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Faciality and De-facialization in Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest: A Deleuze and Guattari's Semiotic Study*

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Abstract

This study offers a re-reading of Ken Kesey's oeuvre, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, employing Deleuze and Guattari's semiotics of Face and their concept of regime of signs; it tries to map the workings of Face as an impersonal despotic system that emerges from the mixture of two regimes of signs that facilitates surveillance, discrimination and control. It also pinpoints the potentiality and activities of escape from this system, and the emergence of signs of disruptive faciality. Analyzing the facial activities of three characters in the novel, namely, Nurse Ratched, Chief Bromden and Randel McMurphy, the study elaborates on the following facial aspects: the State's policies of facialization in Nurse Ratched; the schizoid experience of faciality in Chief Bromden and the suspense of the face system in McMurphy. Besides the produced mappings, the reader also meets a set of newly conceptualized functionalities of faces, contributed by the particular signs this context provides, namely, the *catatonic* face, the *synaptic* face and the *carnavalesque* faces.

Keywords: Deleuze and Guattari, Kesey, faciality, regime of signs, white wall/black hole

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1. Introduction

Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a fundamental work of the anti-psychiatry movement and a radical critique of policies held in mental institutions. This novel has been considered a major influence on post-50s American writers for his innovative storytelling and developing a particular narrative of schizophrenic experience. With the aim of elaborating on this aspect further, the study resorts to a thought which regards literature as a universe of possibility and a continuous potentiality of things-to-come (Bogue, 2007, p. 273).

Of all the various ground-breaking tenets of Deleuze and Guattari's thought, the most fundamental, and also fit for this inquiry is its capacity to traverse the fixed identities; that is, "to reassert the dynamic nature of thinking and the need to reinstate movement at the heart of thought by actualizing a nonunitary vision of the thinking subject" (Braidotti, 2011, p.7). Unlike the traditional view, Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought tends to see events in continuity, in "connections and processes, of making anew" (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013, p. 2).

Concomitant with this perspective of thought, and as linked to the aim of this study — a semiotic analysis of the face — Deleuze and Guattari's system of face, being impersonal, non-human, deterritorializes the generic or gender-biased discrimination of body throughout (Stivale, 2008, p. 127). Although bodies matter, Deleuze and Guattari's semiotics of Face is a different exterior system that presides impersonally over the bodies, creates discriminations and controls their expressions. Thus, since according to this way of thought, "literature takes the opposite path and exists only when it discovers beneath apparent persons the power of an impersonal" (Robson, 2020, p. 438) the task of this study is both to map out the expressions of Face, and also conceptualize the operations of the system of face or faciality machine through Deleuze and Guattari's semiotics; that is, drawing on the ways a flight or escape from this system takes place.

Thus, the following research questions will conduct the goals of the study:

How Deleuze and Guattari's Semiotics of Face provides a re-reading of Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*?

How Kesey's text contributes to the introduction of independent functions of facialities?

2. Literature Review

Faciality has been the case for researches in various fields of arts and humanities. In *Face Politics*, Jenny Edkins (2015) discusses Deleuze and Guattari's concept in practice, from the working of the faciality machine to its dismantling, Edkins analyses faces in photography, disable subjects and cultural and political crisis (pp. 1-3). In "Face and the City", Mubi Brighenti (2019) utilizes the face and body relation, to explore the face in metropolitan space and argue for the way the city unsettles the land, just as the face does it to the body (pp. 1-2). Celis Bueno (2019) in "The Face Revisited: Using Deleuze and Guattari to Explore the Politics of Algorithmic Face Recognition" argues, that algorithmic face recognition is a technology that expresses a key aspect of contemporary capitalism: the problematic position of the individual in light of new forms of algorithmic and statistical regimes of power, while alternatively, algorithmic technology could be used beyond the realm of reterritorialization, signification and individualization (pp. 73-4).

In regards to Kesey's work, Nichterlein and Morss's (2017) *Deleuze and Psychology: Philosophical Provocations to Psychological Practices*, undertakes a cartography of Deleuze and Guattari's applicability of schizoanalysis to the clinic, and advocate for its practicality in comparison to psychoanalysis, which endlessly revisits the past familial issues. Very briefly, they take up with Kesey's notion of Combine to counter-argue against psychoanalytic politics (p.123).

In "The Hipster, the Hero, and the Psychic Frontier in One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" Fick (1989) surveys a contextual analysis of the novel, based on the condition of the West frontier as the site of opportunities of escape, and new the frontiersman, the 'hipster', whose mobile characteristic has changed its spectacle. Fick argues for the existence of a frontier, which can be drawn by constantly calling for a double pole of freedom and restriction (p. 19).

In a brilliant analysis, "The Mixed Heritage of the Chief: Revisiting the Problem of Manhood in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", Weler (2004), examines the cultural background of Kesey's Chief Bromden, his mixed heritage and identity, in a symbolic search for the father as the quest of restoring to his manhood. Wexler suggests that Chief's problem comes from a parallel line of policy in the clinical space of ward and the cultural space of outside; the female reduced the male - the white reduced the Indian (p. 225).

