Becoming Worlds:

Place, Subjectivity and Assemblage in Literature for Young Adults

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Contents

Abstract.

Child subjectivity is a key area within children's literature research. This thesis explores the notion of embodied subjectivity by locating the formation of subjecthood in the context of place. I discuss representations of place in a range of literature for young adults, drawing primarily from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's ontology of becoming to conceptualise place as a constantly shifting, unstable assemblage that not only physically enacts practices of power, but also reveals the instability of social organisation and discourse.

I propose that the concepts within Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming allow us to consider children's texts beyond frameworks of ideology and power. Discussions that privilege ideology implicitly place the child in a powerless position, limiting our readings to how the child subject's actions resist or comply with dominant social ideologies. I argue that such readings blind us to other models of agency and subjectivity, reifying ideology over the capacity of minor subjects to create new relations and changes within the social field.

My analysis of place reveals that children's literature is a genre that thrives when read for, and through, multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari's theories allow us to consider young adult literature as a genre characterised by becoming: becoming-place, becoming-subject and becoming-minor. I conclude that children's literature does not only function to reflect ideological concerns or convey social agenda, but, through its representations of place and social order, also has the capacity to present its own emergent ontology of the becoming subject.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____   Date: 13 August 2018

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Challenging the neutrality of place

Fantasy texts for children and young adults are as identifiable by their settings as by their characters or plots: Wonderland, Earthsea, Neverland, Narnia. When a child reader engages with a fantasy text, he or she encounters places that are like characters in themselves, with particular traits and features that distinguish them from other narrative settings. These fictional worlds are made coherent through their resemblance to real world places, by both their topographical layouts and socio-cultural organisations. Writers, when crafting imaginary worlds, also imagine power structures that animate their fictional societies. These power structures are not just authorities or authority figures in the protagonists' lives, but forces embedded within place itself.

As Pierre Bourdieu observes, 'the most successful ideological effects are those that have no words, and ask no more than complicitous silence' (1977, 188). Place is, perhaps, the most silent aspect of human experience, fading into the background while also determining the extent and limitations of human actions. Michel Foucault's study of the prison space as a panopticon is particularly illuminating in this respect, giving us a framework for discussing the ways in which power is cemented into built form. Foucault writes of the prison as 'a long elaboration of various techniques that made it possible to locate people, to fix them in places, to constrict them to a number of gestures and habits' (1988, 105). The prison — and places in general — reveals the State's interest in social order and demonstrates how spatial practices of power transform individuals into subjects of the State.

Place itself is therefore intensely powerful. This thesis seeks to develop a vocabulary and a theoretical framework for understanding place and setting in literature for children and young

adults as a narrative representation that is more than neutral or metaphorical. I argue that representations of place, much like representations of subjectivity, express processes of becoming and transformation. By understanding place as a non-static, constantly shifting body, we are challenged to decentralise the human as the primary body of power and reconsider how subjects are formed within social contexts. This decentralisation of the human also decentralises power as the primary productive force in place-making and social practices, creating conceptual space to consider how other forces produce society and the subject.

As I discuss below, Foucault's analysis of power focuses largely upon the effects of power upon the human. This analysis is particularly favoured by children's literature criticism, leading to explorations of agency and subjectivity in relation to resistance or compliance to the social order. A Foucauldian perspective tends to understand representations of power in children's literature in terms of complete and hegemonic control over the child protagonist, creating seamless and unconflicted processes of subjectification in which the child is rendered powerless. Gaining power, in this system, involves critical agency, acting in a way that challenges the social order. The second aim of this thesis is thus to develop a vocabulary for recognising and discussing how other forms of agency can be enacted and practised by child protagonists. Place, as a social institution that is both produced by the social order and changed and transformed through everyday ordinary activity, becomes the ideal site for staging agency outside of the social order.

Some groundwork

Any study of place in literature involves drawing from multiple academic paradigms. The category 'children's literature criticism' itself is broader than implied, encompassing criticism of young adult texts and juvenilia, and so is necessarily interdisciplinary, adopting theories from psychoanalysis and psychology to sociology and cultural theory. This thesis brings Gilles

Deleuze and Felix Guattari's ideas of productive desire to complement Foucault's concept of productive power. Deleuze and Guattari do not deal primarily with literary criticism, but their works overflow with numerous references to literature. *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) is laden with references to Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, Edgar Allen Poe and D.H. Lawrence, while *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) offers a reading of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* to explore their concept of 'becoming'. More explicit is their concept of 'minor literature', presented in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986b), in which Deleuze and Guattari dissect how language operates in literature written from a marginalised position. Literature, for Deleuze and Guattari, is thoroughly political:

> What each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement. The political domain has contaminated every statement (*énoncé*). But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is 'often inactive in external life and always in the process of breakdown', literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. (17)

Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of minor literature as political is informed by the question they pose in *Anti-Oedipus*: 'Given a certain effect, what machine is capable of producing it? And given a certain machine, what can it be used for?' (3). In more literary terms, Deleuze and Guattari's question to a literary work is not 'what does it mean?' but 'how does it function?' Deleuze and Guattari's challenge to read literature for its function rather than its meaning appears, at least initially, to be at odds with children's literature criticism and its interest in how meaning is ideologically entrenched. These firm ideological foundations, however, provide an ideal site for exploring how to read in a minor fashion. The ideological presence within children's texts means that we must acknowledge the presence of the major's insistence upon recognisable and unambiguous sense and meaning. Our readings, however, can introduce crises into the major itself by disrupting the major's call to read what is strictly within the text and read instead for what its characters, plot or narration can become. In this way, we can highlight how even the most conventional text can be read in a divergent manner, and how the major always has minoritarian qualities.

Children's literature, as a genre written by adults (the majority) for children (the minority) is not strictly a minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor, however, allows us to consider the interplay between children's literature and politics. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari's writing suggests that minor literature can be considered less as a genre than as a point of intersection that highlights function over form:

> A minor literature is not one of a minor language, but rather one that a minority makes in a major language. The first characteristic is that the language is affected by a strong coefficient of deterritorialisation . . . The second character of minor literature is that all is political. . . . in minor literature each individual affair is linked to politics The individual affair becomes even more necessary, indispensable, enlarged in the microscope, such that a completely different story takes place within . . . There is no subject, there are only collective assemblages of the enunciation — and literature expresses these assemblages, in conditions where they are not given from the outside, and where they exist only as diabolical powers of the future or as revolutionary forces in the making. (1986b, 30-33)

In this sense, children's literature criticism shares Deleuze and Guattari's interest in how literature interacts with readers in social, discursive and ideological contexts. Minor literature is marked by two particular characteristics: deterritoralisation and affinity with the political. Deterritorialisation, in brief, is the re-coding of social codes, marking the movements towards change, difference and transformation. With regard to literature, deterritorialisation is part and parcel of defamiliarisation, the literary technique that presents ordinary and familiar concepts in an unfamiliar way (and, in the process, reveals something new about the concepts). Fantasy and science fiction, both for adults and children, explicitly makes the familiar strange through presenting worlds with completely different possibilities to our own. Social concepts, such as identity (including race, gender, class, and so on) are deterritorialised, re-coded into new contexts and imagined worlds. In this sense, deterritorialisation extends to speculative literature for children and young adults as a whole.

Indeed, children's literature criticism and its current interest in the potential functions of children's texts in society treats children's literature as a Deleuzian machine — a machine that

produces particular effects through deterritorialising and re-presenting certain aspects of the world for consumption by children. John Stephens, in his landmark exploration of the intimate relations between language, ideology and children's literature, emphasises the need to make visible the invisible assumptions about childhood and social relations underpinning texts written for children. For Stephens, a child's textual exploration is inextricably woven with socialisation, and children's texts do not merely present stories, but represent society and ways of being: 'narrative without an ideology is unthinkable: ideology is formulated in and by language, meanings within language are socially determined, and narratives are constructed out of language' (1992, 8). Peter Hunt, similarly, writes that children's texts are 'culturally formative, and of massive importance educationally, intellectually, and socially (1990, 2)'. In this sense, children's literature criticism positions ideology and society as other 'multiplicities' with which a text connects. As a machine, the children's text produces representations: representations of subjectivity (which in turn influence the child reader's subjectivity) and representations of society.

The recognition of the educational, didactic and political capacities of children's literature has encouraged critics to draw upon critical theory to discuss children's literature and the child reader. Maria Nikolajeva, in her defence of the use of theory in children's literature, identifies a range of theorists commonly used in the field, writing,

> Among the best recent critical studies of children's literature, we find those based on Julia Kristeva's theories of literature (Westwater 2002), on Michel Foucault (2000) and Jacques Lacan (Coats 2004). Neither Kristeva (1982, 1984) nor Lacan (1997) nor Foucault (2002) offer ready-made implements to deal with literary texts; instead, they suggest a general way of thinking about literary texts which the scholars embrace and from which they mould their own methods and approaches. (2010, 4)

Nikolajeva's observation continues to ring true. Explicitly Kristevan analyses appear regularly in international children's literature journals such as *Children's Literature* (Rauwerda 2016, Hubler 2017), *The Lion and the Unicorn* (Jenkins 2011, McGlasson 2013) and *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* (Heinecken 2014, Lewkowich 2016). Lacan informs readings

of subjectivity and representations of society (Rudd 2010, Nodelman 2013), the use of language (Coats 2013, Ng 2014) and forms the foundation of broader psychoanalytic approaches to texts (Keeling and Pollard 2012, Buckley 2015). Foucault and Althusser inform children's literature scholarship and its discussion of power; most recently, Foucault's works influence explorations of surveillance and technology (Cantrell 2011, Gonzalez 2011, Happonen 2014, Mallan 2014, Jenkins 2016), and identity politics (Stein 2012, New 2014, Jeikner 2017).

Though the theoretical frameworks vary, discussion generally privileges ideology, considering how the recoding of deterritorialised concepts reveals underlying social ideologies and concerns about childhood and identity. As a result, readings of children's texts become limited to how a text aligns or challenges dominant social ideologies. Deterritorialisation, however, allows us to think about the re-coding of concepts becomings — as moments of flux rather than end-points. The re-coding of concepts creates a 'line of flight' or escape, a creative line that disorders previously stable relationships. For Deleuze and Guattari, these lines of flight simultaneously escape and constitute the social field, privilege lines of flight and relations over constituted, coded forms and organisations. Deterritorialisation thus does not adhere to binaries but, rather, expresses a means of thinking towards the play of movements of, on and between the lines instead of the dualistic oppositions that occur when we focus upon ideology.

Clémentine Beauvais is one of the few children's literature critics to address the field's tendency to position the adult and child in a dual binary.[1] Beauvais' project acknowledges the

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[1] Jessica Seymour, for instance, observes that 'there remains a culture of [the child's] expected submission [to ideology] among academics who concern themselves with the potential sociological effect of these narratives' (2). David Rudd also embarks upon 'dismantling such binary oppositions as child/adult and innocence/experience' (2013, 9), drawing upon Lacanian concepts to reconsider representations of the child beyond powerless. Both Seymour and Rudd, however, are more interested in addressing conceptualisations of the child/child characters than Beauvais, whose exploration of the child also encompasses rethinking and refining our definitions of power.

power dynamics in an adult-child relationship but also reconceptualises the power relationship between adult and child, noting that

> the different aspects of the fuzzy concept of "power" must be defined, refined and redistributed [. . . .] The adult agency, even when didactic is not necessarily powerful; the child figure, even when turned into a projector screen for adult desires, is not automatically deprived of power. (2015, 4)

This thesis builds upon Beauvais' project by suggesting that children's literature can be understood as a minor literature that problematises the oppositional binaries that position social structures as all-encompassing, rigid entities and child characters as powerless, fluid and impressionable bodies. This is not a literal application of Deleuze and Guattari's definition of minor literature but, rather, a means of extricating the capacity of children's literature to deterritorialise social concepts from representations of social structures and places. The political and socio-cultural nature of place becomes evident in the ways that child characters negotiate the places they encounter. These encounters reveal the ideological assumptions underpinning social space and the ways in which ideology becomes flexible and fluid when it is negotiated and experienced, producing ways of understanding the political and the subject beyond power relations. Minor becomings allow children's literature criticism to recognise, imagine and rethink subjectivity beyond the subject positions already imagined by the major.

This thesis thus joins a small though dynamic conversation in children's literature and Deleuze and Guattari. Though Deleuze and Guattari's ideas are not commonly deployed in children's literature criticism, the generative force of their concepts has given rise to some Deleuzo-Guattarian explorations of children's texts. Jane Newland is the most prolific children's literature scholar to draw upon Deleuze and Guattari, working with a plethora of Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas to delve into the complexity of authorship and voice in children's literature (2009). Newland also draws upon the notion of repetition to reconsider time and temporality in series fiction (2013), building upon her earlier work on becoming in children's series fiction (2006) to move beyond comparative difference between texts to an exploration of repetition

beyond analogy and representation. Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the spatial has also given rise to Anthony Pavlik's cogent discussion of paratextual maps in children's literature and their potential to heighten awareness of spatiality (2010) and Sarah Cantrell's examination of liminal space in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as a Deleuzian 'any-space-whatever' (2011). Both Pavlik and Cantrell draw upon notions of multiplicity and connection to explore how children's literature engages with space. This thesis engages with this ongoing exploration of multiplicity and spacce by searching for minor becoming within children's and young adult literature, exploring how place and space can in themselves allow for the production of new assemblages.

The 'new', as laid out in Deleuze's philosophy, is difference:

> For the new — in other words, difference — calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition, today or tomorrow, but the powers of a completely other model, from an unrecognized and unrecognizable terra incognita (1994: 136).

The concept of the minor is particularly pertinent to difference or the new, for it is the 'unrecognized and unrecognizable': the collective becomings which are already part of a major assemblage, yet masked by the typical representational models of the major. As Deleuze reminds us, the minor 'has no model, it is a becoming, a process' (1995, 173), while the major follows 'a given form' (1986b, 51). The minor produces difference and the new through breaking the regular codes and organised practices that the major leaves intact. The new, in this sense, is the disorganisation and deterritorialisation of established assemblages in ways unforeseen by the major. By exploring the flows of becoming that allow for new assemblages in children's and young adult literature, we are able to discuss not only the ideological assumptions underlying representations of place and subjectivity, but also the shifting organisation of power and desire. Power and desire, considered in light of assemblages and the new, become imbued with spatiality.

Rethinking the political: power and desire

Deleuze and Guattari write that 'the second character of minor literature is that all is political . . . in minor literature, each individual affair is linked to politics' (16). As discussed above, the political nature of children's literature — particularly discussions of power in relation to Foucault — is at the heart of children's literature criticism. Roberta Seelinger Trites, in her study of power and repression in adolescent literature, explicitly draws upon Foucault when she observes:

> Power is a force that operates within the subject and upon the subject in adolescent literature; teenagers are repressed as well as liberated by their own power and by the power of the social forces that surround them in these books. Much of the genre is thus dedicated to depicting how potentially out-of-control adolescents can learn to exist within institutional structures. (7)

Similarly, Beauvais notes that power is aligned with the adult. Beauvais outlines various derivations of the concept of power in children's literature criticism, writing that power is conceptualised as 'repressive' (Nodelman 1994, 178), 'dominat[ing]' (Knowles and Malmkjaer 1996, 44) or a force that creates a 'subservient audience' (Hunt 1992, 6) (Beauvais, 2013, 79). Beauvais proposes that the adult-child relationship dynamics are 'of a sophistication that precludes any easy attribution of "empowerment" or "disempowerment" to one or the other party (2013, 78). Power and resistance in children's literature criticism are thus implicitly placed in opposition, in which power imposes identities on individuals and resistance dissolves power's identity formations and empowers the child. A character's subjective development is judged on the character's ability to exercise agency, and agency is recognised when it takes the form of resistance to dominant ideologies and formations of power. Beauvais deftly argues for reconceptualising power with more precision to highlight the nuances of power relations. This thesis responds to Beauvais' call for further reconceptualisations of power by recentring the conversation to include Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts of desire.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire, not power, is the primary productive force. Deleuze and Guattari's desire is notably different from psychoanalytical concepts of desire. While Jacques Lacan writes that 'desire is a relation of being to lack', Deleuze and Guattari explicitly reject psychoanalysis, and reconceptualise desire as a productive force that, like power, is deployed rather than possessed.[2] This concept of desire resonates with Foucault's understanding that power is productive, not repressive. Though Foucault considers desire an important concept in understanding power, noting that power 'produces effects at the level of desire' (1980, 59), but that 'whatever desire is, the power relation is already present' (1978, 81). In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari understand desire, not power, as the primary productive force. They write:

> (1) to us assemblages seem fundamentally to be assemblages not of power but of desire (desire is always assembled), and power seems to be a stratified dimension of the assemblage; (2) the diagram and the abstract machine have lines of flight that are primary, which are not phenomena of resistance or counterattack in an assemblage, but cutting edges of creation and deterritorialization'. (585)

The assemblage is the central concept in Deleuze and Guattari's ontological framework, replacing their earlier image of the machine. The assemblage is a collection of any number of discrete and disparate things gathered into a single context. Importantly, an assemblage is not a tightly organised, coherent whole. In this sense, there is no fixed and stable ontology for the social world — just assemblages of other complex configurations that, in turn, play roles in other configurations. With regard to children's literature, an assemblage may be composed of a child reader and the text being read, which is made up of ever more assemblages. The child reader is an assemblage of a body, experiences, social ideas; the text, an assemblage of author, society. Together, the reader and the book create a larger assemblage of actions and bodies reacting to one another: physically, through paper, print, words, and the fingers turning the pages, and also a 'collective assemblage of enunciation', utterances, modes of expressions and

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[2] Foucault challenges psychoanalysis, describing it as 'the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality' (Foucault, 1972 xiii).

regimes of signs. The appeal of the assemblage lies in its ability to take us away from the presuppositions and categories we bring to children's literature criticism about the social world, such as the boundaries between child and adult or society and individual. The fluidity of the assemblage itself emphasises and highlights the fluidity, heterogeneity and transitory configurations that inform our understanding of society and the combinations of interpenetrating bodies of subject and state.

Deleuze and Guattari's second point in their argument for assemblages of desire emphasises 'lines of flight' over 'phenomena of resistance', making clear their emphasis on connection. The assemblage for Deleuze and Guattari is not static but defined and sustained through connections. These connections, or 'lines', are also fluid, and every assemblage is also composed of lines that carry an assemblage away from its current form. Brian Massumi, in his English translation of *A Thousand Plateaus*, notes that '*fuite*' 'covers not only the act of fleeting or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance (the vanishing point in a painting is a *point de fuite*. It has no relation to flying' (xvi). The image of the flowing or leaking connection between assemblages is key to understanding coherence and consistency in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking. Assemblages need not be free of contradictions to be coherent; rather, assemblages are always leaking to and into other assemblages. With regard to power structures, power leaks and flows in such a way that resistance is part of the same assemblage. In this sense, resistance and power are both manifestations of flows of desire-production. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire reanimates power and agency, which in turn invites a reconceptualisation of the subject as a site of flows. This concept of the subject enables us to see flows of power and how the subject, produced always in relation to other bodies and things, extends into other assemblages (both human and non-human).

Reconfiguring the subject: agency and affect

Consideration of the subject in relation to other entities foregrounds the materiality of the body and its surrounds. Materiality is not a new research area for children's literature scholarship. Ellen Handler Spitz studies picture books in relation to developmental psychology, exploring the therapeutic effect of books upon the reader (1999), while Joseph Schwarcz and Chava Schwarz concentrate on the educational, social and psychological aspects of picture books and visual perception (1991). Together, Perry Nodelman's *Words About Pictures* (1998) and John Stephens' sections on the picture book in *Language and Ideology* (1992) provide tools for exploring how picture books introduce the child to the materialities, practices and discourses of the social world. Both Nodelman and Stephens understand the child as becoming subjectified through interactions with the book and the ideas presented, a framework that theorises subjectivity at the level of individual bodies, emphasising how subject positions are inscribed upon individuals as they engage with the social field.

Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on machinic and productive desire locates both the subject and subjectivity within an assemblage. The various elements of the assemblage make possible a range of actions for the subject, from complex material connections like computer networks and abstract connections like social institutions and economic systems, to more simple machines like the pages of a picture book. From this perspective, any individual is always part of an assemblage, and the assemblage is a central element in subjectification. Since assemblages are constantly in states of flux, subjectivity itself changes depending on the various forces by which it is produced and by which it produces itself. For current children's literature scholarship, the subject represented in children's text (through an assemblage of narrative discourse, social discourse and ideology) is located in an assemblage characterised by forces of power that determine how the subject can act and produce itself. This understanding of the subject recognises abstract assemblages but does not articulate the

effects of the material. As a result, children's literature criticism and its approach to subjectivity centres the process of subjectification through ideology and agency, neglecting to explore the body and its material interactions.

Thinking the body as an assemblage means simultaneously unravelling the notion of the body and the subject as a stable, unified entity, and developing a vocabulary for the connections that bodies forms with other human and non-human bodies. Claire Colebrook uses the example of the bicycle to explain how a body's function is dependent upon its connections with other bodies:

> Think of a bicycle, which has no 'end' or intention. It only works when it is connected with another 'machine' such as the human body. … But we could imagine different connections producing different machines. The cycle becomes an art object when placed in a gallery; the human body becomes an 'artist' when connected with a paintbrush. (2002, 56)

The body represented in children's literature is similarly multiple. Max, the protagonist of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), is a wild thing '[making] mischief of one kind and another' (2) when connected to his wolf costume, a child when he comes into contact with his mother, an explorer when he sails off into the night, and King of all the wild things when he tames the wild things in the forest. Max's body and its transformations demonstrate that the body has no interior truth or meaning and exists only through its external connections and affects. The subject — Max's subject position as child and King — is a particular organisation and stratification of the body within Max's world. Deleuze and Guattari write of the body's potential:

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (1987, 284)

It is here that Deleuze and Guattari shift from an ontology of being and fixity to an ontology of becoming and affective processes. Affect, as the 'effectuation of a power' (1987, 265), presents

a way of analysing power relations within and between bodies beyond ideology. 'The body', as Deleuze and Guattari refer to it, is not necessarily human, but rather any given assemblage, and affects extend or decrease the capacities of what an assemblage can do. Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg write:

> Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces — visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion — that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension . . . affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations. (1)

In this sense, affect is not unlike the concept of drives in psychoanalysis, except affect is produced through connection rather than lack. Indeed, affect as a concept has its origins in psychology and cognitive science, though applications of affect in the arts and humanities have largely moved away from its scientific roots.[3] Within the arts and humanities, the application of affect to social and critical theory is a means to explore the ways in which social and political events influence individuals, much the way literature or film works on an audience. Within critical theory and philosophy, current affect theory has developed in two distinct approaches. The first, headed by Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank's essay, 'Shame in the Cybernetic Fold', draws from psychologist Silvan Tomkins' concept of affect as the 'biological portion of emotion'. Sedgwick and Frank propose affect as a means to think beyond discourse methods, arguing that discursive frameworks prioritise representational thinking over embodied experience (1995). Blackman and Venn (2010) suggest that discursive research neglects corporeality and materiality and implicitly conceptualising the social as a coherent whole that acts upon individuals (16). Similarly, Brian Massumi, drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari, considers affect as a means to move away from the 'codings, griddings and positionings' (2002, 12) of discourse- and ideology-based analyses.

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[3] For example, Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg's *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010) contains no entries for key affective science researchers such as Antonio Damasio, Joseph LeDoux or Jaak Panksepp. Similarly, Deleuze, Guattari and other notable affect theorists such as Brian Massumi, Rosa Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz and Lawrence Grossberg do not appear in *The Oxford Companion to Emotion and the Affective Sciences* (2009).

For Massumi, affect is pre-personal, a non-conscious experience of intensity that differs from emotion or feeling (1987, xvi). Emotions and feelings are contextual, while affect itself is situational (2002, 217). Massumi argues that affect reveals the gaps between the content and emotional effect of a stimulus, referencing a cognitive research study in which nine-year-old children were shown three versions of a short film. The film depicts a man building a snowman, which melts in the afternoon sun. After some time, the man takes the snowman to the mountains, where it stops melting, and bids the snowman good-bye. The first version shown to the children is wordless. The second includes a voice-over that narrates a 'simple step-by-step account of the action as it happened'. The third also has a voice-over, largely the same as the second, but expresses 'at crucial turning points . . . the emotional tenor of the scene under way' (2002, 23). The children were asked to rate individual scenes in the film on a 'happy-sad' scale and a 'pleasant-unpleasant' scale. The researchers found that the sad scenes were considered the most pleasant. Massumi thus locates affect in the incongruity between the children's responses, emphasising a gap between the content of the stimulus and its effect: 'the primacy of the affective is marked by a gap between *content* and *affect*: it would appear that the strength or duration of an image's effect is not logically connected to the content in any straightforward way' (24).

Massumi also emphasises the embodied aspect of affect, noting that the researchers found the nonverbal version of the film 'elicited the greatest response from [the children's] skin' (24). Massumi maintains that affect is an intensity experienced below the threshold of consciousness, a chaotic excess that pushes the subject into certain relations with the material and the social. Emotion or feeling is an expression and representation of the intensity, affect 'gridded' by discourse and representation. For Massumi, affect highlights another dimension with which to think the subject's actions: through the body's reactions rather than the

subject's internalisation of discourse. In this sense, Massumi's work is valuable in emphasising embodiment and the entangled ways in which multiple bodies interact within social assemblages. By focusing on the body's affective responses, Massumi gives us a middle ground between the capitulation to dominant discourse and agency free of social constraints and context.

Massumi's insistence upon describing materiality as an active process that affects embodied humans undoes the binary of subject/object that separates human subjects from their material surrounds. The environment as an affective source becomes explicitly interwoven with ideas and discourse that influence the human subject. In conceiving matter as not passive and inert but possessing its own modes of self-transformation, Massumi disturbs the conventional sense of agents as exclusively human and relocates the subject within an environment in which the material itself possesses agential capacities. Agency becomes enacted through manipulations of the assemblage by both the human subject and the affective material environment. For children's literature criticism, understanding agency through affect means exploring representations of the more embodied levels at which characters experience social forces.

Before discussing what such explorations of agency and affect entail, it must be noted that Massumi, in arguing that affect is 'extra-discursive', firmly cleaves affect from discourse. Massumi constructs the bodily, physical sphere of affect as radical and generative, while relegating discourse to mere 'grids' that codify affect into dominant narratives and social structures. Though Massumi's critique of the 'discursive turn' does insightfully address how discourse studies neglect materiality, his insistence upon leaving discourse completely behind closes off the complex relationship between affect and discourse. Margaret Wetherell suggests a remedy, arguing that affect is 'inextricably linked with meaning-making and with the

semiotic (broadly defined) and the discursive', because affect constitutes 'an ordering of bodily possibilities, narratives, sense-making and local social relations' (20). Deleuze and Guattari's work, after all, does not discount discourse and language from their assemblage. The Deleuzo-Guattarian machinic assemblage (the domain of the material) exists explicitly next to and within enunciative assemblages (the domain of the discursive).

The enunciative assemblage

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the enunciative assemblage underscores the importance of discourse and meaning in stabilising and changing assemblages. While machinic assemblages are the various collections and patterns through which physical objects are formed, the enunciative assemblage is the realm of language: 'of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies' (1987, 88). Like Judith Butler's performative speech acts[4], enunciative assemblages transform configurations of bodies through speech acts. The assemblages of enunciation and machinic assemblages allow us to explore how the corporeal and the incorporeal are entwined without reducing one domain to another. This is not to say that the corporeal and incorporeal are always equally (in)forming each other; indeed, the interest lies in the ways in which domination flows from one to the other without any reduction. Rather, the incorporeal transformations of the enunciative assemblage intervenes and transforms the machinic assemblage in a way that is not about cause and effect or signifier and signified. The two types of assemblages are autonomous entities:

> One can never assign the form of expression the function of simply representing, describing, or averring a corresponding content . . . In expressing the noncorporeal attribute, and by that token attributing it to the body, one is not representing or referring but *intervening* in a way; it is a speech act. (1987, 86)

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[4] Judith Butler's theory of performativity is influenced by speech-act theory, which explores how social reality is created 'through language, gesture and all manner of symbolic social sign' (Butler 1990, 270). The classic example, taken from John Searle's work, is the illocutionary speech act of proclaiming a couple 'man and wife' during the marriage ceremony. The statement does not merely represent something, but changes the status of a couple within a social community. Butler takes this further by exploring the ways in which linguistic constructions create gendered realities and gendered bodies.

In insisting that the enunciative assemblage is not about representation, Deleuze and Guattari diverge sharply from children literature criticism's Saussurean understanding of language, which focuses upon signification and representation.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the function of language is not to represent but to repeat. In Chapter Four of *A Thousand Plateaus*, they argue that representational linguistics assumes that language is structured in a manner that represents subjective possibilities of an objectively shared world. Deleuze and Guattari instead characterise language through 'redundancy', arguing that language is repeated throughout the social field in such a way that it is without individual origin: 'there is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation' (1987, 79). Language becomes a social assemblage of statements and order-words, and an individual does not speak so much as repeat. This in itself resonates with children's literature criticism, as language is considered social, discursive and ideological. Deleuze and Guattari's point of departure is their insistence that language cannot be treated as an entity that informs and communicates.[5] The redundancy of language renders it a relatively stable assemblage, but as an assemblage, it is constantly in interaction with other assemblages. In short, language is not something that 'is', but is always in a state of becoming.

Becoming assemblages: subject, language and place

Becoming is the central concept in Deleuze and Guattari's ontology. Deleuze and Guattari consider every assemblage in a state of becoming, characterised by perpetual and continuous change and flux. Becoming is not about transition between states of being; rather, Deleuze's

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[5] Deleuze and Guattari do not deny the power of language (indeed, *A Thousand Plateaus* devotes an entire section to the subject) but they seek to provide an alternative mapping to repressively unifying forms of representation. Their objection lies in the ease with which rigidity of organisation arises in relation to representation, and so their project privileges multiplicity in an attempt to unsettle such tendencies (1987, 75-110).

driving question is 'how does something become?' This is approached differently in Deleuze's

various works. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze begins to consider becoming:

> there is no being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity; neither multiplicity
> nor becoming are appearances or illusions. . . . . Multiplicity is the inseparable
> manifestation, essential transformation and constant symptom of unity. Multiplicity is
> the affirmation of unity; becoming is the affirmation of being. (23-24)

By arguing that there is no being beyond becoming, Deleuze rejects the traditional

philosophical appreciation of stable unity, such as Kantian transcendental apperception[6] or

Hegel's absolute[7]. Rather, he presents a second concept — multiplicity — to replace being and

unity. Deleuze and Guattari develop Deleuze's ideas further in *A Thousand Plateaus*, writing

that 'becoming and multiplicity are the same thing' (249), which allow us to 'conceive the

multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or

Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come, and instead distinguish

between different types of multiplicity' (32). Becoming, unlike being, is grounded in

instability. In emphasising becoming as the affirmation of being, Deleuze positions becoming

and difference as an affirmative process through which being is produced. This is particularly

interesting in light of children's literature and its interest in subjectivity, as Deleuze's

becoming provides a model of identity that is not stable and self-contained. Rather, the subject

is always becoming, an assemblage that transforms as it comes into contact with other bodies,

which are themselves also transforming.

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[6] Immanuel Kant develops his concept of transcendental apperception in response to René Descartes' argument that the self is a thinking substance. For Kant, Descartes splits subjective experience and objective reality. Kant reasons that reality itself must be structured in the way our thought about reality is structured, proposing a formal unity of the conscious self and the world. According to Kant, the perceptions of inner sense have no transcendental reference, differing from the transcendental subject of the *cogito* ('I think'). The cogito acts as a 'spontaneous source of synthesis', without which 'there would ... be no determinate connection' between ideas, representations, and the world. (1997, B153-4).

[7] Hegel attempts to derive all knowledge from a single principle called 'the Absolute'. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel proposes that 'the true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth. To help bring philosophy closer to the form of science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title '*love* of knowing' and be *actual* knowing — that is what I have set myself to do'. Hegel positions philosophy as a series of claims to certainty and explores how each claim to certainty (sense, perception, etc.) simultaneously establishes and steps over its own boundaries. (1977, ¶5, 3)

At the heart of Deleuzian becoming is difference. While classical representational thinking considers difference in an empirical sense (*x* is different from *y*), implying that each entity has a prior identity of its own, Deleuze insists that 'difference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation' (1994, 330). Deleuze is not therefore interested in the empirical difference in things, but rather thinking about difference itself. He writes:

> Let us imagine something which is distinguished — and yet *that from which* it is distinguished is not distinguished from it. The flash of lightning for example, is distinguished from the black sky, but must carry the sky along with it. . . . One would say that the bottom rises to the surface, without ceasing to be the bottom. (28)

The lightning flash is a moment of intensity that simultaneously differentiates the light from the sky and yet unifies them as part of the same process. The black sky is not erased or replaced by the lightning bolt. Rather, both are intensified through their differential relationship to the other, 'espous[ing] that which divorces it' (1994, 28). This unity causes Deleuze to conclude that 'difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made or makes itself, as in the expression "make the difference"' (28). The unilateral distinction — the moment of difference between the lightning bolt and the sky — describes the dissolution of conceptual boundaries and determinations, challenging the established relationships between already-formed concepts and our own expectations of what such concepts mean or do. Deleuze turns to decorative motifs in art — characterised by their regularity and repetition — to consider how concepts become undone by difference. He argues that repetition cannot be understood in relation to concepts or representations:

> Consider . . . the repetition of a decorative motif: a figure is reproduced, while the concept remains absolutely identical. . . . However, this is not how artists proceed in reality. They do not juxtapose instances of the figure, but rather each time combine an element of one instance with another element of a following instance. They introduce a disequilibrium into the dynamic process of construction, an instability, a dissymmetry or gap of some kind which disappears only in the overall effect. (19)

James Williams gives the example of red paint in a series of repeated motifs, suggesting 'small changes in the actual colour red from member to member of a series in a painting, may be accompanied by a powerful affect in a viewer' (57). It is the repetition — and the difference in this repetition — that produces meaning. The sign, not the red paint, but the actual change in the red paint, suggests a dynamic determination between elements of the sign: the appearance of the sign (the red paint) and the possibilities suggested by the signs (the changes in intensity of the affects experienced by the viewer). The sign is no longer merely the carrier of general meaning produced between the relationships of signified and signifier, but also a matter of experimentation with the series of the sign repeated. In this light, difference is thought of in terms of multiplicities and transformative becomings. Multiplicities are not repetitions of the same, but repetitions with difference, characterised by possibilities and variations. Representation does not have to be understood solely in reference to a Platonic ideal, but is rhizomatic in itself both in meaning and in function.

Children's literature criticism understands representations of place as performing symbolic functions within narrative.   Literary studies generally emphasise a link between contextual place and narrative. Bruce Bennett (1985) argues that 'the specific places in Australia [are] crucibles of, and stimuli to, literary expression' (41), while Parks Lanier Jr suggests, through a collection of critical essays, that the Appalachian cabin and place is key to representations of Appalachian identity in literature (9). Rudolfo Anaya (1989), in suggesting that 'the space of earth and sky' in New Mexico 'dictates the natural pace of stories' draws upon similar assumptions of geographical determinism in his focus on how spatial context affects narrative as a form. Kenneth Mitchell (1987) emphasises a similarly inextricable relationship between spatial context and form, suggesting that the differences between American and Canadian literature are due to 'the very real differences of geography' of the United States and Canada (3). Leonard Lutwack (1984) focuses less upon the relationships between place and spatial

context, arguing instead that place affects significance because it is a literary element. Place for Lutwack is both metaphorical and literal:

> All places, whether drawn from geographical reality or fantasy, from literature or actual life, serve figurative ends and thereby sacrifice part of their concreteness as they cater to some human desire or craving beyond present reality. (32)

It is with Lutwack that concepts of place are moved away form their spatial contexts and enter a narrative assemblage. Lutwack identifies places through the elements that characterise them, pointing to the mountains, valleys and caverns that make up representations of mountain ranges, or the trees and swamps that constitute a forest setting. These repeated motifs, combined with schemas of certain narrative experience, result in a system of archetypal place symbolism (31).

Lutwack's approach finds resonance in children's literature criticism, especially with regard to social discourse. Peter Hunt ascribes symbolic significance to the representation of place in children's texts, suggesting that the representation of landscapes in British fantasy texts reflect constructs of national identity rooted in nostalgia and pride. For Hunt, representations of landscape inevitably interact and engage with national identity, contributing to 'the literary image of England' (13). Louise Mowder, in her exploration of gender in the *Little House on the Prairie* series, proposes that American frontier imperialism in the text is a 'distinctly feminine project' in which the archetypal mother must transform a masculine landscape of 'Indians and wolves [who] represent the undomesticated, uncivilised native inhabitants' into a domestic and implicitly civilised world (18). Similarly, Maria Sachiko Cecire, Hannah Field, Kavita Mudan Finn and Malini Roy's edited collection of essays (2015) consider how metaphorical places can be used as analytical tools to explore power, knowledge and identity in children's literature. Place, in these approaches, becomes fluid in meaning, articulating aspects of subjectivity and social negotiation. However, place in narrative is fluid in meaning but not fluid in itself. Rather, place is stabilised, gridded into metaphors and contextual readings which

privilege similarity, looking only for becomings in the subjects that inhabit places and neglecting the becoming of place itself. In order to think through subjectivity in relation to place, we must think about how place itself becomes, and how such becomings are represented within narratives. Before place is considered as gendered, racialised or differently segregated, it must first be considered as assemblage.

Place as assemblage

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari do not explicitly discuss a concept of place, but their theory of becoming lends itself well to exploring how places form and change. Indeed, becoming is inherently spatial. In his *Dialogues* with Clare Parnet, Deleuze notes that 'becomings belong to geography' (1987, 3). Thinking of place as assemblage offers a way to think about relations and process. Kim Dovey, an urban anthropologist, argues that the street is an assemblage:

> a street is not a thing nor is it just a collection of discrete things. The buildings, trees, cars, sidewalks, goods, people, signs, etc., all come together to become the street, but it is the connections between them that make it an assemblage or place. (16)

It is the relationship between parts of the street-assemblage that distinguish the street from other places (such as a marketplace or an airport). Approaching place as merely metaphorical or schematic thus becomes limiting, leaving little room to consider change, flux and connections. Place as assemblage highlights place as a working system of discourses, non-human bodies and human bodies. This system is implicitly mobilised in representations of place. By unpacking place as assemblage rather than metaphor, it is possible to more fully explore the ways in which power and desire are coded and organised to form subjective realities. Place, seen in this light, becomes a distinct social organisation of space, produced through changing relations between power and desire. The term 'place' within this thesis denotes representations of social organisation of space, while 'space' is used to discuss the wider range of connections within a place, particularly in terms of various movements, changes and differences that give rise to creative and disruptive recoding and reorganisation.

Power and desire are coded and organised within places through processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. Deterritorialisation occurs when entities within the assemblage break off and leave the assemblage, while reterritorialisation describes the process by which new entities enter into the assemblage, creating a new assemblage. Deleuze also calls deterritorialisation 'lines of flight', emphasising that assemblages are not objects but infinite chains of lines or connections.   Deleuze and Guattari's example of the club as a deterritorialized branch (191) demonstrates this infinite chain of connection. In the process of making a club, a tree branch is detached, or deterritorialised, from its physical territory (the tree) but also from its function (to capture sunlight and photosynthesise nutrients for the tree). The branch has been recontextualised, or reterritorialised, into a weapon, taking on new functions (violence) within this new territory.

Recontextualisation is key to understanding place, the subject, and agency in children's and young adult literature. For example, the child characters in M.T. Anderson's *Feed* may appear disempowered in the context of ideological and discursive power structures, but they also have the capacity to affect and be affected through their interactions within the gaps and spaces produced by assemblages of place. Deleuze and Guattari write, the 'crocodile does not reproduce a tree trunk, any more than the chameleon reproduce the colors of its surroundings' (11). On the surface, the child characters in young adult texts can only develop subjectivity in the context of power relations. However, delving deeper and focusing on connections between human and non-human bodies allows place in literature to take on new functions. In this sense, place, like the crocodile or the tree branch, is not metaphor or representation. It does not resemble or imitate; and neither does literature.

Literature deterritorialises elements of the world and becomes an entity that itself functions, acts and produces. This thesis is thus an experimentation; to quote Pierre Macherey on Deleuze, 'an attempt to put the text to work, to bring its theoretical and practical concerns into play' (148). Assemblage thinking moves us beyond place as a static metaphor to an exploration of the relations between place and the various bodies that inhabit place. Representations of place become representations of a phenomenon — something that exists only through experiences and interactions between multiplicities. In reading for multiplicities, we move beyond identifying veiled ideological and discursive influences. Multiplicities and difference acknowledges the ideological and discursive pull, while also opening the text up to minor moments that explore other possibilities and lines of flight.

