 67, no. 1 (1975): 16-20.
- Stewart, Corbet. "Paul Celan's Modes of Silence: Some Observations on Sprachgitter." *The Modern Language Review* 67, no. 1 (1972): 127-142.
- Tabrīzī, Shams-I. *Me & Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi*. Translated by W. Chittick (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2004).
- Tharoor, Ishaan. "The beautiful, historic shrines that Islamists try to destroy," *The Washington Post* (July 25, 2014).
- Thomas, Nicola. "Meridians: the poem as a place of encounter in Paul Celan and JH Prynne." *Tropos* 2, no. 1 (2015): 68-79.
- Tiffany, Tanya J. "Interpreting Velázquez: Artistic Innovation and Painted Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Seville." Order No. 3108180 (The Johns Hopkins University, 2004).
- Tilley, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States* (A. D.: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993).
- Trinh T., Minh-ha. "An Acoustic Journey." In *Rethinking Borders*, 1-17. Edited by John C. Welchman (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- Trinh T., Minh-ha. "Not You/Like You: Postcolonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference." In *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, 415-

149. edited by Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Trinh, T. Minh-Ha. *woman, native, other*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

Tucker, Karen. "Unraveling Coloniality in International Relations: Knowledge, Relationality, and Strategies for Engagement." *International Political Sociology* 12, no. 3 (2018): 215-232.

Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa, Muhtaroglu, Nazif, and Quintern, Detlev. *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue* (Springer, Dordrecht, 2014).

Vergès, Françoise. "The Slave in Le Louvre: An Invisible Humanity." *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* 38 (2016).

Vrasti, Wanda. "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 279-301.

Wald, Robert. *General Relativity* (University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Waltz, Kenneth N. "Laws and Theories." In T. O. Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and its critics* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1986).

Weigel, Sigrid. *Body-and image-space: Re-reading Walter Benjamin*. Translated by Georgina Paul with Rachel McNicholl and Jeremy Gaines (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Watkins, Paul. in conversations with NourbeSe Philips, "we can never tell the entire story of slavery," (Toronto book reviews, 2014).

Whitehead, AN. *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

Wolfreys, Julian. *Deconstruction – Derrida* (Transitions Series: Macmillan Higher Education, 1998).

Wood, Richard. "Secrets and Aporias in Ibn Al-Arabi and Derrida: A Review Essay of Ian Almond's *Sufism and Deconstruction - Milestones: Commentary on the Islamic World*."

Yunus Emre, Yunus Emre Divanı, ed. M. Tatçı (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı).

Zarrinkoub, Abdol Hossein. *Jostojou dar Tssavof e Iran* (Amirkabir publication, Tehran, 2006).

Zwemer, Samuel Marinus. *The Moslem Doctrine of God* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1905).

جستجو در تصوف ایران، عبدالحسین زرینکوب، تهران: انتشارات امیرکبیر کریم زمانی شرح جامع مثنوی معنوی