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Deleuze and Guattari's particular semiotics, in which they conceptualize the notion of face, is according to definition, 'a pragmatics, in which language has never a universality in itself, have not a self-sufficient formalization or a general semiology, or a meta-language' (Lecerle, 2002, p. 65). At the heart of this semiotics is their concept of regime of signs, which is defined as "any specific formalization of expression [that] constitutes a semiotic system" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 111). In other words, "The 'regimes of signs' are only when forms of expression become independent from particular substances and when signs become sufficiently deterritorialized to be able to refer to one another" (Wasser, 2018, p. 85).

The most dominant regime of signs, the signifying regime, works through the process of signifiante. "Every sign refers to another sign, and only to another sign, ad infinitum" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.112). The facial machinery of what they term despotic regime, comes with the paranoid mechanization of *face* of the despot (king, monarch, god, etc.) as the center of significance, whose organized and bordered production of expression, makes the process of signifiante and irradiation of signs possible through the almost perpetual spiral circulation of the signifier. There are priests as the closest to the despot whose duties as interpreters, are to curb any line (be it an individual, a people, a flock, a set of signs) that tends to diverge from the circles, with their act of interpretation or the production of more signifiers, in order to assure no escape from the signifiante. In the despotic paranoid regime, there are no other faces, but one; the *face* of the despot, who imposes it (the priests weave the tangles heavier and denser) onto the others.

In comparison to the paranoid, despotic, signifying regime, the post-signifying or subjectifying regime of signs emerges as follows:

In the first place, *a sign or packet of signs detaches from the irradiating circular network* and sets to work on its own account, starts running a straight line, as though swept into a narrow, open passage [...] Here, it seems that the line receives a positive sign, as though it were effectively occupied and followed by a people who find in it their reason for being or destiny (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 121).

The post-signifying regime holds two major theaters, and Deleuze and Guattari introduce two major images for that. "One is psychiatric in nature: in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, French psychiatrists identified a distinct

kind of delirium, one that was not paranoid but that was still bound by a relation to signs. This was the ‘passional delusion’” (Wasser, 2018, p. 92). In this theater, faciality is no longer “the body of the signifier but has become the point of departure for a deterritorialization that puts everything else to flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.129). The other theatre of this regime is biblical:

the ancient Hebrews follow a line of flight out of Egypt – out of a despotic signifying regime – to begin a new trial in the wilderness; a people is born in this exodus, one that maintains its subjectification in a series of rituals that serve less to interpret than to reiterate, by means of signs, the covenant with God (Wasser, 2018, p. 92).

In this theatre, the faciality is projected towards a double aversion of faces.

The god averts his face, which must be seen by no one; and the subject, gripped by a veritable fear of the god, averts his or her face in turn. The averted faces, in profile, replace the frontal view of the radiant face (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.123).

Then, instead of white wall of signifying regime upon which signs would circulate (refer) infinitely, there is a black hole that captures, the grievance that marks the point of subjectification. Signifying irradiation is displaced for subjectifying aversion; the frontal face for profile: the black holes of the eyes emit points of subjectification; various black holes appear segment by segment. There is no interpretation at work in the post-signifying regime of signs; the black holes regulate the passion of the grieved. These two regimes produce two kinds of faciality which emits signs and deliver into a semiotic system of white wall/black hole.

3. Methodology

The Face or white wall/black hole system is the semiotic method for an analysis of Kesey’s work based on the aforementioned questions. According to Deleuze and Guattari’s perception of signs, the mixture of the two regimes erects an abstract machine of *faciality* that is called a Face, or white wall/black hole system (Sholtz, 2019, p. 347). The abstract machine of faciality (*visageite*) produces concrete faces, at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall [signifying regime of signs], and subjectivity its black hole [post-signifying regime of signs]. The face is the maintenance of the subsistence of this two-foldings onto each other; a simultaneous synthesis of invisible circulation of signs and a linear and temporal succession of

finite proceedings into black hole. There are a number of possible combinations in the system: “Sometimes faces appear on the wall, with their holes; sometimes they appear in the hole, with their linearized, rolled-up wall” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.168).

However, it should be noted that the face should not be considered identical to head; the head is not separate from the body; it is *with* the body. The face is produced only when the head ceases to be a part of the body, and is considered a detached part by the abstract machine of faciality. ”But the operation does not end there: if the head and its elements are facialized, the entire body also can be facialized, comes to be facialized as part of an inevitable process” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.170). Thus, the face *overcodes*, that is, it translates the other strata, particularly the biological strata, and gives them new forms.

