



**The Modern Nomad in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*.**

**Nadjiba BOUALLEGUE.** nadjiba.bouallegue@gmail.com

Department of Letters and English Language, Faculty of Letters and Languages,  
University of 08 Mai 1945- Guelma Algeria

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines the concept of “nomad” in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). The novel's popularity anchors in the new depiction that Lalami devotes to the illegal immigrant. The article seeks to show whether illegal immigration can be considered as a form of nomadic existence. In contemporary theory, the concept of nomad gains much consideration because of the phenomenon of globalization and mass migration. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, respectively a philosopher and a psychoanalyst offer the term ‘nomad’ a special attention. They aim at extracting this term from its old conceptions. Consequently, the term ‘nomad’ is used to define a new and different situation. Through implementing this new definition of nomad, the study reveals that nomadism is not strictly linked to physical crossing of borders. A nomad is a person who manages to voyage through thoughts. For Deleuze and Guattari, physical movement does not define the nomad. The nomad is the individual who transforms his or her demeaning existence into a new and creative exploration through ‘becoming’. The article probes into the concept of becoming that is presented as an alternative sociality for the novel's characters.

**Résumé**

Cet article examine le concept de «nomade» dans *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* de Laila Lalami (2005). La popularité du roman s'inscrit dans la nouvelle représentation que Lalami consacre à l'immigrant illégal. L'article cherche à montrer si l'immigration clandestine peut être considérée comme une forme d'existence nomade. Dans la théorie contemporaine, le concept de nomade est pris en compte à cause du phénomène de la mondialisation et de la migration de masse. Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, respectivement philosophe et psychanalyste, accordent une attention particulière au terme «nomade». Ils visent à extraire ce terme de ses anciennes conceptions. Par conséquent, le terme «nomade» est utilisé pour définir une situation nouvelle et différente. En mettant en œuvre cette nouvelle définition du nomade, l'étude révèle que le nomadisme n'est pas strictement lié au franchissement physique des frontières. Un nomade est une personne qui parvient à traverser des pensées. Pour Deleuze et Guattari, le mouvement physique ne définit pas le nomade. Le nomade est l'individu qui transforme son existence dégradante en une exploration nouvelle et créative par «devenir». L'article examine le concept de devenir présenté comme une socialité alternative pour les personnages du roman. Devenir est un exutoire aux pressions exercées par la société des personnages.  
Mots-clés: Laila Lalami, immigration clandestine, nomade, espace strié, espace lisse, devenir-femme, devenir-animal, devenir-imperceptible



Becoming is an enabling outlet for the pressures erected by the characters' society.

**Keywords:** Laila Lalami, illegal immigration, nomad, striated space, smooth space, becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible.

In *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005), Laila Lalami tackles the subject of illegal immigration. This phenomenon has haunted the imagination of writers since the early 1990s. The period marks the proliferation of clandestine immigration because of European countries' implementation of restrictions on its borders. Writers choose divergent ways to tackle the theme of clandestine crossing of borders. While some writers focus on the hardships of illegal immigration, such as Tahar Ben Jelloun in *Leaving Tangier* (2009), Laila Lalami emphasizes the double-edging nature of the phenomenon. Lalami stresses the contradictions that dwell in this hazardous, often risky, clandestine expedition. She brings to light the pains and the pleasures of this trip. This study aims at exploring these contradictions through an examination of Laila Lalami's characters in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*. It seeks to show how clandestine travel is a trajectory towards experimentation and creativity for some people and a route towards desolation for others. The article also aims at showing that the positive image of illegal immigration is strictly shared by exceptional people who could be considered as nomads.

Illegal immigrants share with nomads the inability to live under restrictions. Their essential objective is obviating all barriers and eluding every boundary. Consequently, home, for both nomads and illegal immigrants is not synonymous to fixity and stability. Mobility is central to the life of this category of people. The nomad's home lies where he/she can make a living. Accordingly, the illegal immigrant is also a nomad who is in a constant quest for a satisfactory life. The burdened existence that this person endures coerces the immigration. For the illegal immigrant, home is not a site of comfort and belonging. It is a repressive space where every opportunity for self-fulfillment is eliminated. In "Nomadic Abstracts", Fiyozat Reza tackles the situation of the modern nomad. According to the author the modern nomad is forced to immigrate "by the miracle of all Modern miracles, i.e., by the global market and/or its half-brothers, modern international politics and war" (para.16). This definition helps to associate the modern nomad and the illegal immigrant. Like a nomad, the illegal immigrant is compelled to roam the world in search of better opportunities for living.

