Transglocal Fiction: Diasporic Poetics of Resistance in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* (1977) and Marilene Felinto's *As Mulheres de Tijucopapo* (1981)

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Abstract: This article explores the theme of diasporic identities in two postcolonial literary works, A Question of Power by Bessie Head and *The Women of Tijucopapo* by *Marilene Felinto*. Through a comparative analysis, I examine how Elizabeth's detour into madness in the village of Motabeng and Rísia's journey to the historical space of Tijucopapo become transformative points of entanglement. These "transglocal" sites foster relational diasporic identities and defy the constraints of national, transnational local, and global affiliations. The article reveals how both *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* exemplify the interplay between local, global and national, and transnational dynamics, offering insights into the construction of postcolonial diasporic identities and their connections to transglocal points of entanglement with a particular focus on feminist diasporic studies.

Keywords: transglocal, detour, diaspora, feminism

Theoretical Detours: Gestures of Relation

Wouldn't it be presumptuous to locate Bessie Head and Marilene Felinto's work within the national literary traditions of Botswana and Brazil based solely on their epigraphs? How do we engage with writers who frame their identities beyond traditional categories? These epigraphs could easily be interpreted as the writers' desire to resist conventional labels assigned by literary critics, illustrating their yearning for universality and freedom. A closer examination of their autobiographical fictions, *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo*, sheds light on how and why Head and Felinto defy labeling altogether. By examining these autobiographical fictions together, we can intervene in feminist theories of diaspora from the perspectives of disidentified writers.

Drawing on the work of Kim Butler, I approach diaspora as "a framework for the study of a specific process of community formation" (Butler 2001, 194). In "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," Butler highlights how this approach clarifies labels and types of diasporas. Her main objective is to establish a strong basis for the comparative study of diasporas. She identifies four dimensions for studying single diasporas, which allow for comparison: the reasons and conditions of relocation, the relationships with the homeland, the relationships with the hostlands, and the interrelationships within the diasporic group (Butler 2001, 209). While my analysis of diasporization in *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* stems from a comparative approach to studying their single diasporas, it departs from Butler's methodology as her dimensions are centered on homelands, hostlands, and the diaspora itself.

Published in 1974, *A Question of Power* follows Elizabeth's physical and mental journey, leading her to a permanent condition of unstable statelessness. Elizabeth leaves Apartheid South Africa and migrates to Botswana with her son, paralleling the historical mass influx of South African refugees to Botswana in the 1960s. As Elizabeth looks forward to a new beginning in Botswana, she experiences

a mental breakdown manifested through male and female hallucinatory figures. She soon realizes that her identity is a question of power.

Based on Butler's diasporean model, Elizabeth would be classified within a nation-based diaspora. While I acknowledge the validity of this interpretation, I argue that to make Elizabeth's diaspora comparable to others, it is important to dislocate her model of diaspora from the paradigm of hostlands, homelands, and diaspora itself. I aim to demonstrate that Elizabeth asserts her agency in her diasporic identity formation beyond metaphysical borders. For this reason, I will investigate which metaphors for diaspora offer new possibilities in comparing multiple single diasporas. These metaphors are particularly important as they allow us to engage in a conversation between *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo*.

Published in 1982 under the Brazilian Portuguese title *As Mulheres de Tijucopapo*, this epistolary fictional autobiography portrays Rísia, a mestiça with indigenous and black ancestry, who travels from São Paulo to the Nordeste. Her personal journey to Tijucopapo, her mother's birthplace, reverses the trajectory of the historical Brazilian Northeastern exodus during Brazilian industrialization in the 1960s. Rísia travels for nine months, yearning for a rebirth as she encounters the Brazilian mythical figures of the women of Tijucopapo. *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* are both narratives of multifaceted physical and metaphysical migrations.

Given Head and Felinto's lived experiences, it is tempting to engage with their own diasporicity. However, this article focuses on how their protagonists, Elizabeth in *A Question of Power* and Rísia in *The Women of Tijucopapo*, elucidate possibilities for alternative diasporic frameworks of being and modes of belonging. I argue that reading *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* through the prism of Glissant's concept of detour contributes to the formation of what I call "transglocal diasporas." This article is a response to Yogita Goyal's urgent call in "We Need New Diasporas." While Goyal addresses latest trends of African immigration to the US in her urgent call for new diasporas, I contend that the need for new diasporas also involves other migrant trajectories not centered around a redefinition of blackness.

Both *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* feature migrants whose journeys are inscribed within national mass migrations. Building on Goyal's work, I use Glissant's detour as an alternative to Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, which centers blackness in the Americas and Europe. As I invite Edouard Glissant into these conversations, I aim to demonstrate how a comparative approach to *A Question of Power* and *The Women of Tijucopapo* illustrates the broadening process of intersectional diasporic visions of subjectivities. Detour, as an analytical tool, situates Bessie Head, Marilene Felinto, and Edouard Glissant in a process of transglocal diasporization, fashioning a relational, uncentered, and multidirectional approach to feminist diasporic theories and comparative literature.

