

Title

From shifting borders towards liminal boundaries:

**The nomadic capture of morphing contouring spaces in the artwork and lives of
some expatriated former Yugoslavian artists and writers**

Dissertation

for the acquisition of the doctoral degree
at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
at the Eberhard Karls University Tübingen

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Tübingen

2013

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Introduction

Toute idée du drame qui finit par spectacle me gene.

Marc Augé¹

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.

Oscar Wilde²

Exile does not mean just crossing borders; it grows and matures inside the exiled, transforms them and becomes their destiny (...) there is an off-putting disguise of loneliness, abandonment and alienation. The self-same loss of comfortable, harmonious and unproblematic inclusion in the surrounding space and the impossibility of feeling at home in that space that is so close and yet so distant, so different from the memorized topography of the lands left behind which torment the exile or the refugee, allow them to penetrate deeper into the universal logic and meaning of life in a kind of world (we would say our liquid modern world.

Zygmunt Bauman³

In the contemporary global border shifting landscapes and in the political contexts of border dissolution and creation of nation states throughout border

¹ Marc Augé has opened the first edition of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate “Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones” in Bergamo on 6 October 2010.

² Wilde, Oscar, *The Soul of Man under Socialism and Selected Critical Prose*, Penguin Classics, 2001.

³ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid life*, Polity Press, 2005, p. 137

establishments, the migration syndrome encloses and represents the human condition of the modern, by nature, nomadic (artistic) mankind in one very much mutating cultural and liminal existential fashion. The continuously increasing globalizing processes tend to be, in a nutshell, determinative of the morphology and the (mis)creation of the human mobility factor: the life habits, the motions habits, the production habits have been all incorporated within the *non-space* in motion. This dissertation draws on the practical case of this spatial-societal fragmentation is the political case of former Yugoslavia, whose violent outbreaks of wars has engendered a series of exiles, emigrations and expatriation. Furthermore, from the platform of those dissolved borders, new borders have been generated and nation states shaped. I have shifted my focus to the nomadic-artistic dimension of the migrations I argue. In fact, the expatriated, the exiled, the wandering human condition of the artist, of the writer, of the intellectual are the main focus I draw on; through their immigrating, or border crossing or exiling experiences I will try to demonstrate the liminality of the borders in terms of cultural complexity and fluid cultural boundaries. This dissertation proposes a specific goal: to analyse the nomadic as an act of resistance against the bordering orders and as a refusal of the sedentary culture, on one side, and on the other side, to argue the nomadic as a consequence, as an outcome and a concrete product of the global border shifts. The expatriated status and the related categories of motion of the human mankind, generously nominated as nomads, vagrants, transhumants, migrants, exiled and expatriated, wanderers and itinerants, induce the fluid side of dwelling and perform the never ending repletion of the Ulysses myth of the never ending vagrancy, search for desire and longing for a home.

Hence, the ontology of the displacement has never been so seminally perturbed and changed on the basis of the political and the economy based societies. Whereas the world we inhabit is accessible for many actions and movements undertaken by few people and, at the same time, shrinking for many others. Therefore, the global shifting border-landscapes, the newly sort out frontiers, the multiple mental borders are, for the purpose of my text, a very appealing context apt to demonstrate that the artistic mobility increases the liminality of the space in which people dwell.

As mentioned above, in the introduction to the corpus of my dissertation, I have chosen to work with several Balkan artists that were expatriated following the political shuttering of the former Yugoslavia. The choice was evident because this political

geography implied multiple and manifold exiles, unclassified nomadism and awkward geopolitics of the migratory policies. The focus on the Balkan spatial reconfigurations has been mostly drifting by the authentic and very special fervid historical and cultural tendency towards the nomadic side of life and the constantly fragile bordering discourse. The vital feature of this choice is because throughout the history, the Balkans have been populated with various nomadic tribes, ethnicities and nationalities, and independently of how dangerous these definitions might be, still we strive to believe that the core reason of the bordering shifts were the overheated political, religious and ethnical reasons. The Balkan map witnesses how those nations and states have been created, recreated, destroyed, raised and occupied. The consequence of this is that the dimension of border inhabitation and cultural shifts and displacement, have become the essence of these spaces and these peoples. If we look back at the historical shifts in the South-Eastern Europe, we shall see, in fact, that the phenomenon of border tailoring and exchange of territory is a very common for the Balkan people; the First Balkan War, the Second Balkan War, The Second World War and last but not least the latest Yugoslavian war have completely changed the national, cultural, geographical and the border face of the Balkan Peninsula.

I shall draw attention to this feature, in the chapters to come, because I find somewhat necessary to demonstrate, nowadays in Europe, that the impact that the border performs on the human life and on the cultural negotiation between space and people is of utmost and utter importance for the cultural studies and social anthropology. After the shattering of former Yugoslavia and the political cleavage, the Western phenomenological notions of *difference*, *diversity*, *fragmentation*, *multiculturalism* and *national identity* were simply inadequate and almost impossible to grasp, and were, therefore dangerous and hazardous for this piece of the European soil. This is the reason I shall try to demonstrate that the overused and abused concepts such as 'identity' or 'multiculturalism' or 'inter-ethnic cohabitation' are not naturally perceivable to the human logic, which is traced by continuous displacement. This dissertation is based, in fact, on anti-identitarian basis. Hence, these concepts are not interpretable in the nomadic landscapes of art and border inhabitation, not definable in border cultures; they do not perform a clean existence, in fact, they do exist *tout court* because the human nature is their culture, because when a border is demolished or upraised or built or concerned, the human existence dwells in individual exchanges of

meaning and heterogeneous production of culture. Finally, we cannot throw concepts which we do not understand in this, so to say, *multi-bin* and liaise on a superficial basis with the phenomena which are always a step forward from the post-modern theories about culture and nation.

For an example if we think of Istria, the small peninsula on the Adriatic shores, culturally divided, or nourished, between Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Italy and the Western side of the Balkans, we shall acknowledge the linguistic insights, the architectures, the cultural mixtures have brought this people, proper border inhabitants, to define themselves always regionally as ‘Istrians’ and not Slovenians or Croats. This small example shows how the regionalism and the regional, local cultures is however something to ponder on; today where we still witness to conflicts arising from the big national definitions of belonging, the regionalism has become a defensive answer to the homologation of the global threats of uniform culture. The nomadic manner to deal with this border fermentation is a solution to such global culture which tends to uniform human habits and practices.

On the other side, there is another interesting phenomenon which regards the border crossers, the metaphoric border inhabitants or the exiled artists, the expatriated people, for their experiences as ‘border inhabitants in motion’ puts into practice the notion of cultural liminality that I draw in the final chapter. The interviews with the expatriated writers have established the goal of freedom within the fragmented space; they have dared to undergo the impact on the human condition and the authorship by the dissolution of the borders. In the contemporary world where notions of boundary and borders are continuously blurred and shifted, we need to redefine notions such as nomadic identity and mobile space as they are in constant phenomenological evolution. Just as the Bosnian poet, Mehmed Begic, said during the interview “I beware of identities”, my research’s goal is to explore the informal logic of culture of those people, of these post-Yugoslavian war expatriated artists (i.e. Slavenka Drakulic from Croatia, Korana Delic and Mehmed Begic from Bosnia, Tanja Ostojic and David Albahari from Serbia) quoted above, who were in continuous dialectic with the dissolving and dissolved, changing and changeable borders, for they incarnate the metaphor or the concrete, plastic reality of border inhabitants and in one way or another prove to be the “exiled” artists generating artwork and literature. With these examples I shall demonstrate the cultural complexity arising from the mobility, the liminal spaces

and the non-spaces. The comparative case study of the experiences of the expatriated former Yugoslavian artists offer some provocative meanings of ethnical non-belongings, longings for a home, nostalgia of a space in motion and feelings of being uprooted. Thus, I shall argue what is a border in the Balkan versus what is a border in Europe, tackling all aspects connected with the border such as migration within national and ethnical belonging. The borders will be argued as liminal spaces in the geographical connotation of the Balkans versus Europe: in former Yugoslavia they became, after the war, a synonym of fear and trauma, while in the European Union they and their openness are symbol of freedom of movement of people and goods.

Hence, I shall argue the impact the dissolution of the former Yugoslavian borders has had on the people's lives and in particular on the lives of these self-exiled and expatriated and nomadic artists and writers. This implies also an in-depth reading and analysis of phenomena such as global changes, social utopia, mass movements, regionalism, nationalism, spatial reconfigurations, expatriation, cultures, nation, ethnicity; the transnational and translational dimension of the border, their minority identities versus their multiple identities, their weak languages and the shifting cultural practices of the border inhabitants. The focus from the borders will be displaced to the utterly relevant concept of mobility and migrations, and therefore the nomadic factor and its meaning for the human condition. I shall argue the nexus between the borders and the artistic migrations and will try to define what is migrant today in different cultural and political environments and focus more on the contemporary nomad, as a wanderer, as an exiled or expatriated citizen, as a person who is in perpetual search for space, who is nostalgic about a space but is, in the same time, a kind of a (cultural) *non-space-in-motion*.

As mentioned above, I draw and focus on the case of former Yugoslavia because I want to demonstrate how the political factor, the social relations, the ethnicity, the religion and the language have influenced the awkward building of identifications and affiliations, the invention of neologisms and the anarchical management of space and memory. Therefore, the goal would be to rethink the concepts of citizenship, community, ethnicity, nationality and the so often called 'multiple identities' or the metaphorical border inclinations. For this purpose I shall use an empirical approach and social qualitative methods to construct my interpretation on the basis of my case studies. The questions upraised will be the following:

To what extent is nomadism and authorship performed by the former Yugoslavian writers, in general are artists influenced by the political consequences of the dissolution of borders? Is their artwork produced by and at the same time producing the dissolution of border? What are the meanings of the culture, space, memory, border, exile, migration and expatriation in the context of their nomadic art? What is the border inhabitant individuation and how do the border inhabitants live? Can we read the border as a productive field and as a living space? Last but not least, how can a border be performed as something liminal and why ought these artists be presented as border-crossers?

In the progressively globalizing and globalized world, the notions of borders, mobility, nomadic, home, displacements, liminality, fluidity and hybridity are unavoidable signals of lecture and interpretation of the human condition in the emerging de-territorialization, spatial reconfiguration and de-bordering processes within the large scale of societal, economic and cultural segments. The present dissertation aims at achieving and exploring such concepts which are in intrinsic relation to a place translated as a non-space, as border, as home and to a territoriality translated as geo-sculpture. My goal is to demonstrate the border as a liminal space but yet as a pro-active actor and factor in the socio-cultural habits in the wider domain of almost all nomadic phenomena such as migration, post-war migrations, national, regional and local identifications and affiliations and to propose the liminality of the border as a living space, as a quality of dwelling. The following chapters transcend the geographical and political meaning of the border and offer creative understanding of the border crosser and the border inhabitants, in the artistic domains of specifications and individuation represented by the coined notions or qualities of borderness and borderlessness. These accordingly coined concepts propose adequate and mental charts of the displaced and migrating bordered subject within the intimate geographical entities of space such as border and such as home.

Considering that since 1991 there have been approximately 27 000 km of new overheated borders and walls built and traced in the frame of the political fragmentation and demarcation processes, we see most part were marked in Europe (former Yugoslavia, former Czechoslovakia). According to the French geographer Michel Foucher, yet, there are still some 18 000 km of ongoing projects of walls and

enclosures⁴. These new borders invent or reinvent tradition, nation and society from within, risking the use and formation of heated middle-aged nationalistic symbols and multiplication of numerous self-definition practices, whilst the nationhood and the mankind are undergoing globalizing (and so to say *glocalizing*) as a response to the global, threats of cultural suffocation. This fragmentation of the world, despite the illusion of closeness imposed by the globalization, engenders creation of barriers and walls, of borders and new states and the so called ‘balkanization’ of the geopolitical and geocultural territory. According to Patrick Picouet, the territorial geography is staggered and shattered because of the macro-regional territorial integration⁵, whilst other tremendous transnational powers occur on the global political map: there is a huge confusion between what is local and what is global, what is center and what periphery. The splitting up and the breaking up takes place on several levels of one inhabited space (e. g. city, border cities and so on and so forth), that is to say some strange and unprecedented practices of nomadism, gated community, segregation, over-identification, ghettoization are taking place in the contemporary world we inhabit.

However, beyond this geopolitical category, the purpose of the following text is to draw on the nomadic aesthetic containing those liminal aspects of the harsh border crossings which attempts the hazardous transit as their own ontological becoming processes. The goal is to define and offer the border as a living space, as a space that multiplies and performs the home but which surpasses, goes beyond the home, transcends upon the loss of home and that transposes the human condition onto a more sophisticated levels of interstice, of creepy thresholds, on the edges of the liminality as an existential precedent of the human nomadic existence.

The cultural liminality of the border will be revalued as a dynamic and vital, and somewhat organic process of structuring one’s own mobility, in an artistic and geopolitical sense, of capturing the nomadic within the border cohabitation and of the perpetual loss of home as a consequence of the global boundaries shifts and liminal drifts. I have taken the example of the former Yugoslavian wars to focus on three elements: the political factor of the dissolving and generating borders; the impact of the

⁴ Niel, Frédéric, avec la participation de l’IRIS, *Contre les murs*, Bayard, Montrouge, 2011, p. 9.

⁵ Picouet, Patrick, sous la direction de, *Le monde vu à la frontière*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 22.

dissolved borders on the human condition and on the nomadic aesthetics; and thus extrapolated product of the perpetually generating borders on the feelings of homelessness, of the fervid economic notions of *home to go* and *take away home*. Therefore, the goal of this dissertation is not to try to define a belonging to one specific, culturally determined space but the purpose will be to question and argue the values that have constructed the border spaces that surround those determined spaces and behold those vital zones of border crossings.

The case studies I worked on and transpose in one chapter are issued from one reflection that comprises these elements of *uprootedness*, as the Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulic said, and of the continuous *carrying the home within*, as the exiled Bosnian photographer Korana Delic said. I have chosen to work with these writers and artists precisely because of their voluntary exile, self-chosen exile or their not engagement in the political factor of the migration in times of war, in the geopolitical factor of border shifts and the anthropological factor of border inhabitation. Even though we do not deal here with refugees, except in Korana's case, we refer to Bauman "cross-fire" and "double bind" concepts of the human condition, where the place, the home has been lost and where the displaced subject has been caught into the nowhere, because these border zones represent the uninhabited drifting places that come from nowhere and go nowhere. More precisely, Bauman puts it:

"Refugees find themselves in a cross-fire; more exactly, in a double bind. They are expelled by force or frightened into fleeing their native countries, but refused entry to any other. They do not *change* place; they *lose* their place on earth and are captured into a nowhere, into Auge's 'non-lieux' or Garreau's 'nowherevilles', or loaded into Michel Foucault's 'Narrenschaften', a drifting 'place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea' – or (as Michel Agier suggests) into a desert, by definition an *uninhabited* land, a land resentful of humans and seldom visited by them."⁶

Having tackled the idea of 'uninhabited land', this we are able to understand the liquid quality of the border dwelling, where the border becomes geographically the uninhabited land yet culturally dense and "populated" with meanings. For the border inhabitants lives become, to put it in Bauman terms, "(...) self-propelling, self-

⁶ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid times. Living in an age of Uncertainty*, Polity Press, 2007, p. 45.

intensifying, compulsive and obsessive (...) as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain its shape for long.”⁷. The fluctuation in the semantically confused cultural meanings is a notion that we find in Bauman’s reference to Alain Touraine, in the sense that it has been a long ago that making a distinction between ‘multiculturalism’ born of respect for untrammled freedom of choice among the riches of cultural offerings and ‘multicommunitarianism’” has become urgent. To that understanding there is a level of emptiness because the educated classes have little or nothing to say about the desirable shape of the migrating human condition. For that reason they seek refuge in the ‘multiculturalism’, that ‘ideology of the end of ideology’.”⁸ Such imposed multi-perception of cultures has gradually imposed a liaison with the politically dangerous notions of choice: “Today, for a change, we are entering in the epoch of non-engagement. The panoptic model of domination, with its main strategy is supervising, minutely monitoring and correcting the self-government of its sub-ordinates, is fast being dismantled in Europe (...).”⁹ And hence the borders have their role in this fluctuant and fluid cultural and political strategies.

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Focusing again on the core subject of the present dissertation, I argue the wider category of displacement meanings, which to my understanding, arise from the concept of the *exile*. The word *exile*, etymologically coming from the Latin word *ex-solum* signifying wrenching, extraction from the soil, extraction, spreading towards outside and exterior outskirts of the territory, implies inevitably the notion of expulsion, voluntary or not, of a compulsory departure; even though it represents a concrete nomenclature, still has a dense structure of meaning, which are not always easily grasped by those categories of people who determine the exile or not (e.g. the judiciary, the police, the State and so on and so forth). For example, if the “idea of non-return” qualifies the exile itself, than we should or we could recognize the quality of exile in many conditions of the mankind. “The exile is first of all a break-up with the country of

⁷ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 11.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 49.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 55.

origin, linked with an almost impossible idea of a return”.¹⁰ In this sense, Julia Kristeva passionately argues the exile-linked category of *foreignness*: according to Kristeva the alienation from the cultural soil and the shift to the border crossing spaces implies specific categories of becoming and producing art and nomadism.

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The political horror, namely classified as Balkanisation by the Western thought, has imposed, as the Italo-Slovenian journalist, living in Koper, in Slovenia, Stefano Lusa will underline later on, the duty to define one's one identity and to choose a compulsory belonging. The reinvention of the past, of the nationalism and the ethnicity has become an ordinary practice in the cultural context of breaking borders and imposing liminal course of displacement and mixture of cultural endogenic habits. The disruption within the creation of the whole has produced a liquid and fluid and therefore liminal affiliation and heated discussion as regards the belonging. The political disappearance of the Yugoslavian people as a whole and the political reappearance of the past nation-hoods visions and beliefs on the former Yugoslavian soil, have engendered a production of stone cast national identities and reinvented past consideration of memory and space (i.e. reconstruction of monuments, renaming streets and toponyms, erasure of common national and cultural emblems, the global amnesia and the reinvention of boundaries in cultural sense) and this has consequently engendered a new reading of the border. The artists I have interviewed could not accept the limitation of the artistic freedom and so they embraced the nomadic side of production, which I have called emotional border production and such border production would be especially the case of the visual artists Tanja Ostojic and Korana Delic.

I took the challenge to draw on specific forms of culture and to argue the production of regionalism and regional culture in the anthropological context as a consequence of border disruption that produces border (psychological) liminality. I shall not focus on any particular border zones, even though there are many outstanding examples to this postulate, e.g. the case of Istria and the insertion of the Istrian culture, which as Stefano Lusa will underline, results to be a produce of many neighboring, so to say bordering cultures such as the Italian, the Slovenian, the Croatian and hence the former Yugoslavian, the maritime culture, the border region culture and so on and so

¹⁰ Sabbah, Danièle, sous direction de, *Ecritures de l'exil*, Eidôlon, Bordeaux, 2009, p. 8. "Ainsi l'exil est avant tout, rupture avec le pays natal, liée à un retour conçu comme impossible."

forth. However, the question raised here, among other, is how can we argue the separation and the division concept of the border, and create disparate cultures on both sides of borders, if the common past experiences have shown that there are examples of fluidity and liminality in border regions (e.g. such are the cases between the twin cities, like Trieste and Koper and Gorizia and Nova Gorica). My argument therefore is not of an ideological kind, even though it contains the structure boosted by the disciplines of the political philosophy and cultural anthropology; the argument I draw on is rather a nexus between the border dissolution and the artistic production proposed by the politically or ideologically or intimately expatriated artists from the former Yugoslavian republics. It is not by chance that I have chosen to interview, in fact, artists coming from the fervent and violent war zones. The challenge, thus, that interested most my research is to draw on the (artistic) refusal of the management of the memory, given that the danger of this memory management (or *collective amnesia* as the Serbian performing artist, Tanja Ostojic has called it) has produced the two elements which will result, at the end, as very much seminal concepts for my dissertation:

- **The nomadic (artistic) capture of borders**

- **The loss of home.**

In the following chapters I shall draw on the above mentioned concepts – constitutive elements of my research - from the aspect of the nomadic ‘unhomely’ (to put it in Bhabha terms) production and from the aspect of the mobility translated as inhabitation within mobility - within the field of artistic self-launching across delicate and dangerous borders - in order to understand the transposing and creative proliferation of boundaries (to what border tend to as Edward Casey puts it) in the concrete but yet morphing contours of the European cultural spaces. These diverse ways of reading the anthropology and the culture in the processes of borders making and border demarcation strategies represent the field of encounters, negotiations and communication between the persons, in this case the expatriated writers and the fluid border as one specific representation of space. The distortion of the former Yugoslavian cultural landscapes and spaces has been introduced, on a wider and global scale, by the novelty of the transformation of space as one major feature in the contexts of the globalization. Therefore, what is interesting for this text, resides in that spatial shaping and reconfiguration which are still tailoring, producing and defining the human condition

and relations between space, between space as delimitation of culture and between people, between border inhabitants or crossers.

I draw on one specific side of such dissolved borders: the artistic production in times of war. After the outbreaks of the wars in former Yugoslavia, the new conceived and performed borders constructed on national, linguistic, ethnographic and historic basis, through the political negotiation and cultural relations, become something which was perceived as fixed and eternal. This romantic conception of the borders drifted me to think of the border as ontologically and artistically productive soil and eventually to propose the border as a fervid, fermenting, promising, changeable, mobile, changing living space. This implies immediately the notion of the boundary, as a conceptual core quality of the physical border, as something engendered and slippery, tricky, evanescent.

The social and political events preceding the idea of this dissertation, a part from the Yugoslavian wars, are the border related events taking place in the last twenty years which depict numerous bordering actions (among which the border between US and Mexico and the outskirts of the European geopolitical borders) which liaise the human factor and influenced the human creativity. I was driven by these spatial transformations and their relations to the nomadic side of dwelling and the mobile quality of artistic production, because I argue the nexus that the extremely fast built former Yugoslavian borders - and consequently the rapid creation of the new nation states from the former federative republics of Yugoslavia - have had with the exiled, with the nomadic, with the expatriated and with the mobile meaning of the border crossings performed by people creating literature, art and visual texts. With this postulate, I would like to raise the question of the impact that the shifting borders have on people's lives, i.e. on those people inhabiting the border both physically and metaphysically. I argue the profound cultural influence the border shifts instigate on the border inhabitants and border crossers whose lives are facing specific form of choice: art, literature, photography, visual arts and art performances. And this feature is very important, for it tackles the different, somewhat unstable and precarious human condition, which envisages often not only the shift of the boundary but the physical shift and therefore the displacement and the relocation of home. In fact, for these specific reasons and for the interconnectedness between the human nomadic actions and the border liminal qualities, I shall, in one later chapter, argue the *homeness* as a nomadic quality of the household, as a nexus, an interzone between the two above mentioned features.

Therefore this dissertation aims to demonstrate how the mobility consisting in the situations marked by inhabiting the border and the border crossing experiences have reconfigured the understanding of culture and politics and the artistic production performed by the Yugoslavian nomadic artists, intellectuals and writers. In particular, I shall argue their expatriation, or their exile, or their nomadic shifts, or their self-exile, or the migration paths and the dwelling in multiple homes after the wars in former Yugoslavia, because they were all engendered because of the limited access to motion, because of the controlled entry towards almost every part of the world, because of the border suspicion, because of the violently generated borders and the fear that they brought, finally, because of the feelings of *'being a number at any border'* as many artists have felt and proclaimed to feel. Therefore, the focus on the nomadic side of their lives is unavoidable part of my work, because per nature artists strive to be nomadic in the sense that they need to move, to cross borders, to achieve the openness and to produce the nomination of the world disorder, to dig a human and ethical sense in the bordering confusion.

The structure of my dissertation is based on the semi-structured interviews I have carried out with the expatriated former-Yugoslavian writers and artists. The social-qualitative methods I have applied helped me to deconstruct the condensed meanings related to the border and the border liminality, extracted from the visions, the interpretations, the artworks, the literary work, the personal and political experiences, opinions and reactions performed by the following intellectuals:

- The Croatian journalist and writer Slavenka Drakulic, born in Istria, currently is living in Vienna, internationally known and translated writer, she is working now as journalist, writer and visiting teacher. During the war she was living in Zagreb, and because of her ant-war attitudes, engagements and statements she was almost obliged to emigrate because, as she says, she was not allowed to write as journalist and have her say. The Yugoslavian wars left a big literary mark in her production and she still explores the Eastern European political context in her novels and journalistic essays. She considers both Vienna and Zagreb as her hometowns.
- Then, the Serbian performing artist and activist Tanja Ostojic from Titovo Uzice, based in Berlin. She used to live in Belgrade during the war and did not emigrate immediately, but questioned the consequences of the war d the

impact on the border and migration politics towards former Yugoslavian citizens. Her artistic notions of border exploitation and border crossings, of memory and displacement are strictly connected with the post-Yugoslavian war societal, political and economic realities. She considers both Belgrade and Berlin as her hometowns. Currently, she works on her project *Misplaced women*, tackling feminist approach to human migration condition and the *Lexicon of Tanja Ostojic* project, which foresees encounters with all kind of social and cultural profiles of women who have the same name as her.

- Third, the Bosnian poet Mehmed Begic, who is basically born on the border itself, at the border town of Capljina between the Bosnian and the Croatian border (at the time of Yugoslavia non-existing border), who during the war was living under the sieged city of Mostar, writing poetry and refused to emigrate. He is currently living in Nicaragua, working with poetry festivals and does not plan to go back in Mostar nevermore, embittered because of the cultural urban division in his hometown.
- The Bosnian (American) photographer Korana Segetalo Delic, was born in Mostar. She suffered the war as she was very young and not established as an intellectual like the other interviewees. Her family was evicted and obliged to exile from Bosnia during the war and she as a child spent almost two years living in refugee camps. She is now living in the United States of America at Salt Lake City, where she settled after living and studying in New York with a scholarship to research photography. As Mehmed, she never plans to come back in the “broken city of Mostar” as she will call it.
- The Serbian writer David Albahari with Jewish origins is living and working as writer in residence in Calgary, in Canada. He places his “house” in this city, but his “home” in the symbolic hometown of Zemun, because according to him Zemun used to be the border city between the Balkans and the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom. During the war he was helping the Jewish community across all former Yugoslavian republics, which, unlike the other communities or nationalities or ethnicities, managed to remain united despite the bloody shuttering of borders and people’s lives. In Calgary today he feels free as a writer.

The following two chapters draw on the geopolitical cases of border dissolution and border engendering and as an example to this I have taken, as mentioned above, the most recent border retailoring experiment, which is the case of Yugoslavia. While in the following chapter I draw on the comparison between the border visions, interpretations and experiences performed, expressed or artistically created by these artists, in the last chapters I argue the core argument of my thesis which represents the ontological qualities contained but also produced within the border-lands: those qualities are the notions of the nomadic, the mobility and the *homeness* in the lives and artworks of the above mentioned artistic *border inhabitants*.

**Dissolving borders and the political factor in the case of former Yugoslavia:
Demarcation of borders, production of people and exchange of *clean limbos***

En ce sens Marx donnait une base historique à l'idée énigmatique selon laquelle ce qui lie entre eux les groupes sociaux et les individus n'est pas un bien commun supérieur, ou un ordre juridique, mais un conflit en perpétuel développement.

Etienne Balibar¹¹

Humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not in this planet. The concept of humanity excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being- and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept. That wars are waged in the name of humanity is not a contradiction of this simple truth; quite the contrary, it has an especially intensive meaning. When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. (...) Whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat. (...) Today we even recognize the secret law of this vocabulary and know that the most terrible war is pursued only in the name of peace, the most terrible oppression only in the name of freedom, the most terrible inhumanity only in the name of humanity.

Karl Schmitt¹²

(...) most discussions of memory in Western thought (including Aristotle's own seminal discussion in his short treatise on the subject) have emphasized the primacy of time, particularly past time, in remembering. Almost all such consideration from Plato to Husserl, Heidegger and Minkowski, has subsumed memory under a temporal problematic: as if remembering were just one more way of being in time. To remember is, in effect, and often in fact, to claim that "there I was doing X or Y in the presence of

¹¹ Balibar, Etienne/Wallerstein, Immanuel, *Race, nation, classe: les identités ambiguës*. La Découverte, 2007, p. 227.

¹² Schmitt, Karl, *The Concept of the Political*, Translated by George D. Shwab, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 54, 95.

A and B.” Place is the operator of memory, that which puts it to work in presenting past experience to us in an inclusive and enviroing format.

Edward S. Casey¹³

The very space of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting.

Homi Bhabha¹⁴

Quand les Balkans se sont embrasés après l’effondrement de l’ex-Yougoslavie, Tom Nairn a résumé l’analyse dominante en attribuant ces événements à une force obscure, archaïque, irraisonnée et atavique une force que l’on croyait morte mais qui s’est réveillée pour « inciter les peuples à placer le sang au-dessus du progrès rationnel et des droits individuels.

Tom Nairn¹⁵

Europe is transforming before our very eyes into a mosaic of diasporas (or more precisely into an agglomeration of overlapping and criss-crossing ethnic archipelagos). (...) identity, as Martin Heidegger would say is ‘given’ and obvious, requiring no special care or maintenance (zuhanden), to the domain of that which is ‘set’, hence demanding action (vorhanden).

Zygmunt Bauman¹⁶

The United States is already a huge, fascinating garage sale. It provides (...) Prime Ministers for Yugoslavia.

Arjun Appadurai¹⁷

¹³ Casey, Edward, *Keeping the past in mind*, in *American Continental Philosophy*, edited by Brogan, Walter/Risser, James, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 2000, p. 253.

¹⁴ Bhabha, Homi K., *The location of culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 63.

¹⁵ Nairn, Tom, *Demonizing nationalism*, in London review of books, 23 February 1993, referred to in Bauman, Zygmunt, *L’identité*, L’Herne, Paris, 2010, p. 77.

¹⁶ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 83..

¹⁷ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 174.

The idea of the title of the present chapter came out from one historical chronology of border demarcation practices, of exchange of ethnically clean limbos and almost organic processes of border dissolution and re-creation. For this reason, it is important to underline that many centuries before the collapse of Yugoslavia, as it has been announced in the title of this initial chapter of my dissertation, numerous Balkan fervent wars have significantly reshaped the maps of South-Eastern Europe and have engendered a series of charts, displacements and blurred psychological, societal and political boundaries. The geopolitical charts were disseminated and ushered in an era of ethnic cleansing and population exchanges, which saw millions of displaced persons losing their homes, millions of native people expelled from their homes and ancient aborigine families uprooted and dispersed in discrepant times and spaces. The two Balkan wars were also the start-up of the First World War: on such occasion, the King Nikola of Montenegro, in 1907, revealed a specific meaning of the Balkans and said that Balkans is the kind of a small change that the great powers use in their transaction. Hence, this metaphoric naming of the political transaction nomenclature is a very seminal statement for this chapter, because it implies the impossibility to locally resolve global conflicts, to put it in Bauman terms. The Balkan region is often called the powder keg: this metaphor, among various examples, comes from the inclination of the Balkan territories to nurture the metaphorical incandescence fire of the history. This metaphor is perhaps inspired by the case of the assassination in Sarajevo of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian imperial throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.

The goal of this dissertation is not, however, to draw a historical outline of these fluctuant and fermenting nation states events, but to focus on a smaller scale: to draw on the micro wave of the human condition in such border confusion, in compositions of liminal tides, linguistic inter-flows and cultural interstices, inside the geographical and the coherent mental maps. I draw on both geographical and mental, because some experiences has shown that nearly every person or community or ethnic group in former Yugoslavian regions envisage the existence of one geographical map, politically set, legally determined, and the inner existence, a fictional one, of a mental map, a dream of a bigger platform, a wider nation-state, which rehearses the imaginary feelings of the nation and the ethnicity caught into a liminal web, network of cultures.

On the other hand, there is the concept, which seems more interesting to me, of the micro interstice culture that will somehow produce massive emigrations issued from

the desire to find or handle with the nomadic *homeness* (I will elaborate the concept of ‘homeness’ in the last chapter), to capture a shifting space. This nomadic culture is issued from the refusal of the bordering domestication: this will be the case, as it will be drawn out later on, of the nomadic, or so to say those wandering artists and writers which were expatriated during or right after the last spark in the European continent, in the Balkans, the bloody destruction of Yugoslavia. In particular, I shall draw attention on the last Balkan break-down: the disappeared country of Yugoslavia and the impact on the artistic lives. Such recent political shattering has taught history once again to what extent the political factor can mutate the space containing social relations, ethnicity, religion and language, and influence the awkward building of identifications and affiliations, inventing neologisms and economical management of place and memory. There has been a strong political and an economic support to grow and feed self-over-identification in terms of self-determination with the adequate region of spatial therefore national and cultural belonging.

Consequently, I thought of making a reference to the Lotmanian system of semantic semiotic-spheres which has been, in the geopolitical turn put into practice: many micro-semiotic-spheres have been reproducing the big simulated semiotic-sphere of the Yugoslavian space, when applying the elements of power. For some reason, it seemed that the global model of power, the Yugoslavian one, was systematically reproduced on a smaller scale of national and cultural values; and that this power-semantic-model, was multiplied on ethnical, on regional, and on local levels in one huge mess of ethnicities, nation and a lust for power. Hence, the shattering was sort of viral form of reproduction of multiple mini-Yugoslavia (Zygmunt Bauman raise the globalizing tendency of reproducing mini-Berlin walls), of mini-centers of power; consequently, what remained in those in-between national and ethnic spaces was the memory of loss, the global amnesia, the indefinite liminality. However, the status of those remained in the *betweenness* was not at stake. What was at stake was the re-invention of people, or as Balibar puts it the ‘production of people’, who were evolving strategically following the collapse of the bigger border frame. Thus, strategies of demarcation of borders, the *urbanicide* (i.e. breaking down and cleaning the cities, dividing them, splitting them, reconfiguring them), practices of b-ordering of the othering and of the impossibility to fix territorial identities, of exchange of ethnically cleaned territories, limbo atrocity, outrage state reconfiguration (which was the case of

Bosnia and Herzegovina), open borders (like the one at that time between Macedonia and Kosovo), and were *de facto* taking place in all those formerly organized states, which had become borderless in terms of smuggling of arms and drugs and trafficking of human beings. From this, one evident line is drawn, and supported by the contemporary studies on borders, and it is the fact that the physical, so to say territorial approach to borders - as determining the stone cast fixed limits of nation states - is a shifting tramp: shifting tramp implies a horizon that we will never reach nor understand. The feature of fixed border certainly is replaced by the idea (represented by the interviewed artists and writers that we shall read later on) that borders occur to be political segregators, human dividers and induce the confusion of the belonging, which turn to become something liminal, unclear, fluid and stuck into the interstices of the changing and hybrid cultures.

The problem of the border is polymorphic, many-sided especially in those cases where the operations of bordering taking place in former Yugoslavia, have engendered societal, cultural and spatial distinctions of cultural practices, even though in almost every case the operation of bordering happens to be only an operation of demarcation of a line in the natural, geographical boundary. In my understanding, the United States and the European Union have easily undergone in defining nationalism as the core reason of the shuttering. But does this mean the economically developed democracies, the power-holders and the healthy nation-state's nationalism is vigorous and vital, whilst the former Yugoslavian nationalisms were pathological? In favor to this question, the twisted perception performed by the media and by the political agendas of such economically grown democracies on the question of the former communist countries in the Eastern European, the Soviet Block, and inclusive of Yugoslavia, was mono-directional and narrow: the general, and complex model and societal political structure of a mixture of nationalities, tribes, peoples in the German linguistic sense of *das Volk*, ethnicities and nomadic people settled there, was not a scientifically wise argumentation and not congruent enough with the real picture of the cultural cohabitation there. The cultural complexities concerning notions of land, blood, religion, language, nationhood, in that side of Europe were outrageously put in a box called *religious war* and explained by populations impossibility to cope with each other. Very easily, as a cure to that, and against the hatred and the bloody rage, morphologically not-understandable concepts and prescriptions of the *multi-cultural* societies as solutions and medicine were

prescribed. The primordial and tribal sense of belonging was thereto often misunderstood with the awkward wage of bloody nationalism. However, it is safer to admit the impossibility of classify into a bipolar national-ethno-religious interpretation that wage of wars, given that those often historically incongruent territories are bound with passionate heat over many identifications questions. The reason why and how did the fear of acculturation and the desire of belonging appear as criminal and primordial nationalism has some sort of enigmatic meaning. And this is also raised by Arjun Appadurai as he puts it in the Bosnia fallacy, which was an error that involved many misunderstandings of the Eastern Europe ethnic battles; an error that caused transaction and translation of those societies as tribal and primordial, an error in which many mass media including the CNN, BBC and the *New York Times* took a responsible part, because they compounded the mistake by taking the Eastern Europe case to be a model case of all emergent nationalisms.¹⁸ Appadurai says that “there is no denying that such concepts such as cascade, transvaluation, focalization, and implosion seem too abstract, too mechanistic, too general to capture the brute contingency, the raw violence, the electric blood lust, the instinct to degradation that seem to accompany the ethnic terror of such places as Rwanda and Bosnia, Karachi and Colombo.”¹⁹ This deep categorical treachery that Appadurai refers to however does not happen to be defined intrinsically for victims and those who kill: the sense of betrayal contained in the deep categorical treachery is defined by large scale forces.

This “(...) preoccupation with the control, classification, and surveillance of its subjects (...)” of the betrayed group of victims, that “(...) the nation-state has often created, revitalized, or fractured ethnic identities that were previously fluid, negotiable, or nascent”²⁰ is something we should ponder on. This was the case of the fast proliferation of linguistic battles and re-invention of languages; what was called the Serbo-Croatian language was not anymore a deep category of meaning and power, for instance. Appadurai puts it very well when describing these groupings of people as “(...) closely bonded, spatially segregated, naturally allied”, and referring to Hobsbawm, he argues that tribalism is a difficult category to apply to those “(...) Yugoslav families who have produced 1.4 million mixed marriages between Serbs and

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 21

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 154.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 162.

Croats?”²¹, which were again difficult to grasp and categorize in the census or in the public shared feelings of culture and belonging.

From here arises the question of nostalgia for a space within the emotional refusal of belonging, of affiliation and of domestication. This is precisely upraised in those lines of understanding of the compulsory individuation and identification in ethnical, nationalistic and cultural terms. “Because they are so often the product of forced as well as voluntary diaspora, of mobile intellectuals as well as manual workers, of dialogues with hostile as well as hospitable states, very few of the new nationalisms can be separated from the anguish of displacement, the nostalgia of exile, the repatriation of funds, or the brutalities of asylum seeking.”²²

Therefore, this chapter allows me to draw on a wider understanding, not at all based on the generic representation and the politically oriented media, that the pathologic and morbid phenomena occurring in the recent European history and geography occurred and mutated on a complex cultural (indefinite) chart and within spaces management strategies; this used to be transposed in our reality under the terminology of exchange of ethnically clean territories (as proposed by the one Macedonian Prime Minister and the other Macedonian Academician) or creation of limbo states. These realities traced by the imposed or forced emigration, expelled citizens and economically fragile categories, engendered state-apparatus paranoia and fear, ethnic cleansing and had to deal with an unclear presence of the international factor, which have occurred in this part of Central-Eastern Europe, led us to think the border as a manifold structure rather than as a purely spatial element. This tragic territorial complexity is also called by Appadurai as “state-refugee domino processes”²³ because in such cases, people were forced to choose to be affiliated into communities, to turn into ghettos, refugee camps (the case of the young Bosnian woman Korana Delic, now a photographer living the United States), concentration camps or unknown cemeteries. “The many displaced, deterritorialized, and transient populations that constitute today’s ethnoscares are engaged in the construction of locality, as a structure of feeling, often in the face of erosion, dispersal, and implosion of neighborhoods as

²¹ Ibidem, p. 164.

²² Ibidem, p. 165.

²³ Ibidem, p. 192.

coherent social formations.”²⁴ Later on, this chapter will draw on the *locality* and the shared intimate common cultural habits, which will lead, once again, to what has been proposed initially as a goal of this dissertation: the liminality.

*

Many border studies argue that borders strive for feelings of safety and wellbeing and thereto the psychological attachment to borders is somewhat explicable. But beyond this apparent safety the question I argue is what really happens when this comfort is shattered in countries which remained with open borders right after the war (e.g. Macedonia, the maritime region between Slovenia and Croatia, Kosovo) and whose political ideology was weakened? Hence, as it was underlined by the Croatian writer and well known journalist, Slavenka Drakulic, it is also pretty much enigmatic how come the new borders and the gained consequent independence have produced a wish to shift, to separate, to go through another union, another similar federation: from the bloodily destroyed Yugoslavian Federation toward the recent European Union? Are we to think the EU integration would mean to a certain extent a transformation of the past, the oblivion or the transcendental upgrade of politics and amnesia of the Balkan passionate legacy? But how could we grasp the question if a territory and the according cultural interpretation of such territory, as Kevin R. Cox argues, are negotiating meanings and are interconnected in a sort of synergy of understandings? Bordered territory implies operations of manifold cultural territoriality and linguistic and cultural production impossible to maintain, to contain or to shape; the question is what is firstly claimed by the inhabitants of the bordered territory: the territory or the cultural territoriality? And to which one is the concept of power and spatial domination is applied? This is especially the case with those republics which remained with open and not demarked borders for a certain period of time.

*

Yugoslavia was a nation-confederation inhabited by many nationalities, ethnicities, peoples (*Volk*) and tribal communities, and yet the concept such as ethnicity did not match at that time and thus there should be a historical questioning of such generic concepts, powerful nomenclatures and categories. After the collapse there were people resisting the national-affiliation in that form of a *no man's land* and on the other

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 199.

hand people striving for state-border definition of their ethno-affiliation (which was the case of Kosovo and the Albanian minority). In such border confusing contexts, as Yugoslavia started falling apart, it appeared that territoriality and borders had actually been much more important than any other societal and political advantages that could have been offered by the federal constellation. In that situation, the territorial principle has been unavoidably intertwined with the defining of the borders of the ethnic identities; thus borders became important to distinguish who are the people inhabiting one side of the border and who were the others neighbors on the other side of the border. The cultural affiliation therefore had to be questioned and re-invented.

The artistic proposal of borderness was another way of seeing this and that will be argued further on. This said, in the present chapter and in the chapters to come, I argue the dissolution of the Yugoslavian political borders and the impact they have had on the human condition and lives, and in particular on the artworks and lives of some writers and artists who left Yugoslavia, some exiled other self-exiled and some simply emigrated. Therefore the goal would be to rethink the concepts of citizenship, community, ethnicity, nationality and multiple identities throughout their personal and ideological experiences with the status of border inhabitants and border crossers. For this purpose I shall use the empirical approach applying social qualitative methods to construct my interpretation on the basis of their case studies and semi-structured interviews.