The illegal immigrant refuses to inhabit a repressive space. Similarly, the nomad defies closures and seeks freedom. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari touch upon the phenomenon of nomadism. For Deleuze and Guattari, the nomad cannot occupy a restricted space and they refer to this repressive site as a "striated space" or "sedentary". They believe that the nomad inhabits a "smooth space". Deleuze and Guattari clearly reveal the difference between the striated and the smooth space, they write: "sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory" (381). The striated space definition denotes the characteristics of the state which exerts control and authority. This sedentary space is fixed and homogeneous (Deleuze & Guattari 478). In contrast, the smooth space is "heterogeneous", it is a space "without conduits or channels" (Deleuze & Guattari 371). A smooth space is not a static field; it is a space



that is constructed by various and multiple directions. In smooth spaces, there is no unique, determined way, it is a field governed by the unreadiness and surprise.

The unexpected smooth space is sharply contrasted with the striated space that is seized by anticipation and predictability. Despite the sharp distinction between these two kinds of spaces, Deleuze and Guattari stress their fusion. They assert that, "we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space" (474). The smooth and the striated space are continuously bound. There is no clear line that bifurcates these two spaces. These two spaces incessantly mutate, the smooth can become striated and the striated can transform into smooth. The domination of one space over the other determines the existence of the person. The nomad is a person who is constantly wavering between the striated and the smooth space. The nomad resists categorization and classification of identities imposed by the striated space of the state. He or she impedes the state's authority through a construction of a smooth space.

The state debilitates the action of the nomad by intensive striation of smooth spaces. It endeavors to control and dominate its space. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the impact of the state, "It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations" (385). Strict boundaries are constructed by the state to hinder nomad's movement. Since the nomad's defining characteristic is freedom, he or she transcends the state's boundaries. The restraining measures enacted by the state to restrain migration fail to contain the ambition of the nomad. The illegal immigration emerges as a solution to block the flow of striation. As a person who cherishes challenges, the illegal immigrant chooses the sea to achieve his/ her objective. While the state is "the striated space par excellence", the sea "is a smooth space fundamentally open to striation" (Deleuze and Guattari 481). The sea is a smooth space that is threatened by the power of striation. The state seeks to dominate the sea through navigation to fulfill its commercial and political interests. Despite the dangers that harbor the sea, the illegal immigrant is blind to the state's attempt of striating the sea. He or she can strictly perceive its promises of freedom.

It is the quest for freedom that leads characters in Laila Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* to attempt illegal immigration. The protagonists of the novel are plunged into the Mediterranean filled with hopes and fears. In the middle of the night, thirty journeyers holding the name "Harraga"<sup>i</sup>, burn their identification documents on the shore of Tangier and embark on a journey of discovery. These "Harraga" do not need any document that could cause their immediate deportation to their homelands. They burn their past identities and are ready to embrace new ones. Among the thirty immigrants, are four Moroccan passengers whose perspectives on the illegal crossing of the strait of Gibraltar sustain the plot of the novel. These four characters represent various facets of marginalization. Faten, a college student, decides to try this risky trip in order to escape an arrest for a comment about the King. Halima, the mother of three children, leaves Morocco to protect herself from domestic violence. Despite being a talented mechanic, Aziz is unable to find an adequate job and provide for the needs of his family. He resolves to make the fourteen-kilometer journey to Spain because he cannot view himself as a burden to his wife. Similarly, Mourad's diploma in English does not save him from the fate of unemployment. His joblessness deprives him from the respect that the position of the elder brother could grant him. He embarks on this journey to restore his self-esteem.



For those characters that succeed in reaching Spain or the deported ones, the trip is life-changing. Faten and Aziz secure an entry to their dream land while Halima and Mourad are immediately deported to Morocco. Despite their different choices, the four characters are considered to be transgressors. They revolt against the demeaning roles that society cast upon them. Consequently, these characters are plunged into a never-ending process of transformation. These characters refuse to reconstruct identities coherent with the rules of their society. They seek transformation and freedom in an oppressive milieu. The four characters are in a constant flux between striated and smooth spaces.