Wandering Subjects: Gestures of Unbelonging in *A Question of Power*

In *A Question of Power*, Elizabeth initially describes herself as "essentially a product of the slums and hovels of South Africa" (Head 1974, 20). By positioning herself at the margins of South African society, Elizabeth highlights that the forced dispersal of Black, Coloured, and Indian South Africans into segregated areas during the Apartheid regime in South Africa is a relational rhizomatic component of her identity. Elizabeth's identification with the slums, which are singular peripheral locations, dismantles the fantasy of wholeness that permeates the rhetorical constructions of national identities. The singularity of the Apartheid regime oddly establishes a collective sense of national belonging based on exclusion and separatism. By confessing her marginal position, Elizabeth respects the terms of her filiation with South Africa by occupying the space nationally carved for her.

Yet, in South Africa, Elizabeth was "living with a permanent nervous tension" (Head 1974, 12). Her neurosis in South Africa is a "nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler with [her] consent" (Fanon 1961, iv) I borrow Jean-Paul Sartre's statement in Frantz Fanon's preface of *The Wretched of the Earth*. To cure that neurosis, Elizabeth takes an exit permit with "a never to

return clause" (Head 1974, 12) as an ultimate resort. Such an act can be interpreted as a desperate search for asylum or an attempt at being included in a new national equilibrium. Her neurosis then is read in direct relation to her classification as a coloured individual within the South African societal organization.

In her native country, Elizabeth has always felt trapped within the confines of a racial group: "In South Africa, she had been rigidly classified Coloured. There was no escape from it to the simple joy of being a human being with a personality. There wasn't any escape like that for anyone in South Africa" (p. 41). According to the 'Population Registration Act of 1950,' "a Coloured person means a person who is not white or a native" (Nixon 1950, 108). Thus, Elizabeth's sense of national belonging is based on a segregationist compartmentalization disguised as filial ties between citizens and the mother country. Elizabeth refuses to belong to the Coloured community to come to terms with a homogenized national identity.

The national itinerary imposed on Elizabeth as a Coloured person by the South African government starts with what was deemed as an "illicit carnal intercourse between a European and a non-European" (Apartheid's Immorality Amendment Act, 1950), which translates Elizabeth's racial identity as a corollary offense to the state. Elizabeth's mother is a white woman who had an affair with a "stable boy, who was native" (Head 1974, 9). Elizabeth is the visible and perpetual reminder of a crime committed outside the legal boundaries of the state. Her mother is put in a mental institution while her father just disappears altogether. This national narrative does not allow for Elizabeth's parents to survive beyond the illicit space carved by the South African state. Elizabeth's filial ties to her parents, although concretely inexistent from her standpoint, rigidly classify her as a Coloured person in South Africa.

For Elizabeth, the state has woven together a series of rejection stories as the child warfare committee fails to find her a home. When she finally was placed in a family like her, "part African, part English" (Head 1974, 8), Elizabeth shares an affinity with her foster-mother to whom she says, "she really belonged emotionally" (Head 1974, 9). Elizabeth understands her foster-mother was paid to take care of her. Her love for that woman does not cloud her understanding of the politics of identity at the intersection of race, class, and gender determining their relation.

Once again, Elizabeth was taken from her foster-mother's care and sent away to attend a mission school when the South African war began. Symbolically, this is where Elizabeth learned about her so-called roots. The principal of the mission school that Elizabeth attended revealed to then thirteen-year-old Elizabeth 'the original sin' that has marked her even before her birth and which is associated with her mother's "stigma of insanity" (Head 1974, 10). Elizabeth's story in this national landscape aims to reinforce the stigma of insanity she has to bear as a Coloured person. "In a country where people are not people" (Head 1974, 11) but "races" (Head 1974, 41), Elizabeth's life has been pre-designed to remain permanently in a position of exclusion.

Elizabeth's mental disorder connected to her national identity as a Coloured South African woman makes her occupy a position of exclusion that led to a physical and mental displacement. From her birth to her exile, Elizabeth has been confined in a racialized space with no escape. On the surface, her relocation to Botswana appears as an attempt to break free from the "prison garment" of the Coloured. However, the narrative of exile from South Africa to flee the Apartheid regime has been incorporated into contemporary nationalist accounts that classify Elizabeth as a South African refugee. In this context, it is tempting to assimilate Elizabeth's psychotic bouts with the nervous breakdowns that "a lot of refugees have" (Head 1974, 49). Her neurosis could then be easily assimilated into the common nervous condition shared by all South African refugees, with no distinction of race, class, and gender.