There are two aspects to the way this abstract machine organizes these intensive signs of the strata; normality and deviance: the face normalizes “through exclusive disjunctions. That is, it establishes arborescent, biunivocal relations” (Adkins, 2015, pp. 109-110). This aspect works through the machinic acts of ‘biunivocalization’; the man/woman, child/adult, leader/subject, military/civilian are some instances of the discrete facial units, created by this aspect of abstract machine into which, one slides every day. The second aspect of deviance works through the machinic acts of ‘binarization’. “It is necessary to produce successive divergence-types of deviance for everything that eludes biunivocal relationships, and to establish binary relations between what is accepted on first choice and what is only tolerated on second, third choice, etc.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 177). Thus, the normalization solidifies the production of concrete faces with the biunivocal relation among facial units, and the deviance erects an order of divergence, based on a fabricated logic of tolerance, according to which the arbitrary and machinic order of discrimination is forged; in other words, racism.

Pervasive, unconscious and machinic as the abstract machine of faciality is, Deleuze and Guattari consider a different direction through difference and the power of intensities. They believe that

if human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle the face and facializations, to become imperceptible, to become clandestine, [...] strange true becomings that get past the wall and get out of the black holes, that *make faciality traits* themselves finally elude the organization of the face (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.171).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the Face is a system that *overcodes*, “translating and compressing into its surface an array of signs and strata—the *inhuman* par excellence” (D’Errico, 2019, p. 357); it emerges as a form of over-coded political capture — as a standard by which difference is at once identified, problematized and subjected to discipline. In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze (2005) considers the ‘intensive’ nature of the face as an emitter of affective signs (p. 100). These two approaches to the face is not incompatible, but rather complementary. Besides the former approach, which itself connotes the close-up activity, the latter provide a *singular* image of the face, detached from its appropriated expressivity; the face in its *nomadic* rapture.

The signs of close-up face produces an ‘affection image’ extracting the face from its surroundings and abolishing any broader situational context. For Deleuze, the face elicits an affective power. Thus, the close up ‘suspends individuation’ giving ‘both the face and its effacement’ (Deleuze, 2005, p. 100). That is to say, it stands as an expression of material affects that precedes any notion of subjectivity or ownership (Roberts, 2019, p. 13). Hence, the affection-image Deleuze introduces in his later work, has two tendencies: “one towards the kind of facialization that imposes order, that grids the subject, and the other towards a deterritorialization of the face that counters the subject as well as the larger system of representation” (Herzog, 2008, p. 71); what Deleuze and Guattari previously called *Probe-heads*.

As to the aim of this study, Deleuze and Guattari’s semiotics of facial analysis serves as a method to understand different aspects of the Face in the text, and also to map out the independent expression of signs, in which a flight from this system takes place, or a disruptive nomadic faciality or meaning of face (what they called probe-heads or the possibility of defacialization) emerges. Hence, as different from the processes of conventional semiotic analysis, this study tries at an *ultra-linguistic semiotics* as redefined in Deleuze and Guattari’s nomadology, the task of which being more or less, to map out the lines of relations and connections of the *system* which creates/runs the process of meaning-circulation, rather than the signification of a group of signs; in other words, a semiotic analysis of the system behind the words. In the course of following analysis, first, the systems are explained with a set of examples from the text, and then the functionalities of particular facial signs are modeled and analyzed in each section.

4. Findings

4.1. *The Catatonic Face and the Black Hole of Nursing Machine*

To grasp the facial authority of the ward, it is to follow the facial signs of the person in charge, at the center of circulation of rules in the ward; namely Nurse Ratched. From the beginning up to the end, it is by most part Kesey's description through Bromden's schizoid narrative, or patients' reactions that defines Ratched's image and facial expressivity. Little does she say and when she articulates, it is the repetitions of either commands: "You get back in that dorm and get your clothes on this instant!" (Kesey, 2005, p. 86), insinuation: "if he says he has a cold in his nose, she'll say, 'I see, a cold...'" (Kesey, 2005, p. 57) or paranoid interpretation: "that is exactly what the new patient is planning: to take over. He is what we call a 'manipulator,' Miss Flinn" (Kesey, 2005, p. 24). Thus, most of her government is done through her stern bodily expression, the Facialized body known as Nurse Ratched. Her face is that which empowers the commands, insinuations, and interpretations, that is, the vocality of faciality in general.

The wholeness and autonomy ('enamel', 'calculation'), in Chief description and her expression signify a set of facial gestures that could be defined as signs of catatonic face. It is this abstract machine of catatonia on Ratched the woman's body that describes, territorializes her particular nursing and recirculates the signs on the white wall of Face. Yet when it gets to the very action, it is this very *catatonia* and inaction, which becomes the very exercise of her power.

The tidiness of the 'outfit', the 'doll smile' etc. are all unchangeable signs that reinforce the unchangeability of her power at the center of signifying regime in the ward. Ratched's Face occupies the despotic radiant face at the center of signifying regime of signs, that constantly refers to and regulates rules and policies (the night shift, the medication, the meal times, housework, etc.). This is the white wall of Ratched's Face. But as said, the white wall has a complementary double, i.e. black hole that make it perfect: what could be termed as the *nursing machine*.