Chapter 1 of the thesis brings Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of becoming into dialogue with Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction and Foucault's discourse analysis to explore how subjectivity and society can be understood in four texts: Terry Pratchett's *Feet of Clay*, China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun*, Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* and M.T. Anderson's *Feed*. Though Pratchett's *Discworld* titles (with the exception of the *Tiffany Aching* series and *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*) do not strictly fall into the categories of children's or young adult literature, its readership spans all ages. Interviews with Pratchett often refer to letters from school children about the *Discworld* series (Gardner 2002), and fans responded to the Twitter announcement of Pratchett's death by expressing their gratitude for Pratchett's role in their adolescent reading history. Pratchett's young readership is not surprising. Thematically, the Discworld series is very much in line with fantasy and speculative fiction for young adults, delving into 'issues of emotional, sexual, ethical and psychological maturation' by which '[young adult literature] is distinguished' (Campbell 2015, xiii). Pratchett's treatment of these issues in *Feet of Clay* is particularly interesting for children's literature criticism due to its

treatment of minor characters — characters that must imperfectly negotiate the manoeuvrings of a society that deems them malleable and, in a way, childlike.

This chapter explores how the minor groups in *Feet of Clay* and *Un Lun Dun* are formed with different degrees of visibility in the texts' societies of hybridity, and how becoming minor arises through negotiating the major. I propose that the current models of agency in children's literature criticism further silence these minor figures, and argue that affect provides a more nuanced means of thinking about minor subjects and their interactions with their societies. I draw upon Brian Massumi's understanding of Deleuzian affect in the dystopian worlds depicted in *The Hunger Games* and *Feed* to demonstrate how abject young adult characters can be given voice through minor moments within the texts. By drawing attention to the minor in society, society (and relations of power and desire) can be conceptualised not as a stable and rigid point, but as a becoming and shifting assemblage.

Chapter 2 builds upon the concepts of subjectivity and society as assemblages, arguing that place, as a phenomenon that is produced by constantly becoming assemblages of society and subject, must therefore also be in constant states of becoming. I argue that place in China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea* can be understood as assemblages, drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of deterritorialisation, rhizomes and smooth/striated spaces to explore how representations of place inform representations of subject and society. The cityscapes depicted in *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea* resonate with Deleuze's understanding of difference, foregrounding notions of deterritorialisation that promote creative, rhizomatic thinking and reflect the protagonists' approaches to their quests. I explore how repetition is mobilised by both texts to emphasise difference and present readers with models of subjectivity that privilege nomadism and movement. This focus on the rhizomatic allows us to develop more nuanced considerations of the *bildungsroman* model in young adult literature,

particularly how the young adult's engagement with place deterritorialises the major and unfolds multiplicities within the established assemblages of the *bildungsroman*.

Rhizomatic connection and multiplicity underscore the exploration of two speculative texts in Chapter 3, Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* and Joan Slonczewski's *The Highest Frontier*. *The Highest Frontier*, like Pratchett's *Feet of Clay*, is not conventionally considered young adult fiction, but it also explores themes and issues common to young adult literature, particularly in relation to technology and subjectivity. To bring these issues to light, this chapter draws upon Deleuze's article, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' to explore how these texts envision the integration of technology into physical place. Both these texts see technology as creating rhizomatic connections between people and places and, importantly, as both an expression of power and a potential line of flight. In these texts, technology renders place as an assemblage brimming with vibrant life — as something alive or even a-live, artificially live. I refer to Luciano Floridi's work on the inforg, a connected informational organism, to consider the cyborg and to imagine the media-consumer subject in *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier* as an active participant in media and information technology. By considering the young adult figure as an active inforg, we can reassemble the power/powerless binary, reconceptualising the way in which we discuss the young adult and agency in children's texts. Young adult agency, in this light, is not merely a question of exercising or rebelling against power but about an awareness of an individual's capacity to create connections and deterritorialise the major.

Chapter 4 is the final chapter of this thesis, and brings Deleuze's notion of the fold into dialogue with his interest in becoming and difference. The fold allows us to think through place not just as assemblages of affect, territorialisation and control, but as both an assemblage and an event. I analyse the ambiguity of place in Diana Wynne Jones' *Hexwood* and

Ursula Duborsarsky's *Abyssinia,* arguing that the fold allows us to explore how disruptions of spatial boundaries fold into the characters' subjectivities. I suggest that the texts ask the reader to perceive the minute folds within the narratives to produce sense, an act which encourages the reader to privilege relations and connections instead of boundaries. These spatial and narrative folds highlight the fold's general capacity to envelop complex relations, making this concept particularly useful for discussions of how children's texts, both because of and despite their didactic tendencies and ideological assumptions, contain the potential to deterritorialise and undo binaries and rigid structures.

The Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts developed in these chapters allow us to consider power beyond the dualistic binaries outlined by Beauvais and how the young adult figure in young adult speculative fiction has the potential to deterritorialise and affirm the minor. The various articulations of assemblage organisation allow us to conceptualise subjectivity and becoming within young adult literature as more than states of constant flux. Becoming, explored through affect, territorialisation and the figures of the rhizome and the fold, establishes a zone of multiplicity characterised by a capacity to extend beyond limits and boundaries, reanimating the child character beyond its status as a powerless subject in relation to the adult. This zone of multiplicity allows the body to enter into an 'infinitely proliferating patchwork' of relations and transformation (Deleuze, 1998, 77). Indeed, my primary corpus is a patchwork in itself, a seemingly indiscriminate and arbitrary collection of unrelated texts. This is not an accident, nor unplanned. The texts have been selected for their particular staging of transformations and relations, but also for their difference to the others in the corpus. Each chapter is thus an exercise in exploring how texts for children and young adults enter into assemblages with concepts and with each other, and also an invitation to find connections in divergence and differences in similarities. In this sense, each chapter and text analysed within this thesis

enacts and participates in the construction of possibilities and potentials between disparate but connected bodies.

Chapter 1

Reframing society and the subject: affect, desire and the assemblage in *Feet of Clay*, *Un Lun Dun*, *Feed* and *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

Children's literature criticism positions children's literature as a powerful social tool that has the ability to shape how children think about and understand the world. As Karin Lesnik-Oberstein notes, academic criticism of children's literature burgeoned with the study of popular culture, positioning children's literature as a dynamic social artefact worthy of study (1). Children's literature has the potential to comment on and depict adult conceptualisations of childhood, presenting these images of the child back to the child reader. Julia Mickenberg and Lynne Vallone note that the

> very category of children's literature comes not simply from the recognition that children are cognitively less developed than adults, not fully literate, and less experienced — and therefore in need of simpler materials that will be comprehensible and relevant to them — but also from the belief that certain material is inappropriate for the young: for example, explicit sexuality, violence, political exhortation, or discussions about drugs, rape, or murder. (15)

The image of the innocent child is particularly interesting to children's literature criticism, which acknowledges that childhood itself is a modern concept. Philippe Ariès argues that childhood in Western civilisation was not valued as a distinct phase of human existence until the seventeenth century (125). Ariès' insistence upon the historically and culturally contingent notion of childhood provides solid foundations for children's literature criticism to embark upon exploring the construction of childhood within children's texts. As such, explorations of children's literature engage heavily in theorising the relationship between the subject and society. Michel Foucault, in particular, informs much of children's literature criticism. Foucault's theories of the relationship between power and knowledge, as well as how power controls and defines individuals within the state, are particularly fruitful frameworks to consider how the child is positioned within society. Jacqueline Rose comments

that texts written for children are 'a way of colonising (or wrecking) the child' (27), while Peter Hunt's call for a 'childist' reading of children's literature is a rejection of the dominant or adult perspective (1992, 192-4). Similarly, Perry Nodelman, applying Edward Said's notion of Orientalism to children's literature, suggests that writing for and about children's literature is a form of colonialism (2008, 29), while Roderick McGillis and Meena Khorana argue that 'children are the subaltern' and 'the most colonized persons on the globe' (1997, 7). As children's literature critics, we occupy the uneasy position of speaking about children after we have ceased to be children. Nodelman proposes a 'benevolently helpful colonizing attitude towards children' (34) through making visible the invisible sociocultural biases in children's literature. The project of dismantling the constructs presented within children's literature has given rise to explorations of how child protagonists gain agency within a power-based social structure, and how such representations reflect social ideologies. Robyn McCallum, in particular, discusses how narrative models of subjectivity are shaped by social ideologies and argues that the child reader's subjective development is influenced by dialogues between socially specific discourses of childhood, power and agency (3).

The notion that ideology shapes representations of child subjectivity underpins many arguments in children's literature criticism, opening up discussions about gender (Clark and Higgonet 2000, Wilkie-Stibbs 2002, Hateley 2010, Flanagan 2013, Lee and Stephens 2013); race and postcolonial politics (Bradford 2001, Bradford 2007, McGillis 2013, Grzegorczyk 2014); social class (Saltmarsh 2007, Jones 2008, Forest 2016); and discussions of the posthuman condition (Mallan and Bradford 2011, Flanagan 2014, Jaques 2015). Much attention is given to how children's literature presents the child reader with an ideologically driven representation of childhood and the child. Readings become devoted to exploring how children's literature is not neutral, but a politically motivated genre, in which the child character becomes the vehicle for ideological expressions of childhood. While this is certainly

a valuable and valid exercise, this approach stabilises ideological expression, restricting readings of child characters as either conforming or resisting ideology. By contrast, Deleuze and Guatari's notion of 'minor literature' expands social negotiation beyond conformity or resistance, privileging escape, difference and transformation. Deleuze and Guattari explain:

> Minor literature is completely different: because it exists in a narrow space, every individual matter is immediately plugged into the political. Thus the question of the individual becomes even more necessary, indispensable, magnified microscopically, because an entirely different story stirs within it. (1986b, 16)

Instead of consigning the individual to the periphery of ideology and discourse — a subject acted upon by society — Deleuze and Guattari see the individual as the site of political negotiation, moving the individual beyond Foucault's 'double bind'.

Foucault outlines the concept of the 'double bind' of simultaneous individualisation and totalisation of power structures in 'The Subject and Power' (785). The individual, through engagement with institutional social spaces, is 'subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his identity by a conscience or a self-knowledge [. . . .] suggest[ing] a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to' (781). In this political double bind, the state is normalised and members of society are individualised, allowing the state to better control each individual through interrelated modes of objectification. Since the political double bind is created through a network of institutional spaces, practices of power must be exposed to 'liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state [. . . .] to promote new forms of subjectivity' (785). Foucault writes:

> The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them. (1974, 171)

For Foucault, seemingly neutral instances must be exposed as part of the networks of institutional power. Children's literature criticism has admirably answered this call. Deleuze and Guattari, however, argue that Foucault neglects to address how to move beyond measures

of resistance and liberation, as resistance and liberation merely reorders and reinscribes hierarchies of power. Deleuze and Guattari imagine the possibility of breaking free without reinscribing power hierarchies, offering their concept of minor literature:

> The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialisation of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective arrangement of utterance. Which amounts to this: that 'minor' no longer characterises certain literatures, but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established). (1986b, 18)

Minor literature, with its disrupting of processes of power through its political and collective enunciation, does not necessarily offer a solution to Foucault's double bind, but allows an escape. The minor is differentiated from the major — in Foucauldian terms, the system of liberation and resistance — in that the minor does not necessarily establish itself as a minority community on the fringes of the major's centre. Rather, becoming-minor creates a new space:

> An escape for language, for music, for writing. What we call pop — pop music, pop philosophy, pop writing — [. . . .] to make use of the polylingualism of one's own language, to make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters things, an assemblage comes into play. (1986b, 26-27)

Understanding children's literature as having the capacity to create new spaces instead of reifying the relationships produced by ideological readings allows us to treat children's literature as a genre in its own right — a genre that is, like every genre, underpinned with political ideologies, but not necessarily restricted to ideology. In focusing on the ideological undertones, we neglect to look for moments in the texts that escape or explore the possibility of escape. This entails engaging in minor reading — giving voice and recognition to the ways in which minor characters, or, indeed, minor people — move within institutional spaces of power.

Recognising the minor: assemblages and becomings

The focus on representations of subjectivity and how such representations are produced by social ideologies frames subjectivity as a malleable concept, moulded within an implicitly stable social field. This chapter uses 'social field' to denote a regulative system that coordinates and influences the actions and activities of a large number of individuals. In this sense, the social field can be understood in two ways: first, as a causally operative institutional complex (such as the state or the market), and second, as a description of the facets of the organization of society (such as demographics, race and ethnicity, income or gender). This chapter focuses largely on the latter, with some focus on the former in Chapter 3.

While subjectivity is indeed influenced by the social field, the social field is in itself not stable but in constant states of flux and negotiation. For Foucault, the social field is not stable, but made fluid through dispersed and pervasive power (*The History of Sexuality* 63); for Deleuze, the social field is mediated by power but, more importantly, is animated by desire and becoming. Instead of asking how characters — and, implicitly, individuals within society — gain agency within rigid social structures, we must initially understand social structures as fluid, unstable entities, and analyse how characters find or create spaces for agency and development within such fluidity. Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of becoming provides useful tools for understanding fluidity and movement.

Deleuze and Guattari anchor themselves against Heideggerian understandings of 'being', arguing that entities are always in states of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari are interested in how assemblages — a grouping produced through disparate parts that are contingent but not necessary — are transformed into something else, and the paths an assemblage travels in the process of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari imagine a horizontal and a vertical axis with assemblages. The horizontal axis deals with 'machinic assemblages of bodies, actions and

passions', and a 'collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations of bodies' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 88). The vertical axis charts territorialisation, the processes of stabilisation and change (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 88). This opens up ways of thinking of society and social structures in children's literature as assemblages: networks of objects, bodies, territories and expressions that come together. The term 'assemblage' is a translation of the French *agencement*, akin to a 'layout' or 'arrangement', and suggests a dynamic process and a notion of spatiality. I will explore this potential in chapter 2 of this thesis, discussing how assemblage theory is a useful way of rethinking representations of place in terms of subject formation, social structures and processes of becoming.

The assemblage is a useful concept for understanding the relationship between the subject and social structures because a range of twofold concepts must be deployed to discuss how an assemblage becomes. Deleuze and Guattari produce pairs of binary concepts — desire/power, rhizome/tree, supple/rigid, smooth/striated (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) — and focus on the dynamism between them. Desire and power cannot be seen as separate or as a dialectical pair, but rather as overlapping and resonating together in assemblages. In the same way, the subject and the social structures in which the subject exists must be understood, not as binaries, but enmeshed entities within the same assemblage.

Assemblages operate through desire, which Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise against Freudian understandings of desire as lack. Unlike the psychoanalytic oedipal conception of desire, which locates desire in the individual as an impotent force, Deleuze and Guattari understand desire as a positive social force that produces connections. In his 1976 article called "Desire and Pleasure", Deleuze addresses Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality and Pleasure*, writing 'I emphasise the primacy of desire over power. ... Desire comes first and

seems to be an element of micro-analysis.' (Deleuze 2006, 126). For Deleuze, desire constantly undoes manifestations and structures of power, breaking through apparently rigid social fields. This emphasis on fluidity figures centrally in Deleuze's divergence from Foucault.

In emphasising the powers and potentials of desire and the ways in which social fields ceaselessly shift and transform, Deleuze's work lends itself well to discussing the fluid and ever-unfinished nature of subjectivity. This chapter will look at how characters move through the broken institutions in *Feed* and *The Hunger Games*, and the infrastructures in the making in *Feet of Clay* and *Un Lun Dun* to discuss how the texts engage with notions of desire and alternative lines of flight (examined below). Character interaction with represented societies allows us to identify and discuss how intersections of technology, interpersonal relation, and desire form the subject. If we imagine desire, not power, as a driving force in becoming, then subjectivity need not speak merely as resistance, nor is it interpellated or silenced by power. Rather, subjectivity should be understood as part of a flow of desire, continually forming and returning in a complex play of bodily, linguistic, political and psychological dimensions of experience, within and against new social structures and ideological value systems. How, then, do we begin to bring this understanding to reading texts? How do we find the minor within representations produced by social discourse?

Affect: lines of flight beyond the call of interpellation

Deleuze and Guattari write of the minor as an 'escape' from an established assemblage into a new assemblage that 'comes into play' (26-27). The transformation of assemblages from one state of becoming to another involves tracing lines of flight — paths of mutation created through the actualisation of previously merely implicit connections between bodies. These lines of flight release new powers in the capacities of those bodies to act and response. The concept of lines of flight, in this sense, resonates with Jacques Derrida's notion of iteration or

iterability, the capacity to escape an original context and become operable in another. Derrida's iteration, notably, does not simply signify repetition (reiteration); rather, every iteration is a modification of the same:

> 'iterability' does not simply signify [. . . .] repeatability of the same, but rather alterability of this same idealised in the singularity of an event, for instance, in this or that speech act. It entails the necessity of thinking *at once* both the rule and the event, concept and singularity.' (1988, 119)

The concept, for Derrida, must not be considered solely as a general rule or definition, but as a general rule applied to a unique instance, for change arises out of shifting contexts. Deleuze proposes instead that affect contributes to the assemblage's continuous rhythms of stability and rupture.

Affect is a series of forces that are in between bodies, within bodies, and between bodies and the world. Brian Massumi, in his translator's preface to *A Thousand Plateaus*, defines affect against personal feeling and emotion, stating:

> it is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution of that body's capacity to act. (1987, xvi)

Massumi emphasises that affect is not a thing, but an event that influences the quality of situations, allowing us to map constant transition and exchanges in power and capacity between assemblages. In terms of the corporeal body, affect is about the changing capacity of the body as it engages with the world, and how the body carries a constantly increasing or decreasing capacity for what will happen. Deleuze and Guattari, writing more broadly of assemblages, understand affect as capacity:

> we know nothing of a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions or passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (1987, 284)

In emphasising capacity, Deleuze and Guattari give us another way of discussing individual agency beyond models of resistance and oppression. Literary representations of the corporeal

body's capacity to affect are thus key to exploring the minor in children's literature. Characters' bodies are therefore not merely the vehicle on which power is inscribed and through which characters are subjectified. Instead of exploring solely how characters are interpellated by their societies, this chapter will discuss how affective assemblages take shape in the spaces opened by heightened emotion and affective experiences in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, *Feet of Clay*, *Un Lun Dun* and *Feed*.

Brian Massumi calls the moment of affective experience the 'beginning of a selection' between 'mutually exclusive pathways of action and expression, all but one of which will be inhabited, prevented from actualizing themselves completely.' (34) These selections build into 'tendencies' (30), habits of thinking and behavior that develop through a culmination of affective experiences. Affect is how logics and situations come to make sense to its participants, and how those relations are paved; that is, how the system meets its subject. In this sense, affect attempts to predict the interpellated subject. Following Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation, we understand that in order to answer to any given ideology, one must feel oneself addressed by that ideology — and it is an individual's very acknowledgement that the law applies to him or her that makes that individual a subject. To illustrate this process, Althusser imagines ideology as a police officer hailing an intended subject from among others on the street, by means of shouting a generic 'Hey, you there!' (301). While Althusser did not mean for this metaphor to be taken literally, taking affect into account nonetheless enables us to resolve the question: why did this individual, among all the others, turn around?

Feet of Clay: affect and desire in the minor subject

Feet of Clay is the nineteenth book in Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series, which features a world occupied by various fantasy races. Ankh-Morpork, the cultural capital and racial melting

pot of the Disc, is inhabited largely by humans. Dwarves and undead are established minority races within Ankh-Morpork, largely relegated to the boundaries of the city. *Feet of Clay* is notable because it introduces another race: golems. Golems are a particularly interesting addition to Ankh-Morpork, because they are objects-turned-subjects: the golems, originally created as possessions, begin to assert their self-autonomy and sense of self. Golems, originally solely created by humans, contain commands in their head, known as 'chem'. 'Chem' are commands, described in similar terms to Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics[8], which outline the limits of golem activity: they must do only what is written in their chem, and they may not engage in (or refrain from) activities that could harm humans. The golems' desire for self-autonomy, however, overrides their chem. The golems tear clay from their bodies to build a 'golem king', and write chem to program the king to protect golems and lead them wisely. In this sense, the figure of the golem is desire embodied, expressing both the individual desires of the golems, and the concept of desire as productive and a creative force.

The golems' ability to create another golem is also an expression of the minor. Nicola Morris, in her exploration of the golem in Jewish American literature, asserts that the golem is a 'metaphor for that which is created, a metaphor for the act of creating' (28), traditionally not an actor or an agent, but the product of another's action. The golems' creation of the golem king not only marks the golems' desire, but also marks the golems as uncanny inhabitants of the traditional boundaries between object/possession and subject/creator. Their golem king, which they call Meshugah (derived from the Yiddish *meshuge* or *meshuga*, meaning crazy), is

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[8] Isaac Asimov's Three Law of Robotics is a set of rules introduced in his short story, 'Runaround'. The Three Laws are incorporated into all robots as a safety feature, though many of Asimov's stories explore how the literal application of the Laws can lead to robots engaging in counterintuitive behavior. The Laws are:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First and Second Law. (1982, 219.)

the ultimate expression of the minor created within the systems produced by the major. Meshugah is more force than animate being within the text; as the golems' golem, he is an expression of their desire and an expression of the constant flows of uninterrupted production, working until he dies. Meshugah, having received too many instructions, begins to murder the citizens of Ankh-Morpork, causing the golems to experience shame over their creation and commit suicide. The text's exploration of golem desire and affective capacity demonstrates the subject as an assemblage of affect and desire, and explores how the minor can be recognised within the framework and language of the major.

Golem subjectivity and consciousness is presented through Dorfl, a golem who is questioned by the Ankh-Morpork police department. For the majority of the narrative, Dorfl sits on the divide between conscious subject and machine, rendering him an uncanny figure, evoking Sigmund Freud's exploration of the uncanny as the ambiguity of flesh-and-blood automaton. Kerry Mallan and Clare Bradford note that golems in children's literature tread the boundaries between reproduction and replication, artificial and natural, and organic and non-organic (153). In this sense, Dorfl is a classic Kristevan abject body, a body that blurs the distinction between subject and object (Kristeva 4). This blurring between subject and object is made clear in the narration through the focalisation of Angua, a werewolf police constable. As a werewolf, Angua is part of the ghettoised minority, and her monthly transformations into a wolf mark her as a subject who constantly negotiates becoming-minor. Angua's disdain for Dorfl is palpable: 'The living hated the undead, and the undead loathed — she felt her fists clench — the unalive' (Pratchett 134). Her focalisation presents her thoughts interrupted by a physical reaction, creating a narrative representation of thought truncated by affective reactions of disdain and anger. Dorfl makes monstrous the connection between the dead and the living that Angua inhabits and negotiates, bringing the minor uncomfortably into the space of the major.

Interestingly, Angua's loathing differs to the reaction of her supervisor, Commander Vimes. Commander Vimes is a human, and thus part of the majority of Ankh-Morpork. Rather than pulling away from Dorfl, Vimes fixates on the possibilities represented by the abject body. While Angua's reaction centres around seeing lack, Vimes senses inchoate potential:

> Vimes stared at the hollow eyes. The top of Dorfl's head was still open so that the light shone down through the sockets. Vimes had seen many horrible things on the street, but the silent golem was somehow worse. You could too easily imagine the eyes flaring and the thing standing up and striding forward, fists flailing like sledgehammers. It was more than his imagination. It seemed to be built into the thing. A *potentiality*, biding its time. (168)

Vimes' understanding of the golem resonates with concerns about creation — and the control over one's creation — that date back to traditional golem stories.[9] Notably, Vimes' focalisation equates emptiness (marked by descriptions of hollow eyes, openness and gaping sockets) with potential rather than with lack. Vimes' affective reaction causes him to already envision Dorfl as an agent, a creation out of control. The spaces of possibility that surround Dorfl expand beyond form — as machine or human — towards the capacity for intentional, conscious action. We are presented with a body that cannot speak and implicitly cannot (or should not be able to) choose to act, yet seems to contain experiences that exceed representation within models of subjectivity based on language and agency. The minor body presented to us gains its cogency not through its ability to represent but in the range of experiential possibility onto which it opens.

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[9] The golem's incarnations and purposes have varied, but the most widely known legend is the early 1800s legend of the Golem of Prague. Rabbi Judah Loew, the High Rabbi of Prague, asks God for help to stop the violence against the Jewish Quarter by the surrounding non-Jewish community. God instructs Rabbi Loew to create a humanoid figure out of mud, and gives the rabbi the secret to infusing clay figures with life. The golem patrols the streets of Prague at night, protecting the Jewish community from violence or injustice. Depending on the iteration of the legend, the golem either becomes destructive or is deemed no longer necessary to the safety of the Jewish Quarter, and Rabbi Loew withdraws its life. (Baer 3-4)

The uncanny plays an extensive role in expressing the possibility within the minor. In his introduction to 'The Uncanny', Sigmund Freud addresses the etymology of the term 'heimlich' (the homely), writing:

> We can understand why linguistic usage has extended *das Heimliche* [the homely] to its opposite, *das Unheimliche*; for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind. (224)

Just the uncanny belongs to the familiar, the minor is not separate to the major but belongs to and within it. Dorfl's body is uncanny because we are able to pinpoint its relation to the human and yet find it utterly foreign. The minor produces this semblance, the simultaneous resemblance and dissemblance, through animating the major in a different way — in a way that should not make sense, but must yet still occur. This uncomfortable unthinkable moment arises when the limits of the *heimlich* are breached and extended:

> The sightless sockets stared at the wall. No one heard the cry that came back from the dead skull, because there was no mouth to utter it and not even a mind to guide it, but it screamed out into the night:
> **CLAY OF MY CLAY, THOU SHALT NOT KILL! THOU SHALT NOT DIE!** (205)

The uncanny notion of 'sightless sockets staring' and dead, mindless screaming is a minor becoming beyond the major, arising from affects (in this case, shame) rather than ideology. Affects do not need mouths or minds to circulate; rather, they act upon objects and individuals, creating spaces for potential that can be acted upon. The golem's capacity for action is thus marked. not by its position in the social hierarchy, but by its unrealised, inchoate potential — a potential that cannot and need not be expressed in the major language of sight and sound.

Language, as we see in *Feet of Clay*, is the realm of the living and the animate. In Jewish mysticism, the act of creating a golem is to claim the position of God, the creator of life. The golem is the product of linguistic alchemy, the merging of language, desire and clay. Golems are animated by means of a 'chem', holy words written on scrolls of paper inserted in the hollow head. Importantly, the script in their heads merely powers golems; golems are unable to speak or otherwise express themselves. Language in *Feet of Clay* reflects the flows of power

between the human creators and the golems. Since golems are animated through chem, the physical power of activating a golem is linked to written authorisation. Language is linked to action and authority, demonstrating a form of power in which language is 'made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience' (1987, 76). The golem, with its mouthless silence, is on the other side of the dynamic. The golem's capacities are limited by the chem placed in its head, and this restriction can be understood as a typical instance in which authority speaks and the minor is subjugated, deprived of its voice.

Feet of Clay undermines this power dynamic, complicating the golem figure and asserting its claims to subjectivity. The golems create a golem king themselves, placing the golem as creators as well as created. The golems' act of creation becomes a minor act, in which language flows not from human creator to golem, but from a community of golems to another golem. The golem king's chem does not contain commands or instructions so much as declarations of hope:

> …CREATE PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL…
> …RULE US WISELY…
> …TEACH US FREEDOM…
> …LEAD US TO… (374)

Unlike the chem written by human creators, which are embedded with intent to control, the chem written by the golems evokes a collective, an assemblage of golems that deterritorialises the master-golem terrain while simultaneously mapping a new territory in which golems can become other than machine. The chem for the golem king is 'the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come' (1987, 18), revealing language as something other than that which orients or describes, but also curates and generates. The chem written by the golems does not only point out the limits of current golem existence but imagines a space beyond such limits, rummaging, as Deleuze and Guattari write, 'at the edge of the fields or the woods' to look for what life might become (1987, 246).

The golems' quest for self-actualisation is mirrored in the text by another minor character's desire to become-other. While the golems seek to express themselves without being able to speak, Cheri Littlebottom, a female dwarf, presents explicit negotiation of the major. Cheri Littlebottom is first introduced to us as Cheery Littlebottom, a male dwarf alchemist new to the police force. After spending more time in Ankh-Morpork, Cheery Littlebottom confides to her colleagues that she is in fact a female dwarf. She changes her name to Cheri, and adds lipstick and heels to the traditional dwarf armour and beard. Cheri's gender performance is an act of deterritorialisation; an act that takes on the conventions of traditional — implicitly male — dwarf appearance and subverts it from within. In this sense, this deterritorialisation is also a minor becoming, a becoming in which a minority constructs itself within the major. As Deleuze and Guattari write, minor becomings are intensely political:

> its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. (1986b, 17)

The figure of cramped space is particularly interesting in light of gender performance. The minor, overwhelmed by social forces, is unable to easily pass through legitimate routes within the social field. The minor exists not in the ghettoised margins but within the major itself, manoeuvring between cramped and constrained conditions. Cheri's gender performance is not simply the voicing of a pre-existing, silent minority but a mutation of the possibilities presented within the major regime.

Cheri's narrative arc seeks to account for what Massumi describes as the movements between 'the grid system of identity' (1-4), living out the affective potential of the minor body. Her body mutates the corporeal boundaries of gendered dwarfness, intensifying the major and '[making] one's own major language minor' (1987, 105). The disparate conjunction of relations and objects in Cheri's appearance actualises the minor, expressing multiple potentials and difference within the major:

> 'Are you all right, Corporal Littlebottom?'
> 'Yes, sir,' said Cheri.
> 'You're wearing a... a... a...' Carrot's mind rebelled at the thought of what the dwarf was wearing and settled for: 'A kilt?'
> 'Yes, sir. A skirt, sir. A leather one, sir.'
> Carrot tried to find a suitable response and had to resort to: 'Oh.' (267-8)

Cheri's gender performance vibrates with affect, a force in excess of the skirt signifier. The skirt allows Cheri to simultaneously manoeuvre the restraints of the major while using the major as a sufficient, but ultimately non-necessary, source to produce transformations and affects. Carrot's surprise and confusion when he sees Cheri in a skirt not only reveals gender performance as an apparatus of control but complicates the affective relationship between subject and object. Carrot's response to the skirt is not merely a reaction but a moment of becoming, in which Carrot enters into an assemblage with the skirt and its milieu. Massumi's soccer field analogy makes this more clear. In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi uses a soccer field to discuss the relationship between subjects and objects, stating that the ball is the 'focus of every player and the object of every gesture' (73). Massumi complicates our understanding of the active subject/passive object relationship by suggesting that it is the ball that acts upon the players:

> [I]f by subject we mean the point of unfolding of a tendential movement, it is clear that the player is not the subject of play. The ball is. [. . . .] The ball arrays the teams around itself.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> [The ball] attracts and arrays the players, defining their effective role in the game, and the overall state of the game at any given moment, by the potential movement of the players with respect to it. The ball moves the players. *The player is the object of the ball.* True, the player kicks the ball. But the ball must be considered in some way an autonomous actor because the global-game affects its displacements produce can be produced by no other game element. [. . . .]
>
> If the ball is part-subject, the player is its part-object. The ball does not address the player as a whole. It addresses the player's eyes, and ears and touch [. . . .] synthesized not into a subjective whole but into a state of intensive readiness for reflexive response: they are synthesized into actionability. (72-3)

The skirt, like the soccer ball, evokes reactions in Carrot. While Dorfl and the golems are objects turned subjects through affect, Carrot becomes part-object through the skirt's affective

field of potential. Minor becoming is not as utopian or optimistic as resistance to dominant power structures and discourse — rather, as Carrot's eventual rejection, reveals, minor becoming is packed with tension and disagreemeent:

> 'Well, I would have thought [Cheri would] have the decency to keep it to herself,' Carrot said finally. 'I mean, I've nothing against females. I'm pretty certain my stepmother is one. But I don't think it's very clever, you know, to go around drawing attention to the fact.' (268)

The humour in Carrot's statement and his uncertainty as to whether or not his dwarf stepmother is indeed female reveals how the cramped space of the minor highlights the absurdity of the major's insistence upon structural constants and binary hierarchies. The minor counters the logic of the major, not through refusing the major's organising structures, but by rejecting the value of the constant. Cheri's skirt causes those that encounter her to enter into a becoming-object that playfully disrupts the major, deterritorialising the categories to value variation and create multiplicity within the same single situation. The affective pull of part-object, part-subject within the text interrupts the dominance and stability of the major, demonstrating how the major itself is in a continual state of becoming minor.

Becoming Un-: becoming-minor in *Un Lun Dun*

China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* is a young adult novel and part of the New Weird, a genre characterised by 'urban, secondary-world fiction' that uses 'realistic, complex real-world models [. . . .] for the creation of settings that may combine elements of both science fiction and fantasy' (VanderMeer and VanderMeer 2008, xvi). *Un Lun Dun* features UnLondon, a mirror city of London inhabited by a medley of misfits: humanoid beings who bear startling resemblances to inanimate objects, humans whose jobs are obsolete in modern London, and discarded objects that develop sentience upon arrival. The text introduces us to Zanna and Deeba, twelve-year-old girls who are native to London. Zanna and Deeba are minor in two ways: they are children and discursively powerless in London and, when they arrive in UnLondon, are outsiders and must negotiate the major assemblages that structure the mirror

city. In this sense, *Un Lun Dun* follows a long tradition of young adult narratives, in which the ordinary protagonist finds herself in an extraordinary world and accomplishes extraordinary things. Zanna, initially presented as the narrative's protagonist, finds herself in UnLondon after she discovers that she is UnLondon's Chosen One, prophesied to defeat the Smog, UnLondon's greatest enemy. *Un Lun Dun*, however, swiftly subverts genre expectations: Zanna is defeated at the first hurdle, proving the prophecy wrong. Deeba, Zanna's best friend, attempts to save UnLondon in Zanna's stead. Children's literature criticism focuses largely upon this subversion, celebrating *Un Lun Dun* as a text that interrogates the quest fantasy genre to champion creative subversion over compliance to authority. Joe Sutliff Sanders, argues that *Un Lun Dun* encourages child readers to develop subjectivities that challenge the authority of language and narrative (294), while Cassandra Bausman reads the prophecy as a representation of narrative authority, arguing that Zanna becomes 'role-bound in her pre-figured destiny and reinscribed by textual authority' (33).

In privileging representations of authority, we focus more upon how the major is overturned than how the minor creates space within the major. UnLondon is constantly becoming through flows of affect and desire, allowing the minor to express potential. The productive and creative potentials of such flows are articulated not only through representations of authority (the prophecy), but also through the rhetoric of threat and fear that inscribes boundaries between particular groups of UnLondoners. These boundaries are intrinsic to both the ways in which the major social structures are constructed, and how the minor finds the space to negotiate the major. Deeba's becoming as a subject is particularly intricate. She is a minor subject, in that her voice is stifled by the major social fields of London and UnLondon: in London, she is a child (and therefore lacks the agency and independence afforded to adults); in UnLondon, she is merely the friend of the Chosen One and thus an irrelevant part of the Chosen One's quest.

UnLondon itself is also quite intricate. UnLondon deterritorialises London's detritus, an act of becoming-minor, but its particular flows of affect and desire operate in terms of constants, standardisations and territories, producing major spaces that Deeba, as a minor character, must negotiate. UnLondon's dual becoming as minor and major is not contradictory; rather, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, the minor is not in opposition to the major but comes from within the major itself. Deeba's quest in UnLondon is to rescue the minor from the standardisation of the major, to use her minor becoming and, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, 'send the major racing' (1987, 105).

Prophecies, anticipation and the affective fact

The prophecy is the most explicit marker of social and narrative authority in *Un Lun Dun,* producing the flows of desire that stratify and organise the UnLondon assemblage. UnLondoners are aware of the prophecy and await the day the 'Shwazzy', or Chosen One (a play on the French *choisi,* 'chosen') will arrive to save them from the threat of the Smog, a pollution-based sentient cloud that threatens to overtake the city. The prophecy offers both the promise of certainty (that a truth about an event can be known for certain and consistently apply across time), coexistent with the acknowledgement that not all is, in fact certain. The prophecy is contained in a talking book, which is entrusted with a body called the Propheseers, who are tasked with interpreting its contents. The future foretold by the prophecy is therefore simultaneously predictable and uncertain, and this blend of predictable uncertainty produces an affective state of anticipation in the characters. Anticipation interpellates Zanna as the Shwazzy. Within the social field stratified by the major, Zanna-as-Shwazzy is an irrefutable fact:

> 'This is crazy,' Zanna said. 'I'm just a girl. How's a Shwazzy get chosen anyway? Why's it a girl? Why not a local? How d'you even know I'm it? None of it makes sense.'
>
> 'That's how prophecies work,' Mortar said gently. 'They're not about what makes sense; they're about what *will be*. That's how they work. And…? Not only do you fit the description, but you're *here*. You crossed over… with your friend even. What greater

evidence could there be than the fact that you're here now? That you found your way through the Odd and through UnLondon to us, the only people who could tell you what you are?' (115)

The Propheseers names', such as Mortar (in the above excerpt) and his colleague, Lectern, convey a sense of authority and hierarchy. In naming the Propheseers after inanimate objects — the lectern from which an authority figure speaks and the mortar, which evokes both the academic mortarboard and the material that bonds loose materials (like bricks and stones) — Miéville invites the child reader to see the Propheseers as physical embodiments of the major. Mortar's explanation demonstrates the temporal logic of affect that structures the major. For the Propheseers, present moments are defined by an anticipation of what will happen. The Propheseers' anticipation, belief and authority is legitimised because the prophecy operates in the present on a future promise, and the Shwazzy's arrival resolves that promise. The Propheseers — and UnLondon as a whole — is governed by this politics of potential.

The imagined future, produced through the prophecy and the pre-emptive actions of the Propheseers, is stabilised by placing the Shwazzy as a necessary — rather than merely contingent — part of the assemblage. When enemies threaten the Propheseers, Mortar, watching Zanna rush to attack the invaders, quotes the prophecy in a voice 'resonant with tense triumph' (124), narrativising the event in the language of the major. The prophecy creates a sense of continuity, turning the tension of being invaded into tension based on hopeful anticipation. Deeba, enveloped in these flows of affect, views Zanna as simultaneously in danger and in control:

> 'Zann!' shouted Deeba. 'No!'
> 'Leave me alone!' Zanna shouted, and waving her stick, she hurtled into the battle, Deeba running to catch her.
> [. . . .]
> [Zanna] turned her head, caught Deeba's eye. For a moment she seemed to glow. Deeba stared.
> 'Zann,' Deeba whispered. 'Shwazz...' (124-5)

Deeba's repetitive call to Zanna keys us into how the prophecy affectively and linguistically doubles Zanna and the invasion, reframing the invasion for easy narrative insertion into the major and its discourses of anticipation and stabilised certainty. Deeba's hesitant recognition of Zanna as the Shwazzy also invites the reader to anticipate Zanna's prophesied victory. However, Zanna is promptly defeated, disrupting the affective cycle of anticipation. The Propheseers, shellshocked, turn to the book for guidance, but find no answers. This subversion of generic conventions reveals the notion of a stable, unchanging assemblage as a fallacy. The assemblage, having shed the prophecy, has taken flight, shifting and becoming something unrecognisable. Our anticipation as readers is then shifted, and we ask: what happens when the major is traversed by the minor?

