MARCELA DE OLIVEIRA E SILVA LEMOS

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# MAPPINGS OF WAR AND SUBJECTIVITY IN THE WOMEN'S CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES
# *READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN, WE ARE ON OUR OWN*, AND *GOODBYE SARAJEVO*

Belo Horizonte
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Dissertação de mestrado apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Literários da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Mestre em Letras: Estudos Literários.

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*To Daniel, my fellow traveler*
*of the long and winding road.*

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"War's being global meant it ran off the edges of maps."

Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*

**Abstract**

This thesis examines Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own*, and Atka Reid and Hana Schofield's *Goodbye Sarajevo* to shed light on the relationship between war and constructions of identity in these narratives. I argue that war acts upon the self because it affects the relations between subject positions and power in a given narrative of space and time. Studies about the literature of war written by women tend to privilege gender in analyses of characters' subjectivity, minimizing or disregarding aspects of identity lying beyond the borders of this category. By contrast, based on the theory and criticism of women's literature of war, locational feminism, and contemporary cartographies of identity, this thesis develops mappings of the various social positions occupied by women characters at different contexts defined by the course of wars. This approach mainly follows Susan Stanford Friedman's discussion about the discourses of the multiplicity, relationality, and situationality of the axes of identity. In this sense, my mappings disclose the effects of conflicts on the portrayed spaces, systems of power, and displaced subjectivities. I also regard the grafting of the characters' hybrid identities as an extended consequence of war, as it motivates the geographical and metaphorical movements that provoke cultural encounters and superimpositions. I conclude that, according to Homi Bhabha's theorization, this thesis performs a move beyond in the study of war literature and women's writings, crossing the boundaries of gender as a standpoint for investigations of identity in order to account for postmodern notions of subjectivity as multiplicity and a locational approach to feminist critical practice.

**Keywords**: literature of war written by women; contemporary cartographies of identity; locational feminism; mappings; subjectivity.

**Resumo**

Esta dissertação examina *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, de Azar Nafisi, *We Are on Our Own*, de Miriam Katin e *Goodbye Sarajevo*, de Atka Reid e Hana Schofield, com o objetivo de contribuir para o entendimento da relação entre guerra e construções de identidade nessas narrativas. Propõe-se que a guerra afeta o indivíduo porque abala as relações entre posições do sujeito e poder em um dado espaço e tempo da narrativa. Estudos sobre a literatura de guerra escrita por mulheres tendem a privilegiar o gênero em análises da subjetividade das personagens, negligenciando aspectos identitários fronteiriços a essa categoria. Em contrapartida, baseando-se num aparato teórico-crítico sobre essa literatura, feminismo locacional e cartografias identitárias contemporâneas, essa dissertação desenvolve mapeamentos das várias posições sociais ocupadas por personagens mulheres em diferentes contextos definidos pelo curso das guerras. Essa abordagem segue principalmente a discussão de Susan Stanford Friedman sobre os discursos da multiplicidade, relacionalidade e situacionalidade dos eixos identitários. Nesse sentido, tais mapas revelam os efeitos dos conflitos sobre os espaços, sistemas de poder e subjetividades deslocadas representados. Também se considera consequência da guerra o processo de enxerto das identidades híbridas das personagens, uma vez que a guerra motiva os movimentos geográficos e metafóricos que provocam encontros e sobreposições culturais. Conclui-se que, de acordo com a teorização de Homi Bhabha, essa dissertação executa um movimento para além no estudo da literatura de guerra e da escrita das mulheres, transpondo as fronteiras do gênero como ponto de partida para investigações de identidade, de forma a fazer valer as noções pós-modernas de subjetividades múltiplas e a abordagem locacional da crítica feminista.

**Palavras-chaves**: literatura de guerra escrita por mulheres; cartografias identitárias contemporâneas; feminismo locacional; mapeamentos; subjetividade.

## List of Figures

**Contents**

## Introduction

> "There is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth."
>
> Homi Bhabha

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha examines the contemporary cultural movement towards the "beyond." He argues that "beyond" is neither a deferred and unreachable position nor a rigid boundary between past, present, and future, but a fluid liminal space for exchange and articulation of differences. To Bhabha, "the realm of the beyond" is "a space of intervention in the here and now" (7), that is, a constant reading of the future that allows a revisionary return and reconfiguration of the present. A similar conceptualization is present in Susan Stanford Friedman's *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (1998). Friedman's appropriation of the term "beyond" entails a look towards aspects that, lying on the borders of gender, may complement this category in the study of subjectivity within feminist critical practice. The use of "beyond" in the title of this thesis is intended to evoke the notions of revision, intervention, and reconfiguration which, devised by Bhabha and Friedman, have inspired me to propose a similar move in the intersection between women's and war literature.

The study of the literature of war written by women has the undeniable importance of resisting silence and gender blindness within a field traditionally centered on male soldier-writers. The progress of research on women's literary representation of conflicts, however, is often hindered by a tendency to focus almost exclusively on gender in analyses of characters' subjectivity as related to war.[1] As a consequence, other important aspects of identity – for

[1] Works in feminist and postcolonial theory and criticism frequently address the blurred distinction between the terms "identity" and "subjectivity." Throughout this thesis, I follow Linda Martín Alcoff's (2006) definition that

instance, class, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality – and their influence on one another in wartime are minimized or disregarded through critical debates that strengthen the binary, alienating opposition between male and female, men's and women's experiences of war. I intend to contribute to this critical conversation with a reading that, although attentive to issues of gender, is not limited to them.

This thesis investigates the relationship between war and constructions of identity in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003), Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own* (2006), and Atka Reid and Hana Schofield's *Goodbye Sarajevo* (2011). For this purpose, I develop mappings of the social positions occupied by the women characters in different situations defined by the course of wars in each work. These mappings demonstrate that war acts upon the self because it affects the relations between subject positions and power in a given narrative space and time. Ultimately, this thesis expects to confirm that the study of the relationship between war and subjectivity in women's writings shall move beyond the exclusiveness of gender as a category for analysis to account for postmodern notions of subjectivity as multiplicity, and for a locational approach to feminist critical practice.

*Reading Lolita in Tehran* is often read among the so-called return narratives of the Iranian diaspora. This classification, according to Jasmin Darznik (2008), refers to accounts of forced migrations and voluntary homecomings "motivated primarily by a desire to heal a historic [sic] wound" (58), such as Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America* (2003), Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran* (2005), and Marjane Satrapi's *The Complete*

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"[b]y the term identity, one mainly thinks about how we are socially located in public … This *public identity* is our socially perceived self within the systems of perception and classification and the networks of community in which we live … By the term subjectivity, then, I mean to refer to who we understand ourselves to be, how we experience being ourselves. These terms … are generally seen as corresponding to 'interior' and 'exterior' aspects of selves, without always taking note of the constant interplay and even mutually constitutive relations between each aspect" (92-93). My often-interchangeable use of these concepts takes such interplay into consideration, emphasizing that the separation between identity and subjectivity can never be complete because, in our contemporary understanding, social interaction plays a constitutive role in the formation of the subject.

*Persepolis* (2007). *Reading Lolita in Tehran* differs slightly from these memoirs because, while Dumas, Moaveni, and Satrapi leave Iran either because of the threat or the immediate results of severe political changes, the dream of a revolution is in fact one of the reasons for Nafisi's return to Tehran after years abroad. In this manner, this autobiography collects Nafisi's both joyful and painful memories of being a foreigner in the United States in her college days, as well as a "lady Professor" (Nafisi 175) of literatures in English in Tehran from the dawn of the Islamic Revolution to the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq War. The extremist regime established after the revolution disappoints and affects the characters through the imposition of religious traditions and condemnation of Western cultural values. It also attempts to engage the whole country as a cohesive Islamic nation during a long and bloody war against Iraq. In this context, women and literature gradually lose power and freedom, subjected to the moral and violence of the Islamic rulers. To Nafisi, women become "invisible" (70) and "irrelevant" (150), as they cover their bodies, and lose their rights and public voice. Despite the circumstances, Nafisi and her students create a space of resistance in a secret class, where they can exercise their differences and discuss forbidden classics such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955).

Movement through spaces, times, and cultures is also a theme in *We Are on Our Own*, Katin's graphic memoir depicting Jewish persecution in Hungary during World War II. The autobiographical work narrates young Lisa and her mother Esther Levy's escape from recognition and deportation to concentration camps, while the father is away serving in the country's forces. In their journey, the characters move through Budapest, the Hungarian countryside, a postwar Israeli Kibbutz, and New York in the present time of the narrative. The story especially revolves around the theme of identity, first, because Esther and Lisa are forced to forge their own deaths and leave their home and life in Budapest under the disguise of a servant girl with an illegitimate child. Moreover, migration and psychological and

physical violence impact the construction of the mother's and the daughter's subjectivities during and after the war, especially in relation to ethnicity and religion.

Similarly to Katin's memoir, a predominantly ethnic conflict impels characters to migrate in *Goodbye Sarajevo*. The Bosnian sisters Atka Reid and Hana Schofield alternately narrate chapters that portray their separation and struggle during the wars in former Yugoslavia. Their hometown, Sarajevo, is caught in the middle of the Bosnian War for independence, besieged by the enemy Serbian army. After her sister leaves in one of the last convoys, Atka is stuck in the destroyed city with starving younger siblings, constant deadly threats, and a poor but persistent Sarajevan resistance. Hana, in turn, strives as a refugee in Croatia. The book's "Acknowledgments" section indicates that the sisters "revisit memory lane" (Reid and Schofield 337) from a detached and peaceful present in New Zealand, where the family is given shelter. In spite of such apparent reconciliation, the war deeply affects the characters' identities, reshaping how nationality, ethnicity, gender, and religion interact to determine privilege or oppression in different situations.

In each work of the literary corpus, one may observe that war provokes displacements, renegotiations of power, and reconfigurations of the identities of women characters. Therefore, these narratives are not only representations of war, but accounts of mobile and marginal subjectivities reshaped along the borders of different spaces, cultures, and subject positions. The corpus is, in this sense, appropriate for a discussion about affected identities/subjectivities in terms of gender and beyond.

Entitled "gender and beyond," this thesis complements gender as a category for the study of war and subjectivity in literature. It does not, however, intend to minimize the importance of that category. In fact, the very choice of analyzing the subjectivity of women characters in narratives by women writers already demonstrates a concern with questions of gender in literature. In this sense, this research subscribes to the contemporary cartographies

of positionality as a way of thinking about identity within feminist critical practice. My discussion is in agreement with Friedman's (1998) claim that, although never disregarded, the category of gender needs to be reviewed and expanded in literary studies about identity. According to the author, this geographic approach to feminism understands the subject as a fluid location determined by the multiple, contradictory and relational positions it occupies. The "axes of identity" – gender, ethnicity, class, religion, sexuality, nationality, and others – interact with and influence each other; they are emphasized or minimized according to space and time and constantly construct the place of the subject.

Besides and in relation to "beyond," another central point in this thesis is the concept of "mapping." Similarly to other metaphors appropriated from the field of geography to discussions about subjectivity, such as "location," "border," and "cartography," "mapping" here refers not only to a visual representation of topography, but also to a description of the abstract space of the subject. It involves identifying the multiple axes that compose a subject inserted in a geographical, social, and cultural scenario. It also includes unraveling those axes as locations of affirmative and/or restrictive power in different situations. In the three memoirs, war unsettles social organizations and reshapes settings by motivating migrations, for instance. In this sense, mappings are necessary both to understand the impact of war on the portrayed worlds and to assess its effects on the characters' identities. Moreover, Rosi Braidotti (2011) argues that "[c]artographic maps of multiple belonging and of power relations can help identify possible sites and strategies of resistance" (10). In this sense, a cartographic approach to subjectivity in the corpus may indicate common patterns of resistance among women characters that face rather different conflicts.

Braidotti (2011) also claims that "a cartography is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present" (4). In this manner, the continuous sense implied in the term "mapping" suggests a constant process of reading, problematizing, and interpreting, since

identities and power are fluid and shifting in contemporaneity. This persistent "positional analysis" (Friedman, *Mappings* 5) is fundamental to locational feminism, an approach that, according to Friedman's characterization, requires "recognition of how different times and places produce different and changing gender systems … and changing social stratifications" (*Mappings* 5). Considering war an uncontainable event capable of altering times, places, gender systems, social stratifications, and, consequently, the positions of the subject, there are several possibilities of complex identities and power relations to map in the chosen corpus.

This uncontainable and transformational nature of war is accurately expressed in Elizabeth Bowen's words in the epigraph to this thesis: "[w]ar's being global meant it ran off the edges of maps" (347). Although this passage from the novel *The Heat of the Day* (1948) refers to World War II, it can be read more generally in relation to the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries. After all, some of the local conflicts of our times have had global repercussion, affecting international economics and politics. Others, especially those involving third-world countries, by contrast, are often disregarded by the media and never provoke the same commotion.[2] In either case, however, as one may infer from Bowen's statement, war is much more extensive than what can be grasped by our traditional maps, history, and literature. That it runs off the edges of maps means that it transgresses the boundaries of conventional representations towards what lies beyond. There, in the borderline realm of the beyond, it encounters women's marginalized writings, alternative mappings, and unheard versions of history. In this sense, the study of the literature of war written by women through a cartographic approach might also contribute to a better understanding of the extension of war in the contemporary world.

[2] In relation to this contrast, think, for instance, of the global repercussion of the wars in which the United States has participated in the 20th and 21st centuries in comparison with the generally unknown but devastating First and Second Congo Wars, from 1996 to 2003, involving countries such as Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Angola.

For a long time in historical and literary writing, wars were predominantly a male domain. As a consequence, men's literary representations of war were often praised as the authentic expression of those who had been there and seen action. War literature written by women, on the other hand, was frequently received with distrust because women supposedly lacked the authority of presence to write about experiences that they could not have lived away from the battlefield. This judgment of value is questionable because, as I consider in the first chapter, it is debatable that only experience, and not imagination, enables men and women to write. Besides, as emphasized by my comment on Bowen's excerpt above, modern wars, especially World War II, have led to a questioning of simplistic, binary oppositions like home and battlefront, soldier and civilian. Those wars also mark an increase in the effective participation of women in the military effort.

Therefore, several other voices began to compose the collective memory of war, among which are the voices of female workers, nurses, correspondents, prostitutes, wives, mothers, and daughters. The increasing amount of women's writings about war coincides with the strengthening of the feminist movement and feminist literary criticism after World War I. During that conflict, as well as during World War II, women became the largest component of industrial and agricultural labor. In the postwar period, their fight for egalitarianism and for the right to earn their living is reflected in literature. Nevertheless, only recently have women's writings on war become an object of growing interest within the fields of literature by women, gender studies, and war literature.

Studies on gender, feminism, and culture have attempted to undermine the view of war as an exclusively masculine tradition. For that purpose, they often rely on the literature written by women as a tool of legitimization of their participation in war. In this sense, as I will show, anthologies serve as important compilations of women's literary representations of conflicts. Such collections raise awareness of and arouse empathy for women experiences,

besides contributing to the expansion of the memory of war. Nonetheless, providing visibility to women's war writings has been a function exercised not only by anthologies of such texts, but by works concerning women's literature as a whole.