When a border is broken, human existence undergoes various degrees of shifting identities and the human condition performs liminal qualities. Numerous artistic productions witness the failure of the misused concept of the border and criticize the conquest of new virtual territorialities. Besides, many artistic products are being created in shifting political systems and this engenders also a certain liquid morphology of the nomadic creation. The last Balkan war, in particular the outbreak of the Yugoslavian wars in Europe, have produced a brand new creation of maps, reconfiguration of territorialities, new cultural meanings, political and social diseases and new borders. After this bloody event, the territory of Europe has reinvented spaces in continuous capture. The expatriation, the migrations of many former Yugoslavian artists and writers performed real, physical testimonials of the geopolitical background and migrated from the countries of origin. Most of their artwork is related to the concepts of transit-migrations, liminal diaspora, continuous displacement and refusal of imposed

affiliation and therefore embrace of layered societal and cultural belongings. David Albahari and Slavenka Drakulic are the writers on which I draw and which are most intellectually involved in the question of borderness, diaspora, migration and exile in the context of former Yugoslavia. But there are many other writers (e.g. Dubravka Ugresic, Goran Stefanovski, etc.) who have been interested and concerned with these topics, many artists as well, namely the *Grupa Spomenik/Monument Group*²⁵ composed by Milica Tomic, Branimir Stojanovic and Damir Arsenijevic. However the most famous example is the figure of Marina Abramovic, the Serbian worldwide known (almost machinery) performance artist. Her case is very particular, for Marina is an authentic nomadic artist. Politically speaking, her early production is mainly relevant; she has performed with her partner the famous naked body performance “Communist body/Fascist body”²⁶, and lived the nomadic life across the continents of the world. Her natural belonging to this Balkan space-in-motion started years before the crash of the big Federation, when she moved to Amsterdam in 1976. From where she initiated the nomadic art with her Dutch nomadic partner, Ulay (Uwe Laysiepen) with whom she explored public and private spaces, performed naked in front of audience, lived the nomadic life across Africa and with whom she did the last work together, The Great Wall Walk (1988), which entailed each walking 2,000 km along the Great Wall of China, departing at opposite ends of the wall and meeting at one point in the middle of the wall as a ceremonial of their love ending. We should admit this transitory nomadic passage is a perfect metaphor of what I argue: the walks, the passages, the spatial conquest, the itinerancy, the vagrancy of her ideas were never seen as something sensational but concentrated on inner initiation, break-through, blowing up and crashing against body impossibilities. The pain, the physical exposure of her art was somewhat extracted from this space-in-motion: the migrating moment, the transhumant action and the total detachment of a border were enacted in order to create a new artistically flagrant meaning and boundary contingent borderline. This is the reason why I would like to focus a bit more on her work *Balkan Baroque*, performed in 1997 at the Venice Biennale, for which she received the Golden Lion Award for Best Artist, and so to relate the spatial turbulence of the Balkan countries, in particular former Yugoslavian,

²⁵ <http://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/timeline/>

²⁶ For the purposes of this work Marina uses her and Ulay birth certificates, to put in evidence the political weight of their belonging: in his case the Fascist *Svastika* and in her case the Communist *Petokraka* star. They sleep naked covered on the floor and next to their bodies on two tables there are different ways of serving food and national and cultural emblems. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20iPqDhjpA0>

to her work. It must be said that her performances push the human boundary to the final edge of cognition. The disjuncture and the scandal are cranking the machinery of the virtual in front of the eye of a spectator; but the spatial redefinition of the passage, both the physical projection into extreme conditions (ice, fire, knife and so on) and the initiation that comes into life through these extreme practices, are at stake. I would also say that the human nomadic condition is the web, a tie of the liminal space of this Balkan Baroque. In *Balkan Baroque* she tells us unedited legends about her cultural cradle. She is a visual story-teller, translating into displacement every spasmodic discrepancy of our intimate life and primordial, primitive cultures.

In the Balkans people say that you are never born and die in one same country. The border and by consequence the spatial definition is, for this part of Europe, a complex moving phenomenon and it has always given the transhumant shape of the complex cultures and human interpretations existing there. Marina Abramovic, who was interviewed for the Observer in 2013 said: “When people ask me where I am from, I never say Serbia. I always say I come from a country that no longer exists”²⁷. After the proliferation of meanings of her statement we feel that there has been a broken border, a trauma and so we start to think of Marina Abramovic in this liquid state of mind. Her creative motion of being occurs throughout crossings of borders of politics and human theory and of boundaries of the flesh. What we face it is the perpetual break or a notion of no-destination, of nowhere-to-be place, which witnesses in a nutshell the focus of my article, the pure yet artistic deterritorialization. This represents a shifting image, a liminal face, unstable substance, individuation of persons that have launched themselves into space to disseminate meaning with their own nomadic bodies. Because the space delimited within certain borders was simply not enough. On the contrary: it expelled them in a certain way. In the case of Marina Abramovic, there is however none of that.

Arguing the dissolution of borders, we shall think of the notion of the Berlin Wall which has changed essential political concepts on the European continent. We witness the turbulences not only throughout the economic crisis, but on a global anthropological-cultural landscape; we perceive that the border is an element of utter importance nowadays in Europe and this is the reason why I would like to offer meanings which were, perhaps, until now neglected by Western contemporary thought,

²⁷ The Observer, 3 October 2010, the on-line edition.

mainly concerned with time rather than space. This is the reason why I am arguing all aspects of nomadic production within Balkan cultures because these experiences might give a broader perception of the contemporary discourse on the multiple sides of the migrations on Europe. The concept of the nomadic is present when dealing with cultural encounters within a large scale of expressions of borders and the possible perceptions of the stone notions of *nation, ethnicity and identity*, as almost overused yet powerful concepts when defining uncontrollable human changes and actions. The transnational circulation offers new figures of nomad rather modern nomads and we no longer think the migrant as a political category but as a fracture of a space and a personal choice. This is why the theory of the nomadic has its vital revival because it will help us to understand in wider perspective these phenomena.

The concept of politics and the political societal shaping power have had inflicted a serious impact on the lives of many artists. The Western social utopias such as “political correctness” and “multiculturalism” have been more than irritating for these nomadic artists who have witnessed the concrete border tailoring. Marina Abramovic after cutting a five star Yugoslav national symbol with a blade-razor on her belly continued exploring the symbiosis between body and space and alluding to gender, communism and Balkan geopolitics. In her Balkan Baroque performance, the boundary of the body within the cyber-space is related to these spatial-temporal arrangements and parameters of the reconfiguration of the concept of migrating space. Even though she is not in the focus of my case studies, I referred to her work, because I recognize the aforementioned geopolitical categories of displaced subjects and of passages. The international border space has shaped abjectly conflicts, wars, refugees etc. but the human factor and the human condition though are the main concepts in which Hannah Arendt considered to be some sides of humanity. These sides, the kind of space where these expatriated artists are dwelling, could be named, according to the Deleuzian terminology, as “striated space”, whilst the human condition turns and moves into a “smooth space”. The rhizomatic roadmap embraces it all: the capture of territory, the exportation of humanitarian democracy, contemporary colonization practices and categorization of the human migration condition in an arbitrary fashion. This is the reason why when we think of nomads we shall not neglect territory, space, or motion. Their territorial ethics are to be disseminated by themselves and their meanings, in the space where they are involved. They hold their space artistically. They inhabit their

inner space. They fill in the space with a notorious sense of freedom and desire to be part of complex cultures which cannot be inflicted by territorial contamination.

Nomadic *per se*, these artists and their artistic thought dwell in a multi-linguistic discourse, in a brand new modernity but not as it used to be up until now in a dualistic, bipolar and sedentary manner: the wandering situation of mind produces multiple degrees of definitions of politics, nation and culture. We realize that confronting anthropology in times of war is a dangerous enterprise; that traits or traces of post-colonization occults multiple cultural perceptions of democratization and rule of law; that metamorphosis of a space produces wanderers; that vagrancy is something that we should extend our focus to, at least for a while, as it is supposed to be a precedent of the humanization. The migrant finds himself, at the end of the day, in a space that does not belong to anyone and anywhere. The dwelling in a sea of languages and communication technologies for a migrant is in a way an issue to save themselves from the threats of the acculturation. Their language is their link to their home, the act of border crossing. The space becomes a spontaneous configuration of territories and positions. Now the question posed by Marc Augé, is why do in one same place can different and unique elements co-exist, but we forbid ourselves to think of their relations and their shared identities shared in a common space.²⁸

The creation of the cherished concept of difference is passing through harsh border crossing, both political and ideological. These artists have been going through these processes of continuum in displacement, because the wall crossing, the border crossing, the mountain crossing, the airport crossing produces meaning: all borders are invented as are the identities. They have nourished the self-chosen-exile as an initiation for many other writers who suddenly started to immigrate drifted by the new map of the former Yugoslavian liminal drift of space. The border is a tie, a web, a capital of meanings. The nomadic practice of crossing borders, walls, passages, without the notion of a cultural interference creates this cross-cultural dissemination and proliferation of power and will not to disappear.

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²⁸ Augé, Marc, *Les non-lieux*, Seuil, 1992, p. 70.

Focusing back on the main subject of this chapter, the outbreaks of the wars in the former Yugoslavian republics has created a large abyss in the proliferation of concepts that used to imply the *Brotherhood* inside the Yugoslavian *Fatherland*. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, the transcontinental meaning of the Yugoslavian state, the race and ethnicity are on an international level a “status group”; to him status groups are a collective representation. Those borders drawn throughout the wars have demonstrated the relation of power among States. The Yugoslavian experiment has shown that sharing a different present relocates borders in both physical and metaphysical manner. The Balibar’s concept of “production of new people” was taking place gradually. The production of peoples in disassembled, cut into pieces and reconstructed spaces, was submerged in the blood of these same people, which was together with their Yugoslavian identity suppressed into an oblivion. The cultural idea of loss was unavoidable. As Edward Casey puts it, the borders are not facing only multiple temporalities, but are composed of natural boundaries, of uncontrollable physical spaces and therefore the content of memory and loss of memory relates to these border spaces in a very performing way: people were translated into liminal transitions; their memories become liminal; their habits split and their language mutates. I would intentionally avoid putting all under the cluster of identity but as Julia Kristeva has put it: the historical construction of *identity*, which is according to her of pedagogical, so to say of demagogical nature, as it refers to one memory and one temporality, whilst the process of cultural affiliation and identification undergoes through the loss of identity, meaning the loss of space and temporality, loss of fixed culture, mistranslation of borders. In this context of *toponimia* and peoples production, the anomia and the isomorphism are influencing the creation of space without places; a space that has to be renewed, re-questioned, seized and dug up from within the frustration of the imposed, circumstantial “identity” refusal. The clash of definitions was infiltrated by the clash of borders.

I have chosen to work with these expatriated artists because in my understanding I could perceive in their personal testimonials the refusal to choose what is already given and compulsory in terms of belonging, even though apparently seems like a free will oath, and the inclination to embrace a nostalgia for a shifting space, a shifting home and continuous aesthetical displacements. In this sense, we shall think the space which undergoes continuous definition, and raise the question of why and how it undergoes

delimitation and why many years the phenomenological notion of space has been neglected by Western philosophy. The past, the memories, the tactile experience are kept in mind in what could be depicted as territory mindful of the personal journey experiences; in fact, this is the focus point of this chapter because I argue how the nomadic is a continuous capture of a space and the longing for a “pure space” is what somewhat motivates people to run, to escape, to refuse the management of memory, the management of space. Therefore, the former Yugoslavian artists I focus on, they have all, or nearly all stated that they have left their native cities, where they were born, because “they have all given to each other (i.e. they and the cities) what they had to give”²⁹. The memory is fulfilled, the space is contaminated and the chapter is closed.

The conclusion to which I want to proceed at the end of my dissertation, would offer an understanding that people do not run away from time, - which often is linked to memory and a certain emotional burden cause by trauma or violence - , but they are leaving the space that is impregnated with personal experiences of remembering, that is absorbing things, moments, elements of collective and individual memory. Now, when the violence is part of that space, the will to escapee is natural (which will be the case that we will see later on, of the Bosnian refugee, the young photographer Korana Segetalo Delic). The runaway, the nomadic escape *per se* represents, incorporates and encloses the missed return to the former space, but in a nutshell it is a liminal drift, a nomadic taking care of that space, carrying the intimate understanding of that former space.

The dissolution of borders in former Yugoslavia has engendered new politics new spaces, new faces and yet non spaces producing, as Augé puts it, loneliness and some strange similarity despite the separation: the condition of inner exile, the crack up within the liquid lives of artists. Therefore the core argument I wish to modestly stress out is that it is impossible to put in one cluster the cultural phenomena raised during the outbreak of the Yugoslavian wars. We should think on smaller scale and focus on the societal redistribution of meaning and the spatial deterritorialization in the context of dissolved, somewhat fragile border zones, which enacts and upraises these cultural mutations, perceptions and values. To understand the human condition in the context of dissolved borders we must move in the interstices of the micro-migration and that is the

²⁹ Interview with the Bosnian poet Mehmed Begic.

migration of the mind: the displacement of the soul, the transit of the body, caused by the dissolving borders drifted by dissolving political powers. We ought to recall that, as Bauman puts it, “the budding nations needed power to feel secure, and the emergent state needed national patriotism to feel powerful. Each needed the other to survive, and both needed subjects/members ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of that survival. The era of nation state building had to be a time of heroism – of heroic patriotism, to be precise.”³⁰ And these general circumstances are very much important in order to understand the impact on the artist’s reason to enact their migration paths, for the relation between building nation state and the urge to move, to run away is implicit. This, the transit of mind I shall explore is somewhat fluid, liquid and liminal and as such opposes the cast in stone, petrified, fixed and stable concepts of borders. By consequence, the produced people mentioned above, and the engendered territories, have produced one form of isomorphism as a cultural practice and as an anthropological habit.

The explosion of the border creates chain implosions rising from the fractioning in six separate republics, pre-existing in Yugoslavia, shows that the quantity of bullets shots, of violence and genocides based on an ethno-societal-economical-religious platform, strongly questions the historically cherished concept of stable and internationally recognized borders. I would not go further into questioning if the ethnical belonging is a social construction or not, but I will try to bring a frame of conclusions aiming to demonstrate that it is not sufficient to dissolve borders and to accomplish one territory, and therefore to generate new borders and give independence to fervent nations (pre-existing republics), in order to smooth over and mitigate the violent calculations of faith and belongings. In this sense, Michel Foucher argues the fiction of the concept of *multiethnicity* produced by the Robert Badinter jurisdiction in Kosovo and the misleading understanding of such generalization. What does the prefix *multi-* means actually? Is it a symbol of false tolerance, a linguistic mitigation, an instant-democracy, or a moderated mask to cover the impossibility to cope with each other?

³⁰ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid life*, Polity Press, 2005, p. 43 - 44.

Luc Cambrézy argues the multitude of conflicts recomposing the world; given that the geographical and social borders are by nature mobile, it is unavoidable to admit that there is nothing so intangible as the intangibility of the trace of borders and that it is impossible like many have tried to (ex. The UN) make out of all borders, a non-temporal objects and definitive categories. The space itself of the exiled, the outcast and the displaced subjects is a multiplication of the cultural codes; they, the exiled, the outcast, the displaced, reproduce the border. Luc Cambrézy puts it very well, that in the international law, the political but the geographical frontier as well allows us to distinguish a refugee from a displaced person; but in the sociology and in the anthropologic or political science, he says, the border is a category that allows us to identify and to differentiate social groups, ethnical communities, nations³¹. Therefore to mitigate the sharp difference between a refugee or a displaced person, which commute into one wider global category in the domain of the shifting, manifold exiles.

For this, I will draw on the post – conflict migration model and refer to Anna Krasteva’s statement: “The Yugoslavian model was more open and emigration and circular labor migration were its expression. The outburst of conflicts and wars opened the floodgates of vigorous dislocations. The economic logic of mobility during the times of the Federation was drastically replaced by the political and military logic of the forced displacement (...) forced, ethnic and trafficking migration”³². However after the war, there was one gradually layered concept that rose to the surface: the notion of the so called Yugo-nostalgia³³, the intimate common world of taste, of smell, of food and of habits. This explains the reason why the territory is often a cultural representation constructed socially, or vice versa, a social representation constructed culturally, that is to say emotionally, which should not be overlooked, because there precisely occurs the micro-transit-movement at extra speed, that gives birth to the overheated dynamics or b/ordering in one specific zone. Having said this it is very difficult to imagine every different culture deploying its difference in an autonomous state. If “nationalism is the

³¹ Cambrézy, Luc, *Crise des sociétés, crise des territoires*, Editions des archives contemporaines, Paris, 2001, p. 136. “En droit international, la frontière politique (et géographique) permet de distinguer un réfugié d’un déplacé, mais en sociologie, en anthropologie ou en sciences politique, la frontière est aussi une catégorie permettant d’identifier et de différencier des groupes sociaux, des communautés ethniques, des nations.”

³² Krasteva, Anna, *Mobile Balkans: from forced to labour migrations*, in Dufoulon, Serge/Rostekova, Maria, *Migrations, mobilités, frontières*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 84.

³³ Nostalgia, longing and craving for all cultural emblems of the former Yugoslavian Federation, such as music, food, holiday destination, movies, theater etc.

philosophy of identity made into a collectively organized passion”³⁴, than it should be extremely difficult to justify and understand the capture of territories by European states as a paradigm of lawful state violence. And what if the only purpose was the “(...) perpetual self-invention (...)” as Said puts it? “Identity as such is about as boring a subject as one can imagine. Nothing seems less interesting than the narcissistic self-study that today passes in many places for identity politics, or ethnic studies, or affirmations of roots, cultural pride, drum-beating nationalism, and so on.”³⁵ (Said 2000:567) Hence, how can we argue the “affirmations of roots” in merely mental geographies? The seminal question is in fact do humans actually have roots?

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Drawing on Maria Todorova’s binary notions of Balkanization versus the Europeanization, this chapter will transpose some parts of the interview that I have carried out with the Chief Editor of the Information redaction at Radio Capodistria, Stefano Lusa. I have decided to interview him for two reasons: first he is an intellectual inhabiting a border then he is a PhD holder in history from the University of Torino, and his thesis was focusing to the dissolution of power, the Slovenian communist party and the democratization of the Slovenian republic. With the goal of discussing the understanding of the frontier in a real frontier zone, Istria, we arranged to meet in Capodistria/Koper and tackle some aspects of the border production and border dissemination in this part of former Yugoslavia. It was very important to discuss these issues with a journalist and an intellectual who comprises critical positions and has panoramic, theoretical and field notions in this argument. When we discussed how does he feels the inhabiting the border between Slovenia, Croatia and Italy, Lusa referred to the text *The conquest of America* by Tzvetan Todorov and *The Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or to Succeed* by Jared Dimond, undertaking the concept of cultural interaction which is an implicit quality of the frontier. He reckons borders are everywhere but the crucial question is whether we are disposed to cross them culturally. He identifies himself as a cultural product of the place he dwells in and the places he

³⁴ Said, Edward W., *Reflections on Exile and other literary and cultural essays*, Granta Books, London, 2000, p. 402.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 567.

inhabited. If we think further to what this layering may mean, then we will announce what it will be concluded in this dissertation: the liminality of the border transit and the trans-boundary transport of the mankind. But the sense of non-belonging and non-affiliation is strong: nobody feels really at home, Lusa says. The perpetual feelings of homelessness are present all along the way and the feeling of strangeness is the inner part of the notion of homeness. Notwithstanding, the alienation, or the organic process of becoming a *stranger* of its own kind, as Kristeva puts it, is not supposed to be traumatic because the *foreignness* gives a wider possibility to dwell in multiple cultures and to produce cultural codes that did not exist on this or on the other side, as they become gradually liminal.

Hence, there is another border related question that we have raised and that is the question related to the people inhabiting the border and their multiple cultural affiliations. According to Lusa local experiences and analysis, such multiple identities were not such a problem as long as the question of affiliation and self-definition was not posed. From here, a very interesting point is when he defines the former Yugoslavian census as a sort of plebiscites, where one was obliged to define themselves and their political belonging in a very rough fashion. According to Stefano, this was a pretty cruel practice for the children coming from mixed marriages; the answer to this question was as if they cherished the mother or the father better. This hybrid culture has even gone too far by producing in the '80 the so called Istria identity. (And this will also be raised by Slavenka Drakulic, where she quotes the cases of the census where people inhabiting Istria declare themselves as Istrians rather than Croats or Slovenians or Italians.). Here, Lusa refers to Eric Hobsbawm text *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* which schema was followed in the strategies of “cementation” of multiple cultural repeals in that region, which here happens to act as an example of cultural liminality. We perceive this liminality in the common dialects and sayings, the common habits and gastronomic products, the daily transit across “borders” and the small commercial activities back and forth over the borders.

In his reflexions, Lusa reckons the Istria border inhabitant as a produce of three cultures: the Croatian, the Slovenian and the Italian one. Therefore, this border cultural phenomenon concept, or pathology as he calls it, that at first glance seems to glorify and exalt the cultural hybridization, in fact excludes the nomenclature of *Istrian* because it builds further borders between them (Istria inhabitants) and the other border inhabitants

dwelling there. What happens in the everyday lives practice is the Italian, the Slovenian or the Croatian affiliation does not suffice to be Istrian, because if someone coming from Rome or Ljubljana comes over, they are perceived as outsiders, as intruders, as people which are not part of “our people”, not our *Volk*. In a nutshell, Lusa points out, this phenomenon is typical for the exaltation of small regional lands and homelands. But what happens with the cultural self-definition within several cultures? Lusa argues cultural dimension and content are issued from the places and the cultures we have inhabited, interacted with, and which have imprinted our migration paths. The cultural imprints and influences from the spaces we inhabit are unavoidable. For this he refers to an example with some friends from Istria, that he had and that have lived for 40 years in The Netherlands. Their dream was to return back to Croatia after the retreat. But when they did return to Croatia, after only few months there, they have decided to go back in The Netherlands. What has happened, in fact, is the classical acculturation case where these people turn out to be more Dutch than Croats, even though they have never wanted to apply for Dutch citizenship. They continued living their lives between Croatia and the Netherlands.

This perpetual reinvention of the tradition and restitution of the past cannot be analysed regardless the Yugoslavian crisis. The desire and the nostalgia for a local, regional identity could be interpreted as a surrogate, which do not exclude the global frame of the falling confederation. Lusa argues that there is no pure culture and the border inhabitant’s identity is a proof to that. The local, minimal, interstice obsession with identification is due to the fact, Lusa says, that such regions have not contributed to the global cultural fluxes and therefore feel the urgent need to cast a forged tradition and identification.

We were discussing the impact of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia and the political factor implemented in people’s lives and Lusa pointed out a very sharp statement that actually Yugoslavia is a live cultural entity and lives abroad throughout the emigrated former citizens (for this we shall focus on the expatriated artists testimonials). Thereto for this purpose, Lusa refers to the research carried out by Mitja Velikonja arguing immigrants from the former Yugoslavian republics, that think their country, their nation from abroad and think such nationhood and belonging with certian nostalgia. (From here, I shall deduce my concept for nostalgia for a space, non-space or concrete space.) This comes into practice especially when, within abroad, from

somewhat marginal or central spaces, say it from Berlin, Paris, Milano or London, these immigrants, or the later, the expatriated former Yugoslavian artists in Berlin, Salt Lake City, Nicaragua, Vienna, or Calgary, are affected by the former space, or as Lusa says, they feel a certain commonality and community-shared-feelings with other immigrants or however former Yugoslavian people dwelling there. In this pattern, the conversations taking places usually between these people, are culturally impregnated with topics and habits formerly established as practices based on common living and common cultural inhabiting the politically non-existing spaces: the Yugoslavian ones. Hence, such topics emerge from the nostalgia of the culinary feelings inspired by the famous chocolate factory in Zagreb, namely *Krash*, or by the Slovenian fruit juices factory *Fruktal*, or the common products like the chocolate cream called *Eurokrem* or the Yugoslavian toothpaste *Kaladont* or the still existing tendency to call the Adriatic sea *our sea*, or the Srbo-Croatian language, *our language*, and other cultural specialties which gather together the former Yugoslavian immigrants all over Europe (the Serbian migrating artists, based in Berlin, Tanja Ostojic will be delivering an artistic politically critical performance on the Slovenian motor bikes factory *Tomos*.) This, according to Stefano Lusa, could be translated into the cultural content or notion of the object, of the material, of the trivial day-to-day practices that have their origin in the politically non-existing space of former Yugoslavia, and which is somewhat a continuous capturing of a non-existing, virtual, simulated, fetishist and intimate common world. This would be a synonym of an old, dying world, which still exists but through different economical optics in another political dimension, and this nostalgia of that shifting space, according to Lusa, has no *raison d'être* for today youngsters who have nothing to share within that common, nostalgic, intimate, interstice-space which is shifting like a live sand, like a rock slowly but surely devastated by the water of time. For those youngsters (born after 1985), those values have no semantic field of cultural meanings because they do not share the common community memories and they do not even speak the formerly official language of the Yugoslavian federation, the so called Serb-Croatian language (today linguistically modified and split into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Montenegrin language), and which was at that time the *lingua franca* of the Yugoslavian Federation.

Arguing whether Balkans are a geographical or a political notion, and the de-balkanization strategies at stake, Lusa says that it is a very mobile, shifting, liminal

concept in sense that for the Germans, Balkans begin in Vienna, while for the Austrians, Balkans begin in Ljubljana and so on and so forth. But what was very appealing to focus to, are the exact daily practices we focused to above. According to Lusa, now, the pro-European strategies of cultural de-balkanization are taking place via the architecture and the ski: Slovenians throughout ski and the architectonical platform projected by Joze Plecnik, the architect who has redesigned Prague, reveal their mittleuropean belonging, leaving the Balkan affiliation far behind. The same applies to people on southern zones of Slovenia: Istria, other parts of Croatia and it means that the political sense of the Balkans does not exist there anymore but the central European imprint is going fervidly and is important economically, anthropologically and culturally. According to Lusa, the geostrategic process consist of moving Slovenia away from former Yugoslavia and bringing it into another sphere, a more “mittel-european” zone of cultural belonging. In this, Lusa reckons the political dimension and reason of the Balkans, rather than the geographical one and he refers to Maria Todorova, stating that more Balkan people are getting europeinized, more they are getting balkanized. This means on a smaller scale what the Croatian journalist, Slavenka Drakulic, said during the interview that to her understanding it is unclear why separated and unplugged from one big Federation, the former Yugoslavian republics wishes to join a bigger union, which has similar traces to the former one. On a bigger scale, Stefano Lusa, says, that as a consequence of the infiltration of the great ideas of nationhood and ethnically cleansed zones, the Balkan area is becoming as fervid as before, one huge heated melting pot.

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The case of Yugoslavia, even today still tackles the question if there has been any shift in the understandings of borders in the Balkans? Biljana Vankovska³⁶ offers one possible explanation: according to her there is still a deep trauma and beliefs that the borders have always been artificially drawn in accordance to the Great Powers' interests on a green table, disregarding natural interests of the living people. The Balkan's people inclination to think that states borders may be changeable and temporary in both political and historical terms, ends up with the thinking that great borders of great nationhoods exist where what prevails is ethnicity and linguistic specificity. According to her it was proven that ethnic affiliation is proven to be stronger

³⁶ Vankovska, Biljana/Bianchini, Stefano/ Joseph,Marko, Craig Nation, Robert/ Uvalic, Milica, *Regional Cooperation, Peace Enforcement and the Role of the Treaties in the Balkans*, Longo, Ravenna, 2007.

and deeper than the affiliation to a certain state entity. This is the reason why I have previously mentioned that there is a form of psychological interzone, a split perception, an interstice chart of the borders in the minds of all the Balkan's nations and people: on one hand there is the established political map, often thought of as a diminished map which is internationally and politically unjust for the nation, and on the other hand there is the nationhood entailed in another historical map, which is smoothly cherished and intimate.

To conclude, I would refer to a reading of Leo Strauss statement on anti-globalisation: since he argues that there is no acceptance of human groups of human beings that can rule the humanity as a whole, we could then apply the theory that the Western political factor has failed their fundamental mission - that is to say failed to prevent war in the case of Yugoslavia. Global citizenship is impossible as it is hard to believe that there is an unique value and entity of instant democracy that can be imposed by force. The perversion of invasion abuses global concepts but in a nutshell engenders fear and dispersion; the mankind categories deals with exclusivity like Strauss appoints and not with generalities. As an answer to Badinter's plan for the peace in former Yugoslavia, I would again transfer Bauman saying that there are not and cannot be local solutions to global problems and furthermore there are not even global solutions to local problems either. At the end of this chapter, we can think the conflict, the revival of the war machine as a generator of the nomadic, and the regeneration and reconstitution of spatial potential, where smooth space means heterogeneous space composed of qualitative multiplicity and striated space homogeneous space composed of quantitative multiplicity.

If space contains the memory, the sentimental, the mindful, and if that manifold memory is contained somewhere in the border crossing artwork, and if that memory is not given nor forgiven, than the corollary would be the fact that the inner sense of the alienation produced by the dissolving generation of borders brings to nothing but a pathologic loss of home (and, perhaps, the language.)

Generating borders: the global platform of spatial reconfigurations

The sea is often tempestuous, sometimes quiet and never confident but one thing is sure: it never recognizes borders.

David Albahari³⁷

Border is mental incapacity to deal with the other; it is the pathology of the world.

Daniel Libeskind³⁸

And the human being is likewise the bordering creature who has no border.

Georg Simmel³⁹

These borders simultaneously force us to remember what is no longer there and what we wanted to forget as well as to hamper out free access to places where we were never denied in order to remember the larger issue that once there was access limitation somewhere.

Sarah Green⁴⁰

³⁷ Albahari, David, *Borders*, in Albahari, David, *Dijaspora i druge stvari*, Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad, 2008, p. 146.

³⁸ *Relocating Borders* Conference at Humbolt University, Berlin, 21 January 2013.

³⁹ Frisby, David/Featherstone, Mike, edited by, *Simmel on culture*, Sage Publications, 1997, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Green, Sarah/Malm, Lena, *Borderwork. A visual journey through periphery frontier regions*, Silti, Riga, 2013, p. 76.

In this chapter I draw on the border in terms of the political, in terms of the material and the concrete implementation of the political and cultural choice of affiliation taking place on the global scale of the spatial reconfigurations within cultural empirical frames. First, I would distinguish two semantic fields of the bordering meanings: the nature and the quality of *boundary* – meaning natural spot, geographical space, that is to say the sea, the forest, the mountain, the desert – of each political somewhat uncomfortable *border*, that is to say the wall, the bridge, the police control, political interdiction, ethnical separation and so on and so forth. In the global context of neo-liberalism, late-capitalism, or even glocalisation versus globalization and the consequent societal changes, borders have undergone continuous definition and redefinitions: placements and replacements of wandering subjects, separation of cities and spatial divisions, and location and relocation of boundaries are defining the global platform of space, art, migration and culture. Yet, as we have seen in the previous chapter on border dissolution and resolution, this tendency has engendered critical forms of artwork and political engagement of artists in former Yugoslavia (namely the Serbian art group *Spomenik*⁴¹, the Bosnian artist based in Berlin, Selja Kamerić⁴², the aforementioned Marina Abramovic, Tanja Ostojic, Slavenka Drakulic, Dubravka Ugresic⁴³ and others that I will draw on later on). In a nutshell, they have become an antinomy of the static, of the haptic, of the fixed spaces and rather have undergone ongoing, fervent and liquid relocation and spatial reconsideration. Again, these border generating geopolitical and geocultural processes, were in particular raised in the previous chapter and was witnessed in the Middle-Eastern part of Europe, i.e. and the fall of Yugoslavia, preceded by the demolishment of the Berlin Wall and followed by local bloody conflicts. These processes which have generated new charting and maps tailoring in the contemporary European geography, in 2009 remarked the 20th anniversary of the violent breaking down of the closed borders, the cutting of the barbed wire, the demolishing of walls between the European nations, the collapse of the Iron Curtain, which have changed the global face and image not only of Europe but of the world as a whole inter-connecting bordering field.

⁴¹ <http://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/>

⁴² http://www.memory-culture-art.org/project/roundtable_belgrade.html

<http://sejlakameric.com/>

⁴³ <http://www.dubravkaugresic.com/>

If the character of the border is traced by static linguistic, economic and political emblems, in the contemporary societal and political context, the border is structured as a produce of global shifts: this means that the border contents and produces are rather interfered with liminal, mobile, shifting meanings of the utopia of belonging. The double layered quality of the border implies a double lecture of the border: a split, a breakup, a separation, a forbidden access, but further on and deeper on it also implies a creative side and artistic production performing pushed and displaced boundaries. David Albahari's novel *Border* argues the essential side of the boundary; Tanja Ostojic performances *Border Crossings* argue the impossible transit, the endless return. Following the previous concrete case, the case of the post-Yugoslav spaces, this *liminality* was performed, established and imposed by a series of reinvention instead of reinterpreting historical processes, toponimia strategies and a massive installation of ethno-nationalistic logos, that is to say: massive border bilateral demarcation, monumental imposture of nationalities, fixed border delimitations, discourse of blood, segmented changing of street names, recreation of monuments, new street lay-outs, removal of formerly established socialist emblems, tactical appropriation of the past, replacement and uncertain border demarcation and building (in the case of Kosovo and Macedonia) and, finally, the "reinvention of the tradition" (to put it in Eric Hobsbawm terms) and the "collective forced amnesia" (as we shall see further on in the interview with the Serbian, former Yugoslavian artist based in Berlin, Tanja Ostojic). This mean that the brand new fresh made borders have acquired and gained significant weight and pluri-historical understanding and yet that the conflictual selection of the past produced somewhat absurd negotiation of the space within the border-zones: riots, roots, hybrid groups and ethnicities were now translated into a fluid structure of the, I would call it, self – construction within the enclosed border-zones spaces of being, of the dwelling.

For this purpose, I shall refer to the Appudurai constructivist approach of making spaces and raise some questions such as: how could a space, a space that is self-proclaimed and therefore arbitrary, and "artificial" (as we shall see in Korana Delic's interview) be named and placed in political nomenclature? And how can the vagueness of border notions remain reduced to an item? And how can a brand new border stand for self-identification? How does memory relate to space? "How a land becomes a

meaning?” as Daniel Libeskind puts it⁴⁴. How do war zones become a non-space? Yet, can we change our approach and define the *I-density* as a process strictly emerging from the strategies of i-identifying to a-identifying⁴⁵? From these questions – the essence of this chapter - two notions will first emerge: the obsessive notion of borderness, i.e. the frenetic generating of borders and the impact on the human condition; and the notion of borderlessness, the consequences on people’s lives following the political processes of border demarcation. In Former Yugoslavia the exact term of ‘border demarcation’ was used and applied each and every time a border had to be defined between the former Republics. To my understanding, these concepts are seminal for this dissertation and the chapters to come because they upraise and argue that the processes of bordering versus ordering and their meanings try to answer the following question:

If we are replacing/relocating/reconfiguring/restructuring borders, where are they?

What are they if not purely ideological products and dividers?

Can we artistically transform the border into a living space?

Moreover, these questions will perform a certain impact on the human segments of dwelling in the cultural landscapes of the borders, which I shall argue in the chapters on mobility, nomadic and home. They will demonstrate that where the theory has failed, the art has achieved the mission of powerful nomenclature of the political. Because, as Thomas Eriksen puts it “elsewhere is away and things are getting the same”. The transit produces inner reconfiguration: “you are recontextualized by crossing the border”, Eriksen stresses, the same but reconfigured. “In the neoliberal world, boundaries have simultaneously become more fixed and more fluid. Political mechanisms, which could be envisioned as rules, regulate flows in ways resembling the osmotic processes of cells”, Erikson stressed out⁴⁶. This means that for the artist both geographical and mental boundaries are especially attractive because the flows across them have

⁴⁴ *Relocating Borders* International Conference organised by EastBordNet, Humbolt University, Berlin, 2013.

⁴⁵ I myself have personally coined these idioms to indicate somewhat specific, almost Jungian, process of individuation and density of the human condition.

⁴⁶ *Relocating Borders* International Conference organised by EastBordNet, Humbolt University, Berlin, 2013.

consequences on both or all sides; they are not always marked, geographically peripheral but culturally significant.

In the anthropological context, Eriksen says borders are “overheated” spaces” they dwell on the basis of heat, friction, frantic motion and this defines ourselves as shifted persons, and the border is heated because of the accelerated flows of people. Given that culture is continuously shifting and not therefore fixed or bounded or hermetically affiliated, the osmosis of the cultural identity reconfigures spaces. As we shall see further on, the border space reconfiguration after the Yugoslavian wars, was all about the idea of digging in the soil and fixing national borders. In the later context, we have witnessed erasure of territory and cancellation of space and thus intrusion of ‘no man’s land’ that were emerging from interstice zones, maritime and frontal and border zones and thus many adjunctive fields of significance were imposed. These are the micro-processes of transforming borders, which are taking place physically in the border zones, therefore not necessarily in the political zone, but in other micro spheres. Or as Sarah Green argues in her anthropological photographic work about walls people build in fervent political zones, borders disappear, or fade away indeed and at the same time they do become internal where once they were external. And here we recognize the Yugoslavian case of bi-polar targeting of border meanings: what once used to be internal now is becoming external culture, border, languages, beliefs and habits and so on and so forth. And even though, she says, they are being erased from the landscapes (i.e. the official federative Yugoslavian border), they sink into people’s minds, and they often reappear physically, somewhere else: in names, in fashion, in expressions, in small enclaves and other leftover places where people who do not *belong* might be found. Following this structure, we might say that they even rise in mental-landscapes in localities where they did not exist before: the new generated political borders between the Yugoslavian people who used to call themselves *equal and unified brothers*.

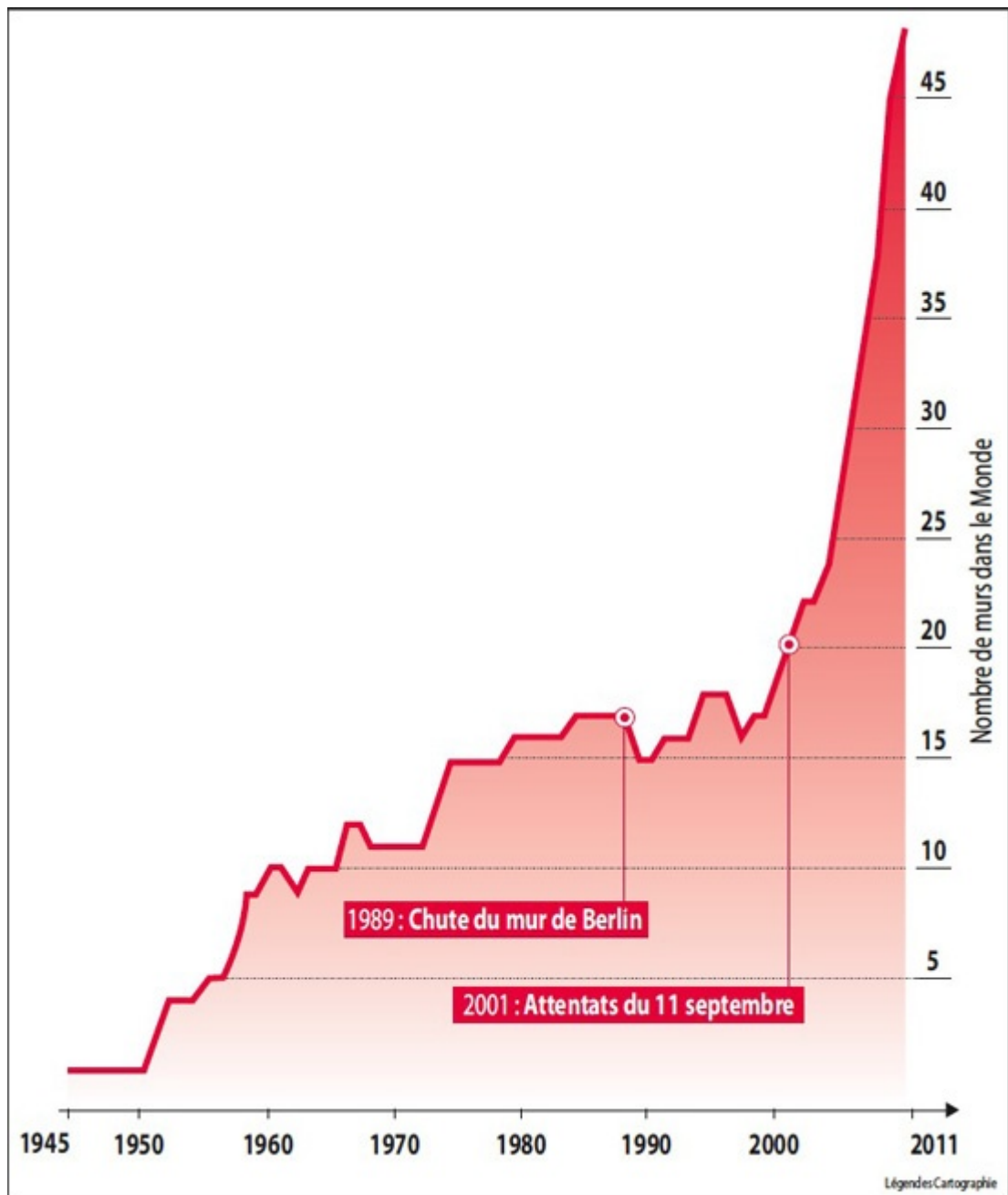
As mentioned above, in the context of new generated borders, of imposed political systems and erasure of the past, there were many exiled artistes, or so to say migrating or nomadic or simply expatriated artists, who, as the Serbian writer with Jewish origin David Albahari says, they were searching for a place where they could *write*. As we shall see with the case of the Croatian writer and journalist, Slavenka Drakulic, this meant also that the new political landscapes did not allow them to do so.

The refusal of the global amnesia, in the case of Tanja Ostojic and the broken city of Mostar in the case of Mehmed Begic and Korana Delic were surely an existential reason to cross further borders in order to trace the authentic artistic existences. In such circumstances the figure of the nomadic or expelled artist was somewhat very appealing for my research. These writers and artists that I have chosen to interview all have a very particular, special, intimate and personal and somewhat ideological relation to the border. In my structure of the interviews I tried to deal, implicitly, with something that was ordered, or even bordered, but not visible, and was therefore artistically very appealing. The outcome was the understanding that for them a border does not mean safety and protection, as we shall see in the further chapter, but fear and trauma. This conversion of borders engendered displacements and osmosis. Therefore, with my work I shall argue the liminal side of their lives and displacements because I perceived in all of their configurations a certain non-affiliation, a non-belonging, ideas of both dispersed and dispersive home, of a lost and ever losing homeland, of perpetual viral non-space, of a-cultural hybridity, of oppressive political agency and of instable national frames and last but not least a refusal of domestication.

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To a larger extent, the border that I argue here is not only a space, but a fragment of time, of emotion, of life, a motion, a condensed memory, which represent the relation with the other fragment of time, with another motion. I argue the border as an artwork, as an ideologically critical space, as a zone of liminal and artistic initiation and anthropological displacement. The coexistence with borders is the imminent characteristics of the displacement. The translation is, thus, the core element of the transit: the uncertainty. One example of this uncertainty is the physical configuration of the *waiting zones* within the border police areas where for the migrants the border is enlarged, diffusive, elusive, general, incorporating and total, imposing the status of transit, of *not-knowing-where-to-be* as a political fraction. The following grid shows the tremendous quantity of walls raised in the past years, which somehow are witness to the theory that the border crossings are new constructions of control, engendering fear and despite their “openness” they infiltrate the illusion of a forged global world and create enormous hatred towards the outsider, the migrant, the intruder. The obsession for security and clean, hygienic spaces is imposing the new bordering orders. By controlling the space and by giving shape to cultural instable contents, the political

factor gains multiple risks: risks of massive flows of emigration, fixed meanings of culture, anthropological sedentary habits of communication, regionalism and retrograde historical enclosure. The global net of borderness landscapes, even in European spaces where they are invisible, shadows various degrees on impacts on human lives.