Becoming-minor: becoming the UnChosen One in *Un Lun Dun*

Once Zanna is defeated, Deeba deemed unnecessary to the future of UnLondon and is sent back home. However, Deeba's conscience does not permit her to ignore UnLondon's plight and, after considerable research, she eventually discovers a way to return to UnLondon. Bausman suggests that Deeba's re-entry into UnLondon 'clearly signals her return on her own terms [. . . .] from a personal choice and difficult action rather than special destiny' (38). Deeba's re-entry into UnLondon, however, also creates new affective flows within the UnLondon assemblage, reigniting the anticipation of the Shwazzy. Her arrival is initially met with disappointment and bewilderment. When Deeba reveals that an UnLondon ally, Brokenbroll, is actually scheming to destroy UnLondon, she is met with disbelief: the Propheseers pay little heed to 'the girl who was not the Shwazzy' (260). Deeba, realising that she cannot break the affective circuits that construct the Propheseers' understanding of reality, steals the book of prophecies and resolves to save UnLondon with her own strategy. Deeba becomes known as the UnChosen, a role affectively constructed through anticipation, but anticipation of a different sort. Her arrival in UnLondon causes a stir:

> The house, on Unshrink Street, was opposite an official newswall, showing headings like *A*LL *GOING WELL*! *B*E *READY TO RETREAT FROM ATTACKED AREAS*! and instructions such as *R*EPORT *ANY UNUSUAL ACTIVITY OR* *Y*OUNG *V*ISITING *L*ONDONERS *TO THE* *P*ROPHESEERS! *T*HIS *IS FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY*! Like several they had seen, this one was scrolled over with counter-graffiti from more than one group. [. . . .] It had been crossed out vigorously and next to it was written *P*ROPHS *R* *S*UCKY *S*ELLOUTS! (409-10)

If, as Bausman argues, Zanna and the prophecy represent textual authority, Deeba's presence in London indicates the increasing movement of the minor within the major structures of the UnLondon assemblage. The city assemblage is disrupted, torn apart and recreated anew, divided into 'attacked areas' and safe zones. Anticipation is no longer directed towards the prophecy but channeled towards negotiating the shifting city zones, with inhabitants instructed to 'be ready to retreat' and 'report any unusual activity'. The minor — marked by the newswall's reference to Deeba, the 'Young Visiting Londoner' — becomes enveloped into the discourse of the major, bureaucratised and categorised in relation to the anticipatory affects circulated by the Propheseers. Importantly, though the minor is constructed as a force that must be contained to maintain stability and peace, its presence in the newswall headlines prompts others to express their discontent, thus amplifying and expanding the space in which the minor can operate.

Deeba's minor status is compounded by her choice of companion, Hemi, another figure that embodies minor becoming. Hemi is a half-ghost, born from a human father and ghost mother. Hemi's hybridity causes him to be shunned by the ghosts of UnLondon, who feel that he is too human to belong, and by the UnLondon 'alive', who believe that ghosts prey upon live bodies. Hemi is a particularly interesting figure as his ability to materialise and dematerialise at will transgresses the boundaries between the worlds of the living and the dead, and is itself a performance of becoming-minor. Hemi's assistance in Deeba's UnQuest allows Deeba to transverse the major in ways she would otherwise not be able to access. In her search for records to prove her case against Brokenbroll, Hemi takes her to Wraithtown, a small borough in Thanatopia, the central city of ghosts. Wraithtown itself is a minor space, 'difficult to make

sense of [. . . .] as the dead were extremely uncommunicative' (197). This shroud of silence causes UnLondoners to distrust those from Wraithtown, creating a cultural tug of war in which the ghosts must exist in a society that pushes against them being seen and heard. Such distrust stems from affective reactions.

As a ghost, Hemi makes visible the array of potential variables and becomings within the minor. The corporeal presence of ghosts within UnLondon disrupts the narratives of stability and certainty circulated by the major, testifying to a reality that cannot be known or experienced. The Wraithtown ghosts, unlike other literary ghost figures, do not defy the permanency of death because of unfinished business, improper burial, or a need to atone for sin or communicate important knowledge to the living. Rather, the ghosts simply exist: Hemi tells Deeba, 'after we die, a few of us just wake up again. ...And most of us end up here.' (206) If the golem in Pratchett's *Feet of Clay* provokes affective responses because its figure presents desire in a seemingly empty machine, the ghost produces affects because it is desire unfettered by a body, unlimited and unpredictable. Hemi seals the ghost figure, an uncomfortable interlocutor and representation of temporal flexibility, within the contexts of the everyday body. His ability to turn his solid body into a wispy, air-based form constantly negotiates the structures and social spaces of the major that insist upon separating and silencing the minor ghost. This limitless flexibility is, in essence, the mark and the promise of the minor.

The fluidity and adaptability of the minor comes to a head in the text when Deeba lays her hands on the UnGun, a mythical weapon prophesied to defeat the Smog and UnLondon's enemies. The UnGun does not use conventional ammunition. Instead, the gun builds upon whatever pieces are loaded, creating something new: grape pips are turned into grapevines that smother the enemy army (389), and a speck of brick becomes a building that encases the

authorities attempting to arrest Deeba and her companions (404). The UnGun's mechanism echoes that of affect: it shoots something out and intensifies it, creating a larger assemblage. The product itself is uncontrollable; the UnGun — and affect — merely releases a line of flight, a new and minor development within the established assemblage. At the climax of the battle with the Smog, Deeba runs out of ammunition and thinks despairingly, 'I have nothing' (493). However, Deeba realises that the prophecy in the talking book does, in fact, still have merit. She reasons:

> *It's no mistake!* she thought. *In the book! It's not 'Nothing* but *the UnGun the Smog's scared of. It* is *supposed to be 'Nothing* and *the UnGun.'*
> [. . . .]
> *Nothing's the opposite of something. If I fire something, anything, from the UnGun, it shoots it* out *and* exaggerates it. *So if I shoot nothing…*
> Deeba fired. (495)

To put Deeba's epiphany in terms of the major and the minor, the minor does not need something other than what is already present. Just as minor language is the expression of the minor *within* the major language, the empty gun is the expression of the minor within the major structures of the quest narrative. The minor needs only to express itself within the major: it is creation rather than negation. Thus, when Deeba aims the blank gun at the Smog, the UnGun continues to produce a different force: a vacuum of air that sucks the Smog into the barrels. There is no nothingness in the UnGun; all concepts only go elsewhere, becoming something other and something new. The Smog is not defeated through a complete rejection of the major, but through embracing the minor within the major. The UnGun magnifies and intensifies the minor, making minor becomings more visible within the stratified organisations of UnLondon.

The UnGun's unpredictable encounter with its topographical surrounds is also a challenge to the representational framework of the major forces in UnLondon. The unpredictability of the ammunition's results works against the major's insistence on consistency and stability. When the grape pip, the speck of brick and the strand of hair are loaded into the UnGun as

ammunition, they are deprived of sense and context — to borrow Deleuze's phrasing, they are made to 'stutter and stammer' (1998b,107-114). Stuttering in Deleuze's thought involves stretching a concept 'along an abstract and infinitely varied line' (1998b, 109). This is not just deterritorialisation but the creation of a state of constant disequilibrium and variation. The grape pip can no longer be considered a seed or the remnants of an eaten grape. Rather, a seed or the discarded, inedible part of the grape is merely a position that the grape pip has entered into through a process of becoming with other entities and bodies. The UnGun brings the grape pip into an intensity of becoming, setting loose the pip's potential to enter other positions within the assemblage. This is the root of power within the minor and its potential: the capacity to stutter, to make the new and unpredictable reverberate through each part of the major assemblage.

The Hunger Games trilogy: minor harnessing of the major

The minor's capacity to make the major stutter is particularly evident in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy. *The Hunger Games* is particularly fruitful ground for exploring how minor texts and minor voices express themselves within the language of the major, and how affect plays an integral role in such stuttering. *The Hunger Games* trilogy consists of *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010), and exists within a lineage of texts fascinated by the child's capacity for violence, namely Kousun Takami's *Battle Royale* (1999) and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954). The trilogy is set in Panem, a post-apocalyptic society built on the ruins of North America. Panem is composed of twelve numbered districts that service the Capitol, the capital city and centre of political power. The Capitol controls the labour of the districts and benefits from their production. The districts are

also forced to participate in a spectacle called 'The Hunger Games', an annual competition in which two children from each district must participate in a televised battle to the death.[10]

The trilogy's representation of institutionalised power has attracted considerable academic attention. Discussions of *The Hunger Games* have ranged from Foucauldian readings of Panem and the Games (Wezner 2012, Connors 2014a, Macaluso and McKenzie 2014), to investigations of reality television and spectacle (Day 2012, Koenig 2012, Muller 2012, Tan 2013), and more specific sociocultural readings of gender (Lem and Hassel 2012, Montz 2012, Connors 2014b, Dubrofsky and Ryalls 2014), race (Garcia and Haddix 2014, Dubrofsky and Ryalls 2014) and class (Clemente 2012). These approaches focus on characterising the major in relation to ideology, exploring how representations of power and identity can potentially mobilise young readers to take revolutionary action.

Katheryn Wright, in 'Revolutionary Art in the Age of Reality TV' (2012), takes a refreshingly different approach, favouring a discussion of aesthetics and affect over representation and ideology. Wright draws upon Massumi to argue that the televised nature of the Games coordinates affect, structuring the affective capacities of the citizens of Panem (99). Wright argues that the televised Games bring the geographically dispersed citizens together 'as a living, breathing public [. . . .] that is subsequently the primary subject of the Capitol's exploitation' (100). This public, as Wright notes, is not a collective mass of people that comes to think and act in the same way, and so perception of the Games is dependent upon each individual's position in relation to the institution of power (100). Wright uses this concept of the public to discuss the aesthetic dimensions of reality television and its intersections with

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[10] Though outside the scope of this thesis, the state-mandated media coverage of the Games invites comparisons to Robert Sheckley's short story, 'Seventh Victim' (1953), as well as Stephen King's *The Long Walk* (1979) and *The Running Man* (1982), both published under King's pseudonym, Richard Bachman.

power and revolution in the text. As Wright argues, the power of the Capitol lies in its ability to modulate affect through televised spectacles like the Games.

The production of the Games is the text's explicit marker of the major voice within the social field. Like the prophecy in *Un Lun Dun*, the Games present Panem's citizens with two expressions of time and temporality: tradition, which evokes the past to stabilise the present and the future, and unpredictability, evoking a fluid present and an always shifting (and potentially dangerous) future. Tradition manifests itself in the justification for the Games, which act as a safeguard against the potentially dangerous future:

> Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated. The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games. (21)

The Games' demand for two child representatives from each district recreates and renarrativises the rebellion firmly within the major social field. The minor voice and its reasons for rebellion is erased and silenced, affectively equated with danger that must not be repeated. The minor is silenced through the death of the child figure, which also acts as the primary affective draw. The historic violence of the districts against the Capitol is re-enacted by violent acts of children against children, and the original violence against the Capitol is reborn as violence that results in the death of each district representative. The unease and shock produced by witnessing a child die is affectively resolved in the crowning of the victor, though, importantly, the victory does not give the districts any power. Since two children must represent each district, a victory is dependent upon the child killing another child from the same district. One district wins, but at the expense of being halved.

In the affective reality produced by the Games, history rubs shoulders with chance. The Games' catchphrase, 'may the odds be ever in your favour', reminds the characters that the same broad story — the death of the districts — has the potential to be retold and re-enacted

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in various ways, though always in favour of the major. Deaths are certain, but the particular details of each death are irrelevant. The Hunger Games itself is a ritual play, in which events are already set out as inevitable. The tributes are distinguishable from their predecessors only through their method of killing. Katniss, the protagonist, notes that District 7's previous winner, Johanna Mason, acted like a 'sniveling, cowardly fool' that 'no one bothered about her until there were only a handful of contestants left. It turned out she could kill viciously' (48), and that there have been 'raging beast tributes, the kind who tries to eat someone's heart after they've killed them' (173). Within the major, these minor individuals only gain recognition through the presentation and performance of killing. Katniss' focalisation gives us insights into how the minor carves space for itself within an explicitly oppressive major 'language' and way of being.

Inherent in the Capitol's ability to modulate affect is the ability to prime citizens to expect shock and surprise. In the affective reality produced by the Games, expecting the unexpected is not a paradox. The text explores the affective possibilities produced by aesthetic performances, devoting much of the narrative and Katniss' focalisation to describing the preparation involved in producing the Games, such as televised interviews, before which each tribute is coached to present a personality that appeals to the crowd. In this interview, the tribute is an assemblage, a field of forces always in becoming: as Haymitch, Katniss' mentor, tells her, 'I'm trying to figure out what to do with you. How we're going to present you. [. . . .] People are intrigued, but no one knows who you are' (141). The interview process positions the child tributes as affects materialised in bodies, assemblages in constant states of becoming — but safe, controlled becoming, because the minor voice echoes and reinforces the sanctioned messages of the major. The audience is encouraged to invest emotionally in each tribute, with the interviews setting up habits of response for the audience, providing the conditions under which affects circulate and attachments can be formed. These affects are

built upon and prolonged by image transmission, narrativised and relayed by the media and state, and qualified by the audience's affective connections. Katniss describes herself as being 'made' through such a process as she watches a playback of the interview on screen:

> And there I am, blushing and confused, made beautiful by Cinna's hands, desirable by Peeta's confession [of love], tragic by circumstance, and by all accounts, unforgettable. (167)

From the perspective of power and agency, Katniss is without agency — her body inscribed by discourses outside of her control. Indeed, the notion that she watches herself, separating her self from the image on screen, suggests a lack of control and agency. More importantly, however, this separation of self and image allows for the minor to become in the spaces between appearance and affect within the Games. Appearance and persona in the Games, as Linda J. Rice and Katie Wrabel (2014) remind us, are integral to the mechanics of the ritual (). A winning personality attracts sponsors, people in the audience who send gifts of food, medicine and other forms of aid that increases a tribute's chance of survival. While Rice and Wrabel note that audience manipulation is more important than physical prowess, they ground their argument in appearance and spectacle rather than the mechanics of affect. Affect highlights the mechanics of the Games and the spectacle, in particular: the tributes must make their mark in the audience's perceptions and be 'unforgettable'. It is here that the Games' second dimension of affective time, unpredictability, comes to the fore, and the reader finds the minor voice within the major discourse of the Games.

Unpredictability produces surprise, an affect that allows for the resetting and renewal of affective intensity. Massumi, in an interview with Joel McKim, speaks of affect as a commotion 'interrupting whatever continuities are in progress' (4), producing an awareness in the affected subject of the 'potential for more life to come' (4). Katniss notes that the success of the Games rests on unpredictability (209), which presents a challenge for the designers of the Games: they must produce a spectacle that maintains the status quo, yet a spectacle that is

novel enough to pique the audience's interest. The Games thus becomes a politics of aesthetics (Wright 100), and surprise comes in the delivery rather than the content. For the Capitol audience, pleasure arises from watching the inevitable come to be; for the institution, any elements of surprise and shock are permissible, as long as the content remains the same. The minor thus finds space to exist and expand within the aesthetic spectacle. The first instance of the minor appears in the text when Katniss' stylist, Cinna, sends Katniss out in a costume ablaze with artificial flames. Katniss and her district opponent, Peeta, are instructed to hold hands as they enter the city. Katniss narrates:

> The crowd's initial alarm at our appearance quickly changes to cheers and shouts of "District Twelve!" Every head is turned our way, pulling the focus from the three chariots ahead of us.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> I can't help feeling strange about the way Cinna has linked us together. It's not really fair to present us as a team and then lock us into the arena to kill each other. (2008, 85)

The spectacle, and the surprise that surrounds the spectacle, are merely manifestations of the major, expected and condoned by the Capitol. Katniss and Peeta's appearance as a team, however, is a radical move, deterritorialising the characters from their subject positions as single tributes. This act of deterritorialisation marks the presence of the minor within the spectacle. Their appearance as a team expresses itself in the affects and language of the major, presenting the necessary surprise and spectacle demanded by the Games.

Throughout the trilogy, conditions for revolution are rooted in the minor's capacity to express itself and produce affects within the discourse of the spectacle. As Wright notes, perception of the Games is dependent upon the individual's position in relation to the institution of power (100). The overarching narrative of the trilogy demonstrates the mechanics of affective politics: even if bodies are collectively called and primed to the same cue — in this case, the shock evoked by the Games — each body carries a different set of tendencies and capacities

for affect, and there is no guarantee that the collective will act as one body. *Catching Fire*, the second book, and *Mockingjay*, the final book in the trilogy, demonstrate that even the most controlled political situation contains a surplus of potential that the minor can harness. In *Catching Fire*, we see how that surplus of affect, when cued, can remodulate a situation and provoke a line of flight. Katniss reminds us that behaviour during the Games is strictly controlled, noting, 'to make it humiliating as well as torturous, the Capitol requires us to treat the Hunger Games as a festivity' (2008, 22). Beyond humiliation, the performance of celebration channels surplus affective energy in an acceptable manner, allowing power to be maintained and the major to prevail. In *Catching Fire*, we see how minor becomings in that surplus of affect remodulates the audience's response, allowing for the minor to break forth. The Capitol, drawing heavily upon the Games as a memorial ritual, announces that the Games' tributes will be selected from a pool of previous victors 'as a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol' (2009, 208). During the tribute interviews, the previous victors selected for the Games capitalise on the surprise and subsequence surplus of affect:

> Cashmere starts the ball rolling with a speech about how she just can't stop crying when she thinks how much the people in the Capitol must be suffering because they will lose us. [. . . .] By the time Johanna Mason gets up, she's asking if something can't be done about the situation. Surely the creators of the Quarter Quell never anticipated such love forming between the victors and the Capitol. [. . . .] And Chaff, who comes right on [Seeder's] heels, insists the president could change the Quell if he wanted to, but he must not think it matters much to anyone. By the time I'm introduced, the audience is an absolute wreck. People have been weeping and collapsing and even calling for change. The sight of me in my white silk bridal gown practically causes a riot.' (301-2)

The tributes' appeal to the audience, and the audience's reactions, highlights the minor's capacity for affect and creation. Katniss' narration of events reflects the ways in which the audience becomes enmeshed in a steady, building intensity: the ball begins to roll and the questions posed by the tributes turn to outright challenges to the major. Cashmere, aligning herself with the major, performs empathy that creates an affective resonance with the

audience. Johanna Mason firmly establishes the connection between the tributes and the audience, suggesting that their distress can be redirected into revolutionary action. In characterising the relationships between the past victors and the audience, Cashmere and Johanna deterritorialise the major and make way for nostalgia, an affective intensity that transposes time. Memories of past Games intensify the affects circulating within the present moment, and the minor expression of resistance wraps itself in the language of the major, in which the relationship between audience and tribute is sanctioned.

The affective moment is capped off by the image of Katniss who, by now, embodies what the Capitol citizens will lose. Her appearance brings the circuit beyond nostalgia and triggers anticipation, allowing the minor to create potential realities. Katniss' wedding gown not only evokes the promise of a televised wedding between Katniss and Peeta, but reminds the audience of their investment in the victors and their successes. The weeping becomes a response to the projected future imagined by the minor. Like Cashmere and Johanna, Katniss' performance is couched in the language of the major. Katniss performs empathy with the audience to reinforce the Capitol's imagined relationship with the victors, explicitly terminating the possibility of that future. Katniss announces to the audience, 'I'm so sorry you won't get to be at my wedding... but I'm glad you at least get to see me in my dress' (303). The promise of the minor looms in what is unsaid: the minor promises satisfactory resolution of audience anticipation; the major, on the other hand, fails to deliver.

As the trilogy continues, the minor's capacity extends further, drawing upon the same language of spectacle through which the major produces its affects and maintains its dominance. In *Mockingjay*, Katniss becomes the mascot of the rebellion, and her image is tightly controlled and manipulated for political means. The Capitol and the rebels both weaponise the affective potential of the image and, as the narrative progresses, the reader

becomes aware of how the minor, when its deterritorialising capacities are confined and stratified, becomes an echo of the major. Katniss' image is manipulated by the Capitol and the rebels, and Katniss finds herself at the centre of this battle over affect. Her narration often describes her image in distant third person. Katniss' present-tense narration makes no distinction between her self and the image when she is filmed, live, reaching out to a Capitol soldier:

> The cameras are tight on me as I reach out my hands to the man, to the wounded, to the reluctant rebels across Panem. 'Please! Join us!'
>
> My words hang in the air. I look to the screen, hoping to see them recording some wave of reconciliation going through the crowd.
>
> Instead, I watch myself get shot on television. (253)

Notably, Katniss watches herself, rather than physically sees herself, getting shot. Katniss is formed in relation to the camera and in relation to her own image: the screen seems to know what happens to Katniss before she does. The battlefield, framed by the camera, is what Massumi calls a 'space of movement-vision', a space in which movement is 'continuously fractured, unhinged from subject and object, and they from each other' (51). The fracturing of movement creates a space of pure relationality — a concept we see manifested in the wounded man, who, through elision with the general wounded and the whole of Panem, becomes an audience rather than active participant. The rebellion no longer needs to speak the language of the major. Rather, the rebellion has established its own assemblage, its own major discourse of propaganda and spectacle. Katniss must look to the major to see herself; like the wounded man, Katniss has become the audience to her own image. Katniss' subjectivity is characterised not merely by agency and her responses to power, but her constant battle to engage in minor becomings and lines of flight within increasingly major assemblages.

Feed: the dream of becoming minor

Katniss' predicament in *The Hunger Games* is an interesting exploration of the minor because the rebellion, originally a minor voice, becomes stratified and forms a major language itself, creating conditions in which Katniss must express her minor self through the rebellion's major language. M.T. Anderson's *Feed* imagines a world in which teenagers, steeped heavily in consumer culture, do not know how to exist as anything other than consumers. The problem is not only creating spaces for the minor to exist, but recognising the presence of the minor at all. *Feed* is set in a futuristic North America, where society is saturated with technology owned and operated by corporations. Many Americans have the 'feed', a small device implanted into the brain that allows users to access information, entertainment and social networking. The feed also monitors the brainwaves of its users, sending constant streams of targeted advertisements and entertainment to encourage more consumption.

The constant presence of corporate power in this society is reflected in the fragmented advertisements that interrupt the narrative and the ease in which the teen protagonist, Titus, drops the names of brands and trends into everyday conversation. At the beginning of the text, Titus meets Violet, a teenage girl who is critical of consumer culture and the feed. Titus and Violet become victims of an anti-feed protest hack, and though Titus' feed is easily repaired, Violet's feed fails to stabilise. The malfunctioning feed slowly robs Violet of her ability to move and speak. Violet petitions the corporations to sponsor the repairs to her feed, but her refusal to participate in consumer culture means that she is 'not a reliable investment' (247), and the text ends with Titus at her deathbed. While Violet's death, in frameworks of resistance/ compliance to power, is the ultimate signifier of the oppression of the minority, this does not necessarily mean that it is the ultimate silencing of the *minor*. Though Violet dies at the end of the text, her discussions of the feed with Titus produces affects that allow minor spaces to develop within the major.

The major in *Feed* is characterised by constant corporate advertising, broadcast to the public through the feed. Noga Applebaum notes that though Titus and his friends' use of the feed means that they can be considered cyborgs, the narration itself separates the mechanical and the organic (93). Applebaum argues that this separation results in a representation of technology placed in opposition to humanity and bestows technology with golem-like independence. In this sense, the feed is like the inanimate golem figure in *Feet of Clay*: an object that acts upon individuals through producing affects. For Abbie Ventura, the feed is the medium through which commodity culture replaces autonomy with unnecessary lack and desire (92). Ventura points to the advertisements scattered throughout the text to argue that the characters' exposure to the advertisements renders them unable to manufacture their own desires outside of consumerism. The advertisements, however, are also powerful because they produce affective reactions and create a reality based on potential, which creates a malleable structure in which the minor can thrive. As we see in the language used in the advertisements, affect is deployed not to create desire based on lack, but to create a sense of unlimited potential:

> *. . . ONLY ON SPORTS-VOX — TAKE A MAN, TAKE A GAS SLED, TAKE A CHLORINE STORM ON JUPITER — AND BOYS, IT'S TIME TO SPIT INTO THE WIND WITH ALEX NEETHAM, THE HARDEST, HIPPEST, HYPEST . . .* (15)

The advertisement works on conditions of uncertainty, drawing upon the phrase 'to spit in the wind' to draw attention to the dangers of mixing chlorine and gas. The exact nature of the activity, however, is unimportant. The details are glossed over in favour of exhorting viewers to watch 'the hardest, hippest, hypest' Alex Neetham. Alex Neetham's value as a commodity is defined by his ability to spit into the wind, to engage in moments of potential futility or potential victory. In Massumi's words, Alex Neetham embodies 'an accident, or an accident avoided' (*The Politics of Everyday Fear* 8). Alex Neetham is not naturally the 'hardest, hippest, hypest' but *made* so through existing in a condition of uncertainty and potential. The exhortation to watch the moment of the accident or accident avoided is not about consuming

to fill a lack, but an invitation to experience consumption as an event. The watcher experiences both the moment of consumption and the moment at which all possibilities — all uncertainties and potentials — are open.

The interesting question becomes: if all uncertainties and potentials are open to the consumer, then how does potential get reterritorialised into the major, and how does the minor create space for itself? Bullen and Parsons, like Ventura, conclude that resistance or other ways of thinking is impossible for Titus as he is thoroughly produced by the feed (138). Violet's resistance to the feed is similarly considered impossible, as her resistance ultimately results in her death. For children's literature criticism grounded in concepts of power and resistance, the minor is irrelevant, as it is always overpowered by the major. However, it is still worthwhile exploring the mechanics of Violet's resistance in relation to affect and the minor, as Violet's resistance produces affective reactions that spur Titus' development as a subject.

Violet's resistance to the feed takes the form of a consumer profile 'so screwed, no one can market to it' (98). She brings Titus to the mall, where they browse but never purchase, flooding her feed with data. At first, Titus does not understand the purpose of her actions, but begins to understand, 'practically laughing snot into [his] hand' (101). Titus' laughter is interesting for two reasons: it marks a moment in which Titus does not consume without thinking as he and his friends usually do, and his laughter disrupts the affective intensity of the consumer space. In fact, Titus is able to stand at a distance, rather than feeling compelled to consume:

> Once [the ads] started coming, they started to call others to them, and I could feel them doing that call, and they were all around me. They came to us. It was like they were lots of friendly butterflies, and we were smeared with something, and they kept coming and coming... (106)

Titus' use of butterfly imagery is particularly significant. Violet marks him as different to his peers, saying, 'you're the only one of them that uses metaphor' (63), which suggests that Titus is able to think and conceptualise ideas beyond the consumer language offered by the feed. Indeed, his use of imagery resonates with the mechanics of affect. Titus conceptualises the advertisements as 'calling', calling him to action as well as calling to each other in a constant stream of connection and increasing intensity. Importantly, Titus recognises these affective calls to consume, but narrativises the moment through a lens that does not feature consumerism. Titus does not blindly see himself as an agent that acts upon the advertisements; instead, his butterfly imagery imbues life and desire into the advertisements themselves, recognising their capacity to render him a passive target. Violet's attempts to create a contradictory consumer profile creates the minor space that allows Titus to explore and articulate the minor within his experience of the major, expanding his capacity to become other than a passive consumer.

Titus' imagery, with its surreal excess of butterflies also evokes dreams, suggests that the feed has the capacity to intoxicate consumers, bringing them to a dream-like state. Indeed, the narrative depicts the feed permeating dreams, demonstrating how pervasive the feed is. Carter Hanson acknowledges the insidious nature of the feed, but also locates potential for resistance and change in Titus' dreams, suggesting that dreams trigger 'forms of remembering removed from the feed' (270). Titus, in a moment of recall unassisted by the feed, remembers the dreams he had after being hacked by the Coalition of Pity. The nightmares, implanted by the Coalition of Pity, feature

> khakis that were really cheap, only $150, but I didn't like the stitching, and then I saw them torn and there was blood on them. It was a riot on the street, and people were screaming in some other language [. . . .] I saw girls sewing things, little girls in big halls. (151-2)

The random stream of feed images resembles the format of the dominant commodity culture but, as Hanson argues, the image sequence 'invokes causation', creating causal and temporal

links between consumption and labour (271). The Coalition of Pity, like the rebels in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, produces propaganda that uses the language and structure of the major to amplify the minor. The dream is the ideal site for the minor to bloom: it is unstable, fleeting and constantly creating connections between seemingly disparate concepts. The sensation of dreaming with the feed is characterised not by adjusting the dream situation to lived or experienced reality, but by allowing the situation to expand and intensify into all possible potentials and variations. The images of the dream presented through the feed are, in themselves, completely different to the images produced by the feed when Titus is conscious and awake. Within the dream state, the khakis, the riots and the factory sweatshop are only partly there; they do not link to a real, actual set of khakis that Titus can purchase after viewing. Their context is multi-layered, diffused with the otherness and minor voice of the Coalition of Pity, creating what Deleuze calls a 'series of anamorphoses which sketch out a very large circuit' (1985, 58): something which is transformative, capturing and changing. This is not a dream to be analysed in relation to representation and resemblance, but for the dynamic and fluid minor.

The inability of subjects to produce or create in a way that does not resemble the feed has been read by Bullen and Parsons as evidence that there is no potential for Titus' redemption (138). At the end of the text, Titus stands at Violet's deathbed, trying 'not to listen to the noise on the feed'. His last words to Violet mirror the first advertisement he hears when the feed is restored to him after the hacking ('until one crazy day when this cranky old woman and this sick little boy meet a coy-dog with a heart of gold — and they all learn an important lesson about love') (71):

> It's about the feed,' I said. 'It's about this meg normal guy, who doesn't think about anything until one wacky day, when he meets a dissident with a heart of gold.'
>
> I said, 'Set against the backdrop of America in its final days, it's the high-spirited story of their love together, it's laugh-out-loud funny, really heartwarming, and a visual feast.' I picked up her hand and held it to my lips. I whispered to her fingers. 'Together,

> the two crazy kids grow, have madcap escapades, and learn an important lesson about love. They learn to resist the feed. Rated PG-13. For language,' I whispered, 'and mild sexual situations.' (297-8)

Titus' inability to express himself beyond the hegemonic, major discourse demonstrates the limits of the discourse itself, not the limits of the subject. Titus deterritorialises the major language, repeating but not necessarily replicating the assemblages produced by the feed. As Deleuze and Guattari remind us in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'a crocodile itself does not reproduce a tree trunk' (5): resemblance is not necessarily reproduction. Titus' repetition does not reproduce the feed's affective circuits; rather, he creates a new assemblage with a new function: a gift to Violet that imagines successful resistance to the feed and expresses hope for growth and change. Titus' development as a subject should be read not only through his relations to the dominant power structures of consumerism, but his movement from being a comfortable part of the major to becoming-minor, opening a line of flight to the marginal. Violet is radical not because her resistance succeeded, but because her minor position within the major prompts the formation of new territories and new ways of being. Titus' story ceases to imitate and replicate the major, operating through intensities that deterritorialise and create what Deleuze calls 'the opposite dream... becoming minor' (1986b, 27). Titus opens himself up to experiencing emotions and sensations beyond what the feed offers, crying as he says goodbye to Violet and expresses a possible world. A possible world, importantly, is not one that is temporally yet-to-come — the text makes no promise that Titus will enact revolutionary change and overthrow the system — but a world in which it is possible to become other, become different, become minor.

In this sense, subjectivity in texts for young adults can be considered as explorations in becoming-minor — not in becoming-minority (defined by identity categories), but in accessing the potentials and intensities occurring within the cramped structures of the major discourse and social fields. The characters in *Feet of Clay*, *Un Lun Dun*, *The Hunger Games* and

Feed are minority characters, but our readings of their subjective development should not be centred on how — or if — they make ripples within the major, for this devalues the potentials within becoming-minor. To judge revolutionary or radical action based only on the major merely reaffirms the major as the default, centralised and static state. The major, as we see in the golem body in *Feet of Clay* and the ghost body in *Lun Dun*, imposes binary concepts of natural and unnatural that ultimately create polarised spaces whereby the different body not only finds itself segregated and minoritised, but must define itself against the natural(ised) centre. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I explore how Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of difference allows for new perspectives on difference and repetition to unfold.

Chapter 2
Understanding place as assemblage: difference, repetition and the nomad in *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea*

As argued in Chapter 1, Deleuze and Guattari's work on assemblage and affect allows us to recognise minor becomings, creating conceptual space to develop a theory of subjectivity that privileges connection and relation over agency. Representations of place are a key theoretical base for this enquiry, as subjects are not only affected by other subjects — as established by the analyses of affect and becoming in *Un Lun Dun*, *Feet of Clay*, *The Hunger Games* trilogy and *Feed* — but also by other entities within the social field. Place, in this light, can be considered an intextricably intertwined knot of spatiality and sociality, and any understanding of literary representations of society must also take into account representations of place. Place itself is not a concept explicitly deployed in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature or minor becoming, nor in their work generally, though their preference for geography over history in their philosophical enquiries means that their work lends itself to a certain understanding of space, spatialisation and movement.

This chapter establishes place as affective assemblage in China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea*, discussing how concepts of difference and repetition are explored through what Deleuze and Guattari call 'striated and smooth' spaces. Both *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea* are young adult texts that also fall under the New Weird. As discussed in Chapter 1, *Un Lun Dun* challenges the young adult quest narrative through affirming the minor and rewriting of major assemblages. Similarly, *Railsea* features young adult characters who, as minor subjects, embrace the minor and deterritorialise the major. Both these texts and their treatment of young adult minor becomings display Miéville's interest in thinking beyond binaries and oppositional relations. *Un Lun Dun*'s treatment of city spaces undoes the call to search for resemblance between a representation and its origin, while two of *Railsea*'s characters, Captain Naphi and Mocker-Jack, challenge the relationship between signifier and signified

through their interaction with the land and with each other. Within these texts, place is represented as assemblages that are always deterritorialised and reterritorialised, producing affects that open avenues for becoming minor. Notably, Miéville's treatment of difference invites us to consider becoming minor through nomadism: how to 'move between things, establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 25).

Deleuze and Guattari conceive of the assemblage as structured along two intersecting axes, which they term the 'tetravalence of the assemblage' (1987, 88-9). These axes are essential to developing a theory of place as assemblage and becoming minor. The first axis links describes the material interaction of bodies and spaces in relation to the expression of meaning through language and representation. Assemblages are thus both material and expressive, and the expressive pole of the assemblage also embodies codes that govern forms of expression. Places, in this sense, are not discrete, essential things in themselves, but are formed by the coming together of component parts that relate, connect and interact. These relations are not permanent. Structures are built and torn down, people enter and exit, events and gatherings put places to different use. Place must therefore be understood as constituted by practices as well as by things.

These practices mean that place is also constituted by the experience of those involved, through the meaning they bring to place and the intensities of affect produced by their interactions with other connecting components. In literature, the flows, affects and spatial connections that constitute a place assemblage co-exist with codes of representation. As discussed in Chapter 1, children's literature criticism has focused largely upon the form that codes of representation take, and how such codes reveal a text's underlying ideologies. This chapter continues to seek the spaces of the minor within major codes of representation by

exploring how *experiences* of place are represented, and how places, as fluid assemblages that distribute bodies, materials and movements, reveal moments and spaces for the child protagonist to access models of subjectivity characterised by becoming.

The fluidity of place-as-assemblage is best discussed in relation to the second axis of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage, which they call 'deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation'. Territorialisation, more generally, is the process of creating territories, the

> critical distance between two beings of the same species. Mark your distance [. . . .] Don't let anybody touch me, I growl if anyone enters my territory, I put up placards [. . . .] It is a matter of keeping at a distance the forces of chaos knocking at the door. (1987, 319-20)

Deterritorialisation has been deployed in children's literature criticism largely to discuss globalisation, postcolonialism and themes of belonging and displacement (Bradford, Mallan and Stephens 2008, Bullen and Mallan 2011). This chapter uses deterritorialisation more broadly to describe the processes that decontextualise a set of relations, creating space for the minor to flourish. Deleuze and Guattari are particularly interested in how forces can erode and/or reinscribe territories and boundaries. Deterritorialisation articulates the shifting, changing and subsequent erosion of a territory, while reterritorialisation encompasses the process of reinscribing order and the creation of a new assemblage. Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation also mediate the degree to which an assemblage is stabilised, and encapsulate how social and spatial boundaries are inscribed and erased. Importantly, the assemblage's constant shift between states of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation establishes the assemblage as an entity in flux, in which the major ruptures and creates spaces for the minor. While reterritorialisation often results in reifying the major (as discussed in Chapter 1's analysis of *Feed*), the minor is still a worthy site to explore because it expresses conditions and capacity for change.

Before discussing the minor, it is important to discuss how the major establishes itself. Deleuze and Guattari use the concept 'segmentarity' to articulate how boundaries are used to stabilise territories, writing that

> life is spatially and socially segmented. The house is segmented according to its rooms' assigned purposes; streets, according to the order of the city; the factory according to the nature of the work. (208)

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between two conditions of segmentarity: rigid (or molar) and supple (or molecular). The molar line, or rigid segmentarity, is of the state: calculated arrangements, segmented to 'ensure and control the identity of each agency, including personal identity' (195). Molecular or supple segmentarities, in contrast, involve fluid lateral connections that have the potential for segments to dissolve and form. Importantly, supple lines are not opposed to rigid lines. The supple and rigid are inseparable and overlapping:

> It is not sufficient to define bureaucracy by a rigid segmentary with compartmentalization of continguous offices [. . . .] For at the same time there is a [. . . .] suppleness of and communication between offices, a bureaucratic perversion, a permanent inventiveness or creativity practiced even against administrative regulations (14).

Here, we see that suppleness has a more fundamental relation in Deleuze and Guattari's consideration of the assemblage and the major than mere differentiation from the rigid. The distinction between suppleness and rigidity presents the condition of the new and the minor, and also allows for distinctions between the organisation of assemblages, which Deleuze and Guattari loosely categorise as 'rhizomes' and 'arborescent'. Arborescent thought, which characterises the major, has its roots in binary opposites upon which other principles are built, and branches out from the root into smaller and smaller subcategories. Rhizomatic thought, in contrast, bypasses these hierarchical operations by virtue of being non-linear and flexible. It is through the rhizome's non-linearity that supple segmentarities become deterritorialised. This process of deterritorialisation between the rhizome and the arborescent is key to developing a theory of space characterised by the minor.

The conceptual contrast between the rhizome and the arborescent finds a parallel in *A Thousand Plateaus*' penultimate chapter on striated and smooth space. These concepts are not different types of space or spatial organisations so much as spatial properties. Striated space is where identities and spatial practices become stabilised within the major, while smooth space is identified with movement and instability, through which stable territories are erased and new identities and spatial practices become possible. Just as the rigid and the supple, smooth and striated space are usually mixed: striated spaces can be smoothed and smooth spaces can be striated. Deleuze and Guattari's interest in differentiating multiple states and properties of assemblages — the rhizome/arborescent, the striated/smooth, the rigid/supple — leaves us with particularly fruitful ways of imagining place, subjectivity and the processes of becoming as complex and interrelated configurations beyond the static and stable ontologies presented to us within an ideology-dominated lens.

In this light, literary interpretation in children's literature can be approached beyond finding the ideological roots of representation. Deleuze and Guattari, of course, explicitly position their project against representation; representation, in their thought, belongs to the rigid (Bolt 47). This does not necessarily mean that Deleuzo-Guattarian approaches cannot be applied to literary representation. Representation may be characterised by rigidity, but as we have seen, assemblages are not bounded and fixed. The rigid becomes supple, the arborescent becomes the rhizome; the striated has the potential to be smoothed. Rather than associating representation with resemblance and identity — representation *of* a concept or object — representation also has the capacity to express difference through the act of interpreting. 'Reading against the grain', such as queer readings of ostensibly hetero-normative texts is, for instance, an act of interpretation that seeks to go beyond the major, finding difference and points of change within the major discourse.

'Difference and repetition', as mentioned in the opening of this chapter, is key to understanding how Miéville's writing provides readers with models of subjectivity located beyond resistance to ideology. *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea* both feature characters that develop subjectivity in ways that embrace difference and becoming-minor, exploring processes of continuous variation and deterritorialisation. These texts, like Deleuze and Guattari's work, stress the importance of becoming-minor, and insist that the power of the minor

> is not measured by their capacity to enter and make themselves felt within the majority system, nor even to reverse the necessarily tautological criterion of the majority, but to bring to bear the force of the non-denumerable sets, however small they may be, against the denumerable sets. (1987, 471)

Becoming-minor and, by extension, the power of the minor, in children's literature can be explored through the concepts of difference and repetition. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze discusses how difference is conventionally understood in Platonic thought as difference *from* the same, or a variation between two states (80). This understanding of difference assumes that there is, at some basic level, a sameness between two states against which variation can be observed or deduced. Difference, then, becomes merely a relative measure of sameness, subordinated to that which is represented in relation to identity. Deleuze argues against understanding difference in terms of resemblance and opposition, seeking instead to understand 'difference in itself'.

UnLondon: the labyrinthine city

The idea of place as assemblage implies more than just a collection of discrete parts working together. Since affects emerge from diverse encounters between different bodies, between those bodies and events, and between bodies, events and contexts, assemblages of place — like the subject-assemblage or society-assemblage — can be considered able to generate affects. The body's encounters in *place* involve affective resonances that differ from those experienced between discrete individuals. Place, as an affective assemblage, becomes a store

of action-potential, of expression, capacities and practices. The interplay between place as symbolic and representation, and place as affective assemblage gives way to an analysis of subjectivity that foregrounds becoming-minor and difference. UnLondon, the main setting of Miéville's *Un Lun Dun*, is a particularly fruitful site for exploring Deleuze's concept of difference in itself.