There is a landscape to the black hole of nursing subjectivity; a white wall upon which everything is inscribed. The patients are landscapified to the nurses as the white wall; they *are* the somatic signs that resubjectify/reterritorialize the black hole of nursing. On the other side, the nurse's face serves as the new landscape for patients; a landscape in which she or he finds herself or himself *facialized as the patient*.

This double fold of landscape/face, with each patient and nurse having their own Face (i.e. white wall/black hole system), does reveal *a double paradox*, at the heart of the signs of nursing semiotics: that is, for instance, Nurse Ratched's paradoxical expression of *care and disgust* towards Mr.Selfelt and Mr.Selfelt paradoxical *forced desire* in taking medication.

Hence, Nurse Ratched is subjectified in the passion of caring, of aiding those who cannot aid themselves — either the curable or incurable — through a binary dialectical machine of potent and impotent, that is, of potent (nurse) seeing the imminent possible impotency in herself; so out of this dialectic, a synthetic of caring emerges, to further promote the transcendence of to-be-transcendental Signifier; the disease, the insanity, and its nursing counterpart: the feeling of pity.

The potent/impotent dialectic puts the former on a superior power-position: the neat kind radiant face of the nurse taking, sometimes too much, care of symptoms [‘abnormal’ somatic signs], of which the paranoid regime of signs makes a rationale, *to rationalize the transcendental* signified of health. The deafening sound of radio is justified to McMurphy by Nurse Ratched through this potent/impotent dialectic relation. But since, there are only signifiers and their justifiable and interpretable references in Nurse Ratched's system of governance, the movement towards this unachievable signified (health) is endless. In the ward, no one will become a healthily person; there is no record of *normal* behavior in patient's files.

The paradoxical meaning of nursing machine is that, the nurse is too kind to be horrible and at the same time, too caring to be malicious; this is how the signs of the *medical catatonic Face* as the white wall, and the signs of the paradoxical logic of nursing as the black hole, express and define values or fixated meanings in the ward.

4.5. *The Circulation and the Expressivity of the Catatonic Face*

In the course of narrative, after the arrival of McMurphy, Bromden describes a psychoanalytic program in the ward, known as ‘Therapeutic Community’, which is performed for the sake of patients' mental treatment, via discussions of major and minor personal issues.

Under its democratic surface, the Therapeutic Community is a sign-detecting mechanism that serves for the solidification of the white wall in the ward. The

doctor's insistence to discuss 'any grievance', 'change' 'emotional problem' is a blockage against the possibility of the flight of any sign that might escape uninterpreted, asigned; as a matter of fact, it would not let any deviant sign as a point of subjectification detaches and turn into a black hole. McMurphy's 'gaze', 'chuckle' and 'sitting backward on the chair' are all dangerous signs that should be discussed in order to be encoded as a referable signs, put into a file, inside Nurse Ratched's shelves.

Thus, the Therapeutic Community is a mechanism of *policing*, simply to preserve the tenacity of the mechanism of the catatonic face and the circulation of signifying regime of signs; a self-reflexive policing of deviance (since the patients themselves reflect on each other without any authoritative interference), that instead contributes to the re-production of the facial signs of the catatonic face, this time as a transactional value. Here, the face and its fixity becomes an *exchange sign*. The circle of movement for this mechanism, in its particular operation in the ward, is espionage: "if you hear a friend say something during the course of your everyday conversation, then list it in the log book for the staff to see. It's not, as the movies call it, 'squealing,' it's helping your fellow" (Keseey, 2005, p. 44).

The espionage is the process that runs the transactions of the face as an exchange-sign or value; with the outside capitalist value of money nullified in the striation of flows of the ward, the only value that flows in assured circles of expressivity is the *Face* (catatonic face of the nurse and paradoxical nursing black hole), which is expressed and defined upon Ratched's body, and is the only value that represents for the machine, the legit conformity of its subjects and therefore, its durability in intention; the log book by the station is designated for this transaction.