In Botswana, Elizabeth's life was between what she calls "dream perceptions" and "a waking reality" (Head 1974, 22). These 'dream perceptions' were manifested through hallucinatory episodes during which Elizabeth is tormented by three intangible figures: Sello, Dan, and Medusa. After a particularly climactic episode, the principal of the Motabeng Secondary School, an Afrikaner man

from South Africa, brought her to the hospital. He began to associate his experience as a refugee with Elizabeth's: "I suffer, too, because I haven't a country and know what it's like" (p. 49). When touched by his sympathy, Elizabeth tried to explain to him the nature of her breakdowns, but he refused to listen. Eugene, the Afrikaner man, silenced Elizabeth's attempts at explaining the singularity of her mental disorder and only conceded one possible diagnostic to her condition: Eugene assumed that, similarly to all South Africans, Elizabeth was still traumatized by the racialist system of Apartheid.

For Elizabeth, the experiences of South African refugees cannot be homogenous considering the racial inequalities that permeated South Africa during Apartheid. In other words, Elizabeth finds that there is a clear distinction between the nervous conditions of Coloured South African refugees and those of Afrikaner South African refugees. She then distances herself from narratives that would blend both very distinguishable experiences by weaving new connections with other oppressed South African groups, notably the homosexuals and the poor. By stating that as a Coloured woman, Elizabeth "could not help but identify with the weak, homosexual men" (p. 43), the connection between two different identity markers, one based on race and the other on sexuality, reveals the multiplicity of forms of domination to which Elizabeth, as a Coloured person, is subjected.

In this sense, Elizabeth's physical relocation to Botswana is still part of the national trajectory imposed on her as a Coloured person. Her impossible identification with neither the Batswana nor the Motswana, both dominant ethnic groups in Botswana, are the sequels of her father's absence in her life: "Definitely, as far as Botswana society was concerned, [Elizabeth] was an out-and-out outsider and would never be in on their things" (Head 1974, 20). Elizabeth cannot relate to the "tribal affairs" of Botswana because her tribal filiation is untraceable. Therefore, whereas in South Africa, Elizabeth's nativeness was concealed as a Coloured person, in Botswana, it is questioned by her disassociation with the "tribal Africans" (Head 1974, 154). This shows that Elizabeth still resists all conventional forms of classification, whether in South Africa or in Botswana.

Elizabeth does not develop a sense of national belonging to Botswana, as she self-identifies "a stateless person" in her host country (Head 1974, 11). Hence, Elizabeth's identity is not localizable in national or transnational contexts. To a certain extent, she exhibits the characteristics of a wandering subject as theorized by feminist diasporic theorist Sarah Cervenak. *In Wanderings: Philosophical Performances of Racial and Sexual Freedom*, Cervenak conceptualizes the wandering subject as a Black woman "who wants to be able to be nowhere, to exist in elsewhere outside the radars of those who desire to fix her somewhere" (Cervenak 2011, 107). Elizabeth's assertion of statelessness illustrates modes of resistance characterized by "renouncing the limits imposed on one's movement, living, and acting in excess of the moorings of someone else's desire" (Cervenak 2011, 145). Elizabeth's statelessness is one of the "terrains where bodies are no longer the grounds for others' becomings, others' vicious expressions of neo-imperial, homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist, classist, and ableist desire" (Cervenak 2011, 172).

For Elizabeth, the principle of domination resides not only in the Apartheid regime but also in universal, rigid, and predetermined identity categories. Elizabeth uncovers the "principle of domination," concealed in all national construction of identity-defining classifications. Her mental exile is the ultimate gesture of unbelonging, defying any identity-defining categories. Elizabeth is not on a quest to belong to any national territory, narrative, or community. As a wandering subject, she makes and unmakes her own way (Cervenak 2011, 107). Her national and transnational trajectories are detours leading her to a point of entanglement where she can understand the nature of the domination in South Africa. Before tackling the significance and dimension of the point of entanglement in *A Question of Power*, let us turn to *The Women of Tijucopapo* and Rísia's gestures of unbelonging.

Nomadic Subjects: Gestures of Unbelonging in *The Women of Tijucopapo*

Rísia's voyage is the reverse journey of many Brazilians who left their rural Northeastern region for the promises of urban São Paulo. *The Women of Tijucopapo* offers an original approach to

Brazilian internal migratory movements that occurred in the 1930s. These singular migrations were often at the heart of regionalist novels produced during the second phase of the modernist period of Brazilian literature. In reverse mode, the regional displacement is at the core of *The Women of Tijucopapo*, as Rísia at first seems to reclaim her identity as a Northeasterner by undertaking the journey of Northeastern migrants from Southern to Northern Brazil. I argue in this section that Rísia's reversal of a journey foundational to the formation of regional and national identities in Brazil is a gesture of unbelonging that illustrates Rísia's desire to be located outside territorially and ethnically defined spatial frameworks.