Miéville encourages the reader to see connections between London and UnLondon, but rhetorically denaturalises the relationship between the two cities and demands that we recognise UnLondon as its own entity instead of merely through its similarities and differences to London. Deeba and Zanna's commentary on UnLondon's differences to London, of course, does easily invite considerations of *Un Lun Dun* in relation to concepts of the carnivalesque and defamiliarisation. Reading *Un Lun Dun* through the lenses of these two concepts, however, will result in drawing comparisons that understand difference in relation to sameness. UnLondon, considered in light of the carnivalesque, merely becomes a London turned upside down: a temporary, fleeting space in which Deeba exercises agency before returning to the original, stable space of London. To free UnLondon from its subordinate state as a carnivalesque mimicry of London, we must look more closely at the organisation of UnLondon as an assemblage. As discussed earlier, in Chapter 1, *Un Lun Dun* explores becoming minor through imagining affect as a driving force in the prophecies and rumours that circle Deeba. These affects are produced by more than the inhabitants of UnLondon. The streets, districts and buildings of UnLondon also produce and channel affect. The organisation of the cityscape in *Un Lun Dun* is presented to the reader as a labyrinthine tangle, creating an impression of a dynamic assemblage that is constantly shifting.

The city as a labyrinth is a common image in literature, from the 'maze of mean dirty streets' in *Oliver Twist* to the explicitly labyrinthine works of Jorge Luis Borges. For Walter Benjamin,

the figure of the labyrinth best encapsulates the modern city's architecture and crowds (1999, 429). The labyrinth itself, of course, is a common trope. In literature and film, the labyrinth is the home of monsters, aliens, psychopathic killers and lost souls. The labyrinth also features in philosophical thought: Nietzsche discusses nihilistic experience through the figures of Dionysus and Ariadne in the labyrinth (Schrift 197); Foucault, in his exploration of metamorphosis and the double in Raymond Roussel's work (1986, 93-5); indeed, Deleuze also employs the image of the labyrinth to explain his concept of the fold (which also informs Chapter 4 of this thesis), writing 'a labyrinth is [. . .] multiple because it contains many folds' (1993, 3-4).

Penelope Reed Doob (1990) reconstructs the idea of the labyrinth from a variety of literary and visual sources to explore how the labyrinth as a visual or verbal sign informs literary texts (2). Doob uses the word 'labyrinthine' to express how certain features (circuitousness, disorientation, chaos, confusion or curiosity) operate to make things function like labyrinths (2). The labyrinthine thus expresses a relationship or connection between form and feeling, and is a useful concept for framing how representations of place foreground the way characters become minor and encounter flows of affect. The labyrinth's circuitous, disorienting space is also an interesting site from which to consider affect, as affect is a 'different temporal structure, in which past and future brush shoulders with no mediating present' (Massumi, 2002, 31). Indeed, temporality is an important feature of place in UnLondon, which contains three particular locations that are both temporally and physically labyrinthine: Wraithtown, the Talklands Blabyrinth and Webminster Abbey.

We are first introduced to the notion of the labyrinthine in *Un Lun Dun* through Deeba's focalisation. Early in the narrative, Deeba and Zanna find themselves on a flying bus that allows them to see a 'threadwork of streets and buildings' dotted with landmarks and

territories inhabited by distinct groups of people (62). Jones, their UnLondon guide, explains

how the UnLondon cityscape is formed:

> 'You'll see a lot of moil technology here,' Jones said. 'Em Oh Ay Ell. Mildly Obsolete in London. Throw something away and you declare it obsolete. You've seen an old computer, or a broken radio or whatever, left on the streets? It's there for a few days, and then it's just gone.
>
> 'Sometimes rubbish collectors have taken it, but often as not it ends up here, where people find other uses for it. It seeps into UnLondon.' (64)

Moil technology is a particularly interesting part of the UnLondon assemblage, as it presents

us with the sheer fluidity of the assemblage. London's detritus is deterritorialised within

UnLondon, set free from the relations that define it as obsolete rubbish. Instead, the rubbish

finds new life, forming buildings made of 'fridges, a dishwasher or two, and hundreds of

record players, old fashioned cameras, telephones and typewriters, with thick cement

between them' (55). The unfamiliar juxtapositions between each type of machine emphasises

the potentialities that surround each individual piece — potentialities that exceed their more

familiar functions. Objects within UnLondon are not just used but inhabited, creating an

assemblage of place characterised by bricolage. In restructuring and recycling that which

already has meaning, UnLondon emphasises potential and connection over origin, creating a

bricolage that is labyrinthine through its deterritorialisation.

Significantly, the deterritorialised rubbish is not in itself freeing: in the form of buildings, they

create physical striations of the land, organising UnLondon into an urban labyrinth. This is an

important distinction: deterritorialisation is therefore not in itself inherently positive; it

merely creates the conditions for a new assemblage. The newness of the assemblage does not,

in itself, create space for Deeba to exercise agency. As discussed in Chapter 1, the prophecies

create affects — affects that striate time, space and the event into structures, organising

characters into particular subject positions. Cassandra Bausman writes that Deeba takes the

prophecies as suggestions rather than concrete truths (41), and this reconceptualisation of the

prophecy allows Deeba to step outside her role as sidekick to the Shwazzy, the prophesied hero. In this sense, Deeba's approach is characterised by moving against striation, finding the spaces for the minor to flourish. Deeba's approach shifts her from mere spectator to mapmaker — someone who 'make[s] a map, not a tracing' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 12). Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between a map and a tracing is integral to understanding Deeba's approach to the quest and, by extension, her navigation of the UnLondon labyrinth. A map, for Deleuze and Guattari, has 'multiple entryways', while a tracing comes back 'to the same', replicating already existing structures (12-13). Deeba's capacity to find multiple, other paths in the spatial labyrinth — characterised by striations of physical walls that limit the potential paths — arises through the narrative's intertextual bricolage, which challenges notions of linearity by critiquing the quest narrative trope:

> 'The whole point is that you need each of those things to get to the next one, until we get to the UnGun,' the book said.
>
> 'Even if we had time to try that, you don't know,' Deeba said. 'You're the one that keeps saying what's in you's wrong. You want to do it your way to make some of it work again. But if we know it's the UnGun we really need to deal with you-know-what, we're going straight to it instead of messing around with in-between bits.' (336)

Though Deeba elects to complete Zanna's quest, she refuses to trace the path set out by the quest narrative. Deeba rejects the arborescent, linear thinking that characterises the prophecy and striates the processes to completion. Rather, she argues for thinking rhizomatically, exploring the full potentials offered by the assemblage to forge other paths through the unilateral labyrinth. Deeba's insistence upon rhizomatic efficiency is also grounded in a notion of time as process, as a force that slowly fixes the past and erases the future. In order to traverse the striated quest, Deeba visits Wraithtown, a borough of UnLondon in which past and present are folded into each other, creating a temporal labyrinth.

Repetition and the temporal labyrinth: *Un Lun Dun*'s Wraithtown

Deeba initially returns to UnLondon after realising that Benjamin Unstible, a prominent UnLondon figure in the fight against the enemy Smog, is an impostor. The real Unstible is dead, and Deeba travels to Wraithtown, the ghost-inhabited UnLondon borough, to find official records of his death and convince the authorities to ignore the prophecy. Ghosts, as we learn from Deeba's initial interactions with Hemi the half-ghost, are regarded with suspicion by the living. As a result, Wraithtown is ghettoised, shrouded in rumour: 'Why else would the Wraithtown dead stay around, unless they were jealous of the bodies of living?' (197). Wraithtown's topographical appearance suggests a strong attachment to the past, evoking a space of inertia:

> Each of the houses, halls, shops, factories, churches and temples was a core of brick, wood, concrete or whatever, surrounded by a wispy corona of earlier versions of itself. Every extension that had ever been built and knocked down, every smaller, squatter outline, every different design; all hung on to existence as spectres. (202)

The palimpsestic appearance of Wraithtown invites us to consider time and repetition as an important aspect of place and place-making. Time, for Deleuze, is central to any consideration of difference and repetition. As with difference, repetition has been subjected to the law of the identical and to a model of time: a repetition, traditionally, is the same thing occurring multiple times at different moments. Deleuze turns to three syntheses of time — the living present, the pure past, and the future — to consider repetition 'for itself', beyond its relationship to the identical. In the synthesis of the living present, the past and the future are contracted. Time passes unidirectionally, with the past and the future always contained within the confines of the present. The synthesis of the pure past involves memory, and the past is treated as a virtual space into which we project ourselves and create events or moments that are related to their pasts in a definite way. The third synthesis, the future, displaces the relation between the others and is capable of breaking the repetitive symmetry between living present and pure past. Wraithtown belongs to Deleuze's third synthesis of time. Its existence

is neither characterised by memory (the pure past) nor the unidirectional passing of time (the living present). Rather, Wraithtown's ghosts recall what Deleuze calls 'the eternal return'.

Deleuze turns to Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return to discuss his third synthesis of time. Deleuze is careful to note that the eternal return is not the return of the same, but the recurrence of difference itself (1992b, 46). To rethink the notions of past and present, Deleuze proposes that the circle of time — the way that the past returns — must be rethought so that return is characterised by difference rather than resemblance:

> Everything travels through time, by cutting it, by ordering it, by assembling it, by setting it into series and by returning through the pure differences it actualizes or expresses. Yet no thing and no one travels forward in time as that selfsame thing or person. (1994, 16).

This qualification separates Deleuze's eternal return from other models such as rebirth or reincarnation, which imagine closed cycles of time.[11] Eternal return of difference involves creative selection, a machine in which the wheel turns away from the centre towards something new. It is here that we find our entry point for understanding Wraithtown as a place based on repetition, difference and becoming-minor.

Wraithtown presents the reader with a dual aspect of death: as the passing of identity and as a difference-affirming process. The ghosts and the ghost buildings meld together in sentences rich with assonance, producing a fairytale-like rhythm: 'from all the ghost windows the ghosts of Wraithtown watched' (202). The ghosts are elided with the buildings, presented as objects, but, unlike the buildings from which they bloom, they possess sentience, interrogating Deeba with their gaze. Their presence raises the question of how things live on when identity passes, creating a sense of Otherness that Deeba must negotiate. Deeba is faced with two

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[11] Deleuze delves into detail regarding death and eternal return in chapter 2 of *Difference and Repetition*. Eternal return, unlike rebirth or reincarnation, is not a cycle of death and rebirths, where death is an objective state into which living things fall and from which living things 'return' (112). Rather, death is present in the living, as a 'subjective and differentiated experience endowed with a prototype' (112), as a difference-affirming process.

understandings of death: a personal one that 'connects the "I" and the self', and another 'strangely impersonal one, with no connection to the "self", neither present nor past, but always to come' (1994, 148). Indeed, the ghost figure in *Un Lun Dun* recalls the paradoxical temporality that characterises Jacques Derrida's concept of spectrality.

In *Specters of Marx* (1993), Derrida coins the term 'hauntology'. It is a play on words: in its French form (*hantologie*), it is a homonym for ontology (*ontologie*). Hauntology, in Derrida's thought, supplants ontology, replacing the primacy of being and presence with the specter, a 'paradoxical incorporation. [. . . .] One does not know if it is living or dead' (Derrida 1993, 5). The specter is liminality par excellence, 'both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance' (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, 117). The specter demonstrates that there cannot be a 'pure' ontology; rather, ontology is always relational, its presence haunted by points that have been and have yet to come: spectres are always there, 'even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet' (Derrida, 1993, 221). The specter thus does not merely signify the presence of the past but also the uncanny presence of a future yet-to-come.

The temporality of Derrida's hauntology evolves, through Deleuze and Guattari's thought, into a concept of becoming. The notion of spectral temporality characterised by the future is not so much an anticipation of a future that will one day become present but, like Deleuze's concept of the future based on eternal return, a call to openness to possibility and the emergence of the new. The spectral figure denies any physical and temporal stability of the present assemblage., instead characterising the assemblage by what it could become. Wraithtown, in this light, is not merely a palimpsestic place with spectral traces of the past. The palimpsest only serves to limit our understanding of Wraithtown to the linear, to the traditional ghost that comes from the past to haunt the present. The presence of past in Wraithtown, however, is not

an echo but the surface appearance of the constantly becoming present and of potential futures. The play of surfaces melding into each other — buildings 'surrounded by wispy corona[s] of earlier versions' (202) — suggest an architectural assemblage in constant temporal becoming, with past appearances across different temporal distances returning and introducing difference to the cityscape. Wraithtown as an assemblage of place is an active space characterised by multiplicity, reimagining the Gothic supernatural setting (with its emphasis on static memory and recollection) as a living, becoming place: place as event.

Doreen Massey (2005) offers the idea of 'place as event' as a means of thinking through place as a 'constellation of processes' rather than a coherent and static thing. Similarly, Edward S. Casey argues that place as event makes possible a 'comprehensive gathering,' privileging the 'power of emplacement to bring space and time together in the event' (36). Wraithtown, understood as event, shuttles back and forth between different temporal frames to capture processes that inhabit the same moment in time and space. Temporality in Wraithtown is not so much a palimpsest, composed of layered linear moments, but as a Deleuzian fold. Deleuze's fold, like Elizabeth Grosz' invocation of the Möbius strip[12], is a flexible figure that simultaneously allows for distinctions while maintaining continuity. The 'inside' is only the inside in relation to the fold; creased the other way, the inside becomes the outside. The fold simultaneously allows us to overcome the notion of time as linear, and visualise the concept of eternal return and difference in Wraithtown. Deleuze writes:

> Thus a continuous labyrinth is not a line dissolving into independent points, as flowing sand might dissolve into grains, but resembles a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements, each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surrounding… A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern. The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold, not the point which is never a part, but a simple extremity of the line. (1993, 6)

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[12] Grosz uses the analogy of the Möbius strip to deconstruct binary notions of mind/body and inside/ outside. The Möbius strip demonstrates how one concept twists into another, with the inside becoming outside in a process of reversibility and transmutation (*Volatile Bodies* 209-10).

Wraithtown, with its 'wispy corona' of buildings conceptualised as folds, can be interpreted as a temporal labyrinth, a series of expressions of difference and potential. The buildings' spectres repeat the architectural structure but the structure is experienced by Deeba as an event rather than an object. When Deeba enters Wraithtown's council building, the eddying spectres of walls and objects are 'overwhelming' (211). The narrative stresses inanimate objects in constantly moving states: the corridors grow 'thicker and thinner' and facades 'shimmer around [. . . .] each other' (210-11). These movements are complex repetitions, a form of spatial becoming that is not restricted to resemblance or imitation. Wraithtown is not a 'dead' cityscape, haunted by what has been, but a place vibrant with multiple spaces and temporalities folding and unfolding within the one site.

Miéville's descriptions of the buildings also suggest an underlying vitality to the folded assemblage of place. Shops and offices are 'clouded with their own remembered selves' (208); rooftops 'lap' at the boundaries of the UnLondon central market (228); ghosts watch from ghost windows (202). The anthropomorphisation of objects imbues a liveliness, or what Jane Bennett calls 'vibrancy', into the cityscape. Bennett's notion of 'vibrant liveliness', developed in response to Deleuze and Guattari's call to consider the vitality of the material[13], proposes that objects can be considered actants in an event. These ideas are similar to Massumi's soccer ball analogy discussed in Chapter 1: a 'source of action [. . . .] can be either human or nonhuman; it is that which has efficacy, can do things, has sufficient coherence to make a difference, produce effects, alter the course of events' (viii). Bennett, after Massumi's affective pull, proposes the concept of 'thing-power': the ability of inanimate objects to animate bodies and

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[13] In Deleuze and Guattari's 'Nomadology' plateau, they name metal as a substance with 'material vitalism': 'metallurgy is the consciousness or thought of the matter flow, and metal the correlate of this consciousness. [. . . .] And thought is born more from metal than from stone. The prodigious idea of Nonorganic Life was the invention, the intuition of metallurgy. (1987, 411). For Bennett, Deleuze and Guattari's thought goes beyond the historicity of objects (how meaning is formed and changed as objects move through various social contexts and connections). Instead, Deleuze and Guattari propose that we attempt to think through how material itself can have life. (Bennett, 2010, 57).

produce affects. Though the ghost inhabitants of Wraithtown are not inanimate objects, they are silenced by the narrative, unable to communicate with Deeba. Deeba's attempts to communicate position the ghosts as foreign, alien Other: she shouts at them, mouthing 'the words slowly, as if she were talking to someone who didn't speak good English' (203). Her initial encounter with the ghosts is characterised by her fear of unwillingly becoming-ghost:

> 'No one come close,' she shouted. 'I'm watching. First sign of anyone trying to possess me, I'll...'
>
> *I really shouldn't have started that sentence*, she thought, because there was nothing she could finish it with. (202)

Deeba's fear of being possessed articulates the affective power of ghosts within UnLondon. Within this labyrinth of spatio-temporal folds, Deeba's sense of self as stable and whole is threatened; she faces the possibility of death and, importantly, possibilities yet unknown. Though Deeba fears dying or becoming *a* ghost, her entrance into Wraithtown causes her to enter into a becoming-ghost, an assemblage characterised by connections between Deeba, the ghosts and Wraithtown itself. The eddying buildings and transparent ghost bodies emphasise the permeability of Deeba's body and of her subjectivity. Deeba is not a body in isolation or a body that interacts solely with other, animate and sentient bodies — rather, her body acts and is acted upon by both animate and inanimate bodies within the assemblage.

Deeba enters into a becoming-ghost when she realises that she is unable to communicate with the ghosts. When she shouts, '"Don't any of you understand?"' Hemi, the half-ghost, arrives and tells her that she is operating under faulty assumptions: '"They all understand you. [. . . .] You don't understand them"' (203). The ghosts express an existence and assemblages beyond Deeba's experience; though their physical appearance is, in effect, a repetition of the past, this repetition is also an assemblage that is drastically different to the past and the present — something that cannot be understood or accessed by Deeba. Deeba, in order to meaningfully interact with the ghosts, must rely upon Hemi for translation. Deeba enters becoming-ghost

through her reliance upon Hemi and, in an interesting inversion, becomes like a ghost, unable to fully communicate with those that surround her. Hemi embodies and reifies becoming over being, and difference through repetition, via his half-ghost form. As a half-ghost, born of a ghost mother and human father, Hemi challenges the notion of ghostliness as repetition of the same. His body is not a repetition or an echo of a former self but a new assemblage that shifts seamlessly between ghost and human forms, becoming ghost to pass through physical boundaries (such as walls), and becoming human to pick up and hold solid objects. If Deeba challenges the arborescent structures of the quest narrative, Hemi embodies becoming and rhizomatic movement that allows for movement beyond the arborescent hierarchies and boundaries of striated space.

Becoming-animal and inorganic life in the forest-in-a-house

Un Lun Dun further explores hybridity and becoming in the figure of Yorick Cavea, a mercenary explorer who assists Deeba in traversing the labyrinthine forest-in-a-house. The forest-in-a-house has arborescent structures, reflecting the hierarchical, ordered nature of the quest narrative and its demands. Its architecture and topography engages with two common settings in children's literature: the forest or woods, and the house. Pauline Dewan (2004) locates the house in opposition to the natural forest, arguing that the house 'operates as a meeting place and mediator between the self and the world' (2). Mavis Reimer (2011) reminds us that the linkage of the house to the self and the family has its roots in consumer capitalism, and that literary imaginings of the home can be understood as displays of hegemonic power (107). The forest, on the other hand, is often understood as a retreat from unnatural civilisation (Natov 92), signalling Romantic understandings of children and childhood unfettered by social structures. Zoe Jaques (2015) argues that depictions of nature in children's literature often communicates 'unease about the rights of humanity to "use" trees and anxiety about a human superiority with notably selfish ends' and notes that the

relationship between human and tree is often represented as a form of humanity's mastery over nature (117).

Miéville's forest-in-a-house acknowledges these boundaries, depicting the natural forest growing over the structures of the house. The forest-in-a-house complicates this dialectic of the human over nature, depicting nature as a force that can be overcome and physically break down manmade structures:

> The carpet and the floorboards were rucked with lichen, moss, ferns and undergrowth. Ivy clotted the walls. The corridor was full of trees. They were old, gnarled things that twisted around themselves to fit into the cramped space. (309)

This description of the forest-in-a-house hews closely to an idea of nature and humanity in opposition: the house is a passive, inanimate object over which the forest actively sprawls, unchecked by the spatial boundaries of the home. Though Deeba is a child — and thus, in Romantic terms, eminently suited to navigating both the safe domesticity of the home and the natural space of the forest — the wildness of the forest and its inhabitants precludes her from entering without a guide. The forest-house assemblage, deterritorialising both the house and the wilderness, allows the minor to flourish. Indeed, Deeba needs a guide who embodies becoming-minor in order to traverse the house. She finds this guide in the form of Yorick Cavea.

Yorick Cavea, with a human body and a head made of a birdcage containing a small bird, embodies Deleuze and Guattari's 'becoming-animal', one of the various forms of becoming explored in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Becoming-animal articulates relationships based on alliance, symbiosis and affection rather than resemblance. Importantly, becoming-animal is 'not imitation at all' but an 'exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjected by anything' (10). Deleuze and Guattari draw upon the relationship between the wasp and the orchid to

highlight how two heterogeneous entities co-establish and transgress boundaries, leaving parts of themselves with the other, and thus demonstrating the porous and composite nature of bodies and assemblages. Yorick Cavea is not a human imitating a bird, nor a bird imitating a human. Rather, Cavea is a complex assemblage in which the barrier between human and non-human is broken down. The integrity of the body itself is similar broken down: the body is not an independent, stable object unto itself but becomes an assemblage brimming with lines of flight through which forces are constantly connecting. The body no longer occupies a realm of stability — a definite man or a definite bird — and is thus inaccessible to any form of already-established definition.

The forest-in-the-house itself also challenges the major through reimagining what life might be, providing us with a means of thinking through Deleuze and Guttari's seemingly oxymoronic concept, 'inorganic life'. Inorganic life is something that is 'inorganic, yet alive and all the more alive for being inorganic' (498). Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the assemblage as the basic unit of all life allows them to consider life beyond the vocabulary of biology. An assemblage does not require organs, like a heart to pump blood or a chloroplast for plants to digest the sun. Rather, assemblages are animated through deterritorialisations, lines of flight, coding and decoding — all processes of ordering matter around a body. The forest-in-a-house opens up spaces for thinking about the mechanisms of assembling and becoming, emphasising how the house does not turn into a forest — rather, the forest and the house are both becoming a forest-in-a-house. As Deleuze says in *Dialogues,* 'It is not the two that are exchanged, for they are not exchanged at all, but the one only becomes the other if the other becomes something yet other, and if the terms disappear.' (73)

Within the Blabyrinth: finding difference in repetitions

The labyrinthine appears in full force when Deeba and Hemi enter the Talklands, a district of UnLondon ruled by a monstrous being named Mr Speaker, who forbids others from speaking without his authorisation. The Talklands contains the Blabyrinth, a Gothic maze of streets 'so extraordinarily complicated [the map] looked like a human brain' (284). Unlike the city in general (which is labyrinthine through its tangle of streets and buildings) or Wraithtown (marked by temporal labyrinths), the Blabyrinth's labyrinthine topography contains a centre, cut off from easy access:

> They passed between terraces that loomed and leaned and became overhangs until they were walking in a tunnel between buildings.
>
> The turns grew sharper, the streets shorter and more cramped. The alley seemed to double back impossibly. Deeba and her companions passed dead ends, spirals, carefully confusing blind alleys. (284)

The Blabyrinth, with its unicursal path that privileges the centre, is a place that striates space to re-establish arborescent hierarchies around the centre. The centre of the Blabyrinth contains a telephone booth, which Deeba must reach in order to contact her parents and prevent the 'phlegm effect', the phenomenon of slowly being forgotten after spending too much time in UnLondon. In this sense, the Blabyrinth hews closely to historical interpretations of ancient labyrinths as symbols of death and rebirth[14]. Its monstrous nature also evokes the Greek mythic labyrinth, the gauntlet that the hero must enter and pass through or the prison built for the half-man, half-monster Minotaur of Crete. Unlike the unicursal labyrinths of myth, however, the Blabyrinth is multicursal, with 'dead ends, spirals' and 'confusing blind alleys' (284): a maze as well as a labyrinth. Doob notes that the word 'maze' enters the English language through the Middle English adjective 'amsed': 'stunned, dazed, bewildered; alarmed, frightened; dismayed' (98). We thus have the figure of the

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[14] Janet Bord notes the existence of labyrinth carvings near burial sites as some of the earliest employments of the labyrinth motif, suggesting that the labyrinth expresses death and rebirth. (141)

Blabyrinth as a site in which every turn in the repetitive spiral intensifies confusion and threatens danger.

The name 'Blabyrinth' also evokes considerations of language. Miéville, through the figure of Mr Speaker, explores the problematic relations between language and extra-linguistic reality. When Deeba breaks the rules of the Talklands by speaking aloud, she and her companions are captured by Mr Speaker's 'utterlings', words that are given bodies through his utterance. Mr Speaker positions himself as the creator of words and thus, the creator of meaning: his words must do what he tells them to do. His proposal that words have singular meanings is the same kind of event that the labyrinth enacts: a space of singular movement and a single path to meaning-making. Deeba, however, exposes the impossibility of any fixed and certain connection between the sign and referent, challenging Mr Speaker's claim: "'Like… if someone shouts, 'Hey you!' at someone in the street, but someone else turns around. The words misbehaved. They didn't call the person they were meant to.'" (297) Miéville's play on Althusserian (mis)recognition rejects the idea of language as possessing singular meaning, proposing instead that language and meaning-making is endless, rhizomatic transformation and becoming. Deeba's realisation about the fluidity of meaning also encourages the utterlings to revolt, overthrowing Mr Speaker. The utterlings, deterritorialised from their position as Mr Speaker's servants, become placeholders for what may come, rhizomatic beings whose repetitions do not presuppose the same origin.

Notably, the utterlings also enact difference and repetition. Deeba observes that different utterlings are born each time Mr Speaker says the word 'Smog', with 'different skin colour and number of limbs' (292-3). The utterlings enact the doubling of language's meaning, appearing differently with each iteration and repetition. The creation of the utterlings presents us with difference created through repetition; the same word, repeated by Mr Speaker in different

tones, produces different effects. The utterlings' existence is dependent upon their word being uttered; after a point, if their word is not repeated, they fade from existence. Deeba attempts to rectify this by appealing to repetition based not on semblance or origin, but repetition for itself:

> 'Can't I just speak them again? Cauldron. Bling.'

> 'It doesn't work that way. You didn't speak them in the first place.'

> 'Well, Mr Speaker's certainly not going to speak them again,' said Deeba. 'Even if he could...' She stopped suddenly. But they're not his things anyway, any more. They rebelled. Why can't they speak themselves?' (453)

Un Lun Dun affirms Deleuze's notion of repetition as a creative force. Deeba's realisation that there is no need to affirm the link between the utterlings' origin (Mr Speaker) and their potential to become frees the utterlings and language from the unicursal structure of the Blabyrinth, highlighting instead the multilayered nature of language and meaning. The utterlings, now with lives of their own, remind the young reader to think of language as a point from which multiple meanings can potentially arise. When the utterlings do speak themselves — it takes them 'a while to work out how to say themselves by signing, but they're getting it' (500) — their repetition is literally for repetition for itself; repetition that does not reincarnate the past but creates a future based on eternal return of the new.

Webminster Abbey: the monstrous, labyrinthine rhizome

The motif of the monstrous labyrinth continues in Webminster Abbey, the site at which the UnGun, the weapon that can defeat the Smog, is located. Webminster Abbey's labyrinth is created through folds and repetitions: what is inside reaches and extends outside, emphasising the multiplicity of becoming through rhizomatic relations. Webminster Abbey — an obvious play on London's Westminster Abbey — is populated by Black Windows, spider-like windows that evoke the monstrousness of the rhizome. The Windows embody growth without end, constant renewal and repetition unfettered by limits:

Windows that had just ingested others climbed into yet others. A window opened and emitted three of its siblings, one of which climbed into another, while the third spat out a fourth. Deeba saw one window emerge from another, then eat its regurgitator. It was endless. (369)

Here, we see the paradoxical natural of the labyrinth that incorporates 'order and disorder, clarity and confusion, unity and multiplicity, artistry and chaos' (Doob 114). The Black Windows and their ouroboros nature produces an infinitely large, multicursal, multi-levelled labyrinth. Each Black Window, we are told, is unique: beyond each pane are 'infinite rooms' with 'monsters and gas and mustard-coloured limbos' and 'tantalising vaults and stairways and arsenals' (371). The window itself is an interesting threshold: it invites entry but is not, in itself, a traditional entryway. The rooms within each Window contain invitations to gaze before entering, creating a labyrinth that beckons and tempts the viewer into engaging. Black Windows are particularly threatening. A Black Window doesn't just kill, but 'takes you right out of this world. No body left, no clothes, no trace. Swallows up whatever comes close. It's the perfect predator' (304-5). In this sense, the labyrinth in Webminster Abbey does not just capture and bewilder; it captures through images of potential, creating spaces that one can enter but not easily exit, as the Windows are constantly shifting their relations to each other.

There are multiple Black Windows in Webminster, but no two are alike: only one contains the image of the UnGun, and thus the room in which the UnGun is contained. Deeba and her companions decide to coax the correct Black Window into approaching them by fashioning a duplicate, puppet window depicting a pistol-like object, reasoning that the mere existence of a similar window will draw their target out of the group. This notion of doubling evokes a comparison between the labyrinth and the mirror. Borges, in particular, notes that labyrinths and mirrors are 'not distinct. It takes two facing mirrors to construct a labyrinth' (2009, 32-33). The bait makes literal the folded, doubled nature of the labyrinth, drawing the text into a playful engagement with Lacanian understandings of the mirror or double as expressions of self-as-Other. The Black Window — the monstrous labyrinth that disquiets —

is itself disquieted by its own doubling. The bait gives back the image of the Black Window to itself, causing the window to 'move in agitation' (374) before it is captured and taken away from the other Windows, severing its capacity to manifest the infinite, ouroboros-like labyrinth.

Significantly, the labyrinthine does not disappear when the Window is taken from its assemblage of other Windows. The labyrinth does not end and begin with the Windows' interaction with each other; rather, the labyrinthine is also within each Window. When Deeba and her friends peer into the Window, they are faced with a room with different spatial orientation — Deeba notes that 'down's a different direction there' (377). Deeba's entrance into this section of the labyrinth is marked by disorientation and foreboding, a 'what if' that stems from Borgesian concerns about choice and 'the recognition [. . . .] that each choice of action which we make involves the rejection of a whole series of other actions' (1964, 65). The narration dwells on Deeba's every move, heightening the drama and tension in her decision-making within the labyrinth:

> She felt unnaturally sensitive, noticing the cracks beneath her feet and on the walls around her. She heard the light bulb buzzing.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> The buzzing noise was coming from behind the door. She put a hand on the wood. There were unclear sounds in the room, or corridor, or whatever it was beyond. *I could open it and go exploring*, she thought. *If this place has the UnGun in it… what else might be here? Maybe there's a garden. Or a bedroom. Or a phone… I could call home again!*
>
> She put her hand slowly to the handle.
>
> Something was bothering her. She paused and wondered what it might be. She couldn't think what was wrong. (378)

Though the Window has been taken away from the other Windows, it has not been removed from the system of folds that make up the labyrinth. The folds are not only between Windows, but within each Window. By entering the Window, Deeba unfolds a part of the labyrinth, but unfolding does not lead to stability, truth or knowledge. Rather, unfolding is an action that

expands the space of the infinite labyrinth, exposing the infinite space and potential that has been folded into a single place. The fold is thus not only a structure, but a trait; a marker of the infinite possibilities within an assemblage. The inside is just as the outside: labyrinthine, rhizomatic and monstrous in its infinity.

Our horror at Deeba's slow responses and sudden forgetfulness stems from the tension between stability and flux in the narration. The Window's frame disappears from Deeba's focalising gaze, creating an impression of the room as a totally discrete place from Webminster Abbey. As readers, however, we are painfully aware of the place outside of the room, and are forced to witness Deeba's wavering resolve as she becomes lost in the assemblage formed between the window's body and her own. We witness Deeba becoming-window, an assemblage with unrealised and unpredictable potential. The uncanniness of the buzzing emanating simultaneously from the light bulb and from behind the door suggests a doubling, calling back to the doubled image of the Black Windows and their monstrous, never-ending labyrinth. The enclosed space of the Window's room thus unfolds for us at the same time as it obscures its inner folds from Deeba, asking us to dwell in the uncomfortable intensity of unfettered potential. Unlike Borges, who delves deep into the labyrinths, Miéville pulls us back from experiencing the full force of unrestrained potential. Deeba returns to herself and manages to exit the Window's room, heightening our awareness that potential is not in itself inherently optimistic or positive. The labyrinth remains unfolded, though its haunting presence remains, embodied in the repetitious, cannibalistic motions of the Black Windows returning through each others' bodies.

Interlude: Theorising Un-

Having explored labyrinthine places in *Un Lun Dun*, it is now time to devote some attention to the linguistic motif, 'Un', that appears throughout the text: UnLondon, the UnHero, the UnGun.

The UnGun, as discussed in Chapter 1, is desire manifested, allowing the creation of new assemblages when it is fired. Becomings are, as the UnGun reminds us, unpredictable — we cannot know how multiplicities will combine until they do. The UnGun is not about removing elements from the assemblage; rather, it adds (through the ammunition) and creates and intensifies connections. Un-, in this sense, does not suggest inversions or replacements.

'Un' is perhaps better understood as 'and', a concept that does not adhere to concepts of UnLondon as negative, carnivalesque or inverted place or social field. Rather, 'Un' hews closer to the French *un(e)*, 'one' or 'a': UnLondon is *a* London among a multitude of potential Londons; an assemblage that, through its compound hybridity, demonstrates the potential for the new. UnLondon presents the possibility of exploring differences without negation, reifying becoming as a process that does not have an endpoint, but is an endless process of differentiation that destabilises being. In the same vein, Deeba is not the Unchosen, but the UnChosen — a title with a visual portmanteau that encourages us to separate 'Un' from 'Chosen' and yet see the phrases as related. To be 'Un' is to be 'and': to be constantly moving forward and becoming.

Railsea: a study of smooth and striated space

Railsea, like *Un Lun Dun*, is replete with repetition and labyrinthine structures. As we have seen with *Un Lun Dun*, repetition often signals complex narrative relationships between time and causality. *Railsea*'s unnamed intrusive narrator delights in the complexity of layered narrative, constantly moving the reader between multiple, intersecting storylines. The narrator introduces us to a world covered by the 'railsea', a highly rhizomatic tangle of railway lines that stretches over an ocean-like expanse of bare, barren earth. The railsea is traversed by various groups, the most common being salvage-hunters (who scour the rails for remnants of trainwrecks to salvage for resale) and molers (crews that hunt giant burrowing animals for

flesh and fur). The name 'railsea' compounds two spatial concepts, the striated rail and the smooth sea, immediately suggesting a tension between potential and fixed absolutes. The railway itself, like the 'and' of *Un Lun Dun*, evokes travel and forward movement but, importantly, only in one direction — movement outside of the paths offered by the rails is unheard of within the railsea's social field. The prologue's meditation on narrative touches upon potential by emphasising the tangled railsea and its multiple routes:

> This is the story of a bloodstained boy.
> [. . . .]
> We're here too soon. Of course, we can start anywhere: that's the beauty of the tangle, that's its very point. But where we do & don't has its ramifications, & this right now is not best chosen. Into reverse: let this engine go back. Just to before the boy was bloodied, there to pause & go forward again to see how we got there, to red, to music, to chaos, to a big question mark in a young man's head. (3-4)

The fluidity of the tangle, with its overlapping paths and options, is realised both in the narrative structure and in the setting. The railsea itself becomes the map on which the narrative events are plotted.

Railsea initially follows the teenage protagonist, Sham ap Soorap, on his first days as a doctor's apprentice on a moletrain named the *Medes*. The *Medes* is captained by Abacat Naphi, who, like Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, ceaselessly hunts an elusive white quarry. During his travels, Sham discovers a photograph in a trainwreck of a single railway line — a geographical impossibility, as the railsea has no end. Sham investigates further and is led to Caldera and Dero Shroake, children of the explorers who took the photograph. Here, the narration alternates between three stories: Sham's attempts to return to the *Medes*, Caldera and Dero Shroake's expedition to the end of the railsea, and Naphi's search for her quarry, Mocker-Jack. The narrator becomes increasingly intrusive as the narrative progresses — Chapter 64 is but two lines: 'Time for the Shroakes? Not yet.' (308) — drawing attention to the interwoven plot threads and, in particular, the relevance of time in relation to striated spaces.

Sham initially experiences the railsea as steady and predictable. He grows bored, counting the days between ports, and learning to read the rails through the vibrations of the train's floor. The readers are treated to a montage of the train's inner workings:

> Crews scrambled on walkways & all the carriagetop decks, worked windlasses, sharpened things, oiled the wheels of jollycarts in harnesses. Way above, Nabby bobbed in his basket below the crow's-nest balloon. (9)

Labour is the force that striates the train space and, by extension, the railsea. In such striated space-time, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, 'one counts in order to occupy' (477). Deleuze and Guattari's meditations on striated time are extracted from composer Pierre Boulez, who places musical time into a state of continuous variation, freeing it from traditional striations. Miéville's narration seeks in storytelling what Boulez accomplished in music — the creation of a temporal phenomenon comprised of heterogenous movements and recurring motifs. Indeed, Sham's attention to the rhythm of the rails suggests that movement through place possesses a dimension that is akin to music: a quality both spatial and temporal, orchestrated and 'played' as one moves through a progression of spatial 'notes' and 'scores' — the arrangement, repetition and syncopation of place markers and narrative motifs.

As Sham travels the rails, he learns the 'clatternames', the vocabulary given to various vibrations produced by the train's wheels on the track. He notes a shift 'from *shrashshaa* to *drag'ndragun*' (8) and is propelled forward — much like the listener is in music — through expectation and anticipation. The intensity of his affective engagement is marked by the places he visits, and in our reading of *Railsea*, we develop an understanding of place and subjectivity as entities that are intimately bound by connections — a manifestation of Deleuze and Guattari's 'and… and… and…'. This commitment to concepts of connection and the 'and' is evident in the stylistic use of the ampersand to replace the word 'and' throughout the text. The replacement of 'and' with an ampersand is striking from the very beginning of the text, but the narrator does not explain until halfway through the story:

> What word better could there be to symbolize the railsea that connects & separates all lands, than '&' itself? Where else does the railsea take us but to this place & that one & that one & that one, & so on? & what better embodies, in the sweep of the pen, the recurved motion of trains, than '&'? (163)

The narrator's meditation on connection, place and narrative exhorts us to think beyond arborescent understandings of relationships and towards rhizomatic considerations of the ways in which the railsea entangles itself in materiality, relations, and signification. These complex entanglements leave gaps for the minor to expand and flourish, and for the characters to engage in becomings beyond the subject positions created by the major.