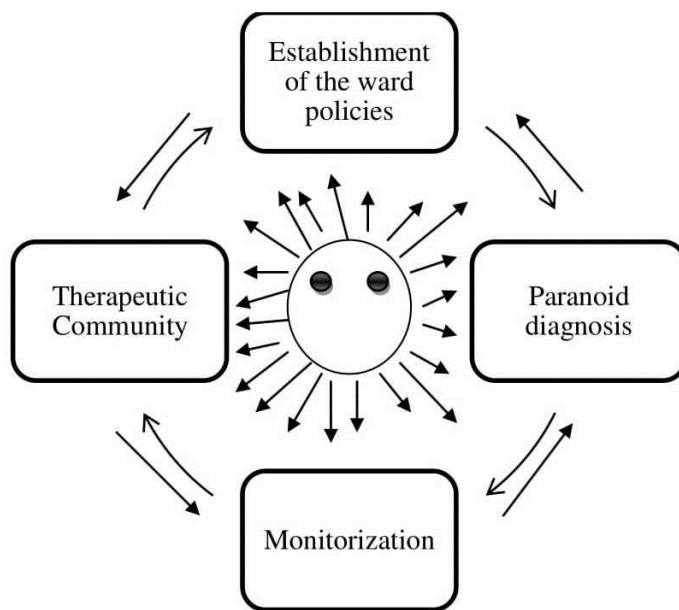
So, the only value the patients, and at some points the staff are after, is to preserve *the face* at its most rigidity; in doing so, their kinesthetic signs not only become *catatonic* in gesture ('yawning', 'sidling', 'writing') but also *paradoxical* in action ('helping'/'squeaking'). *They become part of the whole Face, emulate its mechanism of durability*. In the space of the ward, to spy on someone is to forge a face, not a different face capable of difference, but a *polis* fixating face, the immobile face behind which, the paranoid state machine of signifiante as implanted and institutionalized in the subject, catches and records every possibly deviant sign or *unsign* for further interpretations. Report the signs of deviant face, so you can preserve the serene circulation of Face, which is also your face. No rational interpretation in it, just pinching another hole in the subject. In the course of the

therapeutic section, while discussing Harding's problem, the patients' expressivity of faces are unrecognizably exchangeable from the interrogating Nurse Ratched who remains silent; they keep their retorting reference to Harding's problem for forty-five minutes in a series of repetitive interrogations and insinuations, without feeling any hardship (Kesey, 2005, p. 50).

The distance and discomfort felt towards Harding is the result of absorbing the Face, sliding in the role. Such referential espionage machine strengthens the black hole and solidifies the white wall.

Figure 1

Facialization in the Ward: A Part of Apparatus of Capture



The Faciality Machine makes the face to be 'the only desirable', the objective of desire in the community (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 139). But what desire? "We have to be careful in differentiating, [Deleuze] argues, between the forms of desire that are created, organized and planned for by the state, and desire 'in and of itself' (Reid, 2003, p. 74), which in this case, it is the latter.

The diagram above clarifies that in the space of the ward, the face is a load of overcoded gestures deterritorialized towards being an exchange value. It is the face that reaffirms the establishment and the presupposed necessity of the ward policy; then the facial traits, as that of Nurse Ratched, transmit signifiers in a referential circulation, which disguises the expressivity of any independent sign, for which the patients are being monitored 24/7 in the ward. When the patients assume the face, as in the case of Therapeutic Community, they themselves become the monitoring device of the Face, constantly checking any deviation from the traits of the dominant face, and any aversion is reported/recorded. In the Therapeutic Community, the patients are de facto, the operation of facialization, which block any possible line of flight. All parts of this process do not happen in succession, but work in a simultaneous juxtaposition, which is continuously moderated by the radiant face at the center; the *catatonic and paradoxical* gestures represented by the head/body of Nurse Ratched.

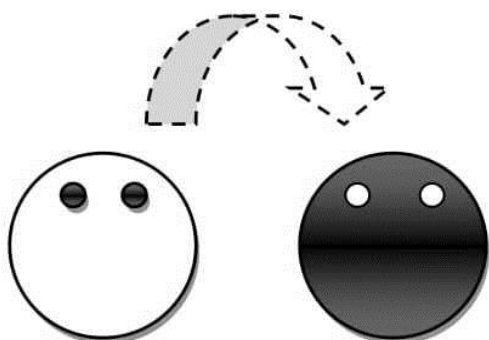
4.5. *The Emergence of Capture Machine*

Some of the marginalized characters in the text are what Kesey names them as 'black boys'. Contextually speaking, in the outside, *the color of black as skin* signifies inferiority in respect of the *average white skin*; that makes the black face, according to the definition, the substandard faciality, which in comparison to the superior white, has limited rights and power in the white wall/black holes system. This facial minority as flew from the signifying center, develops a post-signifying (subjectifying) regime of signs based on their grievance and hatred against the whites, with their blackness as the point of subjectification. The emergence of this subtle yet, meek subjectifying regime of signs, when employed in an inferior rank of 'orderly' in the ward, under the supervision of a white Nurse, benefits the ward in the Inside, as it reverses the facial semiotics of outside for further manipulation and leads to the composition of a particular facial trait. In point of fact, Nurse Ratched makes use of the racist grievance of the outside world in order to refacialize the black orderlies as the ward's capture machine; in refacializing the secondary *black* face, which is the scapegoat face of the outside, she appropriates the racial contiguity and the facial aversion [at the point of subjectification] caused by the oppression of the dominant white face of the outside. So with all hatred of the black orderlies directed, narrowed down at her, as their *white* punitive employer, new facial signs are defined that are controlled by the point of subjectification, by a

set of *emotive* signs, caused in confrontation with whiteness.