In the Brazilian racial landscape, Rísia is categorized as a mestiça. In *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil*, Edward Telles defines mestiçagem as "race mixture or miscegenation [...] that forms the foundational concept of Brazilian racial ideology. Race mixture represents a set of beliefs that Brazilians hold about race, including the belief that Brazilians have long mixed across racial lines, more so than in any other society, and that nonwhites are included in the Brazilian nation. Miscegenation has long been a defining metaphor of the Brazilian nation…" (Telles 2004, 3). Rísia descends from Indians and Blacks, "dark-skinned people," as she puts it. Her grandmother was a "Negress," and her grandfather was an "Indian."

Yet, Rísia does not celebrate her racial hybridity, challenging thus the conventional positive perspectives on Brazilian multiracial identity. Rísia interprets racial miscegenation as a mirage, a fantasy, an illusion, an unstable and fragile mirror reflection: "It was in Poti, a moon-town, where I was born and where I know that my grandfather was an Indian. Sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and I tell myself I come from Indians and blacks, dark-skinned people, I feel like a tree, I feel rooted, a manioc plant coming out of the ground. Then I remember that I am nothing" (Felinto 1994, 23-24). Rísia shows that the Eurocentric tree identification based on racial ancestry and lineage leads to emptiness, invisibility, and nothingness within Brazilian miscegenation.

While throughout her journey, Rísia defines diverse ways in which she is "nothing," she retraces her "nothingness" to the Branqueamento, the institutionalization of a racist immigration policy immediately following Brazil's abolition of slavery in 1888. White Europeans were encouraged to move to the country and whiten the face of Brazil and its culture. In the following passage, Rísia reminisces about how her grandmother's daughters were subjected to this whitening ideology and how they became "women so nothing": "Mama's last native link died out in the rays of the moon on the moonlit night when she was given away. Everything about mama is adopted and adoptive. My mother has no origins; in reality, my mother does not exist. I don't know if my mother ever was born" (Felinto 1994, 23). In Rísia's mnemonic travel, Poti represents the whitening space articulating the sterile feature of the racial notion of miscegenation. De facto, Brazilian miscegenation resulting from the Branqueamento erases all traces of origin for the mestiço/as. This illustrates the inadequacy of the model of root-identity that Edouard Glissant considers to be "an obsession with a single point of origin" (Glissant 1997, 16).

Rísia, therefore, is in search of another model of identity: Rísia "left [her] home and the city because [she] lost the beginning, the birth of her mother…" (Felinto 1994, 62) Rísia realizes that she cannot construct her identity based on a racial ancestry whitened by a racist ideology. Poti is a fragment of Rísia's reminiscences from which her memories depart. Recife specifically represents experiences of her childhood that "spread out into what [Rísia is] right up until now, into what [she will] always be" (Felinto 1994, 58). Describing her childhood as a space of anxieties, Rísia claims that her childhood shaped her existential anxieties in response to her precarious condition.

In terms of race, it is during an outing with her classmates to Manjopi that Rísia was faced for the first time with the notion of racial relations: in Manjopi, she had her first group experience (Felinto 1994, 58) and she learned how different she was (Felinto 1994, 59). Rísia realizes that her "hair wasn't as smooth as Libania's or Maisa's" and that she "was a scholarship student in a class of plump pink girls" (Felinto 1994, 59). Within the context of hair politics in identifying blackness, Rísia's under-

standing that her hair was coarse and kinky is a practice of belonging and the expression of her racial identity. Hair as a racial marker is deeply entrenched within a discourse of racial identification in the US and other parts of Latin America. Rísia's blackness thus is made visible through the texture of her hair. Coupled with her self-identification as "dark-skinned," the coils of Rísia's hair do not necessarily refer to blackness as constructed in other African diasporas.

Noting Rísia's mother's use of brilliantine to straighten her daughter's hair, it is important to mention that such a bodily performance relates to hair traditions in the Brazilian backlands. For example, the Cangadeiros, a group of northeastern social bandits led by Lampião, especially used brilliantine for its distinct odor that would allow them to mark their presence. Rísia's memories of her mother's hair practices weave together a black racial marker and an indigenous revolutionary act. At this point in the narration, the performance of Rísia's mother is read as another attempt at whitening her daughter. Such a reading is supported by Rísia's confession that she was winning swimming races in the River at Pedra Branca, a town that means "white stone." She compares her swimming achievements with her intimidation in front of "the perfect blueness of the swimming pool" in Manjopi (Felinto 1994, 59). Though she depreciates her skinny legs, Rísia suggests that her body is not ill-fitted to swim in the pool. Her feeling of unbelonging is more exacerbated by the economic inequalities between her family and her classmates': "On top of the rest, the girls were the daughters of rich sergeants. I was poor, and my mother was a believer" (Felinto 1994, 59).