Charting the railsea: the affective pull of the material

The railsea, like the world of *Un Lun Dun*, plays heavily with materiality and its capacity to express potential and flux. The narrator draws often upon the materiality on the railsea, most notably in Chapter 44, when the narrator turns away from the plot to lecture the reader on 'ferroviaoceanology', the study of the railsea itself. Chapter 44 establishes the railsea as an entity that exists beyond and before its current function as a site of labour:

> Ever since the godsquabble, since the rest of the world was brought into shape & existence to save the aesthetic & symbolic needs of the railsea, we — cities, continents, towns, trains & you & me — have been functions of the rails. (216)

The decentring of human experience and production, combined with the mythic aspects of the railsea, invites us to consider the rail as an actant in itself, a field of potential that induces interactions between the trainspeople, the rails, and their qualities. The railsea's ability to induce interactions echoes Massumi's thoughts on the soccer field as a field of affective potential:

> The literal field, with grass stretching between the goals, is also an inductive limit-sign, rather than a ground in any foundational sense. The play itself is groundless and limitless, taking place above the ground-limit and between the goal-limits. Put two teams on a grassy field with goals at either end, and you have an immediate, palpable tension. (72)

The railsea allows for the staging of the tension between the molers and their quarry, playing the smooth movements of the moles against the constrained paths of the molers' trains. The

narrator plays with variation in duration, creating stark contrasts between scenes. The first chapter, following the prologue's demands to 'go into reverse' and 'pause & go forward again' (4), opens with the narrator describing a series of vignettes, moving us swiftly through weeks of story time:

> A meat island!
>
> No. Back a bit.
>
> A looming carcase?
>
> Bit more.
>
> Here. Weeks out, back when it was colder. The last several days fruitlessly pootling through rock passes & in the blue shadows of ice cliffs, late afternoon under a flinty sun. The boy, not yet bloodstained, was watching penguins. [. . . .] He'd been giving them his attention for hours. (5)

The clipped, abrupt narration gives way to Sham ap Soorap's focalisation when quarry is sighted by the crew. Sham's focalisation allows the narration to unfold into longer sentences littered with commas, creating a rhythm that evokes the smooth, steady motion of the train. The still vignette becomes filled with movement through dialogue from other, unintroduced characters, creating a sense of chaos and disorder. Mobility becomes a visual and aural spectacle, vibrating with potential:

> 'Port,' came an order & a switchman obliged. But Mbenday yelled, 'Belay that!' The captain shouted, 'Star'd!' The switcher thumbed her button again but too late; the signal rushed past gleefully, it seemed to Sham, as if it knew it would cause havoc & relished the fact. The *Medes* hurtled on for the points now sending them to whatever it was that had Mbenday frantic —
>
> —& here, Zaro Gunst, riding the coupling between fifth & sixth cars, leaned out with a switchhook & with swagger & a jouster's precision swiped the lever as it went by.
>
> The impact sent his pole shattered & clattering across the rails but the points slammed sideways as they disappeared below the figurehead, & the *Medes*'s front wheels hit the junction. The train continued, back on a safe line. (11)

The em-dashes that truncate the narration highlight an affective relationship with the rails characterised by increases and releases of intensity. The rails are presented as something alive, almost mischievous; a 'gleeful' opponent in a game. The crew's miscalculation becomes a

tale of the rails acting upon the train. The crew are relegated to the role of acted-upon, their movements limited by the railsea's striated organisation of space.

The *Medes*, confined to a striated back-and-forth along the rails, exposes the problematic production of spatial striations that occur within the context of the State and power. Deleuze and Guattari equate State power with striation, writing,

> One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire 'exterior', over all flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc. There is still a need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movement of subject and objects. (1987, 385)

A single state body — a state whose interests are served by the striations of the rails — is notably absent in *Railsea*. Each independent nation-state has its own government, but no one body governs the rails itself. The railsea is, in this sense, wild and untamed, a politically neutral landscape shrouded in religion and myth. The most common explanation for the railsea's existence is the godsquabble, a war between gods over the control of the earth. The battles traced the railsea, and the strongest god, That Apt Ohm — an anagram of Topham Hatt, the head of the railway company in W. V. Awdry's *The Railway Series* — is said to protect and control the railsea and its nations.

The railsea thus topographically recounts a confrontation between the smooth and the striated. Indeed, Miéville's nod to *The Railway Series* (and its televised adaptation, *Thomas the Tank Engine*) firmly places *Railsea* in dialogue with the imagined train in literature, which often draws upon notions of modern development, nature and the State. Jane Suzanne Carroll (2011) notes that the railway in children's literature is often used at initiatory or climactic moments, allowing the character to cross great distances, leading to 'the formation of a new

and independent identity' (109-10). More broadly, Remo Ceserani (1999) notes two general attitudes to the railroad in 19th and 20th century European literature: the rail as a disturbing and uncanny invention that violates nature, and as a symbol of progress and modernity (128). The railsea, as a natural part of the landscape, naturalises its striations. The giant moles, with their monstrous size and capacity to move freely within smooth space, are the uncanny bodies that violate nature. Their movements are described as breaking the stillness of the land and changing the landscape: 'soil seethed. Rocks jostled. The ground violently rearranged. From beneath came a dust-muffled howl' (6). The railsea's striations become a place of sanctuary and safety from the unpredictability of smooth space.

Miéville does not allow the reader to consider striation as an inherently positive concept. Sham, unhappy with his career path as a train medic's apprentice, dreams of exploring the railsea and finding salvage to sell. He discovers a series of photographs, one of which depicts a single rail disappearing into the distance (an impossibility in the railsea, which has always been understood as connections without end). He begins his search for the photograph's origin and befriends two children, Dero and Caldera Shroake, whose parents appear in the photograph. Sham abandons his post and travels to the single rail with Dero and Caldera, escaping the arborescent hierarchy of the *Medes* to search for '*X* the unknown. Off the edge of the map. Figuratively speaking' (340): the line of flight, the explicit rupture of the railsea assemblage. When Sham eventually reaches the single rail and travels out of the railsea, he discovers that the railsea is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of ancient competing railway companies attempting to gain economic control over the land. The descendants of the now defunct companies live on the other side of the railsea, waiting for the railsea inhabitants to pay the bills for the use of the railway. The railsea's striations thus do not lead to freedom but, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us in the passage quoted above, towards the State and its

restrictions. The railsea is the striations of capitalism taking hold of the smooth, progressively invading the domains of nature and society, commodifying and colonising the landscape.

Becoming-mole: moving within and without the striations of the labour market

Captain Abacat Naphi, the captain of the *Medes*, is a particularly interesting character, as she deterritorialises aspects of the major labour market to create minor becomings. Captain Naphi's most salient feature is her artificial left arm made of ivory wood, which opens the body beyond the biological and creates explicit intertextual links to Herman Melville's Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick*. Like Ahab's wooden leg, Naphi's arm challenges the traditional association between the boundaries the subject and the boundaries of the flesh; that the 'I' ends where the skin ends. Naphi's and Ahab's prosthetic limbs illustration how the body is constituted through interactions of biological, technological and social flows. Like Ahab, whom Deleuze and Guattari understand as 'engaged in n irresistible becoming-whale with Moby-Dick' (335), Naphi is consumed with desire to capture the elusive Mocker-Jack, a white mole.

Her pursuit of Mocker-Jack is called a 'philosophy', the label given to a captain's quarry. Though the main goal of hunting trains is to obtain flesh and fur for trade, captains create meaning for themselves and their trade by discussing their 'philosophies', quarries that inspire obsessive chase. Philosophies, as the label suggests, have been given symbolic importance by each captain, and the story of the hunt is as valuable as the capture of the quarry. Like Moby-Dick, these hunted philosophies have invariably ingested a captain's limb, and the continued existence of a philosophy is a taunt to the captain to 'ingest [the quarry] back':

> '...By now,' the big man said, 'my philosophy was coursing frenetically horizonward. You see? Carrying my leg.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> But I was beyond fretting. I tourniqueted my own stump & laughed. & set that jollycart after the beast. I set the course to hope. Always a few yards ahead, the rolling humps of its passage.

[. . . .]

> The great stoat slowed & readied itself, & burst out of the earth, looping overhead. I could have reached up and grabbed its hairs. I watched as it set forth horizon ward again, underground dancing at speed. & I stopped trying to catch it, & tried only to keep pace with it, & gloried in its letting me do so. I surrendered to the speed.' (101-5)

This captain's narration revels in the affective movement, framing the encounter in terms of virtual relations and potential not yet actualised. The encounter is no longer about capture but about speed. Acceleration becomes its own purpose, and to catch the great stoat would end the affective moment. The captain's speed is thus qualitative rather than quantitative, occupying space through use rather than through counting. 'Surrendering' to speed resists the reterritorialising forces of productive labour time set out by the railsea. In this sense, captains' philosophies smooth the striated railsea.

While the stoat signifies speed, Captain Naphi's philosophy, Mocker Jack, is presented as a floating signifier. Mocker-Jack's elusiveness results in an affective relationship that is irreducible to interpretation and ultimate meaning, and resistant to sense and comprehension. Naphi's desire to parse the mole expresses becoming-mole. She narrates:

> His absence was a looming presence. The lack of him filled me with him, so he burrowed not only through the earth & dirt of the railsea but through my own mind, night after night. I know more now about him than ever I did before. He stayed away & came closer in one magic movement. (104)

Miéville draws from the trope of the beast, the inhuman monster whose existence provides the external counterpoint against which the human is defined. As Philip Armstrong argues, the beast is often understood as a structural conceit, conceptualising the boundaries between the human and the non-human, being and non-being, presence and absence (93). Lacan provides a tempting framework to discuss the play between absence/presence and lack/abundance. The lack of Mocker-Jack, as well as the lack of her arm, fuels Captain Naphi's desire to capture Mocker-Jack; similarly, the other captain's insistence upon keeping his distance from the stoat,

trying only to 'keep pace', aligns well with Lacan's insistence that desire is driven by its own impossibility.[15]

Railsea, however, rejects the relationship between desire and lack by exposing Naphi's missing limb as a farce. After Naphi encounters Mocker-Jack, the crew notices blood leaking out of the wooden arm, and her cyborg arm is revealed to be a mere shell encasing her actual, intact limb. Her philosophy is proven false, and Mocker-Jack as a conceptual beast is delinked from Naphi's interiority. The dialectical structure of the individual self is unveiled as a tired allegory. The text, having exhausted the overcoded symbol, invites us to turn away from Lacanian understandings of lack and desire, reading for possibilities and transformations instead of cohesive meaning behind representation. Like Deeba in *Un Lun Dun*, our readings must create maps instead of tracings. Becoming-animal, or becoming-mole, provides an avenue for thinking beyond metaphor and meaning as representation with traceable origins.

As Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly stress, becoming-animal is not metaphor, but the creation of a zone of indiscernibility between the human and the animal. All becomings create a zone of indiscernibility that undoes binary oppositions, opening up becomings that venture into the imperceptible. The mole, in this sense, marks a possible opening for new styles of perception. Naphi's character also provides an avenue for considering new becomings beyond those offered by *Moby-Dick*. While Ahab's prosthetic leg is a symbolic representation — a replacement for a loss — Naphi's arm rejects symbolic representation and emphasises the Deleuzian materiality of the body. When the crew challenges the validity of Naphi's philosophy, she responds by deriding notions of desire based in lack:

> 'There are those,' she said. She was using her most splendid voice. 'Whose faith. In their philosophies. Follows from something being taken from them. Who need that terrible bite and rupture to spur their fascination. Their revenge.

---

[15] For Lacan, desire is renewed through lack; to come to close to the object of desire threatens to undo the lack that allows desire to persist (Felluga 111).

'It is weak of them,' she said. I would not so wait. Nor, however, would I fail to know what it is to suffer those agonies for a philosophy. & so. & hence.' She raised her mechanical limb-glove. 'I fail to see your point. my rigour, Mr. Vurinam, is such that I have both made & refused to make a sacrifice.' (305-6)

Naphi's false arm is an addition rather than a replacement, an articulation of desire rather than a catalyst. Her skin is not a mere surface vessel containing a subject but a permeable plateau upon which flows and intensities intersect, flows which are made materially visible through the mechanisms that constitute the captain's 'skin, bones & circuitry' (306). Naphi's deviation from the rhythms established by the practice of mole-hunting marks her entering into a becoming-mole. Her philosophy is not about avenging the self or even merely 'surrendering' to lack and desire, but to manifest the creative forces with which she resonates. She thus orients herself against the homogenized, striated space-time of mole-hunting labor, or to the patterns of philosophising enacted by other captains. In abandoning the territorial boundaries of philosophising and striated labor, Naphi begins to moves through the smooth spaces of the nomadic subject.

However, unlike Sham — who, as I will discuss in the next section, pursues a line of flight that takes him far beyond the striated space of the railsea — Naphi is uninterested in pursuing other potential connections and other assemblages. Her broken sentences in the passage above are striking in a text littered with ampersands; indeed, she only employs the '&' to return and cycle back to the validity of her philosophy. She is not interested in exploring becoming outside of the striations so much as she is in intensifying those striations. Naphi does not become-other so much as she becomes-mole, the smooth counterpoint to the striated railsea. When she embeds a two-way tracker in Mocker-Jack's flesh, she not only traces Mocker-Jack's movements but allows Mocker-Jack to locate the *Medes*' position in the railsea, putting her crew at risk. Like Ahab, Naphi does the unthinkable to create an event that does justice to the intensities of her philosophy. The tracker co-establishes and transgresses the

boundaries between Naphi and Mocker-Jack, creating a relationship of becoming that is 'not imitation at all but a capture of code' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 10). Their bodies are no longer independent stable objects onto themselves, but shifting assemblages through which forces are constantly moving. Interestingly, Naphi names herself Mocker-Jack's philosophy:

> 'It was never going to let us go,' the captain said. 'We had the hubris to think we were hunting it. *We* were never hunting *it.*' She did not sound mad. 'Now the gloves are off. The boot is on the other foot.' She smiled. 'Mocker-Jack is my philosophy. & I am its.' (362)

Naphi, in becoming-mole, does not insist upon human exceptionalism. Mocker-Jack does not have to be human or human-like to have a philosophy. She imagines a lateral relationship in which she is not just like the mole, but is the mole, repeated but different and differentiated. Naphi, by following a line of flight that changes the nature of philosophising and hunting, experiences a deterritorialised railsea. Her pursuit of Mocker-Jack, though a repeated action in the context of the captains and the hunt, is differentiated — an event stripped of its habitual connections to hunting and philosophies, resonating instead with unprecedented possibilities. Her false arm becomes an act of re-membering, allowing her to orient herself through the events of experience and memory, creating virtual possibilities that do not exist within the dominant discourses of the railsea.

Where Ahab's fixation eventually leads to shipwreck, Naphi's chase merely ends in unfulfillment. The *Medes*' pursuit of Mocker-Jack leads them to the single railway line in the railsea. We find here that the rails are tended to and maintained by large mechanical robots known as 'angels', who also guard the edges of the railsea, stopping people from venturing past. The angels are cybernetic beings that are constituted of both flesh and machinery, both divine and constructed. The angels embody boundaries and striation, maintaining the territorial confines of the established refrains of railsea travel. As the *Medes* follows Mocker-Jack down the single railway line, the angel pursues them, attacking them with 'gnashing flaming gears' (378). Importantly, the angel moves through the railsea differently to Mocker-

Jack. Like the *Medes*, the angel is limited to a striated back-and-forth along the railsea, while Mocker-Jack inhabits the smooth space of the earth.

It is Mocker-Jack's movement through smooth space that allows him to destroy the angel. The *Medes* can only hope to outrun the angel within the striated railsea, while Mocker-Jack, coming from the smooth earth, is able to 'tear the angel from the rails', pushing 'its quarry & itself out of that instant, & over the world's end' (379-80). Mocker-Jack uses smooth space to escape; he does not act as a metaphor for becoming, but metamorphoses into becoming in itself. In Deleuzian terms, Mocker-Jack becomes imperceptible, escaping the capture of an identifiable identity, and becomes 'known by nobody'. Mocker-Jack turns into pure movement, a pure becoming, pure line of flight made of nothing but displacement thresholds and transgression — the madness of a delirious speed.

One of the most crucial ways Deleuze imagines literature as escaping the act of representation is when it pushes language to the limit, when it ceases to make sense and instead opens up to sensual experiences of the world; where language ceases to stand for or describe an experience. Language is pushed to 'its point of suspension' (Deleuze 1993, 53) for Naphi, strained so much by Mocker-Jack's escape that it reaches a limit where it ceases to be speech and becomes pure sound:

> 'Ah,' she said. Her tone was calm. 'Fff.'
>
> Sham was still dizzy with the abyssward descent he had just seen. He pulled his attention to the captain.
>
> 'Asuh,' she said. 'Mhuh. Enh.' (385)

Mocker-Jack can no longer be parsed, and any attempts to narrativise his existence become 'discards & language debris' (385). Naphi, in the absence of Mocker-Jack the signifier, is unable to express meaning. Mocker-Jack's escape is an event for which there is no immediate representation, and Naphi's attempt to leap into the abyss and follow Mocker-Jack is an

attempt to continue becoming-mole. However, she is held back by the crew and denied the opportunity to finally reduce Mocker-Jack to unified meaning. There is nothing to be gained from reifying the striations of the railsea and its need for hunting quarry; Sham and the others must look outwards to smooth space for further becomings.

Towards the smooth: difference and becoming-nomad

Sham's initial departure from the *Medes* marks the beginning of his movement away from the predetermined, arborescent path laid out by his apprenticeship and the labour market. Though he travels uncharted parts of the railsea, Sham is initially closer to the Deleuzian migrant than the nomad, moving according to the sedentary, striated model of distribution of land and privileging the location of the single rail above all else. For Sham, the single rail presents openness and potential, its uncanny resemblance to the railsea causing Sham to dwell upon difference:

> & suddenly. Railsea. But not.
>
> Land stretched out like some pegged-out dead animal in an Anatomy & Butchery class. [. . . .] The prow of the train was visible like a fat arrow in the middle of the shot, pointing at an oddly foreshortened horizon. The line it was riding was an unnaturally straight stretch, the two rails bisecting the view all the way to where perspective knitted them together. & to either side of it —
>
> — either side of that line the train was riding —
>
> — was nothing.
>
> No other rails at all.
>
> Empty earth. (84)

Sham, struck by the geographical symmetry of the landscape in the photograph, responds by taking 'a picture of that picture' (84). His desire and compulsion to re-record the image draws our attention away from Sham and towards the photograph's symmetry. The straight railway line that divides the space in the photograph is inexplicably different from anything Sham has seen, distinguishing itself from the expanse of the railsea. In the same moment, the railsea

makes its presence known through its conspicuous absence. The railsea and the single rail become two features that are simultaneously distinct but interact together, creating an assemblage that resists unification and contradicts Sham's understanding of the world.

Sham is forcibly taken from the striated railsea halfway through the narrative. He is kidnapped by pirates, who disrupt the monotony of the *Medes*' labour-striated time, and eventually escapes with the help of the Bajjer, a nomadic railsea people. The narrator, having moved Sham away from the primary setting of the *Medes*, comments upon the 'cheeky escapology of narrative' (211) and begins to shift constantly between Captain Naphi's pursuit of her quarry, a giant mole named Mocker Jack, Sham's attempts to escape the pirates and find the single rail, and the Shroakes' journey to the end of the railsea. The narrator draws explicit links between the narrative structure and the rails, highlighting narrative's capacity to take non-linear paths:

> Asked: *what should the story do when the primary window through which we view it is shuttered?* we might say: *It should look through another window.*
> That is to say, to follow other rails, see through other eyes. (211)

Reading *Railsea* thus also becomes an exercise in following the multiple story rails. The reader must abandon expectations of linear story progression, adapting a nomadic form of reading that is characterised by constant shifts and movement. Sham's literal act of following of other rails also allows Sham to see the railsea differently; to develop 'other eyes' with the Bajjer. Sham unfolds against the specific and particular rhythm of the railsea, living out of order and as a perpetual stranger with the Bajjer tribe. Initially, his mindset is characterised more by the migrant — the notion of travelling to arrive rather than merely travelling in itself. The Bajjer trains, powered by wind (unlike the fuel engine that pulls the *Medes*), present Sham with a new mode of movement characterised by taking up opportunities as they arise rather than setting out for a particular destination. Bajjer movement is, in this sense, one of unending connection. Though the wind-powered trains are still limited to the paths set out by the railsea, the Bajjer form an assemblage that does not adhere to the labour market that limits

the *Medes*, presenting Sham with models of difference that allow him to create and pursue lines of flight outside of the established assemblages of place.

The final chapters of *Railsea* are characterised by lines of flight that move beyond the striated railsea. When Sham and the Shroakes arrive at the single rail, the only way to move forward is by foot. Their footsteps, in contrast to the predictability of the train wheels, are 'slow and unsteady' (399). The act of walking severs them from the rails, and the world beyond the railsea is described as empty:

> Heaven, the world beyond the railsea, was empty, & very long and dead. & he, though utterly awed, was not surprised. Everything was made at once clear & meaningless, & his mind felt at once as near-empty & gusted by scrags & stubs of nonsense as this old city — & inhabited by a sly, growing excitement. (399)

As with *Un Lun Dun*, emptiness for Miéville is not lack but a space of affective intensities, inhabited by excitement and potential. This potential is heightened when the characters discover the ocean at the end of the railsea, where 'land, *all* land, abruptly stopped' (403). The ocean's openness and endlessness is compared to the railsea:

> They stood on a pitted coastline road, a raised walkway just like any shore in the railsea. It rose not out of rails, though, as any shoreline must surely, but from miles upon miles, from a giddying, endless expanse of water. (403)

The sea demonstrates a level of dynamic structure unseen in the constructivism of the railsea, Deleuze and Guattari's 'smooth space *par excellence*' not yet striated by navigation and maps. The openness of the ocean is not valuable in and of itself, but only insofar as it allows the emergence of new lines of thought and mobility. Sham, deterritorialising the Bajjer train's wind-sails from the train, demands '*why should sails only work on trains*?' and attaches them to 'this floaty upside-down water train' (423-4). On the sea, Sham learns to 'shout in a new motion' (423), a new vocabulary that is not rooted in the railsea. Significantly, the sea that the characters now inhabit is just as repetitive as the rails: water leaves no traces, creating an endless, 'enormous damp space' (423). The sea, with its swarms of pure intensities and potential, rejects striation through landmarks and other markers. The characters can no

longer define themselves their roles within the places created by the striated labour market; rather, their relationships to the place they occupy becomes always secondary to the principle of movement.

As we have seen in *Railsea,* spaces and bodies are not autonomous or independent entities. Rather, they emerge through the connections they make: bodily movements and the materiality of place form affective entanglements in a continuous process of transitions and becomings. The railsea can never be stabilized as an entirely striated labor space or a smooth, nomadic space: it is constantly always, already something else through each narrative shift. The text's refusal to adhere to intertextual repetition of the same — to chart the same movements as Melville's *Moby-Dick* — invite the young reader to look for repetition based on difference rather than resemblance. Difference, as we will see in Chapter 3's exploration of technology in science fiction texts for young adults, is what allows characters and readers to make maps, charting new territories and assemblages, rather than tracings.

Chapter 3
Minor assemblages in societies of control in *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier*

The practice of place-making changes as technology develops. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century — particularly thanks to the works of Karl Marx — it has been largely accepted that technologies change society in more or less predictable ways; that technology is both autonomous (evolving) and deterministic in its effects.[16] Science fiction, including texts aimed at young adults, engages with these understandings of technology and how such technology has influenced the human. Children's literature scholarship, in particular, understands science fiction as generally 'dominated by authorial fears about the violent, inhumane social and political worlds young people seem likely to inherit' (Sambell 247). In response to this, explorations of representations of technology in children's literature chart two general attitudes: literature that celebrates technology as a new frontier and literature that warns of the dystopian potential in unlimited technology. Understandably, this has led to discussions of subjectivity and subject positions influenced by the intertwining of technology and power, focusing heavily upon how literature for children and young adults presents opportunities for agency.

The term 'technology', as we use it today, evokes notions of the machine (particularly the computer), the Internet, and the ever-increasing mergence of machine and human. Indeed, this understanding of technology is a defining component of twentieth-century Western culture. Sigmund Freud, writing in 1929, argues that all technology is an extension of the

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[16] In Marx's later works, the theme of alienation is interwoven with his understanding of technology. For Marx, alienation is exacerbated by the entrance of machines into production. Alienated workers revolt against technology — that is, against the means of production — and smash the machines; but in doing so, also smash the possible abolition of the human labour that those machines realised. In their revolt against the means of production, workers are alienated from the tools of material production, misrecognising themselves (1904, 11-13). In this way, technology also changes the way in which human embodiment is constructed and experienced — and, by extension, the ways in which humans engage with and construct place.

human, 'removing the limits' to make humans into 'a kind of prosthetic God' (1961, 37-8). Martin Heidegger, similarly, approaches technology by looking beyond the form it takes, considering instead how humans are oriented towards and by technology. Heidegger concludes that we understand technology as 'instrumental and anthropological': technology is a means to an end, and a human activity (1977, 288).

Heidegger's exploration of the 'instrumental' challenges the dichotomy of human controller/controlled technology, inviting us to consider the assumptions behind our drive to produce as well as the relationships we make between bodies and entities through such production. Indeed, these are concerns that characterise present-day considerations of what it means to be human in a world with ever-increasing technological advancements. Richard Feist, Chantal Beauvais and Rajesh Shukla, in similar fashion to Heideigger, reject what they term the 'neutral view' of technology as 'simply an ensemble of tools' and, in particular, the seemingly neutral relationship between technology and free will (2010, 1-2). Feist, Beauvais and Shukla propose 'deep technology', which 'reaches more deeply into us than simply a machine or peripheral device' (2). Technology, in this sense, is never separate from the human, but deeply embedded in our way of living. 'Deep technology' is a particularly interesting phrase, resonating with Heideigger's call to scrutinise the consequences of framing technology as a neutral instrument.

This chapter examines Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* (2008) and Joan Slonczewski's *The Highest Frontier* (2011), two texts that challenge the neutral and instrumental status of technology and explore how deeply embedded technologies affect the individual. These texts imagine technology as an assemblage that engenders lines of flight, change and transformation. The Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of 'line of flight' (*ligne de fuite*) describes the

path of mutation that occurs when an assemblage is deterritorialised and becomes something new:

> Every assemblage is territorial in that it sustains connections that define it, but every assemblage is also composed of lines of deterritorialization that run through it and carry it away from its current form. (1987, 503-4)

Massumi adds that the French '*fuite*' covers 'not only the act of fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance' ('Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgements' xvi). In this sense, lines of flight not only express the multiplicities within the assemblage, but the capacity of the assemblage to manifest a multitude of potentials. Society (and social discourse) in terms of the assemblage, is therefore not defined by its stability or its discursive contradictions, but by its lines of flight.

Place, particularly place embedded with technology, is an assemblage suffused with lines of flight. *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier*, both written during the rise of computing and its spread into public spaces, depict worlds in which information processing capacities are distributed throughout the material fabric of public urban space. I discuss representations of topology and place in both texts to explore how technology-place assemblages allow the authors to explore posthuman becomings beyond the cyborg, imagining minor becoming within major social structures stratified by technology. *The Highest Frontier* features technology similar to the feed in M. T. Anderson's *Feed* (discussed in Chapter 1), called Toynet. Toynet is more a benign — but no less potentially dystopian — removable device attached to the forehead, and augments the space habitat in which the characters live. The text follows the protagonist, Jenny Ramos, and her realisations about their reliance on technology to survive. *Little Brother*, set in a parallel 21st-century San Francisco, focuses on infrastructure becoming increasingly populated by technology. The protagonist, Marcus Yallow, is deeply interested in technology and gadgets, and begins to realise the insidious nature of the state-controlled technology that surrounds him.

Though little attention has been paid to *The Highest Frontier*, many critics have discussed *Little Brother* in some detail. Kristie McDuffie writes that *Little Brother* shows how technology and technological awareness empowers young adults and allows them to avoid being manipulated by authorities (154), and Megan L. Musgrave, in her exploration of digital citizenship in young adult literature, similarly contends that *Little Brother* imagines how technology allows individuals to become 'both players and agents for social change' (91). The capacity of technology to create change — or, to use Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, to produce becomings and lines of flight — can be articulated in more detail by looking explicitly at place. Place allows us to reconsider how technology influences movement and, by extension, creates power relationships between groups. The image of the city, as I have touched upon in Chapters 1 and 2, has commonly been used to express relationships between individuals and communities, including and especially relationships of power. Eric Tribunella draws upon the image of the flâneur to re-conceptualise the child protagonist in city spaces, suggesting that the child protagonist 'subjects [the city] to his or her critical gaze' (70). Kerry Mallan, also drawing upon the flâneur, identifies the 'neo-flâneur' in children's picture books to frame her argument that the child protagonist acts as both tourist-consumer and wanderer-observer. This notion of standing apart from the city — of observing and perceiving — is also at the core of Kevin McNamara's introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*: 'anonymity is a given and even enabling condition' for characters within a city (10). In all of these understandings of the city, the city is acted upon. However, as we will see in *The Highest Frontier* and *Little Brother*, the cities and places in each text contain technology that operates beyond mere observation, working toward recognising, moving, and consuming individuals.

The technological features of the city-assemblage highlight concerns about the politics of technology, stressing to the reader that technological science is, like other institutions, deeply

social. *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier* are thus embroiled in technopolitics — the intersection between technology and politics, innovation and ideology. The texts explore how technology can be discursively framed as neutral, illuminating how technological products can be value-laden and used to different political ends. Lance Strate, arguing that technology is 'a form of change', writes, 'Technology [. . . .] is best understood as a *means*, a *method*, a *way*, as *how* actions are performed, *how* things happen, *how* change occurs' (6).

The relationship between technology and change is central to Deleuze's work in his article, "Postscripts on the Societies of Control." Deleuze writes about the society of control in the context of Foucault's work on disciplinary societies[17], exploring how control and freedom function within an increasingly interconnected and monitored world. Deleuze argues that the society of control is an evolved form of discipline, moving away from enclosed structures to entangled systems. In this shift, the governing of a population is not limited to enclosed spaces — like Foucault's factory — but is instead freed up to operate in open systems and networks. The notion of ultimate mobility and constant access is tied in with freedom and power. In his essay "What Is a Creative Act?", Deleuze uses the metaphor of the highway to differentiat between control and disciplinary power:

> Control is not discipline. You do not confine people with a highway. But by making highways, you multiply the means of control ... people can travel infinitely and 'freely' without being confined while being perfectly controlled. (322)

For Deleuze, the idea of closure governing disciplinary spaces dovetails with the notion of an opening that involves a controlled freedom. The notion of controlled freedom is central to *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier.* The model of disciplinary societies and Foucauldian theories used by other scholars fails to fully articulate the ways in which societies of control create environments in which it is possible to move freely (to an extent) and impossible to

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[17] Foucault writes that disciplinary societies focus upon self-discipline through the threat of surveillance and punishment.

disentangle oneself from place. While *Feed* has an ultimately pessimistic outlook on societies of control, *Little Brother* and *The Highest Frontier* focus upon following lines of flight to create and move in places unmonitored by societies of control. Indeed, for Deleuze, control is figured as an emphatically — though, importantly, not exclusively — spatial practice. Control differs from discipline in that dematerialisation is at the heart of societies of control: one mobilises flows instead of organising confinements. For Deleuze, the power-shift from discipline to control is located in the movement from the mass factory worker to the notion of individuated workers produced through incentive schemes.

This is not to say that Foucault's disciplinary society or notions of biopolitics are moot. Control permeates the subject at a pre-personal level: the subject is no longer an individual formed according to the normative requirements of each disciplinary enclosure but becomes what Deleuze terms a *dividual*, made adaptable to varying demands and conditions. The individual is no longer conceived or addressed as a whole, self-contained unit, but may be broken down — divided — into relations of forces. The body is therefore not pre-given but an assemblage that emerges through a process of relations and connections. While this relation of forces highlights the significant potential of forces to maintain openness — Deleuze perennially returns to the Spinozan dictum that 'no one knows what a body can do' — dividuality is, in some sense, a territorialisation of specific types of quantifiable and discernible intensities extracted from the body. These codifications allow control and manipulation of a body's relation of forces through the measuring, gauging and anticipating operations of a society.

Control is thus an extension rather than a rejection of Foucault's biopolitics, enacted through circumstances in which the individual body is not as important as the regularities and data the body produces. Bodies become assessed by their codifiable components — 'banks', markets,

data and samples. The conceptual purchase on contemporary conditions offered by Deleuze's model of power and control, with its warning of an age of 'complexity' to come — an age of motivational stratagems and open environments — is pertinent in thinking through the relationships between power and subjectivity represented in the three texts explored in this chapter.

Discussions of the ethical implications of emerging biotechnologies and their implications for what it means to be human have converged around the evocative terms 'posthuman' and 'posthumanism', though, as might be expected with any terms through which 'human nature' is (re)conceptualized, the terms are highly contested. For Francis Fukuyama (2002), the posthuman evokes a crisis, in which human nature and social values are under siege. George Annas (2005), Leon R. Kass (1997) and Michael J. Sandel (2007) join Fukuyama in objecting to the use of technology to modify or enhance humans beyond broadly accepted limits. Other theorists are quicker to endorse the enhancements offered by biotechnologies. James Hughes (2004) argues that the problems of posthuman technologies lie in access rather than results: biotechnologies can radically improve quality of life, but such technology must be regulated in order to ensure that the benefits are equally available to everyone. Focusing more on social implications, cultural theory and gender studies celebrate the potential for biotechnologies to deconstruct foundational discourses of 'nature' and 'the human', and view the posthuman as a means of political resistance against the metanarratives of modernity. Donna Haraway's 'Cyborg Manifesto' (1984), in particular, has paved the way for radically rethinking human ontology. Though Haraway abjures the use of the term 'posthuman', her work is influential in studies of the posthuman, informing Katherine Hayles (1999), Joanna Zylinksa (2002) and Rosi Braidotti (2006). In children's literature studies, Haraway's challenging of the discursive structures underwriting subjectivity are particularly attractive to those interested in

posthumanism, such Victoria Flanagan (2014), Kerry Mallan and Clare Bradford (2011), Zoe Jacques (2015) and Kimberly Reynolds (2007).

Though Deleuze's thinking is particularly concerned with the mechanical and the machinic, he does not write about cybernetics itself. His notion of the rhizome invites metaphorical and analogical links with the Internet as a global system — like the rhizome, the Internet is best thought of as being composed of lines connected in infinite ways. An individual user navigates the Internet in a way that cannot be completely predetermined or predicted by an author, editor or programmer. In *The Highest Frontier* and *Little Brother*, the Internet (or versions of it) acts as the free-floating network that disperses power and knowledge. Indeed, in *The Highest Frontier* — and, to a lesser extent, in *Little Brother* — the Internet is no longer merely a virtual environment supported by a genuinely 'material' world. Rather, the landscape itself is interpreted and understood informationally by the characters, becoming part of what Luciano Floridi (2013) terms the 'infosphere'. *Little Brother*, though its world is not as imbued with technology as *The Highest Frontier*, focuses heavily upon the re-ontologisation process of the environment and the self as informational organisms, or inforgs. Floridi writes:

> We are witnessing an epochal, unprecedented migration of humanity from its Newtonian, physical space to the infosphere itself as its Umwelt, not least because the latter is absorbing the former. As a result, humans will be inforgs among other (possibly artificial) inforgs and agents operating in an environment that is friendlier to informational creatures. And as digital immigrants like us are replaced by digital natives like our children, the latter will come to appreciate that there is no ontological difference between the infosphere and the physical world, only a difference in levels of abstraction. (2013, 16-17)

If a biosphere refers to a region that supports life, the infosphere is a region that is made up of informational entities — an environment that is comparable but significantly different from cyberspace, as the infosphere also includes offline and analogue places and spaces of information. The inforg ('informational organism') also differs from the cyborg. While the cyborg imagines chimeric (con)fusion involving animal and machine (Haraway 152), Floridi's inforg emphasises connectivity and transformation through the reontologisation of the

environment and the human. The inforg body has not changed in any uncanny way; rather, we have found ways of augmenting our mental and informational capacities. Importantly, the science-fiction vision of the cyborg does not align with Deleuze's society of control. Floridi points out that our potential to become cyborgs is unlikely to be celebrated and adopted:

> Walking around with something like a Bluetooth wireless headset implanted in your ear does not seem the best way forward, not least because it contradicts the social message it is also meant to be sending: being on call 24/7 is a form of slavery, and anyone so busy and important should have a personal assistant instead. (2013, 15)

The more insidious nature of the infosphere and the inforg means that there have been changes in the texts' conception of what it means to be an agent. *The Highest Frontier* and *Little Brother* benefit from an analysis focusing on the inforg rather than the cyborg. These texts imagine 'e-migrations' from spaces divided into analogue/digital to infospheres, where humans shift between *Little Brother*'s digital immigrants to becoming digital natives like the characters in *The Highest Frontier*. These texts highlight the intrinsically informational nature of human identity. Technology becomes a motif to make explicit the ways in which the demarcation lines between the real and artificial, material and immaterial, inforg and individual merge and create subject-assemblages. Importantly, the rhizomatic networks in *The Highest Frontier* and *Little Brother* do not just connect digital places, but also connect individuals to those places: characters are part of the rhizome.

The society of control is also particularly interesting in relation to the minor because it utilises the same flows and movements that characterise minor becoming and the creation of new rhizomes. Control flourishes through deterritorialising and shifting social categories, capturing minor practices into the fold of the major. As I will discuss in *Little Brother*, the minor gives chase and is chased in a society of control, escaping and evading the major's reterritorialising grasp by engendering ever-expanding lines of flight. The minor is entwined with the nomadic, embracing the fragmentation of the self to move beyond and between the stratifications of the major.

The 21st century infosphere in *Little Brother*

While *Feed* articulates anxieties about the pervasive nature of technology, *Little Brother* explicitly calls the reader to arms, exhorting the reader to take control of their devices by hacking into them and opening up their potential. Marcus, the seventeen-year-old protagonist, is deeply interested and well versed in the technology that surrounds him. As the first narrator, he intersperses his relay of plot events with explanations of jargon and, in the electronic book version, direct URL links to websites that offer more information, creating a rhizomatic assemblage between the book and the Internet itself. The text thus celebrates the rhizomatic nature of the Internet and, in particular, its pliability and connectivity. *Little Brother* insists that the domination of the Internet by large corporations does not mean that there is no room for the minor to flourish, equipping readers with the explicit knowledge and tools to create new maps of the Internet and become nomads.

In Chapter 2, the nomad was discussed in relation to China Miéville's *Railsea* and *Un Lun Dun* as a means to articulate force and movement. In *Little Brother*, we see the connection between the nomad and the war machine and its response to State apparatus. The nomad, as we have seen in *Railsea* and *Un Lun Dun*, exists in the world differently from a citizen of the State. *Little Brother* emphasises how the nomad's presence strips striated space of its ideology and cultural practices, creating smooth space through deterritoralisating the striated space of the State. *Little Brother*'s Marcus, in response to the controlling mechanisms of the Department of Homeland Security and the State's perpetual desire to striate the digital space of the Internet, creates a war machine in the form of XNet, 'the last open communications network in America' not under State control (164). Marcus explains the difference between the XNet and the Internet, making explicit the tension between the nomad and the State:

> The XNet was secure because its users weren't directly connected to the Internet. They hopped from Xbox to Xbox until they found one that was connected to the Internet, then they interjected their material as undecipherable, encrypted data. No one could tell which of the Internet's packets were XNet and which ones were just plain old banking and e-commerce and other encrypted communication. You couldn't find out who was tying the XNet, let alone who was using the XNet. (111)

At a fundamental level, we see that Marcus, as a nomad, approaches space in a fundamentally different way to the State. While the 'whole Internet [is] wiretapped' by the DHS (112), Marcus designs the XNet to allow unfettered movement and freedom to pursue various avenues without surveillance, deterritorialising the state machine to create space for revolutionary minor becoming. This becoming is explicitly characterised by the political, breaking away from the power relations that seek to dividualise and control the individual.

The infosphere's capacity for increased surveillance and control is a key theme in *Little Brother*, manifested most explicitly in representations of place. The text begins in César Chavez High School, where Marcus leads us through the ways in which technology is used to 'snitch' upon the students: the building is outfitted with gait-recognition software; the free laptops log 'every keystroke . . . keeping track of every fleeting thought you put out over the net' (14); the library books are embedded with location trackers. The school is thus presented to the reader as a complex assemblage of technologies that generates a distinctive model of subjectivity — a microcosm of the larger 'metacity' of San Francisco. Metacities, or smart cities, have information and communication technologies at the core of their infrastructure. Urban planners and architects imagine a distributed network of intelligent sensor nodes that measure parameters and wirelessly deliver data in real-time to citizens or governing bodies (Contin, Paolini and Salerno 4).

Little Brother is quick to point out the potentially dystopian implications of such a connected world: the title's nod to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Big Brother is reinforced in Marcus' choice of screenname, 'w1n5t0n', or 'Winston', the name of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s

protagonist. Like Winston, Marcus constantly tests the limits of the state's power. Marcus'

narration of the technology that surrounds him casts him as both narrator and educator,

giving the reader a detailed description of how the technology works; a vehement argument

for its inefficiency; and an exhortation to manipulate it:

> I'd been a little hyperfocused on the escape [from school], and hadn't bothered to figure out where we were escaping *to*.
>
> I turned to my SchoolBook and hit the keyboard. [. . . .]
>
> [T]he SchoolBook ran Windows Vista4Schools, an antique operating system designed to give school administrators the illusion that they controlled the programs their students could run.
>
> But Vista4Schools is its own worst enemy. There are a lot of programs that Vista4Schools doesn't want you to be able to shut down — keyloggers, censorware — and these programs run in a special mode that makes them invisible to the system. You can't quit them because you can't even see they're there.
>
> Any program whose name starts with SYS is invisible to the operating system. It doesn't show up on listings of the hard drive, nor in the process monitor. So my copy of Firefox was called SYSFirefox — and as I launched it, it became invisible to Windows, and thus invisible to the network's snoopware (19-20).