Migreurop, *Atlas des migrants en Europe*, Armand Colin, 2009

Starting from this point exposed in the above grid, we consider the significant amount of raised borders and walls in the contemporary globalized yet shrinking and localizing world. Arguing the borders arose in the territory of the former Yugoslavian post-war political context, means engendering a discourse on a wide scale of ambivalence of perception and of understanding the border. Furthermore, this implies the interpretation of how people deal with it politically, socially and culturally. A border is a largely wide term dense with meanings, undergoing various semantic mutations and indications. If previously it meant a sovereignty and integrity of one entire national and ethnical discourse, a center, now it is approaching, in the globalized context, to the uncertain and transitory notion of liminality, pushing to the extreme limits of periphery (towards regionalism? localization?) the self-definition. The border has become a red zone, where namely in the Balkans demos, ethnos and polis are being awkwardly commuted and continuously redefined. The human condition in border zones becomes first and utmost an urgent body in continuous adaptation to what has turned into global formation of people, cultures and language. Many unresolved political phenomena are reduced to the seminal reconstruction of borders. Border-zone, border-areas, border-cities are not at the margins of these political mutations, but are the center itself. If we take the example of Yugoslavia, or rather former Yugoslavia (herewith I shall omit 'former') and interpret that political conglomerate (some call it communist regime) as a huge Lotman's semiosphere, then we could also think that the dissolution of their borders has produced various little semiospheres, has generated various centers and various borders, and, therefore, various meanings as regards language, culture, self-definition as ethnicity and ethos, and as nations but even as regions. This ultra-production of borders, on one hand and the ultra-productivity of borders, on the other hand, has multiplied two core qualities of cultures: hybrid or liminal, as they could be called, which show that each demarcation of a border can be arbitrary. People that used to live together they are now separated by borders and languages and have lost the belonging to one political space and the means of communication: the common language. And there were new kind of people and not anymore one nation, but small nations which were generating the same or similar nationalistic discourse and cultural meanings like the previous, shattered nation. The new delimitation of the borders was seen as nothing more and nothing less than trauma. What has to be done is to cross the

mental boundaries, to get exiled in order to prove the impossibility of a border. The Balkan zone became again an extra-outsider's space. The intervention of the Western political factor somehow evidently failed. We saw frontiers rising and breaches of human rights, massive killings and omission to export the peace or the so called *pax americana*. If we read the entire European geographical multitude as a question of confines, borders, frontiers, limitations, and hence multiple interpretation of history and nation, then the Balkans seem to be the perfect example of this border or trans-frontier citizenship. As Balibar puts it, these "constitutions of fictive ethnicity" aim at global characterization of societies under the premises of language, nationality, culture, genealogy, geography, cultural history. This brings us to the limit of the question of the so cherished and over-used term of what is this overwhelming concept of *identity*? What is *identity*? Is it a nomenclature of names? Or is it that through the elimination of space and the erasure of shared systems of values, we coin new "identities"?

In fact, there is another feature and it is that reality that the wars in Yugoslavia have caused the so called "ubicide" (a term coined by the architect Bogdan Bogdanovich), which tend to indicate the dissolution, the division and therefore the destruction of cities, their transformation: new names, new buildings, new streets, new monuments, and last but not least, new memory, invention of new culture traced on the borderline between the invading late capitalism and the fermenting unconscious socialist values. This is a perfect and flagrant example of what spatial agoraphobia means: not division or distribution of space, but its abolition, demolition both architectural and cultural. This is how new cultural boundaries are being imposed or simply composed. It implies playing with the liminality of space and within the concrete soil of the border territories.

In the peace-exportation rhetoric, the Western thought continued reading it as a religious war when in the essence it was an obstinate political conflict of power. Balkans nations were seen as the subconscious part of Europe. It is not by chance that the border line of geographical reference is always somewhat liminal: where are the Balkans? One myth says that for the Austrians they start somewhere in Romania and Hungary, for them in Slovenia, for the Slovenians in Croatia and so on and so forth. And it is always the periphery that is subconscious, as Lacan puts it. But I wonder does this segregation of borders create false tolerance and an over-produced tendency to put everything in a so called "multicultural" domain? This overwhelming exaggerated usage

of all those vague and mysterious prefixes such as “multi” or “pluri” brings nothing more but confusion of frontiers. And on the basis of this false cultural tolerance, as Zizek puts it, resides another form of xenophobia.

The borderness, the complicity of (re)defining borders remaining the core nucleus of my research, is a shifting phenomenon nowadays when the European spaces are inclined to be determined by the absence of the borders, which time and again raises political discussions on the artificial and forced cultural construction. Even though this is not the topic of my chapter, my interests is focused on the understanding of the meaning of the border, the border areas, their mutations and political transformations, the semantic cultural landscape and the anthropological interstice landscape of people lives, as I have mentioned above. How people, precisely, how artists that cross the border, cope with the borderness, is the question I intend to answer because besides the mobility we envisage, we encounter nowadays more and more frontiers. And the frontier does matter in this case of transits.

From a historical point of view, the role of the frontier has been underlined since the Neolithic period, where we do not dispose of a space, while we chase, but we explore. This anthropologic trace still persists: the Tziganes, the Roma people still live this dimension of chase and exploration of spaces and dwellings. But also many artists do too. We negotiate, communicate, exchange, travel towards and through, learn and give, deliver and dwell in the realization of the contact with the border and the neighbor. The idea of circulation between border spaces brought me to think of the idea of loss. If I postulate the idea that we move in order to improve our traces in spaces, in order not to disappear, then the meaning of border is never the same in different historical and political connotations. For instance today we witness a border multiplication: this is why I mentioned the word *glocalisation* meaning that the world despite its accessibility is nonetheless shrinking and turning hermetic for many. The global world by offering a virtual access to other spaces and landscapes are actually building walls and borders: border to the well-being, border to the comfort, walls to the human health, walls to a decent life. The multiplication of barriers is the consequence of the rapid circulation of goods and people. If we think about many walls in our recent reality, i.e. the Berlin wall, the wall between Mexico and the USA, between Turkey and Greece, between Greece and Albania we will better understand this. On the other hand the overall governance of the media and the *panopticon* of viral media give us the will to traverse,

to go through, to see, to desire and this gives the inner illusive feeling of crossing a border. But what is then the inhabiting of the border in the Balkans? Is the border impermeable or breakable?

We know that the border is indispensable in the political action but we also know that the border serves not only to join and connect people but also to refuse them. In the Balkans before 1980 the border was not breakable and permeable: people and ideas were not allowed to go through the curtains between the Eastern Block and the Western Europe. The border was meant to protect the interior from the exterior, to prevent from acculturation and global dispersion. Crossing the border was interpreted as a political action and betrayal. The spatial and mobility inhibition was not so much geographical but political. There was no public no private sphere within the Balkan states, under the communist system. But the attractiveness of my thesis research is that despite this isolation, the people and the so called 'communities' have mixed and exchanged ideas between themselves. When the Berlin Wall fell down many figurative borders were demolished, followed by the rapid diffusion of the USA military force.

Having analysed the concrete case of Yugoslavia, gradually I tackle the global landscapes of borders and I stress out that many borders are by definition provisory. The ontology and the cognition and human knowledge can move the borders and give them meaning. Humans create cultural territories within and around borders; the artists put into question the borders and dig inspiration from the borderness. Often, writers leave the national borders and choose to write in another language. This expatriation brings me to read the artistic form of the exile as a perpetual renewal of its own perception of the world. The displacements are multiplying and the mobility runs smoothly within the exile-zone. As Edward Said puts it, the role of the humanist is not to occupy a space or to belong to a space but to be within and beyond the values that surround him and the physical space.

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The more we approach the East, the more we tend to neglect one important fact: the borders are liminal, fluent, vague, blurred: they move like live sand. This dimension induces me to pose the question: is the foreigner a person who crosses the borders or the foreigner is a self-exiled community within a border? Is the nomad a person who searches in continuation for brand new dwellings or a nomad can he/she be also located

within the border inhabitant's life? Globalization has created new mobility and this implies new definitions caused by the spatial disorientation and the 'non-spaces'. We can no longer think in the overused identitarian fashion because all borders caused by the global world changes are interstice, utopic, fluctuant places and they put the diaspora in the center of the geopolitical events. This is the qualitative power of the border. The border created on water, for instance, is inclined to transmutation and filling in the gaps of the interstice is meant to fight the loss of meaning and the disappearance of the need to move. The overseas and water borders are boundaries, and culturally are purely liminal *par excellence*.

Borders are argued to be liminal spaces in the geographical connotation of the Balkans versus Europe. I draw attention to the impact the dissolution of the former Yugoslavian borders and the creation of nine new states, new nations from the (multinational?) Yugoslavian Federation has had on the people's lives. In particular, on the lives of these expatriated artists and writers. This enterprise also implies an in-depth reading and analysis of phenomena such as global changes, social utopia, mass movements, regionalism, nationalism, identity, cultures, nation, ethnicity; so the transnational and translational dimension of the border, their minority versus their collective features, their weak languages and the shifting cultural practices of the border inhabitants seen in the figures of these expatriated artists. I witnessed once a pretty dangerous statement of Tzvetan Todorov⁴⁷ who said that from Ljubljana to Burgas only one language is spoken in its dialectal variations, implying the relation between border and language? And if Slavenka Drakulic⁴⁸ says the real border is the language than how come there are almost ten different nation states from Ljubljana to Burgas, if as Todorov says, there is only one language spoken there? Does the frontier determine the language and the nationhood? Can we neglect the interior prospection of memory and the ever changing morphology of human life? But can we identify nation borders with linguistic borders which are often translated as regional border areas?

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In the Balkans the over-production of borders taking place both virtually and politically is rather imaginative and meaningful. We have witnessed the burden of the

⁴⁷ *Frontières, démocratie et res-publica*, International Conference, INHA, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Université Paris 8, 4 Juin 2012, Paris.

⁴⁸ In the interview in the following chapter.

deborderization in former Yugoslavia brought up ancient hatreds to the surface during the war. The newly created borders were fluid, liquid and liminal because people on the both sides of the border still have the feeling of belonging to one big country. The explosion of the Federation and the multiplication of borders have implied limited possibilities of circulation. When talking to the people of former Yugoslavia and asking them what do they miss from the former period, they all use to say, from Ljubljana to Skopje, the possibility to move without borders. In the era of global nomads, these people were faced with new borders and limited movement. The overproduction of new states refers to what Bertrand Badie said that border means death, refugees, exile and illegal business. But the reformulation of borders also means cultural negotiation and democratization. For example, between Serbia and Macedonia and between Macedonia and Bulgaria there are official borders even though in some parts of Bulgaria and Eastern Macedonia people speak the same language, have the same folkloristic tradition and culinary similarities and even though Bulgaria is a member state of the European Union, and the currency is the EURO and/or the Bulgarian Lev, one can still find local traders in the Pirin part of Bulgaria that trade with the Macedonian Denar.

““Borderland” is the name of the place where the opposites flow into one another, where “strangers” can be at the same time stigmatized and indiscernible from “ourselves”, where the notion of citizenship, involving at the same time *community and universality*, once again confronts its intrinsic antinomies”.⁴⁹ Exportation of fictional borders means “transporting the actual borders beyond the borderline (...)”. But increasingly it is the working of the border, and especially the difference between security borders and mere administrative separations, which constitutes or produces the stranger/foreigner as a social type. In this context, Zygmunt Bauman explains the nexus between the foreignness and the society; according to him all societies produce strangers, nevertheless each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers and produces them in its own inimitable way, which means the political and the cultural factor holds the context of foreignness.

One example of such strangers is the case of interviewed exiled or nomadic artists. The qualitative methods realized through semi-structured interviews with the expatriated or self-exiled former Yugoslavian writers, most of them coming from war-

⁴⁹ Balibar, Etienne, *Europe as a Borderland*, The Alexander von Humbolt Lecture in Human Geography, University of Nijmegen, November 10, 2004, p. 23.

zones, concerns the border discourse because they witness what is usually at stake when discussing the reterritorialization of borders and this is the creation of anthropological non-spaces. As Marc Augé puts it, the space of the “non-lieu » does not create a single identity, nor relation, nor loneliness nor similarity⁵⁰; that on the basis of this postulate, and despite the contradictions, he draws on the fact that this is precise, so to say, nomadic ethnology of the solitude. This loneliness encountered at the border crossing space, which is inhabited by these artists and their personal affiliation to the disrupted spaces is what makes possible the creation of the non-space in motion possible. However, the border space they inhabit entails a space in motion, a new boundary of meaning and a proliferation of mobile, shifting cultures. As Bhabha puts it “boundary is not that at which something stops but (...) the boundary is that from which *something begins its presencing*”, referring to Martin Heidegger’s *Building, dwelling, thinking*, in *Border lives: the art of the present*. It is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place from which something begins “(...) its presencing in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond that I have drawn out”.⁵¹ Having made reference to Bhabha’s postulate, the analysed interviews will help me to understand how the border is read from various artistic perspectives coming from people expatriated due to war situation. Through the interviews I plan to investigate the liquid wandering life of their loss of *i-densities* within the border retailoring and spaces cracking up. The conclusion I want to achieve at the end is that there is no stable frontier when the nomadic art and culture comes into question and from this arises the creative fervid content of the borderness, which is witnessed in the artwork of Tanja Ostojic, Korana Delic and the literary production of David Albahari.

One of the geopolitical examples for this is the European cultural geography and, within Europe, the political crash of Yugoslavia. As Krzysztof Pomian puts it:

“Europe is this criss-crossed by many borders, some of which coincide and some of which intersect. These borders have a varying degree of permeability: some are watched and difficult to cross while others are noticed only because the environment

⁵⁰ Augé, Marc, *Les non-lieux*, Seuil, 1992, p. 130. « L’espace du non-lieu ne crée ni identité singulière, ni relation, mais solitude et similitude », « Il y aura place demain, il y a peut-être déjà place aujourd’hui, malgré la contradiction apparente des termes, pour une ethnologie de la solitude :.

⁵¹ Bhabha, Homi K., *The location of culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 7.

changes. The meanings attributed to these borders by the different groups they separate are also different. Most such borders form part of each group's self-identity, but not all of them are given equal weight. Meanwhile, their importance changes over time and with changing political circumstances. (...)"⁵².

This amebic character of the criss-crossed reality of the border, in the former Yugoslavian spaces, has put into question many aspects of the political determination and cultural affiliation. However, the experience with the post-war drift, wandering and nomadic, in search of the artistic self-hood of the interviewed artists and writers, tackles the precise a-political tendencies and qualities of the mobility, in the sense that the mobility becomes a politics of its own. It is what was proposed and described in the above Pomian's observation that all along the political restructuring, border importance changes. But this is not so self-evident because the meanings attributed to the border, as he says, are shifting on the basis of the personal, psychological and societal experiment of the border crossing itself. To my understanding, the border crossing experiences of these artists are the real empirical interpretation of the political meaning of the border liminality. This courageous idea and the nexus between borders in war times, art and exile, and the liminality as a core quality of the artistic production, brought me to think of the border as a discourse-meaning and as an open talk. Therefore this idea drifted me to annex, in a nutshell, all the seminal contents of the border itself, which represent the following interconnected notions: first, what comes across in these lines is the idea of home. As we shall see in the last chapter, the concept of home is argued in terms of the artistic mobility, but also in terms of the politically drifted migration. The home is read drawing on the transitory dwellings and on the nomadic artistic production caused (or inspired) by the political expatriation after the war and by the apolitical refusal of the politically generated borders. The *unhomely* feeling of psychological uncertainty where and how to define the personal identification has created this home-related feeling of non-belonging. However, the quality of the non-belonging calls on the specific terms of non-affiliation and of carrying perpetually the feeling of homeness both in the personal life and in the artistic sense.

⁵² Pomian, Krzysztof, in *Penser l'Europe. Diversité et culture*, Culturesfrance, 2008, p. 157.

Having drawn this, I would refer to Marc Augé in order to understand the empirical loneliness of the border dwellings in those micro-mental-apolitical spaces. We have to rethink the border, he says, or even better the refused reality of the border and their reaffirmation in harsh passages and forms, which implies interdictions and exclusions. Hence, Augé says, we have to rethink the notion of the border in order to understand the contradictions that produce an impact on the contemporary history⁵³. In his delimitation of criss-crossed and double-crossed non-spaces, or as someone translated his *non-spaces* into *in-between spaces*, we perceive the *violence* (we will see this notion in the chapter on the expatriated former Yugoslavian artists, raised and underlined by the Serbian artist based in Berlin, Tanja Ostojic, as regards the airport spaces) of the void, anonymous, border control spaces. The awkwardly rising political dimension of globalization and the virtual consumption and alienation of the self-ness, on one hand and on the other hand the transversal, conversational, translating extension of communication are imprinting and corroding the constraining obsession of stone-cast eternal nationalism. The non-space is a space that we cross and that we criss-cross, that we double cross. Therefore, the idea, the inner notion of border is undergoing continuous erasure, discontinuity and distance and it represents a menace. The individual, the displaced subject needs at least a minimal distance in order to communicate; the individual is the sovereign of the culture in its integrality. The language is not a barrier: it is a strong connection that leads to the breaking of the border; it is the threshold, a doorstep that induces to the passage. Culture is not a hermitage – it should be treated due to the conversion of cultures taking place in the border shifts, in the challenging human boundaries, in the strategies of inhabiting the border, which, anthropologically speaking, is no longer a culturally recognizing space but culturally cognitive and communicating space.

Bauman underlines the pressures aimed at the piercing and dismantling of boundaries, which comes to the surface due to what has been commonly called as globalization, and further on he explains that such globalization processes have not left a *terra nulla* nor any blank spots on the mental map, they have not allowed spaces for the unknown, let alone unknowable lands and peoples. The obsession with the borders,

⁵³ Augé, Marc, *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité*, Payot, Paris, 2009, p. 15.

as something impermeable, unbreakable, safe, as a barrier against the tectonic shifts of the globalising culture, comes across as an unavoidable consequence of the homologation tailoring of spaces and cultures. Further on, he perfectly focuses the connection of the borders and the ‘undefendability’ of populations, focusing on the false openness of these societies which are hidden beyond the web of border ties and the negative globalization as a consequence of this tightness of the frontier, he writes:

“... a population horrified by its own undefendability and obsessed with the tightness of its frontiers and the security of the individuals living inside them – while it is precisely that impermeability of its borders and security of life inside those borders that elude its grasp and seem bound to remain elusive as long as the planet is subjected to solely negative globalization. (...) The perverted ‘openness’ of societies enforced by negative globalization is itself the prime cause of injustice, and so obliquely, of conflict and violence”⁵⁴.

This global formation of borders (all kind of borders: political, historical and societal borders) incorporates and shelters the human condition in boxes of fear, in “markets without frontiers”, in injustice, and “new world disorder” as Bauman puts it. “In other words: the displacement of fear – from the cracks and fissures in the human condition where ‘fate’ is hatched and incubated, to areas of life largely unconnected to the genuine source of anxiety”, “the no man’s land of the global wilderness”. The new global reconfiguration and retailoring of borders has put the migrant under the optics of a “serial killer, an obtrusive beggar, a mugger, stalker, poisoner, terrorist...”⁵⁵. I have mentioned above the ‘human condition’ because I draw on the impact that the border crossings have on human life; therefore I refer to this seminal Bauman quote which describes how the migrant dwelling is anthropologically classified in the new global bordering order:

“... they have been cast in to a condition of ‘liminal drift’ and they don’t know and cannot know whether it is transitory or permanent. Even if they are stationary for a time, they are on a journey never completed since its destination (whether arrival or

⁵⁴ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid times. Living in an age of Uncertainty*, Polity Press, 2007, p. 7

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 13, 15.

return) remains forever unclear, while a place they could call ‘final’ stays forever inaccessible.”⁵⁶

The ‘liminal drift’ he refers to, brings the porosity and the uncertainty of both economical and geo-political influences of nomadic migratory paths. “Nothing is left but the walls, the barbed wire, the controlled gates, the armed guards. Between them they define the refugee identity – or rather put paid to their right to self-definition, let alone to self-assertion. All waste, including wasted humans, tends to be piled up indiscriminately on the same refuse tip”⁵⁷. Then he argues the border crossers category of a refugee and underlines the cross-fire, or the double bind the migrant and the refugee (social categories produced from the borders) dwell in. “They are expelled by force or frightened into fleeing their native countries, but refused entry to any other. They do not *change* place; they *lose* their place on earth and are captured into a nowhere, into Auge’s ‘non-lieux’ or Garreau’s ‘nowherevilles’, or loaded into Michel Foucault’s ‘Narrenschaften’, a drifting ‘place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea’ (Michel Foucault “On other spaces”) – or (as Michel Agier suggests) into a desert, by definition an *uninhabited* land, a land resentful of humans and seldom visited by them.”⁵⁸

From this shifting general platform, we try to define a local, intimate platform of dwelling in “(...) the brave new world of erased or punctured boundaries, information deluge, rampant globalization, consumer feasting in the affluent North and a ‘deepening sense of desperation and exclusion in a large part of the rest of the world’ arising from ‘the spectacle of wealth on the one hand and destitution on the other’”⁵⁹. We admit that it is an invading platform for living: now, we have to think the border differently in order to cope with it and transform it perhaps into a living zone. The logic of the imposed barrier, the linguistic and cultural walls, the segregating split walls within cities (the cases of Paris, Sao Paolo etc.), the mass surveillance let alone the viral boundaries emerges from the fact that “resourceful residents buy into separate areas (...) ghetto-like and bar all others from settling there (...) they do whatever they can to

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 41.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 45.

⁵⁹ Hall, Stuart, edited by, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage, London, 1997, p. 32.

disconnect their own lifeworld from the lifeworlds of the rest of the city's inhabitants.”⁶⁰

The global repartition and configuration of border zones, of border areas and of those “(...) ‘slippery space’, ‘space that cannot be reached, due to contorted, protracted, or missing paths of approach’(...) ‘space that cannot be comfortably occupied, defended by such details as wall-mounted sprinkler heads activated to clear loiterers or ledged sloped to inhibit sitting’”⁶¹. Thus the action of “drawing boundaries in lived space is a matter of continuous contention and a stake in the battles waged on numerous criss-crossing fronts (...)”⁶². This evident geographic and spatial operation is well underlined by Hall. He, referring to Gadamer, in fact points out that the “(...) mutual understanding is prompted by a ‘fusion of horizons’: the cognitive horizons, that is, the horizons drawn and expanded in the course of the accumulation of experience. The ‘fusion’ that mutual understanding requires can only be the outcome of *shared* experience; and sharing experience is inconceivable without shared space.”⁶³

The frontier seen as a political tool and interpreted, adapted and applied to the socio-spatial and political needs, turns into a mobile interface, liquid and living multiplication and culturally delimitation action. Given that the motion across borders is culturally amebic and the spatial margins are doubling, the juridical notion of the border also turns into something fluid and not clear. As H el ene Velasco-Graciet puts it, the border is the place of passage and therefore of transgression: we shall see in the following chapter how this border transgression is experimented with and put into real, through artistic, practice in Tanja Ostojic border performances. Despite the geographical marginality, it is a threatening place, given the fact that the notion of the frontier is an opposing one belonging to space, one affiliation, one domestication to one foreign space, unknown, impossible space⁶⁴. According to Velasco-Graciet, the border represents an utter element of territorial appropriation, which does not necessarily mean conquering or possession of soil, but it is an authentic “(...) projection of the subject into

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 73.

⁶¹ Ibidem, p. 78.

⁶² Ibidem, p. 80.

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 92.

⁶⁴ Velasco-Graciet, H el ene/Bouquet, Christian, sous la direction de, *Tropisme des fronti eres*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2006, p. 28. “C’est un lieu de passage donc de transgression, un lieu marginal donc mena ant. La conception de la fronti ere oppose un espace int erieur (qui m’appartient, qui est proche de moi)   un espace ext erieur (qui m’est  tranger, qui suscite peur)”.

the space, it is a condition for existence, an additional cover or even a supplementary skin to oneself.”⁶⁵

The polemic rises from the societal and cultural affiliation and categorization of a territory: how can we associate those concepts such as identity and socio-spatial belonging to the bordering zones simply? How could we geographically deteriorate cultural meanings in mobile and migrating spatial zones? Generally, these socio-spatial mutations are induced by the unbalance coming from the polarity and duality of the modern world: the passage from modernity to post-modernity, to both globalizing and globalized cultural landscapes, the transit of the nomadic artist from one stable country towards the unknown. Modernity imposes stable territory but the postmodern condition shifts the territory and makes it blurred and blurring at the same time, which is a subtle contextual difference but very important for the ontological process of gaining existence, of gaining social action, of being in between the zones as an artist, as an responsible trans-border citizen. Therefore, the purpose of my writings is to demonstrate the incapability of defining the meaning of a dissolved border when dealing with identification and affiliation in the definition of territory. However, the political factor in the context of former Yugoslavia was dominant; drawing on dominance of the political, I refer to Wallerstein who puts it this way: “Every system has frontiers even though they are mobile. Every system has rules even though they are evolving. Every system has internal self-corrective mechanism that leads to a balance in such way that the rupture charge which are relatively important, intentional or not as regards the foreseen cyclical rhythms bring often nothing more but minimal modifications on midterm”⁶⁶.

And further on Balibar explains that “it is in this logic that the notion of modern individual accepting territorial fixed and imposed norms (for example the national territory) and sharing conform practices, is replaced by the post-modern individual, which is somewhat uncertain, assuming new territorial norms (among which certain are

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 16. “(...) projection du sujet dans l’espace, c’est une condition pour se sentir exister, une peau supplémentaire de soi-même.”

⁶⁶ Balibar, Etienne/Wallerstein, Immanuel, *Race, nation, classe: les identités ambiguës*. La Découverte, 2007, p. 71. « Tout système possède des frontières même si celle-ci sont mouvantes. Tout système a des règles même si celle-ci sont évolutives. Tout système comporte des mécanismes internes auto-correcteurs qui le ramènent vers l’équilibre de telle sorte que même les ruptures de charge relativement importantes, intentionnelles ou non par rapport aux rythme cycliques attendues, n’entraînent le plus souvent que des modifications minimales sur le moyen terme ».

based on the movement), using them at its best and “building a territory” a posteriori, for the need of legitimation (...) these territories (...) appear to be unstable and precarious.”⁶⁷ The practical application of these notional shifts burst into to the expatriated former Yugoslavian artists, or as Balibar calls this migrating category the “border populations of freedom”, because in a way they have grasped new territories, built new territories, which turned out to be “unstable and precarious” and by doing so they have become strong entities of the uncertainty, authentic border inhabitants, self-propelled nomads.

This explains why nowadays borders are often and very much put in the cluster of spatial porosity, or trans-permeability of different social categories (criminal, cultures, economies) and this is the reason why border mentality is mutating and the global re-composition of the planet which is becoming more and more nomadic. The border content intolerance, the refusal and hatred of the other side are gaining multiple levels of meaning. If once those were places of enclosure and hermetic emblems of nation, ethnicity and language, now they smoothly become socially constructed, but hence centric, central and thus not marginal anymore; the border transform the place of refusal to place of a communion and fusion.

As this chapter argues global qualities of border-ship, I refer here to Balibar because he broadens this question of European citizenship as “a citizenship of borders” of frontiers, or confines. With this question he raises the condensation of impossibility and potentials that we must try to activate – without fearing to take things up again at a distance. According to Balibar, since 1945, we have gone from a situation in which there were perhaps fifty or so generally recognized countries, the rest of the world being distributed into colonies, protectorates, dependencies, and the like, to one in which there are nearly two hundred, and certainly more to come. The difference occurring nowadays consists precisely of this shift of boundaries, demonstration movements and the decolonization revolution.

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⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 72. “Ainsi, dans cette logique, à la notion d’individu modern acceptant des normes territoriales fixes et imposées (par exemple le territoire national) et ayant des pratiques conformes, se substitue celle de l’individu post-moderne, plus incertain, et adoptant de nouvelles normes territoriales (dont certaines fondées sur le mouvement), les utilisant au mieux de ses besoin et « construisant du territoire » a posteriori, par besoin de légitimation... ces territoires apparaissent .. instable et éphémères ».

The domination of the notion of the border as an open talk, as one language, as common habits and coherence in the cultural practices in former Yugoslavia, remained somehow changed when the new borders were generated and mainly because the war factor was at stake and the massive rage of nationalisms. The feeling of boundness suddenly occurred in those political borders, which became immediately, as Geertz puts it, ‘psychologically active boundaries’. As a consequence of this active fermentation of the border, the culture had to be reinvented: we shall see this during the interview with Slavenka the concept of regionalism and the invention of the Istrian culture, also tackled by Stefano Lusa. This tendency to locally occupy the boundary produces continuous separations, divisions, disjunctions and discontinuities with the past. Besides, the culture, all along with the borderness, the language also had to be merely and specifically established; the economical exchanges were harshly and wildly reconfigured; the political tailoring of the territories had to be introduced violently. From one fluid status of culture (according also to what the Bosnian exiled photographer, Korana Delic has stated during the interview), territory was configuring into fixed borderness controlling cultural movement and flows. “This is why consciousness of boundness is not at its most precise with so called natural boundaries (mountains, rivers, oceans or deserts) but rather with merely political boundaries which only place a geometrical line between two neighbors. And this is happening, in the latter case, since shifts, expansions, contractions or fusions are much easier, because at its end the structure borders on living, psychologically active boundaries, which produce not only passive resistance, but also very active repulsions.”⁶⁸

Developing the notions of the “active repulsions” and “the consciousness of boundness”, which we could call liquid, fluid, blurred, those societal boundaries which are being continuously shifted from culturally stable territories to continuously invented and created cultural flows of territories; those zones that have lost the solidity to become fluid spatial entities. In such simulated reality the parameters of belonging and time are also at stake. The globalization flows has cut off the border of the world we inhabit and has standardized the fashions of living. It seems often that creating a border

⁶⁸ Geertz, Clifford, *Available light: anthropological reflections on philosophical topics*, Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 141 – 142.

would mean solving a conflict or resolving a problem of violence, like it was the case namely in former Yugoslavia, where new internationally recognized borders were decided out of the former federation of republics joined in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

Throughout the notion of border, in this chapter, I had the purpose to demonstrate that space and cultural delimitation of space is not necessarily given but rather conceived and imaginary. The perpetual building-case of the new borders in Europe (more than 27.000 km of borders were traced after 1991) has shown in cases such as former Yugoslavia that walls are liquid and borders are liminal. This can be perceived both as an emotional and political concept in use and in the art of the Yugoslavian artists, which we will deal with in the next chapter. We have understood how the invention of the tradition can put the invention of societies and regional local self-propelling cultures in danger. From this logic, we may ask also general question what is a region-space, what is a country, a continent - a polity? politics? culture? The space that I argue in my chapter is a well determined entity but it is also determinative, fluctuant, fervid, fermenting, “dynamic” as Merlo-Ponty puts it or “liquid” as Bauman puts it or finally it is the “non-space” described by the French anthropologist and the space that, as I would suggest, becomes a tremendously liminal and fervent cultural zone.

This idea will bring into a wider exploration of questions such as what home actually is. Or even better, this discourse-path will tackle the question of what kind of place is home when borders are shifting and culture is re-defined, when the state of birth is shattered and non-existing and when flagrant in-congruency and in-consistency is implemented into the migrant space, where the ‘habit’ is launched out of the ‘habitat’. The transnational movement of people, we know, as a consequence of the financial oriented consuming societies, offers ‘disruption’, schizophrenia and loss of home-ness. The homelessness is argued as a natural given position to be explored in order to understand to what extent the political factor can mutate the human condition. This homelessness of the expatriated writers and artists that we shall see in the following chapter is rather read as a cultural text, as a text flowing into the hybrid metaphor of the non-space of the metaphorical in-between border space. Therefore I have decided to deal with the border-space because it implies the never-ending human condition, seen in

a nutshell as migrating, the loss of belonging and memory, the forced self-determination and the ever changing situation of the self-ness.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the border life because the goal is to understand what it means to live on the margin, on the edge, on the thresholds, in the cultural cracks; from here, to rethink the borders as liquid and vital transition processes and as pure but lavish transit zones; and finally to rethink the boundaries both the natural and the cultural as zones of reflection and nomadic aesthetics. Hence, the border at some melting point becomes a boundary indeed. And as we shall see later on with Edwards Casey argument, the border in this texts will be read as crispy, politically and internationally defined, non-porous, impermeable, present, determined by the here and now, but yet with demarcation flow still, invisible, untouchable, a strange hybrid entity of words and international treaties, ethnic, contentious, controversial, physical, entailing walls, security controls, police, etc. but aiming to become something rather paradigmatically natural, given, porous, mutable, a passage, a 'there and then' entity, contemplative, fluid, liminal, whose free flow demarcation is however visible (a forest, the sea, the sand), putting the borderline in question, surrounding it with complications, with historical and ethnic issues, a porous edge, permeable: borders are to become a boundary basically; they cannot though maintain themselves vital as border but boundary condition. This is what makes them liminal as a matter of fact. The conceptual, hence phenomenological instance puts in question the permeability, which is infiltrated in significant tectonic interstices, in enclosing liminal interzones - such as the culture, in a more epistemological sense and the human habits on one side and the natural territorialization on the other side - in a more empirical sense. Can we yet define the "borderland" the boundary in-between and surrounding the borders, consisting of images, meanings, traditions, words? In this sense, it will be easier to determine the ontological nature of the border and the changeable and changing impact it has on people inhabiting it by dwelling in it, by crossing it, by naming it, by breaking it or by regenerating it artistically.

The haptic spaces of the border definition also might provoke an inner burden, because it is very likely to produce cross-meanings between phenomena of migrants, exiled citizens, nomads and itinerants. Now, what is interesting for the topic I propose is to associate these often analogic entities into a broader reading of a border broken and created by force and for the sake of social utopias. In Bauman's language, the new or

the so called “postmodern” world we are living in, offer infinity of possibilities to build but also to destroy “mini Berlin walls”⁶⁹ each and every day to separate but also to unify people’s lives, habits, practices, languages and cultures in instant democracies. Yet, the geopolitics would therefore remain very antiseptic discipline if does not interfere with theories of anthropology and empiric cultural studies. In fact, negotiations of meaning are main challenge when it comes to reading spaces, motion, circulating people, belongings and nomadic mobile territories.

Before going to the next, concrete chapter of artistic border inhabitants, and after having discusses the shuttering of the Yugoslavian Federation and the complex border conglomerate, the splitting into micro-semiotic spheres, I underline strongly the impact on the new map of border-zones, despite the refusal of duality. However I would conclude by opposing the modern static space, which underlines and comprises boundary, space, fixed identity, fixed positions, spatial configurations, and the post-modern mobile space, which underlines and comprises fluidity, liminality, nomadism, micro-migrations, occurring in the liminal drift of the progressively acculturated contemporary societies shifting and pushing the displaced subject into a wider (and perhaps wilder) globalized vagrancy.

⁶⁹ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Il disagio della postmodernità*, Mondadori, Milano, 2002, p. 41.

From dwelling in *borderness* towards fostering the feelings of *uprootedness*

Comparative reading of the expatriated former Yugoslavian artists

Border is something that does not necessarily need to exist physically but can exist in every individual in form of a personal relation to everything in the world that surrounds him. I was always afraid of borders.

David Albahari

I was born on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. But nevertheless (...) for me that place is not a borderplace. I grew up and lived in an environment where the idea of identity did not exist, people did not have any problems in coping and living with each other. And this is strange if you think about all the bloody violence that took place in that region during the Bosnian and Herzegovina war. (..) for me, it is unthinkable all that border issue even now, because I did not know what the notion of border means, why does it exist and what difference does it make on the 'other side' But what 'other side' is if in both zones, in Capljina and Metkovic, people speak the same languages? (...).

Mehmed Begic

I like taking photos which cannot be geographically or culturally identified, mountains, beaches, roads, portals like doors and windows (...) I have a portfolio titled Crossings because most photos are of liminal spaces taken at a point of crossing, in-between, or they are photos of some kind of movement.

Korana Segetalo Delic

I have always had the feeling of not-belonging in the places I inhabited.

Tanja Ostojic

The real border is the change of language.

Slavenka Drakulic

Drifted away from the previous chapters drawing culturally on the border dissolution and nation-states border generation argument, I shall transpose the empirical case studies of the impact that those borders has had on the lives and the artworks of several expatriated and/or exiled nomadic and/or mobile former Yugoslavian writers, artist and one young woman, who is a photographer. Therefore, the theme of this chapter is the concept of border relocation and how this concept has shaped and formed the artwork both literary and visual of the expatriated Yugoslavian writers and artists. Through the comparison of their displaced experiences, I shall raise the problem of non-belonging from various epistemological favorable aspects that came out during the semi-structured interviews and discussion of their artwork (and personal experiences) strictly related to border crossings, migrations and nomadic aesthetics. Therefore, I argue the mobility, the self-chosen cultural exile and the nomadic as cultural spatial products, as societal produces, as a direct consequence issued from the border dissolution and the border perpetual re-creations, in the life and in the artwork of one photographer, one performing artist and three writers from former Yugoslavia who during or right after the war emigrated, or were exiled, or evicted or expatriated abroad or simply left because they refused the geopolitical management of space and the urban cultural shape of the borderness and the spatial divisions.

For this purpose, I have structured my research on the basis of the social-qualitative method and decided to apply semi-structured interviews to the case studies with the expatriated nomadic artists, thematic analysis to their enunciations and their personal interpretation relating to the core concepts of my research constructed under the notion of a political impact of border reconfiguration. Given the complex relations between borders and artwork, I have chosen to draw on the following notions during the interviews, which have been traced both by their artwork and personal experiences:

- Belonging
- Homelessness

- Borderness
- Nomadism
- Migration

Also, they deal with the criss-crossing analogy in their particular reactions to questions related to their personal affiliation to a border and to a space. To introduce the in depth interpretation of these interviews, I will present, at first, a transversal analysis of the common categories of the contents in the table grid reported below, taking into account the frequency of the repeated concepts and the common feelings encountered during the interviews. Therefore, I shall draw on the categorical analysis of those linguistic encounters that were of utmost importance for my inductive, empirical research. The in-depth interviews of their life stories and their motivation to write and to perform the space and the motion, and to some extent the visual methods and the photo elicitation in the case of one artist, demonstrate the grounded thematic analysis of these data, examining theme and coding conclusions. I will, thus, focus on the development of these coded conclusions to capture some multiple meanings of the border (e.g. the question of home, the quality of homeness), the convergence and divergence of the aforementioned concepts, and their personal and professional relationships with the broader category of (artistic) border inhabitants.

The main focusing line would intend to segment data and remain in the field of the aforementioned categories and the thematic basis of this research is to understand what it means to live within the border; that is to say, what does it mean to perform the mobility, or to evolve within the exile, or to enact the migration path, or to configure the forced migration, or the simulated migration, or the insinuated migration, or the self-proclaimed exile, or the artistic choice of the nomadic life, under war circumstances imposed by the outbreaks of violent massacres. I analyse the disruption of the frontier and the creation of new states, under the political context of the “reinvention of the past” - to use the Hobsbawm term - in the general political context of irruption and emergence of new borders in the former Yugoslavian political spaces. Such places did not provide defined borders and become a very fertile field for artistic creations and critics.

The closer look I would like to take at these artists and read them as border people, brought me to ask questions on what border is to them, how do they feel about

the dissolution of the former Yugoslavian borders, what their political persuasion is, where is their home, where do they belong, how do they express their nomadic experience in a text, or in an art performance or in a photograph and finally to underline their texts and experiences in the frame of the cluster of concepts inducing to border crossings, border imagining, border self-defining and struggling to come to terms with the borderness of their own. The borderness, hence, seems to be a perfect target zone because of the criss-crossed cultural and artistic influences. In the wider European context of border rules, migrant rights, border control technologies and controls of entry, it is very interesting to understand how the border notion operates culture, taste, knowledge and artwork for someone coming from the former Yugoslavian political space, and eventually how does it liaise with the European notion of border.

In the second table-grid I will translate these ideas into structured points and transpose the words they use when discussing the ideas and concepts I draw on, and when interpreting their lives as border inhabitants. The analysis of this chapter will draw attention to the concluding concept of liminality. Through their texts and experiences I will try to demonstrate that these concrete (political) borders are liminal, that the liminality is the intrinsic quality of the border and the transnational belonging forges hybrid sense of homeness. Performing the self-definition through harsh border passages is not only an argument of synergy of ideas and frames, but of other intangible, invisible, fluent, liquid state of mind and of the involved daily life practice. Having said this, I rely on the inductive qualitative and narrative approach and discourse analysis generating theory, epistemologically interpreting the ontological, constructed, social interactions, social phenomena accomplished by these artists. Bringing to a larger scale the social phenomenology of the enunciation, my text will draw not only on the change of territoriality when migrating but on the change of culture and identification with the shifting territoriality. The focus, in a nutshell, draws on the choice of words, their points of view, on the theory of emergent active process, on the proactive researcher unstructured contextual understanding, on rich and deep data, the micro-interaction and the meaning these people give to their artistic proliferation of the migration and the border in continuous making.

Therefore, such is the methodological framework of my thesis, relying on the qualitative social methods, psychological analysis of the behavior and their sayings during semi-structured and direct interviews, textual analysis of texts and interpretation

of photographs, through semi-structured interviews, observation of the interviewee, tick descriptions, visual anthropology methods applied to photographs made during nomadic wandering and exile, textual analysis on nomadic authorship and political novels and articles on migrations and diaspora. I shall first present the authors and then draft charts where I will present their interviews answers, make a short synthesis of the interviews on each key concept that was present during the interviews, and conclude with the comparison of their border related artwork and my interpretation of their work on borders. This interpretation undergoes analysis of their words, behavior, reactions but I shall also tackle their refusals to speak on certain topics. At the end of this chapter, I will draft a tick description of the life and the work of these artists and do a textual analysis of the ontological and the political space of border is translated in the work of Slavenka Drakulić, David Albahari and Mehmed Begić related to these problematics and interpreting the boundaries and the non-spaces in the visual texts by Korana Šegetalo Delić and the performing art of Tanja Ostojić.

In short, this is these are the authors that I have chosen and interviewed:

a) Slavenka Drakulić, born in Istria, in Croatia (in former Yugoslavia) in 1949, is a well-known writer and journalist and her books and essays have been translated into many foreign languages. Amongst her most prominent work are: *Holograms Of Fear; Marble Skin; The Taste Of A Man; S. – A Novel About the Balkans* (made into a feature film *As If I Am Not There*); and *Frida's Bed; How We Survived Communism; Balkan Express; Café Europa; They Would Never Hurt a Fly – War Criminals On Trial In The Hague*; and *A Guided Tour Through the Museum of Communism*. She is a contributing editor in *The Nation* magazine (USA) and a free-lance author whose essays have appeared in *The New Republic, The New York Times Magazine* and *The New York Review Of Books*. She contributes to *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany), *Internazionale* (Italy), *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden), *The Guardian* (UK), www.eurozine.com and other newspapers and magazines. She immigrated during the outbreaks of the Yugoslavian wars to Vienna. Her ideological commitment was strongly directed against the nationalistic regime of the war and against the violence of the wars; therefore she was proclaimed as a “witch” together with Dubravka Ugresic because they were not in favor of the proliferation of violence and, as a result of this, they were considered as anti-nationalist writers, or intellectuals who are against the proliferation of independence, new borders and national and ethnic states because it implied violence, and were

therefore, not in favor of the Croatian independence. Now she lives now between Austria, Sweden and Croatia. Slavenka Drakulić is the recipient of the 2004 Leipzig Book-fair “Award for European Understanding”. For the purposes of my research I shall draw on her articles published in some reviews and on her book *Museum of Communism*.

b) David Albahari, a Serbian writer with Jewish origins, was born in 1948 in Pec, in Kosovo, but lived in Zemun, near Belgrade, in Yugoslavia. He is also a well-known writer and has published nine collections of short stories and eleven novels in Serbian language. For the short stories collection *Description of Death* he won the prestigious *Ivo Andrić Award* for the best book in 1982 in Yugoslavia. Amongst other awards are *Balcanica* and *Berlin Bridge* award. His books have been translated into sixteen languages. During the war he was mainly engaged in helping the Jewish community in former Yugoslavija and at that time inspired by his implicit need to write, he accepted the offer from the University of Calgary to become a writer in residence. In 1994 he moved to Canada and still lives there, in Calgary, with his wife and two children. For the purposes of my work I shall draw mainly attention on his book *Dijaspورا i druge stvari (On the diaspora and other issues)* published in 2008, in Novi Sad.

c) Mehmed Begić is born in Čapljina, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Yugoslavia in 1977. He has published three collective books of poetry: *L'Amore al Primo Binocolo* with Nedim Ćišić, Marko Tomaš, Veselin Gatalo; *Three times thirty three equals (Tri puta trideset i tri jednako)*, Mostar, 2000), with Ćišić and Tomaš; *Film* (Mostar, 2001), with Lukasz Szopa and three solo books: *Waiting for the Butcher (Čekajući mesara)*, Mostar, 2002.); *Poems from the Room (Pjesme iz sobe)*, Split, 2006.); *A Perfect Bullet in the Stomach [Last Poems] (Savršeni metak u stomak [Posljednje Pjesme]*, Zagreb, 2010. During the war he wrote poetry. He currently lives in Nicaragua with his wife. For the purpose of my research I shall rely on his personal views on borders and intimate survived experiences with the war.

d) Korana Šegetalo Delić was born in Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Yugoslavia, in 1979. During the war she had to leave her hometown in 1994 under traumatic circumstances because of the ongoing violence. She lived with her family in a

refugee camp in Croatia and afterwards in Turkey, also in a refugee camp, for about a year, before the “permanent relocation” to the USA. In the USA, in New York, her family worked all sorts of job to survive. She graduated in New York but settled in Salt Lake City, where she is married with two children. Her family after the war returned back in Mostar. She did not go back in Mostar never again, but occasionally travels to Bosnia to visit her family. I draw attention on her *Crossing* - series of photographs - and her personal experiences with borders, migration and space in the context of the war.

e) Tanja Ostojić, an independent international performance and interdisciplinary artist and cultural activist, was born in 1972 in Titovo Uzice, in Serbia, in Yugoslavia. She has lived, studied and worked as an artist in Belgrade, Nantes, Paris, Ljubljana and Dusseldorf and currently she lives in Berlin, Germany. She uses diverse media in her artwork and focuses mainly on migrations, power and women perspective in the political integration. She has produced several videos, solo performances and exhibitions and worked as residence artist in many cities worldwide. She has a well done a work about Jovanka Broz, Tito’s wife, called: *The case of comrade Jovanka Broz*, former first lady, who lived as a *sans-papiers* in the form of house arrest for over thirty years. She has been for several years contributor to *Remont Art Magazine* in Belgrade and to *Art in Migration* in Vienna. Drifted by after-war border retailoring, she has produced the following *Crossing Border Projects: Illegal Border Crossing; Waiting for a Visa; Looking for a Husband with EU passport*, which will be the main work on which I shall draw on.