In a Fanonian moment recalling the postcolonial scholar's emphasis on the racialization of inequalities, Rísia thinks about the relationship between her racial identity and her precarious economic condition as she states: "I am poor in father and in mother. Poor, poor" (Felinto 1994, 61). She later adds: "I walk on the bridge, and there are beggars lining my path. And robbers and prostitutes. So I don't identify with them. And yet I do. [...] They don't reflect, they are not a clear, limpid mirror. I see myself" (Felinto 1994, 61). In this passage, Rísia includes race in the social and economic stratification of precariousness. In doing so, she exemplifies the juxtaposition of racial, social, and economic difference. By identifying with the lumpenproletariat, she is also juxtaposing different scales of experience. Out of place within a Eurocentric family tree model, Rísia develops a sense of identification and belonging to the precarious communities of the downtrodden. Yet, by associating miscegenation with self-hatred from the onset of the novel, Rísia expresses her hatred of her mother. As a matrophobic protagonist, Rísia manifests the desire to reclaim a lineage different from her mother's.

Rísia's fractured identity does not fit in the superficial uniformity of any group, whether it is that of her family or her classmates'. Her atypical migratory journey does not create a location of unbelonging where she could identify with a specific group. As a nomadic subject, she redefines her identity as "nothing," which is a gesture of unbelonging that should not be misread as a blurring or a subversion of identity categories. This resonates with Paula Jordão's effective characterization of Rísia as a protagonist corresponding to what Rosi Braidotti defines as a nomadic subject: "she/he connects, circulates, moves on; s/he does not form identifications but keeps on coming back at regular intervals" (Braidotti 2006, 35).

According to Jordão, Rízia as a nomadic subject identity can be characterized as: "a play of multiple, fractured aspects of the self; it is relational, in that it requires a bond to the 'other'; it is retrospective, in that it is fixed through memories and recollections, in a genealogical process" (Braidotti 2006, 166). This is a gesture disrupting the discourse of identity constructing migratory subjectivities defined by points of origin.

By challenging the rigidity of identity markers and acknowledging their local and global singularities, Elizabeth in *A Question of Power* and Rísia in *The Women of Tijucopapo* interrogate conventional narratives of migration. As a metaphor for displacement, migration implies a movement "to specific places and definite reasons" (Boyce-Davies 37). Neither Elizabeth nor Rísia follows that model of migration in their narratives, considering their gestures of unbelonging and their search for the principle of domination rather than a single point of origin. For Elizabeth and Rísia,

neither Botswana nor Brazil is the mythical promised land that permeates discourses of diaspora. They both resist their inclusion in national historical narratives of travel by crossing, distorting, and eluding space, and time. They project themselves into intangible worlds, diverting the movements of national mass migration. Yet, those alternate movements are not completely detached from 'reality'; they are the deformed, disoriented, and disorderly echoes of Elizabeth's and Rísia's diasporic lived experiences.

Transglocal Diasporas: Sites of Entanglement

In *The Women of Tijucopapo* and *A Question of Power*, the protagonists, Rísia and Elizabeth, engage in routes leading to the construction of nomadic, wandering, and muddy points of entanglement, which establish what I call "transglocal diasporas" (Cervenak 145; 172). The concept of "transglocal space" represents a postcolonial point of entanglement, where the local and the global, the personal and the collective, the historical and the mythical, and the national and the transnational collide transversally (Cervenak 145; 172).

After examining both protagonists' wandering and nomadic movements as practices of unbelonging, eschewing the regional, national, and transnational borders within which Rísia and Elizabeth were confined, it becomes evident that Tijucopapo in *The Women of Tijucopapo* and Motabeng in *A Question of Power* are transglocal points of entanglement revealing the multiplicity of border crossings forming Rísia and Elizabeth's intersectional diasporic identities (Cervenak 107). Paralleling national mass migrations, the aim of Rísia and Elizabeth's metaphorical travels is "to be reborn" as transglocal diasporic subjectivities (Cervenak 13).

Tijucopapo: Muddy Entanglements

In The *Women of Tijucopapo,* Tijucopapo is initially introduced as Rísia's motherland: "I can be reborn in Tijucopapo where my mama is born" (Felinto 1994, 13). Yet, as mentioned earlier, Rísia's mother was said to be born in Poti. Rísia herself realizes her confusion as she states: "Sometimes I confuse the towns saying that it was in Poti that those women were given away like my mother were born. But what happens is that everything is so moonshine that all of a sudden I become moonstruck" (Felinto 1994, 23). The moon in this sentence symbolizes the Branqueamento policies that whitened the black and indigenous populations. The confusion is, therefore, a direct consequence of the implementation of racist ideologies.