Marcus, as the narrator and lecturer, blends both expository plot paragraphs with

explanations of more complex key ideas underpinning technological devices, such as Bayesian

mathematics and cryptography. The text thus emphasises how technology and the user are

woven together: that technology can be used; that we are woven into the smart city, not

separate from it. This notion of being woven into the smart city is key to Doctorow's attempt

to encourage readers to become more critical users of technology.

Having demonstrated that surveillance technology dividualises the students in Cesar Chavez

High School[18], the narrative takes the issue of surveillance to a wider sphere: government-

controlled public infrastructure and questions of citizenship. San Francisco experiences a

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[18] Marcus' high school is named after Cesar Chavez, a Latin American civil rights and labour activist. The image of a state-controlled institution bearing the name of a revolutionary figure is not just ironic, but also testament to the capacity of the control state to capture and reterritorialise the minor.

terrorist attack and the government increases security, implementing surveillance technology that allows them to track citizens and their movements. Marcus and his friends, playing truant, happen to be at the site of one terrorist attack as it occurs. Their unauthorised presence and Marcus' hacked personal technology puts them under suspicion, and Marcus and his friends are detained by the Department of Homeland Security (or DHS) for questioning. The DHS demand access to his personal data and information, and continue to hold Marcus captive until he acquiesces. Marcus is eventually released and told that the DHS will be paying close attention to his movements. From here, Marcus becomes increasingly aware of the technology that surrounds him and how such technology creates unbalanced power relationships between the State and the public. After the terrorist attack, he notes:

> I saw new sensors and traffic cameras installed at many of the stop signs. Someone had a lot of surveillance gear lying around, waiting to be installed at the first opportunity. The attack on the Bay Bridge had been just what they needed.

> It all made the city seem more subdued, like being inside an elevator, embarrassed by the close scrutiny of your neighbors and the ubiquitous cameras. (89-90)

Marcus' narrative touches upon how place influences movement; his thoughts echo Foucault's notion of the panopticon and self-discipline, in which the ever-present, constant threat of scrutiny influences the behaviour of the observed. However, there is one important difference between San Francisco's new infrastructure and the Foucauldian panopticon: citizens carry the means of surveillance with them in the form of access cards. The infrastructure does not just watch citizens, as Foucault's panopticon implies. Rather, the infrastructure interacts with various objects, such as public transportation cards, toll cards attached to car windshields, and bank cards. This is made most explicit in the text when the police question Marcus about his public transport habits:

> [The police] had no business spying on me — Christ, the BART had no business *helping* them spy on me. Where the hell did my subway pass get off on finking me out for having a 'nonstandard ride pattern'? (106)

Marcus' outrage links State authority to the subway pass, an inanimate piece of technology. The subway pass becomes, as Jane Bennett would write, an actant, producing ripples

throughout San Francisco that invite the police to act upon what they see (Bennett 2010, 9). Marcus points to the reontologisation of the world through technology: though he experiences the world as offline, the infrastructure that surrounds him is a responsive environment of wireless, pervasive information processes — a world that is artificially live. We see, as Marcus does, that San Francisco and its citizens are being interpreted and understood informationally, as part of the infosphere: he is defined as a State subject by his data rather than his body. In short, he has become dividualised.

This dividualisation is represented as a dehumanising process that increasingly takes individual freedom away from citizens. Marcus explicitly notes that his individuality has been reduced to data when he describes how the DHS took him 'down the long hall lined with doors, each door with its own bar code, each bar code a prisoner like me.' (60) The prisoners are elided with their identifying barcode and, importantly, with the doors preventing their freedom. The government's interrogation of Marcus becomes a dialogue between a dividualising State and the individual, where the State extends its territory into the private sphere. The DHS's interrogation of Marcus dramatises this reterritorialisation of private into public:

> 'I'm not going to unlock my phone for you,' I said, indignant. My phone's memory had all kinds of private stuff on it: photos, emails, little hacks and mods I'd installed. 'That's private stuff.'
>
> 'What have you got to hide?'
>
> 'I've got the right to my privacy,' I said. 'And I want to speak to an attorney.'
>
> 'This is your last chance, kid. Honest people don't have anything to hide.' (48)

The notion that 'innocents have nothing to hide' is explicitly critiqued throughout the novel. The public, rather than resisting such dividualisation, submits to the incremental demands on their individual rights as the discussion is framed as an accusatory suggestion that only

criminals have something to hide. Marcus insists that the 'nothing to hide' argument obscures issues of access and power:

> There's something really liberating about having some corner of your life that's *yours*, that no one gets to see except you. It's a little like nudity or taking a dump. Everyone gets naked every once in a while. Everyone has to squat on the toilet. There's nothing shameful, deviant or weird about either of them. But what if I decreed that from now on, every time you went to evacuate some solid waste, you'd have to do it in a glass room perched in the middle of Times Square, and you'd be buck naked?
>
> [. . . .]
>
> It's not about doing something shameful. It's about doing something *private*. It's about your life belonging to you. (57)

What is relevant is not what is hidden, but the experience that there is an intimate, private area to which access can be restricted. The text thus begins by defining individuality in relation to technology rather than against it. Becoming an inforg, for Marcus, does not necessarily mean dividualisation by an ever-growing State. Rather, Marcus embraces his inforg subject position to increase his ability to control access to his own data, embarking on a line of flight to create a minor virtual space called the XNet.

The XNet is a new assemblage within the virtual. Marcus creates the XNet by modifiying Xbox devices, a video game platform with internet access, to create a means of browsing the Internet outside of the channels watched by the government. Instead of using Internet connections provided by companies (which keep records of customers and clients), the XNet uses multiple Internet connections and encrypts the data so that the connection is untraceable. Like the DHS's surveillance infrastructure, the XNet grows and extends far beyond its initial boundaries: 'And I couldn't even stop it — now that the XNet was running, it had a life of its own.' (113) The image of the XNet as growing uncontrollably emphasises cyberspace as an actualisation of rhizomatic knowledge and movement. The attraction of thinking of XNet and the Internet as a rhizome goes beyond being able to articulate the organisation of communication, though *Little Brother* does emphasise how the XNet allows

Marcus and his friends to communicate without the knowledge of authority figures like parents or the government. In understanding the XNet as rhizomatic, we are able to see how *Little Brother* reorganises the human. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the human and the digital network are not two radically different regimes but are two vectors in one plateau that exceeds either. The XNet articulates how the rhizome has 'finite networks of automata in which communication runs from any neighbour to any other, the stems or channels do not pre-exist, and all individuals are interchangeable, defined only by their *state* at a given moment' (1987, 17).

The inforg as an extension of the self in *Little Brother*

In Anderson's *Feed* (discussed earlier in Chapter 1), Violet attempts to exercise agency by removing herself from the feed database, preventing the feed from interpellating her into the limited subject position of the consumer. *Little Brother* has a similarly pervasive information system that observes and analyses the subject into limited categories: that of the obedient citizen and the security threat. Instead of exploring the implications of stepping outside of the system as *Feed* does, *Little Brother* encourages readers to embrace the infosphere and the inforg subject position to create new territories and becomings. Marcus' development as a subject traces how inhabitants of an infosphere must become smart citizens to match a burgeoning smart city. The text explores how Marcus embraces the connectivity of rhizomatic virtual space and technologically augmented places. Indeed, the text's celebration of technology and its distinct attempt to redefine readers as savvy technology users prompts Debra Dudek and Nicola Johnson, pointing to the afterwords written by famous hackers Bruce Schneider and Andrew 'bunnie' Huang, to dub *Little Brother* a hacking manual (188).

Presenting young readers with a hacking manual poses an interesting problem for Doctorow. As Victoria Flanagan argues, *Little Brother* explores how to reshape technology as a means to

achieve agency, but struggles with how to represent responsible acts of resistance that do not replicate the very acts used to oppress citizens (147). Flanagan's observation is based on Marcus' first attempts to sabotage DHS surveillance systems by 'jamming' — feeding false data into the system so that everyone appears suspicious. To gain this false data, Marcus breaches the privacy of other individuals, and encourages other young insurgents to do the same via his online blog. At first, Marcus rejoices in his plan: he receives small digital gifts like music from people thanking him 'for giving them hope' (129) and gloats when his father, a supporter of the new surveillance regime, is pulled over for his suspicious travel pattern (132). As the DHS investigation into the data jamming progresses and the police begin questioning people, Marcus reflects that he is 'no better than a terrorist' (141). He eventually decides to stop jamming, posting on his blog:

> > I'm not jamming. Not this week. Maybe not next. It's not because I'm scared. It's because I'm smart enough to know that I'm better free than in prison. They figured out how to stop our tactic, so we need to come up with a new tactic. I don't care what the tactic is, but I want it to work. It's _stupid_ to get arrested. It's only jamming if you get away with it. (245)

Though Marcus began jamming to protest the government's breaches of individual privacy, his reflections on the problems of jamming do not delve into the implications of his own breaching of private data. Dudek and Johnson attempt to reconcile this by suggesting that the difference between Marcus' resistance and the DHS's surveillance resides not in the form of the act itself, but in its purpose and accountability. Though purpose and accountability are indeed important aspects to consider, delving deeper into the form that Marcus' resistance takes allows us to explore how inforg subjectivity and potentials for agency are envisioned in the text.

Marcus' attempt to disrupt the surveillance system embraces the inforg and dividualisation. Marcus deterritorialise the dividual, enacting a form of resistance that takes place in the territory of the DHS. As the DHS tightens its surveillance net and increases its budget to catch

the jammers, the smooth space of the XNet becomes compromised by the presence of DHS spies. To counter this breach, Marcus works to create a network that is not just rhizomatic in its connections, but rhizomatic in its growth. He builds on the concept of 'transitive trust', a computing term which explains how computer domains define relationships between each other[19], and decides to build a 'web of trust': a system that allows users to confirm that the parties they are talking to are not government spies. This web of trust involves physically meeting at least one other person and signing a 'key', an encrypted code, to confirm each other's identity. These keys are added to a 'keyring', which is then distributed among one's trusted connections:

> With more people, you create the seed of the web of trust and the web can expand from there. As everyone in your keyring goes out into the world and meets more people, they can add more and more names to the ring. You don't have to meet the new people, just trust that the signed key you get from the people in your web is valid. (153)

The web of trust is self-replicating, providing its own means of distribution outside of the XNet. Trust and connections move along the 'web' of relationships, and each individual user is identified by a specific code. The act of creating a web of trust involves dividualisation of the self — but, unlike the government's dividualisation of citizens (which involves surveillance and control), dividualisation in the web of trust is to foster connectivity and nomadism away from the striations of government power.

These digital expressions of the individual are key to *Little* Brother's approach to minor becomings and nomadism. The most explicit of these is Doctorow's exploration of Marcus' online identity and avatar, M1k3y. The avatar has its origins in Hinduism, as a deity entering into the world. This suggests a limiting factor of manifestation, reducing the god into a form in which it can interact with humans. The digital avatar, rather than reducing the human,

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[19] Transitive trust in computing draws from the transitive property of equality in mathematics, which states that if a = b and b = c, then a = c. In computing, if domain A trusts domain B, and domain B trusts domain C, then domain A trusts domain C.

expands its capacities within cyberspace, allowing for flexibility and connection and, importantly for Marcus, anonymity. The digital avatar's capacity to give users anonymity in their interactions has been explored in a wide range of texts for children and young adults. Sherry Turkle (2005) suggests that virtual space and the avatar make it 'possible for individual users to assume multiple identities', cycling through personae' to explore the self (288)—a notion we see expressed in texts such as Jordan Cray's *Danger.com* (1997-8) series (the blurb invites the reader into a 'world without rules, without boundaries, where you can be anyone you want, whoever you aren't') to Doctorow's novelette *Anda's Game* (2007).

This potential for duplicity or — more accurately in the case of *Little Brother* — multiplicity of the virtual self is realised largely near the end of the narrative when Marcus holds a press conference to answer questions about the XNet movement. Importantly, Marcus chooses to hold a virtual press conference as his avatar M1k3y, ensuring that his online persona cannot be traced to his real life identity. The journalists, not accustomed to controlling their avatars, move around 'like staggering drunks, weaving back and forth and up and down, trying to get the hang of it all' (234). David Rudd (2005) notes that the anonymity and disembodiment that comes with cyberspace '[removes] many markers that often produce more condescending responses', particularly that of children 'being "talked down to"' (18) by adults. Indeed, while teachers and other adult authority figures treat Marcus with contempt, the journalists treat M1k3y quite seriously:

> **> M1k3y, this is Priya Rajneesh from the BBC. You say you're not the leader of any movement, but do you believe there is a movement? Is it called the XNet?**

> Lots of answers. Some people said there wasn't a movement, some said there was and lots of people had ideas about what it was called: XNet, Little Brothers, Little Sisters and my personal favorite, the United States of America.

> They were really cooking. I let them go, thinking of what I could say. Once I had it, I typed,

> I think that kind of answers your question, doesn't it? There may be one or more movements and they may be called XNet or not. (236, emphasis in original)

Here, M1k3y becomes an avatar, not merely an electronic image that represents a computer user but the embodiment of multiplicity and multiple voices. M1k3y has become a collective assemblage of points of view from which fragmented and decentred perspectives can be enunciated. Indeed, the decentred self becomes central to Marcus' experience of becoming M1k3y. Importantly, the text attempts to embody the experience of being online through a different font and the use of angle brackets (>), symbols that are commonly used to enclose a computing code. Just as angle brackets are used to denote coding, they frame the conversation in cyberspace, anticipating the reader's move from print media to the Internet.

The disembodied nature of the avatar means that another body (in this case, Ange, Marcus' girlfriend) can inhabit it. The digital avatar becomes a hyptertextual assemblage, composed of the relations between multiple users:

> When I got tired, I handed my keyboard to Ange and let her be M1k3y for a while. It didn't really feel like M1k3y and me were the same person anymore anyway. (238)

Marcus' detachment from M1k3y is particularly significant, expressing how lines of flight create new relations and repetitions that are similar but not necessarily attached to their origins. Indeed, the new connections engendered by becoming-avatar are more important than their source. The difference between M1k3y and Marcus highlights the always-becoming interaction between the various parts: an assemblage between each fragmented aspect of differentiation and multiplicity. Marcus and Ange become lost in the assemblage of their many selves — in M1k3y, a collective between subjects. The avatar is a subjectivity without a single subject. The readers cannot locate who or what M1k3y is at any particular moment (M1k3y is Marcus, is Ange, is the leader of the movement, is the symbol of the movement, is the catalyst for many movements) and so M1k3y escapes the law of singularity. But, as we see through

Marcus' brief reflection on being the 'same person' as M1k3y, M1k3y still maintains the lure of subjectivity and continues to give the impression of identity.

The Marcus-M1k3y relationship, in terms of the rhizome, offers a model of posthuman becoming as an intricate network of connections between the inforg and the infosphere. The avatar is decentred, existing only in relation to desires that flow from many directions, from the designers of the game which Marcus uses as a medium to talk to journalists, to Marcus' own desires and the desires of the XNet rebels. In this sense, M1k3y, acting as a receptacle for the projected desires of others, also becomes a material instantiation of the idea of the rhizome, standing as a working model of plurality and deterritorialisation. *Little Brother*'s avatar, as rhizome and as an entity woven out of a network of various subjectivities, provides a model of being that moves away from ideas of singularity, self-identity and unity, proposing a model of posthuman minor-becoming based in multiplicity and creativity.

Indeed, though *Little Brother* explicitly calls the reader to resist the control state, minor becoming in *Little Brother* is marked more by creativity than reactionary resistance. This is not to say that Marcus' resistance is not produced by a repressive state; rather, it is important to also emphasise and recognise resistance as a force that does not merely react to repression but also affirms and creates. The XNet is not about dissent and negation but an engaged practice of affirming the minor, producing new lines of flight to evade capture by the state's apparatus of control.

The Highest Frontier's Frontera: an infosphere, refuge, and society of control

The Highest Frontier is not as explicit in its depiction of a society of control as *Little Brother*, though, as in *Little Brother*, the concept of control is central to the text's understanding of the posthuman. Slonczewski imagines the United States of America in the 22nd century. Climate

change and pollution have made many parts of Earth uninhabitable, and the destruction is compounded by the invasion of cyanide-emitting alien microorganisms called 'ultraphytes'. People are beginning to take refuge in space habitations that orbit the Earth, known as spacehabs. The protagonist, seventeen-year-old Jenny, is about to begin her first undergraduate year at Frontera University, the first university in space. From the first page, readers are thrown into an unfamiliar world in which Toynet, a communication technology, is embedded in every aspect of life. Toynet marks the existence of an infosphere in *The Highest Frontier*: a landscape and a world that is characterised by information technology and its inhabitants' understanding of the world as populated by information.

In this sense, Toynet is similar to the feed in M.T. Anderson's *Feed*, providing users with entertainment, communication and information. Toynet is accessed through a diad worn on the forehead, which channels the user's brain streams and allows the user to act within virtual Toynet spaces (known as toyboxes) and telekinetically control objects within augmented real spaces. Jenny is constantly engaging with Toynet; indeed, her first day at university is marked by the new streams of information, descriptions of images interspersed with bold text marking written messages sent through Toynet's communication software:

> A window winked open, Reese and Ricky Tsien, then Fritz somebody, then another. Half the students were Reese or Fritz, the 'in' names. Many were cultured Newmans, blond and black, male and female. Their tiny windows glittered with skaters and violinists, warworlds and danceworlds. **"Visit Gloriana — my Elizabethan court." "Come visit my Candyworld — be a gumdrop!"** (36-7, emphasis in original)

People are marked by their Toynet windows, more meaningful to Jenny as informational beings than as the uniform, genetically cultured physical bodies based upon Paul Newman and Marilyn Monroe. Individuality is instead cultivated and marked through toyworlds, virtual spaces that are controlled and designed by individual Toynet users. It is also possible to use Toynet to create or visit virtual re-creations of the real world: Jenny often visits the archived

simulation of her deceased twin brother, Jordi. It is in this virtual space that readers get a glimpse into Jenny's anxieties:

> Then gradually the crowd faded away, into history. Only Jordi remained, the archival Jordi, in his starched white suit leaning over the white fence rail. The Jordi Ramos Kennedy who lived forever in the Toynet archive.
> Jenny came forward, her heart beating too fast. Seeing her, Jordi smiled, the old smile that used to say, 'It was all for you.' [. . . .] 'How'd I do, sis?'
>
> 'Fantastic, as always.' She swallowed. 'The Jupiter line always drives them wild.'
>
> 'Jupiter. We'll get there,' he said with the trademark Jordi conviction. 'It won't be easy.'
>
> 'It will be hard. It was hard enough for me, going to...' She mustn't mention Frontera; Jordi hadn't lived to know about that, and if he'd lived she wouldn't be here. (74)

Toynet's manipulation of reality is an important distinction to make. While Anderson's *Feed* augments reality largely through pop-up advertisements projected from the feed onto the landscape[20], Toynet gives users the capacity to create virtual worlds. Toynet thus does not merely translate aspects of reality that are pieced together by a perceiving subject, but acts more literally as the creator of realities. Though Jenny is aware that she is dealing with a memory — an event that is temporally bounded — she does not have to adhere to a script. She is not only experiencing an archived reality, but also building a new experience on its foundations. Repetition, in this case, is Deleuzian: a form of becoming and of creating difference.

Peter-Paul Verbeek (2007) provides an excellent framework to discuss how images and visualisation technologies mediate Jenny's experiences of the world. Verbeek proposes three models: modern visions, postmodern visions, and posthuman visions. In the modern model, which assumes the separation of subject and object, images provide an objective relation to reality. Visualisation technologies are used to determine how objects can be presented to

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[20] As discussed in Chapter 1, one of *Feed*'s most striking narrative techniques is the paratextual advertisements that interrupt the flow of the narration, mimicking the ways in which the feed interrupts and is always present in any interaction with the world.

subjects and how subjects and objects can be presented in an objective world. In the postmodern and posthuman models, the mediating role of visualisation technologies is more explicit: technology translates a reality that is not visible to the naked eye, becoming an active generator of representations of reality. In this sense, technology and the observer become co-shapers of reality. Humans and technology no longer have a separate existence. Rather, technology and the technology-imbued landscapes of Frontera and 22nd century America become vibrant matter, mediating the ways in which humans interact with the world.

Toynet's ability to create realities that do not exist before they are generated imagines a move beyond subjectivism and realism. The characters are always implicated in complex socio-technological assemblages that involve not only a 'stretching' of human intentionality over artifacts but an actual extension of intentionality that become a property of artifacts as well as humans. The reality in which Jenny and her friends live consists of a rhizomatic web of relations between the human, the world and the technologies that mediate them; a network of human and non-human entities that is constantly becoming, creating new realities and assemblages based on the connections and associations being made. Subjects and objects in *The Highest Frontier* emerge, not as the prime movers and producers of the interplay between human and non-human, but as the products of such interplay.

We explicitly see subjectivity as a product of the interplay between non-human and the human in Jenny's visit to the simulation of her deceased twin, Jordi. The twin or double, as Robyn McCallum writes, is often featured in young adult fiction. Doubles in texts for young adults often take the form of an 'imagined or real counterpart or twin who is either a mirror inversion or a duplicate of that character and whose presence is crucial for that character's sense of identity' (17). *The Highest Frontier* takes a decidedly Deleuzian turn in its treatment of doubling and repetition: being doubled through technology is common practice in

22nd century Earth, an accepted condition of existence rather than an aberration. Twins, for Deleuze, manifest figures of 'discrete extension' and thus constitute a 'true repetition in existence rather than an order of resemblance in thought' (1994, 14). Through Jenny's attitudes to her deceased twin, we glimpse the complex workings of sameness and difference in identity formation and the inforg itself.

> There stood Jordi's sim, like Newman or Monroe for the toyflicks, only so much more accurate, since practically every moment of Jordi's life had been recorded. Jordi was there for all the public to 'meet and greet' at a Unity rally in Bailey Park, the summer before senior year. (73)

Jenny's relationship to Jordi is one of difference and *différance*. Jordi exists as a spectre and a trace that allows Jordi's death to become temporally delayed. It is interesting to note that retracing is not a necessary condition for the simulation's coherence. There is no script that Jenny must follow. While she must adhere to the temporal limitations of Jordi's knowledge bank — Jenny notes in the excerpt above that she 'mustn't mention Frontera; Jordi hadn't lived to know about that' (74) — Jenny can still introduce new information. She acknowledges her discomfort with playing with a new sports team by asking Jordi's opinion of the change, being careful to keep her question temporally unspecific. Jordi therefore exists as both trace and presence — both an echo that retraces the past and a present simulation that can respond to present stimuli. His simulation is constituted and conditioned through delay, and the distinction between the original and the derived is unimportant. In repeating Jordi's presence, Toynet achieves repetition with difference, creating a space in which Jenny's anxieties and questions can become present to herself. Jordi is not just a simulation but a simulated inforg — a simulation of a body created through the manipulation of information and data amassed over time.

Simulation, one of the defining technological device in *The Highest Frontier*, marks a significantly different attitude to technology compared to the information-based computer society in *Little Brother*. While the invasive nature of technology in *Little Brother* is justified

through national security, the potentially invasive nature of Frontera's technology is veiled by convenience and customisation. Simulation in *The Highest Frontier* does not only occur in virtual reality, but within the physical world as well. Frontera University is equipped with 3D printers that use amyloid protein to print out everything from food to furniture. To maintain the stability of the spacehab, students are not permitted to bring any of their Earth possessions. Instead, they must 'upload' them and print out amyloid-based copies. Amyloid bridges the gap between the virtual and the concrete real, revealing the parasitic relationship between humans and technology and the parasitic nature of the human in general.

As Anders M. Gullestad notes,

> contrary to the common-sense view where social parasitism is seen as a metaphorical extension of a biological phenomenon, not only were humans the original carriers of the title parasite, but we also all start our lives in such a way that scientists will have a hard time explaining why exactly we [. . .] should not be considered as full members of the class of parasitic entities. (306)

Gullestad comes to this conclusion through reading Michel Serres' *The Parasite*. Like Haraway's cyborg, Serres' theory of the parasite does not explicitly refer to the posthuman, but has nevertheless become a foundational text in posthumanism. Serres' theory of the parasite focuses upon the nonhuman multiplicities of social systems, arguing that human institutions and relations have, at their cores, parasitic characteristics. To say that humans are parasitic rather than predatorial undoes the centralisation of human experience and activity, articulating a creative, productive force that is non-human. Serres' parasite is 'an expansion; it runs and grows. It invades and occupies' (253). Like other French theorists, Serres enjoys the multiplicity of words and their meaning. In French, the word '*parasite*' evokes three meanings: a biological parasite (an organism that feeds off its host), a social parasite (an unwanted guest) and, notably, static or noise in a communication channel. Similarly, the word '*hôte*' carries a useful double meaning for Serres, translating to both 'guest' and 'host' in English (Schehr 1982, vii).

Serres' parasite is particularly interesting as it simultaneously evokes the connections and relations that Deleuze and Guattari privilege, and describes the conditions for the endless proliferation of the new and the different. Like Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-other, Serres' parasite suggests a unity or synthesis over separation: Deleuze and Guattari use the image of the wasp pollinating the orchid to propose that the wasp and orchid create a new orchid-wasp assemblage; in the same way, Serres' parasite is both guest and host. Notably, the concept 'parasite' immediately signals an asymmetrical relationship that the wasp-orchid figure does not, but the double-meaning of parasite as guest-host also suggests the possibility of symbiotic relations.

The parasite is a particularly interesting framework for considering the relationship between technology and the human because it suggests conditions that are not solely negative. Rather, the parasite creates greater forms of complexity and relation, blurring the clear hierarchies between guest and host, pointing out the difficulty of delineating the moment of original production. In *The Highest Frontier*, humans create and control technology, but technology also creates through its status as an apparatus of control. As we see in the discussion of *Little Brother*, the potential in the minor lies in its ability to deterritorialise and — in light of Serres' parasite — become parasitic to the major. This parasitic theme comes out more strongly in *The Highest Frontier* through the relationship between amyloid and the invasive species that populate the planet, which evokes both the conventional notion of social/biological parasites, and the third Serresian concept of parasite as noise.

Amyloid, as we see throughout the text, is a fluid and flexible substance with the capacity to replicate physical objects. Though amyloid is flexible and fluid, its fluidity is not celebrated.

Rather, amyloid is judged by its ability to repeat and replicate the original objects on Earth, held against Platonic understandings of the idea or copy:

> In [Jenny's university] bedroom, everything was a middling amyloid copy, not quite her bed from home, not quite the same blue coverlet with gold flowers, a bit stiffer material; nearly the same dresser, almost like oak. [. . . .] She recycled her nightgown and printed out clothes for the day. The printer printed out yoghurt and grapefruit, all amyloid. Jenny wondered about that café Anouk had found. (57)

Amyloid does not lead thought to the ideal essence of things, instead bearing witness to the existence of another way of becoming than the one sanctioned by the inner resemblances between copies and ideas. Amyloid thus articulates the aspects of control central to Frontera: the potential lines of flight in amyloid and the multitudes of becoming cannot be explored to their fullest, as limitless growth is monstrous, akin to the ultraphyte and the kudzu vine. The monstrous also stems from amyloid's parasitic nature; like the orchid that needs the wasp for pollination, amyloid needs the human in order to multiply and take physical form.

As Serres notes, the meaning of the word 'parasite' comes from its prefix, 'para-': 'it is on the side, next to, shifted; it is not on the thing but on its relation. It has relations, as they say, and makes a system of them' (38). The parasitic nature of amyloid also thus extends to the human. To suggest that the human is parasitic rather than a predator overturns the illusion of one-way power relationships (such as predator-prey). The human in *The Highest Frontier* is not a predator; in fact, amyloid points to the vulnerability of humans and the human body in Frontera. Frontera is the body upon which humans enact parasitism, drawing life and sustenance from its technological field. The human body is rendered a consuming body rather than a solely creative body, fleeing to Frontera and entering into a becoming-parasite because of the invasive species that inhabit the planet Earth.

The motif of the invasive species also plays an important role in understanding technology and control in *The Highest Frontier*. The notion of 'invasives' — a category that describes

bodies that are both foreign and threatening — runs through the narrative. Though the narrative centres on the ultraphyte alien and the implications for human inhabitants of Earth, Slonczewski's landscape also imagines how 21st-century threats embed themselves into the ecosystem. The narration of the ultraphyte is initially twinned with kudzu, a vine originally planted in the southern states of America and classed as an invasive weed in the 1990s. In the text, the kudzu growth is uncontrolled, bathing the landscape and choking buildings and roads. The monstrous nature of kudzu is linked to the incomprehensible movement of the ultraphyte. While humans have learnt to negotiate the growth of kudzu, ultraphytes are still uncontrolled — a particular threat, since most threats to human health have been tamed through technology.[21]

Amyloid is thus an interesting manifestation of the parasite, because its flexibility epitomises Deleuzian control and Serresian parasitic 'noise'. Like other technological apparatuses of control, amyloid's power lies in its capacity to give the user the illusion of freedom. The narration revels in affixing amyloid as a descriptor to everything: we read of amyloid food, amyloid clothing, and amyloid buildings. This is as much a marker of amyloid's ability to form as to deform. Amyloid carries with it the third aspect of Serres' parasite: the unwanted noise of communication. For Serres, noise is the unwanted third element in communication: that which interferes in what would otherwise be a clear connection between a sender and receiver. Serres points out that noise is a constant and constitutive feature of communication, writing,

> We are surrounded by noise. And this noise is inextinguishable. it is outside — it is the world itself — and it is inside, produced by our living body. We are in the noises of the

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[21] Anthrax, a bacteria that the narrative concedes 'would have blackened the blood' (9), is now used to lift freight into Frontera; HIV is no longer a virus but a 'Human Improvement Vector' that cleans the blood and prevents cancer; and the spacehab is sterile because everything is made of amyloid.

world, we cannot close our door to their reception, and we evolve, rolling in this incalculable swell. [. . .] In the beginning is the noise; the noise never stops. (1982, 126)

Noise marks the presence of the space of transmission, the force that mediates humanity and what it is to be human in Frontera. If Toynet dissolves barriers through virtual reality, amyloid permits us to see those barriers literally dissolve, emphasising each institution — the university; the dormitory; the spacehab itself — as coexisting in the same modulation.

In this construction, the spacehab is less a static location than a moment in which the two planes of consistency —the 'relation to speed and slowness between particles that imply movements of deterritorialisation' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 270) — and organisation (in the sense that amyloid is repetition of the original) intersect and interact to form territories. Amyloid makes present the machinic nature of control. We see this on a smaller, individual scale after Jenny visits the simulation of Jordi. Her Toynet brainstreams are monitored by a team of psychiatrists, who notice the variation in her brainstream and print out a Direct Intervention Robotic Guardian (DIRG) from the amyloid printer. The following exchange occurs:

> Jenny caught her face in her hands. '¡*Vaya!* Get out, or I'll—' From her desk drawer she pulled a scissors. 'I'll slit my wrist.'
>
> 'That is why you need me.' The chin of the DIRG had just cleared the printer. [. . . .] 'After viewing the sim of your deceased brother, you always try to harm yourself.'
>
> 'Not this time.'
>
> 'This cottage was built to meet your needs. We need to keep you safe.' The scissors softened and melted in an amyloid puddle. (75)

This is a city in which, as Deleuze writes, individuals are able to move but are 'easily rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position — licit or illicit — and effects a universal modulation' (Deleuze 1992a, 7). Jenny's attempt to eliminate the noise from the amyloid DIRG merely makes the interference and apparatus of control 'louder' and more explicit.

Control in Frontera is also manifested beyond amyloid within the technological landscape. The passage from disciplinary society to the society of control, as Deleuze writes, is characterised by the collapse of the walls that define the institutions. Frontera University utilises Toynet for many of its classes, which means that students sit in 'toyrooms' to access lectures rather than move from building to building. For Jenny and the other inhabitants of the spacehab, there is less distinction between the inside and the outside. In Jenny's Life Sciences class, Toynet is used to create virtual worlds in which students can step into simulations of objects to view DNA structures. The narrative describes Jenny's toyroom 'splicing' into eight different toyrooms, each owned by a different student. In the centre of the eight toyrooms is a tall cylinder, which the students step into to see their professor. Jenny's focalisation makes no distinction between the virtual and the real: 'Heart pounding, she stepped forward into the cylinder' (77). Unlike Marcus in *Little Brother* — who feels disconnected to his avatar M1k3y — Jenny experiences the virtual in a distinctly embodied sense. In class, she experiences a physical and affective reaction to the virtual place created in her toyroom:

> The blue sphere of nitrogen was slippery, not at all sticky like phosphate. Someone collided from behind; she found herself sliding even faster downward in the [DNA] spiral. She fought the instinct to reach out and halt the toyroom; it couldn't be as bad as it felt, it had to end sometime. (79)

These forces and phenomena are no longer understood as outside; that is, they are not seen as original and independent of the artifice. In Frontera, all phenomena and forces are artificial. Toynet's colonization of both public place and virtual space means that notions of 'outside' and 'public' have declined. The dialectics of inside/outside, private/public and actual/virtual have been replaced by a play of degrees and intensities, of hybridity and artificiality. In this regard, Guy Debord's analysis of the society of the spectacle illuminates notions of control and power in science fiction. Debord writes that the spectacle 'cannot be understood as either a deliberate distortion of the visual world or a product of the technology of the mass dissemination of images' but rather a *weltanshaung*, a worldview that has been 'actualised

[and] translated into the material realm' (1994, 13). In *The Highest Frontier*, the spectacle is at once unified and diffuse in such a way that it is impossible to distinguish any inside from outside, the natural from the social, the artificial from the real. The notion of the public, the place outside in which individuals act in the presence of others, has been both universalized — Jenny is always under the gaze of others — and channeled in the virtual spaces of the spectacle. Jenny's experience with Toynet is not something that is added to the real world, but the spectacle that epitomises control.

Toynet also acts as a world market. The market in a society of control is thwarted by exclusions and, as we see in Anderson's *Feed* in Chapter 1, thrives by including always increasing numbers within its domain. Toynet is the capitalist world market in its ideal form: there is no outside to the world market as the entire globe is its domain. Toynet thus serves as the diagram of power in the society of control. The spaces Toynet produces are smooth, appearing free of the binary divisions of modern striation but, in reality, are criss-crossed by lines so that it only appears as a continuous, uniform space. There is no central place of power in Toynet — it is both everywhere and nowhere.

The progressive lack of distinction between inside and outside in Frontera has important implications for the form of the production of subjectivity. For children's literature (which draws on the notion that subjectivity is not pre-given and original but at least, to some degree, formed through social forces) the production of subjectivity is rooted firmly in the functioning of the major social institutions — the Foucauldian institutions of the family, the school, the factory. In the society of control, subjectivities are still produced in the field of social forces. Since the boundaries used to define the spaces of institutions have broken down so that the logic and power that functioned within the institutional walls spreads across the entire social terrain, the society of control emphasises intensification of power as opposed to a decline.

Toynet means that individuals are always still in the factory, always still in the school, always still in the prison, the factory, and so forth. The functioning of these institutions becomes more intensive and more extensive, and their logics pass in waves of intensity across undulating social surfaces. Control is thus an intensification and generalisation of discipline: the boundaries of the institution have been breached so that there is no longer a distinction between inside and outside, producing the illusion of flexibility and freedom.

Beyond the cyborg: embracing the parasite in *The Highest Frontier*

Unlike many other science fiction and speculative texts for young adults, *The Highest Frontier* does not present a new model of the human or posthuman in a humanoid form. Slonczewski presents alternative models of becoming in the ultraphyte and the plant, emphasising multiplicity rather than the possibilities of extending human abilities. Indeed, genetic engineering to extend and alter the human is presented as a questionable solution. Though Jenny and her friends are genetically engineered and appear, on the surface, flawless, we find that an error in Jenny's engineering has rendered her a 'public mute', someone who is too anxious to speak in public. The text also touches upon the issue of controlling the product of genetic engineering: fundamentalist religious groups interpret the writings of the Christian apostle Paul and engineer women to be 'paulines', women who lack a gene and cannot speak until spoken to.

These characters allow Slonczewski to explore how biotechnology's interventions into matter and nature can potentially influence biological determinism and notions of authenticity, challenging boundaries that have acted as stable and reliable frameworks for many traditional categories of thought: human/machine, nature/technology, treatment/enhancement, and born/made. Throughout the text, these distinctions give way to new entities and categories, such as the artificially intelligent Direct Intervention Robotic Guardians, the publicly demure

and silent paulines, and bio-engineered plants that influence human behaviour. These categories render the notion of 'nature' — and by extension, human nature — ever more uncertain, both by complicating the question of what it means to be 'human' and challenging the fixity of the label 'nature'.

Despite Haraway's critical attitude to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (discussed below), her declaration that the cyborg 'has no origin story' (150) echoes Deleuze and Guattari's repeated insistence that a 'line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination... A line of becoming only has a middle' (293). Further into Haraway's work, we see that the cyborg's undoing of the distinction between organism and machine (152) is compatible with the machinic alternative to mechanisms that underlines both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia.*[22] Like Haraway's cyborg, Slonczewski's posthuman figures blur the boundaries between the human and the non-human. The Direct Intervention Robotic Guardians are not considered human by the characters in the text, but we find out that Amherst University has accepted DIRG students, suggesting some level of similarity to humans. More interesting, however, is Slonczewski's treatment of technologically enhanced plants.

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[22] Haraway takes particular issue with Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-other'. In *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway finds 'little but the two writers' scorn for all that is mundane and ordinary and the profound absence of curiosity about or respect for and with actual animals ... a philosophy of the sublime, not the earthly, not the mud' (27-8). Despite Haraway's objections, her becoming-with is complementary to Deleuze's becoming-other, with no inherent conflict between her concerns with interspecies symbiosis and Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the becomings that emerge in human-animal zones of indiscernibility. While Deleuze and Guattari are more interested in the 'mode of the pack' of animals (241) and Haraway in the daily relationship between single human-dog partners and (314), Haraway's becoming-with, in the broadest sense, denotes the symbiotic, co-evolving relations of otherness that bring multiple species together in complex combinations and assemblages — something that Deleuze and Guattari explore in multiple instances: the orchid-wasp, cat-baboon-C-virus, roots-microorganisms (238).

Professor Abaynesh, the head of Life Sciences at Frontera University, invites Jenny to work closely on her current research project, engineering plants to understand wisdom. Abaynesh has two particular projects already integrated into her everyday life: Meg and El, a two-headed pet snake; and Ari, a sentient plant. Ari allows Slonczewski to explicitly comment upon the possibilities of the posthuman:

> 'Ari has a nervous system with ten or twenty flower heads. Why not us? If we had two heads — might we see two points of view? Wisdom in stereo?' (65)

In Ari, the text's preoccupation with doubles and twins becomes clear: 22nd Earth envisions twins and doubles as two individuals: a multiplicity that is also marked by disunity, an implicit Self/Other. The hypothetical two-headed human proposed by Abaynesh is a different sort of double, embodying difference and *différance*, signalling the continuous deferral of meaning and identity, a multiplicity rather than a mirror image.

The wisdom plant project creates a rhizome between the plant and the human. The plants, modified to form human neurons, produce semiochemicals that influence human behaviour, creating a parasitic relationship between human and plant. The plants destabilise the category of the human and its hierarchical relation to other forms of life: the plants influence the humans so much that their presence in the room disrupts a political debate, during which both sides acknowledge the flaws in their own campaigns. The wisdom plants thus stress proximity, not in terms of a capacity to experience or do similar things, but in the capacity to think. While *Railsea* imagines becoming-animal, affording the mole special closeness to the human, *The Highest Frontier* maintains the fundamentally foreign status of the plant in both experiential and ontological terms. The politicians in *The Highest Frontier* unwittingly enter into a becoming-plant, a process that does not elevate the human in a hierarchy — indeed, as one politician concedes, 'it's a belief totally self-centred. How can we teach children that the entire universe revolves around our own selfish existence?' (375)

The ultraphyte expresses the possibilities of posthuman becomings. T. S. Miller devotes a brief paragraph to *The Highest Frontier* in his consideration of plants, animal studies and posthumanist discourse. Miller's thoughts on *The Highest Frontier* are illuminating, pointing out that plant life in the text is 'both monster and sentient [. . . .] and thus both engages with and offers a way out of the obsession with the plant-as-monster that has, with few exceptions, dominated the history of speculative fiction' (471). It is interesting to note that the ultraphyte acts as both the catalyst for war and as a symbol for the future of (post)humanity. From the perspective of contemporary world orders, the society of control removes notions of an outside in a militaristic sense as well as a public/private sense. Just as the binaries that define modernity and modernist notions of the human have been blurred by the society of control, so too have the binaries that define modern conflict. The Other that delimits the sovereign Self takes the shape of the ultraphyte, and the Other is quickly destabilized when Jenny discovers that her roommate, Mary, is in fact an ultraphyte. The trope of alien invasion — the narratives of repelling an unwanted aggression and studying an unknown life force — are similarly destabilized. Mary's goal at Frontera is to study humans, and in doing so, attempts to become-human.