The increasing knowledge about women's literature of war opens space for investigations on the relationship between war and identity in those works. Research on this topic has focused on issues of gender by associating wartime abuse and changes in social roles to questions of subjectivity. Those studies often compare the representation of a woman character before and after the war. Differently from this thesis, they consider her identity as fixed prior to the war, but destabilized and uncertain afterwards. This contrast is then commonly associated with a wartime inversion of gender roles, a relationship established, however, without always taking into account important notions of class and ethnicity. In this line of thought, scholars argue that war functions as a traumatic instance in the woman's life that causes her to develop inner conflicts. This instability is due to the character's inability to find her place in a restructured society.

This thesis is organized into three chapters, besides this introduction and a conclusion. Chapter one departs from Adrienne Rich's 1984 lecture "Notes toward a Politics of Location" not only because of its importance to the development of the feminist cartographies of contemporaneity, but also because this talk provides critical insights valuable to the rethinking of the relationship between women, power, and war. From this starting point, I first propose a look backwards to revisit the history of such relationship, as well as of its representation, from the viewpoint of women's marginal social condition. Then, I turn to the gradual emergence, before and after Rich, of a locational approach to constructions of subjectivity in feminist critical practice. In this regard, I review works by Virginia Woolf, Rich, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Caren Kaplan, Toril Moi, Bhabha, Braidotti, and Friedman, whose concepts and discussions contribute to the theoretical and critical apparatus

that composes the methodology of this thesis. Among them, I particularly focus on Friedman's (1998) schematization of six interrelated discourses of identity that guide the method of literary analysis devised in the same chapter. Finally, I debate the findings and hindrances of other studies concerning subjectivity and women's literature of war.

After this bibliographical review and methodological explanation, I engage in the examination of the literary corpus itself. Chapters two and three develop the proposed mappings of war and women's subjectivity in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *We Are on Our Own*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*. Chapter two investigates the effects of war on women characters in each memoir according to Friedman's (1998) principles of the relationality and situationality of the various axes that constitute identities. It also offers a comparative reading of those women's similar wartime experiences and interactions with the portrayed spaces, despite their contrasting social backgrounds and the differences between the conflicts through which they live. Chapter three, in turn, focuses on the hybridization of characters' identities as a product of migrations and cultural encounters motivated by war. In this sense, I point out and discuss instances of hybridity depicted throughout the stories, or implied in the textual construction of the narratives. As I see it, the examination of such fragmented and hybrid subjectivities has special relevance these days. In a world where the transit of refugees is often called a crisis and incites nationalist speech and circumscribing policies, a study of literary, mobile subjects may serve as an exercise in alterity, allowing a humanization and growing empathy with migrants regardless of their political status.

As for its own position, this thesis stands on a common border between fields, in the interstitial space that connects women's literature, war literature, feminist theory and critical practice, and contemporary cartographies of identity. This transdisciplinary location allows me to approach my objects of study from multiple and combined perspectives, for it enables the exchange and appropriation of concepts and methods between those areas of knowledge.

In this manner, my thesis aims at moving beyond the traditional limits not only of gender-exclusive analyses of subjectivity, but between academic fields of research.

# Chapter One

## Writing in No-Man's Land: Women's Literature of War, Locational Feminism, and Contemporary Cartographies of Identity

"A place on the map is also a place in history."
Adrienne Rich

In her 1984 talk "Notes toward a Politics of Location," Rich asserts the place from which she speaks. The location she underlines is not only Europe, where her words are spoken, or the United States of America, where they were thought, but a social position of intersection of her gender, American citizenship, upper-middle social class, Jewish ethnicity, white skin, and homosexuality.[3] In "Notes," Rich advocates a feminist theory and critical practice that avoids ideological abstraction and reproduction of patriarchal dominance, and that acknowledges difference within the category of women, with a consciousness of their positionality. Her discussion then, as does mine here, understands bodies as having "more than one identity" (Rich 215), which relate to each other and to systems of power in larger locations, like the nation or continent, and various times.

My choice of opening this chapter with Rich's words is due to her early concern with geography, cartographies, and subjectivity. Her speeches and essays in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985* (1986) contribute to the different discourses of identity Friedman (1998) discerns in feminist critical theory and women's writings, such as those of multiple oppression, multiple subject positions, and situationality. Their concepts are,

[3] I use the word "intersection" purposefully to refer to the theory of intersectionality, formulated mainly by law and feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989). As one might notice throughout this chapter, locational feminism shares with intersectional theory the premise that the different traits of a person, such as gender, ethnicity, and nationality, do not exist in isolation, but in an intrinsic and complex relationship with each other. Studies on intersectionality, however, tend to focus more specifically on the understanding and denunciation of systemic injustices, social inequalities, and forms of discrimination. Dialoguing with the politics of location, intersectional theory contributes to the intricate development of locational feminism and contemporary cartographies.

moreover, explored in Braidotti's (1994) proposal of the nomad as the model for contemporary feminist subjectivity. Rich's words are also appropriate to begin this bibliographical review because the trope of war, in literature and humanities, is frequently associated with the history and maps mentioned in the epigraph.

War is inherent in human history. That is not to say that human beings are naturally a warring species,[4] but that wars have early penetrated our cultures, our texts, from representations of the classic battles of the Trojan War in Homer's *Iliad* to historical, autobiographical, and fictional accounts of the global and local wars of the 20th and 21st centuries in literature, painting, cinema, and other arts. Maps, in turn, regarded as reproductions of political demarcations of and within nation-states, but also as "a social construction of the world expressed through the medium of cartography" (Harley 35),[5] delimit regions which are often the motivations for armed conflicts. An example is found in the scramble for Africa, the late 19th and early 20th-century colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers, which helped build the tensions that culminated in the outbreak of World War I in 1914;[6] or in the expansionist drive of some authoritarian regimes,

[4] In optimistic discussions in *Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace*, Douglas P. Fry (2007) questions the cultural belief that warfare is inherent to human nature by presenting data that proves the existence of non-warring societies, whose "culture lacks war … people do not engage in warfare, or … members … respond to threats from other groups by moving elsewhere rather than fighting" (17). Robert O'Connell (1989) similarly argues that war is a cultural product of civilization and of the conflicts over territory that followed its establishment.

[5] Intriguingly, while I appropriate geographical and cartographical concepts throughout this thesis, J. B. Harley (2001) proposes an interpretation of maps adapted from linguistics and literature. He suggests that we read maps as "text rather than as a mirror of nature" (36) because, "[f]ar from holding up a simple mirror of nature that is true or false, maps redescribe the world – like any other document – in terms of relations of power and of cultural practices, preferences, and priorities" (35).

[6] According to Stephen Morillo *et al*. (2009), "[m]ost of Africa was partitioned by European powers between 1830 and 1910" (465). This rapid "increase in imperial ambitions" (Morillo *et al*. 463) was motivated by economic and nationalist rivalry, and the "heightened ambitions and stakes involved in this competition showed up in the dawning conceptions of 'total war' … [and] would become even clearer after 1914" (Morillo *et al*. 502).

leading, among others, to the Napoleonic Wars, and to very World War II.[7] Mappings, even more than a cause, are consequences of wars. I refer, first, to the dangerous act of (re)dividing lands, especially the losers' possessions, among nations, which usually takes place after the war is over or as part of the peacemaking process. One cannot help but mention, in this regard, the Treaty of Versailles, which compelled Germany to make substantial territorial concessions, causing profound resentment and later propelling German revanchism and nationalism;[8] or the Berlin Wall, which, splitting Germany in two, epitomized the division of the world into Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War. Aside from the impact of war on geopolitical boundaries, it is also necessary to point out here its effect on metaphorical mappings of individual identities, since it affects social-economic structures, political rights, notions of borders, and places, which may cause a subject's spatial, social, and cultural dislocation, in a diasporic movement, as I discuss in the subsequent chapters in relation to Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Katin's *We Are on Our Own*, and Reid and Schofield's *Goodbye Sarajevo*.

In this chapter, I first revisit the history of the relationship between war and women, with a focus on the wartime roles they have played from the margins of patriarchal society, with attention to the social changes the category of women has claimed and undergone especially after, and as a consequence of, the rise of the world wars. Next, I review the history of the literary representation of war by women by addressing questions of silencing, authority of experience, and authenticity, and by acknowledging their works. Moreover, I consider the relationship between the literary representation of war by women and feminist movements, aiming to disclose the political function of those writings and their relevance to

[7] David P. Barash and Charles P. Webel (2009) state that "Napoleon, and, in more recent times, Hitler, attempted to conquer larger parts of the world, and although they succeeded briefly (at least in continental Europe), their imperial ambitions were defeated by countervailing military force" (27).

[8] In a discussion about diplomatic failures on the establishment and/or maintenance of peace, Barash and Webel (2009) consider that "German anger and humiliation associated with the Treaty of Versailles (which ended [a] war) led in part to World War II" (249).

feminist literary criticism. The following section reviews the theoretical apparatus central to the methodology of this thesis. I revisit works by Bhabha, Rich, Friedman, and Braidotti, among others, to trace the development of a transdisciplinary locational feminism, which moves beyond gender-exclusive analyses. I also discuss an alternative model of feminist subjectivity, interconnected discourses of identity, the meaning and use of metaphorical, cartographical, and geographical concepts, and a proposed method of mapping the effects of war on women characters. Finally, I consider the contributions and difficulties of other studies on war, diaspora, and subjectivity in the works of the corpus, in their treatment of positionality, gender, and beyond.

## 1.1 Of Margins and Fronts: Women and War

I want to return to Rich's "Notes" for another critical insight. In that talk, she lists among the patriarchal and militarist values repeated through generations "[t]he valorization of manliness and masculinity," and "[t]he archaic idea of women as a 'home front' even as the missiles are deployed in the backyards of Wyoming and Mutlangen"[9] (225). We can argue that, for Rich, militarism and, by extension, war are historically related to male maintenance of power and to a consequent marginalization of women, placed literally and figuratively away from the center of action, negotiation, and representation. This marginal position, or the "idea of women as a 'home front,'" however, does not implicate that women

[9] Rich refers here to the American state of Wyoming and the German city of Mutlangen as bases where the U.S. Forces stationed missiles during the Cold War against the USSR, as part of a strategy of deterrence, or, as Barash and Webel (2009) put it, "peace through strength" (330). According to Donald Mackenzie (1993), "[b]y 1967 … 1,000 Minuteman ICBMs [International Continental Ballistic Missiles] and 54 Titan II ICBMs … sat in underground silos dispersed, miles apart, over nine Air Force reservations in Montana, the Dakotas, Missouri, Wyoming, Arizona, Kansas, and Arkansas" (161). Wyoming, as noted in the website <http://www.warren.afb.mil>, still houses its Air Force reservation. The town of Mutlangen, on the other hand, informs in its page, <http://www.mutlangen.de>, that it has promoted historical tourism in the once military site since December 8th, 2007.

have not suffered or participated in wars, for the center, after all, cannot exist without its margins.[10]

Even when overtly excluded from politics, decision-making processes, and battles themselves, women played valuable roles in wartime national mobilization, offering emotional motivation and comfort to male combatants, supplying military and food industries, supporting the state economy by working in factories, providing for the household, and caring for the injured. All such functions considered, we can understand the archaism of the "idea of women as a 'home front'" as a historical obfuscation of patriarchal society to acknowledge that the homefront is also a front, as much a part of war as the battlefield. To Rich, as I see it, the pervasiveness of war and the absurdity of denying it become most evident in the contemporary world. After the total, global wars of the 20th century, the threat of nuclear holocaust, and the constant menace of terrorism, the rhetoric of fronts, of a gendered, or even spatial, distribution of war, begins to crumble.

But the antiquity, in Western societies at least, of the comprehension of war as a male practice and of women as homely spectators and instigators,[11] leads one to ask of historical texts to what we can attribute that cultural belief. To discuss that, it is important to first clarify the definition of war. In his defense of the overlooked and underappreciated human potential for peace, Douglas P. Fry (2007) considers different understandings of war because,

[10] Although this chapter does not specifically revisit poststructuralist theory, it is necessary to acknowledge the role of scholars of poststructuralism and postmodernism in (re)signifying center and limits of knowledge, and ex-centric, marginalized subjects, such as the women characters discussed in this thesis. In his review of poststructuralism, James Williams (2014) asserts, in a sentence quite similar to mine, that, in poststructuralist works, "[t]here is no core that does not presuppose the limit. The limit comes first, not the core" (5). In spite of this valorization of the margins, which she also identifies in postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon (1988) warns that "the ex-centric relies on the center for its definition" (73), and that the center remains an object of attraction for the marginalized.

[11] For an instance of the literary representation of the notion of women as homely spectators of war, see British poet Siegfried Sassoon's "Glory of Women" (1918), which expresses bitterness towards women's patriotic support of war and their safety, in contrast to the horrors suffered by men: "When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run, / Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood. / O German mother dreaming by the fire, / While you are knitting socks to send your son / His face is trodden deeper in the mud."

to him, "[d]efining war so broadly as to encompass a plethora of individual and group conflict behavior … can facilitate making the claim for the universality of war" (16), against which he argues. After reviewing Keith Otterbein's (1970) proposal that warfare is "armed combat between political communities" (14), and Bobbi Low's (1993) assertion that "war – lethal conflict – is older than humanity itself" (15), Fry favors Roy Prosterman's (1972) idea that war is:

> A group activity, carried on by members of one community against members of another community, in which it is the primary purpose to inflict serious injury or death on multiple nonspecified members of that other community, or in which the primary purpose makes it highly likely that serious injury or death will be inflicted on multiple nonspecified members of that community in the accomplishment of that primary purpose. (140)

This definition is less generalizing because "it clearly excludes individual homicides and feuding and, consequently, clarifies that *war entails relatively impersonal lethal aggression between communities*" (Fry 17). However, it is still controversial because it implicates, for instance, that conflicts between rival criminal gangs in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, which often involve a good portion of the community,[12] are wars, a conclusion usually opposed by scholars of the field.

In a debate about the impossibility of reducing war to a neither broad nor restrictive single statement, Luiz Gustavo Leitão Vieira (2013), for example, argues that "organized

[12] According to Alba Zaluar's 2007 case study "Crimes and Violence Trends in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil," partially reproduced in the United Nations' *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements 2007*, "Drug Commands have transient skirmishes to dispute the territory of shantytowns where their markets are located. … [T]he drug lords or "donos" restrict the movements of dwellers and governmental agents … Residents of one favela cannot enter the territory of an "enemy" favela … If they do, they are killed. … This is what… some districts call 'the endless war', which consists of opposing members of enemy trafficking commands or policemen confronting traffickers. During these violent clashes, not only gang members, but also youths that live in the invaded or threatened favelas are told to help the local defenders against their 'common enemies'" (19). Zaluar also highlights that the community is often coerced to cooperate in such conflicts, under threats of expulsion and execution.

violence is not necessarily war"[13] (26). The formulation Vieira prefers to adopt throughout his study is adapted from Robert O'Connell (1995), who establishes "a set of characteristics that delimit what we should understand as war … a 'defining structure'"[14] (Vieira 26). This model of war consists of premeditation and planning, origin in collectivity, leadership, willingness to engage in warfare, and result. Vieira admits that wars do not necessarily involve all the components of O'Connell's structure, for they may vary culturally, and that the model fails to account for human emotions, irrationality, and imponderability, inherent, in his opinion, to warfare. Nevertheless, he considers that set of characteristics "useful and reliable"[15] as "elements outlining a theoretical formulation towards a definition of war"[16] (27) because they are present in accounts of current as well as ancient conflicts, even those prior to the creation of nation-states and modern armies, such as the Trojan War.