Due to the 'whitening' of Brazilian national identities, Tijucopapo as a historical space has been erased from the collective memory of Brazil. Rísia unearths a silenced and unmapped past which she strives to translate into her contemporary world. Looking for ways of improving this speech impediment she caught in São Paulo (Felinto 1994, 78), Rísia embarks on a nine-month journey to Tijucopapo. The choice of Tijucopapo as a camouflaged destination point is not fortuitous. Besides the fact that it might or might not be the birthplace of Rísia's mother, Tijucopapo is "the space of insurrection" (Felinto 1994, 105) where Brazilian women fought back against the Dutch army in the 17th century. Inscribed within the colonial past of Brazil, Tijucopapo witnesses the insurrection of Brazilian women against Dutch invaders in Pernambuco. As she weaves the personal memory of her mother with historical figures of resistance such as the women of Tijucopapo, Rísia reinvents for herself a glorious past when women fought against colonial oppression, highlighting its international characteristics. The revolt of these Northeastern Brazilian women is even more interesting as the women of Tijucopapo defeated the Dutch army with weapons including cooking pots.

There is no mention of those specific historical events in Rísia's description of the women of Tijucopapo besides their warrior attributes:

> "Where those women came from, my heritage, women made of the substance of the tijuco, thick-
> haired, dragging on their horses' manes, straddling the beasts bareback, amazons. Once upon a night,

upon a time, my mother was born in the heart of a swamp. In a mud plain. Women like my mother bear the mark of certain women who take off to face the world straddling their horses, amazons defending themselves no one knows exactly from what, except, as we know love. They are amazons on horseback coming to make their mark on the tijucopapo, where everything's a mire. The women of Tijucopapo: horseshoes. The women of Tijucopapo: it's as if so little remains of everything; and it's as if so much remains when it turns itself into a heritage. The women of Tijucopapo: they are me with my mark of mud, I who emerged, a mud creature, a worm, where the beach meets the mud. The women of Tijucopapo: yes. I'm coming. I'm slippery" (Felinto 1994, *46*).

In this passage, Rísia clearly articulates her identification with the women of Tijucopapo, colliding personal and collective memories. Tijucopapo can be read as a "lieu de mémoire" (Nora 1989) in which Rísia's memories gestate a muddle of historical moments, as demonstrated by Paula Jordão: "As a reminder of the heroines who fought the Dutch invaders in Pernambuco in the seventeenth century, Tijucopapo is not just an element of Rísia's symbolic reality but is also part of Brazilian reality and (mythical) history. Moreover, by passing on her recollection of that (mythical) place to other generations, Rísia fulfills the task attributed to the lieux de mémoire – the enrichment of its meaning to a community, and in this particular case, to (a part of) the Brazilian Northeastern community.

Finally, by reviving events that are part of a forgotten history in which women played an essential role, Rísia broaches another aspect of Tijucopapo as a lieu de mémoire, namely the making of another history or of a renewed history that belongs to the legacy of gender of the Brazilian Nordeste" (Jordão 2010). I would add that designating Tijucopapo as lieu de mémoire still confines the women of Tijucopapo within national histories. Read as a transglocal site of entanglement, Tijucopapo puts in the same space local and global figures of women's resistance movements. To associate the women of Tijucopapo with the Greek Amazons re-locates Rísia's personal history on a global scale.

With the "unpredictable proliferation of its ramifications" (Nora 1989, 19), Rísia reconnects "scraps of memories with contemporary historical moments: "before that my mother had been born. And it had happened in Tijucopapo. It was 1935, and I can't imagine how things might have been, how one could have been, how one could be born. How could one have been in 1935?" (Felinto 1994, 7). By setting her mother's date of birth in 1935, Rísia relates her mother to the Vargas government, as the first failed communist coup in Brazil occurred in 1935. Bearing in mind the passive nature of Rísia's mother, such a connection is plausible since the coup failed. However, 1935 also records the peasant revolts in the Northeast led by the Cangadeiros meaning 'those who can't adapt' in Brazilian Portuguese.

Rísia's trajectory traces diasporic lines embedded in different forms of resistance. After unveiling the principle of domination in Tijucopapo, Rísia sets out to engage in different movements of resistance, ranging from social banditry to women warriors in her contemporary time. By recording the stories of battles for a just cause, Rísia liberates herself from the nationalist narrative of migration. Rísia now belongs to a new race that relays, rallies, and relates to the women of Tijucopapo, the women of Poti, the Amazons, and the Cangadeiras. Along the migratory route, she manages to identify the power structures that have excluded her: the nation, the patriarchy, and white supremacy.

Another feature of Tijucopapo encompasses Rísia's racial identity, as Tijucopapo means "black mud clay" in Tupi-Guarani. Tijucopapo is "where the beach meets the mud, where the beach turns into mud" (Felinto 1994, 45). As a mestiça, Rísia's identification with blackness has been determined by filial ties to her grandmother. However, the existence of her grandmother has been whitened in Poti, leading to invisibility. Rísia embraces her diasporic identity with the contact between Africans and the indigenous lands of Brazil. She does not link diasporicity to a specific environment or a territorially defined identity.