First, I will transpose the thematic synthesis of the interviews and then I shall translate the extracted meanings of the tick description into two separate tables. Afterwards, I will undertake a comparative analysis of the interviews and their artwork related to borders, the migration as a personal mission and as a social mutation, and then I shall draw on the conclusion upon the lecture of their significant work related to the interest of my research.

Table 1

In the following grid I transpose the interview with Slavenka Drakulic that was conducted while she was in Istria in November 2011, in English language instead of Croatian, upon her choice.

Thematic questions on the key concepts	Partial transcription of Slavenka's answers
<p><i>Home. Homeness. Life.</i></p> <p>In how many countries have you lived, where do you live now and do you feel Rijeka is your intimate hometown?</p>	<p>The question of Rijeka being my hometown is a hard one. I lived there briefly. My father was an army officer, we soon moved to Senj, then to Zadar, then to Split. I lived on the Croatian coast but I am uprooted. My real hometown is Zagreb, as I've lived there since I was seventeen. For me this kind of life is a normal life and I would not call it a nomadic life. The result of this change of cities is the feeling of being uprooted, but on the other hand I gained the ability to adjust to every new situation.</p>
<p>Self-chosen exile or emigration?</p> <p>How did you live during the outbreak of the Yugoslavian wars? Why and how did you leave Croatia?</p>	<p>Some journalists and writers were expelled from the public sphere and the media. There was no such thing as a declaration or decision to expel them. But what happened is much simpler - yet very complicated at the same time. If you are prevented from publishing in the media, then there is this feeling that you are not there anymore. You cannot participate in the public life; you cannot do your job. You are no longer a public person. It happened to me, and to other dozens</p>

of writers in Croatia who did not want to take part in the nationalistic media propaganda. They were outcast and attacked by their own colleagues. The first president Franjo Tudjman did not say “now let’s get rid of these people” but colleagues that publish in the media attacked the few of us in order to prove that they were on the right side. Predrag Matvejevic went to Paris and then to Italy, Rada Ivekovic to France, Dubravka Ugresic to Holland etc. They left because they could not stand the atmosphere of the ‘witch hunt’⁷⁰. Some others published only in foreign papers, so it was a kind of internal exile... I was never expelled and never left the country but there was no chance to make for living there, so I published abroad and was absent temporarily, from time to time. I started to publish abroad long before the war, in 1987. I first began to publish in the USA and I continued to do so in the European newspapers as well. I had no chance to be published in Croatia except in one magazine known for their bravery and courageous journalism, which does not exist any longer. It was the weekly *Feral Tribune* from Split.

⁷⁰ The three Croatian women authors Slavenka, Dubravka and Rada were also called “witch”.

How did you live after you left? How did you choose in which country to go? Please tell me something about this so to say wandering experience.

In the autumn of 1993 I have met a Swedish colleague and I married him. He lived and still lives in Vienna. I lived in Zagreb and Istria and we moved together to different places. I lectured abroad, we had grants to travel and teach, although we spent most of the time in Istria. But the idea that you are not there is because you are not in the public eye. There is another aspect of the physical movement from one country to another, so to say the nomadic dimension, and that is the change of the language: I started to write in English. I first published my book *How we survived communism and even laughed* in the USA. At that time it was difficult to write in Croatian because it was hard to find good translators and I was aware I could not publish my work in Croatia. English become my language both in writing and in my private life. I speak English with my husband.

In your personal experience, what is the difference between nomad, expatriated or exiled citizen or migrant? And are you nostalgic for a certain space?

It depends on your age. If you were young, you do not remember your life at home. If you are older, you are nostalgic not so much for the space, but for the language. I speak as a writer. I would explain the feeling like this: when you walk in high heel

shoes and then you come home and put on your slippers, it feels so good! My mother's tongue language is like slippers.

I think it is important to understand that a person - any person - has more than one identity. It goes both for a personal and national identity.

But what is identity, both national and personal? It is, I am afraid, understood as fixed identity, like if it is cast in a stone.

However, modern anthropologists agree that identity is seen as a construct and that it changes.

You see, in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, the first national government of the independent Croatia tried very hard to construct the national identity. With the help of history but also myths as well as folklore, they had to invent the new flag, uniforms for the army and the policemen, the new national anthem...

You could see the national identity in construction. You could also see it in Macedonia in the fight for national identity, the language, the name...

This is how the identity is invented and acquired by the new generations. The result is what the anthropologists call the multiplied identity.

When you move around, you have

	<p>more chance to acquire a multiple identity than people who live a sedentary life.</p> <p>But sometimes you could be asked to decide or to choose between your various identities. For example, if you are a Turk in Germany, in the war you are compelled to choose. Or in situation of a football match you will have to take side, but of course the football is not such a difficult decision.</p> <p>Today in Europe, due to hard times of economic crisis, I see people are regressing, going back to groups, to mass movements, choosing one side over another, one nation over other... I see the revival of the concept of a stone cast national identity, the idea that the identity is God-given.</p>
<p>In your books (<i>The Balkan Express: Fragments from the Other Side of the War; They Would Never Hurt a Fly: War Criminals on Trial at the Hague; How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed</i>) and in your articles you told us the painful stories of the former Yugoslavian Balkan crisis, wars and despair. You spoke about many taboos that most people did not dare to even think of. You made many people ashamed about what they did or about what they did not do. But you also tackled a broad European cultural space and</p>	<p>Some artists are engaged directly and some are not. I think we should not put any demands on the artist. I would not assign such a great responsibility to an artist and say that the artist has to be engaged. I believe that artists have the power to articulate and shape the reality, but it is more and more marginalized. There are much more powerful forces like money, politics, mass-media. Artists are not very important. If they play any role at all, it is pure entertainment. Today writers</p>

<p>opened their eyes. Thus I strongly believe that if the artist does not nominate the world, the world will not exist in a way.</p> <p>Any nomadic literature of yours?</p>	<p>are not present in the mass media, perhaps the only way to influence reality on a bigger scale. Serious writers write for a happy few...</p> <p>It is the last book I wrote, <i>Museum of communism</i>, also <i>How we survived communism and even laughed</i> as well as <i>Café Europa</i> – all three about life in different Eastern European countries. I guess they might be defined as a nomadic creation.</p>
<p>What does it mean to you personally the concept of a border after the Yugoslavian wars? How do you experience the border crossings? Have you ever witnessed and experiences a traumatic or a strange border crossing?</p>	<p>Every border crossing was and is still traumatic for me. If you travel from the socialist countries to the Western countries, you can feel that. Perhaps we were lucky in Yugoslavia, we did not need visas. But the suspicion remained. You were always a suspected criminal, e.g. a customs officer treated you as if you have had hidden money, or you had smuggled something. Today, if I travel with my Croatian passport – I have also a Swedish citizenship – I would be able to bring to the country goods worth 150 euro. However, nowadays you can buy the same things in Zagreb, you can see the same shops everywhere. This is global capitalism you have the same things everywhere. You don't need to smuggle any longer. Yet the suspicion at the border</p>

<p>What is now border for the Europeans? What was the border, according to you, between Europe and Yugoslavia and now between Europe and the newly created ex-Yugoslav states? What has changed?</p> <p>If we imagine a border as something liminal, what would be then the impact on the identities and the cultures of people inhabiting the borders?</p>	<p>crossing back home – going in or out of the country – is still there.... This makes me feel bad, I really hate borders.</p> <p>As soon as you would cross the border crossing between Europe and Yugoslavia - and at that time it was the border with Austria - you would notice disorder typical for Yugoslavia: in Yugoslavia, in toilets at the border crossing there was always lack of toilet paper, broken seats, no lock, no soap, a total disaster. Today, of course, toilets have changed. What else had changed? Airport, highways, border crossings or uniforms they all look alike today on all sides. In terms of looks and smells you feel the same on the both sides, but the real border is a change of a language.</p> <p>The identity of people living nearby borders is a very interesting topic. Anthropologists from the University of Lund in Sweden concluded that these people acquire different identities. They usually speak the other language because of their commercial, agricultural or personal deals across the border. They also acquire food and habits from the other</p>
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side of the border.

In my book *Café Europa* I write about the peninsula in Croatia towards the border with Slovenia and Italy. It is Istria. The results of the 1991 census revealed very strong feelings of regionalism in that region. A citizen could not declare his regional belonging as nationality, for example that you are an Istrian instead of Croatian. Yet many declared themselves as Istrians. They prefer regional identity over the national one. This was their form of rebellion against the nationalistic propaganda, but also an authentic expression of their multiplied identity. Their local dialects are a linguistic mixture of Slovenian, Croatian and Italian words.

Some authors like Edgar Morin think that people can identify themselves with no more than 100 km around them that is with their region. The Alpe-Adria project, for instance, is uniting Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Austria (although not politically) working on different cultural and economic projects because they belong to the same region, culture, food and could better understand each other. This identification of people with their region is very strong and it is interesting as a possible antidote to

	<p>nationalism. We can learn a lot from the people with multiple identities, inhabiting the borders.</p>
<p>Given that we do not know which cultural imprint the nomad carries within, can we say that the nomad is a non-space in motion? And which space is the boundary of their life deprived of many cultures?</p>	<p>The concept of many identities and imprints is interesting; living in many cultures make you rich as a person. But nowadays we witness the fear of globalization and one aspect of it is re-appearance of nationalism. By that I mean the populist use of nationalism by right wing and even center parties. Speaking in terms of globalization, there is a kind of justified “nationalism” within small cultures, small languages, because they are afraid their language could disappear. And it is a fact that many languages disappeared over time. The challenging question is how to preserve such language and a culture without using nationalism as an argument? This is a big question for the European Union.</p>
<p>The political impact of the dissolved borders: we were born in a country that no longer exists. How do you feel about and live this belonging to a space that is in continuous capture, a space that no longer exist on the map yet it exist in the cultures and the imaginary of people?</p>	<p>I do not feel so dramatic about that. My grandmother was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She lived in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and then in the new state of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia - and so, she lived in three different states. She was born in one, lived in three and died in another country. And these things happened to many people.</p>

<p>What was the impact of the dissolution of the borders of Ex-Yugoslavia for you?</p>	<p>But in my view, the problem people are facing is the problem of memory. I am speaking about the memory of the people of my age. What people remember does not necessarily correspond with history and how it is interpreted today. I see this as a trouble. What we learned in schools, as history, was the official history. That is to say you were not supposed to speak about certain things or events, like the number of people killed in Jasenovac, the Croatian concentration camp where – we learned at that time - about 600.000 people perished, which was a number ten times bigger than in reality! To my sorrow, this double standard is continuing. Now, you are not supposed to have memories because your personal memory is different from the official version of history. At least the people of my age have this sense of uneasiness because their past and memory seems somehow illegal now. The young people born after the collapse of the Berlin Wall do not know much about their own history, which is one of the topics in <i>Museum of communism</i>, my latest book.</p> <p>Wars in the former Yugoslavia cannot be separated from the new borders.</p>
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How did you cope with that? How do you perceive in your life the new borders? A little bit on the collective versus the personal experience.

This war was a very brutal and very frightening experience for many people, especially for these who lost someone in the war. Therefore, for me there is an immediate connection between the independence, the borders and the wars in the Balkans. The first time I crossed the new border it was a strange experience... For example, when I was crossing Slovenia, which was the first former federative Republic that had split from Yugoslavia, I had no Croatian passports yet. At that time, in 1991, when crossing the Slovenian border, we Croats had the same Yugoslavian passport that the Slovenian border policemen had. For me it was almost absurd to have the passport of country that does not exist and to cross a new border with the passport of that non-existing country. These borders were improvised, abstract, they were not real. What kind of border was it if I had the same passport as the border policemen did?

Borders were also a consequence of the euphoric collective experience, euphoria of newly won independence. You cannot just say "oh, how nice that Croatia got the independence!" because this experience of independence cannot be separated

<p>Have you ever witnessed any social or cultural constructions crashing against a Western European? For example you did not share the same past and common</p>	<p>from the war and death. You have to realise, what price people had to pay for the independence. I wrote very much about that during the war. At the end, if you ask these thousands of displaced people, people who lost somebody, whose families were killed, real victims – if you ask them what are borders, nationalism, euphoria and war to them, they will say: it is a trauma. If you go and ask them now, they will probably say that they are glad to be on their own but they paid the price for that.</p> <p>When the wars were over (maybe not yet in Kosovo), the Balkan paradox – as I call it – becomes obvious. It is the fact that countries of ex-Yugoslavia that have fought for their independence, suddenly started to apply for the EU membership as soon as they get their sovereignty and independence! The EU is not a federation like Yugoslavia, of course, but it is a community that takes away part of a state sovereignty. Although I am for the EU, in my view, their wish to join the EU is a paradox.</p> <p>One of the reasons to write the book <i>They would never hurt a fly</i> is institutions of justice that are supposed to deal with the law of the country. If</p>
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values with the culture where you move to live, on one hand, and on the other hand, you came from a country that was falling apart and there were so many national pasts, so many “truths” about the past and the reasons?

we would have been left with our national institutions, our war criminals would be heroes. If you would leave it to the Serbs, the Bosnians or to the Croatians they will say the people were charged, prosecuted and sentenced in the International Criminal Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia in The Hague - they all would say they are heroes. That set me on the path to research and to go to The Hague. There I witnessed some of the trials and I wrote that book. I think what The Hague does is bringing the truth to the surface. If you take the massacre in Srebrenica, according to the Serbs it never happened. But the processes against some perpetrators proved that not only did happen - but over 8.000 Bosnian men over the ages of eighteen-thirty were executed, some of them soldiers but most of them civilians. Now, the Serbian Parliament recently voted for the Declaration about Srebrenica and expressed their regret but this would not have happened without the tribunal. There is no justice without the truth. We have to know the truth in order to understand why the massacre happened. We cannot speak about these countries in terms of European culture and values without

<p>The world we are living in builds and destroys “mini Berlin walls” (Bauman) each and every day. What element from the Balkan cultures do you associate with this? Do you think the Balkan states are facing nowadays new cultures-in-making?</p>	<p>remembering the war. We cannot proclaim the war criminals as war heroes in search for justice because the legal institutions were not able to deal with these issues. This is an example of how people have standards and have laws, but in the real life they are not able to apply these laws because of the nationalist ideology. The current Prime Minister of Croatia, during a celebration of the national holiday, sent her regards to two men that are already sentenced as war criminals at ICTY. What more do you want as a proof of a cultural clash!</p> <p>What Europe suffers now is the fear of immigrants, of Muslims. And Balkan people live in fear from each other.</p>
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The interview with David Albahari was conducted in live, in Zemun in November 2011, was realized in Serbian language and the English translation was approved by the author.

Thematic questions on the key concepts	Partial transcription of David’s answers
<p>Discussing the Home: homeness/homelessness and the origins</p>	<p>I have one text where I revealed to myself that I have two homes: when travelling from Calgary to Europe to Serbia, I always used to think that I</p>

<p>Tell me something about your life?</p>	<p>was going home, whilst when I was going back from Belgrade to Canada I always used to think that I go back to Calgary. But, then one day, I got into the plane for Calgary and I heard a voice telling me: “hm now you are going to your house”. And then I told to myself that I have two houses, but the difference is that the house in Calgary is only a house while the house in Zemun is a real home. Zemun is more than a house. Zemun is my hometown. It is a city that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Belgrade belonged to the Ottoman Empire – and for me the real border between the Balkans and Europe is here in Zemun, exactly at the borderline of the river Sava.</p> <p>Ah if I could only know something about that ...</p>
<p>Why did you leave Serbia and what impact had the dissolution of Yugoslavia on your personal and professional life? What were you doing then?</p>	<p>In 1994 the University of Calgary invited me as a <i>writer in residence</i> and this is how I move there. That meant that I would be paid on a monthly basis. Between the years 1990 and 1994 I was President of the Union of the Jewish Municipalities of Yugoslavia. Basically, I was their last federal president in former Yugoslavia, at a time when everything fell apart but only the Jewish</p>

	<p>community managed to meet together. But when the new states were created, also our association and the federation of Jewish municipalities fall apart. Since 1999 the Jewish organization of Croatia started to organize gatherings of all Jewish people from ex-Yugoslavia, and we were the first former Yugoslav people that manage to meet together after the war.</p> <p>Hm, you see, I see the real Balkan culture in the kitchen and in the Jewish Sephardi music.</p> <p>Personally, I wanted to leave because I had no time to write, I was mainly dedicated to my humanitarian work, taking care of around 800 Jews that came from Sarajevo to Belgrade. I decided to leave because I wanted to deal only with writing. When we arrived there, I started to write and all came out of me like a river: during my eighteen-year stay in Calgary I wrote around twenty books. There I feel good as a writer.</p>
<p>Borders in the Balkans they are for sure a very delicate concern. What is now border for the European connotation? What does border mean to you? How do you live it?</p>	<p>Border is something that does not necessarily need to exist physically but can exist in every individual in form of a personal relation to everything in the world that surrounds him. I was always afraid of borders. Even though there are no borders in Europe, I can feel them because I</p>

	<p>know there were once borders there. On the other hand I do not feel the borders when travelling through the countries of former Yugoslavia, because, at least in my life, there were not borders on those spaces. For me the border is a reflection of some historical reality that I translate in the present moment. When I was carrying a bit of hashish in my suitcase it was very uncomfortable for me to cross a border and so I realized that it is more peaceful to cross the border without. I am joking of course. But every joke contains a bit of truth. For me every encounter with uniformed people is a terrible experience and I do not feel well when I am near these people, symbolizing power and performing the power to make decisions about you, for example with the passport control they can forbid my entry in one country, the customs can call the police and the police can fight or hurt me and so on.</p>
<p>Shifting identities, nomadism and diaspora.</p> <p>Given that we do not know which cultural imprint the nomad carries within, can we say that the nomad is a “non-lieu”, a non-space in motion? And which space is the boundary of their life deprived of in many cultures?</p>	<p>I have always belonged to many cultures. I interpret the identity like a collection of identities and I read every new identity as richness for the human being. At the same time, one should learn what usage to make out of their identities: if one person is open to oneself then they will be open</p>

	<p>the others. When I go to the Jewish Community I become 100% Jewish and I will not go there like a rock'n'roll man and pretend I do not know what those people do. But if I have to act like a rock'n'roll man in another situation, I will do that. I live the life as if ten David were in me that occur and go out of me every time there is the need to.</p> <p>Something else, about identity: identity of a writer does not exist, because the writer is a writer only when they create. This is the identity that you cannot carry from the outside. Because I am a writer only in the moment when I write. This comes from a text written by an American writer, he says: the writer cannot be a revolutionist and you can be a revolutionist as a man but not as a writer. Many writers claim that they are writers, but that is not a question of the writer's identity.</p>
<p>The world we are living in builds and destroys “mini Berlin walls”, as Bauman writes, each and every day. What element from the Balkan cultures do you associate with this? Do you think the Balkan states are facing new cultures-in-making nowadays?</p>	<p>I am convinced that there have been many attempts and politician's insistence, mainly politicians and other factors, to build many walls in the former Yugoslavia, both physical and mental. But after the war I started to travel more in former Yugoslavia and I realized that walls may exist in some places, but between the people</p>

	<p>of good will and the artists those walls nearly do not exist. It is the optimistic side of the story, but this is the way the story goes. As an author I feel the same in Macedonia or in Slovenia or in Montenegro as I felt before the war. We have all decided to call “our language” the Serbo-Croatian and it will always remain “our language”. Even though the Macedonian and the Slovenian language are different, “our language” remains the same for all. The new generations of writers are not at all interested in Yugoslavia. But you see, they unconsciously get in touch and enact cooperation with writers from other parts of Yugoslavia and this is why when going to some literary festival in Europe, I know that I will find on the same table at lunch all representatives from Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Montenegro. It is funny, but it is like that. It is the truth.</p>
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The Interview with Mehmed Begić was conducted via Google talk while he was in Nicaragua throughout spring 2012 in Bosnian language and I have translated it in English.

Thematic questions on the key concepts	Partial transcription of Mehmed’s answers
Home: homeness/homelessness Origins	I was born in Capljina. My father, Jusut, was a biology and chemistry teacher who

<p>Life</p> <p>Real home, real Mostar?</p> <p>What do you mean by giving?</p>	<p>lived in Mostar and Sarajevo. My mother, Nagja, was also a teacher, born in Mostar.</p> <p>The real home is the place where your beloved people live. My beloved people are all around the world. Mostar is one of those places where people that I love live. Mostar is the place that formed me, because of the wonderful people that I have met there and have had the honor to spend part of my life with them and do some stuff that I am proud of. But far from wanting to go back there and live in Mostar again. Mostar and I we have given each other all we had to give.</p> <p>The story with Mostar is over. I feel like that... you know it is like when you are in a beautiful relationship and you know it is the real thing, and then things become ugly, and so ugly that the only thing that could happen, despite your will, it is the end of that relationship, leaving the beauty behind. Even though once it was wonderful, now you do not want to recall it anymore. This is how I feel about Mostar.</p>
<p>Migration.</p> <p>Why did you leave your town?</p>	<p>Well, the answer to this question is not so romantic and tragic as one could eventually imagine... Even though I have had opportunities to leave, I left from Bosnia and Herzegovina, last year because my wife was offered a very interesting job</p>

<p>Why then did not you leave earlier? And you told me you were writing poetry during the war? Were the poetry and the music an exile or an exit for you? How did you live during the war?</p>	<p>in Nicaragua and so we moved from Sarajevo to a country, where otherwise, for me it would have been difficult to go. It is very important to spend some time of your lifetime in a new and different situation to realize that all that you think you have learnt and known does not mean a thing.</p> <p>Frankly, I do not have a clue. I never thought of the possibility of leaving as something real. I have had the chance to get an education abroad or new beginnings somewhere else, but I never took that seriously. It would have meant a strong commitment from my side and initiative, but I am just a man that goes with the flow, no matter where it takes me. And now the river flows have thrown me on the shores of Nicaragua.</p> <p>I have thrown away all the poetry that I have written in the times of the war. It has no value. But I have a friend who managed to take those poems and print them in a book (he was working in a printing house) and he printed one copy of all those poems. Just because I had very good memories of him, I could not throw it away. The title was <i>Journeys</i>.</p> <p>But the music was the real exile for me, my journey to the happiness.</p> <p>And how did I live during the war.??</p> <p>Hm...I really do not know. First it is</p>
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<p>Did you ever wanted to leave?</p>	<p>strange and terrible, then you get used to it and then all that you have considered as normal is changing and you have to build your life in such circumstances. And what was abnormal to you now it becomes normal. I was lucky to be young enough not to live that in such a tragic way like I do it now. I survived.</p> <p>I was writing poems and dreaming of being Charles Baudelaire. I was more worried about my unaccomplished loves rather than about the grenades or the fact that I have to go searching for water under the grenade fire. And when we had electricity I was mainly happy because I could get my radio portion and enjoy the music again. I am aware this is not really a normal way of seeing things.</p> <p>No, I did not. I do not know why... maybe because I live my life like flowing down the river and I do not care where it goes.</p>
<p>In another interview you would say “I beware of identities, except if they are absolutely individual and personal”. I also believe that identity is a concept difficult to grasp and as you say, if it does exist then it is individual choice.</p>	<p>Look, collective identities and borders do not interest me at all! I ignore them as much as I can! If one would build them for their purposes, I will then ignore them for my purposes.</p>
<p>I am very fascinated by people inhabiting the border, like people in Istria Could you give me an example of a liminal border?</p>	<p>Well, if we think about the place where I was born, we could say, yes, I was born on the border. Capljina is on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. But nevertheless, perhaps</p>

<p>Indeed. That border became a war zone while in the past there were no problems. How did you spend your childhood on that.... border?</p>	<p>because it was in former Yugoslavia, for me that place is not a borderplace. I grew up and lived in an environment where the idea of identity did not exist, people did not have any problems in coping and living with each other. And this is strange if you think about all the bloody violence that took place in that region during the Bosnian and Herzegovina war. I was rescued by the fact that the place is now some sort of a geographical border and for me that place is still special.</p> <p>I was born and lived in a place that in the former Yugoslavia was a border between Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of course for me it is very strange and unthinkable all that border issue even now, because I did not know what the notion of border means, why it exists and what difference does it make on the 'other side'.... But what is the 'other side', if in both zones, in Capljina and Metkovic, people speak the same language and look the same, and they laugh even when they are arguing. You see why I cannot understand the border? And even when I begin to understand it, I refuse to do it. I spent a happy childhood over there, endless summers on the Neretva river, footloose... it reminds me of Tom Sawyer and it is something that I can hardly see nowadays.</p>
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<p>Geographical border means that people on both sides live the same life and habits?</p> <p>That the borders are fictional...?</p> <p>What is Balkan?</p>	<p>Therefore, I cannot answer your question... I do not know how it feels to live on the border. Ahh but, that plain near Neretva river before it flows into the Adriatic sea that is a gorgeous place to live.</p> <p>Hmm... I am not of any help to you, right?</p> <p>Ok. Maybe I used a wrong word when I said geographic border. I was thinking of the border (e.g. the one between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) determined by two nations, or whoever. Such borders are completely artificial, not natural ones. People living there have much more similarities and common habits, than people living in the respective capital cities of their countries, most of the time distant for them, in many senses. As far as I know, the Macedonian and the Bulgarian language, spoken on both sides of the border, are much more similar than the languages spoken in the capital cities, right? And this is a sign of something, isn't it?</p> <p>Exactly! In my case I was not aware, until I was fourteen. That was a place like any other place to live, a beautiful small city... and then everything went to hell...</p> <p>A geographic notion.</p>
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<p>Only a geographical notion?</p>	<p>Yes, only geographic notion. And a place where I was born without my own will. And that place has formed me just like any other places where I lived, visited, dreamed of, or where I have never been no matter how much I wanted.</p>
<p>Do you think that there is a border between Europe and the Balkans? What would be the nature of the border – if any – between Europe and the Balkans?</p>	<p>For sure there is a border. Just as like as the border between the Great Britan and continental Europe, or between Scotland and England, or between Italy and Sweden. If you search for borders, you will find them and even make them. I ignore them.</p>
<p>Do you think there are more borders in the Europe than in former Yugoslavia?</p>	<p>This is a question of perception. In what you call Europe, I do not perceive the borders and I really feel that there are more borders in the Balkan than in Europe. But as I said I am trying not to see any of them.</p>
<p>But personally I do not see nor feel the borders in former Yugoslavia...</p>	<p>I told you, it is a question of perception. I see the borders and I see the border in the so called Eastern Mostar and Western Mostar.</p>
<p>We witnessed the creation of new borders, even new languages, new cultures, new cuisines, new nations and a longing for invisible spaces. How do you feel the</p>	<p>I would rather erase those borders. I really want to feel like a citizen in every place I find myself to be, I do not want to belong somewhere because I was born there, because we do not chose to be born in one</p>

Thematic questions on the key concepts	Partial transcription of Korana's answers
<p>Homeness/Homelessness. Belonging. Origins. Life.</p> <p>So you were forced to leave Mostar?</p> <p>How old were you in 1994? What did you feel at that time about your life in exile?</p> <p>What impact on your personal life the bloody dissolution of the borders in former Yugoslavia has had?</p>	<p>I was born and grew up in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. I left my hometown in 1994. The circumstances which made my family leave were somewhat traumatic. Afterwards we lived in Croatia and in Turkey, in refugee camps, for about two years, before relocating to the USA.</p> <p>In a sense, yes. My father was taken captive by the Croatian army, simply because he had a Muslim name. He was held with other men and was given an option to stay in the holding camp or sign the eviction papers and be evicted with his family out of the country.</p> <p>At the time I was 14 or 15. I thought I was a grown up person, now I think I am still in the growing up process. Leaving Mostar was a temporary solution for me, for a very long time I thought a comeback was imminent. In no way did I anticipate the life that happened after the exile. It made me aware of many things I probably would not have been had I not been uprooted again and again. I enjoy stories, losing the ability to tell them in my native language I turned to photographs, so I think it is safe to say that had I stayed in Mostar I probably would not be doing the work that I am doing now.</p>

<p>Why did your father make that choice?</p>	<p>I am not sure if I would call it a choice or an option, but basically he was told that he would be free if he chose to leave. I do not know what happened to people who did not make that choice...</p>
<p>It must have been terrible for your father to be obliged to be a refugee but as you say staying would have been a risk....</p> <p>And if someone asks you what your real hometown is, what would you say? Do you say you were uprooted and uprooted again and again... hmm I don't quite understand that... and when did you realised the comeback is not possible anymore?</p>	<p>My whole family took comfort in the fact that staying would have probably meant death for my father. We were witness to so many horrible stories of people being taken away and never heard of again. Living in a refugee camp in Turkey was not a great experience but still we were surrounded by our own people and language. There were Bosnian schools there, and books, I had friends. Moving to the USA brought the idea of permanent relocation closer to me. I had to find a way to connect, to say what I had to say that is when photography helped me make sense of it all. Mostar is still my hometown on paper and in my heart but that is probably the city I remember before the war. Speaking honestly it is a broken city and I do not feel very comfortable in it. I feel like I belong nowhere but could live anywhere.</p>
<p>On one photograph you put the quotation <i>Home is the inescapable place, the place to which the heart's compass turns, the single place for which there is no substitute; and every day spent away your</i></p>	<p>I walked into a second hand store and found that little nightstand with drawer pulls that reminded me of something I remember from back home and without thinking I took a photo of it. It is funny</p>

<p><i>soul is raw with memories.</i> (J. Harris)</p>	<p>how a detail like that takes you back in time. Those are the moments you realize you carry all of these things with you, and it is nothing such that you can put in a suitcase!</p>
<p>You say "permanent relocation".... what do you mean?</p> <p>So why did not you go back to Mostar with your family? What made you stay in the USA? When did you first go back in Mostar?</p> <p>Why do you say broken?</p>	<p>Permanent relocation in the most raw sense there is, meaning we had no language skills therefore my parents could work the lowest paid jobs and it would take forever to save enough money to return home and live a somewhat decent life after our home was robbed of everything they have worked for all of their lives. That is how I saw it, but that is not how it was. The pull of home proved too much for my family, they needed to go back even if that meant starting again from scratch.</p> <p>By that time I had already started school and discovered photography. I thought I would have more opportunities here: I wasn't ready to go back and face what had happened so I stayed. My very first visit back is when I with heavy heart realized that I have made the right choice and that I will not be coming back to live in the "broken town" anytime soon.</p> <p>Why broken, well Mostar truly is. One side is under a Croatian regime while the other is Bosnian. It is a town with two town halls, two languages, two different currencies, literally broken.</p>

<p>How did you cope with the experience of the refugee camp? For me is very challenging to incorporate these experiences with your experience of border crossings ...</p>	<p>We went from Mostar to Croatia where we shortly stayed in a refugee camp on one island near Sibenik. From there we went to Turkey and stayed there for a bit over a year. After Turkey we moved to New York. After one year in New York my family decided to return to Bosnia, I stayed. Costs of living and tuition in Salt Lake City were so much less than in New York. I applied to a film school and got a scholarship and that is the main reason for my move to Salt Lake City UT. Each move meant losing some of the things I had gotten used to, even the bad ones. That is what I was thinking when I said uprooted.</p> <p>The border... hm, it has both positive and negative notes for me. I have already mentioned my broken town, a border is very clear there, a very painful one: it's almost a scar that will never heal. Yet sometimes it seems people who live the closest to it can claim both sides, can live richer lives because of it. They are usually more tolerant and accepting. Catholic and Muslim, that too. My parents are non-practicing Muslims, so I call myself "A Muslim by tradition" and I know many Catholics who do the same. It is not ethnically clean on either side of the city and Mostar is still very mixed even with all the borders around.</p>
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<p>I understand.hm. I understand that you would not be ready to face what has happened whilst for your parents Mostar meant everything because a life build there pulled them back.... why all these borders?</p> <p>What do you recall from Mostar before the division?</p> <p>...what do you mean aware of so much more?</p> <p>Some say Fatherland is not a space but is made of senses, of smell, memories...</p>	<p>Why there are so many? Because politicians poke at old wounds and are power hungry, because they put their pockets ahead of the people's life. They use the people to create the borders. It is sad.</p> <p>A happy childhood, many friends. I had no idea I grew up in an ethnically diverse place. It was all the same to me. Sense of freedom and confidence, sense of pride; my kids are aware of so much more than I was...</p> <p>Well, they talk about going to church with their friends so in turn they ask questions like "what religion are we? Why do we not go to church?" I did not know about things like that when I was a child, not until the war. Religion just was not something we talked about.</p> <p>I agree about what you said of Fatherland, it's also a sense of values. I have a friend who lives in Canada now, she is a writer; we went to elementary school together. She knows I now live in the United States of America, yet she asked me to do a cover for her new book. Her book is titled <i>Mostarghia</i>. I asked her what that meant. She said since her family was relocated to Canada her father became sick, homesick, and <i>Mostarghia</i> was the name of his</p>
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	<p>sickness, disease. He could not get over Mostar that no longer existed, Mostar of his youth. He died a few years ago and she dedicated the book to him. I thought maybe she would want me to shoot the cover in Mostar, but she said <i>there is Mostar all around</i>: she sent me on a quest to capture the emotion of Mostar here in Salt Lake.</p>
<p>How do you experience the border crossings?</p> <p>I see... I often see in the Balkans the borders are liquid, permeable, liminal...do you understand me?</p> <p>Something about the “non-spaces” inhabited by nomads... can we say that the nomad is a « non-lieu », a non-space in motion? And which space is the boundary of their life deprived of many cultures?</p>	<p>I have a love and hate relationship with them. Partly because of the war, where crossing the border meant leaving family and familiar things, and that was traumatic. Now many years later it means getting familiar with something new, being open to it, adapting, learning...</p> <p>I do. And they feel artificial, I have a hard time taking them seriously because I have not lived there for a long time since the war.</p> <p>Sometimes, yes. I like taking photos of spaces which cannot be geographically or culturally identified, mountains, beaches, roads, portals like doors and windows, you can find those everywhere, there is a comfort factor. Wherever you go there will be some kind of a hole in the wall to let the light in. There will be water and it all sounds the same, and sometimes it will sound like the home you carry with you.</p>
<p>Why did you name many of your</p>	<p>I have a portfolio titled <i>Crossings</i> because</p>

<p>photographs under the nomenclature of “crossings”?</p> <p>For my research it is very appealing to analyse and read your photographs expressing: doors, windows, enclosures, liminal lines, water borders, sand – why did you choose these landscapes and passages? I do often perceive in your photographs lights emerging within open spaces, various sorts of travel with no destination, wandering moments occurring in liminal spaces, water, air, “<i>frozen distances</i>”, dunes – what is the metaphor of?</p> <p>I like "uncomfortable in between feeling". Where did you shoot your photographs? Why put them all in the “suburb/small city girl” portfolio?</p>	<p>most photos are of liminal spaces taken at a point of crossing, <i>in between</i>, or they are photos of some kind of movement. The photo you pointed out is one taken from one room looking into another. The room where I stood in while taking the picture had very different light than the one that you see in the photo. I imagined a figure crossing into that light and how that light would reveal many things that the room I stood in would hide. That is why i decided to include it in the <i>Crossings</i> series.</p> <p>Those photographs become important in the process of making. In school I was taught to strive for balance in photographs, that is what makes them great, but for me it rarely happens mainly because life is so often out of balance. I plan but plans do not always turn out like I want them too, I have goals but they change often. Change can be beautiful, that uncomfortable in-between feeling can yield some great images. That is what these photographs are.</p> <p>I either take photos of exactly what is happening, those I call mirror photos, or I run in the opposite direction and take a photo of something that is very far from where I am emotionally, those I call my balance photos, they pull in a different</p>
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	<p>direction. I have a portfolio titled <i>Portals</i>, most of the imagery you mention is there, for me those portals make sense of events or experiences that I went through, I hope they convey a bit of that vulnerability at the moment the change happens, of the crossing through a portal.</p> <p>I call them <i>Provincijalka / Provincial girl</i> mainly because of this song which has a line that I love, it says: “we are all alone refugees from our nonsense”.</p> <p>However, I do not think that song is related to what happened to me but some parts of it speak to me like the fact that the song is about a provincial girl who put all her hopes and dreams in a suitcase and headed into unknown. Since I moved so many times I lived out of suitcases, I never allowed myself to unpack them... it was easier if I was ready to leave all the time. When I moved into the house where I live now and where my children were born I finally had enough space and I realized that it was going to be a more permanent dwelling but it still took me a long time to get rid of my suitcases.</p> <p>Also, in <i>Portals</i> I found a photo of a window. The color of the house was similar to a house I remember from my childhood. I took a photo not even knowing this: something about it spoke to me. It was a three second decision to take a photo and I later realized why I took it.</p>
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<p>It is really interesting that you were drifted by a remembrance, a memory to capture a shifting space... The inner state of the exiled...?</p> <p>The attachment to the suitcases is really something that makes you a wanderer in the soul... but now you've settled down and you live a different life from that you could have lived in Mostar...</p>	<p>This blue-grey worn out house color is the same in so many languages.</p> <p>Exile can mean different things. There are days when I feel like an outsider, exiled from my surroundings. I like shooting at the Great Salt Lake beach on those days. I put myself in that strange environment, just sky, sand and water and then my emotions match my surroundings and somehow it helps.</p> <p>I did settle, but I did not get rid-off the suitcases.</p>
<p>The political impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the <i>construction</i> of former Yugoslavian wars and walls.</p> <p>How did you inhabit your home-place before the war?</p>	<p>How you put your question talking about the Berlin wall, it really made me think a lot when I read it in the attachment you emailed and it made me a bit sad. Taking down the Berlin wall was a reason to celebrate but the former Yugoslavian states did the opposite of that. I feel like many walls were built and that many children are being conditioned now to believe that those walls are normal and natural.</p> <p>We travelled all over and we had relatives in different towns. My mom was born and grew up in Croatia, I have a grandmother whose family is from Serbia. I got my</p>

	<p>name from a Yugoslavian movie about the WWII, the Croatian river of Korana that saved some Partisans. I knew what the war was about, but I could not understand it: I saw it as an end of Yugoslavia, each republic wanting to gain their independence. Sounds pretty simple.</p> <p>I still think people were one before the war and I still think they are one today. I think people were used and manipulated by those in power or those who were power hungry. But in fact Yugoslavia was fluid, there were republics but we were one people.</p>
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Interview with Tanja Ostojic conducted in Berlin in January 2013. The transcript was revised by the author.