Because of Black boys' hate for Ratched, and in order to avoid the hateful encounter with her, they had to figure out 'her hate'. Thus, the emotive signs of facial aversion brings a mutual non-linguistic agreement between the two. As long as Nurse Ratched's favor (obedience, order) is guaranteed, they can avoid the hateful encounter. So, the black boys' hate forces them to do their job in any possible way to *defer* the confrontation with her radiant despotic face. Meantime, in the absence of confrontation, and as long as black boys' duty, which serves as their *grievance*, is being done, the faces remain averted. In this aversion, the black orderlies and Ratched may constantly betray each other. But since all spaces are striated, the orderlies are subjected to undertake the task as their passion; the passionate hatred and the signs for its prevention is to intensify when confronting the Nurse. With this black hole pinched at the primary segment, the authoritative averted faciality of Ratched *deracializes* them in the space of the ward to transform them into the ward's capture machine. In this deracialization of their black Face, Ratched refacializes them by the white dress coding of the ward, so they become integrated with or materialized in the white wall of the ward. The black bodies with white clothes become the *radiant signs of capture*, a new expressivity that as dissociated from the outside, but integrated in the policies of striation of the ward.

The schizoid vision of Chief Bromden perceives this integration in his narrative (Keseey, 2005, p. 27). The black boys become the stealth capture machine in every dark corner of the ward. Their black skin melts into the white dress. The black head and black hands become invisible in the darkness of night. The subversive signifiante of emotive signs transformed, moderated and added to the circulation of signs, by Nurse Ratched. With the pinched black holes, they are meant to be the eyes that locate, and black invisible hands that capture. Here, the facialization is *reversed*. Instead of white wall/black holes, a black wall/white holes system emerges: for the black boys, the signifying regime of signs on the ward takes on the form of point of subjectification: Nurse Ratched as the center of this white racial signifiante, pinches a *white hole* on racial *black wall*. The signs which pinch the white hole are the content of their task; the contrived rules are unquestionably devoured into white eyes, so the white eyes-on the dark skin of black boys-in the darkness of ward, is the machinic assemblage that locates any deviation defined by the ward's regimes of signs.

Figure 2*The De-racialized Facialization of the Inside*

In this new system, the *integumentary sign* of blackness, no longer signifies inferiority, but capture. Every patient that sees a black orderly, the referential signs on the black wall alarms captivity and policing the space. The black holes are now as white as the white wall to locate the signs of capture, to activate the black hands of the capture and return it to the circle of whiteness. So there are two phases for the operation of this capture machine: optical location and physical capture. What is taken place is an interior facialization based on the interior semiotics of the Inside. In Deleuzian words, one seeps into another: black holes come out of their deep abyss and spread on the surface of the skin, while the flat white wall finds depth and goes into holes.

The deterritorialization of black racism in the ward ends up with an absolute reterritorialization: it becomes a positive sign of capture, only to reintroduce a subjectivity through a new set of signs; to re-signify the subject; to make the signs of the white wall, one's passion.

4.4. 'Air-Raid Air-Raid!': Bromden's Synaptic Face

On the plane of facial semiotics in the ward, there is a kind of face, the expressivity of which is in reverse direction of catatonic face or black boys' faciality of capture machine. The reader encounters this face in the first pages of the text, in the schizoid experience of the narrator with the shaver: "I'm not sure it's one of those substitute machines and not a shaver till it gets to my temples; then I can't hold

back. It's not a will-power thing anymore when they get to my temples" (Kesey, 2005, p. 7).

Unlike the dominant facial regimes of the ward, whose expressivity is triggered by the internalized signifying signs (Nurse Ratched's facial signs are expressed only filtered through interpretive circles of signifying regime) in Chief Bromden's case, the expressivity of face is triggered by outside territorial signs or stimuli. His face is an unorganized surface (what Deleuze and Guattari call BwO), a somatosensory assemblage of visual, aural, tactile senses, which creates a sense of meaning, with which he narrates the whole events, and presents the experience of the schizoid: It's a... *button*, pushed, says Air Raid Air Raid, turns me on so loud it's like no sound (Kesey, 2005, p.7).

From a 'shaver' (tactile-aural) to 'his temple' (tactile-aural), to 'button' (visual-aural-tactile), 'Air Raid' (visual-aural), and the 'fog' (visual- tactile), to eidetic experience of 'war', to 'Papa'. These are not signifiers, but an assemblage of signifieds, that are interwoven into each other and escape the process of signification. To Nurse Ratched, to black boys, this is a *dis-able* mentality. But for Chief Bromden, it is the complex, yet inadvertent semiotics of escape (the fog machine is its ultimate achievement, where as it triggers, the Faces around dismantle into cavities of mute hollering; mouths are holes without sounds, and all the signification are lost), which is not planned or thought, but comes spontaneous and free: "I'm not scared anymore. They can't reach me. Just the words reach me, and those're fading" (Kesey, 2005, p. 120). In this kind of Face, there is no circle of signifiers, but rhizomatic volatile perception of signifieds. The invention of such assemblage is haphazard and creative.