The shift from the striated to the smooth space is not an easy task. For the characters, homeland is a site of repression that represses their creativity and ambition. They are involved in a daily struggle to enhance their conditions. Faten's miserable conditions cause her aimlessness. Her aimlessness is clearly demonstrated in her life choices. In university, Faten adheres to political Islam seeking justice and meaning of life. For Faten, political Islam is the smooth space that she inhabits to report crimes of the corrupt Moroccan system.

Faten's involvement in political Islam does not stem from a strong conviction for its ideals. Her beliefs stand in sharp contrast with her actions. Her cheating in the exam and her illegal crossing of the frontiers highlight her hypocrisy. In "The Dislocation of 'Home' in the Writings of Laila Lalami", Abdellah Elboubekri examines Lalami's portrayal of the character of Faten. He writes, "Lalami is not apparently sympathetic with [Faten]" (254). In a personal interview with Lalami, Abdellah Elboubekri recalls her comment on the character of Faten. Elboubekri states that Lalami expects her character to experience all these dangerous transformations and contradictory choices (255). Faten's radical changes are a strategy of survival. Her shift from being "fanatic" (19) to her status of an illegal immigrant stresses her inability to inhabit a striated field.

Lalami's female characters demonstrate a strong opposition to fixity and passivity. Like Faten, Halima does not succumb to the norms of her society that catalogue her conduct. She refuses to silence the voice that seeks a dignified life for herself. She is unable to tolerate a life of domestic violence. Halima is aware that she deserves a better life. This awareness incites her quest for a divorce. However, she cannot win people's support. Her mother does not view divorce as a solution for her daughter's predicament. Halima's mother asks her daughter to discard this idea of divorce because the Moroccan civil law<sup>ii</sup> will impede her choice. Nevertheless, Halima is conscious that she possesses an inner strength that enables her to smooth this striated space.

Halima's means to obstruct striation is immigration. She ponders this solution and immediately plunges into a fantasy. Halima imagines how her life would be if she has "gone to Europe like her brothers. Would she have an apartment, a washing machine, maybe even a car? Would she have Maati?" (71). Fantasy plays an important role in motivating Moroccans to emigrate. Sandra Stickle Martín tackles the impact of media on Moroccan youth. According to her, Western television programs and magazines are responsible for creating stereotypes of life in Spain that activate Moroccans' determination to emigrate. These images show a dreamy life that many Moroccans aspire to live (19). Through media, desperate Moroccans reach what they believe to be Spain while they stay at home. This way of traveling is typical to a nomad. According to Deleuze and Guattari, there are two kinds of voyage: a voyage of intensity



and another of extensivity. To travel like a nomad is to travel intensively. It is not an extensive voyage from one point to another but it is a "Voyage in place: that is the name of all intensities, even if they also develop in extension. To think is to voyage" (482). Media, books enable people to travel in thought because these thoughts create a pack of intensities. These intensities create a smooth space. A nomad is a person who voyages in thought even if she or he moves extensively after the thought journey. Halima becomes a nomad who embarks on a journey to Europe through her fantasy. However, this intensive voyage does not suffice Halima. Halima envisages another kind of voyage (73). She chooses the illegal way to elude the homeland.

Escaping the homeland becomes a necessity for people who are ostracized by their community. Similarly, Aziz suffers from this rejection. His unemployment aggravates his sense of marginalization. His inability to support his wife and his mother adds to his despair. Despite being a talented mechanic, Aziz cannot earn a living. Providing the needs of his family becomes his wife's responsibility. While Aziz is unable to find a job, his wife, Zohra, manages to secure a work "at a soda factory" (76). This situation intensifies Aziz malaise. He cannot tolerate the condemnation gaze of people who accuse his joblessness. The accusations grow harsher when Zohra finds a job (76). Aziz is aware that his wife's new position threatens his role of being the man of the house. Rima Abunasser deals with the issue of manhood. She states that male characters in Lalami's novel "choose migration as a means, not just of finding gainful employment, but of reclaiming their perceived loss of masculinity" (11). Because in their communities the definition of masculinity anchors in the possession of financial means, these men risk their lives to recoup their manhood. By emphasizing the male characters' frustrations, Lalami launches a critique on the community's norms that valorize one side of masculinity. Through the character of Aziz, Lalami wants to subvert the view that restricts masculinity in financial power. She wants to show the various qualities that can shape a man. Through this portrayal, Lalami denounces the rigid classifications imposed on men and women.