To my purpose of seeking in history explanations for the cultural belief in the nonparticipation of women in wars, O'Connell's defining structure of war, adopted here as brought by Vieira, offers important insights. Of all its components, willingness, or the readiness to "engage in actions of certain duration [and] that implicate risks"[17] (Vieira 26), is the only that often includes women. Premeditation and planning, collective origin, and leadership involve, in turn, the high ranks of the military and politics, fields from which women tend to be excluded in peace and wartime.

Surely enough, if we look thousands of years back, into the beginnings of civilization, we find a gendered distribution of tasks in human settlements that attribute to men, because

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[13] "[V]iolência organizada não é necessariamente guerra." This and subsequent translations from Vieira (2013) are mine.

[14] "[C]aracterísticas que delimitem o que devemos compreender como guerra – o que ele chama de 'estrutura definidora.'"

[15] "[Ú]teis e acertadas."

[16] "[E]lementos balizadores de uma formulação teórica para definição da guerra."

[17] "[S]e engajar em ações de certa duração que implicam em riscos."

of their greater body proportions and strength, the functions of protecting the group against the most various threats, hunting, and handling heavy work, all of which could involve tools or weapons, if available. But Almeida (2015) draws attention to the manner that scenario is appropriated throughout time to serve "the perverse logics of biological determinism,"[18] a discourse in which:

> [M]en, for their physical constitution and strength, would be in a position of superiority, acting as providers of the family and agents of the public sphere. Women, on the other hand, would be relegated to private spaces for their maternal role and supposed physical fragility, exercising activities strictly linked to the domestic zone, such as housework and child care.[19] (20)

From primitive warriors to the "agents of the public sphere," therefore, men have dominated the processes involved in the structure of war. It would, however, be uncritical of us, contemporary readers of poststructuralist, posthumanist, and postmodern theories, to continue to attribute to "an essentialist view of sexual difference"[20] (Almeida 20) the maintenance of patriarchal power through the centuries. War is believed to be a male activity because it originates in structures traditionally controlled by men, and because it retroactively enforces male supremacy and patriarchal values as one of its results. Women are not alienated from wars because they are peaceful, nurturing, and feeble.[21] They are, in fact, archaically idealized as a homefront because they have been historically denied participation in politics

[18] "[A] lógica perversa do determinismo biológico." This and subsequent translations from Almeida (2015) are mine.

[19] "[O]s homens, por sua constituição e força físicas, estariam em posição de superioridade, atuando, assim, como provedores da família e como agentes na esfera pública. Em contrapartida, as mulheres estariam, então, relegadas ao espaço privado por sua função maternal e suposta fragilidade física, exercendo atividades estritamente ligadas ao plano doméstico, como o cuidado com a casa e os filhos."

[20] "[U]ma visão essencialista da diferença sexual."

[21] In agreement with Fry (2007), and referring to O'Connell (1995), Vieira (2013) argues that war contradicts human, that is, men's, women's, and other genders', biological logic, and that "only culture would be able to offer enough motivation for us to go against our survival instinct and risk our 'personal and hereditary annihilation'" (33).

and public affairs, a point central to Woolf's reflections in *Three Guineas* (1938), commented on in a following section.

Paradoxically, almost as ancient as the marginalization of women from centers of power and wars are the earliest myths and accounts of their direct or indirect participation in those conflicts from their peripheral position. Denise Borille de Abreu (2008) traces such participation back to the mythological Greek goddesses who intervene in the course of war, as represented in Homer's *Iliad*. Thetis, Achilles' mother, for example, is placed in an "unparalleled position," as "intermediary between soldiers in the battlefield and the gods" (Abreu 20-21), and exercises her influence on Zeus in behalf of the Trojans, on her son's request. The goddess of love, Aphrodite, on the other hand, protects Paris, the seducer of Helen. Abreu argues that another important woman in this mythological world is Penelope, the Queen of Ithaca. Her role is closer to the "women as home front" than Thetis's, for she remains at her palace in charge of domestic chores. However, her ingenious stratagem of undoing by night her daytime weaving of Laertes's burial shroud, to put off her second wedding, demonstrates agency and subtle power over her own fate during and after the war. Moreover, from both myth and history, Abreu cites the Amazons, "a tribe of women warriors" (19) in ancient Greece, as the heading of a "long outline of women who played an outstanding role in wartime" (24). They are followed, when one turns to British history, by women like Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth I,[22] and Florence Nightingale, respectively, in the 15th, 16th, and 19th centuries. Those women's celebrated deeds suggest the existence of nameless, but similarly important others, and helps unsettle patriarchal assumptions about gender roles in war and peacetime.

[22] An illustration of the Queen's role in wartime is her famous 1588 speech to the British troops at Tilbury, Essex, before confrontation with the Spanish Armada, in which she claims, according to The British Library website, and in present-day English, "I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field."

This questioning of patriarchal, essentialist definitions of gender roles becomes more evident, as Rich states, with the emergence of total wars in the 20th century because of a notorious wartime change in women's condition, which makes explicit their significant participation in such conflicts. The wartime inversion of gender roles is one of the central issues in Abreu's discussion. She believes that the representation of women in war has evolved from myth, as considered above, to silent victims, and from those to "proactive members" of society (Abreu 6). She also argues that these shifts in representation are motivated by actual social changes in women's status. Prior to World War I, for example, "women did not do military service" (Abreu 8), and they were expected to be "merciful, caring, nurturing, and pure… in association with the Virgin [Mary]" (Abreu 10). This image, appropriately defined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979) as "the angel in the house" (17), placed women in the position of helpless objects of protection, and patriotic supporters of the nation in war.

Women were forced out of that role "to join the workforce in order to replace men who were drafted into military service" (Abreu 11). They had to leave the private space of the domestic sphere to occupy farms, factories, and commerce. Of course, a concession must be made that those new functions were still an imposition of a patriarchal system of government in total war, compelling its citizens, often through patriotic fallacies, to contribute to the national effort. Nevertheless, outside the house, women encountered possibilities. As political activists, ambulance drivers, nurses, journalists, and factory workers, they became "independent wage-earning women" (Abreu 14). The earning of their livings empowered them because their existence was no longer contingent on a man's wage. Once achieved, such status would not be easily given up. It turned into a reason for rivalry between women and returning soldiers, who had to compete with them for work, and felt emasculated by the

changes in gender roles, on top of their often-damaged condition. It also motivated women's movements in their proactive fight for equality of rights.

A hundred years after the end of World War I, however, there are still cultural traces of Rich's "archaic idea of women as a home front" and of Almeida's "essentialist view of sexual difference" in the way we regard the relationship between women and war. Ifat Maoz (2009), addresses, for instance, the "'women and peace' hypothesis" (519) in her analysis of the effects, on Israeli-Palestinian peace transactions, of the national identity and gender of a negotiator offering a compromise proposal. Her findings confirm that the social belief in a "tendency of women to hold more peaceful and compromising attitudes than men" (Maoz 519) grants them a more favorable reception of proposals. Galia Golan aptly advises her audience, nevertheless, that this must not be "the often-held discussion on … whether or not women are more peace-loving than men" (42), but, as I see it, an effort to acknowledge how those women appropriate the stereotypical image historically associated with them to minimize and prevent conflicts. Nonetheless, continued questioning of such fixed, essentialist notions of identity and gendered functions in either war or peace is necessary so that people may, for example, educate themselves not to accept, and to help reduce, the prejudice and abuses women suffer in military careers.[23] This way it will finally be possible to read women's writings on war for their literary value, since such a wide participation in conflicts would not go unwritten.

## 1.2 Of /Off No-Man's Land: Women in War Literature

[23] Kirby Dick's 2012 documentary film *The Invisible War* denounces, according to the numbers of the U.S. Department of Defense, that "3,230 women and men serving the military reported sexual assault in the fiscal year of 2009." The Department, moreover, admits that "as much as 80% of survivors of such abuse do not report," and that the estimated number of service members attacked in 2009 rises to 16,150 (00:14:18-00:14:20). Among the various reactions to the film is the creation of the national organization Protect Our Defenders (POD), dedicated to offering support to victims, and to ending, through policy reforms, advocacy, and public education, "the epidemic of rape and sexual assault in the military," according to the page <http://www.protectourdefenders.com/about>.

The title of this chapter, "Writing in No-Man's Land," refers to a space whose literal and metaphorical meanings are relevant to the study of war and its representations, especially those produced by women. "No-man's land" acquired its contemporary connotation mainly because of World War I. Before that, according to historian Joseph E. Persico (2005), "[t]he term was believed to have been used … to define a contested territory," and, in its first recorded usage dated from 1320, to denominate "a dumping ground for refuse between provinces and fiefdoms" (68). Within the model of trench warfare of the Great War, it signifies "the terrain between enemy trenches" (Persico 68), controlled by neither part and disputed by both. That land is often represented, in art and history, as a devastated place, where corpses of soldiers rot in the mud and rain, among remnants of civilization.[24] The expression, and variations such as "no-woman's land," serves as title to various articles, movies, and books, among which is Gilbert and Gubar's 19th and 20th-century historiography of women writers, compiled in three volumes: *The War of Words* (1988), *Sexchanges* (1989), and *Letters from the Front* (1994).

Gilbert and Gubar appropriate "no-man's land" as a metaphor for the 20th-century literary and institutional scene, which they see as "a vexed terrain," where "armies of men and women … clash by day and night" (*The War of Words* xiii). To the authors, this "battle of the sexes" (*The War of Words* 4) is related to the diversification of women's social roles in World War I, after which "the rise of the New Woman was not matched by the coming of a New Man but instead was identified … with a crisis of masculinity that we have imaged through the figure of the no-man" (*Sexchanges* xii). The "no-man" is the disillusioned homecoming soldier, the wounded, and the shell-shocked, often unable, or unwilling, to

[24] For artistic representations of no-man's land, see, for example, the paintings "We Are Making a New World" (1918), "Wire" (1918-1919), by Paul Nash, "Over the Top" (1918), by John Nash, and "Paths of Glory" (1917), by Christopher Nevinson.

return to life as it once was.[25] Gilbert and Gubar thus disturbingly suggest that "the Great War … allowed at least women to profit from male pain" (*Sexchanges* xvii) because it helped create conditions for them to claim their place in the public sphere, which, as the expression "no-man's land," literally read, implies, did no longer belong to men.

As much as I admire Gilbert and Gubar's work in defining the place of the woman writer in the last century as one of empowerment, I am skeptical towards their view of no-man's land as a metaphor for an even dispute between men and women, especially in relation to the literary scene. This preoccupation is shared, according to the authors themselves, by "nineteenth and twentieth-century women writers [who] have been far less confident of women's victory" in the battle of sexes (*The War of Words* 66). In this sense, I would like to propose other readings of "no-man's land" that regard it as a figurative space for women's writings of war, and women's literature in general.

One reading considers that no-man's land is an area between enemy trenches to suggest its understanding as a liminal space, a space "in-between." Bhabha (1994) regards "in-between" as a space of the marginal, of the limiting, an interstice bridging opposing parts, where difference is acknowledged and articulated. If one takes into account, as in the previous section, that women are relegated to the margins of Western warring societies, one may begin to see these societies' liminal space of no-man's land as metaphorically populated by women. In this sense, when women represent war, they write from that paradoxical place of multiple (non-)belonging. This position might be the one to which Woolf (1938) refers when she states that "if you [brother] insist upon fighting to protect me, or 'our' country, let it

[25] An example of this "no-man" in the literature of the Lost Generation is Ernest Hemingway's character Harold Krebs in "Soldier's Home" (1924). The free indirect discourse of this narrative provides access to Krebs's unspoken, depressive, and guilty postwar thoughts, and to his unwillingness to live: "[h]e would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. He did not want to get into the intrigue and the politics ... He did not want to tell any more lies. It wasn't worth it. He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along without consequences" (99). In Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), moreover, the hero is "de-manned," impotent from a war wound, while the heroine, Lady Brett Ashley, is an example of the New Woman, financially and sexually independent.

be understood" that, because that country has historically denied women the same rights as men, "as a woman, I have no country … As a woman, my country is the whole world" (108-109). In this passage, Woolf underlines the alienation of her sisters from the war-making political centers, also locating women in the margins, and, as I suggest, in that in-betweenness of no-man's land.

To the entrenched soldier, no-man's land is a place of danger and fear. Persico (2005) well illustrates that sensation through a Lieutenant of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment's memories of a raid. The Lieutenant reports that "[t]he party waited in brittle silence, during which 'tiny noises are magnified a hundred fold … a very ominous sign'" (69). This atmosphere of suspense and terror is, moreover, magnified by the anticipation of confrontation with the enemy: "My heart thumps so heavily that they must hear it, my face is covered with cold perspiration … I have one solitary thought: I am going to kill a man … and the thought makes me miserable and at the same time joyful" (Persico 70). The conflicting misery and joy the Lieutenant describes can be associated with the dynamics of abjection: an oscillation between repulsion and attraction. No-man's land lures the soldier for its promise of the overwhelming thrill of facing death. The filthy sight of decomposing, dismembered bodies and waste, however, strongly repels them. Almeida (2015) adequately remarks that, to French poststructuralist theorist Julia Kristeva, "the abject is fundamentally associated with the feminine, and the maternal element"[26] (103). The relationship of the abject to no-man's land, on the one hand, and to the feminine, on the other, supports, in my view, the possibility of reading that space as metaphorically connected to women, and as the position from where they write war.

Aside from a field for a battle of the sexes, or a space of in-betweenness and abjection, I believe it is possible to read no-man's land, in its relation to women's writings, as

[26] "Para Kristeva, o abjeto é fundamentalmente associado ao feminino e ao elemento materno."

a non-place, or a de-place.[27] A de-place is what I understand as the antithesis of an acknowledged space. It is denial, silence, suspended existence. This view is inspired by one of Gilbert and Gubar's own descriptions of no-man's land as "a land that was *not*, a country of the impossible" (*Sexchanges* 267). It draws from the acoustic similarity between "de-place" and "displace." Displacement is an important word to this thesis because it is, spatially and socially, one of the main effects of war on the (re)construction of women characters' subjectivity. It is also relevant here because, as much as it may imply movement forced upon the subject, it also suggests a degree of trespassing, transgressing the physical and social borders the displaced subject crosses. In this sense, when I argue that women write from the de-place of no-man's land, I do not mean to pessimistically sentence their literature to remain enclosed within that space. On the contrary, despite the thick barbed wire and enclosing silence and denial, women's writings have and will continue to transgress such borders, in a movement off and, one might say, beyond no-man's land.