For her, Africa is a detour that leads to Tijucopapo, the diasporic point of entanglement where Rísia becomes connected to multiple histories and multiple spatial structures. Her diasporic identity is nei-ther metaphorically nor physically territorially determined. The transglocal dimension of her diasporic

identity addresses the muddiness of Rísia. Her slipperiness translates in Glissant's world as opacity, which is "the demand of the right to not be understood" (Britton 1999, 19). To a certain extent, Rísia survives in a world that has no words to identify her as belonging to a specific community.

Motabeng: Sandy Entanglements

Like Rísia, Elizabeth demands the right to not be understood by shaping an identity "too funny for words" (Head 1974, 41) in connection to hallucinatory intangible figures: Sello, Dan, and Medusa. For Elizabeth, Sello and his reincarnations represent "the prophet of mankind" who incidentally happens to be an African with many reincarnations and vesture garments" (Head 1974, 25). Dan Molomo is the "epitome of the African male" (Head 1974, 137). Both Dan and Sello are local black people in Motabeng that Elizabeth barely knows and projects in her hallucinations. Her nervous breakdowns are described as follows: "the mentally, the normal and the abnormal blended completely in Elizabeth's mind" (Head 1974, 8). While the normal is associated with the local in Elizabeth's 'waking reality,' "her journeys into hell" go beyond the rural environment of Motabeng and extend to what can be easily misinterpreted as the universal.

Sello and Dan take on universal disguises of dominant power structures preying on "soft-shuffling, loose-knitting personalities" (Head 1974, 4). For example, Sello is appointed a religious personality which locates him in the spiritual frameworks of Hinduism, Buddhism, Ancient Egyptian pantheist religion, and the Greek pantheon. Portrayed as a local man who embodies the multiplicity of divine figures, Sello is incidentally African, which suggests that anyone can claim the attributes of God. Sello's transformation from a local man into supreme divine figures originated in Asia (Hinduism/Buddha), Africa (Egyptian gods), and Europe (Greek gods), and his identification with epic heroes including Rama (Head 1974, 8) and Caligula (Head 1973: 38) shows that at the transglocal scale, while different, religion and national epic narratives conceal a similar institutional system of domination.

Elizabeth's mental condition is a detour that she takes to uncover the principle of domination. Tormented by nightmarish figures like Medusa, Elizabeth shows how mythologies, creation stories, and religion have taken part in labeling people according to fixed, rigid identity categories. By juxtaposing multiple histories and temporalities in her hallucinatory world, Elizabeth exposes the real "insanity" in adopting pseudo-universal concepts such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality. It is by trying to belong to specific groups through national or local filiation that Elizabeth fails to connect with Motabeng.

When she arrived in Motabeng, Elizabeth was amazed at how different life in South Africa and Botswana is: "It was so totally new, so inconceivable; the extreme opposite of 'Hey, Kaffir, get out of the way,' the sort of greeting one usually was given in South Africa" (Head 1974, 14). She settled in the central part of the village and had a sense of home in the village through routine interactions with the people. Then, "her life began to pitch over from an even keel, and it remained from then onwards at a pitched-over angle" (Head 1974, 15). This disequilibrium seemingly detached Elizabeth from reality and illustrated her repeated interactions with hallucinatory figures. It is only three months after her arrival in Motabeng that Elizabeth started to have these visions, blurring all forms of dividing lines.

As Elizabeth confesses that "she was not given to 'seeing' things. The world had always been two-dimensional, flat and straight with things she could see and feel" (Head 1974, 22), it almost seems like when she realized that Botswana was not that different from South Africa in terms of societal compartmentalization, Elizabeth created a world in parallel where all boundaries would be blurred. Her hallucinations are ways to cope with her profound sense of unbelonging to realities determined by classifications. Her delirious interactions with Sello, Dan, and Medusa form "an entanglement of negativities accepted as such, in which it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between active and passive, choice and constraint, or even victory or defeat" (Britton 1995, 27). Elizabeth's madness is a form of detour, with Motabeng as the transglocal point of entanglement.

"Motabeng means the place of sand. It was a village remotely inland, perched on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. The only reason for people's settlement there was a good supply of underground water. It took a stranger some time to fall in love with its harsh outlines and stark, black trees" (Head 1974, 13). This description locates Motabeng in relation to the Kalahari Desert, a transnational space. From the onset, Motabeng is identified in local (village), national (Botswana), and transnational (Kalahari Desert) terms. The ordinariness of life in Motabeng is starkly at odds with Elizabeth's torment. It is only when she joins the market gardening project that Elizabeth feels a sense of belonging to the land.