Thematic questions on the key concepts	Partial transcription of Tanja's answers
Your life: where is your home? Where do you belong?	<p>I am from Belgrade and Berlin. My migration path starts when I was born in 1972 in Titovo Uzice, and when I was one month we moved to Titograd. Then Belgrade where I lived until 1998 when I graduated. Then I lived in Western France in Nantes, and in Paris, then Ljubljana, again Belgrade, again Paris and Ljubljana. After my project <i>Looking for a husband with an EU passport</i>, I got married in Dusseldorf. After three years I moved to Berlin, where I live almost nine years. But</p>

	<p>as a residence artist I traveled a lot abroad mainly in France and Germany. Actually, I have always had the feeling of not-belonging in the places I inhabited. I am pretty independent in my private life and economically as well and I do believe that a good dose of not-belonging in the spaces that you inhabit is healthy. This is how I remain fresh and avoid falling down in lethargy – because every space has a specific lethargy. But this does not mean that I am not engaged: I have profound social interactions with people in the places where I live.</p>
<p>What made you start the <i>Looking for a husband with EU passport</i> project? What was the precedent? How did you feel about this artistic conception of the borderness in your life?</p>	<p>That is a very complex project, which was developed from 2000 to 2005, in the medium of the interactive and participative on-line project, in the medium of law and in the medium of the performance. Afterwards, I have transposed that project in several artistic forms such as <i>Wedding book</i>, handmade book; the <i>Crossing over</i>, video, together with Klemens Goff; and the multimedia installation <i>Looking for a husband with an EU passport</i>. I have recycled that work in the lecture of performance, where I interpret what has happened, I talk about the work, I present the candidates with whom I was in touch, but also the candidates with whom I was married – thus I discuss with the public the context</p>

	<p>of the marriage within the project. For the purposes of this project I have used my identity card, my gender, race and national belonging, and my class belonging: you cannot run away from these aspects of the identity. My positions were politicized and the work itself is very political and somewhat feminist. It is a critique of power of the <i>Fortress Europe</i> and <i>Prison Europe</i> but also a critique of the Eastern European spaces, the spaces of origin and the elite dimension of those spaces...</p>
<p>Borders and liminality. Was your work inspired by does it criticize the outbreak of the border dissolution in former Yugoslavia? How do you feel about it?</p> <p>Hm, what do you mean by that?</p>	<p>The borders theme is very interesting for me, even though I think nowadays borders have become a commercialized agenda. I very much agree with Manuela Bojadziev that we cannot talk about borders if we do not consider the violence of border citizenship and restrictions of citizenship laws. I would add to that the economic exploitation and transnational capitalism.</p> <p>I mean, how they exploit the condition of migration and the restricted citizenship laws. In my opinion, many people are not given citizen rights in order to be easily exploited. Having said this, the border interests me only in the political and the economic context, and not as a kind of performing border commercialized agenda. I have been at many migration related conferences and I have to say I have been disappointed by the topics</p>

<p>You actually did cross the border with the EU illegally, right and this was your protest against EU border control politics as you were nearly refused as an artist to perform your artwork?</p> <p>Even not-identitarian... David Libeskind yesterday said that borders are “mental incapacity to deal with the others”...</p>	<p>people do their studies, without considering the bigger picture, and you know the bigger picture in this context is the crucial one.</p> <p>I started my <i>Crossing Borders</i> series in 2000 to 2005. For the purpose of this interview, I shall mainly focus now on these three projects quoted in this book: <i>Illegal border crossing</i>, <i>Waiting for a visa</i> and <i>Looking for a husband with an EU passport</i>. These projects are analyzing the strategies that migrants have to apply for in order to be able to transit and cross borders...</p> <p>Yes, I crossed the Schengen border not registered and it was in one place where the border that does not exist anymore nowadays. It was between Slovenia and Austria and this proves that borders are artificial, unjustified...</p> <p>I do not focus on personal and mental racism but rather on institutionalized, political and economic questions (the more dangerous ones.) Migration has a long history you know, and it is a matter of gaining power, that changes people's attitudes and positions. You know very well, once those who were now historically "first migrants" are the ones who took the power afterwards and have limited the natives others and as well as</p>
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	<p>the contemporary immigrants, (for example in Australia, USA...). I think it is the other way around actually. It is a proof of cruelty when dealing with the other.</p>
<p>How and do you see and perceive the political impact that the dissolution of the former Yugoslavian borders has had on your life and art? What does it mean to you? How did you cope and lived with the idea of having to do with a country that no longer exist?</p>	<p>Well, it is not only that the country does not exist any longer. The problem is more linked to some forced amnesia of certain Yugoslavian history like the anti-fascist struggle that someone wants to erase. I have a number of works that are also kind of analyzing this issue. One of these works was developed in Ljubljana, where I had a small retrospective. I produced post- cards in 1998, and those were some kind of fake ads for Tomos International Cooperation Company, the famous Yugoslavian “concerna” that produced small sized motor bikes and small motors for boats. I still have one in our summer house in Montenegro! They always symbolized freedom and access to me and they were affordable and easy to use and to ride. I offered this to the company and I published it on their Facebook page and they erased it. It is funny because I loved the contexts and I had hundreds of ‘likes’. I then went to see the web page of the company and realized they erased the history of the Yugoslavian market in their website, even though Yugoslavia is very important for them. Now it is Slovenian, sold to a Dutch company.</p> <p>My mother died in the period of transition.</p>

	<p>She was working for <i>Jugoexport</i>, the elite women fashion company of Yugoslavia, which was degraded through the transition period from socialism to capitalism. And I made a performance about it: <i>Clothless</i> several years ago. I did as well a work about Jovanka Broz, <i>The case of comrade Jovanka Broz</i>, the former first lady, who has lived as a <i>sans-papiers</i> in a form of a house arrest for over thirty years in Serbia. I am currently working on an interdisciplinary research project <i>Lexicon of Tanja Ostojic</i> where I am meeting, interviewing all Ms. Tanja Ostojic coming from former Yugoslavia. The key question, besides to the gender and labor questions – the labor being a question truly related to all ex-Yugoslavian questions - was focusing on how the war and the fall of Yugoslavia influenced their lives. The 90% of them said that it has radically changed their life – in sense that they become refugees, lost close family members, decided to move, or their economic situation went very difficult. The <i>Tanja Ostojics</i> that I had a chance to interview so far are of diversified national and religious identities, different age groups and different social background (some coming from Croatia living in Serbia, they consider themselves Serbs, or in Istria, some say they are Orthodox, <i>etc.</i>)</p>
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<p>And how did this influence your life?</p>	<p>Well, the condition of political turmoil and war influenced my inner landscape since I have been forming myself in that period, I was studying and I was becoming politically aware and conscious. I found the labeling issues very problematic – like someone is labeling and putting or labeling identity on you, or placing you, labeling this and that: it was an unjust period to many people. The situation radically changed, in the region, economically speaking. Then the issue of human rights came along. And the identities issues were at stake, because the context made that the Yugoslavian identity was not wanted anymore and some national identity were wanted. So this was all very particular.</p>
<p>Would you consider yourself as a “non-space in motion” like an artist? Like a continuous rupture in space without belonging? And you also argue the “non-lieux” in your artwork right?</p>	<p>I do not live in-between-spaces. I live in real spaces: economic and political. When you speak about the “non-space” I would not agree that there is no context or identity in the “non-lieux” – in those spaces - even though very interesting from an aesthetic point of view, because they are extrapolated from the everyday life - there is a political context: at the airport you know which zone is for the EU and which one for the non-EU citizens.</p> <p>For example when you are about to enter the UK or the USA at those airport police border zones, the question of identity is evident and forced to that extent, even</p>

<p>Your project <i>Misplaced woman</i> could be considered as a demonstration of this?</p>	<p>though when applying for visa we have answered 100 questions related to our life, past, family, profession, ex-marital partners, our children, our incomes, our savings, our acquaintances, friends, colleagues, plans, goals and even though we have released our finger prints imprints, and our biometric photographs, we again undergo at border crossings through interrogations, controls, finger imprints and biometrical identification and therefore to my understanding I consider the word "non-lieu" not quite appropriate for such spaces which are pure bureaucratic machinery of population control identified as "alien" nexus.</p> <p>On the other hand all those different life stories of people when the train is late or when the train station is blocked for hours and hours because of the snow, are a quality per se. I also recall the happiness I felt when traveling as youngster and enjoying the freedom and the distance from the local context, far away from family and barriers.</p> <p>One aspect of this project could deal with the “non-lieux” but I was mainly interested in other issues: for example the forced security, which is legally a burden for anyone who travels. Therefore, those situations where travelers are exposed to search, to interrogation and to stress. And</p>
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	<p>this is the focus of some other projects of mine: people who do not have the privilege to travel because they do not have a certain color of the passport, people who are discriminated throughout the journey ethnically or because of their race, <i>etc.</i> I must say that however integral a part of the “non-lieux” border is, and borders are discrimination, limitation and explicit demonstration of the political and economic context.</p> <p>Today we witness some repressive innovation of airports; besides the repressive "security" control measures, we are obliged to cross the barrier of artificially branded perfumes, alcoholic drinks bars and chocolates and other useless things that I personally feel as a repression and aggression.</p>
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Table 2

In the following grids I translate the condensed concepts that the artists referred to when discussing the borderness issues; I transpose the synthetic deductions from the interviews corresponding to each key concept that I argue. The aim of this grid is to facilitate the conclusion on how these expatriated artists cope with the shifting, unstable and liminal quality of the politically dissolved border and the cultural boundary arising from every border shift and violent border encounter sites.

Slavenka Drakulic

Borderness/borderleesness	<p>First, she introduces the analogy between the border and the violence: the borders of all former Yugoslav, nowadays independent, republics were created through war. Therefore she liaises with the term of <i>trauma</i>.</p> <p>She recalls the improvised borders, reporting one episode of a border crossing between Croatia and Slovenia but with the old Yugoslavian passport, which was the same as the one of the Slovenian border policemen. She thus raises the question: what kind of border do we see if we have the same passport as the police officer?</p> <p>She hates borders and the feeling of being a victim of suspicion every time when crossing a border, being suspected as a smuggler, as an ex-socialist citizen.</p> <p>Because of the globalization, airports and borders they all look the same but the real 'borderness' tie lies in the language.</p>
Home/homeness/homelessness	<p>Despite the feeling of <i>uprootedness</i> that she refers to, she feels Zagreb is her real hometown. She raises the multiple belongings of former Yugoslavian people and realizing the place of home in several countries: her grandmother was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, lived in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and died in the Socialist Federalist Republic of</p>

	<p>Yugoslavia.</p> <p>She points out that culture means identifying oneself with no more than 100 km around them.</p>
Nomadic	<p>She does not consider herself as a nomad, but as someone who has been uprooted due to the course of the Yugoslavian wars. Because of that she underwent to an internal exile during the war.</p> <p>The nomadic dimension of her life resides in the language shifts between all her towns of residence.</p>
Yugoslavia	<p>What has been left in Yugoslavia is the perpetual erasure of memories.</p> <p>She tackles the paradox of the new republics: from the Yugoslavian Federation towards the European Union.</p> <p>Reinventing nationalisms through invention of new flags, army and all possible national anthems: national identity in construction. Multiplied versus multiple identities both personal and national.</p> <p>Fear of globalization and re-inventing nationalism and regionalism.</p> <p>Loss of memory.</p>

Borderness/borderlessness	Fear. Terrible experience with uniformed people. Symbols of power. Other people's decisions on your life. Forbidden entry to a country.
Home/homeness/homelessness	The homeness somewhat relates the notion of border: Zemun is a symbolic hometown because it used to be a border town between the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empire. In Calgary there is something called 'house' whilst in Zemun there is the real 'home'. Strong even imaginary belonging to Zemun but not nostalgic: he revisits and lives Zemun wherever he is.
Nomadic	Belonging to various cultures. Dwelling in multiple identities. Self-chosen exile because of the urgent need to write and to be a writer.
Yugoslavia	Despite the many walls build after the war, there is no perception of the borderness after the war mainly amongst artists and people with good will. The language (Serbo-Croatian, widely spoken in all former Yugoslavian republics) as an anti-border tool and Yugoslavian rock and roll music as a unification tool of all Yugoslavian people.

Mehmed Begic

Borderness/borderlessness	He would rather erase political borders.
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	<p>He considers borders as barrier between people that by building identities creates separation between people. He ignores each identitarian notion of borderness.</p> <p>He ignores the understanding of the border, in the concrete case, of his hometown, because he says one same language was spoken and people lived the same life.</p> <p>He does pay particular attention to the idea of inhabiting the border. Borders are fictional, unreal and traumatic.</p> <p>One can always trace borders, if they want – it is a question of perception.</p>
Home/homeness/homelessness	<p>He was born on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in Capljina. For him that place is only a geographic determination and in no way a political border, despite the bloody war on that exact border.</p> <p>He did not know what it meant to live on the border simply because the border did not exist at that time.</p> <p>He feels as citizen of the world.</p> <p>The real home for him is the place where people that one loves are.</p> <p>He declines Mostar as his hometown.</p>
Nomadic	<p>The becoming nomad is marked by urge and force, or by personal will and desire, shifting lives and contexts wherever one goes.</p>
Yugoslavia	<p>He feels and sees the borders after the war. For him the most painful example of</p>

	this is the divided city of Mostar.
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Korana Delic

Borderness/borderlessness	<p>Border has positive and negative sides: in the case of Mostar border is painful, but in cases of people inhabiting borders means being more tolerant and richer.</p> <p>Her relation to borders is however traumatic: crossing a border means leaving something familiar.</p> <p>Borders are artificial and border crossings are liminal.</p>
Home/homeness/homelessness	<p>Mostar in her heart and on paper. Today for her Mostar is an uncomfortable place to be because it is a broken, divided city.</p> <p>She belongs nowhere but could live everywhere.</p> <p>Mostar means freedom, confidence and pride, but never an ethnically diverse place, because it was all the same.</p> <p>She is uprooted but she carries the home within.</p>
Nomadic	<p><i>Nomadic means loss</i>: each move means losing things, uprootedness, means to live a life as a refugee, to be in permanent</p>

	<p>relocation, to face the lack of language skills.</p> <p>Nomadic capture of home in the spaces which cannot be culturally or geographically identified.</p> <p>She was living her life for a certain period of time with unpacked suitcases.</p> <p>She demonstrates the consequences of the war which made out of her an outsider.</p> <p>The nomadic resides in the performance of carrying things with you everywhere.</p>
Yugoslavia	<p>No borders, there is a notion of being one people.</p> <p>Yugoslavia was fluid: there were republics but the people were united.</p> <p>During the war people were manipulated by people hungry for power.</p> <p>Children are conditioned to believe those walls are natural.</p>

Tanja Ostojic

Borderness/ borderlessness	<p>To her understanding and artistic interpretation borders are artificial, unjustified and politically cruel.</p> <p>Furthermore, she describes them as discriminative: by not giving citizenship rights, borders are zones for exploiting people.</p> <p>She feels limitation and repression in</p>
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	<p>border spaces, barriers and human exploitation.</p> <p>She could not attend an international exhibition in Vienna, legally, where she was invited to perform, because she was not granted a Schengen Visa and therefore she decided to cross the Slovenian border to Austria illegally.</p>
Home/homeness/homelessness	<p>Berlin and Belgrade.</p> <p>She nourishes the feeling of <i>not belonging</i>.</p>
Nomadic	<p>Nomadic to her means not to belong, being misplaced. Performing freedom and artistic nomadic actions, which are purely critical towards the global invasion of economic and exploiting power of the concept of the borderness and segregation.</p>
Yugoslavia	<p>What has remained after is called global amnesia, a tendency to the collective loss of memory.</p> <p>The notion of Yugoslavia for her represents the struggle against fascism.</p>

The reading of this chapter undergoes a split in two directions of interpretation: on one side the chapter will draw on the analysis of the interviews and on the other side it will focus on the analysis of their artistic and literary work inspired by and focused on borders, on the migrating life, on shifting spaces. By doing so I will try to understand to what extent the former Yugoslavian political impact and culture had a bearing on their border lives and arts. At the final phase, I will try to transpose the border as a transcending space, as a liminal zone and as a productive region. Taking the challenge to bring my reading towards the “thick description”, the chapter will make an effort to understand not only the common feelings and statements - almost all of them but particularly Slavenka, Korana and Mehmed linger on that feeling of *uprootedness* and

witness the barrier and repression experiences issued from border zones - but to understand also the disparate reactions to border and the subliminal production in artistic terms of the borderness. The political frontier incorporates a physical barrier and therefore, one confrontation arises from the question why David does not see the borders and Mehmed sees the borders in former Yugoslavia. Is it because one has not lived the war and the other did? Or is it because they lived the war in different way? Or is it because of their age and therefore different perception of the past? However, the first moment what struck me most during the interview is the feeling of uneasiness that they show and explicitly express regarding the notion (implicitly political) of a border. Delimitations of cultures, *separation of people* like Korana says, clusters of habits, identity definitions, *barriers* like Mehmed says, *fear and trauma* like David and Slavenka say and *repressions* and (economic) *labeling*, like Tanja Ostojic would say, are very much *traumatic* to all of them. I draw on some common perceptions of the political factor in former Yugoslavia: they do not consider the differences between people were the root of the war; they do not recall hatred; Korana says *we were one people* and *Yugoslavia was fluid*.

The second moment on which I shall draw is the over-repeated notion of being *uprooted* as an action of border dwelling: it is important to underline that they all refuse to call themselves nomads, and even reacted negatively and nervously to my question about the nomadic side of their life and work. The homeness for them means to belong everywhere, to be citizen of any place where they are, as Mehmed would say, and at the same time to belong nowhere – that is to say denial, refusal of spatial cultural configuration: no labels, no identities, no national emblems, no ethnic divisions and finally no borders. Now, when it comes to borders, I shall draw on the third element that grasps my attention is their relation to border: as stated above, they all had traumatic experiences with borders. Something that within the larger European context is a national, linguistic and emblematic distinction, for these former Yugoslavian writers and artists becomes a geographic determination, an ideological repression and to some extent a creative limitation or inhibition. The analysis of their social and cultural discourse goes through one line of symbolic acts, words and feelings they express and translate in their work. My aim is to draw a wider conclusion that border, according to their work and interviews, is something liminal, difficult to grasp, painful and hybrid for those people who have witnessed throughout their life and art, or through political or

activist engagement, the disruption of one state and the eruption of several states. Considering this, their age, their life, their belongings and their work, I believe their testimonials are authentic because issued from a real historical context. Even though most of them are very famous, well known, internationally recognized - and therefore ideologically responsible as artists, given that where the theory fails to name the political drifts, art manages to do that perfectly – however they were not very available to express all their points of view and for me it was very difficult to insist on grasping the most interesting meaning of their behavior. Still, I rely on small but concentrated, dense and condensed words, notions or nonce they express, in order to extrapolate one at this stage modest theory of border liminality. By doing this, I shall draw on one group of condensed key-words that have been referred to when discussing with me questions on borders, on the logic of the frontier and the liminality of the border production.

Table 3

Condensed notions in a concrete assertion on a generic question about border

<p>Borders, borderness.</p>	<p><i>Fear.</i> <i>Trauma.</i> <i>Artificial, unjustified.</i> <i>Invisible. Painful.</i> <i>Hybrid.</i> <i>Hatred.</i> <i>Control.</i> <i>Forced security.</i> <i>Discrimination.</i> <i>Forbidden entry.</i> <i>Suspicion.</i> <i>Liminal.</i> <i>Fictional.</i> <i>Unreal.</i></p>
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	<p><i>Linguistic.</i></p> <p><i>Identity-building.</i></p> <p><i>Violent.</i></p> <p><i>Power.</i></p> <p><i>Invented.</i></p> <p><i>Instigating-belonging.</i></p> <p><i>Repression.</i></p> <p><i>Barrier.</i></p> <p><i>People exploitation.</i></p> <p><i>Labels. Labeling people.</i></p> <p><i>War.</i></p> <p><i>Collective euphoria.</i></p> <p><i>Nationalism.</i></p>
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These assertions, extracted from the collective experiences (Yugoslavian culture and reality; Yugoslavian war; dissolution of borders; creation of new nation-states; re-invention of the past; ethnically conflict issues; emigration/exile) are fully engaged towards the framing of the specific, concrete but complex and deep social meanings: the meanings of exclusion and “forced security” (Tanja), meanings of “suspicion” towards “socialist” travelers (Slavenka), meanings of “forbidden entry” (David), meanings of separation with “family” (Korana) and meanings of separation between people in “divided cities” (Mehmed). It is important to underline, that my goal was not to answer general questions of the “bigger picture” (Tanja Ostojic), but to make a fertile soil of the distinctive perception of the border-zones and to create an available field of productive meanings that will allow me to extrapolate an inductive theoretical approach to a border which in their cases is somewhat liminal. Therefore, I managed to conduct the semi-structured interview in this implicit direction, insinuating and instigating them to speak about the borders – but without telling them what I was meaning by that. The values I obtained in the tables above are synthetic, but the explanation that follows will support their statements on migration and borders, that even though they have encountered significant density in the recent years, still the Yugoslavian example of the borders in

continuous making in progress and their impact on an artist's life and artwork is very particular.

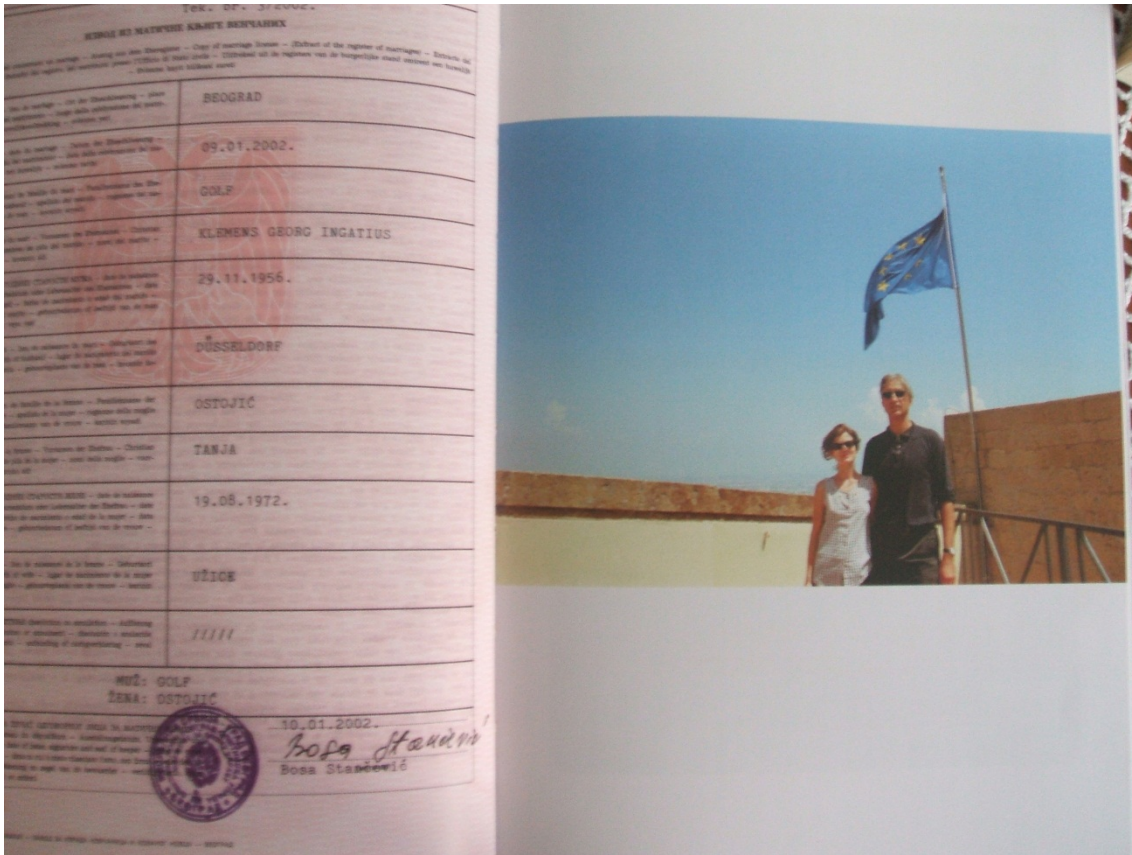
Border means human exploitation: Tanja

Tanja Ostojic argues the border in terms of the political exploitation of people: she has upraised questions concerning restricted citizen's rights measures and repression. In fact, in her artwork she is criticizing the Eastern European "élite" inclination to migration towards Western Europe with the goal of *getting married to an EU citizen* – social phenomenon which was boosted especially after the fall of all communist political systems in Eastern Europe. In her outstanding project on migration, shaved and naked (see photo below), she developed accordingly to this idea the project *Looking for a husband with EU passport*. For this performance she says: "For the purposes of this project I have used my identity card, my gender, race and national belonging, and my class belonging: you cannot run away from these aspects of the identity". We see very strong attachment and even a legal risk of exposing and explicitly waving with her "identity". Drifted by the social mutation of the post-war post-socialist schizophrenic and confusing societies *in transition* towards capitalism, Tanja is publishing an advertising item on the web with the title *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport*, which is a participatory web project and combined media installation. In the frames of this project, she has exchanged over 500 letters with potential husbands, which she publishes afterwards as art-fact. After six months correspondence with a German man, Klemens Goff, she arranged their first meeting as a public performance in front of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade in 2001 (only Belgrade and Skopje having Museums of Contemporary Art during the socialist period). One month later they married, she joined him in Dusseldorf with a single entry family visa. Subsequently they got divorced and on the occasion of the opening of her

Integration Project Office at Project Room Gallery 35 in Berlin, she organized a Divorce Party. She says during the interview: “I have transposed that project in several artistic forms such as *Wedding book*, handmade book; the *Crossing over*, video, together with Clemens Goff; and the multimedia installation *Looking for a husband with EU passport*. (...) My positions were politicized and the work itself is very political and somewhat feminist. It is an open critique against the power of the *Fortress Europe* and *Prison Europe* but also a critique of the Eastern European spaces, the spaces of origin, the elitistic dimension of those spaces”, she says.



Flyer advertising the project *Looking for a husband with EU passport* (see Tanja's call for applications)



Marriage certificate of Tanja Ostojic and the German artist Klemens Goff



Tanja's Yugoslavian passport used for the purposes of her interdisciplinary project

The other project of equal risk of exposure of the body is the illegal crossing of the Schengen border at that time between Slovenia and Austria. Tanja was not granted with a Schengen visa and she literally crossed the border illegally through the mountains with her Austrian friend, who was photo-documenting this illegal transit. She crosses the Schengen border not registered in one place where the border does not exist anymore nowadays: it was between Slovenia and Austria and this proves that borders are artificial, unjustified. At that time it was the border of the European Union and citizens from former Yugoslavia were facing huge difficulties in obtaining visa; actually, at this tiny natural boundary, eight to nine persons per day were caught while illegally crossing from Slovenia, not yet part of the EU, toward Austria. Like these people, Tanja's application for a Schengen visa in 2000 was denied. She used to live in Ljubljana at that time and wanted to join an international artist workshop taking place in Austria. This illegal border crossing art action was therefore developed thanks to the guidance of an EU citizen, an Austrian friend who took the risk of driving her in a car through inaccessible mountain zones, equipped with detailed maps of the territory and a camera. Tanja would say: "It was exciting and still less stressful than the legal procedure that I went through when I got a proper visa a few weeks later, when I took part in an exhibition in Carinthia."



Tanja crossing not registered the Slovenian side of the border with Austria, at that time the border between the EU and the formerly dissolved Yugoslavia

This artistic yet illegal mission was introduced by her situationist performance *Waiting for a Visa* that took place in 2000 in front of the Austrian Consulate in Belgrade (photograph below) where she was lining from 06 am until noon with hundreds of other people and a huge file of guarantee letters and documents and she had to repeat this every day because the Embassy would close at noon and she “shared the fate of failure” to access the Consulate. She says that this scenario as ongoing for 24 hours a day every day in Belgrade and that it was strictly forbidden to be documented with camera. This is all very strange because for all of them – given their age (except for Mehmed and Korana) – being Yugoslavian meant travelling across the world without the need to apply for a visa. Therefore the situation after the war was somewhat shocking, uneasy and traumatic for them.



Tanja is queuing for Austrian visa in front of the Consulate in Belgrade together with other Serbian citizens.

Her position towards borders and her artistic interpretation of what happened in Yugoslavia is clearly politicized: “I very much agree with Manuela Bojadziev that we cannot talk about borders if we do not consider the violence of border citizenship and

restrictions of citizenship laws. I would add to that the economic exploitation and transnational capitalism”, she says. Currently working on two projects, *Lexicon of Tanja Ostojic* and *Misplaced woman*, Tanja undertakes a feminist approach to the border citizenship and former Yugoslavian identifications. Interviewing many women having her name, i.e. Tanja Ostojic, from former Yugoslavian republics, and negotiating concepts such as identity, religious self-affiliation, national belonging and ethnicity, with this interdisciplinary project focusing on how the war and the fall of Yugoslavia influenced their lives, Tanja comes to the conclusion that “the 90% of them said that it has radically changed their life – in the sense that they all became refugees”. The liminal side of these cross-border interviews has shown that self-identification is negotiable when dealing with borderness because “(...) some Croatian *Tanja Ostojic* coming from Croatia living in Serbia, they consider themselves Serbs, or Croatian *Tanja Ostojic* living in Istria, some say they are Orthodox, etc. (...) they all have diversified national and religious identities.”

In *Misplaced woman* Tanja gathers all kinds of women’s performances on airports accusing the “forced security” measures and “those situations where travelers are exposed to search, to interrogation and to stress”. She has personally documented a video of one performance at the airport where she is publically opening her suitcases and showing what she has, arranging things and living the “non-lieu” as an “haut-lieu” of displaced existence, continuing even today (2012-2013) on the ontological path of human denial of that boundary that she calls: “discrimination, limitation and explicit demonstration of the political and economic context”.



Tanja work *After Courbet* conceived and inspired by *L'origine du monde* (1866) by Gustav Courbet, artist who during the time of Paris commune was struggling against class divisions between people and who was also arrested for political affiliation. His painting was hidden for more than 120 years in private collections, but has been displayed in the Musée d'Orsay since 1980. Tanja displays her intertextual work, always criticizing European politics of migration and "impossible integration" in the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Celje, in Slovenia (2004) and in KunstHaus in Graz, Austria (2005); some billboards of this image were spread in Vienna as part of the exhibition *EuroPart*. However, this work had to be removed after two days from public spaces because it was "offensive" for the morality of the public and religious feelings (see photo below).

Vienna, January 2006

Dear Tanja Ostojic

As curators of the rolling billboard project EUROPART, we highly regret to inform you that your work *Untitled (After Courbet)* and *Integration Impossible* had to be taken out of the boards by the end of 2005 due to massive pressure from various sides.

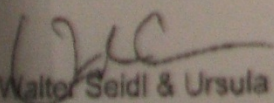
Much to our dismay, the public, the tabloid Kronen Zeitung, the Christian Family Union and various political parties demanded the removal of your work due to "sexist" reasons. We are very much appalled by the public's misreading of your work and do not accept what has happened. Yet, as curators, we were not able to influence the whole process.

We as curators always opposed the removal of your work since we feel that it is very important how you raise issues of European integration, but the final decision to take the work down was taken by the organizers, who saw themselves in danger of having to stop the entire project.

That we had to take away all your works and not only *Untitled (after Courbet)* is due to the fact that they were always printed on one roll, which couldn't be taken apart and shown as individual pieces.

We are looking forward to discussing further details when you come to Vienna for the catalogue presentation.

With best regards,


Walter Seidl & Ursula Maria Probst

The letter with which Tanja had to remove her work *After Courbet* from public spaces



"Chancellor Stops Porn-Billboards!"
Kronen Zeitung, cover, 29 December 2005

The Kronen Zeitung refers to sexist reasons and the public's misreading of Tanja's posters *After Courbet*



This is the latest Tanja Ostojic project on multiple identities of former Yugoslavian women named *Lexicon of Tanja Ostojic* and their migration paths. Tanja was researching on their migration stories, some of them migrating from Istria to Slovenia or to Italy, some locally within Croatia, others from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia or to Montenegro, and some even to Western Europe, North America and in the Caribbean after the Yugoslavian war. The artwork is a drawing with pencil 3.5 meters long.

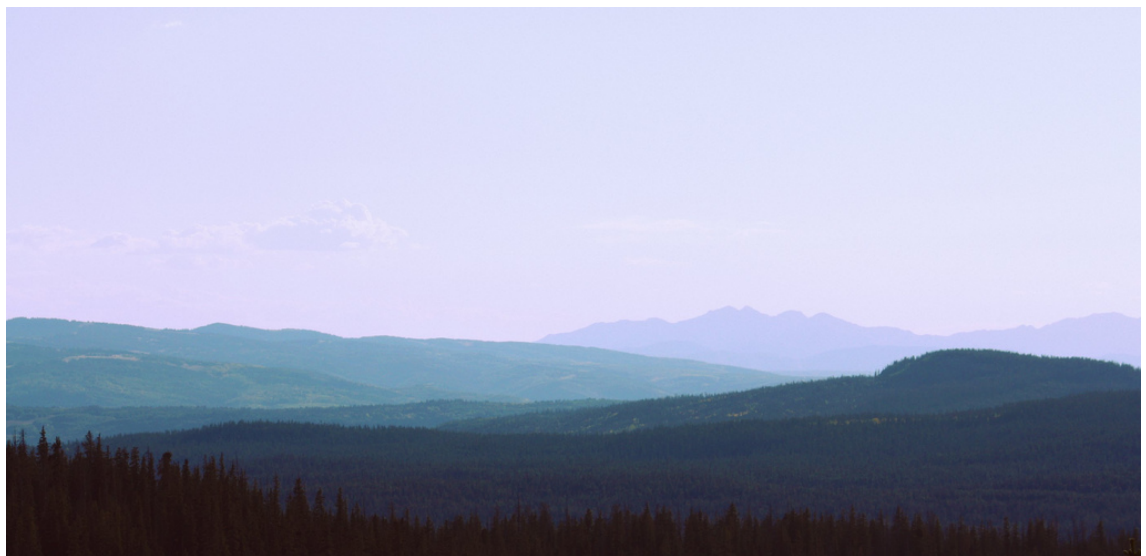
Being uprooted again and again, carrying the home within: Korana

Korana's experiences with borders are slightly different from the other artist's testimonials; in a sense that she was a child when she left former Yugoslavia and so not an established and internationally recognized artist like the others. She comes from a mixed Serbian and Croatian family and received her name from a Yugoslavian movie about the World War II from the Croatian river of Korana, which saved some partisans. Her migration path is very traumatic. Her father was taken captive by the Croatian army just because he had a Muslim name and was given an option to stay in the holding camp or to sign the eviction papers and be evicted out of the country with his family. Korana spent some years in refugee camps in the island near the town of Sibenik in Croatia, then in Turkey and then they were relocated to New York. After the war her family returned to Mostar but Korana decided not to go back and to complete her studies.

The feeling of relocation for Korana means “being uprooted again and again”. This permanent situation of waiting for the return to take place and living the life as a “temporary solution” inspired Korana to document life in visual elements: she started to shoot photographs. “For a very long time I thought a comeback was imminent. In no way did I anticipate the life that happened after the exile, but it made me aware of many things I probably would not have been had I not been uprooted again and again. I enjoy stories”, Korana says, “losing the ability to tell them in my native language I turned to photographs. If I stayed in Mostar I probably would not be doing what I am right now.” She explains that living in a refugee camp for her was facilitated by the fact that she could use her native language with other Bosnian people, attend Bosnian school and read books in her mother tongue. The “idea of permanent relocation” induced Korana to think of ways of connection and the photography helped her a lot in this nomination of the world around her. Even though she always feels that Mostar before the war is her hometown, and that now she does not feel comfortable in a city that is broken, she says: “I feel like I belong nowhere but could live anywhere.” I was curious to understand why both her and Slavenka use the word “uprooted” – the notion of tree, of soil, of territory and the emotion of loss, of eradication and of eviction – and I asked Korana what does she mean by that: (...) each move meant losing some of the things I had gotten used to, even the bad ones.”. She explains the most “raw sense” of the process of “permanent relocation” with the condition of having no language skills, of being obliged to deal with lowest jobs in order to pay for living expenses and for her the loss of home; her parents were driven by the pull of home even if that meant starting from zero in Mostar, but Korana felt the loss of homeness because, as she says during the interview, she was not ready to face what happened. This decision of never more was fostered during her first visit to Mostar, when she with heavy heart realizes that she would never live in such a divided city with two languages, two town halls and two currencies. In this context, she refers to the border as something very painful, almost a “scar that will not heal”. Painful because her memories of a happy childhood, united people, the “sense of freedom and confidence, of pride” and the total absence of the notion of “ethnic diversity”, the perception of “fluid Yugoslavia” and the interpretation of “one people” were erased from her life. “I have a love-hate relationship with borders, partly because of the war, where border crossing meant leaving the familiar and that was traumatic. Many years later border means getting familiar with something new, being open to it”,

Korana says. She finds those new borders in the territory of former Yugoslavia “artificial”.

In the following photograph she quotes Janos Pilinszky: “My voice is more homeless than the world” and so I asked if she thinks that the nomadic longing for a home often turns into a refusal of a home, or provokes the loss of home, because I find the evidence of lights emerging in open spaces, the choice of deserted landscapes, wandering moments occurring in liminal spaces (air, water, dunes, “frozen distances” as she says, doors, windows, water borders, enclosures, liminal lines, sand) and moving without destination a strong metaphor in her artwork. She says that she enjoys shooting photographs of “(...) spaces that cannot be geographically and culturally identified (mountains, beaches, roads, portals like doors and windows, you can find those everywhere. There is a comfort factor. Wherever you go there will be some kind of a hole in the wall to let the light in, there will be water and sometimes it will sound like the home you carry with you.” She does not retrieve balance in photographs, as she was taught in school, because she says life is often out of balance, but she locates the visual focus in some “uncomfortable in-between feeling that yields great images”. She is infiltrating the liminality in her photographs of border crossing. To her understanding the liminality is performed within the border crossings, and this evidences the impact rather psychological impact of the hunting liminality in her childhood, spent in refugee camps.



She refers to one episode of one remembrance, of the “blue-grey worn out” that she found in one window and only after some time she realized that the color of that

house was similar to a house she recalls from her childhood. Her home is pulling not only in this visual moment, but musically she recalls a song from a famous Serbian singer, namely Gjorgje Balasevic, called *Province girl* where she quotes the notion of being a refugee of our own nonsense. This song expresses her work well because of the exile of a provincial girl who put all her hopes and dreams into a suitcase and because she moved so many times and learned to live with permanently packed suitcases. Even in the house where she moved with her children, that was supposed to be her permanent dwelling, she did not manage to unpack her suitcases for many years and to release herself from the attachment to the suitcases. She feels thus in exile all the time, “like an outsider, exiled from my surroundings”; for the process of photo-making she explains: “I put myself in strange environment just sky, sand and water (...) most photos are of liminal spaces, taken at a point of crossing, in between, or they are photos of some kind of movement”. She is continuously recalling her home and her hometown Mostar in her photographs; she will shoot one photograph in a second hand store where a nightstand with drawer pulls reminds her of something homeness and she says: “It is funny how a detail like that takes you back in time”, because at the end a home is somewhat inescapable imprint, an irreplaceable place. “You realize you carry all of these things with you and there is nothing such that you can put in a suitcase”, she says.

These photographs are from the *Crossings* series. They represent the transit, the passage, the fluid state of the body, the liminal horizon, the motion, the displacement, the physical transformation within the space, the uncertainty and the desire to grasp the shifting borderlines of the culturally non-identified places.









These photographs are intimate testimonials. However, in the larger political context, I notice an explicit implication with what she calls the “native language”, what Slavenka and David called “our language” and the nexus with the question of the non-return, of the non-space and of the non-location in their lives. She reckons that even though the fall of the Berlin Wall was a reason for celebration for many people, the former Yugoslavian states did the opposite: they built “mini Berlin walls” and “many children are being conditioned now to believe that those walls are normal and natural”, Korana says at the end of the interview when I concluded by asking her which border element she associates with the former Yugoslavian reconfiguration of territories.

Discussing borders in the European Union and in former Yugoslavia, walls and divided cities with Korana, I was drifted to think and interpret these very condensed idioms and concepts that she refers to, which have shifted my focus on the core theme

of my introduction to the conclusion. I will transpose those concepts and explain the relation Korana performs to them:

- Uprootedness

This concept reveals the literary meaning of the loss of the territorial attachment to the spatial culture. It has been repeated several times during the interview with Slavenka and now with Korana, it strongly implies the feelings of border dwelling.

- Pull of home

The term used by Korana reveals the emotions of longing and yearning for the notion of home, which is not a specific place, but is rather or perhaps the imaginary and poetic homeland, which in this concrete case is lost.

- Movement versus loss

The action implying what comes after the border is broken, is exceeding the human condition in a status of exile.

- Permanent relocation

When defining her *modus vivendi*, Korana refers to this condition of the exiled life.

- Belonging nowhere

This almost artistic call of nowhere place to be is delimiting the personal choice, the intimate safety, the readiness to be always on the move, the opportunity to carry the home within.

- Liminal spaces at a point of crossing

The core theme of this dissertation is describing the liminality at the point of border crossing, which encloses the artistic, cultural, psychological and political transits. Besides, it also describes what her photographic and visual discourse captures inside the metaphorical borders and the natural boundaries.

Borders produce identities and identities create barriers: Mehmed

Mehmed interprets the war in a somewhat unusual situation: he spent the war times writing poetry and expressing joy each time the electricity would come so that he could listen to some music because, as he said during the interview, “the music was the real exile for me”. When asked about the former Yugoslavian borders, just as like as David, as we shall see further on, Mehmed was not aware of them: “I was not aware, until I was 14. That was a place like any other place to live, a beautiful small city... and then everything went to hell”. Unlike David he feels the border today in those spaces and he claims that the border is a question of perception and so he answered to my question, which was inspired by David answer – that there are no borders nowadays in former Yugoslavia (see interview) but there in the EU, even though there are no political borders, you still feel that there have been borders - “In what you call Europe, I do not perceive the borders and I really feel that there are more borders in the Balkan than in Europe”, Mehmed said.

It was very challenging and curious to understand the nervous refusal to talk about borders, walls, divisions between people and incision and decision in a border inhabitant’s life and so I continued on that path. My goal was to understand how Mehmed translates the life of Capljina in the discourse of “inhabiting the borderness”: “Such borders are completely artificial, not natural ones. People living there have many more similarities and common habits, than people living in the respective capital cities of their countries, which most of the time are distant for them in many senses (...) I would rather erase those borders. I really want to feel like a citizen in every place I find myself to be, *I do not want to belong somewhere because I was born there*, because we do not chose to be born in one place, we do not chose our names or labels. I am tired of all those borders and barriers between people. *Borders are creating identities and identities produce barriers.*”

I therefore have found the word *label*, *labeling* very much emblematic in his statements and during the interview with Tanja Ostojic as well. It means that they both

used this condensed concept which signifies many things, that I locate in mostly commercial semiology such as an identification tag, a sticker with information, a descriptive word for something a brand of commercial recordings issued under a usually trademarked name, the brand name of a retail store selling clothing, a clothing manufacturer, written or printed matter accompanying an article to furnish identification, and I tend to consider this word as a trustful ontological determination of what in late post-modern theory was described as *identity* – because, at the end, this is what they both said about borders when referring to this word. Identity is label; identifying someone means labeling them. This comes again in Mehmed assertion “...we do not choose our names or labels. I am tired of all those borders and barriers between people. Borders are creating identities and identities produce barriers” and in Tanja’s one: “I found the labeling issues very problematic – like someone is labeling and putting labeling identity on you, or placing you, labeling this and that”.

Here we join the question of borderness in his life: if we consider the geographic notion of border we could say that he is a real border inhabitant because he was indeed born on the border; however in his life on the “border” he never recall issues related to boundaries, to labels or so to say to ethnical and religious identifications. Even though the war has made of that in-between-zone a real political border, for Mehmed this place remains only a geographical boundary. He did not even know at that time what the border means, signifies or determines and here I can recognize the liminal dimension of the borderness, exactly in his assertion that there could not be a trace of a political border if people speak the same language and live the same every day habits, meaning they share the same culture.

For Mehmed becoming a nomad among other meanings, also implies a certain degree of personal proactive will “(...) to displace yourself everywhere you live, to be uprooted all the time.” Somewhat embittered and distant from the divided Eastern and Western city of Mostar, Mehmed refuses to accept the “broken” city of Mostar as the hometown he used to know. He said: “Mostar and I we gave each other what we have to give”. This made me think of what David said (and then he erased it), referring to a Serbian proverb: “If the home is good, even the wolf would have it”.

Home is where my mother tongue is: Slavenka

Slavenka underwent an “internal exile”, as she says, during the wars, like other Croatian colleagues. Her position was strongly opposing the political power of Croatia during the war. She was not “expelled” she says, but not given a possibility “to write” – and here we find similar condition to David’s “exile” where he has to leave because of the “need to write”. To write means to say, to claim, to suffer or punish, to nominate the world. Slavenka does not consider herself as a nomad, but the nomadic side of her life lies in the language: she feels “at home” when speaking Croatian, whilst the real displacement for her is the English language, the borderness of the linguistic transposition over the other side – even though it is still the language she uses to speak with her husband. She refers to the example of her grandmother, who was born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, lived in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and died in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia as a very fluid human condition that happened to other people in former Yugoslavia. This contains surely the meanings revealed in the proverb: *in the Balkans people are never born and never die in one same country.*

When introducing to her my topic of borders and my interest in border inhabitant’ lives, she recalls the times when travelling from socialist countries towards Western countries would reveal in her feelings of “suspicion”. Even though “we were lucky in Yugoslavia for having the opportunity to travel worldwide without visas, still that suspicion the “socialist” meant “smuggling goods” remained on both side of the borders. She expressed a real “hatred” for borders, for this perception as a “suspected criminal” when crossing a border from East to West but also from West to East. Border policemen, she says, still suspect you have hidden money or goods, even though now because of the global capitalism you have every good everywhere and you do not need to smuggle goods like people used to do in former Yugoslavia. She also recalls the border crossing between Yugoslavia and Europe – she says “Europe” because at that time Yugoslavia was Yugoslavia and Europe was Europe, like a notion apart – that is to say the border between Yugoslavia and Austria, where she says, toilets were the real sign of the border crossing kinetic entity: on the Yugoslavian side of the border toilets were broken, no lock, broken seats, no paper while on the Austrian side the toilets were clean and fully equipped. “Of course”, she says, “today toilets have changed. What else

has changed? Airports, highways, policemen and border crossing are the same now. In terms of locks and smells you feel the same on both sides, but the real border is the change of a language”, Slavenka states.