Although the focus of this section is the literature of war produced by women, I see the space of no-man's land, as I have been discussing, as a metaphor for the place from/off which women have historically written, whether they represent war or not. As a matter of fact, silencing and denial from a male-centered publishing industry and criticism are among the main difficulties Gilbert and Gubar (2007) name to now celebrated authoresses such as Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, and George Eliot. The lives and works of Behn, the Brontës, and Eliot are, in fact, much earlier mentioned in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), helping support her thesis that basic material conditions, namely, five hundred pounds a year and an undisturbed room of her own,

[27] The concept of de-placement came to my knowledge during Elena Isayev's lecture "Unmapped World: Meshworks Rather than Nation States" (2017), when she discussed that, in a speech recreated by ancient historian Livy, the dictator Camillus, returning to a war-torn Rome after exile, expresses greater fear of de-placement (erasure, inexistence of his beloved city) than of displacement (moving elsewhere as long as Rome stood).

are requirements for a woman to write good fiction. Such conditions allow for a state that Woolf calls "freedom of the mind," that is, the ability to "think of things in themselves" (*A Room of One's Own* 47), "or rather the possibility that in the course of time the mind will be free to write what it likes" (*A Room of One's Own* 77). The woman of letters Woolf pictures is financially independent from men and family, and, thus, able to devote time and effort to her production, itself unconstrained by economic subordination and paternalistic influence. However, aside from materialism, this "intellectual freedom" is affected by education. In discussing this matter, Woolf often lends a resentful tone to her text, for, to her, while men were entitled to "the best education England can give" (*A Room of One's Own* 126), women usually received faulty instruction. Either she did not see herself as a counter-example or she thought she could have received a better education if she had been born a man.

In *Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* (1999), a collection of women's texts on the Great War, Margaret Higonnet revisits the relation between women's education and writing: "[w]e continue to encounter the thesis that women's domestic condition, their lack of education, and their education in femininity prevented them from recording their experiences or reactions to public events, especially 'war'" (xxii). Like Woolf, Higonnet acknowledges women's deficient intellectual instruction as a hindrance to their literary production. However, the previous quote also suggests that she sees that "lack of education" and "education in femininity" as a common "thesis," or argument, for leaving women's effective writings out of a male-centered tradition, which is valued, in turn, as elevated, elaborate, and authentic. As a matter of fact, among the challenges shared by women's literature in general and women's literature of war, it is the question of the authority of "authentic" experience that mostly draws my attention, especially because this idea remains strong, even with the increasing recognition of women's representations of conflicts.

Within the field of literature of war, the authority granted to male writings seems to be based on the already discussed "archaic idea of women as a home front." In this line of reasoning, since men experience the "reality" of the battlefield, their representation of war is the reliable, realistic account of those who had been there. In contrast, women's writings have frequently been distrusted, for how could women narrate experiences they would not have lived in the safety of the homefront? As I have argued in the previous section, the notion that women do not face wars is fallacious because, although excluded from the centers of war-making power structures, they have historically played important roles from their marginal position. However, just as such participation is often unacknowledged and forgotten, so are, according to Higonnet (1999), women's testimonies and reactions neglected in bibliographies and official archives of war, for institutions, and "earlier historians and critics" (xxii) tended to narrow the whole of the event of war to combat. This restricting and exclusionary practice, nevertheless, is not yet, unfortunately, left in the past. The contemporary scholar of war, Samuel Hynes (1990), for instance, argues that "[t]here is nothing like a war for demonstrating to women their inferior status, nothing like the war experiences of men for making clear the exclusion of women from life's great excitements" (88). In this biased and war-glorifying passage, Hynes also reduces war to firing lines, and seems to disregard its extensive effects, a position somewhat contradictory to a scholar who devises the notion of the Myth of War. "'Combat,'" Higonnet reminds us, "is not the sum total of 'war'" (xxi). Therefore, each of the several forms of experiencing war discussed so far should allow for its account to be seen as "authentic," regardless the gender of whoever lives or writes them.

What is most intriguing about the authority derived from experience is that, while it remains a question that women writers have to confront, that has pointedly not been an issue to male authors who did not live through war. Higonnet points out that "Rupert Brooke, usually thought to be a 'war poet,' died of disease before he ever saw combat" (xxiii).

Stephen Crane, in turn, was born six years after the end of the American Civil War. Yet, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) was received with acclaim. These observations suggest that it is the maintenance of a gender-based literary hierarchy, in which men' texts are superior to women's, rather than the actual need for battlefield experience, that underlies the depreciation of women's literature of war as inauthentic, unrealistic, and faulty. They also indicate that it may be imagination and empathy, more than authentic experience, that allows men and women to write good literature of war.

This notion of the valorization of works of imagination in the face of accounts of "real" experience escalates towards the turn of the 21st century. Scholars such as Hayden White (1978), Linda Hutcheon (1988), Higonnet herself, and writers like Tim O'Brien (1990) and Ian McEwan (2001) call into question, through a critical view of historiography and the production of historiographic metafiction, the possibility of authoritative claims to truth in the discipline of history and so-called factual accounts. They assert the common textuality of both fiction and history, and level these discourses, disclosing how narratives we consider authentic reports of experience are, in fact, inevitably articulated through what Jacques Rancière (2004) calls "the logic of fiction" (35). That is, every story is inescapably intertwined with a subjective perception of reality and ordering of events, with the imprecision of memories, or our inability to face them, and with the limitations and arbitrariness of language. In this sense, the view of authority and authenticity of "a true war story," to use O'Brien's celebrated phrase, is undermined, for the benefit of a supposedly more democratic and inclusive field of war literature.

Our postmodern and contemporary comprehension of the inconsistency of notions of authority and authenticity in war literature, however, does not erase women's long-lasting struggle against them. While some women authors supposedly agree that male experiences

and, thus, representations of war are more valuable than their own,[28] others address this matter ironically, and demur while seeming to assent. A case in point is Edith Wharton's "Writing a War Story" (1919), a narrative of pretty nurse Ivy Spang's failure in composing "a good stirring trench story" (Wharton 248) for a magazine during World War I. Throughout the tale, Ivy strives against her (mis)conceptions about literary aesthetics, and wonders "how could your reader know what you were talking about when you didn't know yourself?" (Wharton 249). However, as Ivy is at last humiliated for a story she does not even create, but adapts from a soldier's recorded account, Wharton discloses her critique: not against women authors' assumed incompetence, but toward men and their literary hierarchy, dependent more on fallacious ideas of authentic experience, authority, and subordination of women than on writing skills.[29]

In addition to authors who either openly or ironically criticize patriarchal constraints to women's works, other women writers manifest their disagreement by increasingly taking up the pen and representing war in spite of the harshness of their reception. As a result, especially after the two World Wars of the 20th century, a web of relations is delineated between women's new social roles, their writings of war, feminist mobilizations, and the destabilization of essentialist assumptions about gender, conflict, and literature. The wars had created conditions for women to leave the private sphere of the house, and occupy public spaces. The diversification of social roles, the possibility of some financial independence, and the glimpse of careers unrelated to femininity and motherhood are among the achievements motivating more women to write, including about war. Evidence of such intensification and

[28] Hynes (1990) claims that the war writings of Rose Macaulay, Rebecca West, May Sinclair, Cynthia Asquith, and Enid Bagnold express women's feelings of inferiority in face of male experiences, and their "guiltiness of being alive and well" (88).

[29] For a more detailed discussion of Wharton's irony and critique in "Writing a War Story," see my article "Imaginando a Guerra: Gênero, Autoridade e Experiência em 'Writing a War Story,' de Edith Wharton, e 'How to Tell a True War Story,' de Tim O'Brien" (2017).

gradual valorization of women's writings is found in anthologies and studies of war literature. *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (2009), for instance, proposes a chronology of the wars of humanity that also includes the estimated year of appearance of the major works discussed in the volume. Although the first entry dates from as far back as the 12th century BCE, with the song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-21, women only figure in the list in 1773, with Phillis Wheatley's poems, discussed in terms of the tensions contributing to the outbreak of the American Civil War. Along with Wheatley, only two other women have works considered important to the war literature of the 18th century: Anna Seward and Susanna Rowson. Even though that number begins to rise regarding the 19th century, with five highlighted writers, it is in the 20th century, mainly after 1918, that it reaches its peak of sixteen admittedly great works on war by women writing in the English language.

Among those sixteen female names, some are consensually recognized as producers of major literary representations of war in the English language by other anthologies and historical collections. Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), Wharton's *The Marne* (1918), and Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* (1949), for example, are referred not only in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*, but also in Gilbert and Gubar's "Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War" (*Sexchanges*), and in Gill Plain's "Women Writers and the War," within Marina MacKay's *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* (2009). Wharton is moreover included in Higonnet's *Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* for her short fiction "Writing a War Story," while Bowen is praised by Plain for *The Demon Lover, and Other Stories* (1945) as well. In addition, Gilbert and Gubar, Higonnet, McLoughlin, Plain, and Daniella Gioseffi (2003) acknowledge Woolf for her essayistic and literary writings on war, such as *Three Guineas*, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *Between the Acts* (1941). The first three scholars also acclaim Vera Brittain's poems and her World War I memoir *Testament of Youth* (1933).

Among all those scholars, however, only Higonnet and Gioseffi pay tribute to women writing in languages other than English, such as Romanian Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and German-Dutch Anne Frank. Perhaps as an effect of those groundbreaking examples of women's literature of war, contemporary research on the textual representation of 20th-century and 21st-century conflicts is also attentive to relevant works by women. Tom Burns's yet unpublished study on the literature of the Vietnam War, for instance, considers Mary McCarthy's *Vietnam* (1967) and *Hanoi* (1968), Pamela Sanders's *Miranda* (1978), and Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* (1985) relevant to the cultural legacy of that conflict, which may also include memoirs such as Lynda Van Devanter's *Home before Morning* (1983), and Winnie Smith's *American Daughter Gone to War* (1992).

At this point, it is important to reflect upon how acknowledging the substantial development of women's literature, in general and of war, in the 20th century, as influenced by conditions experimented in wartime, is different from saying that wars allowed women "to profit from male pain" (Gilbert and Gubar, *Sexchanges* xvii). A nation at war imposes its needs upon its citizens, particularly those excluded from decision-making processes, and summons their best efforts, often through the rhetoric of fear and patriotic love. When women performed male functions in wartime, therefore, it was not because they were at last acknowledged as equals, and could deliberately take up positions left by men, but because their country compelled its entire people to be subordinated to its total war machine. Of course, some degree of empowerment was accomplished, and concessions had to be made to renegotiate women's place in society.[30] However, the situation I describe here differs from Gilbert and Gubar's view of an even battle of the sexes over the public and literary arena of a

[30] According to Higonnet (1999), an example of such concessions is "[t]he number of nations that eventually granted female suffrage when WWI was over (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Great Britain, Lithuania, Turkey, and the United States, among others)," which "confirmed these women's sense that their contributions had earned them fuller participation in the rights of citizenship" (xx).

"no-man's land." We should remember that European colonies also fought wars to gain "freedom" in the aftermath.[31] However, that does not mean that those new-born "nations" became politically, economically, and culturally independent overnight. As a matter of fact, some of those countries still confront local and international issues as a lingering effect of the dominant presence of the colonizers.[32] Analogously, even the unprecedented number of postwar women writers would, as some still do, face the difficulties and retaliations of disrupting a field whose aesthetics and canon were defined by and for male masters.

As arduous as it is, the disturbance of the patriarchal cultural tradition is a political function of women's literature of war that inserts it within feminist thought. I have mentioned that feminist movements draw strength, in the 20th century, from women's increased presence in the public sphere of work and power, which is, at least in part, influenced by their roles in wartime, to mobilize activist struggle for suffrage and other rights. This feminist consciousness opens a favorable space and audience, even if constituted only by peers, for women to be visible, to speak and be heard, to write and be read. In turn, in the specific case of women's writings of war, their literary production retroactively fuels feminist philosophy and critical theory and practice through the challenges it raises to essentialist assumptions about gender, conflict, and literature.

Those writings undermine, for instance, the "archaic idea of women as a home front," by denouncing women's wartime conditions and sufferings. In *We Are on Our Own*, while Esther's husband, Károly, is away serving the army, she and her daughter Lisa are not home

[31] That is the case, for example, of Egypt, a former British colony. According to M. W. Daly's "The British Occupation, 1882-1922" (1998), after allied wartime promises of self-government, and by the end of the Great War, Egyptian political classes demanded their independence from the Empire.

[32] In regard to such lingering effects of colonization, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) argues, for instance, that "[t]he contemporary international division of labor is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism … countries, generally first-world, are in the position of investing capital; another group, generally third-world, provide the field for investment. … With so-called decolonization, the growth of multinational capital, and the relief of the administrative charge, 'development' does not now involve wholesale legislation and establishing educational systems in a comparable way" (287-288).

safe, but in a continuous escape from a war that follows them everywhere, in the form of the Nazi persecution of Jews, Soviet air attacks, and officers and soldiers' sexual abuse. Similarly, in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Nafisi reveals how the Iran-Iraq War provides the Islamic Republic with a patriotic justification to coerce women to behave according to its standards, even as their roofs are blown off by bombs in the middle of the night. At the same time that they expose the contradictions of "women as a home front," narratives as such help distrust the view of the authority, authenticity, and exclusivity of male accounts of war. In this sense, they raise, in literature, the claim for equality heard in women's rights demonstrations, strikes, and institutions of education. However, in relation to such ideas, a question lingers to be examined. I have stated that the value derived from the so-called authentic experience of war is an obstacle against which women authors *still* struggle. That is, however, not solely due to a comparison to the male literary oeuvre, but because of a noticeable reproduction of notions of authority within women's literature of war, which leads to the question: how does equality work within this field?

A negative viewpoint on this question is provided by a review of anthologies and research on women's literature of war. In an attempt to increase visibility to women's works and conditions, and as a means to attest women's participation in wars, those studies frequently focus primarily on life writing and on the autobiographical aspects of texts. That is the case, for example, of Higonnet's *Lines of Fire*, and of both of Gioseffi's collections, which dedicate shorter sections to fiction than to diaries, memoirs, letters, interviews, and journalistic reports. In other instances, like that of some of the articles on *We Are on Our Own* and *Goodbye Sarajevo* I revisit in the last section of this chapter, the preference for life writing is due to a sense of the ethics of representation, that is, of a restricting notion of how, and by whom, the horrors of war are to be portrayed. Moreover, the editorial market often privileges "authentic" narratives because, like televised coverage of conflicts, they appeal to

the public's desire for "true" information and experience. In all cases, one may observe the internal and contradictory re-inscription of hierarchies women's writings have sought to unsettle.

At this point, an explanation as to the composition of the literary corpus of this thesis is necessary. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *We Are on Our Own*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo* declare themselves, respectively, in their covers, as "a memoir in books," "a memoir by Miriam Katin," and "a true story of courage, love, and survival." However, I do not propose to study them for their supposed commitment to narrating memories of "authentic" experience, and "actual" impact of wars on women. As a matter of fact, and for reasons I have stated previously, such as the poststructuralist and postmodern arguments in favor of leveling the discourses of history and literature, I do not subscribe to their claims to truth, but instead question them, as one of their authors, Nafisi, ironically also does in the course of her narrative. My selection of the corpus is, in fact, due to other characteristics those works share. The first is that they are 21st-century pieces that address the contemporary issue of mobility through the representation of geographical and subjective displacement as an effect of war on women's identities. Another feature motivating my choice is the relatively ex-centric positionality from which those narratives and women writers speak.

The notion of authority in war literature derives, in my view, not solely from the gender-biased, widely accepted fallacy of authentic experience, but also from the location from which one recounts that experience. It is said, in a sentence commonly attributed to former British prime-minister Winston Churchill, that "history is written by the victor;" apparently, so is literature. The greatest war writers of the 20th and 21st centuries are British

or American.[33] In contrast, German literary production on World War II, for instance, was censored and discouraged for decades.[34] In this context, authors of diverse linguistic backgrounds, such as Nafisi, Katin, Reid, and Schofield themselves, have originally composed and published their works in English to attempt to enter that Anglophonic field and editorial market. In this sense, to conduct research on narratives by more peripheral women writers, of often marginalized cultures, ethnicities, classes, and nationalities, regardless of whether they claim to write fact or fiction, is to challenge hierarchies based on gender and on other axes of identity in literature. Ex-centric women war writers need to be given a space to speak, so that they too can transgress the borders of no-man's land. This acknowledgement and valorization of positionality and difference is, in fact, at the basis of the politics of location, locational feminism, and cartographies of identity, which I shall now address.