Bromden's Face is what could be best called a *synaptic* face. Unlike the facialized face of Nurses, orderlies and patients, the expressivity of the synaptic face is inseparable from the accumulated mass of *synaptic* intensities (facial synapses), stored in forms of memories and images (chief's recollections of Dam, Papa, WWII, etc.) which are perpendicular to the face.

Bromden's synaptic face is the face as a zone of synaptic connections, a zone of pure intensities, of molecular imperceptible lines of affection; a synaptic surface that translates any exterior impulses (e.g. touch on temple) into accumulated intensities. Bromden's face in this sense is anti-facial, in that, it deterritorializes any facialized expressivity into an *asignifying* impersonal expressivity of face; as in the

vision of the fog machine, Chief Bromden sees the senselessness of facial encounters with “faces blow past in the fog like confetti” (Kesey, 2005, p. 119). It is an incessant disguising as imperceptible and invisible, in that the Ward, Nurse Ratched, the doctor and the staff, can neither predict nor control its expressivity.

The synaptic face of Chief Bromden is unlike the flat-faces of patients the faciality machine produces. Unlike the Face which is *immanent* in Nurse Ratched, Chief’s Face has an unlimited depth that goes way back to an unlimited time-space. In comparison to the readable interpretable faces of the ward, his face is unreadable. Behind any point, there is a line that goes back to a memory, a zone of mixed intensities, (‘Air Raid’) which is incessantly channeling, flowing into the present. In other words, his face contains molecular blocs of time-space that is always ready to activate, stir; to express and deterritorialize with various stimuli.

4.5. *The Theatrical Signs and the Carnavalesque Face of McMurphy*

In terms of disrupting the circle of signs that works in the ward and the despotic faciality that express them, McMurphy, a picaresque figure, has a different rather rebellious method for dealing with Nurse Ratched and the ward policies. In the course of McMurphy’s actions and words, what goes beyond linguistic expressions (yet empowers them affectively), is a set of variations in gestures, tones and sounds (e.g. laugh) that is asignifying to the interpreting machines of the ward, and deterritorializing to its striated space.

McMurphy’s presence in the ward, emits a set of *theatrical signs* that, although being temporary and changeable at his will, remains amusing yet unintelligible to both the staff and patients. These theatrical signs are actualized/expressed in the forms of lexical exaggeration or minimization and non-lexical acceleration and deceleration, as the intensity of its parameter remains intractable. The expressions of these signs prevent the working of facialization in the ward; they are random and incalculable gestures or movements, such as sitting straight up in chair or scratching his stichmarks on the nose, incongruous grinning, sudden blocking and breaking the window glass of the Nurse Station (Kesey, 2005, p. 171).

Under this analysis, it is allowed to claim that the regime of signs in which McMurphy expresses his presence, is that of *counter-signifying* regime of *carnavalesque*, which due to release of spontaneous theatrical signs, the codes and rules of faciality in the ward becomes suspended. With McMurphy, the fixity of

Face vanishes, but a range of different facial expressions (which the state-science of psychoanalysis would label insanity) emerges, that evades identification in a surreptitious way. In Fact, these carnivalesque facial signs invent *incipient micro-facialities* which fade into a new one, just as it nears its full revelation and creates frictions in the process of facialization of patients. Evidently, McMurphy adopts many roles; a fool, a gambler, a bully, a farm-worker, a democratic rebel, a reveler, a friend, a leader, etc. and sometimes slides into the roles the ward fabricated for him; the patient, the 'committed under jurisdiction'. But McMurphy never signifies with the fixated meanings behind these roles. He is all and at the same time none of them. From Chief's keen point of view, he was more than what he cunningly played out. Acts of writing a probable love letter and painting a picture were unexpressed dimensions of McMurphy's differential potentialities. Unlike Chief Bromden, whenever McMurphy stopped acting or speaking, the efficiency of this carnivalesque experience was lost (Bernaerts, 2010, p. 279); he would remain ungraspable, imperceptible, in the in-between.

The theatrical signs signify the suspension of identity and meaning. They displace the signifiers of the signifying regime of signs, to suspend the circle of signifiers and produce *asignifying* signifiers, in whose faciality, there is no semantic difference between McMurphy in gambling role and McMurphy the patient. In fact, what is semantically important is this suspense, that transpires in-between these roles, of 'doing things that didn't fit with his face or hands', of having 'more to him than just big hands and red sideburns and a broken-nosed grin', as one is charged with battery. Flattened faces with a minimum number of facial signs of the circle, are expressible only to be displaced by a multiplicity of other faces of kind. The face of a hero, the gambler face, the psycho face, the fisherman face; McMurphy invents *paper* faces, shallow as they are, only to transmute / mutate to a different face, with its own little white wall, a patchy black hole; simply to lure, disguise.