Lalami's male and female characters help obviate these classifications through an exceptional way. The characters reject the categorization through an experimentation of new roles. Deleuze and Guattari give an important consideration to this state of experimentation. The concept they give to designate this strategy is "becoming". According to them, becoming is "minoritarian; all becoming is a becoming-minoritarian". For Deleuze and Guattari, minority is not defined by quantity, it is related to power. They explain that "Majority implies a state of domination, not the reverse". Minority are deprived of this domination. This imbalance of power leads the man to be "majoritarian par excellence" because "the majority in the universe assumes as pre-given the right and power of man". While man stands for the majority, "women, children, but also animals, plants, and molecules, are minoritarian" (291). The minoritarian is constructed by any divergence from the norms that shape the majoritarian male.

This movement from the major to the minor is what constitutes becoming. Deleuze and Guattari offer a clear description of the relation between the major and the minor. They explain that becomings "imply two simultaneous movements, one by which a term (the subject) is withdrawn from the majority, and another by which a term (the medium or agent) rises up from the minority. This connection between two bodies produces becoming. Becoming occurs through alliance. There is no space for resemblance since resemblance "on the contrary, would represent an obstacle or



stoppage” (233). Becomings reject resemblance and imitation because becomings “are molecular” (292). Becoming defies appearance because it does not happen on a molar line<sup>iii</sup> but it happens on a molecular level<sup>iv</sup>. The becoming cannot be perceived through the classifications and the norms of the molar line. Becoming opposes the rigid codes of race, gender, age, it is a unique alliance between the subject of becoming and its medium.

Breaking the rigid codes of the community is the purpose of becoming. Annie Potts explains that becoming “requires a departure from rigidification, categorization and segmentation; hence, an escape from molarity” (251). This escape relates the subject of becoming to the oppressed. Through this relation, a new thing is produced. The newness that becoming creates is a virtue (Deleuze and Guattari 280). The person who experiences becoming transcends the restrictions of his body to become a new person. Lalami’s novel presents characters that are able to transcend the limitations of their bodies to experience new dimensions of themselves. Being fraught with his community’s burdens, Aziz is implicated in a process of becoming-woman. In his becoming-woman, Aziz does not imitate women. Aziz becomes a woman through affect<sup>v</sup>. Deleuze and Guattari draw a close connection between becoming and affect. For them, the process of becoming can never exclude affect (258). Aziz is involved in a combination with the woman.

Through this combination, Aziz affects the woman and gets affected by her. Aziz is detached from the majority and connected to a feature of a woman from a minority. The portrayal of Aziz in the novel does not show any aspect of physical imitation. Aziz does not become a molar woman that is “defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject” (Deleuze and Guattari 275). His becoming-woman is a creation of “the molecular woman” that transcends the codes of the society, a new kind of woman that must be adopted even by women. Deleuze and Guattari argue that, “the woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman* in order that the man also becomes- or can become-woman” (275-6). The woman needs to defy the limitations imposed on her body and mind. The woman is implicated in the first dualism that defines the man as majoritarian. As a result, the man has to become-woman to detach himself from the history of oppression and domination.

By discarding himself from the majoritarian status, Aziz becomes sensitive to the suffering of women. He is able to share his wife’s distress. Despite his yearning to escape Morocco, Aziz feels guilty to leave Zohra behind (77). However, Zohra shows no fear or hesitation at the idea of being alone. Zohra’s bravery strengthens Aziz’s determination. Zohra’s resilience demonstrates her becoming-woman. Zohra is able to transgress the norms of femininity shared by her community. She is not a passive woman who shows her need to be saved by a man. Zohra is becoming-woman so that Aziz will also become-woman. Aziz’s radical change is revealed through the strong determination he shows towards the idea of illegal immigration. Despite the warnings of his parents, friends and neighbors, Aziz can only see the successful end of his trip. Aziz listens to the warnings but at the end of the conversation, he often weighs “their warnings against the prospect of years of idleness, years of asking them for money to ride the bus” (79). Aziz’s determination shows he is affected by Zohra, the medium of becoming. They both enter into a combination where their bodies are able to affect and be affected. This mutual affect has only empowered both of them. The power Aziz demonstrates reveals his nomadic existence.