## 1.3 Beyond Women's Literature of War: Politics of Location, Cartographies of Identity, and Feminist Literary Criticism

To develop the reading this thesis proposes, it is now necessary to look beyond women's literature of war towards feminist literary theory and criticism in its intersection with the politics of location and cartographies of identity. A move beyond, Bhabha (1994) remarks, does not imply the abandonment of one side, or, as here, of one discussion, by crossing its borders into another. Rather, it suggests "an exploratory, restless movement … hither and thither, back and forth" (Bhabha 1), through the permeable, liminal spaces that do

[33] Among such writers are the women acknowledged by the anthologies and historical works reviewed in this section, namely, West, Wharton, Woolf, and Brittain, and men like Brooke, Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, Hemingway, William Faulkner, and O'Brien.

[34] For a discussion of how German historians and writers are working in contemporaneity to tackle the taboo of "the sufferings of the German civilian population in the last years of World War II," and of the "moral and aesthetic impossibility to describe the Germans, the nation responsible for the world war," see Peter Schneider's (2003) article in *The New York Times*, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/18/books/the-germans-are-breaking-an-old-taboo.html>.

not separate, but connect, those sides. In this sense, to move beyond women's relationship with and representations of war, my points of departure in this chapter, is to continually transcend and return to them in a revisionary itinerary that enriches and complements our understanding. A similar trajectory is perceived in some of the works by Woolf. Although she is, as considered in the previous section, among the greatest women authors of war literature, her writings, fictional as well as essayistic, go beyond that field. They may, however, assist in a return to it in the complementary way aimed here, for Woolf is one of the first feminists to think of the intricacies between war, women, and positionality.

In her 1938 book-length essay *Three Guineas*, Woolf denounces patriarchal systems of government that resort to the patriotic love of country and fear of foreign threats to inspire women's support for war. According to her, since women are denied the same privileges as men, they should not consider themselves attached to any country, or feel they have a duty to participate in any war, as epitomized in her famous assertion "as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (*Three Guineas* 108-109). As shall be seen, this passage has provoked both reassuring and outraged responses. However, what is of special importance to the present discussion is that, in this sentence, as well as in the entire text, Woolf seems to understand gender as a factor of either privilege or oppression, and to locate women in an equal position of exclusion, of marginality, from the power centers of war-making societies.

Toril Moi (1985), Braidotti (1994), and Friedman (1998; 2013) are among the feminist critics that reaffirm the validity of Woolf's claims for contemporary thought. Moi contrasts Elaine Showalter's (1977) humanist disapproval of *Three Guineas* with alternative poststructuralist, deconstructionist readings of Woolf's language in that text, a possibility Friedman also considers, for, to her, "the dizzying complexity" of the essay "undoes every binary it establishes" ("Wartime Cosmopolitanism" 26). Both Friedman and Braidotti are

more concerned, however, with the implications of *Three Guineas* for the politics of location and cartographies of identity. In this sense, Friedman contends, as do I, that Woolf's work "exhibits an early feminist formulation of locational politics" (*Mappings* 118). Braidotti, in turn, acknowledges Woolf's primacy in thinking about women's (dis)placement in society, as Woolf associates, in her well-known statement, "female identity with a sort of planetary exile [that] has since become a *topos* of feminist studies" (Braidotti 21). Even though she recognizes the importance of *Three Guineas* to the field within which she theorizes, Braidotti does not fully subscribe to Woolf's ideas because, to her, the model of a feminist subject that critics should advocate is the nomad, "the kind … who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity" (22), rather than the exile, which she sees as politically motivated and often socioeconomically privileged.

To Friedman, on the other hand, Woolf's is not the uprooted critique of a "planetary exile," but a situated reflection on how "the power relations of the private sphere become the basis for understanding the politics of the public sphere" ("Wartime Cosmopolitanism" 29). That is, she affirms that Woolf exposes the way the authority of men over women in the household is reproduced, on a much larger scale, in the state's control of citizens in peace and wartime, as that often tyrannical power lies in male hands, due to the privileges of education and autonomy they have, and which they (or the country) repeatedly deny their female counterparts. Friedman adds that Woolf's argument "does not transcend the nation-state" towards global exile, but "alludes to the experience of those whose citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state is partial, conflicted, or limited by laws and practices that privilege some and circumscribe others" ("Wartime Cosmopolitanism" 27). Although I agree with Braidotti and Friedman's recognition of Woolf's precedence in discussions about the location of women in society, the fact that her category of "circumscribed others" refers primarily to "the class [of] the daughters of educated men" (Woolf, *Three Guineas* 4) shows that this early concern with

subject positionality is yet to be expanded by the consideration of differences among women. I also think that Woolf's critique does transcend the nation-state, for it does not end on the last page of *Three Guineas*. As a matter of fact, it travels in space and time, continuing to be received and reacted to as it encounters difference in the voices of other feminists, who multiply Woolf's view of a position of exclusion marked solely by gender.

Some scholars, Kathy J. Phillips (1994) and Jane Garrity (2003), for instance, critically address what they see as an "exuberant embrace of the rhetoric of territorial expansionism" (Garrity 15) in Woolf's assertion. To them, the affirmation that "my country is the whole world" embodies the discourse of British colonial imperialism, internalized by subjects of the Crown, even if they manifestly disapprove of that institution. Other feminists direct their critique of *Three Guineas* to issues of class and race. According to Braidotti (2011), Alice Walker, for example, inquires in response to Woolf: "is this nonchalant detachment not the privilege of caste and whiteness?" (21); or, in other words, how can the dispossessed choose cosmopolitanism over a sense of belonging to a country if they have historically been denied any idea of home? How do they give up something they have never had? Caren Kaplan (1997) argues that such questionings confront Western feminists' expansion of Woolf's words into a "dream of global sisterhood of women with shared values and aspirations," and expose how the advocacy of that dream conceals "the revival of a form of feminist cultural imperialism" (137), that is, the reproduction of binary hierarchies that reinscribe white, First-World, and elitist supremacy. These anti-imperialist and anti-racist challenges lead Kaplan to ask a question whose answer is part of the development of locational feminism and contemporary cartographies of identity: "what conceptions of location replace Woolf's worlds" of women in equal gender-based exclusion (138)?

The conceptions about which Kaplan inquires develop from a "politics of location," envisaged by Rich in the eighties, and proposed in her 1986 collection of essays and speeches

*Blood, Bread, and Poetry*. In Rich's texts, this politics refers to a feminist theory and critical method that acknowledge and value geopolitical differences between women, and, as a result, de-homogenize the notion of "woman," interrogating and unsettling hierarchies concealed within that notion. Kaplan explains that "[t]he key to Rich's politics of location lies in her recognition that as marginal as white, Western women appear to be in relation to the real movers and shakers of this world – white men – there are others made marginal by white, Western women themselves" (140). This recognition, for Kaplan, follows Rich's observation of racist and homophobic attitudes within women's movement in the U.S. and in the academy. Rich thereafter calls attention to the need to diversify the category of "woman" at home and abroad to avoid its use by hegemonic discourses.

Rich admits that it took her time, trips to exoticized countries like Nicaragua, and contact with other cultures to understand that need, and to change her from a supporter to a critic of Woolf. Before all that, she concedes in "Notes," "I would have spoken … quoting without second thought Virginia Woolf's statement in *Three Guineas* that 'as a woman I have no country, as a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (210-211). Afterward, however, she rearticulates that thought, and states that "As a woman I have a country; as a woman I cannot divest myself of that country merely by condemning its government or by saying three times 'As a woman my country is the whole world'" (212). This second formulation expresses what she considers "a struggle for accountability" of her location (211), that is, a responsible effort to understand how her positioning in the United States, rather than in "Prague or Lodz or Amsterdam" (216),[35] affects her. In examining the privileges granted by her First-World citizenship, whiteness, and upper class, as well as the

[35] Rich refers here to cities respectively in former Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Netherlands because, as a Jewish girl growing up in the interwar period and during World War II, if she had lived in any of those places instead of Baltimore, her experiences would have been marked by the negative value of her ethnicity in a context of increasing anti-Semitic practices advocated by Nazi politics.

hindrances posed by her gender and homosexuality, and in thinking how different such relations of power could be were she placed in another time or space, Rich contributes to the diversification not only of the idea of "woman," but also of the conception of location. In her reflection about how her body "has more than one identity" (215), a discussion quite similar to the analyses of subjectivity beyond gender that Friedman later proposes, we notice that "location" signifies more than a geographical coordinate, or a cosmopolitan sense of belonging nowhere/everywhere. It may be read as a metaphor for each of the multiple, changing social positions one occupies, which together compose the space of subject, delineating her identity.

Despite the criticism Rich directs at Woolf and even at her former self as a promoter of hegemonic Western feminism, I would argue that the two authors are not to be treated as antagonists. That is because both contribute, differently but importantly, to the development of a feminist consciousness of the varied positions and relations of power that constitute the female subject. This view is similar to Friedman's suggestion of an actual proximity, or complementarity, between Woolf's and Rich's projects. She proposes that Woolf's *Three Guineas*, "materialist as [Woolf's work] so often is," be read as acknowledging that women "face, as a group, multiple exclusions" (*Mappings* 118). In Friedman's opinion, *Three Guineas* "does not erase … differences" (*Mappings* 118), and must not, therefore, be seen as a repudiation of locational politics. Although Friedman's insistent defense of Woolf may run the risk of overlooking the necessary and enriching rethinking of her ideas by the critics I have reviewed above, it also sheds light on how Rich's text converses with sources prior to and contemporaneous with it. This helps one see "the politics of location" not so much as a notion Rich devises, but as a tendency she contemplates in her own work and in that of others, a common direction towards the recognition and valorization of difference, and away from the homogenizing discourse of white, Western feminism.

In that same sense, Kaplan argues that although "Rich had been moving in the direction of such a deconstructive moment for some time … without the critique of Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, Michelle Cliff, and other U.S. women of color … a 'politics of location' would not have been fully formulated" (141). Kaplan confirms the view of locational politics as an orientation observed not only in Rich's *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*, but also, she proposes, in the works of critics associated with the pluralization of the notion of feminism. Lorde and Smith are important names for the development of North-American black feminism, one of the main instances of the several feminisms "[e]merging out of the volatile and deep divisions within national and international kinds of feminism by the late 1970s" (Friedman, *Mappings* 4). The pluralization of "feminism" into "feminisms" is a process that shows the inconformity of women oppressed not only because of gender, but of race, class, nationality, and sexuality, with having white, heterosexual, Western feminists attempting to speak for all. According to Hutcheon (1988), since that time:

> There are many different orientations that are subsumed under the general label of feminism: images of women criticism (Cornillon 1972); canonchallenging and women's literary history (Showalter 1977); separatist or women-centered gynocriticism (Spacks 1976); feminist "critique" of patriarchal ideology in male texts (Showalter 1979; Ellmann 1968; Munich 1985); psychoanalytic studies of female subjectivity (J. Mitchell 1974; Gallop 1982; Silverman 1983; de Lauretis 1984); theories of *écriture féminine* or *parler femme* (A.R.Jones 1985; Marks and de Courtivron 1980); lesbian attacks on heterosexism (Zimmerman 1985; Kennard 1986); Marxist-socialist contextualizing (Newton 1981; Moi 1985a; MacKinnon 1981, 1982; Marxist Feminist Literature Collective 1978); deconstructive interrogations of cultural constructs (Spivak 1978; Kamuf 1982; Belsey 1980); women's perspectives on Afro-American (S. Willis 1985; Christian 1980 and 1985;

> Pullin 1980; B. Smith 1979), and postcolonial (Spivak 1985; Alloula 1986) experience and identity as women of color. (67-68)

Hutcheon's extensive list gives her readers an idea of the wide scope feminism(s) can have when attentive to the multiplicity of difference. In regard to such variety, Friedman points out that "[t]his pluralization has contributed profoundly to the expansion and diversification of feminism; it has been vitally necessary … for the development of a multicultural, international, and transnational feminism" (*Mappings* 4). In view of such relevance to women's movements and studies, I must consider also here the effects of that pluralization on feminist literary criticism.

Friedman attributes to some of the voices related to the pluralization of feminism, like Walker, Smith, and Lorde, the emergence of what she calls "the discourse of multiple oppression" (*Mappings* 21), one among the six discourses of identity within locational feminism, all of which I will later address, responsible for exposing and undermining the insufficient practices of gynocriticism. Gynocriticism is a term Showalter (1979, 1984) uses to refer to "the historical study of women writers as a distinct literary tradition" (Friedman, *Mappings* 18), which, as opposed to the feminist critique of male writers, advocates that "womanist" scholars focus on works of female authorship, in a canon-challenging maneuver. The drawback of gynocriticism is similar to that we find within hegemonic, Western feminism: "an emphasis on sexual difference and a privileging of gender as a constituent of identity … [that] produce[s] certain blindnesses" (Friedman, *Mappings* 18) towards difference and other instances of subjugation, often represented in the literary text, or disclosed by the study of the location of ex-centric characters and women authors. In this sense, the effect of the pluralization of feminism on feminist literary criticism is the expansion and diversification of its practices, which follow an attention to multiplicity and

positionality, and a perception of the need to move beyond gender as the organizing category for literary analysis.

The need and the paths to move beyond gender in feminist critical practice is a central concern in Friedman's *Mappings* and "Locational Feminism: Gender, Cultural Geographies, and Geopolitical Literacy" (2001). In accordance with the notion of "beyond" reviewed in the beginning of this section, Friedman informs that, in her theorization, "moving beyond gender does not mean forgetting it, but rather returning to it in a … spatialized way that I call locational feminism" (*Mappings* 18). Such a reminder is always necessary because, as some feminists[36] warn, the advocacy of a "move beyond gender" may unwillingly serve the interests of patriarchy, contributing to the silencing of gender questions, while seeming to support a misleading belief in a present condition of equality. As a matter of fact, it is to avoid this risk that I choose to invert the words of the first chapter of *Mappings*, "'Beyond' Gender" (17), to "Gender and beyond" in the title of this thesis. In this sense, I mean to reaffirm, along with Friedman, the need to supplement the category of gender in the readings of the literature of war written by women, since there are several other aspects of subjectivity that interact with it, for which it is necessary to account. To Friedman, this much needed move beyond and back to gender is performed by what she terms "locational feminism" (*Mappings* 5), whose critical practice fills in the gaps of the hegemonic thought often concealed in binary oppositions such as man/woman, white/other, First World/Third World.