Motabeng becomes a site of entanglements defined by "voluntary labor" (Head 1974, 207), "friendliness" (Head 1974, 128), and "solid respect of work partnership" (Head 1974, 207). With multiple factors of interaction beyond the conventional identity markers, international and local communities could develop gestures of belonging, such as gardening, to settle harmoniously in Motabeng. The garden project not only provides food to both communities, but it is also a space of belonging in which people from foreign backgrounds, including English volunteers and Danish exiles, come to exchange their agricultural and commercial skills. The strength of the "seedlings" arises from the multiple and diverse methods of metaphoric and agricultural transplantation.

Transplanted in Motabeng, Elizabeth "like the Cape gooseberry, settled down and became part of the village life in Motabeng" (Head 1974, 163). Elizabeth's process of diasporization is not based on the common sufferings of people relocated in Motabeng. It is related to voluntary cooperative labor. A significant detail is the diversity of the members of the cooperative, not only in terms of nationalities but also in terms of race, gender, and class. Elizabeth's unlikely friendships with Tom, the American Peace Corps volunteer, Kenosi, the Botswana woman, Eugene, the Afrikaner South African refugee, balance her everyday life in Motabeng when she is not having her psychotic bouts. While I interpret Elizabeth's neurosis as a form of detour, I contend that Motabeng is a transglocal point of entanglement where Elizabeth manages to experience the relational identity politics impossible to assume in South Africa.

Eventually, this section illustrates how the construction of postcolonial diasporic identities is connected to transglocal points of entanglements in Head's A *Question of Power* and Felinto's *The Women of Tijucopapo*. Taken together, Tijucopapo and Motabeng create a series of transglocal points of entanglements where Elizabeth and Rìsia cultivate a 'poetics of solidarity in diversity' (Glissant 1989, 144). Both Elizabeth and Rìsia live globality to combat the inequities of globalization. Indeed, while Elizabeth participates in sustainable local agriculture supported by global agricultural techniques, Rísia rewrites her own story with a happy ending without needing to translate it into English. When Rísia sets out on her journey from the city to Tijucopapo, she expresses the desire to translate the letter she is writing to her mother into English. She wants her letter to have a happy ending, in comparison to Hollywood films. Eventually, she dictates the letter to Lampião, the Brazilian Northeastern folk hero, appropriating Lampião's revolutionary language rather than English or Portuguese. Elizabeth and Rìsia's journeys are practices of detour that led them to Tijucopapo and Motabeng, where they not only resist conventional identity politics but also identify globalization as one of the principles of domination they have been subjugated to.

Theoretical Detours: Gestures of Transglocality

Overall, both Tijucopapo and Motabeng create transglocal points of entanglement where Rísia and Elizabeth cultivate relational identity politics that resist conventional classification and address the inequities of globalization (Cervenak 144; 139). Through their journeys, Rísia and Elizabeth challenge the principles of domination that have subjugated them, ultimately embracing a transglocal diasporic identity that transcends traditional boundaries (Cervenak 139).

Fruitful theoretical conversations between feminist diasporic concepts such as Carole Boyce-Davies's migratory subjectivities, Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subject, and Sarah Cervenak's wander-

ing and diasporic theoretical frameworks including Glissant's detour offer new avenues to explore how to engage with opaque subjectivities in the context of migration (Goyal, 2016). Responding to Yogita Goyal's call for new diasporas (Goyal, 2016), I mapped an alternative to spatial diaspora such as Robin Cohen's global diasporas (Cohen, 1997) and Lindsey Moore's glocal diasporas (Moore, 2010).

Transglocal fictions are postcolonial narratives of detour, embracing multiple forms of diasporization. After examining both protagonists' wandering and nomadic movements as practices of unbelonging, rejecting the regional, national, and transnational borders within which Rísia and Elizabeth were confined (Felinto, 1998; Head, 1973), Tijucopapo in *The Women of Tijucopapo* and Motabeng in *A Question of Power* are transglocal points of entanglement that reveal the multiplicity of border crossings forming Rísia and Elizabeth's multilayered diasporic identities. The aim of Rísia and Elizabeth's metaphorical travels, paralleling national mass migrations, is "to be reborn" as transglocal migratory subjectivities (Felinto, 1998, 13; Head, 1974).

Elizabeth and Rísia engage in gestures of unbelonging by diverting the diasporic routes framed within their corresponding national migration narratives. Then, they assert their agency by relinking and relaying their identities with transglocal points of entanglement where personal and collective, national, and transnational, local, and global histories collide transversally. These points of entanglement, I argue, are spaces of resistance and survival necessary for Elizabeth and Rísia to change their ways of conceiving, living, and reacting to routes leading to the construction of transversal, wandering, and muddy points of entanglement that formulate transglocal diasporas. The transglocal space is a postcolonial point of entanglement where the local and the global, the personal and the collective, the historical and the mythical, and the national and the transnational collide transversally.

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