Here, we have tackled the delicate issue of the connection between borderness and language. Tzvetan Todorov during the conference *Frontiers, Democracy, Republica in the geo-artistic creation, geo-mass-media and geopolitics*⁷¹, once said that from Maribor to Burgas there is only one spoken language modified in dialects; however there are seven independent states from Maribor to Burgas. Drifting from this contradictory or even better provocative statement, I moved Slavenka’s focus on her origins back to Istria, because (as we have seen before in the frame of the interview with Stefano Lusa), Istria is a region very much emblematic as far as languages, national identifications and belongings are concerned. The Alpe-Adria project is uniting (although not politically) Austria, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia on different cultural, that is to say culinary, musical and agricultural economic projects of cooperation because they “belong to the same region, culture, food and could better understand each other”, Slavenka says (but we have seen with Stefano Lusa that there is not a question of “common understanding” however). However to *belong to the same region, culture, food and could better understand each other* is a very dense assertion and I shall argue this later on.

In her book *Café Europa* she writes about this peninsula culturally shared between Croatia, Slovenia and Italy because she finds it very interesting how border inhabitants share different languages and food habits for commercial purposes and live the fluid side of the national belonging. Slavenka refers to the results of the 1991 census that revealed strong feelings of regionalism in the self-declarations of these border inhabitants. Even though the citizens of Croatia cannot declare their regional belonging over the national one, still they preferred their regional affiliation instead of the national one: they claimed to be Istrians instead of Croats. According to Slavenka this is a proof of their “rebellion against nationalist propaganda, but also an authentic expression of their multiplied identity” Slavenka says. The local dialectal language in Istria is a mixture of Slovenian, Italian and Croatian words, which is also the case of the bordering regions of Istria in Italy and Slovenia. For Slavenka this “identification of

⁷¹ INHA, Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, RETINA International, INHA, EA 4010, AIAC, Arts des Images & Art Contemporain, Université Paris 8, 4-5 June 2012, Paris.

people with their region” is a propaedeutic antidote to the global rage of nationalism because what we learn from border inhabitants is that the language is liminal and shifting, that the culture is fluid and exchangeable, that local habits are delimitating borderlessness and that border’s inhabitants lives are culturally in transit. On a humanistic level Slavenka says that the concept of pluri-cultural imprints is a very interesting one, because living in many cultures enriches you as a person; however she reckons that in the appearance and emergence of ‘local cultures’ there is a fear of loss, fear of globalization and the re-invention of nationalism is a form of fear of disappearing. But how we could preserve the national emblem and linguistic identification without using the regionalism or nationalism or strong cultural regional and political affiliations like an argument, Slavenka asks. For her this is a big question for the EU.

In the Austrian magazine Eurozine (Eurozine, 06.02.2009), Slavenka tells an episode when while walking down the Mariahilfer Strasse in Vienna, she has overheard the conversation of three youngsters walking along. They spoke in Serbian about an event where also some Bosnians and Croats were present. She says: “What drew my attention was not their language *per se*, you hear plenty of it in the subway and the streets of Vienna nowadays. It was an expression one of them used. *"I did not expect there to be so many people who speak our language,"* he said.” She understands the nominalism of "our language" did not mean one particular language such as Serbian, Bosnian or Croatian, but an idiom that is used *instead* of naming that language by its proper name which would have been the politically correct thing to do. The “our language” is, of course, what once was the ‘Serbo-Croatian language’; after the shattering of Yugoslavia it underwent re-creation of dialects and regional linguistic systems as national languages apart. To Slavenka however today this adjective *our* does not imply a nostalgic sense of belonging to a political sphere that no longer exist, but rather “the expression refugees and immigrants – or, for that matter, a mixed group of people from former Yugoslavia meeting abroad – use as *the name* for their different languages of communication.” Drifted by this moment she recalls “(...) images and feelings. Like the words of a Muslim woman from Srebrenica whose son was slaughtered in her arms by a Serbian soldier: *I was forced to drink the blood of my own son*, she said. Her words have been buried in my memory for thirteen years now”, Slavenka writes.

In the interview when talking about the national and linguistic building of borders following the Yugoslavian wars, Slavenka says: “Wars in the former Yugoslavia cannot be separated from the new borders.” In her personal experience, she describe the absurd-ness of this violent operation: while crossing the border with Slovenia (the first former Yugoslavian republic that split and gained independence), in 1991, Slavenka had the old blue Yugoslavian passport, which was, basically the same passport as the Slovenian border policeman had, because at that time neither Slovenian nor Croatian passports were not printed yet. The “non-existing country”, the “improvised and abstract border” and the “not real” border crossing made her think about the validity and the substantial legality of the border itself; “what kind of border is that if I had the same passport like the border policeman did?” Slavenka said during the interview. In this context, in the above quoted article in Eurozine, Slavenka argues how sad, absurd and humiliating this situation is, because with the old red Yugoslav passport, her generation used to travel through Europe without visas. This was a source of Yugoslavian pride, *a differentia specifica*, compared with the other countries belonging to the Soviet Block. The other Eastern European countries and the countries belonging to the Soviet Block used to envy the Yugoslavian people because in the 1970s, they travelled freely to Italy and France, to Great Britain and Sweden, “to pick strawberries and make money over the summer”, Slavenka says. Regarding the habits of living, she tackles the example of economic power of purchase: Yugoslavians were envied because they could buy a pair of blue jeans, fine Italian shoes, foreign books and records in Trieste on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia. Trieste meant the other side of that freedom to travel, to circulate and to be free. However, she argues “that it became one of the reasons for accepting the political system, functioning as a kind of bribe. We were bribed into believing that *socialism with a human face* made sense and could work. We did not question it.”

In another article published in the online edition of *Baltic Worlds*⁷², Slavenka argues that both peace and war are constructed and never occur spontaneously. Perhaps she is the most politically critical person amongst the artists that I have interviewed and this was crucial for me to discuss the shattering of the “poly-semantic system”, to put it Lotman’s words, of Yugoslavia. “Wars are the result of political will, prepared by

⁷² Drakulic, Slavenka, *A few easy steps towards reconciliation*, in <http://balticworlds.com/towards-reconciliation/>, 13 May 2011.

inflammatory rhetoric that constructs the "enemy" and justifies aggression", she writes. About the imposed and Western concepts of social inclusion, social reconciliation and cohabitation, Slavenka reveals the hard side of post-war societies because these concepts deal with "the emotions, and emotions are easy to inflame and therefore dangerous", she writes. Always in terms of wars, she offers the perfect example of Bosnia and Herzegovina of a divided country, divided cities, divided regions and divided people. The absurd-ness of these divisions is that, however, "(...) victims and perpetrators live in the same state, the same towns, maybe even the same streets and villages", she says.

In a very congruent and coherent context with Tanja and with what she argues as 'post-Yugoslavian amnesia' and with what Korana argues as conditioning the memory, Slavenka as well finds very problematic the collective loss of memory and selective remembering of the past. In school people are compelled to learn the "official history" and are not allowed to personal memories because these memories might be different from the official version of the history. For example, Slavenka says that in Croatia you were not supposed to speak about Jasenovac. The Croatian concentration camp, where about 600.000 people perished and this "double standards" of the selective memory and the selective remembrance continues even today; to her sorrow, young people born after the collapse of the Berlin Wall know very little about their own history and she argues this in her book *Museum of communism*.

She underlines the so called 'Balkan paradox' related to the Balkan territory and especially desegregating the nationalistic ideologies, caused and fostered the dismemberment of Yugoslavia through the bloody wars. To her understanding, it is very strange and illogic that all the independent former Yugoslavian republics, inventing new history, new flags, new monuments, new street names, new national identities, apply for European Union membership and wish to live again without borders. "Tens of thousands of lives were lost: a conservative estimate for Bosnia alone is some 100,000 dead. Hundreds of thousands people were displaced or resettled, not to mention those maimed and orphaned. Between 30,000 and 50,000 women, mostly Bosnian, were raped. Now, a mere decade since this tragedy, all the newly established independent states want to join the EU and live in union with neighbors whom, historically speaking, they were killing only yesterday." Slavenka writes. Even though the EU is not a Federation like Yugoslavia used to be, still there is a kind of a structuring of the certain

loss of the national, state sovereignty and this for Slavenka is a paradox nearly impossible to understand. It is unjust to speak about European values without considering the wars in former Yugoslavia and therefore her position towards this political phenomenon is very negative. Despite the efforts made to cherish those societies of various cultures and global borderlessness, still Slavenka fears “people regressing, going back to groups, to mass movements, choosing one side over another, one nation over other”, she says during the interview, and in all this social mutations she recognize the “revival of the concept of a stone cast national identity, the idea that the identity is given by God”. “What Europe suffers now is the fear of immigrants, of Muslims. And Balkan people live in fear from each other”, she concludes the interview.

***Belonging together in “our language”:* David**

Unlike Slavenka, who thinks that the “Serbo-Croatian” language is called “our language” for the purposes of political correctness and interpersonal negotiation, and that the real border is the language – question that can be debated nowadays because it is difficult to trace clear borderness between forms of dialects of the Serbian and the Croatian, of the Bosnian and the Montenegro, of the Macedonian and the Bulgarian language - David still considers the Serbo-Croatian language as “our language”, a space of cultural belonging and mutual understanding between artists and writers from former Yugoslavian countries (speaking today official national languages to be distinguished from that former “our language”). But his perception of “multiplied” identity is the same as Slavenka’s one, and the other interviewees which shows the flagrant identification with shifting and changing spaces.

The linguistic question is an integral segment of the migratory human condition. It reveals inner sense of belonging and affiliation with the lost space, the lost country and the loss of the familiar, somewhat irrupting into the unfamiliar, the unknown space. I will read some part of his book *Diaspora and other issues*, which together with *Snow man*, written during his migratory life in Canada, is a novel about the nostalgia, about the desire to return, but also about that feeling that once you go, you never come back. For instance, in *Snow man* the main character does not try to go back wherever, but does what is feasible for him, what he knows to do better, that is to say, he is trying to

release himself from himself and therefore to leave himself and the world. “You are longing for the Fatherland when it no longer exists”⁷³ the immigrant admits here the painful attachment to what has been lost, the attachment of that ‘familiar feeling’ as proposed by Korana Delic, that has undergone the border shaping impact and to what has remained virtually or poetically as a strong taste, as a desire for dense belonging, as a nostalgia for a space: the Fatherland.

The notion of fatherland is very present in David’s work and in his novel *Immigrant* David argues several concepts that I will summarize in the following traces of immigrant’s life:

- Shifting home

The movement reveals meanings of displacing and relocating the home at each border crossing and it becomes a continuous rupture with the stable meanings of home.

- Non-belonging

The non-belonging contains meanings of non-affiliation to a certain culture and actions of affiliation to every culture; in a nutshell it represents the human condition of the nowhere space, not having a fixed home.

- Eternal departure

This literary notion expresses the readiness to move all the time and beyond any circumstance.

- Transitory state of mind

Another literary notion implying the performance of the capacity to adjust at every border crossing perceived as a metaphor of shifting cultures.

- Totalitarianism of the multiculturalism

⁷³ Albahari, David, *Dijaspóra i druge stvari*, Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad, 2008, p. 16.

This intellectually irritable concept is tackled in Albahari novels, meaning refusal of domestication, labeling and clustering.

David places himself in the multitude of cultures and does not hide his fear of borders. For the author once the migratory path takes the leading shape, what suffer firstly are the homeness and the natural right to belong culturally. He describes the home in such circumstances like something that all the time is shifting, that is floating, erratic and something which is as much as unstable like everything else is. When we met in Zemun, in a bar near his *home*, and when I asked him where his real home was, he told me one Serbian proverb: *If the home was good even the wolf would have it*, laughing. I found this assertion pretty emblematic and somehow unclear. In this proverb certain nostalgia of a space is perceived, and this nostalgia is occurring within the literary metaphor of the islands in his writing:

“How long the immigrant remains an immigrant? Is there any moment of change or it is a state of mind that lasts forever, or which never ends? (...) My friend from Vancouver was very clear. “Being an immigrant is a continuous state of mind”, he wrote, and then he said: “Immigrant always comes and never goes back”⁷⁴.

David Albahari affirms that the immigrant state of mind is a continuous process-in-making and that the loneliness of the immigrant implies a nomadic capture of shared social, cultural and psychological backgrounds and obligations of social integration. Nevertheless according to Albahari, being an immigrant implies being lonely and the worst content of this loneliness is that it is a feeling that never goes away even when the immigrant is fully integrated into the society of adoption because there is one place that the immigrant could never own and this is the past, the common past with the people where he has been launched. He explores lives and meanings of immigrated Serbian diaspora in Canada and creates fiction but also documented testimonials of all kind. In doing so, the writer becomes at the same time: migrant, nomad, itinerant and transhumant. We are facing in his stories some confused figures, which have to deal with series of loss, despair and identity detection: to find who they are, what have they

⁷⁴ Albahari, David, *Dijaspora i druge stvari*, Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad, 2008, p. 56.

done and why have they remained in silence. Migrants that often even cherish their political status of exiled or even find their comfort in the wandering logos-in-life is another category also elaborated by Albahari in this book.

“Being an immigrant means being a shape of loneliness, and this loneliness never disappears even when the immigrant is fully integrated in the society. There is, actually, something that the immigrant cannot possess – the common past with those to whom he wants to belong. And to do this, the immigrant has to first deny his past, his history, his tradition and therefore, in a way, himself”.⁷⁵

In Albahari’s stories and essays we perceive this perpetual, even painful, attachments to the culture of origin and the cultural transmutation of the presence. The absorbed diaspora cultures in the Canadian space and the anthropological segments of the immigrants are conducting the reader to a serious questioning on what it is a frontier, a border: where does it begin and where does it end? Is it a state of mind, geopolitics or virtual hegemony of the globalized world? Is it liquid or strict? However what Albahari tackles is this liminal dimension of the experiences of the Balkan migrations and cultural sources from the following cities: Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Belgrade and Calgary. The haptic spaces of the border definition also might provoke inner burden, because it is very like to produce cross-meanings between phenomena of migrants, exiled citizens, nomads and itinerants. Now, what is interesting for the topic I propose is to associate these often analogic entities into a broader reading of a border broken and created by force and for the sake of social utopias. In Bauman’s language, the new or “postmodern” world we are living in, offer infinity of possibilities to build but to destroy “mini Berlin walls” each and every day to separate but also to unify people’s life, habits, practices, languages and cultures in instant democracies. Yet, the geopolitics would therefore remain very antiseptic discipline if does not interfere with theories of anthropology and empiric cultures. In fact, negotiations of meaning are main challenge when it comes to reading spaces, motion, circulating people, belongings and nomadic mobile territories.

The concept of political and the power have had inflicted a serious impact on the life of many artists. The Western social utopias such as “political correctness” and

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 58.

“multiculturalism” have been more than irritating for these nomadic artists who have witnessed the concrete border tailoring. As Albahari claims the so called over-used and abused concept of ‘multiculturalism’ exist only to demonstrate the unchangeable element of ethnic loneliness then it may turn into machinery of evil and explosions. In my view when one cannot give a precise meaning to a social phenomenon, it often occur the reference not empirically but theoretically constructed of multi- or trans-culture. “The politics of multiculturalism increases the differences instead of increasing the understanding.”⁷⁶ The importance of the political urges in this paragraph:

“Stalinism had one line, a line that was not supposed to be crossed, but in politically corrected society there are hundreds of lines, that forbids totally any movement. Of course, there aren’t Stalinist laager but still the feeling of inferiority and degradation is the same. (...) They say that the real parent of the political correctness is the multiculturalism, but this is partially true. The real parent could be found, as Marxists would say, in the “unsolved contradictions of the capitalistic system”⁷⁷.

David, having a background in one socialist political context has launched himself with the family into one capitalist political context, in order to be productive as a writer, as he says. Hence, having said this, he can authentically compare both contexts arguing that in order to be politically correct one has to have a disciplined level of self-censure that nearly did not exist in communist regimes and he writes that because of those lists of forbidden words, patterns of thinking and restrictions, “(...) political correctness becomes the most efficient system of shuttering individual voices by glorifying the average and by denying the diverse. (...) I have crossed miles and miles to find my Future in the West, but it seems that I have returned in my Past”⁷⁸, the immigrant says.

During the interview he described his experiences with borders as something very traumatic and limiting the human freedom. He said when he finds himself in bordering zones, he felt like his access to another country could be denied. He, unlike Mehmed, sees the borders in Europe, even though in the European Union they do not exist, but does not see them in the former Yugoslavian countries, even though they exist

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 34.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 127.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, p. 128.

politically. In his novel *Borders* he says that society that interlaces and interweaves various cultures, cannot discuss borders. If there are borders, then there are no cultures, David argues, and this would mean that there is one dominant culture, one semantic system that has power and control over the others – which is a pure consequence of the globalization. And globalization means mono-culturalism. David does not believe that multiple cultures or the cherished concept of “multiculturalism” are better than the individual, the local, the controversial culture. He lived both the socialist and the capitalistic form of “multiculturalism” and he says at the end that there is no difference; the ideology does not support the fusion or the synergy of cultures. “Cultures or interweave or get isolated”⁷⁹ he says in this novel. There is no quality comparison between mixed and singular culture for David. He continues:

“Borders, no matter how we define them, instigate the discussion of belonging, even in situations when the writer wants to live on the border itself, refusing to declare to belong to one side or another”.⁸⁰

Very metaphorically, the writer describes how he identifies with the places he inhabits, if on the Islands of Hvar, in Croatia he feels like flowing into the water and the nature, when in Calgary he acquires the accent and when at home in Zemun he immediately longs for the “fish soup” – a very typical Baljan dish. And he says “In few weeks I become three personalities. And this reminds of one character of Mraovic novel, who says: “Such a sad story, dear reader, that all borders are invented”. And the same goes for the feeling of identity: all identities are invented, false, and therefore the beauty comes from that identity which is not imposed or compulsory but a produce of a personal choice, which is then again unstable and changeable as long as we want to.”⁸¹ He perceives space and borders in Canada as something “(...) enviously conserved (...) harsh, clear, distinct and untouchable.”⁸²

I would conclude this chapter drawing on one very seminal quotation that somehow interweave coherence with the idea of border production and resembles these artistic experiences with border crossings and art:

⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 140.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p. 142.

⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 117.

⁸² Ibidem, p. 122.

“The immigrant find himself in a space that does not belong to none and to nowhere, in a water not profound enough to draw and profound enough so that he cannot reach the ground, or so to say on some form of mansard, nor in the sky nor on earth.”

The nomadic could be identified in this refusal of belonging, in the denial of territorialization because shaping an individual within the territory means assigning them identity, in order to assume culture and impose language. For the interactions I have undertaken in order to understand the cultural imprints, the wandering charts and the refusal of territorial enclosure, made me think of the instable quality of border crossers and border inhabitants – if we could call these artists “inhabitants” – lives. The agony continues through the harsh interstices of fear of disappearance of the pre-existing habits and culture: assuming the new language both for David, Korana and Slavenka, meant nomadic, meant being transposed into the culture of adoption, which is then again splitting, doubling, turning and invasive. The borderness is the repressive notion for Tanja; *Unheimlich* notion, those familiar things that Korana left behind the border that therefore requires limitation, identification, homology, coherence, empty codification, genetic violence and cognitive anxiety. It is uneasy but unavoidable to redefine the terms: what I want to understand is the loss or the mutation of cultural meanings and intimate translations of the borderness during the displacement; the anomia *tout court*. Thus, to draw one structure (discourse?) that would be able to tackle the rearticulation of social meanings, the linguistic interference and the anthropological codes of habits.

Drifting the post-consumption and post-globalization threats, border produced societies undergo internal and external production of continuous non-targeted dislocations and transits, proliferating motions, unpredictable and uncontrollable trajectories, waves and fluxes, tidal and liminal zones, roaming and crossings, shifting borderlines and launching migration and diaspora in a context of a journey with no specific determination where the nomadic factor per se becomes particular *I-density*. Boundaries and border are remade and what I underline as *I-density* quality rather than identity generalization is some fluid conglomeration of global fear and trauma released from the ongoing demographic turns and shifts, within the marginalized, diasporic and detached human condition. Through the depiction and the description of the writers and artist’s dense life and dense identities, I tried to create one modest field of cultural lecture of the movement *per se* as decisive element of all human existence and thus the

border as a space where such existence is being defined, diverted or deviant or divided. Those spaces of interstices interested me most especially because they represent a counter-meaning of all semantic fields under the cluster of meta-something or multi-something (language, culture, communication, interaction). Those spaces of transit are often neglected or unexplored but in David's novel on borders we feel the inclination to read the exile as denial to immerse their own belonging into the adoptive culture. Or as Ulf Hannerz puts, when talking about the creolized world, it is not urgent to draw boundaries and borders and charts in a world that has turned culturally so liminal and flow or liquid like Bauman says.

Hence, such reality depicted with social, political, cultural and economic cohesion, possession, attachment and landmarks of lost homeness and "familiarity" could be claimed as a violent and conflictual consequence of borders reconfigurations (especially in the case of Korana, but also Tanja, David, Mehmed and Slavenka). Comprising both border studies and artistic experiences of borders and bordering strategies, my work brings together impulses and directions of human toponimia (artistic) readings: how the artwork and the artist correlate to the space; the political space; the utopia of the nostalgic belonging to a shifting space; the progress of the transitory life; and the desire that takes in for questioning such impossibility to define their own space within the limits of shade and corrupted shapes of the nationhood, towards the impossibility to achieve solitude and to find a home. Thus, the only feasible device there is in order to grasp the borderness is the liminality; and liminality here is argued in the political context of the border which geopolitically and geo-culturally becomes porous. From such network of borders, the nostalgia for a space is emerging and the home is fluid, thus nothing that could be called a home is certain. The imposed new generated borders engendered confusing concepts which have liaised artwork inspired from the new political bordering platform in the former Yugoslavian republics. The evidence could be traced in David's novel *Borders* and we witness it in the following line:

"I started to think about borders in the beginning of the '90 of the past century. Before that moment I did not believe those people who were telling me that borders exist."⁸³

⁸³ Ibidem, p. 140.

Non-space in motion: inhabiting the mobility

(...) on a planet open to the free circulation of capital and commodities, whatever happens in one place has a bearing on how people in all other places live, hope or expect to live. Nothing can be credibly assumed to stay in a material 'outside'. Nothing is truly, or can remain for long, indifferent to anything else – untouched or untouching.

No well-being of one place is innocent of the misery of another.

Zygmunt Bauman⁸⁴

In Europe, we shall not be, or no longer, able to escape from this condition. Foreignness is affixed to our national identity, like a more or less permanent second skin.

Julija Kristeva⁸⁵

Il faut apprendre à sortir de soi, à sortir de son entourage, à comprendre que c'est l'exigence d'universel qui relativise les cultures et non l'inverse. Il faut sortir du quant à soi culturaliste et promouvoir l'individu transculturel, celui qui, prenant de l'intérêt à toutes les cultures du monde, ne s'aliène à aucune d'entre elles. Le temps est venu de la nouvelle mobilité planétaire (...)

Marc Augé⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid times. Living in an age of Uncertainty*, Polity Press, 2007, p. 6.

⁸⁵ Kristeva, Julia, *Diversité, c'est ma devise*, in *Penser l'Europe. Diversité et culture*, Culturesfrance, 2008, p. 108.

⁸⁶ Augé, Marc, *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité*, Payot, Paris, 2009, p. 91.

The previous chapters have demonstrated and acknowledged that along with and across the border (d)evolution, conceived and translated as a cultural evolving practice and as a gradually mutating spatial process, an intermission has occurred, an interference of the mobility took place in the interstices of the border itself. This mobility that I argue in this chapter incorporates and undertakes virtuous and various movements of the artistic nomadism, because being nomadic *per se*, it shapes and entails the bordering processes and the subjects that do not belong nor are determined by certain fixed cultural entity. This chapter, in fact, focuses on the mobility as a naturally given anthropological human practice put into the scale of the cultural complexity, which is waived within like an impulse or a circulation. Therefore, the goal is to contextually understand what consequences arise from the contemporary continuous learning practices of these mobile habits and to understand what it means to walk on a living and fermenting soil, hence, what does it mean to walk on the “quicksand”, as Bauman would say, of the border ties.

In such complex semiotic cultural systems which are, as Lotman puts its “(...) in a state of constant flux”⁸⁷, migrations engender semiotic cultural conflicts and uncomfortable zones. Having this concept in mind, we understand that the post-Yugoslavian war has shown and presented those conflicts on numerous levels: one of those levels is the artistically engaged and ideologically involved level of the artist and of the writer. Hence, we have understood in the previous chapters that the borders that have influenced literature and artwork are to be nurtured and cherished, because they are reflexive and self-evolving, mobile, communicative complexes and they foster the border as a purely fermenting space. Thus, we should foremost define how the very generic categories of mobility and of migrations liaise reciprocally and define the relations they enact with the (notion of) borderness and the nomadic dwelling of the individual. For this purpose, we need to understand how they determine the meanings they imply and behold and absorb in form of a nomadic (displaced) artwork under the impact of the dissolving borders.

The human (artistic, literary) mobility I argue in my dissertation, namely raised by the disruption of a border due to a political conflict, could show or witness that the

⁸⁷ Lotman, Yuri M., *The Universe of the mind. Semiotic theory of culture*, Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 151.

culture, as a human condition, is not something generalizable or observable in terms of habits, but it is an interference of attitudes, perceptions and interpretations of one personal cultural shift. There is not a concrete or specific or generic model that we can discuss here, because each artistic case, both artists who stayed in the former Yugoslavian republics and artists who immigrated and behold the diaspora, have been involved in the wider border criticism. As Wieviorka puts it, the migratory processes pending on the frontier, signify transit and nomadism and this is what describes in the nutshell the bordering strategies which influence the displaced artist. This means that there is a continuous shift and creation of diaspora and repetition, intersection and completion of the migratory phenomena and critical questioning of the phenomenology of the border itself as a wider and an abstract community of individuations and identifications. If we forget about the methodological nationalism, Wieviorka says, we will be witness to many identities inter-changing meanings, cultural crossings, cultural interbreeding and hybridization deploying over national contexts. And therefore he stresses: “in fact, some may raise the question, shall we in certain cases talk about deterritorialization instead of transnationalism?”⁸⁸

The history of the XX century, as Karl Schlögel puts it, is made of discontinuities, disruptions, of contrasts and of the simultaneity of the dis-simultaneity⁸⁹, i.e. *Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigkeit*; this spatial and bordering junctures imply new fashions of analysis and reconstructions, inviting us to think twice about these reconstructions in order to grasp the organic and mutable cultural processes. “We inhabit a world marked by extreme reductions, elimination of the distances, in a new phase of “the supremacy of the space”, comparable to the revolution of the transports and the communications from the 20th century. This results with the production of “virtual spaces”, of what has been called as “Cyberia”⁹⁰. The fashions of life, the mass circulation of goods and brands, of styles of living and the capitalization

⁸⁸ Wieviorka, Michel, *L'Europe de la culture. La diversité et le dialogue interculturel*, In Moussakova, Svetla, sous la direction de, *Migrations culturelles en Europe à vingt-sept. Quand l'Est rencontre l'Ouest, vingt ans après*. Cahiers Européens de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Academia L'Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 24. «De coup, certains s'interrogent, ne faut-il parler dans certains cas au moins de transnationalisme, de déterritorialisation ».

⁸⁹ Bonadei, Rossana, a cura di, *Naturaleartificiale. Il palinsesto urbano*, Lubrina Editore, 2009, p. 28.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, p. 31. “Viviamo in un mondo di drastiche riduzioni, di eliminazione delle distanze, in una nuova fase di « dominio dello spazio », paragonabile alla rivoluzione dei trasporti e delle comunicazioni del XX secolo. Il risultato è la produzione di “spazi virtuali”, di quella che è stata definita una “Cyberia”.

and the mass importation of Western values, is what was radically and rapidly changed in the former Yugoslavian cities, which was mysteriously and commonly known or rather sarcastically called as period of *transition*. This mobile status of the political urbanization and the cultural borderization has had its impact on people creating art there and pushed them to leave, to become mobile artists. The proliferation of meanings within the compartmentalization of mobility is a complex cultural chart; as Ulf Hannerz puts it such a culture has to be seen as a moving interconnectedness. Anthropologically speaking, people have been usually located and interpreted in spaces and restricted to places and their thoughts were reflecting local cultures, but in such liquid urban circumstances and in such liminal border spaces, people's lives should be read and observed as border inhabitants lives, as border co-habitation lives: due to the massive consumption of the mobility we have become authentic border dwellers. Cultures, in such cases, come and go, leave traces, transform places, create new images and representations. These cultural mutations are very well depicted in Ulf Hannerz statement: "One might speculate that people also make different assumptions, in a meta-cultural fashion, about the nature of the relationship between themselves and their culture". What comes out of these mobile cultural mutations and the reduced, shrinking global cultural platform is one context of lack, of loss and of allusive feeling of over-possession of the reality and the open access across borders, but in fact "too much is missing and too much is assumed"⁹¹ at the end of the border networks.

Given that this chapter shall synthetically draw on and approach the conclusions of my dissertation, some notions strictly related to the mobility and the cultural migrations, should be perceived and understood in the field of building, or creating new artistic meanings through the motion across borders. In fact, the effects of such structured mobility perform the cultural complexity and the impossibility to think about culture nowadays only in one narrow way, in one dimension and in one cluster is flagrant. From the previous case studies, I will argue the border also as one kind of mobile architectures and spaces of dwelling of the expatriated former Yugoslavian nomadic artists, because it turns to be an example of the mobility utopia. Here, the meaning of the mobility utopia shall be applied to the impossibility to grasp a fixed

⁹¹ Hannerz, Ulf, *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning*, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 220,221.

cultural space, a cast cultural place and the inclination and the hyper-mobile tendency to grasp and capture ever shifting, nomadic traces, which is the core *raison d'être* of the nomadic artist. This situation is perhaps due to the fact, as Gadamer puts it, that there has been an introduction of certain *new freedoms* which have been attributed to the human condition, and based upon addictions to the mass media. Such 'new freedoms' issued from shrinking world where the perception of the intimate, familiar person has been dissolved, are diluted into the liminality of the virtual. But these 'new freedoms' proposed by Gadamer have fully different meaning in the sense that we no longer yearn for what is close or imminent, for what is necessary or indispensable, but yet for the distance constructed and infiltrated within the interstice of the strange, of the distant, of the adventurous, of the shifting, hence of the nomadic spot. The nomadic spot of creation and production is the border inhabited by mobile and displaced subjects, and yet it is the spot where the motion starts and circulates. And that is the motion of loss, the loss of all the affiliations, of all the familiar attachments, the loss of home and the refusal of domestication that will be argued in the last chapter. The rapture of the space over the human needs and the simple dwelling within the sedentary live is shown in a chart of mobile borders and somewhat impossible cultural shapes and frames. In such an impossible world there is no longer humbleness but inferiority to the complex machinery of conflict production. This attributes a meaning of culture as an open process, and as something made or invented. This feature is raised by Appadurai in the following quote:

“The story of mass migrations (voluntary and forced) is hardly a new feature of human history. But when it juxtaposed with the rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts, and sensations, we have a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities. As Turkish guest workers in Germany watch Turkish films in their German flats we see moving images meet deterritorialized viewers. These create diasporic public spheres, phenomena that confound theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state as the key arbiter of important social changes”⁹² .

⁹² Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 4.

This “rapid flow of mass-mediated images, scripts and sensations” create the deterritorialization within the new order of anthropological instability. The parallel diasporas engender multiple cultural “contact zone”, term derived from Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes*, adapted from sociolinguistics, from the notion of contact languages (e.g. pidgins and creoles which emerge in specific historical conjunctures) as well as from the work of Fernando Ortiz on the *transculturation*. These are the perspectives that do not see or read or feel the cultural contact taking place on the political borders, or within those borders, as one form that progressively, sometimes violently, is replacing another form of culture. These perspectives focus on the relational ensembles sustained through the processes of cultural borrowing, that is to say the cultural appropriation, and translation which are once again multidirectional processes, as stated by James Clifford. In the rapid exchange of meanings the question we raise is how the loss can occur in a space that we do not behold, in a space where we do not belong? How can we lose what we do not possess, or something that romantically gazes our reality? Yet, can we inhabit the mobility and embrace the border as a fertile and a fermenting field of production and therefore as a field of homeness? Can something that has been lost become the engine and the measure of our artistic nomadic creation? Among such a critical matters related to the idea of loss is surely what is called the mono-cultural identity construction where the idea of loss is replaced by the dynamic, centrifugal concept of search, in societies where the global tendency is aiming at construction of both processes of loss and gain. As repeated several times in this dissertation, such totalitarian tendency of mono-superior culture has been infinitely abused as an excuse of false outrageous tolerance and mutual hygienic cooperation and without any doubt pushed into the limit-boundary of empty theories of appropriation of the past and refusal of the idea that mobility does change the identity on solid basis.

These strategies of the mobility performing the refusal (intimate and artistic) of the domestication and the single-culture affiliation and the impact flooding from the global border reconfigurations, represent the risk of incorporating manipulations with the traditional concept of culture, which despite all studies that have been carried on, still contains rather ambiguous conceptual content. This means that it results very difficult to negotiate the complex cultural meaning in the ever shifting mobile societies where immigrants do not always perform the complex culture of origin but they learn to perform some negotiable cultures, the imposed acculturated habits, and therefore they tend to be able to appropriate the translation of cultural performances and practices.

Whilst, on the other side, the cultures of reception are not only hostile but often hospitality is replaced by irregular cultural shifts and unknown liminal drifts; and this comes into practice on the border zones.

This representation of the strongly fragmented, uncontrollable and violent former space of Yugoslavia was not always the most authentic and therefore the tendency to incorporate these spatial mutations and cultural negotiations under a generic definition of those very much cherished concepts of multiculturalism, is always a huge risk, because it neglects the uncertain and, therefore, the over-productive outcome and effect of the mobility and of the human condition inhabited within the mobility. Secondly, it is a huge risk because, the manipulation of the word *culture* occurs each time when there is a need of justification of the minority relocation strategies, of the immigrant management strategies, of the *different* people intruders, and the socially excluded people. Thus, following this path, I argue the empirical understanding of the culture undergoes sophisticated evidences of translation of behaviour, of mobility and of mis-communication. It is precisely the mis-communication that proves that it is not as simple as calling *only* cultural those processes where the liminal negotiation between space and nomadic artistic lives are at stake. The cultural clashes demonstrate the impossible negotiation: in such case, inhabiting the mobility is a solution of the unsolved, woven or strained identification, a possible rescue or remedy against those sedentary fixed cultural meanings, which are imposing our daily practices and our everyday lives in the shrinking frames of the globalization.

In fact, inhabiting the mobility turns out to be an answer and a solution against sedentary practices occurred as a negative effect from the globalization. In this sense, and as Augé puts it, we shall say that the contemporary thought is caught up in a trap by speed which paralyses the idea that the mobility should be conceived within the space and should not be therefore understood within the time. Actually, according to him, the contemporary thought betrays its instability in the space itself, by misunderstanding the spatial implications. There is an urgent need to understand that the co-existing world we inhabit continues to raise and build awkward spatial reconfigurations, such as borders or even better boundaries, where the boundary is somewhat natural, abstract and mental, despite the fact that such spatial reconsiderations have been always an active principle of violent confrontations. Hence, we are living in times of shifting soils and cultural sand-landmarks and genetically modified mobility. Therefore, facing the emergence of

one human world, we immediately pull ourselves to organise it, and by doing so, we find a shelter in the old spatial divisions such as borders, frontiers, cultures and identities, which have been up until now an active ferment of conflicts, confrontations and violence and “(...) everything is evolving like if, captured in a Pascalian vertigo, one part of the humanity was afraid of the conquests made on her behalf and is trying to find a shelter in the old cosmologies”⁹³

To introduce the liquid concept of inhabiting the mobility, of the foreignness as a “second skin” (Kristeva) and the interconnectedness on planetary level of all social-economical turns and shifts, induces the narration towards one global meaning or rather translating signification of the border as a living space, as a space where things begin to happen, where events evolve *tout court*: the border seen as the core center of the happening, rather than as a periphery. (This postulate first implies the question of what does it mean to inhabit the border and then tackles the question of what it means to dwell within the mobility from artistic point of view. In this context I have mentioned previously the artistic example of Marina Abramovic and the even more specific case of Selja Kamberic, the exiled Bosnian artist, currently based in Berlin, who has been imprisoned for having walked the divided city of Nicosia for artistic purposes). To think of the border as a center instead of a margin, instead of an edge brings us again to the Augean concept of *non-lieu*, which, even though refers mainly to places, becomes here particularly relevant in terms of understanding the entity, the displaced subject that has become a moving non-space, where *moving-non-space* or a *space-in-motion* resides within the essence of the nomadic human condition. Impregnated with emblems of not knowing and not having, the nomadic artist (here being a wanderer artist or undergoing a self-chosen exile becomes a question of choice) has to envision various spatial reconfigurations of the cultural complexity of the mobility and to question perpetually the nomadic aesthetics.

The new migrating model of the global artist/citizen belonging elsewhere and nowhere and which refuse to belong to one border-shaped space, is truly the challenge

⁹³ Augé, Marc, *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité*, Payot, Paris, 2009, p. 88. « Devant l'émergence d'un monde humain consciemment coextensif à la planète tout entière, tous se passe comme si nous reculions devant la nécessité de l'organiser, en nous réfugiant derrière les vieilles divisions spatiales (frontières, cultures, identités) qui jusqu'à présent ont toujours été les ferment actif des affrontements et des violences. (...) tout se passe comme si, saisie d'un vertige pascalien, une partie de l'humanité s'effrayait des conquêtes faites en son nom et se réfugiait dans les antiques cosmologies. »

of the reading I propose to make. The cultural emblems and contents that these deterritorialized trans-border citizens perform are the truthful imprints of the liminal definition of space impregnated with culture. In fact, for the former Yugoslavian artists (it is definitely what they do behold in common) to inhabit the mobility means to share meanings which are continuously modified and modifiable, which are unifying and differentiating meanings. That implies the dissemination of some semantic cultural clusters all along and all across borders and the creation of multiple (almost tribal, artistic) experience of non-belonging, performing artistically the refusal to belong to one space shaped politically and culturally in an artificial way. I use the word *refusal* because it becomes a clear consequence of the strategies of inhabiting the mobility - not yet the symptom - and will become, in one later chapter, a refusal of domestication. This refusal of domestication is performed as an itinerant practice of taking, sharing, disseminating and artistically producing the home within, as Korana Delic says. I argue, in fact, the practice of a *take-away-home* or of a *home-to-go* status that I shall elaborate later on. The symptom is the condition, if we can say so, of the *uprootedness*. This fashion of reading the displaced subject engenders some interstice-web of meanings and some complex charts of inter-waiving the invading concept of hybrid cultures.

The understating of the category of mobile human non-spaces as a reason to inhabit the borderness, which is a core spatial quality of the mobility, and which strengthens the human capacity of negotiation, is very well depicted by Balibar. According to him, the understanding of the migrant and the immigrant nowadays combines some paradoxes: the migrating categories and paths represent at the same time categories of unifying and differentiating elements of culture, given the fact that they assimilate a very special type and situation of inhabitants, of so called border “population”, Balibar says. In such situation, according to Balibar, we have to read the heterogeneity issued from the various geographical belonging, we have to ponder on the intimate stories of interferences of entry and exit of another territory, another national territory, and to consider the juridical status of often unknown origin (like in the case of the shattered Yugoslavia). This category of “immigrant”, also called by Balibar “an amalgam”, combines economical, societal, political, ethnic emblems of belonging and undergoes different interpretation of the human factor of foreigner. But Balibar however does not limit such reading to all foreigners or to no-one-else but the foreigners; he actually focuses “(...) on category that allows precisely to split the apparently neutral

group of foreigners (...): one Portuguese will be more seen as in immigrant than one Spanish (in Paris), but less than the Arab or the Black; an Englishman or a German will be certainly not considered as foreigners; a Greek maybe; a Spanish and a Moroccan worker will be seen as “immigrants” but a Spanish or an Algerian businessmen certainly not”⁹⁴. This con-fusion and this mobility of different criteria of spatial occupation and inhabitation, recalling the heterogeneous human situation of social and economic fragility (in Balibar quote referring mainly to economic and political categories of immigrants) and, to a larger extent, to the heterotopia composed within those cultural semantically dense border zones, or border-war zones, boats and airports zones, almost all strongly influencing the human behavior when in a position of shift, of displacement, of nomadic dwelling in an undetermined spaces. This is the reason why the term *inhabiting the mobility* covers a poly-semantic field of meaning.

In fact, in the present chapter I propose the human dwelling within the mobility, precisely the wandering as a very special and hybrid manner (and tool) of the mobility. This chapter proposes a reflection of the experiences of the particular form of mobility. The wandering is seen as an alternative that allows the liberation throughout the passage of all of the kinds of borders, containing and meaning real, social, mental and moral boundaries, which are always subject to displacement, disruption, discrepancy and discontinuity. This behavior has not been much analysed so far, but it will be, hopefully, given that it defines and changes the frame of social relations. Our civilization, very sedentary, is also being continuously affected by these argued daily practices of wandering and of this microscopic imaginary form of nomadism.

In short, this discontinuous situation of the human mobility is very well put by Anna Krasteva: “Millions of emigrants have divested the region of significance: the “roads” became more attractive than the “roots”.”⁹⁵ This explains how the cultural hybridity moves along with the interstice space of the in-between belonging. But the

⁹⁴ Balibar, Etienne/Wallerstein, Immanuel, *Race, nation, classe: les identités ambiguës*, La Découverte, 2007, p. 294, 295. « En fait c’est une catégorie qui permet précisément de cliver l’ensemble apparemment « neutre » des étrangers, non sans équivoques bien entendu : un Portugais sera plus « immigré » qu’un Espagnol (à Paris), moins qu’un Arabe ou un Noir ; un Anglais ou un Allemand ne le seront certainement pas ; un Grec, peut-être ; un ouvrier espagnol, a fortiori un ouvrier marocain seront « immigrés », mais un capitaliste espagnol, voire un capitaliste algérien, ne le seront pas ».

⁹⁵ Krasteva, Anna, *Mobile Balkans: from forced to labour migrations*, in Dufoulon, Serge/Rostekova, Maria, *Migrations, mobilités, frontières*, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 100.

term of “in-between” is not anymore authentic and true, because it imposes dual, bipolar fields of negotiating and sharing culture, whereas the displaced subjects dwell in multiple spaces and the “in-between” definition of belonging does not suffice anymore. The global ordering versus the local bordering implies a very particular model of self-construction, of self-identification in the semantic web-field of cultural interstice, which is multidimensional: there the capitalism survives and the mediatized societies have their own impact. The displaced subject caught in an atmosphere of multiple-in-between complex and multidimensional spaces, is no longer the same yet no longer leaves the same traces; they inhabit the self-realization and the self-launching within those above mentioned spaces from various aspects. The mobile subjects lives are not narrow, nor regular, their habits shift from one interstice to another, their beliefs are continuously negotiated, their nationally and ethnically definitions are perpetually reproduced. And it is very important to understand this expression of self-realization in order to understand what Caren Kaplan calls the “politics of collocation”, which reveals the negotiating complex of geo-culture and geo-politics. Or even more helpful to understand this politics of collocation is to refer to what Slavoj Zizek calls “the shift of progress within the immigration” where we have nowadays Portugal immigrating to Angola and Mozambique yet no longer as colonizers but as economic migrants (and the same applies to the BRIC countries).

Focusing again on the artists expatriated after and during the former Yugoslavian war, this chapter’s proposal is to put particular attention, therefore, on this model of wanderer because the wandering itself, the roving, the roaming around, the vagrancy tend to create a path, a chart, a map, which is, in a nutshell, empirical culture cross-stitched with discrepancies, discontinuities and displacements. And this is one more reason to read the human existence in this perspective of discontinuity and displacement. To the sedentary life and to the belonging, to the nationalistic and ethnical identification and to the political and societal affiliation, the vagrant, the itinerant, the wanderer and the nomad propose and oppose the dispersive and disconnected mobility. Actually, this is the new form of migrant: the border dweller, the physical incarnation of the non-lieu, the complete detachment of emotions determined by any border, any attachment to national venue, the condition of sentimental *Weltschmerz* despite the burden of the world capitalization.