After asserting the relevance of the pluralization of feminism to women's movements and theoretical and critical studies, it might sound contradictory to consider a "re-singularized" locational feminism. This re-singularization, however, according to Friedman,

[36] Braidotti (1994), for instance, cautions against the "argument 'beyond gender' or a 'postgender' kind of subjectivity" because she thinks it may imply "the overcoming of sexual dualism and gender polarities, in a favor of a new, sexually undifferentiated, subjectivity" (149), which is not only utopian, but also a risk to feminist projects and achievements.

does not imply "a return to a notion of universal feminist subjectivity or a movement based on an assumption of female homogeneity" ("Locational Feminism" 14). It is not, therefore, intended to reestablish the relative hegemony of white, Western feminism which other women, the "Other" of that discourse, strived to unsettle especially during the 1970s and 80s. Rather, a re-singularization through locational feminism proposes to bridge the borders between the several sites of feminism delineated in the preceding process of pluralization. Borders, Friedman argues repeatedly in *Mappings*, mark separation at the same time that they, paradoxically, connect and invite transgression. Analogously, while it remains important in locational feminism to recognize and value differences among women, the acknowledgement of similarities between them allows enriching interactions. Like Rich's politics of location, Friedman's locational feminism reflects an orientation towards which feminist studies turn in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In this sense, this notion of exchange and movement across borders is identified in Friedman's proposal, relating to what she calls a "new geographics"[37] (*Mappings* 17), or a "spatial rhetoric" ("Locational Feminism" 22), central to feminist thought since then.

Aside from a conscious and responsible re-singularization of feminism(s), locational feminism is a line of thinking and a praxis that is spatialized and transdisciplinary. This notion of spatialization can be observed not only in its metaphorical bridging of the borders between sites of feminism, but in its move beyond and back to gender, as a category always in interaction with other axes of difference. In this feminism's concern with literal locations, its "assumption [that] changing historical and geographical specificities … produce different… theories, agendas, and political practices" (Friedman, *Mappings* 5) is also

[37] In *Mappings*, Friedman defines geographics as "a new, rapidly moving field of identity studies ... [i]nterdisciplinary in scope" (18). In "Locational Feminism," she substitutes "geographics" for what she considers to be a "spatial rhetoric" that reflects how scholars have lately thought about subjectivity. I choose to use the latter in this review because it appears to be a more up-to-date and less technical term.

noticeable. Friedman refers here to a manifested awareness, in locational feminism, of the multiplicity it encompasses because, since women are different everywhere, their heterogeneous needs, culture and insertion in society contribute to feminist thoughts and practices that vary according to place. In this sense, in addition to the ethnic, national, and geopolitical distinctions between Western European and Saudi Arabian women, for example, their feminist demands are not the same either: while the first often attack the mandatory use of the hijab by Muslims in public spaces,[38] the latter, as Carole Boyce Davies (1994) pointedly notes, may "resent not being able to drive an automobile more than … having to wear a veil" (2). Friedman contends, however, in her defense of re-singularization, that both sides "are still political practices informed by theories of gender and social justice that are recognizably a part of a singular entity we can call 'feminism' ("Locational Feminism" 15). Among other reasons why locational feminism can also be seen as a spatialized critical thought and praxis are its emphasis on a spatial discourse and metaphorics, and its very transdisciplinarity.

To Friedman, since "[l]ocational feminism by its very terminology," that is, its deployment of the word "location," "invokes notions of space," it requires, in its formulation and practice, "a compensatory emphasis on the spatial over the temporal" ("Locational Feminism" 16, 18). After having reviewed above how ideas of space and spatialization partake in the theoretical formulation of locational feminism, I now discuss how that "compensatory emphasis on the spatial" functions in a critical practice based on the principles of this trend of feminism. To do so, it is first important to understand why such emphasis would be "compensatory." Naturally, the need for such redress suggests that, over time, there has been a privileging of temporal aspects in narrative analyses, while the spatial

[38] Almeida (2015) exemplifies such an attack reporting that "on April 29, 2010, the house of Belgian representatives approved a project that prohibits garments that cover the face, like the *burqa* and the *niqab*, worn by Muslim women, in defense of a supposed European identity which such use would be offending" (99).

dimension remains relatively unexamined. If, however, as Friedman puts it, "space and time are unthinkable without each other" ("Locational Feminism" 17), how could that historical privileging have come about? Although Friedman does not give her audience a definitive answer to that question, there are some possibilities to consider.

The first is that, as Phillip E. Wegner (2002) points out, it is not until our contemporary world that spatial theory develops and questions Cartesian and Kantian accepted views of space as, respectively, "an objective homogeneous extension … distinct from the subject," and "an empty container in which human activity unfolds" (181). Wegner argues that the works of several contemporary thinkers, like Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Jacques Derrida, and Mikhail M. Bakhtin, contributed to the emergence of a perspective on space as "both a *production*, shaped through a diverse range of social processes and human interventions, and a *force* that, in turn, influences, directs and delimits possibilities of action and ways of human being [sic] in the world" (181). Hence, from Shakespearean Renaissance to modernity, while space is a stage on which men's history marches,[39] in postmodernity, it is an effect of and over our interactions with it and among ourselves. Taken as a human production and a force, space and spatial elements in narratives become as relevant for interpretation as time and history.

The other possibility for the historical privileging of the temporal over the spatial I want to consider relates both to the views of space presented above, and to the question of women's subjectivity, central to this thesis. The Cartesian, Enlightenment notion of subjectivity poses as its model the *cogito*,[40] a singular and coherent center of rationality.

[39] Notably, "All the world's a stage" is the opening line of Jaques's monologue in Act II Scene VII of William Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It* (1623). The monologue well illustrates the notion of space as an empty platform over which men live their lives as characters perform a play.

[40] *Cogito* refers to René Descartes' Latin philosophical proposition *cogito ergo sum*, usually translated as "I think, therefore I am." The proposition, which first appeared in Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), is fundamental to rationalism, for it secures a foundation for knowledge in confrontation with doubt.

Since knowledge and reason, from the 17th to the 19th century, are associated with white, European, aristocratic man, he becomes the epitome of the Self, whereas those often related to emotions and irrationality, such as women and the colonized, are denied the status of subject. In this sense, their pursuit of subjectivity, even when, in modernity, the idea of wholeness is shattered through fragmentation, is a temporal process, a becoming in time that entails a sense of "before and after" (Friedman, "Locational Feminism" 19), even though that "after" may be unachievable. This notion of identity as a temporal construction is observed, according to Friedman, in a metaphorics of time found in feminist literary and critical writings, even if in a contesting tone. She cites, for example, the metaphors of "awakening" and "rebirth," present in writings such as Rich's early "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" (1971), that express women's supposed illumination as to their oppressed condition. A feminist rhetoric of subjectivity informed by contemporary theories of space, on the other hand, "figures identity as a historically embedded site, a positionality, a location, a standpoint, a terrain, an intersection, a network, a crossroads of multiple situated knowledges" (Friedman, *Mappings* 19). In this definition of identity, Friedman illustrates the compensatory emphasis on the spatial in locational feminism, for space, and not time, is the predominant source of its metaphorics, and the basis for its literary analyses of subjectivity.

The spatial metaphorics of locational feminism and of its compensatory discussions of identity is perhaps the central reason for this line of feminism to be considered transdisciplinary. According to Friedman, this metaphorics "now sweeping many different fields, has been influenced especially by postcolonial studies, for which the issues of travel, nomadism, diaspora, and the cultural hybridity produced by movement through space have a material reality and a political urgency" ("Locational Feminism" 21). In this passage, Friedman asserts a borrowing between locational feminism and postcolonial studies, but it is not only from the latter that the former draws concepts and metaphors. Both fields, in fact,

also converse, for example, with geography, as related to notions of physical displacement, and with multiculturalism, which addresses hybridity as a product of cultural transit. In this sense, we notice that, in its very conceptualization, locational feminism already transgresses borders between disciplines, and performs a move beyond, as it returns to feminist studies in a supplementary way.

A similar movement is found in the rethinking of the privilege of gender in feminist analyses of subjectivity that employ such crisscrossing between spatial rhetoric and metaphorics. That is because, as Friedman argues, "[w]here the temporal rhetoric of awakening tends to focus on gender in isolation from other systems of stratification, the spatial rhetoric of location emphasizes the interaction of gender with other forms of power relations based on such cultural categories as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, national origin, age, and so forth" ("Locational Feminism" 20). Therefore, locational analyses of subjectivity move towards gender and beyond as they examine the flow of power between that and other categories in a constant (re)configuration of identity. As a matter of fact, what Friedman calls "cultural categories" in her essay "Locational Feminism" appear in *Mappings* and other texts[41] as "axes of difference" (4), "subject positions" (20), or "axes of identity" (22). These axes are among the spatial metaphors appropriated by feminist discussions of subjectivity that I now further examine, along with the notion of identity as intersected positionality, and with the idea of contemporary cartographies and mappings of identity.

The view, in locational feminism, of identity as "a positionality," "a crossroads of multiple situated knowledges" poses the question of what elements in this spatial logic touch and collide with each other in the intersection that we call the space of the subject, delimited by the body. The answer, according to Friedman, is the axes of identity, as she contends that

[41] Braidotti (1994), for instance, refers to those categories as "axes of differentiation" (4), and "axes of identity" (99). Almeida (2015), in turn, translates Friedman's terms into Portuguese as "constituintes identitários" (22), and "posições subjetivas" (153).

"discourses of positionality and location sometimes resort to the rhetoric of axes to designate the different constituents of individual identity, cultural formations, and societal systems of stratification. Any given identity … can be read as the place where different axes intersect" (*Mappings* 109). A subject's identity is, therefore, a metaphorical point in which gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, class, and other coordinates converge and interact. It is in this sense that locational feminism advocates discussions of subjectivity that consider how a person or character's gender relates to other axes of difference in the affirmation of one's power or powerlessness. However, it is necessary to emphasize, with Friedman, that "no one axis exists in pure form, but each is mediated through others" (*Mappings* 109). Such clarification helps avoid essentialist readings of identity based upon fallacious notions of supremacy of a given race, gender, or nationality, for example. That is because it asserts those axes as cultural elements within an epistemology of identity, constructs to understand subjectivity, which only exist relationally, and are not meant to support or reestablish hegemonic ideas.[42]

This geographical, constructivist theory of subjectivity based on axes is central to what Friedman considers "paradigms," or "discourses of identity" (*Mappings* 10, 20), which have informed feminist movements and critical practice from the late 20th century to the present. These discourses are, to Friedman, effects of the political and cultural changes resulting largely from the racial and social conflicts that shook the United States in the 1980s. As responses to dominant rationality, those discourses challenge hegemonic notions of subjectivity in a turn to the fragmentation, instability, fluidity, and spatiality of identities. In

[42] To affirm ethnicity, gender, and other axes as relational epistemological constructs to understand subjectivity is not to deny their practical existence and effects as social factors used both to justify discrimination and motivate movements for change. It is, as a matter of fact, an attempt to expand our comprehension of such categories by considering their interactive functioning in the building of multiple subjectivities.

*Mappings*, Friedman schematizes six of them: the discourses of multiple oppression, multiple subject positions, contradictory subject positions, relationality, situationality, and hybridity.

Although Friedman argues that there is no relation of succession between such discourses of identity, and that their ideas often overlap, she concedes that the first to develop is that of multiple oppression, for it stems, as I have suggested, from initial notions of locational politics, and from the unrest that led to the pluralization of feminism. The discourse of multiple oppression understands that defining identity only in terms of gender produces blindness in relation to other forms of domination. In this sense, it focuses on how deviations, among women, from normative ethnicity, nationality, age, sexuality, and other axes render them powerless, along with gender. This discourse is voiced mainly by black American feminists like Lorde, who pointedly affirms in her "An Open Letter to Mary Daly"[43] (1984), that, although differences between women are "a creative force toward change," "those differences expose all women to various forms and degrees of patriarchal oppression, some of which we share and some of which we do not … The oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries, true, but that does not mean it is identical within those differences" (70). In Lorde's words, it is possible to recognize two features Friedman considers characteristic of the discourse of multiple oppression: an advocacy of difference as a source of creativity and energy for feminist movements, and a paradoxical "interminable negativity evident in the pileup of oppressions, with its hierarchization of suffering" (*Mappings* 20). This negativity, the critic fears, actually weakens feminist creative force, and tends to homogenize voices that defend the importance of difference under the common label of "the oppressed."

[43] Mary Daly was an American feminist with whom Lorde exchanged books, reviews, and letters. Lorde published "An Open Letter to Mary Daly," a response to Daly's work *Gyn/Ecology* (1987), after sending it to her, but receiving no reply. In the text, Lorde criticizes Daly's negligence towards ethnic differences among women and towards racism, and even asks of the latter "Have you read my work, and the work of other Black women, for what it could give you?" (69).

Deriving from the ideas of pluralization and from the recognition of manifold subjugation inherent in the discourse of multiple oppression, the discourse of multiple subject positions differs from the former, however, in two main aspects. First, its figuration of subjectivity does not emphasize the plurality of oppression, but of spatialized identity, posed as a site in which competing axes of difference, or multiple subject positions, intersect.[44] Second, since this discourse does not focus "exclusively on victimization," its object of interest becomes the "various combinations of difference that may or may not be tied to oppression" (Friedman, *Mappings* 20). In this sense, I return, as an example, to Rich's reflection on her privileges and privations as a white, wealthy, American, and homosexual woman. A discussion of subjectivity based on the discourse of multiple subject positions considers those various constituents of the self, exposing how some axes, in Rich's case, ethnicity, class, and geopolitics, build up power, while others, like her gender and sexuality, may entail powerlessness.

That the various axes intersecting in the composition of identity have different relations with power is the premise of the discourse of contradictory subject positions, since contradiction is "fundamental to the structure of subjectivity" (Friedman, *Mappings* 21). As one might expect, this paradigm also subscribes to the notion of a spatialized, multiply constituted self. Nevertheless, its emphasis is not simply on the labeling of different axes and of their relationship with power systems. In this sense, it supplements the discourse of multiple locations with a focus on the conflicting, dialectic nature of identity. Thus, it would foster an examination of Rich's example in terms of which positions, like gender and class, ethnicity and sexuality, simultaneously oppose each other.

[44] Throughout this thesis, I use the term "figuration" according to Braidotti's (1994) definition that "a figuration is a politically informed account of … subjectivity" (1). In the second edition of *Nomadic Subjects* (2011) she further explains that "[f]igurations are ... mappings of situated, i.e., embedded and embodied, social positions" (4), reassuring the relevance of that concept to discussions related to contemporary cartographies.

Regarding the discourses of identity considered so far, although I acknowledge the pervasiveness of discussions of multiple oppression in the development of locational feminism and contemporary cartographies, my reading of the literary corpus of this thesis draws more intensely on the discourses of multiple and contradictory subject positions, as well as from the others I explore next. That is because I mean to avoid victimizing and homogenizing women characters, so that I may, instead, investigate their strategies of empowerment and resistance. As a matter of fact, even my treatment of the discourses of multiple and contradictory subject positions is careful in a similar manner. Spivak (1996) warns against the disservice of "the litany of confessional and accusatory, but always determinist, descriptions of so-called 'subject positions'" (254). She refers here, as I see it, to simplistic, descriptive readings that end up establishing fixed associations of certain axes, like ethnicity, to either power or oppression, regardless of the contexts in which those relations take place. In this sense, to move beyond deterministic analyses, I address the multiplicity and contradiction of the characters' subjectivity throughout the following chapters without dwelling on isolated accounts of subject positions and what they entail. Rather, as Spivak suggests, I focus on what is at stake, that is, on how the various agreeing and opposing axes relate to each other and to systems of power as the woman subject is socially and physically displaced during and because of war.