As a nomad, Aziz resists the strong pressure of his society. This powerful resistance is a mere result of the state's oppressive regime. Throughout this novel, Lalami reveals the positive side of power. Besides its capacity to subjugate others, power could be liberating. This view of power is strongly supported by the French historian Michel Foucault who views resistance as the outcome of power. Foucault explains, "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (*The History of Sexuality* 95). Both Foucault and Deleuze agree that state's oppressive authority is not a handicap to individuals' freedom. State's power could engender resistance as well as becoming. Becoming is regarded as one of the forms of resistance.

Aziz resists his society through his becoming-woman. Now, he is ready for new transformations and new becomings. Similarly, Mourad has to undergo the becoming-woman to experience a new life that is not shaped by the society. Being a bachelor holder of an English degree does not allow Mourad to have a decent job. Instead of having a steady employment, Mourad spends his days soliciting tourists for a tour. Narrating anecdotes of Paul Bowles is not always a successful strategy to attract tourists. Mourad often returns home "empty-handed" (99). His inability to be the provider of the family deprives him from exercising the patriarchal role after his father's death. This joblessness frustrates Mourad who is even unable to envisage a married life (102). Mourad is aware that his idleness discards him. In the eyes of his family members, he is invisible. This marginalization removes him from his majoritarian status to a minor position. At this phase of his life, Mourad is able to feel the pain of being voiceless. Mourad does not aim at inhabiting the passive, demeaning position he is confined to. As a molecular woman, Mourad seeks revolution. He aims at defying the rigid codes of his society by accomplishing his process of becoming.

Mourad's becoming-woman is the first step in his radical change. He does not surrender to the society's effort to ostracize him. By his becoming-woman, Mourad approaches the minoritarian status. His second step towards minor position occurs when he accomplishes his becoming-animal. Mourad's becoming-animal is achieved through his becoming one of the "Harraga" who attempt the risky trip to Spain. Dimitris Papadopoulos & Vassilis Tsianos endeavor to explain the relation between the term 'Harraga' and becoming. They argue that the illegal immigrants' act of burning their documents is "a voluntary 'de-humanisation' in the sense that it breaks the relation between your name and your body. A body without a name is a non-human human being, an animal which runs" (4). The authors show that crossing the borders of Spain necessitates a becoming-animal. Becoming-animal is one of the strategies that Deleuze and Guattari propose to obviate the pressures of social classifications.

To show resistance to social pressures, Mourad resolves to connect to other passengers who have nothing in common. This heterogeneous connection is an important condition of becoming-animal. These connections are a result of a process of contagion. Deleuze and Guattari view contagion as a means of peopling a pack, they explain that, "[b]ands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes" (241). In Lalami's novel, contagion is embodied in the dream shared by all passengers on the boat. All passengers cherish the dream of having a dignified life. However, the dream seems to be out of reach for many passengers. Mourad is one of the passengers who fail to realize the dream. Just at the moment when Mourad sets his feet on the Spanish soil, dreaming about his happy life in Spain, "THE OFFICER FROM the Guardia Civil" appears to interrupt his fantasies. He endeavors to



escape the guards. However, his efforts are sterile, Mourad's imprisonment is the end of his journey in Spain. The chase and the imprisonment that mark Mourad's journey stress his becoming-animal (13-14).

Suspecting the danger that these illegal immigrants may represent, the Spanish authorities order their imprisonment. Mourad can feel this fear in the way the guards and the doctors deal with them. Doctors wear "surgical masks on their faces" (15) so as not to be contaminated by the contagion that these passengers will spread. Although he is conscious that his return to Morocco is inevitable, Mourad refuses to give his real name (15). Mourad wants to be imperceptible. Deleuze and Guattari argue that, "[t]he imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming" (279). By refusing to give his name, Mourad becomes "everybody/everything" (Deleuze and Guattari 280). Mourad's becoming imperceptible reveals his nomadic mind.

Although he fails to have the expected end of his trip, Mourad can still be considered a nomad. Mourad is a nomad because his becoming process did not experience any obstacle. Despite the disappointing return, Mourad is able to envisage a new life in his homeland. Consequently, Mourad becomes an "urban nomad" (Deleuze and Guattari 482). For Deleuze and Guattari, an urban nomad is a person who lives "smooth" even in the most striated sites. Mourad is the urban nomad par excellence, since he manages to travel to a desired place when he is not compelled to desert Morocco. Mourad constructs his own world within the oppressive conditions of his state.