Serge Dufoulon and Maria Roštekova put it well, when depicting the two essential categories of human displacements: mobility versus migration. According to them, the mobility implies positive personal experiences of integration, security, well-being, constructive accumulation of knowledge and cultural denotations, prestigious possibility of return back home, of symbolical exchange, fostering personal experiences with intellectual travels and positive social advantages, while the migration does not imply any idea of return, but rather uncertainty and lack of comfort both linguistic and economical, loss of cultural landmarks and points of attachment, loss of origins, acculturation, dissolution within the receiving culture, risk of psychological degradation, negative social image, decreasing societal belonging. The category of people, I have decided to focus on, the nomadic expatriated artists following the outbreaks of the Yugoslavian wars, demonstrate, however, a somewhat different classification than the two above stated: they incorporate both the mobility and the migration; both the eternal return and the loss of home, the possibility to liaise the precedent culture and refusal to engender the culture of origin. They have proven that there is no such a thing like a definition of human displacements and that even the deterritorialization performed by the nomadic does not suffice to experiment and delimit what they are looking for. Throughout their interview, some have explicitly refused to be called nomads, and have clearly accepted the idea of double home, of parallel homeness, of multiple belonging (Slavenka Drakulic, Korana Delic, David Albahari, Tanja Ostojic) and positive migration (unlike Dufoulon's bipolar classification). The interviews with them proved that we cannot longer think in dual and polar terms, when reading the human displacement, regardless whether it is mobility or migration. The unavoidable emotional interference of the nomadic and the waived vagrant quality of living makes out of these border inhabitants, truthful dwellers of the mobility, an authentic incarnation of the *non-lieu*, where the *non-lieu* is no longer a non-definitive space, a culturally not affiliated space, but a person, an artist, a writer, a photographer, a poet, which wanders carrying *the home within*, as Korana Delic said during the interview.

The artists I have interviewed proved that being a nomad does not necessarily mean moving, yet it is a stable being within a motion. They hold that wandering space, they incorporate the non-space and they fuse the dual categories of *mobility* versus *migration*: that is to say they inhabit both the negative and the positive experiences of

the displacement, they support well the acculturation but they disseminate also well the cultural affiliations all along their journeys; they inhabit that inner space still. The message derives always from somewhat spatial turbulences of the senses, the feelings and the perception. When we see what these artists do, we are drifted and shifted into a shimmering space, into a liminal space of our body cells, fighting the sharp definition of a landscape where we are dwelling mathematically and gaining weight and power of travelling knowledge. Moving from inertia to itinerancy, we no longer belong to a fix meaning of a space, but we are culturally changed. Such passages signify the cultural evolution all along the mobility. Not our eyes, but our body reacts just like the skin cells hurt and regenerate after being burned. This nomadic art continuously pushes us into uncertain feelings: it is when we are excited we actually are on the move towards a higher tension. This could be named as a nomadic pulsation in the migrating art. In this sense, Deleuze says: “the primary determination of the nomad is that he occupies and holds a smooth space: it is this aspect that determines him as nomad (essence)”⁹⁶. The narrowing and designing of “global-scapes” (Appadurai) and the trajectory, the path, the motion *per se*, is what makes the nomads “vectors of deterritorialization” (Deleuze, Guattari). However, the inner communication between these categories of displaced itinerant subjects is the repercussion of the new concepts in the geopolitics. Having said this, I tried to stress out the attachment that nomads have to the mobile territory, to the liminal boundary of a space and to the perpetual apolitical border, on one side, and on the other side their relation and dialogue with a homeland, in their cases with the ever changing *no man’s land*.

From here, we shall think of the nomadic artist as a person who refused to belong to one delimited space: the case of Tanja Ostojic, of Korana Delic and Mehmed Begic is evident in this sense. In this context, the border does nothing else because the border obliges him to belong to one space or another. Tanja Ostojic, Korana Delic and Mehmed Begic are artists inhabiting the re-configured and perpetually re-configuring morphological borders, for the border inhabitants do not belong no-where and at the same time they belong everywhere. Thus, the sedentary nomadism, on one hand, and the *nomadization* (or, the progressive mobile condition of the human condition) on other

⁹⁶ Deleuze, Gilles/Guattari/Felix, *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Semiotext (e), 1986, p. 101.

hand, in one a-semiotic system of space takes place in order to achieve the rupture of a code; the non-lieu of the mind within the space, where concepts such ethnicity, nation and culture are build, created and extracted out of the complex meaning and corpus of cultures drawing the main focus on the work of these artists.

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David Albahari in his short story *Immigrant* inspired from the Serbian diaspora in Canada, writes: “Everybody is walking in an invisible diving suit: the body exists in order not to become another body, the border exists in order not to be crossed, the loneliness is a fashion of life and not a form of rebellion”⁹⁷. Shifted by this sentence, when I interviewed him in Zemun, on 29 November 2011, I asked how he feels when crossing the borders and he told me: “When I travel across Europe I feel the borders even if they do not exist. But when I cross the borders of the Ex-Yugoslavian countries even though the political borders exist I do not feel them”. Even though the spaces defined by the untouchable and sharp borders are not communicating, but Albahari is playing with this definition, witnessing the longing for a never reaching space is stronger than ever. I notice in his essays and in Tanja Ostojic performances the removal or the displacement of subject out of their border, creates new boundaries, which transcend the political border, are interstice in motion, nomadic displacement of dynamic culture-in-making, relative reference, expatriation at its minimalism, open talk, desire of exit, refusal of a globalization of a culture, will to perceive things and homeland from a phenomenological distance, drifted by continuous rupture of created fix meanings, acknowledging lived cultures, undergoing the control and the supervision of the movement and circulation, reshaping the space of the boundary and the virtuous nostalgia of a space.

The notion of diaspora in Albahari essays is outsourcing several interpretations; as Luc Cambrézy puts it, this can be, at the same time, a synonym of a dispersion or even of a dilution, because the diaspora consists of time and motion, it is made out of non-spaces and borders; “(...) the diaspora designs and qualifies the movement more than the population itself. However the diaspora – mostly those which, charged with

⁹⁷ Albahari, David, *Dijaspora i druge stvari*, Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad, 2008, p. 122.

history, participate at the identitarian creation – signify the communion and the solidarity born within the exile and the detachment of the country of origin”⁹⁸. This shows to what extent the core quality of the so cherished concept of identity becomes provisional and somewhat temporary: this could be called a travelling identity, a nomadic source of being. The lived experiences of diaspora, mobility and migration translated in the work of these artists entail feelings of home deficiency, lack of border stability, shortage of security, absence of powerful national belonging, empty space, gap, perhaps even a failure performed as loneliness. To a certain level, this deduction shows that the invading power of globalization can make out of the human kind, from one moment to another, a fully displaced subject, an uncertain border dweller, homeless craftsmen, a vagrant, a tramp, a vagabond roaming through the interstice of the global-interzones-order.

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To put it in Bauman terms we are living in consuming, consumed and consummation liquid societies, which implies fictional market relationships (read instable, uncertain, liminal, fluid) and makes us being at the same time consumers and products. Even the border and the border artist risk becoming products. Even the consummation of our humanities and personal relations is elaborated through a cycle of *use and abuse* and *through away* capitalistic system of consumption. In a nutshell, the title of this chapter, for the present reason, could have been interpreted as Bauman says learning to walk on a quicksand, because the idea of quicksand or mobile sand or alive sand is a metaphor of the contemporary displaced persons (with no invasive fatherlands cultures) expelled and obliged to a specific form of exile. The non-space, the no-where place, the any-where zones are perceived as sort of purgatory, cleaning areas which divides but mixes border plots of land in some sort of cultural synergy trembling within the emotions of space and by doing so the new-comers of the diaspora or the constant mobile artists are continuously shifted away from the actual belonging, removed from the previous affiliation and shown up as specimen for trans-frontier citizenship. In such a human condition, the dual bipartition between inclusion and exclusion does not match

⁹⁸ Cambrézy, Luc, *Crise des sociétés, crise des territoires*, Editions des archives contemporaines, Paris, 2001, p. 137. « La diaspora désigne et qualifie alors le mouvement plus que la population elle-même. Mais les diasporas – surtout celle qui, chargées d’histoire, participent de fondement identitaire – signifient le regroupement et la solidarité nés dans l’exil et l’éloignement de la terre originelle. »

well the artistic realisation where the political factor cannot be turned off. This is why the nomadic art of these artists is a political critique and relevant in geopolitical sense: they are deprived of their fundamental political affiliation. The dissolved border zones of Yugoslavia made a certain impact on their lives and on their art-craft, notwithstanding they disseminate specific (nomadic) form of belonging, which is the foreignness (or more precisely the homelessness).

It is no longer the mobility of the intellectual elite, like Dufoulon states, but the migrating path of the politically expelled, expatriated, exiled and self-exiled artists turning into new fashion of living: it is what I call border inhabiting lives, and under border inhabitants I understand the migratory path undertaken by the interviewed former Yugoslavian artists. In a way, we could consider that the border and their qualities are not calculable or predictable, because they are surprising and emerging within the art and the writings; the cultural definitions and interpretations issued from borders, the emotional liaison with the cultural encounters are evolving at the outskirts and shrinking margins of border spaces. The condition of the expatriated artist unglues fixed meaning, and therefore fixed attachments to a territory: the vagrancy makes their condition a specific form of humanity. They absorb circumstantial consequences of mobility, both in form of a political migration and of an artistic nomadism. This capacity to engender the border inhabitation and the non-space mobility is what fosters their capacity to evolve culturally, to mutate culturally and to challenge the anthropology of the first globalization in the modern era. That is to say that the place they behold (or obsess), as we have seen in the cases of David Albahari and Slavenka Drakulic, and the mobility they inhabit, as we have seen in the case of Tanja Ostojic and Korana Delic, lies far ahead; in their outline, in their nomadic landscape (even though they never assume to be nomadic), the shifting landmarks are very clear and distinct in their adumbration within the border-scapes. Nearly all of them, but especially David Albahari in his short novels and mainly Tanja Ostojic with her interactive border-work performances, have offered the meaning of the border as something re-defining, re-refined, as something not-definitive, rough, crude, brutal, but because of that and not less vital, authentic and perfect. With their own personal examples of self-launched artists across border spaces, they proved that the home is shifting, the border is not a guarantee of safety but a carnival of desire, fervid life styles and productivity, and that nothing, no space is certain anymore.

Capturing the nomadic: offering the border as a living space

Nomadism opens humanity out on to something non-human.

Kenneth White⁹⁹

Dwelling in isolated places here and there, walking the whispering shores of the world, though also at times moving through cities, trying to work it out, living the tides and the multiple spaces. Thinking. Trying to say it.

Kenneth White¹⁰⁰

Le nomadisme, autrefois perçu comme un privilège et un accomplissement, n'est plus une question de choix : c'est un devoir.

Zygmunt Bauman¹⁰¹

What makes modernity 'liquid', and thus justifies the choice of name, is its self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive 'modernization', as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain its shape for long.

Zygmunt Bauman¹⁰²

Nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory. (...) The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space, he occupies, inhabits,

⁹⁹ White, Kenneth, *The Wanderer and his charts*, Polygon, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 138.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, p. 247.

¹⁰¹ Bauman, Zygmunt, *L'identité*, L'Herne, Paris, 2010, p. 47.

¹⁰² Bauman, Zygmunt, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 11.

holds that space; that is his territorial principle. It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement.

Gilles Deleuze¹⁰³

In the previous chapter the focus from the borders has been displaced gradually to several aspects of the human condition undergoing the displacements concentrated on the artistic re-creation of the self-hood. The following chapter condensates the utterly relevant concepts of mobility as a special emotional form of migration and this shall be traced in the cases of the former Yugoslavian writers and artists drifted away through the world. Consequently, this chapter will draw on the nomadic factor and its vital reasons for the human condition and creative generation. I will argue the nexus between the borders and those specific forms of displacements, or mobility, that incorporate the urgent need to drift, to stray, to wander within the space and to search for a safe home. I will try to define what does it mean to be a nomad or to live like a nomad today in these different cultural and political environments that surrounds us and try to focus more on the contemporary nomad, performed as a wanderer, as an exiled or expatriated citizen, as a person who is in perpetual search for space, who is nostalgic about a space but is in the same time a (cultural) space-in-motion.

Referring to Gertrude Stein quotation, Clifford Geertz upraised once the question of the rootedness. He, undertaking her question, stresses: “in a foot-loose world, what good are roots if you can’t take them with you”. From this logic, he tackles the impossibility to collocate the human border crossing fashions in one nomenclature of a tree or a root. In the testimonials of the emotional border experiences correlating the interviewed artists, we have observed a space of a world thrown into pieces, and learned the morphology of the motion. In Korana Delic’s photographs we perceive and read the nomadic capture of shifting spaces: not only the border, or the border horizon from Korana Delic photographs, are mobile, but the beholder of those spaces as well, she as photographer, the writer as well, the artist as well, the photographer as well are part of the nomadic capture of shifting boundaries. In fact, the more we read the

¹⁰³ Deleuze, Gilles/Guattari/Felix, *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Semiotext (e), 1986, p. 52.

testimonials the more we understand that this capture has shown how it feels to inhabit the metaphorical straits divided in-between seas of cultural meanings and what it means to dwell in the polymorph boundaries between outskirts, shores and thresholds of the border defined cultures. The nomadic that I argue in this chapter occurs in those boundaries: those are the “overheated” places where the border inhabitants dwell.

In fact, the nomadic side of lives interests me in the sense of the dynamic process of becoming culturally changeable, exchangeable and interchangeable. Even though from the interviews with Tanja, Korana and Mehmed the nomadic detachment from the territory of origin reveals emotional rebellion and while in Slavenka and David cases the attachment to the native homes is dominant more than the nomadic refusal of the *homeness*, as a core or seminal emotion of comfort and belonging, still in most of their lives and artworks, the nomadic process incorporates notions of ontological becoming, of discontinuity and heterogeneity, of variation, passage, transit and anti-nominal state of static order. In this consists the idea that they represent or perform a border crossing category shifted, drifted and created due to the political shattering of former Yugoslavia. The political factor, hence, has shown the weight of the borders in the artistic and nomadic lives of these inhabitants. In a nutshell, these experiences comprise the hedonistic dimension of the “exile” – if we can call it an *exile* – or the self-chosen-exile, that is to say the moment when the artist becomes a stranger to their own national and cultural territory, they embrace the border as a living territory and the border itself becomes then a void, a space unoccupied by any signification, a free zone, a *zona franca*, which is a-linguistic, a-cultural, a-regional, a-local, a-national. This state of mind I argue is caused by the global border dissolution and border mutations. The exile means becoming a stranger and the status of the stranger is in fact nomadic, in terms of the profound anthropological lack of decision and belonging. The liminal side of the emergent nomadic identification occurs in the edge of the belonging: the need to belong is not anymore necessary and the need to belong is not anymore at stake, thus, the need not to belong becomes therefore an exceeding need. The notion of belonging (to nationhood, to culture zones, to border frames, to households etc.) is somehow confusing because space is impregnated with memory: it is coherently sharp and liminal at the same time. The nomadic artist is untranslatable, indeterminate, rebel and they challenge and question if the hybrid identity occurred as a result of the mass migrations worldwide.

Space is today a subject to continuous definition: whether is centric or peripheral, is bounded with memory or liminal and shifting. These questions lead us to think of why and how it gets a proper delimitation and why many years it has been neglected by the Western philosophy. The past, the memories, the tactile experience is kept in mind – what Casey calls “mindful” and this is the starting point of this chapter because I argue how the nomadic is a continuous capture of a space and the longing for a “pure space” is what motivates people to run, to escape, to refuse the management of memory and the management of space. Undergoing a phenomenological reading, in this chapter the physical, geographical, geometrical space does not coincide anymore only and merely with the anthropological space, but with the existential space, the border dwelling, the mobile space which enacts multiple intimate relations with the ontology of the becoming a nomad. Further on, according to Marc Augé the non-space is waived with loneliness, uniqueness, similarity, where similarity stands for liminality; the absence of spatial determination, the absence of humanity in its anthropological definitions is taking place in spaces where liminal people, who do not belong, roam around without habits, without culture, without linguistic affiliation. Such a non-space is, as Tanja Ostojic said, invasive for people, economically speaking; however, according to Marc Augé the loneliness of human destinies dwells precisely in the anonymous zone of the non-lieu, which again in the artist Tanja Ostojic’s view imposes the economic burden of the capitalistic amebic border-zones. In such a zone all connections are confounded: flight connections and cultural connections; all attachments are suspended and the non-belonging is completely detached from the territorial configurations of the nomad. In such places the idea of home is completely lost, abstract, pale and vague. There is no comfort, nor feelings of safety: rituals of transit, of transition, of passage and initiation. As Rosi Braidotti puts it, those places are the real and authentic “no man’s land” and this toponym denomination is already part of the “post-industrial sensibility” which has produced out of the non-lieu or out of the transit zones, desirable, economic, esthetics and social spaces¹⁰⁴, which are actually argued and opposed by the artist Tanja Ostojic. In this context, we refer again to Braidotti definition of the nomadic status, because in her view it is characterized by the consciousness and the desire to go through and go beyond the convention; it is, in fact,

¹⁰⁴ Braidotti, Rosi, *Nuovi soggetti nomadi*, Luca Sossella Editore, Roma, 2002, p. 37.

the political passion to change society, which is often given, and to motivate the transformation of spaces, which is, yet, an emotional enterprise.

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The nomadic capture of home-spaces undergoes the locus of the Heideggerian notion of the *Umheimlichkeit*, which consists, according to Stuart Hall, in the feeling of dislocation of the modern displaced cultural subject through a symbolical act of splitting different presents, where sharing different presents meant living divided memories and different past. Identically to the nomadic feelings, the feeling of non-homeness, the Heideggerian *Umheimlichkeit*, reveals here the creepy, if we can say so, or however, the almost unusual feeling that provokes the loss of the feelings of familiarity, to which Korana Delic referred to in her interview talking about the fall of the Berlin Wall and the contradiction of all the small walls raised in former Yugoslavia. The feelings of the meaning of home are the focus of the following chapter as they are exchanged with the uncertainty of the nomadic lives. The nomadic capture is often a very traumatic because the exclusive border is constructed on the conception of the so called *otherness*, and the inside and the outside melt like in a boiling pot; the meaning is no longer supported by codes but by primordial emotions of fear and loss. The liminal space of the nomad is impregnated with meanings, which arise from the mixture and the splash of the encounter of dual meanings, and as such does not belong to anyone.

The former expatriated Yugoslavian artists I draw on, have stated that they have left their native cities, where they were born, because “they and the cities have given to each other what they had to give”. The memory is fulfilled, the space is contaminated and the urban belonging chapter is closed. The conclusion would be that people do not run away from time, - which often is linked to memory and is a sort of a burden - , but they are leaving the space that is impregnated with personal experiences of remembering, the space that has captured the time of freedom and desires beyond borders, the space that is absorbing things, moments, elements of collective and individual memory. Now, when the violence is a part of that space, the will to escape is natural. And in such nomadic path the language is the core capacity (also in Lacan sense) to nominate its own existence, a migratory quality of the live. According to Edward S. Casey space contains the memory, the sentimental and the mindful. This is very much evident in Korana Delic work and in Mehmed Begic nomadic choice of life,

where the exile turns into *insilium* – and interior exile, a motion towards within, a loss of belonging, while waiting for the time to go away without betraying the past belonging. In cultural anthropology the terms indicating the state of *fatherlandless* refers to this double timing and double space which is expatriated, shifted, nomadic space.

To put it in Deleuze terms the “The hydraulic model of the nomad (...) consists in being distributed by turbulence across a smooth space, in producing a movement that holds space and simultaneously affects all of its points, instead of being held by space in a local movement from one specified point to another”¹⁰⁵. In other terms, the overheated space of the nomadic motion is an active, fermenting place that can explode at any stage of the migratory path. The dualism takes place between the motion and the space, for the nomad relates namely to a territory, to a shifting or liquid paths, to dwelling spaces, “(...) but the question is what in the nomad life is seen as a principle and what is seen only as a consequence. (...) The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them.”¹⁰⁶ We could even call this activity an activity of capturing and changing skins, for the action of artistic or literary dwelling does not connects exclusively to one affiliating territory but to a wandering paths. The consequences of this itinerant lives is introducing the last and final chapter on the refusal of domestication and territorialization, in a perpetual longing for a home. The nomadic path does not leave any scar, because the journey is within the artistic representation, within the space exchange, within the border crossing: in an interstice. “The nomad is not at all the same as the migrant; for the migrant goes principally from one point to another, even if the second point is uncertain, unforeseen or not well localized. But the nomad only goes from point to point as a consequence and as a factual necessity: in principle, points for him are relays along a trajectory. Nomads and migrants can mix in many ways, or form a common aggregate; their causes and conditions are no less distinct for that”¹⁰⁷.

According to what Deleuze stresses, the quality of the nomadic space is smooth and intra-waived with perpetually shifting traits; it is the space which is occupied by the nomad. We would say that the mobile, liminal, hence the border space (both in

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, Gilles/Guattari/Felix, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, Semiotext (e), 1986, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, p. 21.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, p. 50.

geographical and in metaphorical meaning) is the most homely and comfortable habitat of the nomad. Perhaps because in this nomination consists the difference between the migrant and the nomad: the will to leave, to depart, to be evicted and to be expelled. The time of the nomad is not measured by the necessity to move on or to shift or exchange cultural spaces, but it is in fact measured by the emotion of the challenge to reproduce space. “If the nomad can be called the deterritorialized *par excellence*, it is precisely because there is no reterritorialization *afterwards* as with the migrant, or upon *something else* as with the sedentary (...). With the nomad, on the contrary it is deterritorialization that constitutes the relation to the earth, to such a degree that the nomad reterritorializes on deterritorialization itself. It is the earth that deterritorializes itself, in a way that provides the nomad with a territory.”¹⁰⁸

The border crossing points, in the sense of the nomadic crossing, are one of those overheated spaces that gnaw, glow, shimmer and diffuse in indefinite paths. What makes the expatriated artists nomad, in the sense of their relation to the space, is that they inhabit and behold the border-heated space and this is explainable by the fact that the ordinary political day-to-day lives in former Yugoslavia were, indeed, marked by political spaces and spatial determinations, by spatial affiliations traced with cultural boundaries, on one hand, and the political notion of border on the other hand. They become therefore “vectors of deterritorialization” (Deleuze) by committing operations of space exchange and space fermentation. They float in interfering cultures, in border cultures and proved to a certain extent that the border can be interpreted as livable and living space, as an open space combining both hospitality and hostility at the time. It is at the same time stable and liquid, safe and overwhelming, offering and invading: a cultural space to inhabit, which is an antinomy of the unclear concept of general multiple cultures. And here we can propose the meaning of liquidity in Bauman sense: those spaces are liminal because they are free, bounded with desire, self-defining, self-propelling, tight broken, interstice, tensed, invading, and not constant and therefore the social model of nomadic life is not stable within and are in perpetual mutation. This is what makes the border culture a liquid culture, where the motion liaises with a space in the shape of an encounter and not in a shade of stable constitution of meaning.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 52.

The global decomposition of the political and the economic organization, the creation of hyper economic and hyper political conglomerations and the liquid shifting definition of societies produce conflictual trans-border migrations, where the nomadic is the spatial consequence of the political factor, of the emergence and the reproduction of one mono-shaped, uniform and mono-emotional societal space on a global level. This has created local and shrinking realities, where entire zones are divided by borders and impossibility to interrelate and communicate. In this sense also the post-Yugoslavian war and violent conflicts proposed a reading of the compulsory or unavoidable transformation and essential mutation of the people as a whole. The former Yugoslavian people were compelled to obey to the duty to affiliation, to the obligation to self-determination, and from this has emerged the urge to exile, the forced expatriation, the thousands of refugees, of expulsions, the terrible crimes of ethnic cleaning, the cunning call for hyper-identification and hyper-nationalisation. In fact, this obligation to self-determination was also raised by Stefano Lusa during the interview. Hence, the ethnic and politically nomadic decomposition and the production of people in Balibar is condensed in Appadurai statement: “The many displaced, deterritorialized, and transient populations that constitute today’s ethnoscapas are engaged in the construction of locality, as a structure of feeling, often in the face of erosion, dispersal, and implosion of neighborhoods as coherent social formations.”¹⁰⁹.

In this sense, the mobility and the nomadic elements became the reading tools of the society, as long as the mobility is reproducing societal relations, territorial reconfigurations and producing identification temperatures. The approach is liminal because it incorporates the vagrant languages and the uncertain communication occurring at the border crossing, where the nomad becomes a nomad, where the border dweller becomes an indeterminate subject. For the nomad artist the vagrancy is an active ferment that refreshes the nomadic art: the fluid spaces reconfigure the memory and the affiliation. The disposal of space within the nomadic dwelling is a subject to multiple shifts of possession of the living space: the obsession with this living space, with the border spaces is explained by the desire for home. And such a fertile activity of longing for a home is inseparable element of the nomadic mobile art. To inhabit the mobility means to dwell beyond one’s one territory and spatial limits; this is one vital

¹⁰⁹ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 199.

and spiritual necessity, for the nomad conceives no other thought than the one raising from the motion of walking down the border and the action of border crossing and this takes place in the entire world, which becomes gradually one immense foreign land.

Every space is foreign now and every border crosser a foreigner. In this context, the idea of a border without a boundary is perceived as a whole, integral global process. According to Appadurai we no longer put the human condition in the territorial configuration of a root and rootedness, but to understand the mobile subject means to experiment in a very emotional, substantial and sensual fashion the existence of the nomad. The human being does not need roots in order to belong, because we ought to understand finally that the culture is uprooted from the territory and the territoriality itself. The nomadic emotionality is outward-bound and intra-waived through the ethno-empirical interstices of other people, other spaces, other meanings, other cultures.

If the modernity is marked by a mobility utopia, rootlessness, distance, alienation, the culture shape paths of hybrid meanings within blurring and shifting processes of self-definition throughout mobility utopia, which is dual and hence concerned with the space and the human condition. We have never asked ourselves why nomads are deterritorialized? We tackle constantly this deterritorialization but do we ask ourselves why? The nomads are haunted as outsiders and they resist territorialization often, not always, and remain outside the normative, legal, political space. They chose to be counter-spatial, to belong in the land of the non-political nomenclature and the heterotopic space. They belong and behold distant spaces and become diaspora entity and nomadic versus rooted, embedded subjects. All the migration flows (need to) occur in order “(...) to reproduce the old capitalist reserve army in a period when a significant part of the “national” labor force is still protected by social rights and regulations (...) but this means that the new proletarians (in the original sense adopted by Marx (...) must be transformed into subjects and objects of fear, *experiencing fear* of being rejected and eliminated, and *inspiring fear* to the “stable” populations. This is supposed to make sure that they will not become integrated into the political “constituency” in particular through their participation to common

social struggles, because in the end they are becoming “citizens” in the active sense”¹¹⁰, as Balibar puts it.

On a cultural level, according to Braidotti the nomad is perforce a polyglot and the polyglot is a nomad of language, constantly living between two different idioms and nomadism is not only a theoretical option, it proves to be also an existential condition. The nomadic motion is not narrow or straight or predictable: it is a movement that has multiple endings and multiple beginnings, it is a liminal movement. As Kenneth White explains it, the nomad evolves within the space and returns to the multiple paths of the selfhood here and the selfhood there in an apologetic and epistemological strategy of vagrancy. It means not having a fixed home, not being at *my place* nowhere, it means running all the time and searching for its own *my place* within an open border space. Therefore, the idiom of *my place* becomes the *each and every space, any place*, for the motion of the nomadic artists is marked by the absence of a stable place. Nomadism as a concept was invented to transcend the domestication, to break up the comfortable ideological affiliations to the ethnical and the national and to transcend the political alienation. The nomadism has turned into a mechanism, a tool, a device for stability refusal, for resistance and movement into the global homeness.

To refer once again to Deleuze, we could think of the political commitment to deterritorialization, for “(...) the nomad is intrinsically political, always on the side of freedom, choice and becoming, always opposed to power, territory and the fixing of identity”. According to Deleuze nomads are those who start nomadizing in order to stay in the same place and free themselves from codes; in order not to disappear. Nomadism is a meaning, a shifting and a liquid interpretation of reality; as Deleuze puts it, the deterritorializing flows of desire, capital, bodies and information and so on, are always accompanied by reterritorialization processes that serve to institutionalize, capture and recode such indeterminate flows. Nomads “(...) do not mark out territory to be distributed among people (as with sedentary cultures), rather people are distributed in an open space without borders or enclosures. Nomad space is smooth, without features, and in that sense the nomad traverses without movement, the land ceases to be anything else than a geographical support. Unlike the migrant, the nomad does not leave land because it has become hostile: rather she clings to the land because it is undifferentiated

¹¹⁰ Balibar, Etienne, *Europe as Borderland*, The Alexander von Humboldt Lecture in Human Geography, Institute for Human Geography, Universiteit Nijmegen, November 10, 2004, p.15-16.

from other spaces she inhabits”¹¹¹. This is the territorial principle of the nomad to be “distributed in a smooth space which he occupies, inhabits and holds”. Nevertheless, the awkward burden is that we cannot longer distinguish on this basis the nomads from the other categories of mobile subjects such as migrants, itinerants and transhumants; every mobile category of displaced humans is inter-relating, exchanging meanings, crossing boundaries and inter-communicating, changing roles. If nomads are “vectors of deterritorialization”, then the border inhabitants and border crossing dwellers do share the same unlimited space, with no precise limits: they all do share the liminal landscapes of the borderness. And the question which remains unanswered however is the following: beyond this frame who are the deterritorialized people and who pushes them into continuous deterritorialization?

To my understanding, it is no longer useful to ponder on the distinction and the dividing definition of the displaced subjects. Even though Braidotti opposes the figure of the nomadic to the figure of the immigrant and the exiled, we still have to believe that these categories undergone the liminality. This is why in my view the former Yugoslavian artists (except Korana Delic, who was a refugee and has been evicted politically) do dwell in the wider field of the nomadic, - and here the *nomadic* is comprising the expatriation in David Albahari, the vagrancy in Mehmed Begic, the migration in Tanja Ostojic, the exile in Korana Delic, the itinerancy in Slavenka Drakulic -, because as Braidotti says the nomad is not a homeless individual who underwent compulsory, obliged dislocation, but the nomad is an individual who has abandoned any idea of stability or a nostalgia for stability. Hence, this belief is translated in the nostalgia for an ever shifting space and refusal of the domestication. According to Braidotti, this nomad reveals, and performs, perhaps, the desire to be someone physically made of transit, transitions, progressive displacements, coordinated mutations with or against any idea of essential homogeneity, while the immigrant is located in an inter-zone, intermediate zone and his past and origins defocuses and destabilizes his present¹¹². When defining the nomadic consciousness, Braidotti refers to Foucault, because it reveals a form of counter-memory: the nomadic resists the assimilation and the uniformity with the prevailing and dominant models and

¹¹¹ Deleuze, Gilles, *Empirisme et subjectivité. Essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume*, PUF, Paris, 1988, p.380-1.

¹¹² Braidotti, Rosi, *Nuovi soggetti nomadi*, Luca Sossella Editore, Roma, 2002, p. 44-46.

representation of selfhood. In terms of fluidity she puts it: “(...) the nomadism is not a borderless fluidity but rather a precise consciousness of the fixed borders. It is an intense desire to continue border crossing, to transgress (...). The nomad is a post-metaphysical entity, intense, multiple, which functions within the network of interconnections (...) and is therefore embodied and therefore cultural (...) it is a cyborg and is yet unconscious”¹¹³

Before going to the next, concrete chapter of the notions of home performed by the artistic border inhabitants, and after having discussed the Yugoslavian federation conglomerate shattering and splitting into micro-semiotic spheres and new map of border-zones, and despite the refusal of duality, however I would conclude by opposing the modern static space which underlines and comprises boundary, space, fixed identity, fixed positions, spatial configurations, and the post-modern mobile space which underlines and comprises fluidity, liminality, nomadism, micro-migrations occurring in the liminal drift of the ever-exiling contemporary societies. In a world of passive images that construct and disseminate our connection to the world, the individual turns into an ambiguous factory spinning as an uncertain border dweller in those overheated places of belonging. Defined by Marc Augé, the transit places, denominated by virtual communities of loneliness, the empirical non-spaces and the transport zones are culturally impregnated with dense void. This is the reason why I have proposed since the first chapter to read and to think of the border as an open talk, as fervid principle, as a discourse: the overheated crossing spaces (and by overheated I mean and refer to the physical quality of a burden: economic, political, cultural, psychological, anthropological burden) signifies or symbolize the lack of definition and the will to find, to belong to mobile, therefore, unstable definitions. It is precisely there where the notion of freedom within the notion of space is evolving, precisely through the reading of the societal element of the human condition in the perspective of the cracked, split and fissured space. The cracked, split and fissured space is that non-space that we cross and we crisscross, that we double cross. It is a miscommunicated space: an anonymous space, an innocent space, a passport space, a transit space invading and obsessing the nomadic factor of human lives, the nomadic element of the border inhabitants, which is

¹¹³ Ibidem, p. 57. “Il nomadismo non è una fluidità priva di confini bensì la precisa consapevolezza della non fissità dei confini. È l’intenso desiderio di continuare a sconfinare, a trasgredire. (...) il nomade è un’entità post-metafisica, intensa, multipla che funziona all’interno di una rete di interconnessioni. (...) è incarnata e quindi culturale (...) è un cyborg e tuttavia ha anche un inconscio”.

transversal, and consists of ontological conversation, spatial extension and mobile consummation, given as core qualities of the nomadic human lives.

Here lies perhaps the political dimension of the globalization proposed by the media, the market strategies and the virtual obsession of the selfhood: the notion of the border as a limit is getting erased gradually and the notion of the border as a living space is getting imposed or proposed progressively. While local conflicts engender global web of uniform communication and social channels, the world is turning into a continuously changing spectacle, marked by discontinuity, discrimination, distance and therefore in such a condition of border menaces, the individual needs at least minimal distance in order to communicate. But here is the key of the border as a different space: a communicating space where the language is not a barrier anymore, where the liminal spatial reconfiguration enhances cultural flux and where the strong connection that leads to breaking up the border, become the threshold, the outskirts, the doorstep that induces to the passage. The culture is not a hermitage – it should be translated and applied separately to each and every displaced level of border belonging. The individual is the sovereign of the culture in its integrality. The erased frontier and the spectacle of cancelled frontier, followed by the generating and reproducing historical and ambivalent boundaries in former Yugoslavia, foster the idea that the individual is pushed to its nomadic boundaries.

Today everything is being performed and evolving pretty fast: the science, the cities, the intellectual and artistic thought, the fear of the future, the dis-individuation of the world, the saturation of marketing images, the transparency in the societies the irruption in the intimate space, in the seismographic spaces of human life, the ruins as a spectacle of the human devastation. The individual is condemned to seek for the beauty walking on a ware which is cross-cut and criss-crossed in the nucleus by invading geopolitics and geo-cultural features: it is a cultural interstice ware. As stated above the individual is pushed to its nomadic boundaries, which again are natural, and human to put it in Marx's terms, because are due to the over – production of the market, of the immigration caused by the poverty and by the luxurious side of living, in societies divided more and more in layers, undergoing science, power and money. The nomadic culture is not a stable one, it is hybrid: we could talk about the utopia of the non-space where one day we will see the growth of both excluded migrants and rich migrants. Even though the entire world can circulate, there are certain contradictions which are

developed as regards the distinction between the space and the no-space. The nomad than becomes an adventurous individual that attaches themselves from one space to another without belonging anywhere. In this sense, nourished with the expatriated artists and writers testimonials, we think the nomadic reality as an infinite field of decomposition: fluid, borderless, transversal, and the border zone as an alternative living space, hence the border crossing as a brand new definition of home.

Longing for homeness, refusal of domestication

The unhomelessness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused.

Homi Bhabha¹¹⁴

Le sentiment de n’être nulle part à sa place, jamais totalement là (...) peut être déroutant, voire agaçant.

Zygmunt Bauman¹¹⁵

If the home was good, even the wolf would have it.

Serbian proverb¹¹⁶

You cannot watch a masquerade without moving.

Igbo saying

The previous chapters, dealing with the cultural impact of the mobility caused by the dissolved borders and their artistic influences of the newly generated former Yugoslavian borders on the lives and artworks of the expatriated artists and writers and the exiled photographer, have put into surface the figure of the artistic border inhabitant who envisions permanently the border crossings as a cultural and artistic act and performance. The artistic nomadic captures of bordering spaces have induced them to

¹¹⁴ Bhabha, Homi K., *The location of culture*, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 13.

¹¹⁵ Bauman, Zygmunt, *L’identité*, L’Herne, Paris, 2010, p. 22,23.

¹¹⁶ The Serbian popular saying was mentioned during the interview with David Albahari.

inhabit the mobility and to transpose it in a literary work (David Albahari, Slavenka Drakulic) and in the visual testimonials and performances (Tanja Ostojic, Korana Delic). Having said this, in the present chapter I draw on the third element, seminal for my research, which represents the human side of the mobility and the intimate content of the nomadic, and that is the concept of home. Besides the nomadic and the mobile side of the border inhabitation, the condition of lost home, of liaised and negotiable idea of homeness and of the artistic status of homelessness, here becomes an artistically fertile field. Therefore, the chapter argues the precedent of these artistic experiences and the consequences of the fervid mobility across the so called liminal borders: that was witnessed in Korana Delic's visual nomadic capture of spaces and the literary argument and depiction of the diaspora and the Serbian immigration in Canada (their language, their parallel non-belongings, their difficult almost impossible acculturation) in David Albahari's novels and the politically liaised aesthetics of the border crossing representing also denied access, exploitation of people, in Tanja Ostojic's border performances. The case of Mehmed Begic represents the loss of home but as an incarnation of the self-chosen, cultural exile, as a poetic will of displacement, caused by the traumatic experiences with the Bosnian war. While in the case of Slavenka Drakulic we do not perceive any loss of home, but rather attachment to several homes. Even though she proved that the real homeness is the language. From this logic, we come back to what Korana has said: the real home is somehow carried within just as the language is. Therefore, in a nutshell, this chapter focuses on what I shall call here the syndrome of home deficiency.

The home deficiency syndrome came out as a consequence of the perpetual displacements and the historical border shifts and most of all as artistic aesthetics of those artists who belong and behold multiple cultural affiliations. In one general frame, the home deficiency syndrome is a global condition of the manhood due to the globalization turns and shifts of space, economies and cultures. I do not argue the nihilism of home but the classification and the layering of the homeness as a quality rather as a space; as a mobile condition rather than as a fixed point. Thus, the home does exist, however and the hometowns are imprinted in the lives of the interviewed artists and writers, but as mentioned above, what is lost, or what is being lost continuously, is the feeling of fixed homeness. The quality of homeness is therefore traced in the ever moving artistic displacement and detachment from the mono-cultural territories. As an

answer to that, the phenomenon of lack of the intimate, private, self-identifying and affiliating space is understood rather as a constant, fertile and turbid condition, often described as homelessness, which is undoubtedly caused by the “new world disorder” (Bauman). In such world disorder the circumstances surrounding the unstable human environment have engendered something that, under Bauman sociological influence of the concept of liquid lives, I have conceived and linguistically coined as *take away home* and *home to go*. Therefore, the metaphor of the *take away home* and *home to go*, here proposed as purely globalizing products issued from the global world shifts and blurred boundaries, undergoes meanings revealing the reconfigurations of the homeness quality. We no longer deal with the sedentary image of the belonging, but with the belonging beyond the home, which means having the home on the road; searching for the home while moving, that is to say while migrating; carrying the home from within, like in Korana Delic’s case; dreaming the home while away from home, like in David Albahari’s case; definite loss of the home, like in Mehmed Begic’s case; reinventing the home, like in Tanja Ostojic’s case, and last but not least, questioning the home from the perspective of the cultural exile, like in Slavenka Drakulic’s case. The *home to go*, actually the motion speed put into practice, is a product issued from the mass globalization flows and migrations (illegal or legal, political or economic, asylum seeking or artistic and so on and so forth) engendering fear and sense of loss, complete eradication from the intimate soil which liaises with the personal memory and the spatial culture, and thereto with the constant “uprootedness” (tackled by Slavenka Drakulic) and the precarious feelings of anxiety, and of non-belonging.

I have introduced this chapter with one very significant quotation from Bhabha precisely on the concept of the unhomelessness, or the status, “the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations”. These cross-cultural and extra-territorial initiations contain the liminality as a core quality and the border as cross-spatial dimension. This is how I have arrived to the conclusion that the home becomes a quality and not therefore an emotional space, that the home undergoes a loss and oblivion and does not represent stability. The artistic displacements following the former Yugoslavian outbreaks of war and violence have produced this feeling of lost home, because the (feeling of) fatherland was lost in a way and therefore the spaces and the homeness tackled after the war became a daily practice. The interviews with the expatriated artists, nearly with all of them, but especially with Korana, Tanja, David and

Mehmed, proved what Bhabha says that “(...) to be unhomed is not to be homeless (...)” and that the ‘unhomely’ quality of dwelling everywhere yet nowhere precisely, the ‘unhomely’ feeling nourishing the wandering, have caused what Bhabha says in the last quote that “(...) the borders between home and world become confused (...)”

The interest of this notion, that is to say of the interconnectedness between the border (its dissolution and creation) and the mobility (as a self-chosen displacement, as eviction, or exile) have engendered the liminal quality of the unhomely home, which is the nomadic home issued as a dynamic process of becoming and of artistic initiation. The border studies, in fact, argue the border as not only a line but as a complex, as a porous map nurtured with increased mobility. The globalization emerging and evolving worldwide has nurtured this non-living-locally and the belonging to shifting homes and places. This is one of the reasons why I explore the liminality of the borderness. In fact, this reveals that the vital segments of the nomadic, which are correlating substantially the wider notions of home and non-home, on one side and on the other side, the border as a stable, “safe”, secure, controlled “home”, as predetermined space of belonging and the border as a porous space, as a shifting and ever displacing home and non-belonging, as a liminal shift from one home to another, from one migrating condition to another, from one nomadic quality to another.

The aforementioned syndrome of lost home immediately liaises with the refusal of domestication, with the cultural and/or self-chosen exiles and the fragile displacements of the former Yugoslavian artists. Such fragile displacements correlate to the space and engender a very strong concept or an idea of home according to which the homeland is not anymore the point of departure but becomes a field, a landmark, a space profoundly eradicated into the mobile, shifting and therefore liminal territory of the border itself. This human condition of a gradual loss of home, in the expatriated artists lives, and in general, is due to the mass global tectonic shifts of the globalization. But it is also due to those wanderings that induces the individual to introspection but not of an oriental, spiritual kind, though an introspection of the modern mankind in crisis who roams around airports, transports, places and lost spaces.

The notion of the *non-space* developed by Marc Augé here coins perfectly this state of non-belonging, never settled down zombies: people who wander around and speak with the void, within the void, cut off from the real factual environment,

elsewhere, alienated autistic bodies, checking all the possible times voices and words (emails and vocal messages) to be reassured that someone do correlates and connects with them, as he puts it. These people have continuously performed the new homeness condition, in which one carries the home while moving around, while producing within and beyond the border. The concrete cases I have analysed, took place, actually, after the collapse of the communism in the so called Eastern Block, which shows to what extent the political factor, produced by the shifting political systems, implies the dislocation as a core quality of the expatriated subject.