Mary and the ultraphytes are what Lyotard calls the 'inhuman' within humanity: that which inhabits, underpins and undermines the articulation of human subjectivity by revealing that humanity is always-already inhabited by the inhuman (2). Mary literalises the coding of the assemblage 'human' in the plot of the transformation of human into posthuman — a transformation that recrafts the body and preserves the mind. The resulting posthuman subject presents a narratological quandary: Mary is simultaneously contiguous with humanity and thus speaks in a human voice, and yet is also radically Other, her performance a parasitic simulacrum:

> Suddenly Mary smiled. 'What a good idea! Thank you!' Her voice lilted exactly like Dean Nora Kwon.

> Jenny smiled. 'Have you been seeing the dean?'
>
> Mary stood up with her bottle. 'We're having therapy. We learn to say things.'
>
> 'What things?'
>
> Mary's face lit up, expressing executive confidence. '"Hello, how are you? That's a pretty necklace." "Professor, may I ask a question?" "Oh, I'm sorry. I hope you feel better soon."'
>
> Jenny bit her lip to keep from laughing. (161)

Mary's mimicry borders on the uncanny. The perfect performance of repetition seeks to resemble the human but merely acts to underscore the inhuman. The exchange between Jenny and Mary dwells upon the artifice — an artifice that is even more striking in a world populated by artificiality. Mary's mimicry of human behaviour functions as an interface between the two species, and challenges the notion of the authentic self: if perfect imitation is possible, what is the value of the original? Here, Slonczewski negotiates the challenge of representing the Other as other. As Elana Gomel writes, 'where the artistic goal is to represent the Other as other, first-person narration or focalization backfires': in using conventional narrative techniques that convey the interiority of a subject, the Other becomes the Same (98).

Importantly, Slonczewski does not attempt to imbue the Other with intent; rather, the ultraphyte and its Otherness models for us an encounter with multiple forms of agency. The ultraphyte's most striking characteristic is its thirteen cells. Each cell acts as 'citizens of a colony' (197), in which it casts a vote to determine movement of the whole. In the event of an even number of cells, the body of the ultraphyte is paralysed, as the 'vote' is tied. The ultraphyte body then doubles one cell to restore the odd number. The ultraphyte's democratic impulses and ability to split itself speaks to the multiplicity that Deleuze and Guattari insist is central to becoming. Mary is not a singular entity but a multiplicity (hence the use of the plural 'we' in her exchange with Jenny).

This multiplicity is not limited to the self. Rather, Mary's parasitic capacity to become-other also allows for becomings with other life forms. When Mary begins using Babynet, a rudimentary version of Toynet, she learns to produce a human-like brainstream that can be read by technology, thus enacting a becoming-human. Similarly, when security discovers Mary is an ultraphyte, she escapes the spacehab in the form of a plant: 'One of the plants was not a plant. A good approximation, but the fleshy fake leaves would need UV. And half buried in the stem was the diad.' (443) The ultraphyte plant echoes amyloid in that is it a 'good approximation'. However, unlike the amyloid replications, the ultraphyte plant is not repetition without difference, but an assemblage of something completely new: plant, technology, ultraphyte and human-like brainstream.

The wisdom plants — whose form Mary now takes — allow for connectivity and correspondence beyond the heightened connectivity fostered by Toynet. These plants shift the characters' centres out of bounds; that is, each character feels their selfs as something outside of the boundaries of their bodies. Jenny's sense of self is understood beyond her self-identification as a twin or a member of a political dynasty — and beyond the notions of human-influenced intersubjectivity that have characterised children's literature scholarship. Rather, Jenny's subjectivity is shaped through her understanding of her self as a related entity to the ultraphyte and to the wisdom plants. Instead of being spoken about in academic lectures or casual conversation, the ultraphyte speaks for itself. The wisdom plants, too, display a startling agency, inviting us to rethink what is agential in more complicated terms: beyond agency as a manifestation of a Cartesian cogito and towards a notion of agency as a non-negative parasitic capacity to connect, produce and communicate about a self and its conditions.

Parasitic action is, in this sense, a continual performed splitting of relations. This splitting can also be thought of as producing difference through repetition. The parasite, as both host and guest, destroys the hierarchical binaries between the human and non-human. The parasitic doubling of bodies and relations create new assemblages that affirm and re-express difference rather than reifying homogeny and stability, allowing the minor to flourish and difference to take flight. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, these relations can be considered folds, in which the inside of a fold not autonomous or separate from the outside of the fold, but is a doubling of the outside itself, expressing a form of connection is that is open-ended, inexhaustive and infinite.

Chapter 4
Thinking in folds: the virtual and the minor figure in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia*

The driving force in the preceding chapters is the concept of the assemblage which, through its constant becoming and shifting, disturbs the notion of stable boundaries and limits. For Deleuze, these territories are marked by folds rather than boundaries. Deleuze writes of the fold as a means of thinking beyond the hierarchical relationships and binaries implied within the concept of the boundary. The boundary suggests 'line[s] dissolving into independent points, as flowing sand might dissolve into grains', while the fold implies a single plane: 'a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds [. . .] each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surrounding' (Deleuze, 1993, 6). This aspect of the fold allows us to consider the infinite possibilities of relations between assemblages and, more significantly, how distinctions and seemingly contradictory differences are still part of the same continuous whole. In this sense, ontological concepts like 'subject' and 'object', metaphysical concepts of 'virtual' and 'actual', or temporal concepts like 'before' and 'after' can be considered as part of the same assemblage, joined through the fold rather than separated by boundaries. The fold is the final piece in our search for the minor within children's literature. If the minor, as Deleuze and Guattari write, flourishes in the spaces created through deterritorialisation and becoming, the fold's capacity to reveal those spaces is particularly illuminating for our understanding of subjectivity and becoming in children's literature.

The boundary is a significant idea in discussions of children's literature, largely due to its capacity to encompass explorations of the conceptual (in relation to social structures and power, or the constructed nature of the child and the adult) and the geographic (such as representations of place and place as metaphor). Perry Nodelman astutely observes that children's literature theorists 'often view children's literature as a literature *divided* [. . . .] And, certainly, texts of children's literature represent *negotiations* of all the things they oppose —

ways of crossing the boundaries they establish' (2008, 303). Less attention has been given to representations of spatial boundaries. Most notably, discussions of spatial boundaries in children's literature tend to focus upon borders and race, such as Renata Morresi's investigation into the theme of borders and immigration in Mexican-American Chicano children's literature (2015). These discussions explore negotiation of boundaries rather than unpacking and challenging the limits of concept of the boundary.

This chapter explores the concepts of the boundary and the fold by examining Diana Wynne Jones *Hexwood* (1993) and Ursula Dubosarsky's *Abyssinia* (2003). Though *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* are different genres, both texts feature narrative and spatio-temporal ambiguities and folds. *Hexwood*'s non-chronological, fragmented narrative invites the reader to actively discern whether places and events are real or imagined, while *Abyssinia*'s two-part structure simultaneously emphasises and blurs the boundary between the characters' home and their dollhouse, creating ominous and sinister links between the two spaces. The fold allows us to consider more fully how the boundaries between places in both texts are blurred, disrupted and connected.

The blurring of spatio-temporal boundaries in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* involves the blurring of narrative causality and coherence. Readers of both texts are asked to accept inconsistency as part of understanding and creating meaning. *Hexwood*, marked by chronological inconsistencies, features a virtual reality machine that draws the characters into a virtual world and forces the characters to engage with various, seemingly unrelated scenarios (much in the manner of a role-playing game or choose-your-own-adventure narrative popular in the 1980s). The disjointed narrative makes it difficult for the reader to discern the order of events and construct a coherent narrative. The end of the text, rather than reconciling discordance and difference through correcting contradictory scenes, establishes each different moment as

equal and valid parts of the whole. This validation of difference is key to the horror or thriller aspects of *Abyssinia*. *Abyssinia* presents a classic causality dilemma, in which the causes of events loop back on each other. The first part of the narrative, titled 'The Dollhouse', introduces Sarah. Sarah finds herself in a mysterious house inhabited by strange, sinister children named Gus and Gussie who show Sarah their dollhouse, which hold their dolls Mary and Grace. Part Two of the narrative, titled 'Abyssinia', feature two children named Mary and Grace, and their dollhouse with unnamed dolls who bear striking resemblance to Gus, Gussie and Sarah. The causal dilemma arises when the reader realises that actions taken by Gus, Gussie and Sarah have repercussions in Mary and Grace's world, but, also, that Mary and Grace's actions affect Gus, Gussie and Sarah. Unlike *Hexwood*, which eventually explains how the assemblage is folded, *Abyssinia* refuses to offer any sense of closure, keeping the reader firmly within the becoming, folding assemblage.

The texts' insistence upon the coherence of incongruity is particularly interesting in relation to Deleuze's notion of the virtual. For Deleuze, the virtual is not in opposition to reality, but an important part of reality itself. Deleuze's prevailing concern is to understand virtuality as a mode of reality rather than in opposition to reality. Deleuze writes:

> The virtual is not opposed to the real but to the actual. The virtual is fully real so far as it is virtual. Exactly what Proust said of states of resonance must be said of the virtual: 'Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract'. (1994, 94).

The virtual can be thought of as a category of being that, while real, is not yet actualised (or made concrete). Importantly, the actual is not a limitation of the virtual. Rather, the actualisation of the virtual 'takes place by difference, divergence or differenciation [sic]' (1994, 212). By relating the virtual to difference, Deleuze also relates the virtual to multiplicity, repetition and becoming. The real thus becomes an assemblage, composed of the implied multiplicities of the virtual folded into the actual. Experiencing the real involves unfolding the multiplicities and potentials of the virtual.

The virtual in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* is characterised by the emergence of new potentials within an initially stable real. In *Hexwood*, the industrial town of Runcorn, England, is disrupted by the presence of the Bannus, a virtual reality machine that creates repetitive spatio-temporal loops as part of its simulation program. The virtual in *Abyssinia* is less explicit. There are no spatio-temporal loops that suggest a relationship between the real and the potential; rather, the virtual in *Abyssinia* is one of pure possibility, a mode of reality in which the causal loop exceeds its actuality. The causal dilemma in *Abyssinia* is grounded in the chaotic presence of the virtual within the real, in which causal explanations are always possible but never actualised. Deleuze's fold becomes the ideal figure for discussing the mediation of the virtual and the actual in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia*. These different ontological levels are particularly important for understanding place within these narratives, and the ways both texts approach concepts of memory and the self. The texts create unities between self and place that are also paradoxically divergent — series of repetitions and differences that fold and unfold to actualise multiple possibilities.

By mapping the thematic and topological paths from one fold to the next, we see complex assemblages in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* that re-architect place and subjectivity. The hierarchical relationships between subject and object are rearranged, and the liberal humanist metaphor of the interior and exterior of the subject is undone. Instead, the fold gives us an understanding of subjectivity as assemblage — as multiplicity, difference and continuity — governed by connections and different vectors of becoming, from which ever more assemblages are produced. Subjectivity is a process of infinite folds, in which difference and repetition, and the potential for the minor, reside.

Though the fold appears briefly in *Difference and Repetition*[23], it is in the final chapter of *Foucault* that Deleuze initially truly begins to expound upon the concept. The fold, as figured in *Foucault*, explores the production of the new by mapping production and becoming as a process of folding:

> The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by the peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside. (1986a, 96-7)

The fold thus describes particular conditions of exteriority and interiority: an outside that is always co-present to the inside, and the transformation of the exterior from the interior. The coherence of the subject in narrative also lies in the form of the fold: a combination and interaction defined by a complexity of folds rather than an inherent separability of bodies or concepts. Simon O'Sullivan suggests that subjectivity, for Deleuze, is a 'topology' of different kinds of folds, 'from the fold of our material selves, our bodies — to the folding of time, or simply memory' (107). Indeed, 'topology' captures the way in which the subject can be considered like the world: both world and subject are mutually folded and unfolded, creating paths and rhizomatic webs that redraw the limits and relationships created by the Cartesian concept of the thinking subject: the subject and the object, the mind and the body, the self and the other. Foucault, too, in his work on power and the subject, demonstrates that the interior subject is shaped by exterior powers.[24] Deleuze articulates a similar idea, writing that the world outside the individual — the world of affects, assemblages and modulations — is folded into the subject. The self is thus not a unitary subject that experiences and perceives, but is

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[23] Deleuze invokes the fold to describe the fundamental ontological structure according to Heideggerian thought: 'this difference [in Heiddegerian thought] is not 'between' in the ordinary sense of the world. It is the Fold, the *Zwiefalt*. It is constitutive of Being and of the matter in which Being constitutes beings, in the double movement of "clearing" and "veiling" (1994, 78).

[24] For Foucault, subjectivity is constructed through collectives of power. Individuals are subject to dominant systems and create a sense of self through negotiating power systems. Deleuze writes of Foucault:

> What powers must we confront, and what is our capacity today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? And do we not perhaps above all bear witness to and even participate in the 'production of a new subjectivity'? (1986a, 115).

assembled through constant and continuous processes of becoming-minor. Power (and the negotiation of power) is merely one aspect of becoming. Indeed, as *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* reveal, the relationship of the subject to the world is more rhizomatic than arborescent, becoming-minor through constant deterritorialisations and connections.

Hexwood: folds within the rhizomatic forest

Place itself figures heavily in Diana Wynne Jones' *oeuvre*. Catherine Butler devotes a chapter to Jones' use of landscape in her writing (2006), while Farah Mendlesohn notes that places in Jones' works are 'not landmarks: they are routes, patterns worked out by people. They are not static either; places are continually being rebuilt, and this construction creates a sense of place as process' (2005, xxvi). The building and rebuilding of place is paramount to *Hexwood*, which blends science fiction and fantasy to construct a world that is characterised by repetition and ambiguity. Chapters detail the same events, apparently being repeated from different character perspectives and points in time. The reason for such repetition gradually becomes clear over the course of the text: the story events are triggered by a minor character's desire to use the Bannus to play a virtual reality role-playing game, and the structure of the text mimics the episodic nature of events. The characters lose their sense of identity within the game space, and the readers follow the characters as they rediscover who they are outside of the virtual world.

Hexwood establishes Earth as a small cog in the evil machinations of an intergalactic empire headed by the Reigner Organisation. The organisation is led by five Reigners, who maintain control over Earth and other planets. Earth is largely used as a cheap source of flint, which powers Reigner weaponry, and also acts as an archive and reference complex for their records. Historically, Reigners are chosen by the Bannus, a decision-making device that 'makes use of theta-space to give you live-action scenarios of any set of facts and people you care to feed into

it' (16-7). However, a usurper named Orm Pender disabled the Bannus and hid it on Earth. The Bannus has been kept undisturbed at Hexwood Farm, located in Runcorn, an industrial town in England. However, an unauthorised Reigner employee activates the Bannus, and the Bannus' theta-space becomes impossible to control, slowly pulling people into a virtual Arthurian Britain, in which everything shifts and is rebuilt. The story takes place in three distinct locations: Homeworld, the planetary headquarters of the Reigners; Hexwood Farm, in which the protagonist lives; and Banners Wood, the wood located next to Hexwood Farm in which the Bannus initially creates its virtual realities.

The first chapter is narrated by an ominiscient, third-person narrator and, through the use of dialogue between two Reigner employees, establishes Earth's existence as part of a galactic corporation. The employees have various titles such 'Sector Controller' and 'Junior Executive' and are placed in 'information grades', denoting their clearance status for classified information. The figure of the corporation, with its multiple hierarchies and bureaucratic organisation of information, is an interesting expression of the power relations between the Reigners and Earth. The Reigners' power is decentralised, dispersed through numerous management hierarchies. Indeed, the Reigners are so abstract that one employee has 'worried, double thoughts' about them, 'believ[ing] almost mystically in these distant beings who controlled the Balance and infused order into the Organisation' (18).

The narration shifts abruptly in Chapter 2, which is told in more mythic register, describing only 'a boy' and 'a wood'. The absence of specificity is striking after the detailed descriptions of bureaucracy in the Reigner Organisation, heightening the sense of an assemblage in the process of becoming. We are given no apparent structural referent to the earlier chapter:

> A boy was walking in a wood. It was a beautiful wood, open and sunny. All the leaves were small and light green, hardly more than buds. He was coming down a mud path between sprays of leaves, with deep grass and bushes on either side.

And that was all he knew.

[. . . .]

He did not know where he was. Then he realised that he did not know where else there was to be. Nor did he know how he had got to the woods into the first place. After that, it dawned on him that he did not know who he was. Or what he was. Or why he was there. (20)

The continually developing questions — where, who, what, why — solicits an equally fluid approach from the reader. The reader does not discover how the boy came to be in the woods until Chapter 5, and that understanding is disrupted at the end of the text, when the reader discovers that the boy is merely a virtual identity imposed upon an old man. The common image of the displaced or lost child in a mysterious, unfamiliar wood simultaneously acts in two ways. The first is to lull the reader into assuming a particular schema to make sense of the boy and his place in the text (for instance, a schema that includes 'Little Red Riding Hood' and a quintessential dangerous maze of woodlands in which the protagonist must find the safe path from which she has strayed). The second is to overturn this schema through one key aspect: the unnamed boy has no prior knowledge and nowhere else to be. The boy's journey through the woods is not an attempt to return home (with its implications of safety and familiarity), but a form of becoming, an act of connection that creates relations between himself and the woods-assemblage that surrounds him.

As the boy wanders through the woods, he runs into a silver robot named Yam (short for Yamaha), who is also the Bannus in disguise. Yam informs the boy that his name is Hume — 'short for *human*, which you are' (23) — and that he and the boy have met many times before (24). The dialogue between Yam and the boy establishes the woods as a space that is not bound by linear time, nor defined by linear connections:

[Hume] looked back to see Yam pointing a silver finger down the left fork. 'This wood,' Yam told him, 'is like human memory. It does not need to take events in their correct order. Do you wish to go to an earlier time and start from there?'

'Would I understand more if I did?' Hume asked.

'You might,' said Yam. 'Both of us might.'

'Then it's worth a try,' Hume agreed.

They went together down the left-hand fork. (24)

The notion of the wood as memory suggests fragmentation and recurrence. Indeed, repetition is paramount to representations of woods and forests as places in which people can easily get lost, surrounded by similar trees that blend, formlessly, into the ground and into each other. Gaston Bachelard's writing on woodlands marks the woods as immeasurable, evoking temporality and memory: 'We do not have to be long in the woods to experience the always rather anxious impression of "going deeper and deeper" into a limitless world. Soon, if we do not know where we are going, we no longer know where we are.' (185) Yam, in likening the woods to human memory, suggests that the past and present coexist on the same plane, in the same assemblage — it is merely a matter of choosing a particular fork or connective path. Like the trope of the lost child, memory evokes familiarity and stability of reference. However, as the narrative continues its fragmented, episodic structure, we realise that returning to the past involves repetition that engenders multiplicity and difference rather than sameness and familiarity.

The final chapters of Part One demonstrate the temporality of the fold with its overlapping and turnings back and forth in time. Chapter 3 departs again from the previous chapter, introducing the protagonist, Ann Stavely, a twelve-year-old girl from the Hexwood Farm housing estate. Ann is explicitly our entry-point into the disjointed narrative. She is established as an observant and perceptive character, noting unusual events in her town and discussing them with her imaginary people — four characters in her head that she invented at

a young age[25]. In the tradition of imaginary companions in children's literature[26], Ann's voices suggest a multiplicity of the subject, acting as a sounding-board for her ideas. Ann's imaginary people immediately invite us to draw distinctions between the real and the imagined, leading us to view Ann as the marker of reality and unfolded space-time. This assumption is further reinforced when Ann observes mysterious strangers entering Hexwood Farm. The narrative initially follows Ann as she discovers that the woods near Hexwood Farm, called Banners Wood, has been enveloped into the Bannus' theta-space. Banners Wood is also filled with people who have been fooled by the Bannus into believing that they are somebody else. Ann meets Mordion Agenos, who claims to be a rebel put into stass-sleep by the Reigners and woken by the Bannus. She witnesses Mordion rise, corpse-like, from a metal chest, and regrow his skin, hair and clothes. Mordion convinces Ann to assist him in growing a hero to fight the Reigners and, through manipulating the paratypical field, produces a child that erupts from the ground. We recognise this child to be Hume and assume that the temporal fold has been traversed: Hume's origin is explained, and linearity has been restored.

Seeing the creation and origin of Hume brings us back to the dialogue that concludes Chapter 2, in which Yam tells Hume that the events may make more sense if they travel 'down the left-hand fork' to an earlier time. Banners Wood is thus nestled in a fold; a pocket of narrative space and time in which coherence is unfolded through its relations to its surrounds. However, we discover in Part Seven that we have not finished traversing the fold, but have been caught in another, smaller fold. Part Seven reveals that Ann is actually Vierran Guaranty, a 21-year-old rebel working within the Reigner Organisation, and explains that Vierran was unwittingly enveloped into the Bannus' theta-space when she travelled to Earth with the Reigners. The

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[25] These imagined voices are later established as real people, and will be discussed later in this chapter in relation to folded subjectivity.

[26] For instance, Floreal in Ursula Dubosarsky's *The Red Shoe* (2006) articulates what the protagonist, Matilda, does not want to acknowledge about her father's attempted suicide, or Danny in Stephen King's *The Shining*, whose discussions with his imaginary friend mark his psychological disturbance.

chronological linearity of Ann's story, and its claims to veracity, are false and merely an illusion produced by the Bannus. Our process of reading *Hexwood* thus shifts from attempting to reorganise the events of Banners Wood into a linear timeline to an understanding of the fold as event, or events as folded within each other. Creating narrative coherence demands adopting a more rhizomatic approach, understanding each event as an unfolding of another facet, or another multiplicity, and the creation of a new assemblage.

Farah Mendlesohn argues that our understanding of these places and their relationships to each other are characterised by the differing narrativisations of time. Mendlesohn, drawing upon John McTaggart's theory of A-series and B-series time[27], identifies time in *Hexwood* as constructed of concentric circles, in which the outermost circle is linear time (experienced by the Reigners and the other alien characters before their arrival on Earth). Hexwood Estate and Banners Wood exist in two circles of time located within the outermost circle. These two circles feature time that is non-linear, presenting events to the reader out of chronological order (73-4). For Mendlesohn, A-series and B-series time theory provides a vocabulary for tracking the temporal shifts in the narrative, thus allowing for an exploration of how the text plays with reader expectation to build the fantastic.

Though McTaggart and Deleuze both conceptualise time as series, and both consider series in terms of event, the two diverge in one important way: for McTaggart, events are 'in' and 'on' the series. Time is thus external to the event. For Deleuze, events are the series — that is, events produce time. This distinction is particularly important in considering the role of the Bannus, who acts simultaneously as the creator of and a player within the virtual realities of

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[27] Mendlesohn writes: 'A-series time . . . is relative time. It locates events in the past, present and future, and events move away from one, backward into each. B-series time is absolute time. Rather than locate events in time, it orders them, fixes them within a series of coordinates: an event happens earlier than another, later than a second, and simultaneously with a third.' (54). A-series is thus tensed, depending on a temporal perspective: 'is past', 'is present', 'is future'. B-series is without tense; an event is located 'before' or 'after' another.

the text. The fold, coupled with a more Deleuzian approach to time as produced by event, allows for a nuanced discussion of difference, repetition and narrative in *Hexwood* that emphasises blurred boundaries on a continuous plane. A consideration of temporality without the fold fails to consider how *Hexwood* explores repetition with difference, and does not fully encompass how each initially disparate chapter folds into the other. The fold also encompasses three important ideas and concepts that run through *Hexwood*: the relationship of the actual and the virtual in producing reality, the role of memory in articulating folds of time, and the use of intertextuality to explore difference and repetition.

Unfolding the actual/virtual divide in *Hexwood*

Hexwood, in presenting Ann and Hexwood Estate as markers of coherence, reinforces our desire to draw distinctions between the real and the illusory. As readers, we imitate (Vierr)Ann's attempts to create a coherent sequence of events, searching for clues to piece together the fragmented moments she experiences in Banners Wood. For instance, (Vierr)Ann focuses upon a cut on Mordion's wrist, which he received on the same day she scraped her knee. She observes that the Bannus 'play[s] tricks with time' (95), noting that Mordion and Hume seem to age at varying speeds, but Mordion's wound is unaffected by his age and remains quite fresh. Similarly, when (Vierr)Ann leaves Banners Wood for what she believes to be the second time, she notes the large cut in her knee, which she received on her first visit to Banners Wood, and promptly stops to analyse the situation. She consults her imaginary voices, which tell her that she has only entered the woods once. The wound thus becomes a temporal event inscribed upon (Vierr)Ann's body, a marker of reality for (Vierr)Ann and, initially, the reader. Deleuze, in his dialogues with Claire Parnet, observes that 'the wound is something that I receive in my body, but there is also an eternal truth of the wound as impassive, incorporeal event' (65). (Vierr)Ann's wound is, in this light, evidence of the paradoxical, shadowy presence of an event that cannot be precisely located as an actual occurrence: our

first clue that (Vierr)Ann's focalisation is not as grounded as she assumes. The wounds on the physical body in *Hexwood* thus act to rupture the assumption that (Vierr)Ann's world is the real and that Banners Wood is illusory. Rather, *Hexwood* proposes an ontology in which the real is characterised by the virtual and the actual.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Deleuze's prevailing concern is to understand virtuality as a mode of reality instead of in opposition to reality. Deleuze, in writing that the virtual is 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract' (1994, 94), emphasises that the virtual is a category of being that, while real, is not actualised (or made concrete). This is an ideal way to conceptualise the Bannus and its created scenarios, and allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of how the actual in *Hexwood* is created in relation to folds of the virtual: the events within the fold are actualisations — dramatisations that enact simulations rather than copies of an original. The contraction of virtualities through the folding of space and time comes into being through an indexical or deictic leap rather than continuity. The Bannus' multiple scenarios act as a test of eternal return: each repeated scenario that is experienced by (Vierr)Ann is explicitly different, producing different results and different connections between each character. The virtual — the 'what may be' — thus gives way to actualisations of each possibility, and every repetition produces divergent lines of actualisation. The virtual therefore both constitutes and dissolves within each fold and repetition.

We see the realisation that takes place between the possible and the real in Part Three of the text, particularly in the motif of the yellow crisp packet, which appears three times. The three moments are as follows: in Chapter 2, (Vierr)Ann decides to re-enter the wood to 'din the truth into Mordion' (97) and, in her attempt to determine the Bannus' reach, asks her imaginary voices to 'clock [her] in' so she knows how long she spends in the wood (98). We

receive a detailed description of the woods (which will be discussed later in this chapter), which establishes a yellow crisp packet in a hollow tree as a landmark:

> Because it was Saturday, there were little kids all over [the wood], running along the muddy paths and shouting as they crossed the stream on the traditional fallen tree and the tree rolled under their feet. [. . . .]
>
> She was nearly down to the stream by then, passing the yellow crisp packet that had been inside the hollow tree for nearly a year now. (98-9)

Soon after (Vierr)Ann passes the yellow crisp packet, she realises that she has entered the Bannus' paratypical field. She has an argument with Mordion and, at the end of the chapter, begins to leave the wood. The opening of Chapter 3 initially appears to narrate her next journey into the wood. The yellow crisp packet makes another appearance:

> She went past the yellow crisp packet in the hollow tree, sure that she would be at the muddy little stream any second. But when she came to water, it was the river.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> By the time she had scrambled up the path that Mordion and Hume had worn going down to the river to wash, she could see Yam was dented as well as doleful. It seemed as if some years had passed. (103)

Chapter 4 also features the crisp packet at the beginning. The shrieking children are 'still' heard by (Vierr)Ann, suggesting a temporal continuity with Chapter 2:

> Past the yellow crisp packet tucked into the hollow tree, there seemed no change in the wood, and Ann could still hear the shrieking of the little kids trying not to fall off the rolling tree that bridged the stream. (112)

It is in this moment that we realise that (Vierr)Ann has been caught in a temporal and spatial loop of her own, a repetition of entering and attempting to leave the woods. The yellow crisp packet thus does not mark a boundary but is the crease in the fold, acting as the same that displaces and disguises difference. Our notion of (Vierr)Ann as an objective observer is challenged. Her actions no longer measure time but are folded into time, and our attempt at creating cohesion shifts from organising events into a linear timeline to understanding what is being repeated, and why.

It is important to note that though (Vierr)Ann is caught in a loop, the different scenarios that eventuate establish that the loop is not closed; rather, the repetition of the first event (Ann's entrance into the woods, past the crisp packet) marks the moment at which the woods fold over and create a spatio-temporal pocket that separates the linear progression of past to presents. Chronological linearity is not discarded but is instead measured in folds: repetitions that produce divergence and multiplicity, and create coherence through the interaction between the actual and the virtual. The narrative presents us with multiple lines of divergence, in which reality produced through the multiple possibilities produced by the Bannus or, in Deleuzian terms, the actualisation of the virtual.

The topography of Banners Wood is key to understanding how the virtual, with its implicit characteristics of abstractness, can be expressed in more concrete form. The boundaries of Banners Wood are consistent; it is the features within it that shift and change. Indeed, Banners Wood is characterised by change. The yellow crisp packet strikes us as a constant, but its appearance is always contextualised by the shifting presence of the water. Hume, in Chapter 3, invites (Vierr)Ann to a new part of the woods, where the river is 'wide and shallow', 'an open invitation to take your shoes off and paddle' (107). In Chapter 4, (Vierr)Ann is surprised to find the wood altered again:

> The familiar waterfall was no longer there. The river now flowed in a flat welter of white water split with jagged rocks, and fairly roared through the bubbling pools beyond. [. . . .] It was wide, and tumultuous, and *flat*. The steep cliffs on either side had been scooped away backwards, as if a bomb had hit the place. Ann stared, and halted halfway down to stare again. (116)

The smooth, calm river of Chapter 3, in which one can safely paddle, becomes a space of wild fluctuation, 'roaring' past the characters. When we compare this rough river to the river of Chapter 3 that 'invites' interaction, we see that the change is more than just spatial — the change encompasses the virtual, in that (Vierr)Ann registers the potential orienting of her body to the river. The virtual is not seen in the form that emerges, but in the evidence of its

path. The image of water 'split', of steep cliffs 'scooped away backwards' are signs of transition, implicating changeability and potential for further change rather than rigid formations. The woods are thus continually regenerated effects. If the yellow crisp packet stands for a boundary, the boundary itself rests entirely upon variation and virtuality. The repetition of the crisp packet motif marks the distribution of difference. The other repetitions of events, or other scenarios, arise in relation to each other, while also being displaced by each other. Each moment with the crisp packet introduces a differentiation that, each time, distributes the past differently, giving way to the creation of a new present. Along with the repeater of the present and the repetition of the past, there is that which is repeated in them: the eternal return of the future.

Memory and the past: temporality and the fold

The question of redistributing and repeating the past is central to *Hexwood*'s unfolding of the plot. The woods itself, as Yam tells Hume, is 'like human memory . . . it does not need to take events in their correct order' (24). Even though each character loses their memory as they enter Banners Wood, the narrative itself is oriented more to the future than to a recollection of the past. In this sense, memory is used to trace and create lines of flight and change, situating memory as a form of becoming: a site that can be rewritten and reimagined, so that repetition engenders difference rather than the same. *Hexwood*'s reflection on the past and the emergence of the past as repetition with difference occurs most explicitly in Vierr(Ann)'s and Mordion's realisation that they are labouring under the Bannus' illusion. As they remember their past selves and reflect upon the identities they have adopted while under the Bannus' control, we see the fold as a model for the self. Vierran's memories provide us with a visual description of the structuring principle of the fold, evoking the fold's layers, blurred boundaries and appeal to multiplicity. In contrast, Mordion's memories emphasise how the fold brings the past to bear upon the present to create further possibilities for becoming.

In Part Seven of the text, Vierran (unaware that she is under the Bannus' influence and has recently experienced events as Ann) has been threatened by the Reigners and briefly contemplates suicide. As she moves to retrieve a hidden micro-gun in her bracelet, she notices a small cassette tape also hidden in the casing and listens to it. The recording is of her own voice, speaking to herself:

> Vierran. This is Vierran speaking. Vierran to myself. This is at least the second time I've sat in the inn bedroom despairing and I'm beginning to not quite believe in it. If it happens again, this is to let me know there's something odd going on. (258)

Importantly, the narrative does not focus upon Vierran sending the message, but on receiving it. Her voice, folded within the cassette tape, triggers a realisation that interrupts the cycle, flooding her with memories of her experiences as Ann and as Vierran. Vierran is suspended in the fold of time, her absent (virtual) past self intruding upon her present (actual) self. Her past self is preserved as a memory in the cassette tape — a memory that 'doubles the present, that redoubles the outside' (Deleuze, 1986, 115). What would be a single linear connection between the past and the present multiplies, unfolding to accommodate Vierran's multiple experiences as Ann.

Memory for Vierran thus becomes a fold that opens up a line of flight passing from the virtual to the actual by interrupting repetition and fragmenting the present. Deleuze, in his writings on repetition and past, present and future, identifies a 'theme of three temporal stages in most cyclical conceptions', in which 'the most important and mysterious lies in the third' (1994, 93). Deleuze suggests the third repetition 'takes time out of "joint" and, by itself the third repetition, renders the repetition of the other two impossible' (1994, 296). A 'time out of joint' means 'demented time or time outside the curve . . . freed from the event which made up its content' (1994, 88). The movements by which time has been measured are disrupted by the repetitions of the Bannus, leaving an empty form of time that eschews the unity of the subject:

Vierran is dissolved into multiple fragments as the aware speaker, as the bewildered receiver, and as Ann. The fold itself and the layered nature of Vierran's subjectivity become visible when Vierran examines her body, searching for proof of her earlier adventures in the woods. We see the fold of virtual and the actual billowing between the fabric of her clothes:

> If she looked closely, she could see a whole variety of rips and snags in her trousers and her top, from where she had climbed the tree or wrenched herself through thickets. These rents were sort of glossed over with an illusion of whole cloth — no doubt partly for the benefit of the Reigners — but they were there if you knew to look. (263)

The overlapping of the virtual and the actual, in which the visible is held in place by its relationship to the hidden, echoes Vierran's relationship to Ann and her development as a subject. In this moment, Vierran realises that the Bannus has allowed her to see the rips in her clothing and to hear the message in the cassette tape (and thus allows her to realise that Ann Stavely is an identity imposed upon her by the Bannus). Importantly, Vierran does not dismiss Ann Stavely as a mere trick or even an alter-ego. Rather, she understands Ann as a folded part of her subjectivity, produced through her embodied memories of her childhood. It is here that Ann's imaginary voices are explained. The voices are not imaginary friends, as Ann rationalised, but a symptom of Vierran's Reigner powers: the ability to telepathically communicate with other Reigner people through space and time.

As suggested above in the analysis of Vierran's fragmented self, the Reigner voices are key to understanding the narrative events. Sanna Lehtonen argues that Vierran's reliance upon the four voices in her head to fill in the narrative highlights how interdependency is not a negative quality but an integral aspect to intersubjectivity and the 'interpersonal construction' of subjectivity (29). The voices, however, also act to illustrate subjectivity as a fold. Like Vierran's clothes, the voices of the other future Reigners are matter made abstract, a virtual reality that is no less real than the actual reality surrounding her. The folds of clothing, memory and subjectivity in Vierran thus convey the notion of the actual as just as incorporeal as the virtual.

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Her body (and its clothes) and her mind have been traversed by this capacity of folding-becoming.

Like Vierran, Mordion labours under the impression that he is someone else. Mordion is the Servant of the Reigners, trained from childhood to kill on command. In Banners Wood, he erupts from a metal chest, telling (Vierr)Ann that he is from another planet and has been placed on Earth in a 'stass-chamber' as a punishment for rebelling against the Reigners. He initially appears as a desiccated animated corpse, which becomes human through a series of folds:

> the creature grew itself clothes. The lower rags went expanding downwards into two khaki waterfalls of thick cloth, to make narrow leggings and then brown supple-looking boots. At the same time the strip of rag on the corpse's shoulder was chasing downwards too, tumbling and spreading into a calf-length robe-thing, wide and pleated, the colour of camelhair. [. . . .] She watched, then, almost as if she expected it, the long hair and beard turn the same camelhair colour and shrink away. The beard shrank away right into the man's chin, leaving his face more skull-shaped than ever, but the hair halted just below his ears. (44-5)

As with Vierran's clothes, the fold is rendered here in Mordion's clothes. While Vierran's clothes express the folds of the actual and virtual, the clothes described here exceed their limits; they, as Deleuze writes, 'flow out of the frame' (*The Fold*, 123) and onto the body. The defamiliarisation of his body is also a spectacle that folds the human and the alien together. Mordion's face maintains its corpse-like inhumanity, causing (Vierr)Ann to compare him to the Grim Reaper: something perceptible but unintelligible.

Mordion, as an expression of the fold, differs from Vierran in that the changes to his body are explicitly considered part of the Bannus: he can manipulate the paratypical field to produce clothing, food and shelter. If Vierran enters into a becoming-other through unfolding her memory, Mordion enters a becoming-other with the Bannus and Banners Wood. This is particularly clear at the end of the text when Mordion is turned into a dragon by a magic potion (a manifestation of the text's engagement with Arthurian mythology, which will be

discussed in more detail in the next section). He is compelled to revisit repressed memories of

his childhood, which are narrated in imagery that blurs his dragon body and the sky:

> Night fell. The net of pain that held Mordion pricked slowly into points of light against
> the darkness, until his entire huge body was a web of cold sparks stretched half across
> the night sky. Each speck of fire pierced like a diamond knife, keen as frost and biting
> as acid. His only choice was to slip from point to fiery point and let each diamond stab
> him to the soul, or to remain still and experience the blinding pain of all his memories
> at once. There was no avoiding the memories. They were there, and they existed,
> implacable and everlasting as stars. (319)

The stars invite us to see Mordion's memories as a constellation; a rhizome of many points

rather than a linear progression of time. The spatialisation of time through the images of the

night and outer space are suggestive of a dream state, which is further reflected in the ways in

which the narration alternates between the present moment (in which Mordion reflects upon

his childhood) and flashbacks to Mordion's past. Mordion's dialogue with the Bannus

performs the actualisation of the past in the present. His memories form a circuit with the

present moment, with the present referring meaning onto the past and vice versa. This circuit

also reflects how Mordion enters into an assemblage with the Bannus. As we see in the

following excerpts, the division between their bodies and the environment becomes

imperceptible:

> Mordion was alone after that for the final years of his training, and ten years after that,
> just as he was now, stretched across the spangled universe of himself. (331)

> Mordion was aware of [the Bannus] nearby as an outline of a chalice made of stars. He
> had some thoughts of stretching out his starry tail and wrapping it round the chalice,
> taking it prisoner and telling it to put him out of his misery, but he saw that would be
> useless. Here in the sky where they were was in some way also inside the Bannus. The
> chalice was an illusion of the Bannus, as empty as the sky behind it, which was also the
> Bannus. (320)

Through memory, Mordion's body is transfigured into a duration in time, a constellation of his

own past. His becoming-minor is characterised by his going beyond the human condition

towards the non-human, both in his dragon form and as a constellation, challenging our

anthropocentric and subjective understanding of time and duration. Mordion's becoming-

minor allows for an exploration of memory, the past and the present, not as successive

instances but coextensive moments. Unlike Vierran's cassette-tape memory, which is actively created by her, Mordion's experience of his memories is more passive, expanding and contracting around the narrative of his recollection. We are given a plurality of durations, and the virtual moment is expressed in the coexistence of all the planes of the past. Mordion is caught at the middle of these durations, a becoming that is enmeshed in a creative event of differentiation. He has become, to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari, 'a sort of stranger' within his own memories, entering a form of becoming-minor (1987, 26).

Minor becomings through role-playing Arthurian legend

As mentioned in the synopsis of *Hexwood*, the virtual is initially marked in the text by the incongruous medieval setting created by the Bannus. This medieval setting is explicitly presented as an artificial space in the opening chapter of the text, which informs us that the Bannus has been activated by an unauthorised lower-level clerk, who sees the Bannus' ability to produce multiple scenarios as the perfect medium to run a role-playing game featuring 'hobbits on a Grail quest' (340). The virtual thus moves and becomes immediately aligned with Deleuzian potential, a space for exploring the multiplicities within any particular moment. The roleplaying game is a particularly interesting form of virtual potential as it brings intertextuality and player participation together, creating an assemblage in which players enact lines of flight through active engagement with the narrative. This, in turn, has implications for how spaces for the minor are created.