The interaction between axes of identity and their relationship with power and spatiality are the core issues of the discourse of relationality. Contrary to determinist thought, it proposes that the axes of difference are not only multiple and contradictory, but relational. That is to say, as I have previously stated, that those categories are seen as epistemological constructs to understand subjectivity that depend on and converse with one another in the constant construction of a fluid identity. It is mainly in this sense that such discourse resists ideas of essentialized identity, for its approaches consider that "[c]lass, race, ethnicity,

religion, national origin, and gender … function relationally as sites of privilege and exclusion" (Friedman, *Mappings* 23). There is not, therefore, any fixed, unalterable association of certain subject positions with either domination or oppression, for, since the axes are relational, the privileging or subjugation of one may affect how the others interact with power.

Take, as a brief example, the case of the protagonists of *We Are on Our Own*, Lisa and her mother Esther, upper-middle class Jewish women living in Nazi-occupied Budapest during World War II. The ethnic oppression they suffer, as it will be seen in greater detail in the next chapter, affects other axes of their identities, such as socioeconomic class, when they are deprived of their lives and belongings, and forced to escape. To the discourse of relationality, hence, power and powerlessness become a condition that varies according to a point of reference. This standpoint, which already evokes a spatial rhetoric, is usually metaphorical, signifying, for instance, one coordinate of identity, and its status and effects on the others. But it may also refer, as it is the focus of the next discourse, to the shifting contexts in which the most various relations between axes of difference unfold.

It is in that concern with referential, spatiality, and context that the discourse of relationality overlaps with that of situationality. One notices that the latter, however, is attentive to geography and movement in a more literal sense. That is because this discourse, according to Friedman, is "engaged with issues of postcoloniality, travel, and ethnography," in a way that its approaches "particularly stress how [identity] shifts fluidly from setting to setting," and that "geographical allegorization is not merely a figure of speech, but a central constituent of identity" (*Mappings* 23). In other words, situational analyses of subjectivity also emphasize the relationality of the axes of difference, but with a focus on how those interactions change according to where the subject is geographically located. Their premise is that "while the person's identity is the product of multiple subject positions, these axes of

identity are not equally foregrounded in every situation. Change the scene, and the most relevant constituents of identity come into play" (Friedman, *Mappings* 23). The decreased or increased relevance of a particular aspect of selfhood depends, thus, among other things, on space and time, on the situation.

This situational thought is noticeable when Rich states that "[t]he body I was born into was not only female and white, but Jewish … Had it been not Baltimore, but Prague or Lodz or Amsterdam, the ten-year-old letter writer [Rich] might have had no address … no body at all" (216). Rich was born in the United States in 1929 and raised in a context in which her ethnicity was not negatively valued. If that scenario had been different, a German occupied city in Czechoslovakia, Poland, or the Netherlands, her Jewish origins would have been emphasized over all other axes, as in Lisa and Esther's case, and this might have led to loss of privileges or even of her life itself. In the examples drawn from Katin and Rich, we observe that an event as intense as a war may provoke the changes in scene to which Friedman refers, for it affects, as I earlier remarked, social roles and structures, political rights, places, and notions of borders, and it may as well displace spatially and culturally the subject.

The discourses of relationality and situationality inform the mappings of war and women's subjectivity I develop in regard to Nafisi, Katin, and Reid and Schofield's works in the next chapter of this thesis. As I argued with Braidotti (2011) in the introduction to this study, a cartography, in contemporary feminist literary criticism, is "a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present" (4). Almeida (2015) supports and expands that understanding, stating that "the cartographies of contemporaneity map a variety of concepts that pass through contemporary literature, such as diaspora … multiculturalism, [and]

nomadism" (29).[45] From these comprehensive, geopolitical definitions of contemporary cartographies, it is possible to infer that what Braidotti calls "cartographic maps of multiple belongings and power relations" (10), such as those envisioned here, identify and critically discuss the constitution of both the geographical space and the space of the subject, as represented in the narratives. With that in mind, the mappings of wars promised in the title of this work aim at examining the effects of conflicts on the portrayed scenarios, whether those effects be, for instance, the wartime transformation of a city into a battleground, or the several changes in the setting of the stories produced by character migration. The mappings of subjectivities, in turn, focus on the relations between a woman's axes of identity, and on their negotiations with power systems in the several situations that exist because of war in each text. They also, in the final chapter, draw those women's trajectories not only throughout narrative space and time, but through cultures and experiences, offering a reading of their identities as fragmented, conflicting, and hybrid.

The last discourse of identity to be discussed is, therefore, that of hybridity, which also emerges "most directly out of ethnic, postcolonial, and diasporic studies" (Friedman, *Mappings* 24). According to Friedman, the words "hybridity" and "hybrid" were first used in a biological sense to designate, respectively, the phenomenon and the product of cross-breeding species. Around the 19th century, those words acquired a negative connotation. In a context of expanding imperialism and of enhancing scientific experimentation and racialism, hybridity also signified impurity, deficiency, and the danger of relating to unknown others and "inferior" races: colonial subjects, native populations, or dark-skinned peoples. Although a derogatory meaning remains in our languages in terms such as "mongrel" and "half-breed," hybridity has "emerged explosively in the late twentieth-century as both a rallying cry for

[45] "As cartografias da contemporaneidade mapeiam uma gama variada de conceitos que perpassam a literatura contemporânea, tais como diáspora ... multiculturalismo [e] nomadismo" (29).

antipurist ways of thinking about 'race' and as a widely used term in postcolonial studies, anthropology, and cultural studies to suggest different forms of cultural mixing and interactive exchange" (Friedman, *Mappings* 83). In spite of this appropriation of the concept, and its re-signification into both an object of and a framework for critical practice, it is important not to idealize hybridity.

The discourse of hybridity emphasizes identity as the product of what Friedman describes as a "cultural grafting" (*Mappings* 24), that is, a superimposition of cultural elements and relations on the same subject space, which is the product of movement through space and time, languages, or cultures in general. That grafting, nevertheless, as the word itself indicates, is not always the natural and beautiful drawing of a multiculturalist mosaic. On the contrary, it often takes "the form of painful splitting, divided loyalties, or disorienting displacements" (Friedman, *Mappings* 24). The hybrid identity is, in this sense, as we will see, commonly represented as fragmented and conflicting, especially if the disparities between the relations of power in the internalized cultures are intense.

In *Mappings*, Friedman reviews the theorization of hybridity in regard to type, function, power relations, and orientation. Only the last two aspects, however, inform the mapping of hybrid identities I develop in the third chapter of this thesis, for they are the ones that address a concern with the effects of space and movement on subjectivity. The conceptualization of hybridity in terms of power relations considers that the process of hybridization, or the constitution of a hybrid identity, follows an oppressive, transgressive, or locational model. The three models converge in the assumption that the process presupposes cultural encounter, which, in turn, involves an individual or a collectivity. They differ, however, in their regard of the agency[46] of the parts that meet in such an encounter. The

[46] Friedman refers to agency not only as "autonomy or freedom to act," but as "the assumption of human subjectivities that create meanings and act in negotiation with the systemic conditions of social order, however

oppression model, on the one hand, poses hybridity as a product of deculturation or assimilation forced upon the less powerful by a dominant group. A case in point would be the historical accounts of decimation and subsequent colonization of native American peoples by European settlers, who imposed their language, religion, and mores on the weaker group. The transgression model, on the other hand, would see that very situation with an eye to the agency of the colonized. In this line of reasoning, "hybridity undermines authority" (Friedman, *Mappings* 89), for a mixed identity is seen as a challenge to full domination and purity. The locational model, in turn, "stresses mutual agencies on all sides," and "encompasses such plots of oppression and transgression, but is not restricted to them" (Friedman, *Mappings* 90). In this sense, it is this model that most truly treats hybridity as an encounter, a process, and a negotiation, since it does not establish fixed relationships of domination, but considers the flow of power moving among the same individual's competing cultural ties.

In addition to the models of power relations, Friedman distinguishes two orientations in the theorization of hybridity: the temporal and the spatial. Similarly to what I previously stated about the categories of space and time, the author underlines that "both geographical and historical modes of thinking about hybridity are ultimately necessary and inseparable" (*Mappings* 87). Nevertheless, critical and theoretical discussions about the process of hybridization tend to emphasize one direction or another. Those that stress geographically produced hybridity, migration theory, for instance, look at "the function of traveling in the formation of collective and individual identities," or at "the hybridic layering of identities produced by crisscrossing travel" (Friedman, *Mappings* 87). Friedman highlights in the

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circumscribed" (*Mappings* 90). Agency as the assumption of human subjectivities that converse with systems of power also appears to be the premise of Donald E. Hall (2004) when he argues that the possibility and practicality of agency "brings us face to face with the political question of how we can motivate ourselves and others to work for social change" (124).

excerpt that travelling is fundamental to geographically oriented hybridity, both in the senses of literal spatial dislocation, and of metaphorical movement through cultures. That is because it is such constant (dis)placement that causes grafting of various culturally inclined positions on the same subject space. For better comprehension, we shall look at the example of Professor Azar Nafisi, who transits between Iranian and Western, mainly North-American, locations and cultures. As a consequence of her several migrations between Iran and the United States, and of the distinct relations her axes of identity establish in those scenarios, Nafisi becomes a fragmented self of opposing parts and divided loyalties. To cite but a few aspects, her language, politics, sense of (un)homeliness, and self-perception illustrate her hybridization, oscillating between Western and Iranian cultures, without fully pertaining to either. Naturally, this multicultural subjectivity unfolds over a period of time, enhancing the connection between spatial and temporal orientations of hybridity, and leading to a review of the latter.

According to Friedman, the discourse of historically oriented hybridity develops its analyses of that phenomenon along two main lines. One thinks of the hybrid as "a temporal palimpsest of sedimentations," that is, a product of "the mingling of different cultures and the formation of new ones [that] takes place over time" (Friedman, *Mappings* 87). In this sense, one of its objects of interest is the culture of a former colony like Brazil, which draws from aboriginal, Portuguese, Italian, German, and various African traditions, and illustrates the idea of "a temporal palimpsest of sedimentations." The other temporal line of thinking about hybridization focuses on this process as "the result of a particular set of conditions at a specific moment in history" (Friedman, *Mappings* 88). Thus, instead of stressing hybridity's development throughout time, this line examines why and how it is made possible at a particular point. That would be the case, as Friedman exemplifies, of theorists, like Arjun Appadurai, who "regard hybridity as inextricably linked with either modernity or

postmodernity" (*Mappings* 88). Those thinkers argue that factors such as globalization, high mobility rates, international commerce, and prompt virtual connections that characterize contemporaneity compose a set of conditions that favors hybridity, even if this phenomenon is still looked down upon with prejudice and fear by some groups.

In agreement with the principles and focus of locational feminism and contemporary cartographies, my mappings of hybrid identities in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *We Are on Our Own*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo* follow specifically the locational model of power relations and the geographical orientation of hybridity. That is because, as I have been arguing, locational feminist analyses of subjectivity, in their attempted movement towards gender and beyond, have the same compensatory emphasis on space and on spatial rhetoric and metaphorics present in those modes. In this sense, the cartographic approach to characters' subjectivities in the last chapter of this thesis aims at investigating hybridization as a consequence of spatial and cultural migrations motivated by war, and of uneven flows of power in those women's encounters with difference. For this purpose, I search for instances in which hybridity is represented in the texts, attentive, for instance, to characters' ambiguous relations to language, religion, politics, food, clothing, home, and habits, among other things. I also discuss the context, in terms of power relations and displacement, of those fragmented figurations of women's identities. Just as the reading developed in regard to the multiple, relational, and situational nature of subjectivity, this other analysis is aware that hybridization is as much a temporal as it is a spatial process. However, both mappings intend to highlight the relevance of space to the (re)construction of subjectivities affected by war in several aspects, one of which is gender. In this manner, it will be possible to demonstrate the range of the effects of war on women, and to perform, through the critical practice advocated by locational feminism, a supplementary move beyond in the studies of war literature written by women.

## 1.4 Other voices: A Conversation about *Reading Lolita in Tehran, We Are on Our Own,* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*

After reviewing the methodology of the analysis I develop in the following chapters, I now engage in a brief conversation with sources that also examine *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *We Are on Our Own*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*. The purpose of this conversation is to acknowledge the contributions as well as the hindrances of other studies on the works of the corpus, and to assess how scholarship about subjectivities affected by war may profit from mappings based on locational feminism and contemporary cartographies. The critical legacy of Nafisi, Katin, and Reid and Schofield's narratives is not extensive, perhaps because they are somewhat recent, published in the first two decades of the 21st century. Another reason for such scarcity, one may speculate, could be linked to the long period it still takes for an account of war written by a relatively unknown woman author to be recognized by public and critics. The first of those narratives to be published, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is, accordingly, also the most studied, and even the most attacked.[47] Regarding *We Are on Our Own* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*, however, the majority of findings are book reviews and uncritical responses. As it would, then, be expected, there are no examples of a comparative reading of the three memoirs. The review I conduct here is not, however, exhaustive, for I leave out research that does not address some of the themes approached by this thesis. The studies that

[47] As Jasmin Darznik (2008) observes, "an all-out campaign has been launched against Iranian immigrant writers … leading the campaign are US-based Iranian academics who decry these writers' authority to speak about the experience of 'real' Iranians" (55). Two US-based academic critics of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* are Hamid Dabashi, in "Native Informers and the Making of the American Empire" (2006), and Fatemeh Keshavaz, in *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More than Lolita in Tehran* (2007). They claim that Nafisi endorses worldwide supremacy of Western ideology through her text's defense of democracy and admiration for English-language literature. In this sense, she is regarded as an Orientalist, in reference to Edward Said's (1978) concept, who propagates patronizing views of the East through cultural translation and commodification to an American audience. Of course, it is ironic that US-based Iranian academics question US-based Iranian writers as representative of their "real" people. Since both groups are in the same privileged condition of escaping the regime and of living in a "first-world" democracy, they would, then, be equally distant from and unable to speak about that Iranian "reality." Moreover, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* does not explicitly claim any allegiances with reality, even though it is a memoir. Indeed, it unsettles the assumption of truth commonly associated to autobiographies, often acknowledging the inevitable constructiveness of reminiscences.

I do revisit, in turn, consider topics such as hybridity, ethnicity, gender, diaspora, and war, differently from the cartographic method envisioned here.

*Reading Lolita in Tehran* is commonly read among the writings of a so-called Iranian diaspora, the exodus following the Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979. As I mentioned in my general introduction, Nafisi's case is in fact different from that of other authors of that diaspora, like Marjane Satrapi and Firoozeh Dumas,[48] for she returns to Tehran shortly before the Revolution, and only departs again several years later. Still, her migrations are also motivated by political issues and wars. Nafisi's movement between Iranian and Western, mainly American, locations, cultures, and politics is an interest I share with the studies I choose to review, which mostly deal with notions and feelings of home and of divided loyalties in the memoir, at times relating them to a hybrid condition.