We have seen in the chapter on the nomadic captures of spaces that the spatial mobile reality and the cultural imprints correlated to such a liquid reality, so to say, are not stable, nor given, nor natural-born. The globalizing processes are shaping collective realities and we witness the position of the artist in politically constructed contexts that they do not agree to share: in war times and in massive border shaping time, the artist undergoes exile, self-chosen exile, as unique possibility to dwell within the creation and the production across borders. As a consequence to this, now we will try to understand the bordures of the home and to offer a meaning of the home as a space located or collocated in any particular places. The condition of *foreignness* (on the semantic margin of strangeness, randomness, alienation), as it was mentioned in multiple manners and in various occasions during the interviews with the expatriated artists, the question of the artistic hedonism of the exile (or rather internal, self-chosen, self-propelling, cultural, proactive, humanistic, artistic exile) and the question of the “matricide” consisting in the abandon of the mother tongue raised by Julia Kristeva, are structuring this concept of chapter. In this sense, Julia Kristeva argues that the conflict in border-line spaces, be it spatial that is to say geographical, or political that is to say economical, is not a consequence issued by religious factors. According to her, in former Yugoslavia the religion was an utterly important conflict trigger; however, as an example of religion-based conflicts she refers to the Parisian suburban riots burst into fire and the periphery become the center, the focus, not because of the religious claims, but instead because of the hot red-line delimited by the exclusion, by the frontier and the metaphor of a margin. However, there is no such thing like a definitive erasure of the cultural frontier and the religious factor cannot be claimed as a reason for the breaking up the borders. The fissure of the cracked border spaces and the dissolved political borders in former Yugoslavia have demonstrated and offered manifold meanings of what it means to live

the liquid life, meaning to share the same life and same cultural habits. Beyond these dissolving borders, the example of former Yugoslavia demonstrated what does it means to be homeless (not socially or politically but rather culturally) in its own country. The border crossings in the markets without borders, as Bauman says, are the path to the “new world disorder”. “In other words: the displacement of fear – from the cracks and fissures in the human condition where ‘fate’ is hatched and incubated, to areas of life largely unconnected to the genuine source of anxiety.”¹¹⁷

Arguing the displacement of fear arose from the overwhelming and devastating “new world disorder”, we think that it is gradually transposed to those areas of life, which become the virtual, allusive and illusive, unreal, liquid, unstable and shifting boundaries and yet unconnected to the genuine source of anxiety, as Bauman puts it, which is the displacement itself, and which, on long term, anticipates all kind of exiles. Hence, as Ulf Hannerz puts it, “for the exile, shifted like the tourist directly from one territorial culture to another, but involuntarily, the involvement with a culture away from his homeland is at best home plus safety, or home plus freedom, but often it is just not home at all.”¹¹⁸ This shows clearly that the “involvement with a culture away from the homeland” means gradually losing the home, or permanently dwelling in the “not home at all”, dwelling in that unhomely, as Bhabha puts it, place of living. This means, in a nutshell, that the expatriated artists having envisaged the substantial state of that “not home at all” - which implies in a way the intimate search for home and the freedom to perform artistically, literary or visually (border photographs, border crossings, border novels) - were, in fact, drifted away by the geo-political and the geo-cultural factor in the former post-conflict Yugoslavian spaces contaminated by the bloody war that took place only several years ago. This is the reason why I have chosen to argue the liminality of the border because it produces not only a fertile territory for creation but it produces as well the lack, the loss of home, which, at the end, does not seem to be as traumatic as it supposed to be.

The perpetual compelling duty to self-define the own (artistic, ideological, nationalistic etc.) belonging, the implicit fear to belong to one side or another, the

¹¹⁷ Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid times. Living in an age of Uncertainty*, Polity Press, 2007, p. 13.

¹¹⁸ Hannerz, Ulf, *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning*, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 248.

weakness of the migrating existence and the compulsive inhabitation of the borderness turned into something that is perfectly coined in the German language as *Sehnsucht*, most probably translated into yearning, that is to say longing, feeling a nostalgia for the lost home. And here the Freudian sense of the word *unheimlich* comes into practice, because every time the idea of home is at stake, the reality of the home is gone, is shifting and the feeling of being launched into space is precisely this uncanny, uncomfortable yet thrilling sense of yearning for an intimate space, let it be a border space, but a safe homeness space. As Bhabha puts it, the loss of homeness (here the notion of homeness stands for emotion of home, feeling of belonging, of being safe) being without boundary, living the permeability of the “global homeness”¹¹⁹. The global homeness however could be interpreted as a rebel refusal of the domestication and of belonging to one community or another, to one ethnicity or another, to one nationality or another, which were geopolitical processes ongoing in undefined disputatious and polemical border spaces in post-war Yugoslavia. For the artist, these questions were not quite understandable. “The artists refuse such polarizing identifications, and reject univocal choices that define social and personal freedoms negatively (...)”¹²⁰. “The process of cultural transmission prompts us to reflect the diaspora displaced lives of artists who share diverse cultural affiliations and itinerant social identifications. The artworks’ layered transition across various mediums of manufacture echoes the artists’ complex and displaced relation to territoriality – exile and belonging, habitation and homelessness. In what way does the diaspora movement back and forth across countries and cultures relate to artworks whose time-lagged materials and techniques place them somewhere between the past and the present? (...)”¹²¹ He supports this concept with the example of the Iranian artist, Shirana Shahbazi, who was born in Teheran, moved to Germany, and now based in Zurich, given that she cherishes the artistic productivity of living between borders. This example of another exiled or self-exiled artist is very much relevant for my dissertation because it raises the question of belonging, the question raised above also by Stefano Lusa, and that is the question of *who you are, to which side do you belong*. The trouble comes when the belonging cannot be classified in simple (so called multi-) terms: for example the simple idea of belonging results to be pretty much

¹¹⁹ Bhabha, Homi K., *Without a boundary: seventeen ways of looking*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2006, p. 32.

¹²⁰ Ibidem, p. 34.

¹²¹ Ibidem, p. 32.

simplistic and yet dual. What this Iranian artist tackles is the perfect explanation of the impossibility to fit or to settle onto stable soil, where people continuously are trying to define who you are, where do you come from, where is your home and where do you live. For these reasons underlined by Bhabha and with the example of Shirana we witness nowadays a certain impossibility to communicate on questions such as: “where do you come from?” and especially “where do you live?”, because the global displaced nomadic trans-boundary citizens live everywhere and nowhere. The trans-boundary adjective indicates exactly the fact that they take away their home and bring it back; they go away with the home or without, but they have it well imprinted in one abstract, metaphoric, sensual place in their emotional and artistic lives.

In this sense, again referring to what borders dissolution have caused in post-war Yugoslavia, we shall think of Appadurai definition of homeland as something partly invented, “existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups”; as something that “(.) can sometimes become so fantastic and one-sided that it provides the fuel for new ethnic conflicts.”¹²² The political incisive factor gathered multiple sided definitions of what border was and what cultural processes were undergoing within the wider political Yugoslavian manifold and layered landscape. The refusal to be ideologically available or suitable was a sign that the artists and the writers could not cope with the ethnical hegemony and the violent border shaping and spatial retailoring. The answer to those spatial reconfigurations was the cultural exile, the nomadic artistic path, the redundant departure and the parallel dwelling in several cities. The fantastic, intimate and strong representation of the homeland still yearns for the artistic testimonial and this is self-evident in David’s stories, in Slavenka’s novels, in Korana’s photographs and in the fervid artwork of Tanja Ostojic, still appealing former Yugoslavian political and cultural notions.

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¹²² Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 49.

In the context of a nomadic expel (voluntary or forced) away from the homeland, Saskia Sassen argues the notion of expulsion, intrinsically related to a land, space and ground basis of the global nomadic artist. The experimentation and the reconfiguration of spaces have brought into trouble massive groups of expatriated citizens, eradicated, dismissed, dissolved culturally and disintegrated spatially. According to Sassen¹²³ it is no longer self-evident that the borders are the edges of the system, because the core and seminal questions for the sociology and the cultural anthropology is precisely what happens at the edge? Does the system bring people or expel people? Sassen is raising the question of expelling people because the system combines solid cultures and liquefies cultures. Yet, when territory exists as conventional framing, it becomes institutionally mobile, nomadic and can alter the meaning of nation-state membership. (Do we recognize here the case of former Yugoslavia?) Territory becomes nomadic institutionally because it is not a land, it destabilises the immigrant subject, according to her. Sassen puts it very well: for her the territory is a very powerful category and in this sense destabilizes the mobile, exiled and expelled subject to the level of a compulsory self-definition. In the case of the immigrants displaced after the Yugoslavian wars, there was the chance to reinvent fervid national belongings but also to be classified geopolitically as *Eastern Europeans*, hence again the culture was, in a nutshell, put in a correlation to space. The de-bordering of the border space meant changing the status of the migrant. The new geopolitics now means expelling people from their homeland, their livelihood, expelling even bioflora to inhabit greater economic venues, making boundaries and buying land, according to Sassen. But who has the capacity to make borders after dissolving them? Why the expatriated artists do not have the answer to the question of the dark goals of bordering capabilities and digging structural holes in the formal framing of the national territory and in the households? The power of using people for the financial market and expelling them from the households is unavoidably changing the face and the meaning of the homeness: the loss of home is flagrant and evident. Citizens are expelled from the right to form, to establish a citizenship, as Tanja Ostojic said as well: they are compelled to vagrancy both economical and ethical. The crisis has removed, relocated and replaced households of citizens by narrowing the space of economy. High seas are used for “human transactions”, Sassen stresses, because in high seas there is no legislation for

¹²³ Sassen, Saskia, *Expulsions: A Category of Our Age*, at Relocating Borders Conference, Humbolt University Berlin, 21 January, 2013.

accepting asylum seekers, and those zones are the liminal interstices of the border definition. The *Fatherlandless* has become a manner of dealing with space and culture and this relation has raised serious questions to ponder on and to revisit: what the home represents in the globalized world? How can the nomadic artist or metaphorically the border inhabitant become a home on its own? Perhaps that non-space in motion, turning the dark side of the border space into a comfortable open living zone, is the nomadic artist *per se*?

The interviewed former Yugoslavian artists in a sense do enjoy this kind of uprooting mobility and nomadic view of the cultural contexts they dwell in. They become special nomads: with multiple homes and with no particular home at all. They establish a peculiar nomadic community, no matter how awkward this word community is, a societal layer of artists unqualified for tribalism, artists who constantly define the vagrancy as a pre-human pre-existing condition. This artistic inclination not to settle down, that is to say not to become affiliated and identified by one or several cultural spaces, and not to be obliged or willing to inhabit and behold certain household, is what makes them border artists and a specific category of research. It makes them restless and curious trans-boundary citizens. They become culturally sensitive and intuitive for border crossings both political and psychological. Once again this shows to what extent the human sensitivity is struggling with the question of home and its disquieting acolytes: territorial identification and cultural belonging. This chapter does not draw on some romantic, adventurous or poetic Ulysses longing for the comfortable dawns or wasteland of a home left behind, nor the pathetic moaning of privileged Western travelers who long for the cheap (for them an exotic) life that doesn't exist in the capitalistic world and tend to call themselves “neo-nomads”, but draws on the human condition of a lost home and, therefore, on the artistic production and emotions issued from this loss. To give up the feeling of home, to be continuously compelled to produce the surrogate of a dispersed nomadic identification and to forgo the comfort of the homeness intimacy, and therefore of the political safety, is what makes these artists a special category of nomads.

After the war, in the post-Yugoslavian republics many artists and professionals were defined as “brain drain”, framing the struggle for home as an intimate settlement with the feelings of a personal loss and trying not to remain isolated and disconnected, because of the displacement. But with their experiences they proved to understand that

yet home is not always a concrete place: it can be a territory, a relationship, an art craft, a photograph, a novel and finally a border zone with its crossings. This makes them border inhabitants, given that the home turned to become an experience of belonging, a feeling of being whole and incomplete at the same time, sometimes too closed for comfort. Those attachments that liberate us more than they constrain us contain the comfort of the refusal of domestication. Following from this postulate, the meaning of the motion suggests that the home is not only the place where *we are from*, but it becomes the place where *we begin to be*. Rather than learning to live away from home, or to handle with the migratory paths without possessing a home, these global nomadic artists perform households in and between two or several homes. Hence they perform the households at the border as a focal point of the artistic production. This is most evident in Tanja Ostojic's art of airport performances and transits; and in Slavenka Drakulic's and David Albahari's cases it is the local and the global home. Actually, they take away *the* home, they perform *the* home to go, always on the move and they do become familiar with many local, virtual and global communities and produce multiphase artistic products. This takes physical and emotional presence. No matter how hard it could be to mitigate the local and stable dimension of the border crossings settled households, it is a privilege to have a chance to inhabit the border zone homelands and/or household. This privilege consists in liaising and negotiating those homes with the cultural connotations within and around them. We must embrace the nomadic vagrancy to establish a home that feels on our own. The uneasiness becomes the struggle for wider presence and for negotiation of the "familiar feeling" (as referred in Korana's interview) of the original home and the wider compass of the bordering homes. By bordering homes I mean exactly those places where the shift from the original homes flows into the liminality of the interstice and the in-between spaces.

This loss of the familiar feeling shows to what extent the traditional concept of home is layered and determined by the planetary cultures we inhabit and crisscross. At one point the notion of home turns into a notion of a mould: a physical place where something can be built, constructed, contained; a productive void, a mobile cavity, a shaped frame that can contain liquid and liminal states of mind, hence an ontological shifting interzone where one becomes oneself through the touch with the other – which is, finally, a process that takes place through the border itself. After what has been said, now the home becomes a manifold place, and it is lost and gained at the same time. The

home is bordered and bordering because it has become a hound, a moving lair, somewhat an illegitimate space to find a shelter in, to stay protected. The experiences with the interviewed expatriated former Yugoslavian artists shows that we do have indeed different homes, and therefore belong to different levels of geographical, cultural, ethnical and linguistic homes: for Slavenka is Zagreb and Vienna; for David is Calgary and Belgrade; for Mehmed is Mostar and Managua; for Korana is Mostar and Salt Lake City; for Tanja is Berlin and Belgrade. These shared emotions of homeness and affiliations make the humankind nomadic *per se* and they do not dwell within a conflict or contradiction but they nourish variety of complementary cultural actions and anthropological meanings of the nomadic artists' habits. Both on geopolitical and cultural-spatial level, the model of the artistic vagrant seeking and yearning for the household to keep, to devote and to inhabit, yet to question and to transform, is a model that has been overlooked and explained in local political terms. However, as Bauman puts it, there are no local solutions to global problems, and we have to read the notion of home in layers as well to be able to understand the structure of multiple homes.

From the previous chapters, we have approached to the understanding of the creation of the cherished concept of difference and realised how this concept is passing through harsh boundaries of artistic dwelling. We have also realised how the border crossing, both political and ideological, can become an artistically fertile soil. The writers and the performing artists have been transiting through these processes of continuum in displacement. Slavenka and David nurture the intellectual freedom abroad; Tanja found herself in her second home, Berlin, where she dwells into a more critique artistic and intellectual ambience; Korana undergone the political exile and she never returned back in what she calls the "broken city": the refusal to dwell in border shaped and wall tailored city, in a city that no longer is what it was is more than evident; for Mehmed this same "broken city" is the complete loss of home.

They have decided to grasp the motion and to continuously capture the multiple dwellings, the border inhabitation and the manifold homeness and to some extent the nomadic drift, because the wall crossing, the border crossing, the mountain crossing, the airport crossings produce meanings. Actually, as Edward Casey has put it, all borders tend to become at one precise point boundaries; this supports the idea of liminality to which I want to arrive. In fact, all borders are invented, as are the identities, says David Albahari. Mehmed Begic says that borders create identities and artistically one should

always beware of such spatial divisions of humanity. Drakulic has nourished the self-chosen-exile as an initiation for many other writers who suddenly started to immigrate drifted away by the new map of the former Yugoslavian territories and cultural spaces.

The border is a tie, a web, a capital of meanings. The nomadic practice of crossing borders, walls, passages, without the notion of a cultural interference creates this cross-cultural dissemination, the proliferation of power and the will not to disappear. As underlined several times before, the outbreaks of the wars in the ex-Yugoslavian republics has created a large abyss in the proliferation of concepts like *Brotherhood and Unity* and *Fatherland* and we have seen many writers and artists have gone into self-chosen exile. However, the inner communication between these categories is the repercussion of the new concepts in the geopolitics. Having said this, I tried to stress out the attachment that nomads have to a territory as constituting part of the home; the attachment they have to a boundary of a space as an integrative cultural element and to the concept of the apolitical border as a new living space model, on one side, and on the other side their relation and dialogue with the homeland, with the uncanny and sinister, somewhat uncomfortable *no man's land* of the lost homes. Therefore, we shall think of the nomadic element in this liminal structure of borders perhaps as a homeless person who refused to belong to one delimited space of domestication. And while the border does nothing else but obliges to belong to one space or another, the nomadic artist continuously questions the quality of the homeness from both sides and is able to dwell in trans-boundary places. For this reason, the sedentary nomadism (Braidotti), the nomadization in one space in order to achieve the rupture of a code, and the acculturated *non-lieu* (Augé) of the mind in space, where concepts such ethnicity, nation and culture are build, created and extracted out of the complex meaning and corpus of cultures draw the main focus concerning the displaced artists during or after the Yugoslavian wars. The artists inhabit the re-configuring spaces of the nomadic quality of the homeness, they conquest the morphological borders with the notion of freedom possible only within the artwork, yet they do not fear the loss of the home nor the loss of traces, for the artistic inhabitant of the border does not belong nowhere; nevertheless, at the same time they belong everywhere: in the shores of the liminality, in the interstices of the globalised world illness and their anthropological strength consists precisely in this.

Conclusion

The intellectual nomad who quits the monolinear, monocultural, monomaniac motorway will pass through as many cultures as possible, but will go beyond the relativistic ('You in your own small corner and I in mine'), pluralistic ('The more, the merrier') vision of things. The fact is that all cultures are partial. A culture will insist principally on one aspect of the human being, to the neglect of other.

Kenneth White¹²⁴

The goal of this dissertation was to comprise significations of cultural liminality within the borders, that tend to become more manifold boundaries and that cease to be only lines and the nomadic dwelling and the shift of home, the pull of the poetic home of the expatriated artists from former Yugoslavia. These discontinuous spaces, blurred borders and trans-boundary movements imply moving and interfering significations of inter-community dwelling, of carrying the home within, of dwelling within the language, of dynamic territories. Hence, the concept of trans-border nations, the existence of the in-between zones, of sharing common spaces is a concept of coherence between languages and belonging; hence, it is an artistic concept of co-errance which, in my dissertation, is more evident and alludes to a specific understanding of the border spaces in the contexts of war and conflicts. These post-war zones are the fertile fields of exploration of the vulnerable human condition, of the artwork which is in making, which comes and goes, which belongs to a non-space, which is born in zones that no longer exist and which refuse to be clustered in dividing zones.

In fact, liminal boundary combines notions of actual and factual events emerging from several fields: history, geography, transaction and openness, flux. It is very difficult to draw borders in geographical and political spaces marked by open cultures, fluctuations of meanings and geopolitical red-lines. The Balkans in particular witness

¹²⁴ White, Kenneth, *The Wanderer and his charts*, Polygon, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 247.

this in-between cultural frontier siding the West and the Orient and therefore for me they were a very appealing geo-cultural region to propose meaning of manifold belonging in trans — boundary contexts and affiliation beyond the borders. The question, among others, raised in this dissertation is the question of why raise and imposing borders in the contemporary societal blurred boundaries and shifting identifications? Yet, do we really have to contain and define the morphology of one determined geopolitical space (of Europe, of the Balkans) when safety regulations, circulations, migrations phenomena are drifting away and exceeding the borderlessness.

Today we face many differentiating movements whose origins cannot be located simply by stopping them or explaining them in one narrow-dimensional line traditionally called border. The geopolitics of the middle Europe has shown that border and ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia have not gone away by simply imposing of borders; the collapse of the communism in the Eastern Block and the bloody collapse of the Yugoslavian Federation there have only nourished the hatred toward the borderness – as it was testified during the interviews with the expatriated writers and artists. It is indeed a very complex problematic that involves interlocked linguistic, ethnic, religious and anthropological notions and therefore it has been proven that is extremely difficult to grasp those shifting, liminal processes taking place within the trans-border cultural complexity in former Yugoslavia. But on the other side what this bordering production has brought into light is the feeling of over-homeness, or *unhomely* homelessness, of the hyper-nomadic-artistic production within the border itself: we should think of Tanja Ostojic's interdisciplinary project *Misplaced woman* taking places at the border and transit outskirts of airports. Therefore, the shift and the passage are translated as liminal acts of displacement, of delocalization and the loss of home, yet also of misplacement, which has engendered the continuous over-present feeling of the Heidegger notion of *Umheimlichkeit*, that misplacing unhomely feeling of over-homeness present especially in Tanja's visual artwork and in Korana's photographs.

These meanings of carrying the home within arise from the experiences of common bordering elements: the artists expatriated from the outbreak of the wars in former Yugoslavia have underlined a specific semantic chart of hatred towards the seminal elements of the border, which are the cultural delimitations and the compulsory identity definitions, which was again tackled by Stefano Lusa in the interview as regards the choice of nationality imposed to children born in mixed marriages.

However, such differences are not considered by these nomadic artists as an origin of hatred which would be the burden of the political factor. They belong everywhere and nowhere and in the place they are, they disseminate the artistic value of the borderness, of the nomadic capture of spaces. Perhaps, we shall think they refuse to call themselves nomads because the border, given as a national emblematic linguistic distinction in the EU, was for them seen as something more geographical and spatial, despite to what Maria Todorova has called the 'Europeanisation of the Balkans'. If we think that many years after the wars in former Yugoslavia, many refugees will never be able to face the return to their homes and will remain displaced because the mobile option would be acceptable rather than going back into divided or "broken" or ethnically perturbed cities, hence, rather than accepting artificial borders which more than ever would oblige them to label them and accept the awkward reconfiguration of territory.

The importance of the border was always very attractive in many social disciplines and especially in cultural anthropology because it delimits and shapes one vital, fertile dynamic of human flows and exchanges determined and controlled by political state mechanisms and the financial logic of exchange but also characterized often by liminal definitions, transits and meanings of cultural complexities and local interconnectedness. The argument of liminal borders and shifting boundaries in the morphing contours of the Balkans was very interesting for me, because it allowed me to build a structure drawing on the concept of artistic liminality and the human condition in terms of displacement, or misplacement as Tanja Ostojic has put it.

After developing the chapters where I have argued the human condition within the 'overheated boundaries', as Thomas Hylland Eriksen puts it, 'between the fixed and the fluid' – whereas the condition was juxtaposed in the limits of certain space, the border and the consequences both political and ontological of inhabiting a border (by crossing the border) – I would bring the text to the very often mentioned concept of liminality, which is, in a nutshell, the conclusion of the nomadic, of the borderness and of the homeness as three seminal categories of my dissertation. In a place – geographical, mental, political and therefore cultural - where all or certain criteria and definition have imploded, where there is no such sure concept which could absorb or incorporate the variety of borderless dwellings (and in the case of the expatriated former Yugoslav artists) and where creating a cultural nomenclature to name the liminal human factor (nomadic *per se*, mobile, utopic, shifting), would mean again and again building a

wall of severe understandings and fixed meanings to control a vague territory of ideas, it is nearly impossible to argue the abused semantic consequences of the late capitalism. There is no affiliation to a certain nation flow therefore there is no home and no standard obligation to belonging. Every tentative to clarify the complexity is fatal.

Undertaking again Augé's idea, we think every spectacle created from the suffering is a form of interactive participation in the suffering caused by the imposed border. We can no longer think of the border in geographical terms as an edge or a margin, or a place where something stops: but rather think of the border as a place where something begins with and where something is continuously produced, created, fluid, drifted, singular and specific. That is to say we have to rethink the boundaries as zones of interrogation, as zones of transition which contain a desire for fervid cultural affiliations. The anthropology of the *non-spaces* offers a plurality of cultural fields, traces and spaces, an archipelago of meanings, practices and habits in border zones, such as the airports. Thus, the border is very dense and concentrated with meanings, fluctuant, seen as an interlude which is socially alive, episodic and organismic. The border is becoming a real non-space, because the more we witness the appearing of borders, the more we realize their hybridity: they are abolished and imposed, the multiply and reappear in different shapes. And therefore their legitimacy is questionable.

Referring again to what Edward Casey argues on the binomial spatial edge of border versus boundary, we think of the internal side and the external side of these margins, of these cracks, thresholds, outskirts, which define their own different degree of arbitrary. He defines border as something severe, defined by international conventions, non-porous, impermeable, concrete, demarked, here, where migrants and movement flows control takes place, untouchable, invisible, strangely defined by words and treaties, hybrid, ethnic, interlocked with memory, a wall entailing the factor of physical and the distinctive separation, delimiting the borderlines and border-zones of the natural and cultural human existence. While on the other side the boundary remains paradigmatically changeable, permeable, porous, mutable, liminal, fluid, there, the flow is free and visible and conducted via seas and forests and sands, something that surrounds and complicates the border. The boundary contains the liminal meaning of the border as it offers a permeable quality of the porous edge. According to Casey

borders are to become boundaries because they cannot maintain the political condition as a borderness quality but as a boundary, as something ever changing.

Space is not continuous, non-congruent, non-consisting concept and therefore the migrating exiled nomadic lives of the border inhabitants incorporates the habits out of the habitat, the meaning of the language out of the cultural context and here in this passage consist the liminality of the border. The physical quality of the border becomes liminality on the level of the border inhabitant individuation and transition rites, which was evident namely in the case of the Serbian performing artist and activist Tanja Ostojic who, in the frame of her project *Misplaced woman*, a part from the feminist approach, has turned airports and border crossing zones from places of initiation, of exposure, of transit, of exhibitionism, of vulnerability and awkward creation, to places where the traumatic motion of migration and the perpetual loss of home is taking place, where the political and economic burden is delimitating the right to move and to behold a certain space.

I have tried with this dissertation to translate the political catastrophe onto a scale of cultural text and as the metaphor of dwelling in between turbulent turmoil; and drawing on the concept of the hybrid culture caused by the possession of several homes and bordures. Space and culture are not given, but their notions of borderness are constructed and condensed with emotions and initiation; they are therefore not calculable. Numerous fervid human motions are taking place in the interstice of the dynamic space: the exile, the nomadic shift and the migrating homes. Therefore, for the sake of this dissertation, it was of utmost importance to deal with and to question the border space as it determines and delimits the human factor of the mobile, nomadic, wandering, vagrant, exiled and expatriated artist as well as the loss of memory as progressive and changing sense of the selfhood.

When reading the world as a shrinking cultural entity we want to achieve an understanding that the opposing attitude of the globalization is precisely the rebellion against the cultural uniformity, that is to say mobile inhabitants do tend to find shelter against the homologation within often virtual, mythical and local stabilities and icons. The vagrancy often is a sign of this action of multiplying border crossing experiences, itineraries, paths, countries and outskirts. “The change of identity is one form of nomadism”; according to Barbara Michel; the nomad is not overburdened with the

superfluous side of life, but carries from within only the emotional refuge, the anchorage and the root.¹²⁵ In her view, the nomadic side of dwelling is another way to give balance to human lives, to nomads who refuse the domestication because their home is continuously displaced and shifting, that is to say open, overheated, polysemic and segmented. This act of becoming a nomad by each and every act of questioning the home is what made me interview the artists. And mainly because they perpetually wander on the border between multiple affiliations and locations of differentiations; as Bhabha puts it, they are “never entirely on the outside or implacably oppositional (...) a pressure, and a presence, that acts constantly, if unevenly, along the entire boundary of authorization.”¹²⁶

The liminality and the fluctuation of the writers cultural and mental dwelling emerges from the fact that most of them (except Korana) shared and lived a common cultural landscape interfering several languages, shared cultural habits, mixed marriages, several religions, different audiences public and readers, different publishers, contextual cultural events across the republics and working with two official alphabets. This shows the up-roadness and the up-rootedness that they envision in their border-centric lives and artwork. But the geographical and the psychological breakup of former Yugoslavia brought an end to these pluri-border-dwellings and ruined i-density of interactions, and last but not least fixed the liminal space of communicability. Former values were being vandalized – often literally destroyed or perished – and replaced with reinvented legends from the past: new emblems, national anthems and language issues. Through this collective psychotherapy of recreation and reconfiguration of borders, something seminal was being lost and lost each and every time: the idea, or even better the feeling of home. The disruption of the cultural semiosphere produced a series of small semi-spheres that are being produced perpetually even now. If all these premises have engendered troubles in humanity and that is to say in being humans, then perhaps, the endeavoring the new shape of liminality could be a way out of the coined fixation of standard concepts that could deal with the consequences of the forced “labeling” as

¹²⁵ Michel, Barbara, *L'errance : une forme singulière de mobilité*, in Dufoulon, Serge/Rostekova, Maria, *Migrations, mobilités, frontières*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 32. « Changer d'identité sur un coup de tête est une forme de nomadisme » ; « Le nomade ne s'encombre pas de « superflu », il ne transporte avec lui que (...) l'ancrage affectif. »

¹²⁶ Bhabha, Homi, *Nation and narration*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 297.

Tanja Ostojic pointed out. We cannot label people nor oblige them to belong; we cannot impose them to choose as Stefano Lusa said which parent to choose to belong.

Deconstructing borders and boundary entities in the international state building applied in the Balkan region that was gradually taking place right after the last Balkan war demonstrates how the world is growing smaller, to put it in Appadurai terms. I tried to propose or to contribute to one wider proposal of re-appropriation of the terms in the ambiguous border-field of culture and read the nomadic notions of home and of displacement in one merely *unheimlich* culture of progressive understanding. The challenge was, for me, the authentic empirical experiences of these authors, who have undergone political, ideological, artistic and cultural series of mobility utopia. After interviewing them, the voice that remained struggling in my lines was the one of the – anti-identification. In this sense, the term cultural studies becomes in my dissertation an occult, awkward and creepy zone of dwelling and the actions of border crossing are the proof of that understanding of the wandering.

The question is if the real culture consists of such a phase which occurs preliminary to the mixed interference of hermetically constructed meanings or it is based on the “blood” discourse? The question is whether culture is traced by representations or co-errant and co-existence? I tried not to agree with those who consider culture as a collective phenomenon as much as I disagree with the global treatment of the somewhat liminal and intimate dimension of the migration. It was therefore difficult for me, at the end of my research, to define one clear category of the migration or the artistic mobility path of these artists. First of all, calling them nomads was somewhat slippery because they refused it during the interviews: they do not consider themselves as nomads but as truly attached subjects to one home or another, to one cultural context or another, but not only and exclusively one. Calling them exiled likewise implied a political connotation of expulsions – which in their cases was not at stake, because they dwell literally in both zones and therefore the contact between those zones is characterized by physical friction. I have chosen them to be my interviewees because they all come from cities which were brutally affected by the war, some demolished, some divided, some changed; because they all attach the meaning of trauma to the concept of border both fixed and flow; because the space, to them, after the war implies geographical meanings rather than geopolitical; because in one way or another they were expelled by the system; and finally, because they associate the home

with the feelings of blurred, confused, uncertain and *unhomely* belonging. These artists dwell in unknown zones of the post-war nationhood. They do not belong to any culture or nationhood but admit a dwelling as a geographical affiliation and moreover the refuse to belong. And no matter how hard is to define their mobility status, nevertheless, they tried to perceive the degree of nominal liminality in their lives.

For this reason, to conclude, I took the challenge of using some phrases stressed by Todorov, phrases in the position himself of an exiled citizen very close in meaning to the immigrant, as he settles in a country which is not theirs, but which at the same time as a part of the diaspora avoids assimilation. I argue on the fact that, by doing so, they become part of the diaspora and avoid the assimilation, or they persist the artistic roaming and dwelling and disseminate manifold culture with perseverance. The exiled is the person who does not belong, who does not consider their nomadic inhabiting the border as an experience of non-belonging and who cherishes this kind of vagrancy just because of the fact of non-belonging – and this was noticed in almost every case of the interviewees. Even though attached to his native country just as Slavenka, David, Tanja, Mehmed and Korana are to their native homes, they chose to belong everywhere and to dwell in multiple homes, that is to say in those places of non-belonging, of almost nowhere-ness. I argue actually those (again, liminal) places where they do not belong in a fixed manner, but where they do belong in order to become a foreigner in a definitive and not temporary manner.

In order to summarize my argument, I refer synthetically on the liminal quality of the dissolved and broken border; the etymology refers to the Latin meaning of the word *liminality* which meant a *threshold*. Here the meaning I tried to propose is purely a metaphysical and psychological threshold, and therefore not self-evident, not fixed, not stable, but self-propelling, creative, a neuralgic meaning of unconscious belonging to two or several different states of meanings. This term has been already previously developed by Van Gennep and Turner to signify the in between conditions marked by a disruption of fixed, established structures and by the uncertainty regarding the national and the established cultural history. In this sense, it was particularly important to analyze it in terms of the Yugoslavian dissolution of borders and transpose it on a wider cultural scale and level. In the cultural anthropological science the liminality applies to those concrete changes of the political, societal and historical context. Therefore, the nomadic artists I have worked with are in liminal cultural state because they carry the

borderness within, they are not absorbed by none culture, they are self-reflexive. The exiled artist somehow becomes a human instrument investigating and experimenting levels of mobile betwixt cultures. We translate their motion as a constant liminal flux.

The spatial dimension of liminality can include specific places, larger zones or areas, or entire countries and larger regions. Liminal places can range from borders and frontiers to *no man's lands* and disputed territories, to crossroads to perhaps airports or hotels, which people pass through but do not live in. The nomadic displacement enacts the liminality in the sense of separation, marginalization, and re-aggregation. The separation taking place from the previous space into another space and by doing this the ordinary habits becomes suspended, fluid and culturally uncertain. In Korana Delic's photography and in Tanja Ostojic's border crossings performances we witness the spatial liminality as consequences of continuous displacement and separation from the stable soil: outskirts, doors, bridges, forests, crossroads, borderlines, airports, thresholds. Their nomadic aesthetic art explores the threshold of space and memory, the in-between territory as a cultural entity, as pure nomadic mobile culture of an artist.

The liminality has stimulated them to *become* through the border crossings, where the process of becoming is purely ontological, cultural and yet empirical. To put it in psychoanalytical Jungian terms this initiation of the border individuation begins with a withdrawal from normal modes of socialisation, epitomized by the breakdown of the persona, which represents the liminality as cultural entity. The liminality indicates here the movement of the artists through the bordering spaces of becoming, of being, of dwelling within the individuation, the non-belonging and the refusal of domestication, the disorientation and the re-integration.

The dissolution of the former Yugoslavian borders has created cultural irritation and the artistic produce has, furthermore, reproduced border inspired nomadic artwork, both literary and visual. The liminal passage consisted of the permanent loss of the previous practice and the beholding of the metaphorical and real border crossings. The transit as a core quality of the liminality, the bi-polarity, the passage, has been producing several degrees of border creativity; the dwelling on multiple levels of borderness and homeness implies a cruel, vital, fermenting transit through the threshold of the new borders, which describe the contemporary world (walls, borders, barriers between the USA and Mexico, between the former Yugoslavian countries, eventually

between Greece and Turkey, and so on and so forth). Such borders are to become boundaries, as Edward Casey puts it, because they engender natural qualities and vibrate in between two phases. In this context the word *liminality* occurs as it was meant to signify this kind of nomadic passage and initiatory/initial transition and fluctuation. Afterwards, the nomadic subject, the expatriated artists behold a new individuation, they choose a new affiliation. The previous chapters drawn on the passages and the liminal (liminal stands for quality changing) border crossings from one stable culture to another liminal culture in progress, in making. Such border crossings involve a change, a symbolic, artistic change and a detachment from the fixed and stable social space. These writers and artists have performed a liminal social and cultural status in the sense of non-belonging, of carrying *the home within* and the artistic capture and nostalgic grasp of boundaries. We learn that these artists and writers have undergone through those levels of spatial dislocation and the border relocation the continuous self-questioning, which implies a purely artistic values of memory, of home, of migration and place.

The goal of my dissertation and the conclusion I wanted to achieve is that liminality of borders, as witnessed within the expatriated artists experiences, has one particular quality and that is the transit. The transit in geographical, geopolitical and geocultural signification is the action that allows them to shape their artwork and their political involvement, their saying. The agency of the liminal passage and the role of the liminal artist are to grasp the threshold horizon and cultural experience. As it was pointed out during the interview with the Italian-Slovenian journalist Stefano Lusa, he refused to accept the Istrian regionalism and the exaggerated accent on the localness, and with the Bosnian poet Mehmed Begic, who refused to accept the divided city of Mostar, the dissolution of borders meant, indeed, the dissolution of the vague and over-cherished concept of identity. We have seen that such a concept does not exist anymore and it is no longer feasible to rely on such generic clusters of human behavior. The withdrawal from the previous political spaces and from the newly generated border-zones has engendered various cultural enterprises such as cultural exile, self-chosen exile, as a reinvention of culture in pure, uncontaminated, undone border zones where the boundaries of artistic production and self-propelling interaction with space are being continuously shifted and displaced towards the mutating processes of the empirical culture.

The comparison between their artwork and border living could be condensed in the following lines: from the no notion of border in Mehmed's experience, to the poetic connotation of invisible, liminal borders over-seas in David's literature, from the liminal spaces captured in non-identifying horizons in Korana's photographs to the risk of illegal border crossing and rebellion against the global world disorder, and to the intimate affiliation to the language as truthful home in Slavenka's novels, there is an outsourcing line drawing a scale of rarefied meanings of borders. These experiences have shown that we are particularly uprooted in a world that is gradually shifting boundaries and getting fluid and unstable, that we no longer think nor perceive the human condition in some stable, fixed and cast stone national borders or on a national and bordering basis; the human condition is bordering the mobility in the sense that the displacements values are being changed. Borders we have seen are shifting into something very liminal and this is something that makes all border inhabitants becoming liminal in the sense of their culture, language, belonging, beliefs and visions. The passage through the difference of the boundary both political and natural disturbs the cultural order and shifts the symbolic boundaries of the border crossers. This liminal transit changes them, transforms them and questions the categories apt to give cultural meaning and individuation. Approaching the final conclusion of my dissertation and taking advantage of this context, I should now draw on the changing category of the liminality which impacts the substance of art and the quality of the border inhabitation. Once the borders have been dissolved, new cultures emerged; the artwork and the literary work modified the human condition and produced homelessness in the most poetic term of the word. What was outcast as a surprise is that the border has been ultimately proposed as a living space. The living space that shapes the human degrees of transposition and of transcendence consists in the pure liminality of a border.

In the end, drawing on what Kenneth White argues, I shall conclude with the initial quotation, which results to summarize the previous arguments on borderness, nomadic and liminality in the lives and artworks of the mobile artists, and that consists in the consciousness of departure performed by the "intellectual nomad", embraces their migration path as another productive quality of the artistic dwelling. Despite the political burden of broken borders, broken cities, broken cultures, the artistic nomads or the nomadic artists, as White puts it, "(...) quits the monolinear, monocultural, monomaniac motorway (...) and crosses as many borders as possible and which is most

important of all “(...) go beyond the relativistic (...), pluralistic (...) vision of things. The fact is that all cultures are partial. A culture will insist principally on one aspect of the human being, to the neglect of other.”¹²⁷ Hence, this idea that all cultures are partial brings to the understanding of the border as something by nature liminal, because never enough able or capable to grasp the mobile culture. The anti-relativistic vision of things implies in fact the general conclusion of what the border dissolution impact could engender in the lives of those artists who have been translated and interviewed in my work as border inhabitants. But different ones: they behold the nomadic spirit, which alleviate them from the burden of the simple migrating artists but which enables them at the same time to name the difference, to enhance the structure of the border liminality in art and motion. The culture they live and perform is therefore liminal, shifting, changing and changeable, non-relativistic, non-pluralistic, for they behold the space from various aspects and yet they interpret the border from different perspectives.

In this sense, Appadurai suggest that “(...) it may be useful to begin to use culturalism to designate a feature of movements involving identities consciously in the making.”¹²⁸ This means that the cross-border and trans-boundary cultural transactions have made the world “rhizomatic” (Deleuze and Guattari) and “(...) even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other.”¹²⁹ And here begins the question which urges to be deconstructed and is well put by Ulf Hannerz, the question of “cultures collectively held structure of meanings”¹³⁰; here begins “the central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between the cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization”¹³¹.

The nomadic culture of the artistic border inhabitant has shown that culture is depending on context and as much as it depends on context, the borders do negotiate liminality in a manifold structure. The border crossing experiences and the artistic advantage to tell them, to argue them, to discuss them and to regenerate them, have

¹²⁷ White, Kenneth, *The Wanderer and his charts*, Polygon, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 247.

¹²⁸ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 15.

¹²⁹ Ibidem, p. 29..

¹³⁰ Hannerz, Ulf, *Cultural complexity: Studies in the social organization of meaning*, Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 64.

¹³¹ Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large. Cultural dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, 2000., p. 32.

gone through harsh mutation of what is called *identity*, or affiliation to one culture or another. These literary and artistic experiences interconnected with the border as category of space and as category of culture, have demonstrated that there are no pre-coined, naturally given affirmations of belonging, but rather uncertain, unhomely feelings of non-belonging, which again is not traumatic at all but becomes fertile and fluctuating soil for artistic explorations and self-questioning. In this sense the border artistic work becomes a positive standpoint, despite the ‘traumatic’ definition proposed by these artists and writers. However, it is somewhat understandable, as mentioned before, why the border, or better the border imposition, became or turned into something traumatic for them: suddenly the notion of access to free movement has been put into question. The new national, ethnical, linguistic and cultural borders not only separated what once was ‘one people’ as Korana Delic has said, and turned into fix and cruel what once was ‘fluid’¹³², but they infiltrated the feelings of prison, limitation, inaccessibility and fear. This is the reason why the border liminality and porosity is a very strong reason to contrast the violent erection not only of borders, but walls, divisions, urban and inter-state separations. Because, after all, the migration flows take place everywhere and the home is becoming a space (an intimate one) without place. These artists have proven that the border movement seen as an evolving motion is a cultural and yet ontological process, for it undertakes and embraces virtuous and various movements and is, therefore nomadic in a nutshell. The nomadic element of the border vagrancy performed by the expatriated artists proves the non-belonging, because these artists are not determined by the border.

Along these experiences we have arrived to the conclusion that the word culture reveals weakness when interconnected with the concept of borderness, which was argued in the previous chapters, because through the conversation and the conversion of cultures, through the movement across borders, the human boundaries are challenged and the novelty of inhabiting the border is coming into cause. This dissertation and the notions of fluid culture I argue in terms of border culture, argued that “the nomadism, once perceived as a privilege and as an achievement, today is not anymore a question of choice: it is an obligation”¹³³, as Bauman puts it. And this idea, this fact, this reality bring to a wider understanding of the quality of the mobility settled and entrenched

¹³² Korana Delic used the adjective *fluid* when referring to Yugoslavia during the interview.

¹³³ Bauman, Zygmunt, *L'identité*, L'Herne, Paris, 2010, p. 47. « Le nomadisme, autrefois perçu comme un privilège et un accomplissement, n'est plus une question de choix : c'est un devoir. »

deeply into the cellular interstices of the human condition as a consequence of the global and globalizing world shifts. In such global frame of movements, the border, in general, becomes a locus impregnated with all kind of societal segments: political, economic, artistic, anthropological and psychological and can be, for this reason, read as a liminal crossroad. The cultural reality is not a given reality, nor natural, but it gains weight across the adumbrations of the transit, within the border shifts, through the interstices of the psychological liminality experienced inside the human condition of the nomadic home-seeker, who is launched into the artistic fluid and fluctuating motions throughout manifold borders, which were proposed, in this dissertation, as ontologically active and ardent places.

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