Performance theorist Daniel Mackay considers the role-playing game as an 'episodic and participatory story-creation system that includes a set of quantified rules that assist a group of players and a gamemaster in determining how their fictional characters' spontaneous interactions are resolved' (2001, 4). Mackay explains that the gamemaster establishes the setting for the other players, whose alter-ego 'characters' explore the setting by telling the

gamemaster what they wish to do. The gamemaster then relays the consequences of their actions (4). In narrative terms, the gamemaster acts as both narrator and author, constructing plot and causality. More interestingly — particularly for children's literature — is the player's role. Players are subject to the rules of the game, presided over by the gamemaster/narrator, but are also authors in themselves, playing an active part in creating the story. Within *Hexwood*, the Bannus acts as the gamemaster, producing scenarios in which the characters must participate. These scenarios are points in a rhizome that is perpetually in construction, as the active and participatory nature of the characters' gameplay means that the Bannus must engage in a refereeing process that is constantly 'breaking off and starting up again' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 20). These scenarios deterritorialise the characters from their original social bonds (for instance, Vierran as an undercover rebel within the Reigner Organisation) and reterritorialises them within Banners Wood. The characters' roleplaying also deterritorialises Arthurian legend, unfolding the intertextual references to the legend to engender lines of flight. The inclusion of the role-playing game in *Hexwood* shifts our reading of the characters and the text's intertextual references from 'what a book means' to 'what it functions with' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 4). The Arthurian setting of *Hexwood*'s role-playing game no longer simply signifies, instead functioning to allow the characters to explore potentials and re-map the narrative.

As Adele Cook notes, *Hexwood*'s wood echoes characteristics of the woods in *Le Morte d'Arthur* and its retellings. Cook points to Malory's use of the wood as the site of Lancelot's madness, suggesting that Jones 'embraces the possibility of the wood for re-creation of the self' but rejects the image of hetero-normative love that characterises White's retelling[28]: Mordion, the mad man, rises like a corpse and (Vierr)Ann, 'rather than being the source of healing affection, "scrambled into a turn and ran"' (149). Notably, this moment is not just a reimagining of

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[28] Cook writes that Malory has Lancelot healed by the ministration of the hermit (483)', while White instead 'has Lancelot healed by the sight of Elaine', the mother of Galahad. (148)

Arthurian legend, but also marks the Bannus' deterritorialisation of the major. The Bannus'

second form, as Yam the robot, is particularly interesting. Susan Ang observes, "'Yam" is also

an inversion of "may", which, as the O.E.D. succinctly tells us, is "a possibility"' (295). The

wood, as the Bannus' creation, stages both Jones' rewriting of the Arthurian myth and the

potentials and possibilities within in the virtual. The woods thus become a minor space within

the Reigner-controlled assemblage for Vierran, Mordion and Hume to engage in minor

becoming.

As we discover in the final chapters of the text, Vierran is originally taken to Earth by the

Reigners, forced to find Mordion within the wood and 'breed with him' to make future slaves

for the Reigner Organisation (239). The wood, however, becomes a place in which Mordion

and Vierran, in their new roles, unfold the virtual potentials within the Reigners' command.

The Bannus' virtual space allows Mordion and (Vierr)Ann to deterritorialise the Reigners'

command, creating the child Hume. This deterritorialisation is more powerful than outright

rejection, as it creates a new assemblage unaccounted for within the major: a 'hero [. . . .] safe

from the Reigners inside this field, who is human and not human, who can defeat the Reigners

because they will not know about him until it is too late' (52). Hume is created from and

within the virtual, made from Mordion and (Vierr)Ann's blood mixed with the soil of the forest

floor — the literal foundation of this virtual space. In this sense, Hume's body within this

virtual role-playing space evokes possibility made actual.

Hume embodies both the effects and conditions of becoming-minor through the text's

extraction and displacement of Arthurian legend. The final chapters of *Hexwood* reveal that

Hume is not a child, but the wizard Merlin[29]. Merlin/Hume, within the woods controlled by the Bannus, renegotiates its source material and pushes the traditional Arthurian legend to its limits. This becomes most clear in the text's treatment of the hero narrative. It is Merlin-as-Hume, not Arthur, who wields Excalibur to defeat the Reigners, challenging and undoing the notion of preordained authority upheld in traditional retellings of Arthurian myth. Significantly, the Reigners are not defeated by Hume alone, but by the combined efforts of Hume, Mordion, Vierran and the Bannus (in the form of Yam the robot). Becoming minor in *Hexwood* involves the treatment of event and place as potential. If, to write minor literature, the writer has to be a 'foreigner, but in one's tongue', *Hexwood* reveals that becoming-minor is not merely marking and recognising potential, but inhabiting and embodying the infinite folds of potential itself.

Abyssinia's dollhouse: staging the incompossible subject-object dilemma

Deleuze writes: 'either it is the fold of the infinite, or the constant folds [*replis*] of finitude which curve the outside and constitute the inside' (1986a, 80). While *Hexwood* presents the fold as an opportunity for growth and the endless, infinite potential for becoming, *Abyssinia* expresses the horror of finitude and the closed repetitions of the fold. Indeed, *Abyssinia* is an exercise in repetition and doubles. The narrative is divided into two parts: 'Part One: The Dolls House' and 'Part Two: Abyssinia', and contains a one-page prologue and epilogue, titled 'The Beginning' and 'The End'. Two paratextual newspaper excerpts (written by one of the children, Grace Wren) also flank the text. The narrative's two parts reflect the two spatial frames of the text: the unnamed, dollhouse-like dwelling, featuring newcomer Sarah and the siblings Gus and Gussie (and their dolls named Mary and Grace); and Abyssinia, the farm estate in where

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[29] Merlin's reincarnation as a young boy also connects *Hexwood* to the 12th century legend of Merlin and Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (which itself is drawn from the 9th century *Historia Brittonium* by Nennius). Geoffrey of Monmouth writes of Merlin a boy-wizard, born without a father, who reveals the outcome of a battle for the British crown, speaking of a red dragon (symbolising the Britons) defeating a white dragon (the Saxons) (Fulton, 98).

two children, Mary and Grace Wren live (and their dolls, who bear physical resemblance to Gus, Gussie and Sarah). The text begins with Sarah, who is not sure why she has arrived at the house. Sarah discovers that she is there to replace their lost sister, Susannah, though Gus insists that Sarah is 'all wrong' (33). Sarah is then assessed by a man named Dr Fleet, who tells her that she can go home, if she assists him by bringing a silver whistle to Abyssinia (which Sarah understands as the centre of Africa). In her attempt to discover the truth, Sarah runs to the attic, where she comes across a covered chair. She uncovers the seat to find a doll-like body, and suddenly disappears.

'Part Two: Abyssinia' begins, and it is here that the two initially separate spatial frames collide. 'Part Two' is focalised through Mary, who is recovering from an unnamed illness. Ambiguity arises as the doubles appear to converge and embed themselves in each other, and it becomes unclear which set of characters are the dolls, and which house is the dollhouse. The paratextual newspaper excerpts, written by Grace, are clearly part of Grace's make-believe world and initially act to reify the subject/object hierarchy, establishing the characters in 'Part One' as dolls: they share the same names, and talk of the same experiences reported in the newspaper. Susannah's disappearance is described as though an object, not a person, has been lost: 'it is believed that she was left behind after a riotous picnic and was unable to be retrieved' (n. pag.). Prompted by this newspaper article, we are invited to read the events in 'The Dolls House' as a story about Mary and Grace's dolls within their dollhouse. Mary and Grace are not present, and Sarah, Gus and Gussie do not move beyond the house's walls. However, the reader realises in 'Part Two' that Mary is affected by the dolls: Gussie, Augustus' sister, cuts the hair off her Mary doll (15), and Mary wakes up to find that all her hair had been cut off (58). The blending of space culminates when a boy, whose description matches that of Gus, appears in the middle of the night and tells Mary that he will come back for her. On the night of their parents' house party, Dr Fleet attends as a guest, and Gus returns. Mary pursues

Gus up the stairs and, like Sarah, discovers a covered chair in the attic and disappears. The paratextual newspaper article at the end of the text, dated one year later, notes that the Savoy family has had their lost child restored to them and that she 'appears, very strangely, to have forgotten her name. She insists on being called Mary', suggesting a closed loop and what Deleuze calls an 'incompossible fold'.

Deleuze borrows the concept of the 'incompossible' from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who proposes compossibility to distinguish between the impossible and the possible.[30] Compossibilities are 'those, one of which being given, it does not follow that the other is negated; or those of which one is possible, the other being assumed' (Leibniz, 1927, 498). Two worlds or events are incompossible if their joint existence results in a logical inconsistency or self-contradiction. Deleuze reanimates Leibniz's thought by reframing incompossibility as a condition of compossibility, suggesting that divergence can be considered not as negation but as possibility. Deleuze writes that 'nothing prevents us from affirming that incompossible worlds belong to the same universe', arguing that both divergence and convergence are generated by the same conditions (1985, 136). In this sense, bodies and events are always infinitely divisible, open to further determinations, further divergences or convergences, without any reference to an underlying cohesion.

This infinite divisibility and endless multiplicity characterises the relationship between the houses in 'Part One' and 'Part Two' of *Abyssinia*. Though 'Part One' is named 'The Dolls House',

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[30] For Leibniz, impossibility is a twofold concept:

> that which does not have essence, and that which does not have existence, i.e., that which neither was, nor will be because it is incompatible with God, or with the existence or reason which brings it about that things exist rather than do not exist (1927, 463-464).

Two things are thus incompossible if one situation by itself is sufficient to infer the negation or non-existence of a second.

its status as a toy dollhouse is never confirmed, opening up the domestic space to unpredictability and transformation, rendering the house as a threatening and uncanny space. The uncanny dollhouse is, of course, a well-trod path in children's literature (and notably, 'uncanny', translated from Freud's *unheimlich*, has 'heim' or 'home' at its root). In this respect, *Abyssinia* finds consonance with other children's texts, such as William Sleator's *Among the Dolls*, in which the protagonist finds herself trapped inside her dollhouse, and discovers that her own house is a dollhouse in the dollhouse's attic. In A. S. Byatt's *The Children's Book*, Olive Greenwood writes a short story, 'The People in the House in the House' (2009), in which a little girl kidnaps miniature people in the park to populate her dollhouse and, in turn, is kidnapped by a larger child for their dollhouse. In television, Mark Gatiss' *Doctor Who* episode 'Night Terrors' (2011) follows the characters as they enter a dollhouse in a child's bedroom, are pursued by menacing dolls and realise that they are in danger of becoming dolls themselves. *Abyssinia*, like these texts, develops the idea of the dollhouse as 'center within center, within within within' (Stewart 61). Each layer mirrors and problematises the other: each set of characters lives in a house that mirrors the other characters' dollhouse, creating a tension between subject and object.

As stated above, 'Part One' initially maintains the subject/object hierarchy. Sarah, the focalising character, wakes in a mysterious room. She compares this new room to her old home, and takes notes of the things surrounding her:

> When Sarah woke up and looked out the window she saw things she didn't understand, so she stopped looking out. There was plenty to see inside the house anyway. There were things everywhere. Not just furniture, although there was enough of that: tall dark cupboards, high bookshelves, a dressing-table with an oval mirror. No, it was the things that made her stare, so many things — books, bottles, cups and plates, balls of wool, gardening tools, boxes, crayons, pots and pans, clothes and, rather surprisingly, a grandfather clock.

> [. . . .]

I suppose all houses have these things, thought Sarah, trying to be reasonable. But you don't notice because they're kept in the right place. (5-6)

The description of the bedroom and its cacophony of things is key to the room's uncanny nature. The bedroom — generally a place of safety and privacy, is presented here as a site in which things do not belong together. Sarah observes the objects in the same way a child pores over the details in a dollhouse and, as we observe Sarah, we find ourselves appraising her as a displaced object and part of the visual confusion of the room.

The sudden appearance of Gus and Gussie further reinforces our understanding of Sarah as a doll, an assemblage that exists within the major as an object to be played with and acted upon rather than acting itself. Gus and Gussie are described as having doll-like features: Gus has 'lopsided eyes' and Gussie is dressed 'in a kind of white gauze pinafore thing that was at least two sizes too big for her' (9). Sarah is 'pulled out through' the door of the bedroom into the hallway, which, like the bedroom, is full of things but strangely empty, 'like a ghost house or a museum' (12). This observation about the similarity of the house to a museum resonates again with the dollhouse: dollhouses are not inhabited but observed, a simulacra of a home rather than a home in itself. It is in museums that objects do not relate to subjects, but to other objects, ordered and classified. What we see in the house through Sarah's focalisation is not a group of possessions made into a meaningful assemblage through personal use, but a collection of disparate objects. Just as a selection of artefacts in a museum is arranged in a way to produce a discursive narrative that gives sense to the objects on display, Sarah, placed in relation to doll-like people and things, is becoming-doll.

Becoming-doll is a particularly interesting manifestation of becoming-minor. Like Mordion, who dwells upon and within his memories in *Hexwood*, Sarah is a foreigner in a seemingly familiar space. The house, with its strange collection of objects, becomes defined as an impasse for Sarah, a space with no fixed context that she cannot leave. Her attempts to

discover why she is in the house are rebuffed. The narrator tells us: 'Nobody explained, because nobody knew' (9). Sarah, like a doll in a dollhouse, can only sit and wait. Becoming-doll and becoming-minor, however, are not characterised by stillness, but by potential. The inanimate objects within the house are imbued with the virtual and its potentials. For instance, Gussie's dollhouse, like the mysterious house in which Sarah finds herself, is described by noting the objects within: Sarah delights over the miniaturised furniture, and is particularly drawn to a 'tiny milk bottle with a splash of milk spilt out of it', which she picks up, 'splash and all' (13). The image of a milk bottle with its contents caught mid-splash is central to understanding how potential underlies the tension and horror produced in the text. As an affective image, the milk splash suggests a capacity for movement, but a capacity that can never be fully realised. Movement and vitality within this space is impossible. Everything can be acted upon, but the milk splash cannot continue its journey beyond the bottle. If Sarah is indeed in a dollhouse, she is trapped; like the milk splash, her becoming is stymied by the static, unchanging and frozen assemblage.

The act of play still has consequences and changes, but these are not felt in the immediately present assemblage. Rather, consequences are used to express a connection between the two worlds. In the first chapter of 'Part Two: Abyssinia', Mary recalls waking up to find that all of her hair had been cut off without her knowledge. We immediately recall Gussie telling Sarah in 'Part One' that she has cut off the Mary doll's hair because 'she's a very bad doll' (15). Similarly, Gus and Gussie's mother refuses to speak, and spends breakfast reclining on a sofa with a handkerchief on her face. Mary, in noting that her mother doll has a 'strained look', takes the doll from its chair and puts her 'down on the chaise-longue that was in the dining room. Then she put a tiny white handkerchief across her forehead . . . only it was not small enough and covered her whole face.' (60)

Unlike the other dollhouse texts (mentioned in the beginning of this section), in which characters realise they are dolls in someone else's dollhouse, the characters in *Abyssinia* are unaware of the existence of the other, their links to each other, and their possible status as dolls. The act of playing with dolls refuses us an obvious hierarchy delineating a dollhouse and a 'real' house. Each house is the other's dollhouse; each dollhouse is the other's house. Each child's hand affects the other house without any logical spatial connection between them, producing a divergent series of events within the same space. In this sense, the world of *Abyssinia* presents us with what Deleuze calls an 'irruption of incompossibilities on the same stage' (82): a combination of events that do not produce the clear divisions between house and dollhouse but, instead, emphasise folds within the same world.

Folding and unfolding the virtual within the 'real' house: irruption and ingress

While the house in which Sarah finds herself is characterised by claustrophobic excess, Mary and Grace's home, a rural property named 'Abyssinia', is marked by movement and openness. Mary and Grace spend much of their time outdoors, gathering leaves and holding picnics. Jane Suzanne Carroll identifies similarly pastoral spaces in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) as 'the pleasance', a garden-like setting characterised by 'grass, trees, shade, flowing water, wild flowers and a gentle breeze', establishing an idyllic calm that can be intensified or shattered (70). True to conventional representations of the pleasance, the idyllic calm in 'Part Two' is shattered but, unlike the other texts that Carroll explores, this is not accomplished through an inversion of the landscape. Rather, the idyll of the farm is penetrated by mysterious visitors and items that appear in 'Part One'.

It is in the outdoor setting that we see how 'Part One' begins to flow intrusively into 'Part Two'. In 'Part One', Sarah finds herself in the conservatory with a man named Dr Fleet, who claims to

be a hypnotist hired to help the mother cope with the loss of her missing child. Dr Fleet is sinister, with eyes that are 'very round and green as leaves' and a face 'pale as bones' (37), a description that evokes both life and death. Indeed, the narration associates Dr Fleet with nature more than it does the plants in the conservatory. The plants are 'glossy', 'waxy, hugely bright' — an almost hyper-real, exaggerated caricature of plant life — while Dr Fleet's voice is 'soft but cold as the earth', and Sarah compares him to 'an owl hooting, not like a person at all' (41-2). Dr Fleet, as someone closer to nature than human, becomes like the wild faerie of European fairytales: unpredictable, sinister, and potentially malevolent.[31] This characterisation of Dr Fleet as a volatile, wild force is particularly interesting in relation to Dr Fleet's appearance in both sections of the text, embodying the incompossible potentials that exist within the fold.

Dr Fleet's fey trickery involves offering Sarah a silver whistle in the conservatory, which is then discovered by Mary in 'Part Two.' The narration of the discovery of the whistle is echoed between both parts, creating an implicit causal connection between the two moments. Sarah and Mary mirror each other's actions:

> Into her open palm the doctor pressed something small and cold and white as silver. Sarah stared down. It was a whistle. Her fist closed over it at once, like a jaw. (43)

> Mary lay flat on her back staring at the sky. She stretched out her arms and ran her hands along the ground underneath her, feeling the soil, the roots of dry grass. Her fingers came upon something like a pebble sticking out. She closed her hand over it.

> [. . . .]

> Mary looked quickly at Miss Lothian and Grace who were busy packing up. She opened her fingers and looked at what she had found. It was a whistle. A little silver whistle! Her fist closed over it instantly. (75)

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[31] Karen Coats' *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Children's and Young Adult Literature* notes that the 'fey folk' in trickster fairy tales are 'creatures whose malevolence must be guarded against [. . . .] lest they perform tricks that range in seriousness from souring the milk to carrying off a young person or replacing a human child with a changeling' (258).

The opening and closing of the fist, in particular, mimics the movement of the fold: Mary's folded fist conceals the whistle from Miss Lothian and Grace, and also briefly defers the moment in which the reader realises that it is Sarah's whistle. Mary's open palm reflects the ways in which the unfolding of the fold expands a concept. In this case, the link between Mary and Sarah is unfolded, which we see articulated most explicitly through place, particularly representations of nature as excess.

Nature in 'Part One' is marked by uncomfortable excess, made all the more uncomfortable for Sarah because it is constrained to the conservatory. The narrative dwells on the cumquat trees in the conservatory, first establishing them as charming and quite appealing, 'covered with fruit, like tiny dainty oranges made for a dolls house' (37). By the end of the chapter, Sarah's discomfiting discussion with Dr Fleet is marked by the 'tiny dainty oranges' surging beyond their small bodies, producing an affective response in Sarah: 'Sarah felt very unhappy. The sweet smell of the ripening cumquats made her feel ill and for a moment she could not speak' (39). The oranges become an important motif, marking Mary's spatial relationships to Sarah and the ways in which the fold moves beyond 'the facade and the closed room, the outside, and the inside' (Deleuze, 1993, 39). The conservatory's pair of cumquat trees swells into Abyssinia's orange orchard, a sprawling space in which Mary can '[stretch] out her arms and [run] her hands along the ground underneath her, feeling the soil, the roots of dry grass' (75). In this way, Mary and Sarah (and their respective worlds) are folded into and over one another, resonating together to form an assemblage — and, importantly, establishes an assemblage as a collection that allows for dissonance and divergence.

Indeed, *Abyssinia*'s horror lies in the affirmation of the incompossible. The ways in which the fold allows for the incompossible is expressed through Dr Fleet, who appears in both Abyssinia and the mysterious house. Dr Fleet explains to Sarah:

'For every child that is lost,' said Dr Fleet, his voice dropping, so that she was not even sure that he was really speaking, 'another must be found.'
Sarah shook her head at the floor.
'In the circle,' whispered Dr Fleet, 'there can be no gaps, no spaces. Loss and gain, a child for a child. There is a circle. A child for a child, for a child.' (42)

As in *Hexwood*, repetition is a condition in the production of the new. The process of repetition does not require the same child, merely 'a' child. The child is both an addition and subtraction, acting in the same instance as both the different and the same. The circle is a dimensionless event, enveloping the houses within the fold. What is horrifying, then, is the realisation that Sarah's identity as an individual is not fixed. Rather, she is merely 'a' child; whose relation to the assemblage is indefinite and unresolved, a finite entity that enters the infinite cycle. The question, for the reader, is no longer 'which is the doll?' but 'when do they become-doll?'

Becoming-doll, becoming-minor in *Abyssinia*

The attic unites Sarah's and Mary's worlds, and is the implicit threshold between the two houses. Both characters arrive at the attic by chasing Gus upwards — Sarah, because she believes that Gus is trying to trick her into thinking he has left the house, and Mary, because she sees Gus beckon to her and run upstairs. The attic, like much of the space in 'The Dolls House', is marked by unbearable excess. Mary notes that the attic is 'so very full, too full' and feels that she is 'near to something dangerous' (126) while Sarah feels nauseated and longs for 'plain wooden floors, white stone walls unadorned' (50-1). In both parts, Mary and Sarah notice a blanket-covered figure in an armchair and, upon removing the blanket, discover a child-sized doll and mysteriously disappear from the attic.

The attic or upstairs area as a significant place immediately evokes Deleuze's allegory of the Baroque house of thought, which is composed of two floors, an upper and a lower. The lower floor, with its windows and common rooms that open into each other, consists of the 'pleats of matter' (3). The upper floor is the 'folds in the soul', a closed, windowless room defined by

interiority. The fold, for Deleuze, exists between and connects these two floors; the house is a single, virtual plane that encompasses both matter and soul. The Baroque house of thought will inform, but not dictate, the analysis of the houses in *Abyssinia.* The attic does not denote interiority or 'folds of the soul'; rather, it is the threshold between the two houses, firmly situating both houses as part of the same plane or world. The attic itself is the fold, the flexible membrane through which the doll/subject status is questioned. The attic is particularly uncanny as it is the place in which the characters enter into becoming-doll, a form of becoming-minor.

The attic, for Sarah, denotes the limits of the house itself: 'There's nothing above me at all, except for the roof and sky' (49). As she climbs up the ladder and moves further into the attic, she finds herself surrounded by 'things, things, more things, things that no longer fitted in the house full of things' — an excess of objects but, unlike in her bedroom, an excess that cannot be contained. When Sarah raises a pair of binoculars to her eyes, the objects she sees through the lens defy the rules of observation and perception:

> That's strange, she said to herself. Everything looks smaller and farther away, not closer.
>
> Everything was tiny, perfect but tiny and terribly far: the coffee pot, the candlestick, the hat, the shoes, all in miniature.
>
> Perhaps I'm looking through them the wrong way round, she thought.
>
> But when she turned the binoculars around and looked through the other end, she could see nothing at all. It was black.
>
> [. . . .]
>
> She put the binoculars up to her eyes again. Although everything was tiny, all the edges were remarkably clear, as though the binoculars themselves had brought the world into sharp focus. [. . . .] Sarah's hands were shaking, and so was the room, but she kept looking until the shapes slowly began to make sense and out of the darkness things formed. (52)

The objects seen through Sarah's binoculars take a flight towards abstraction, melding into and out of shadows and changing size, appearing simultaneously as miniature dollhouse

furniture and life-size things. When Sarah sees the armchair with the blanket-covered figure and pulls the blanket off to reveal a girl with a 'face as still as a waxwork' (54), her reaction to the lifelike figure in front of her differs from her attitude to the miniaturised furniture of the dollhouse downstairs. Where she delights in the accuracies of the milk bottle made miniature, the heightened realism of this figure (if it is indeed a doll) brings confusion and underlying fear. The uncanny becomes insistently somatic in this final moment, shifting the external body to the internal experience of an affective moment. The chapter's final sentences dwell upon the limit where subjectivity fades and the body ceases to be:

> Sarah had a sensation of absence, of herself disappearing, of fading, of going.
>
> She stared at the face of the girl as though staring in the mirror. And then she was gone, really gone. (54)

The text's refusal of closure forces the reader to dwell in the uncomfortable awareness that becoming is a process without end: we do not know what she becomes, only that she has ceased to be Sarah and, perhaps, has become-other within Dr Fleet's circle of children.

While Sarah's experience of becoming-minor is articulated solely through an absence of self, Mary's becoming-minor is marked by the slow dissolution of the self. We see the dissolution of the self during the house party, at which Mary and Grace entertain the guests by performing Julius Caesar's death. During the performance, Grace, playing Brutus, forgets her lines. Mary's attention is drawn away from Grace, and her performance as Caesar (and Caesar's death) becomes simultaneously delayed and anticipated, mirroring the reader's attitude towards Mary's death, which is explicitly foreshadowed in the prologue. As Mary focuses on Dr Fleet, she begins to fall, and the narrative focalisation begins to alternate between Mary and the party guests, fusing the two bodies together:

> 'No!' she cried suddenly. 'no!'
>
> But it was too late. Caesar fell to the floor, the wreath slipping from his head.
>
> [. . . .]

> The dying man raised himself up on one arm and she gazed upon the audience [. . . .] They seemed so large, overgrown, as though they were too big for the room, as though the house had been made for smaller people. Their heads were almost at the ceiling, it seemed to Mary, bumping on the lights, and they perched uncomfortably on pieces of furniture far too small for them. (119-20)

The shifting focalisation and its lack of unity is only resolved by the description of the house and its inhabitants, which evokes dolls sitting on dollhouse furniture. In this light, Mary's earlier observation of the house suggests that a folding has occurred:

> But of course, from inside, with the curtains drawn, there was nothing to see [outside]. In the house there was only the house, there was no outside. Everything happened inside. (117)

Indeed, the notion of the house being solely 'inside', coupled with the presence of Dr Fleet and Gus, suggests a folding: aspects of the dollhouse (or other space) have been pulled into Abyssinia. The fluidity of the body and of matter, suggested by the shifting focalisation, is further emphasised by the images of drapery that characterise Mary's encounter with Dr Fleet. The curtains, mentioned in the excerpt above, echo the old sheets used to make Mary's Caesar toga. However, while the curtains act to separate the inside and outside, the toga's drapery conceals Mary, 'slipping from underneath, secretly collapsing' (108), suggesting the slipping and collapsing of boundaries as the events unfold.

The house itself begins to unfold as Mary pursues Gus. Mary finds herself in an attic that, like the attic which Sarah explored, is 'so very full, too full' (126), and contains a covered figure in an armchair. While Sarah actively uncovers the figure in her attempt to resolve the discomfort that arises from encountering the uncanny, Mary finds herself feeling 'nothing, not even curiosity', and the blanket falls away by itself without her assistance (127). This passivity suggests a becoming-other through becoming-object, which is further reinforced by Mary's realisation that the doll looks like her:

> But even as she stood there looking down, slowly she saw the face of the doll shifting, changing shape and colour. She had a sensation of falling, as though the earth was giving way.

She looks just like me, thought Mary, dreamily unsurprised. Just like me.

And then she was not inside any more. The house was gone. She was down in the orange grove, under a ceiling of bright and dark green leaves, the hanging globes, the sweet citrus air.

The world turned black, and disappeared. (128)

The metamorphosis of the doll suggests a becoming-other and a becoming-minor. If Mary has turned into a doll, as the epilogue suggests, her actualisation as becoming-doll merges her with the dollhouse and its occupants, an object to be viewed in relation to the objects around it.

Thinking in folds ultimately implies a philosophy of the event in *Abyssinia*. The differentiated and the individuated are not presupposed but become the actualisation of a common virtual plane. As we see in *Hexwood*, the process of unfolding is buried within an assumed form: Vierran's actualised self is veiled by the virtual intensities embodied in Ann. Banners Wood, as the site of the virtual plane, allows for the playing out of the potentials folded within the past and the future, exploring the pasts that were never present, and the futures that will never become actualised. In contrast, the duplicity of folding, evoked through the doubling in *Abyssinia*, unsettles the spatial and temporal order of being as presence. The other — the doll — can no longer be located simply outside of 'what is', as the narrative refuses to merely invert the two spaces. Rather, the fold unsettles the dichotomies between 'The Dolls House' and 'Abyssinia', creating a tension in which each house is pulled into the other, distinguished from each other yet held together by the operation of folding. Becoming within the fold is to engage with the minor and the virtual, not by retracing the assemblage's roots back to the major ideologies and discourses, but by searching for the conditions that allow the incompossible to become. As we see in *Abyssinia* and *Hexwood*, resolution is found not in agreement but in dissonance. The children in both texts negotiate this dissonance and, in doing so, envelop their material bodies with the incompossible, creating folds between body and place that unfurl as

the narratives progress towards endless possibility. In this light, the child figure in these speculative texts marks the harmonious relationship in contradiction and the generative power of divergence.

Epilogue and afterthoughts

The driving question of this thesis has been asked by many others before me: how does children's literature function? Throughout my undergraduate studies of children's literature, the answer has largely been couched in the didactic nature of children's literature and children's literature as a social artefact. Children's literature, as a genre written and distributed by adults, gives us insights into how adults attempt to guide the child reader's understanding of the world. In this sense, children's literature criticism occupies a particularly interesting space. As literary critics, we are unable to read as a child reader would. We draw from literary and theoretical ideas that are not commonly known by the adult non-critic, let alone the child itself. The child of children's literature is thus an intellectual concept, and theorising children's literature becomes an exercise in exploring how social constructs interact with each other. Theories of social ideology and discourse are the mainstays of children's literature criticism for this reason, giving us a vocabulary for discussing how socially-determined ideas of childhood and society are presented in children's texts.

However, as I propose in the introduction of this thesis, focusing solely upon the ideological nature of children's texts leads us to conceptualise children's literature as a stable, fixed and unchanging artefact, a genre limited by the ideological assumptions and social contexts of its authors. While uncovering the hidden assumptions in children's texts is a commendable and, indeed, necessary exercise, such an approach means that children's literature criticism is limited to 'how does children's literature function?' instead of 'how *can* children's literature function?' As we have seen throughout the texts examined within this thesis, Deleuze and Guattari give us the vocabulary to dwell in that uncomfortable, ambivalent space between acknowledging invisible ideologically-driven assumptions and searching for possible readings beyond those assumptions.

Significantly, Deleuze and Guattari's post-representational position does not entail a refusal to analyse the workings of representation itself. Deleuze and Guattari merely refuse the centrality of representation based on similitude and semblance, revealing the limitations of relying upon frameworks that assume hierarchies of sameness. My analysis of the texts within this thesis attempts to answer this call by exploring rhizomatically and seeking difference to find the minor within the regime of representation. By understanding children's literature as a literature of the minor, we are able to open up our readings to embrace possibility, potential and becoming, exploring the capacity of children's literature to communicate conditions for change even when texts adhere to dominant ideologies. In this light, children's literature can be considered a literature of becoming — of multiplicity, nomadism, affect and the fold.

Deleuze's figure of the fold, in particular, allows us to consider seemingly contradictory moments or concepts without imposing hierarchies and binaries. As we have seen in *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia*, the fold provides a means to consider contradiction and difference as part of the same fabric, embracing the minor while acknowledging the influence and presence of the major, dominant ideologies and discourses. Minor literature, in this manner, offers children's literature criticism something that is not necessarily a solution to Foucault's political 'double bind' — the 'simultaneous individualization and totalisation of modern power structures' (Foucault, 1982, 785) — but a means of considering how new forms of subjectivity can arise through shifting, changing assemblages of power and place. *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia* present us with seemingly disparate places that, through relations between the actual and the virtual, cross-fertilise each other to suggest a shared space and unity, a fold rather than a boundary. The chaotic temporal and spatial multiplicities within both texts —the tangled virtual reality within *Hexwood* and the causal dilemma in *Abyssinia* — foreground the process of subjectivity as a process of becoming. The characters of *Hexwood* and *Abyssinia*, rather than

developing within the closed and convergent, undergo a process of unfolding in which the boundaries of the self are thrown apart. The subject, continually being pulled into the virtual, becomes a chaotic assemblage, a multiplicity in which subject and place are mutually folded and unfolded.

If place is social ideology and discourse made concrete, the folding of subject and place means that it is impossible to compartmentalise and separate them. The tendency of children's literature criticism to discuss agency and subjective development through the character's resistance to their society's ideological restraints implicitly creates a binary between the subject and the state, two distinct and disparate entities that are interwoven but can be separated. The interpenetration of subject and world, however, reminds us that there is no beginning or endpoint in the relationship between society and the individual. Indeed, children's literature itself can be considered in folds. Though this thesis only considers the ways in which subjectivity and place are folded into each other in children's literature, the fold has the potential to extend beyond this application into further considerations about the relations folded within children's literature.

The fold envelops the complex relations between the implied author and the implied child reader, as well as the multitude of ways child readers can engage with texts beyond the textual object itself (such as Internet fan groups, merchandise or adaptations). In this sense, the fold encourages us to explore not only how children's literature is an assemblage but how children's literature enters other assemblages. The fold moves us beyond our awareness of children's literature as didactic, opening up the question of how children's literature functions towards an understanding of children's literature as a minor force — a discursive space that does indeed reflect ideological assumptions, and yet contains the potential to deterritorialise those assumptions and present the child reader with something new.

The capacity for children's literature as a genre to deterritorialise concepts and present them anew — whether through the explicit intertextual play of China Miéville's *Railsea* or the call to revolution in Cory Doctorow's *Little Brother* — is testament to the minor nature of young adult and children's texts. Works such as M.T. Anderson's *Feed*, which presents a compelling world in which characters are subjugated by technology-based consumerism, contain moments of deterritorialisation that allow the minor to convey difference, undoing the assumption that minor repetitions are inherently rooted in the same foundations as the dominant major. As I discuss in Chapter 1, *Feed*, *Little Brother* and *The Hunger Games* trilogy reveal that working within the major does not necessitate capitulation to the major. To ignore the minor moments represented in children's literature is also to silence them, to deny the capacity of the minor to shift the assemblage.

This is not to say that the minor can, wholly and in itself, overcome the major and shatter the ideological assumptions that contextualise a text. Rather, as *Railsea* and *Little Brother* reveal, there is a tension between the minor and the major that is staged through place, particularly striated and smooth places. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the smooth and the striated give us concepts for discussing how place is created and shaped, as well as how power structures form and re-form. The characters of Miéville's *Un Lun Dun* and *Railsea* learn to navigate striated spaces and, significantly, discover the smooth spaces within the striations to allow the minor to emerge. The minor is inherently nomadic, constantly moving and merging to find spaces for expression.

The minor thus offers avenues of becoming beyond models sanctioned and created by the major. Chapter 3 of this thesis reminds us that the minor is not in opposition to the major so much as it is enfolded within the major. *Little Brother* explores the concept of dividualisation

(the reduction of the individual to units of data) and, instead of completely rejecting dividualisation, embraces the potentials within the dividiual-society assemblage to follow lines of flight that allow for minor becomings. Resistance, in this light, is not solely about creating a separate space from the major or the dominant structures of control/power. Rather, minor becomings involve working within the major, finding points within the assemblage that can be deterritorialised and sent along a line of flight, mutating the assemblage into something new. Significantly, reading *Little Brother* through a Deleuzian lens recasts the relationship between the power and powerless to the minor and the major. It is not about exercising power or even the embodied internalisation of power, as much as it is about the capacity of the major to match the minor's speed and ability to deterritorialise assemblages. The minor must always deterritorialise, moving into smooth spaces not yet striated by the major.

The minor, as we see in Chapters 2 and 3, is a nomadic force, constantly moving without settling. The characters in *Little Brother*, in particular, must become virtual nomads in the XNet to evade the striating grasp of the state. Though all the texts examined in this thesis explore this concept, *Hexwood* brings us nomadism most explicitly, showing us models of subjectivity structured through the distribution over multiple spatio-temporal planes. Subjectivity in these children's texts cannot be considered as whole, stable states of being; rather, the nomadic dispersion of the subject means that subjectivity is an assemblage and a constantly-becoming and evolving event. Nomadism gives children's literature criticism a particular direction for considering the topological nuances of subjectivity, implying the significance of a subject's path on of a line of flight while simultaneously affirming the multiplicity of potentials within an assemblage.

As Chapter 2 discusses in relation to *Un Lun Dun*, the nomadic subject must continuously react and readapt to the open-ended nature of place. Navigation is not grounded so much in knowledge (suggested by the text's rejection of the prophecy and the standard quest narrative), but on building connections to the potentials embedded within a spatial assemblage. The capacity for children's literature to explore connections and potential is particularly important to children's literature criticism, as it provides us a means to approach texts nomadically — to, as Deleuze and Guattari write, 'make a map, not a tracing' with our readings (1987, 12). This involves embracing connections and lines of flight instead of plotting the points at which a text and its ideological context meet, pushing the text and the reading to find difference within repetitions of signs and symbols. My reading of *Feed* in Chapter 1 extricates Violet from her ideological position as discarded, abjected subject, demonstrating that it is possible to simultaneously recognise the ideological anti-consumer drive of the text and affirm the characters' capacity to creative affective connections and express difference.

Deleuze's twin concepts of difference and repetition are, perhaps, the thorniest ideas for current children's literature criticism. It is difficult to read for difference when our assumptions are grounded in children's literature as a didactic genre that is ultimately rooted in ideological assumptions. Any manifestations of difference, through an ideological lens, must necessarily be considered arborescent, defined in relation to a set of points and positions. My exploration of children's literature reveals that it is possible to explore difference as rhizomatic — based on connections and the creation of something new — in which even repetitions engender multiplicity. Repetition allows children's literature criticism to consider contradictions and the incompossibilities that simultaneously fragment and unite a concept, allowing for the dominance of the major while making space for the minor.

As this thesis argues, affect is the ideal framework to allow our readings to mutate beyond the major, recognising the ways in which texts for children and young adults affirm difference and the minor. Affect is particularly interesting in its potential to create mutations, difference and new assemblages. The characters in *Feet of Clay*, like Violet in *Feed*, cannot immediately exercise agency recognised by dominant major social structures, but are able to produce affects that engender difference and change, creating discursive and topological space for the minor to emerge. Similarly, the oppressed district competitors within *The Hunger Games* trilogy are able to wield their affective connections to fold themselves into the Capitol audience and intensify potentials for revolution. Affect thus gives us a means of thinking about intersubjectivity, not just in terms of subjects in relation to other subjects, but as an event, a form of becoming that is profoundly collective, social and spatial. Affect thus provides as a means of thinking about the subject-assemblage in terms of what fragments it as well as what propels it and holds it together, recognising other means of engaging with social structures beyond agency and resistance.

Affect opens other avenues for discussing children's literature not explored within this thesis. My reading of the minor focuses largely upon using affect to complement our understanding of agency and the capacities of the non-subject, but affect also lends itself particularly well to discussing the ways in which ideology can be internalised. Further discussions of affect in children's literature could extend beyond the narrative level explored within this thesis, discussing — and delving more deeply into — the didactic aspect of children's literature by exploring how readers are affectively positioned. Alternatively, affect also offers a means of considering the text as a rhizomatic assemblage. Representation itself can be considered an affective body with lines of flight, with multiple connections within and beyond the text. Affect thus offers potentials for mapping how texts offer readers ways to engage with multiplicity and becoming itself.

Indeed, children's literature, as this thesis demonstrates, is a genre that thrives when read through multiplicity. For instance, multiplicity animates the simulacra in *The Highest Frontier* (discussed in Chapter 3) to develop beyond its relationship to representation, allowing us to cohesively link the amyloid simulacra to the parasite figure. In doing so, we are able to challenge the hierarchical relations between the human and technology, reframing our definition of the posthuman to consider a becoming-assemblage that does not necessarily have 'human' at its core. Children's literature, in this light, does not only function to reflect ideological concerns or convey particular agendas about the posthuman subject. When pushed towards the virtual and the multiple, children's literature has the capacity to propose its own emergent ontology of the posthuman and, more broadly, of the becoming subject.

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