This nomadic existence is achieved through his decision to become a writer. When Mourad hears one of the tourists claiming that Paul Bowles knew Morocco "better than the Moroccans themselves" (174), Mourad resolves to stop telling tales of Paul Bowles. He will narrate his own stories. Mourad dismisses the striated space to plunge immediately "in the story he would start writing tonight" (186). The decision to write demonstrates Mourad's successful becoming. In "Literature and Life", Deleuze stresses the close link between becoming and writing. He argues that "writing is inseparable from becoming: in writing, one becomes-woman, becomes-animal or -vegetable, becomes-molecule, to the point of becoming-imperceptible" (225). Here, writing enables Mourad to transcend his actual state to become a new thing. Through writing he is able to experiment with new dimensions of his existence.

Through her novel, Lalami shows that writing is not the sole strategy of resistance. There is no unified strategy for all nomads. Every nomad invents the strategy that suits his or her circumstances. Throughout the novel, Halima proves to be a nomad in her own way. Her refusal to lead a subordinate existence within marriage denotes her courage. Although her decision to take this trip is viewed by others as a mere matter of levity, Halima defies the norms of her community and resolves to become-woman. Her failure to reach Spain does not confine her to a state of despair. Halima's enthusiasm intensifies through every obstacle she encounters. Her deportation which is considered to be a debacle for lot of immigrants has only empowered Halima.

The trip offers Halima an opportunity to form alliances with other oppressed individuals. These alliances reinforce her determination to resist social pressures. Her rebellious existence has a powerful impact on her husband who decides to give her divorce (116). As a new woman, Halima feels no shame to bear the stigma of divorce. Her divorce brings her a "feeling of elation [ that ] was entirely new to her"(116). This happiness embodies a new force that spurs Halima's creativity. She challenges poverty



through establishing a successful 'beghrir' business (122). Her economic power authenticates her status of an independent woman.

While Halima manages to achieve her independence in her homeland, Faten fails to lead the expected life in Spain. The determination that encouraged her to escape Morocco is transformed into passivity and subjugation. Faten's deteriorated situation is a mere result of her inability to maintain her becoming. Although she was able to escape prison in Morocco and desert that striated space, Faten imprisons herself in the smooth space of Spain. In Spain, Faten can enjoy the freedom of speech and can escape the homeland's pressures. However, these images of emancipation can only perpetuate her marginalization. Faten becomes a prostitute. She escaped Morocco in search of a voice; now in Spain she cannot even own her body. She uses this body as a means of survival. She traded this body to enter Spain (141), now, she offers it to feed herself. Faten's degradation veers onto a dangerous path when she accepts to internalize the stereotypes that her client, Martin, has about Arab women (142). She attempts to satisfy Martin's fantasies in order to help her "get her immigration papers"(132). Through this deal, Faten is enslaved; she turns to be the passive, sensual woman that nourishes the Orientalist fantasy of her client.

This transformation clearly reveals the wrong path that her becoming process takes. Deleuze and Guattari caution the reader about the dangers of becoming. They believe that becoming may lead to the annihilation of the self when the body detaches itself from all the rigid codes in an impulsive manner. They explain that, "this too-sudden destratification. . . will sometimes end in chaos, the void and destruction, and sometimes lock us back into the strata, which become more rigid still" ( 503). By discarding all the categorizations in an impulsive way, Faten is enmeshed into the void. Consequently, she is entrapped into a more striated field. Because the title of the novel is *Hope and Other dangerous Pursuits*, Lalami shows how hope dwells in the most dangerous situations. For Faten, hope can be seen in her refusal of Martin's help to get her papers. She does not want to pay that "price . . . every time if she wanted to see him" (143). Through this act, Faten rebels against the classifications and the cataloguing of identities.