The movement of this transmutation is not logical or segmentary. There is a rhizomatic network of *paper* identities, or better, mock-identities that are liable to spontaneous shifting and shift at an absolute speed; once a prisoner, then worker, farmer, psychopath, etc. McMurphy escapes the abstract machine of capturing and fixing identities. In the closed space of the ward, Nurse Ratched does not allow any facial invention; for McMurphy, in such space, all known faces are rather predetermined vessels, which he slides into, to *emulate* the surface of a skin, as *holed black and painted white*. This potentiality of nomadic faciality is mentioned

in Deleuze's concept of affection-image; the face in itself, in its ability as affection-image, deterritorializes the perception-identities.

In as much as the affection-image enjoys a special relationship to the face, abstracting it from determinate milieus and expressing its affective singularities in unprecedented durations, it enjoys the occasional power to go through the face — to tear the face from its signification and subjectification and thus to elude its own abstract-machine (Flaxman & Oxman, 2008, p. 49).

The analysis of McMurphy's Face as the affection-image explicates the relation of such faciality towards other patients. McMurphy's entire body is a site of producing affects, going beyond the *identifiable* close-up. In the ward, the abstract machine of faciality (Nurse Ratched's Face) projects faces, but the theatrical machine realizes a different schizoanalytic project: to slough off, *dismantle* the face. In the course of the fishing trip, when the crew stopped at the service station, McMurphy did slough off their meek and obedient faciality as patients and projected onto them, the fabricated micro-facilities based on the expressivities of their head: Billy Babbitt, Harding, Chief Bromden, are all ripped off their *patient faces* and became knife artist, Bull Goose Loony, and minacious killer (Keseey, 2005, pp. 202-3). Theatrical signs of lexical exaggeration/minimization (expressed in tone of speech and word choice), non-lexical acceleration/deceleration (expressed in gestures) suspended the facialization of the ward.

McMurphy's expressivities can be conceptualized as a *papier-mâché* artist, gathering/assembling the substance from the already actualized faces, right into a mixture, make it of his own, not to preserve, but only to survive to another one. One can say that McMurphy is a carnival artist (Hiebert, 2003, p. 115), who deterritorializes faciality towards the possibility of that of nomad face, for whom, according to Deleuze and Guattari's definition, the intensities of faces are not punctual and perceptively fixated, but rather, are an accumulation of multiplicities of heterogeneous affects, that these faces, juxtaposed – superimposed – interwoven into one another. Carnavalesque Faces such as McMurphy would dismantle the fixity of the white wall/black hole system. Instead of following a set of signs, they devise their own semiotics of expression, which the so called 'normal' mind would call *abnormal*. At the end of the narrative, it is *this* network of weaves that Nurse Ratched, as the purveyor of the extensive operations of faciality tries to overcome with lobotomy; destroying the invisible intensities, i.e. both the rhizomatic

substance (nervous system) and rhizomatic expression (multiplicities of faces).

5. Conclusion

Although chance interferes, ('schizos lose their sense of the face, their own and others, their sense of the landscape, the sense of language and its dominant significations all at the same time') dismantling the face is not at all a haphazard engagement; in fact, nothing would dismantle in this way; rather the face would further mantle into one's skin, end up in a further and stronger reterritorialization. For Deleuze and Guattari, madness by itself – schizos – and facial malfunctions – tics – although might by chance trigger towards becomings, but are pregnant with dangers of abolition. Succeeded mostly, *McMurphy's* improvidence in his final acts proves this idea. Dismantling the face is a matter of politics. "Find your black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw your lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 188).

Dismantling is immanent to the mantling of the faces, or as Deleuze and Guattari says, one is born to them, with a destiny to dismantle and escape. Catatonic face of *Ratched*, with its upgrading system of face-value, was a reterritorializing development, but it was inside this compound of striated expressivity that Chief Bromden's synaptic face deterritorialized him for a totally physical escape or *McMurphy's* carnival face nullified, if not destroyed, the circulation of faciality system, with a multiplicity of possible faces.

Dismantling the face does occur with becomings. Becoming–woman,–molecular,–imperceptible are the invisible yet, explorable parts that have been left out in this study, but are at hand with the aid of this semiotic map. "Becomings connote to a creative force which emits particles, when it reaches an intensified degrees of intensity" (May, 2003, p. 150); actualized as molecular assemblage within the white wall or the black hole, those particles create a different facial trait, an uncoded faciality that thrusts itself out of the black hole, leaks out of the white wall. It can be a permanent leak; a molecular mock-face imposed on the Face, created by a different machine, (not through *mimesis*, but 'a different repetition') an abstract machine of faciality that does not circulate, but rather rotate upon the white wall/black hole. This is the creative differential force of what appears to be a nomad's faciality; a multitude of flattened *paper* faces, as mapped and conceptualized in this study.

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