For Faten, Spain embodies another striated space that she has to smooth. Similarly, Aziz realizes that Spain is not the smooth space he expected to inhabit. Although Aziz's journey in Spain is more successful than his fellow passengers, he fails to achieve happiness and satisfaction. Aziz's malaise lies in his inability to belong. Despite securing the necessary papers to allow him be legal, Aziz still views himself as an outsider. He painfully recalls scenes of discrimination he endures in Spain: "He didn't describe how, at the grocery store, cashiers greeted customers with hellos and thank yous, but their eyes always gazed past him as though he were invisible" (155). Although he exhibits a personality that is coherent with the norms of his adopted country, Aziz is rejected. He is rejected by the social and cultural norms that seek to block his identity in fixed conceptions. Consequently, Aziz reacts to marginalization through isolation. Anthony Giddens argues that "withdrawal from the outside » is a tactic used by individuals to cope with modern society's anxiety (135). Upon his return, Aziz is asked whether he has any friends in Spain, Aziz could only mention his neighbor and his boss (155). Aziz's loneliness echoes his homelessness.

For some immigrants this inability to belong to the host country is related to their strong longing for the homeland. In Aziz's case, Morocco is not a home for him. Aziz's homecoming is marked with ambiguity. He shows revulsion towards many



images (151). He neither belongs to Spain nor to Morocco. This frustration stems from Aziz's inability to find his smooth space. He loses his capacity to smooth the striated because his becoming is blocked. Aziz's becoming is hampered by the social classifications that aim at plugging possibilities of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari 270). The racism and the discrimination that Aziz experiences in Spain are responsible for impeding his becoming. As a result, Aziz ceases to be a nomad.

Crossing the geographical borders in search of emancipation does not constitute a successful tactic for everybody. While physical displacement embodies a gateway for creativity for some individuals, others regard their trip as a thwarted experience. Emancipation and creativity should not be restricted to physical movements because smooth and striated spaces exist everywhere. Freedom depends on the individual's capacity to create a smooth space within the oppressive milieu of either the homeland or the host country. The modern nomad is the person who manages to transgress the classifications that the society reserves for him or her and follow his or her own trajectory. Despite their similarities, the modern nomad and the illegal immigrant differ in many ways. The modern nomad is a person who refuses his/ her being and seeks the becoming.

#### Notes

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<sup>i</sup> In his article, entitled The Harraga of Tangiers, Majid Hanonoum argues that the term "*harraga* comes from the word *hrag*, meaning "to burn". The word *lahrig* has different meanings, including "to burn", which means to violate the law to go to Europe; to burn, which means to cross the sea by an act of transgression . . . The term is also used to refer to someone who has overstayed his or her visa and thus has become a *harrag*, that is, an "illegal" immigrant" (232).

<sup>ii</sup> Divorce in Morocco under pre-2004 Family Code offered men more freedom in divorcing their wives while women's chances to get a divorce were severely limited. Women sought the help of religious men when they had a complaint to report. They can ask for a divorce in the cases of abuse and mistreatment. Lot of women were not granted divorce, despite the mistreatment they faced in marriage. When the reformed 'Moudawana' was passed, women were able to have an access to courts. Through the changes of the 'Moudawana', women have secured more freedom and support (qtd in. Leila Hanafi 7).

<sup>iii</sup> In defining the molar line, Deleuze claims that, "Segments depend on binary machines which can be very varied if need be. Binary machines of social classes; of sexes, man-woman; of ages, child-adult; of races, black-white; of sectors, public-private; of subjectivations, ours-not ours" (Deleuze, *Dialogues* 128). Through this dualism, the individual's life is definitely planified. The person has no chance to seek freedom within the rigid segments of the molar line.

<sup>iv</sup> According to Deleuze and Guattari, the molecular line's segments are not as rigid as the molar line's. They are "more supple but no less disquieting" (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 199). The molecular line's segments are responsible for changes that defy and oppose the molar line's rigidification.



<sup>v</sup> The concept is used by the philosopher [Baruch Spinoza](#) and elaborated by [Gilles Deleuze](#) and [Félix Guattari](#) in *A Thousand Plateaus*. It is used to designate a bodily experience. For Spinoza, the affect can be related to feelings but it differs in other ways. Spinoza relates the affect to the body's powers. According to him, the person can increase his or her body's powers by affecting and being affected by other bodies. In the introduction of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi summarizes Deleuze and Guattari's definition of affect as follows: AFFECT/AFFECTION. Neither word denotes a personal feeling (*sentiment* in Deleuze and Guattari). *L'affect* (Spinoza's *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection* (Spinoza's *affectio*) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include "mental" or ideal bodies) (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari xvi).

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