In "Looking for Home in the Islamic Diaspora of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Azar Nafisi, Khaled Hosseini" (2012), Rachel Blumenthal claims that those authors have "vexed identities as citizens of multiple 'homelands'" (251). Differently from Blumenthal, I choose to read Nafisi's self-representation in her narrative as a character of her own memories, rather than as the person of the author, to avoid a simplistic equation between literary text and "reality," a relationship *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, in my view, repeatedly questions. Nevertheless, Blumenthal does contribute to the understanding of the work by discussing Nafisi's disputed, hyphenated, Iranian-American identity in terms of notions of home. That is because, to the diasporic, hybrid subject, home is a very complex idea, on account of a conflicting sense of belonging to more than one place, or even to none at all. Blumenthal further explores the concept of home, distinguishing two categories of homeland: the geographical and the

[48] Marjane Satrapi is the author of the much acclaimed graphic novel *The Complete Persepolis* (2007), and of others such as *Embroideries* (2005), and *Chicken with Plums* (2006), all originally published in French. Firoozeh Dumas wrote the memoirs *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America* (2003), *Laughing without an Accent: Adventures of a Global Citizen* (2008), and *It Ain't so Awful, Falafel* (2016).

ideological. To her, while Iran and the United States figure as Nafisi's geographical homeland, as she moves from one to the other, she also "constructs the Western canon as an ideological homeland … a place of safety to which oppressed and terrified Iranian women can flee for refuge" (253). That is, when Nafisi attaches to classics of Western literature values such as "genuine democracy," "freedom of imagination," and "courage," and refuses the ideology of the Islamic Republic, she bends towards the West as her ideological home, even though her affect is notably divided between the two lands.

Jasmin Darznik (2008) also observes, in her study of the return narratives of the Iranian diaspora, that that preference for Western ideology is not often accompanied by an affective abandonment of Iran. On the contrary, she contends, "a persistent feature of Iranian immigrant literature [is] the dominance of Iran … in the exploration and articulation of Iranian-American identity" (56). This dominance is represented, in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, for instance, in the "still-wild landscapes of the country that inspire in her [Nafisi] a visceral feeling of belonging" (Darznik 59). This conflict between ideology and affect in the definition of home is, as a matter of fact, quite similar to the complexities of nationalist support of country and love for the land Woolf discusses in *Three Guineas*. To Woolf, while it is natural to be emotionally attached to the land where one is born and raised, women must be alert towards institutional use of that feeling to inspire their patriotic support in wartime, despite the inequalities and exploitation perpetrated against them. Although Nafisi is aware of such manipulative strategies, she cannot deny Iran as a part of her national identity, even when choosing to leave it for the United States. It is in this sense that, to the subject in transit, home seems to be forever displaced, postponed, unattainable. That could be due to her fragmented, hybrid identity, which has pieces from various cultures, but is not complete or final at all.

Blumenthal and Darznik examine one of the manifestations of Nafisi's hybrid identity, her (un)homeliness and ideological ties, foregrounding a discussion to which I return in the third chapter of this thesis. Their analyses, however, could benefit from a consideration of the theoretical apparatus about hybridity to better address this phenomenon, instead of solely observing one of its expressions. Somaiyeh Hanaee (2013) takes a step further in that direction, studying Nafisi and other characters in terms of their "adopted duality" (38). To Hanaee, "adopted duality, or what Hamid Naficy calls liminality or Bhabha calls hibridity, is acceptance and usage of a deterritorialized and intercultural space within which … authors are equipped to empower their resistance" (38). Although I agree with Hanaee about the potential for resistance characteristic of hybrid subjectivities, I am unsure whether we should see duality, a concept apparently suited to the transgressive model of the power relations of hybridity, as the "deliberate choice" (Hanaee 50) the author envisages. In my view, as explained in the previous section, hybridity is an effect of geographical displacement and movement through cultures, which cause the subject to experience empowered and powerless subject positions, and which, inevitably rather than wittingly, reconfigure her space through the grafting of other cultural elements. Moreover, I think Hanaee's, as well as Blumenthal and Darznik's analyses, would be more profitable to the study of literature of war written by women if they considered diaspora, unhomeliness, and hybridity direct effects of war on Nafisi's identity.

Aside from *We Are on Our Own*, Katin authors another graphic novel, *Letting It Go* (2013), depicting her struggle to redefine her own preconceptions about Germany when her son decides to live there. The little scholarship that there is about Katin's works tends to focus on autobiographical writing and ethnicity, perhaps because of her status as a witness of

the Shoah, whose representation and literary study often raise ethical questions.[49] Louise O. Vasvári (2009) defines Katin's comics as "life writing," an umbrella term for subgenres like memoir and testimony. Although Vasvári's main purpose in her "Introduction to and Bibliography of Central European Women's Holocaust Life Writing in English" is to compile Holocaust narratives by women, she makes valuable remarks about *We Are on Our Own*. For instance, she discusses it as "a special case of life writing [that] is the two-voiced life writing," portraying "an intergenerational and intercultural transmission of imperiled narratives, in and through a space of thick translation from orality to textuality" (7). That classification might be due to Katin's admission, during an interview with Samantha Baskind (2010), that her memories of the events she tells are very scanty, and that *We Are on Our Own* is her recreation of the stories she used to listen her mother tell. It is in this sense that Vasvári considers Katin's text a translation from oral storytelling, passed through generations of displaced Holocaust survivors, child survivors, and children of survivors.

The same ethnic and memorialistic preoccupation is present in Dana Mihăilescu's "Haunting Specters of World War II Memories from a Transgenerational Ethical Perspective in Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own* and *Letting It Go*" (2015). Mihăilescu reads Katin's comics in relation to the way three Jewish generations (Esther, Lisa, and her son) deal with the memory of the Shoah. Although Mihăilescu does not analyze relational and situational subjectivities, she refers to conflicts between those generations which can be approached through the discourse of hybridity. For example, a naturalized American, Lisa denies Judaism and tries to avoid the transmission of Jewish culture to her son, privileging secular values

[49] Discussion on the ethics of representation of the Holocaust often refer to Theodor Adorno's (1983) vexed statement that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34), which is contemporarily read not as condemnation of the arts, but as a culturally critical reflection on "the tension between ethics and aesthetics inherent in an act of artistic production that reproduces the cultural values of the society that generated the Holocaust" (Richardson 1).

instead. That suggests, as I will discuss further later, that her identity is affected by war-driven migration through Jewish, anti-Semitic, and secular contexts.

The fact that the greatest part of the critical bibliography on *We Are on Our Own* circles around ethnic issues indicates that, analogously to the tendency towards gender exclusivity found in studies of war literature written by women, there seems to be a privileging of ethnicity as a category for the analyses of subjectivity in works by authors of Jewish origin. While this favoring is understandable in light of the tragedy undergone by that people, like gender-centered discussions, it runs the risk of fostering blindness towards other important constituents of individual identity, including gender itself. Naturally, that Vasvári and Mihăilescu choose Holocaust narratives written by women as their object of interest already demonstrates a concern with questions of gender and visibility within the literature of the Shoah. Nonetheless, there are some other research pieces that address the meanings and effects of the representation of gender in narrative texts. In this sense, I refer first to Eszter Szép's essay "Graphic Narratives of Women in War: Identity Construction in the Works of Zeina Abirached, Miriam Katin, and Marjane Satrapi" (2014), which affirms the need for "a more gender-sensitive perception of narrative trauma of the Holocaust" (25), suggesting neglect of gender issues within the field. Szép, however, does not deepen her own analysis much in that regard, limiting it to a consideration of the way the comics she reads unsettle the common protagonism of male characters in the genre, and to a comparison between Katin's representation as Lisa and Art Spiegelman's Artie in *Maus* (1991).

Mihăilescu's "Performing the Gendered Self: The Stakes of Affect in Miriam Katin's *We Are on Our Own*" (2010), on the other hand, is the critical text that most converses with this thesis when it comes to discussing relational subject positions and situational flows of power. It is true that Mihăilescu does not refer to locational feminism, contemporary cartographies, or discourses of identity founded on a spatial rhetoric and metaphorics. Rather,

her study is mainly based on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, although she does consider Jewish ethnicity a "coordinate" (Mihăilescu, "Performing the Gendered Self" 143) of the characters' subjectivities. Despite her different theoretical apparatus and terminology, Mihăilescu's analysis can be said to acknowledge the multiple, relational, and situational constituents of identity, as it focuses on "the intercrossing of ethnicity and gender" (141), or "the dynamics of the gender … brought to life by the ethnic rigors characteristic of an extreme situation as that represented by the Shoah" (140). That is, similarly to this thesis, Mihăilescu investigates the powerlessness of Jewish ethnicity as it is affected and enhanced by Esther and Lisa's gender in various episodes of their journey. She even describes this interaction as "a competition between emphasizing ethnicity or gender" (148), reminding her readers of Friedman's situational discourse of identity, in which she proposes that, in different contexts, some aspects are highlighted, for better or worse, while others remain constitutive in the background. Moreover, not only does Mihăilescu address the axes of gender and ethnicity, but she also assesses their impact on the category of social class when, as I previously mentioned, Esther and Lisa are forced to abandon their cosmopolitan lives. Lisa's hybrid subjectivity is, however, an issue the essay "Performing the Gendered Self" does not contemplate.

In contrast to *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *We Are on Our Own*, regarding *Goodbye Sarajevo*, there are no examples of critical studies with which to engage in a critical dialogue about the effects of war on women's spatialized identities. In general, the references to Reid and Schofield, including reviews, take at face value the narrative's self-proclaimed status as "a true story of love, courage and survival" (cover), some of them quoting excerpts from the book as "reported evidence" (Hartlein 19) of the "reality" of war. Hartlein's dissertation "Images of Pain" (2013), for instance, cites the motto coined by Atka's boyfriend Andrew Reid, "No war, no work" (Reid and Schofield 240), as an epitome of unethical attitudes and

profiting from the part of NGOs and journalists towards conflicts disastrous for other people. Jay Marlowe (2014), in his turn, refers to Reid and Schofield's memoir as one among other autobiographical accounts that "document … challenging circumstances and the diversity of people's experiences" (196), as part of his argument against the homogenization of refugees as a victimized and traumatized category. At this point, it is important to clarify that my thesis is not meant to discredit Hartlein and Marlowe's considerations, or Reid and Schofield's claim that *Goodbye Sarajevo* narrates their lives during the war. Rather, it is intended to take that narrative for what it is as well: a text of literary value and possibilities for analysis, and a selective and discursive (re)construction of experience, which is, inevitably, written according to the logic of fiction.

Throughout this review, I have noted that some research projects about the works in the corpus share themes with this thesis and contribute to its proposed analysis. Still, there appears to be a scarcity of more comprehensive investigations on the impact of war on the construction of a woman character's subjectivity, especially those based on contemporary, transdisciplinary, spatialized feminist literary criticism. Hence, the relevance of the mappings I develop in the following chapters to the study of the literature of war written by women involves an attempt to fill that gap, complementing current understanding of writers' textual representations of the manifold, ancient relationship between women and war.

## Chapter Two

### Gender and beyond: Mapping War and Subjectivity in *We Are on Our Own, Reading Lolita in Tehran,* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*

"In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself."
Frantz Fanon

In *Black Skin, White Masks,* first published in English in 1967, Fanon discusses his pursuit of dignity as a black man. The author, Martinican by birth and Algerian by choice, relies on psychoanalytical theory to argue that the colored, colonized subject internalizes an inferiority complex in face of the white, European colonizer, and emulates the oppressor in a desire to overthrow him and occupy his place. Fanon subsequently advocates a rewriting of the black man as someone who understands, but resists, his past of blackness determined by (non-)whiteness, and who moves towards freedom from oppression. It is in that rewriting that Bhabha (1994) locates Fanon's "agency of empowerment," a subjective autonomy to act that emerges from "conditions of cultural displacement and social discrimination" (8). To Bhabha, the endless re-creation of the self, cited in the epigraph, is a consequence of movement through "the world of travel" (9), where fluid identities are constantly renegotiated and performed.

Although Fanon is often accused of disregarding the ordeal of colored women,[50] for example, through a restatement of the Oedipal complex in colonial and postcolonial contexts,[51] I begin this chapter with his words because they adequately summarize the

[50] Postcolonial critics like Bart Moore-Gilbert (1997) and Ania Loomba (1998) argue that *Black Skin, White Masks* "discriminates pointedly between the experiences of men and women of colour" (Moore-Gilbert 145).

[51] Loomba (1998) states that Fanon rewrites the Oedipal framework in racial terms, in a way that the "scenario where the male child desires its mother [is replaced by] the fantasy of possession of white women by black men … Thus colonialism is described as an Oedipal scene of forbidden desire" (146). In relation to this rewriting, the critic notes that, problematically, since Fanon's "'colonial subject' is usually conceptualised as male and the 'female subject' as 'white' … the colonised, especially black, woman's situation is glossed over" (163).

locational feminist mappings of identity here developed. Like the subject of Fanon's sentence, the protagonists of *We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo* travel through the world and experience circumstances of displacement, discrimination, privilege, and oppression. In this diasporic movement propelled by war, their axes of difference, such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, and class, flow relationally and situationally between positions of power and powerlessness, reconfiguring the identities the characters perform.

This chapter maps war and women's subjectivity in Katin, Nafisi, and Reid and Schofield's works according to the critical and theoretical apparatus reviewed, and to the method proposed, in the previous chapter. Those mappings, as I earlier stated, mean to demonstrate that war acts upon the self because it affects the relations between subject positions and power in a given narrative setting. They also intend to move beyond the exclusiveness of gender as a category for analysis in the study of the relationship between war and subjectivity in women's writings. For such purposes, this chapter is organized into four sections, each of the first three devoted, respectively, to *We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*. This arrangement reflects a chronology of the wars portrayed in those works, namely, World War II, the Iran-Iraq War that followed the Iranian Islamic Revolution, and the Bosnian War. This order facilitates explanations about those conflicts, which often emerge from previous disputes, or draw characteristics from past wars. In each of those sections, I divide the stories into parts of certain spatial, temporal, and social circumstances defined by the course of war. *We Are on Our Own*, for example, presents three such divisions: Budapest at the start of the Nazi occupation and before Esther and Lisa escape, the Hungarian countryside during the war, and post-war New York. Then, I examine the interactions between a woman's axes of subjectivity and power in each setting and discuss the negotiation of her identity in that context. The last section, in turn, compares the

preceding mappings, debating their findings and reflecting on difficulties. It also contrasts the war experiences of characters from such different backgrounds, revealing how war, regardless of its nature and proportions, is represented as having a strong and lasting impact on women's lives, especially because of imposed migrations.

## 2.1. "Goodbye cosmopolitan lady:" World War II, Displacement, and Subjectivity in *We Are on Our Own*

The memories Katin depicts in *We Are on Our Own* mainly recall Hungary, in 1944 and 1945. By the summer of 1944, when the story begins, the country had already been occupied by German forces. Although the Hungarian government had supported the Axis in the first years of the war, its alliance with the Nazis weakened in face of the popular pressure for getting out of the war after Italy abandoned it in 1943. Besides, Hungarian leader Miklós Horthy wished to withdraw his troops from Ukraine in order to guard the Carpathian Mountains against a possible Soviet invasion. In this scenario, the German decision to take over the territory emerged as a solution to enforce "the loyalty and subservience of their allies in East Central Europe" (Braham 53), and to avoid Hungarian negotiations of peace with Western powers. It also, as a consequence, intended to solve the question of the Jews, who, according to Hitler's order of March 12, 1944, as quoted by Randolph L. Braham (2000), "controlled everything in Hungary" (54), and had been spared from Nazi persecution until Horthy, under pressure, finally legitimized the occupation, and consented to the delivery of Jewish workers to Germany.

The mass deportations that followed Horthy's concessions haunt the first images and dialogues of *We Are on Our Own*, giving meaning to the title of the memoir, as Jewish citizens, especially women, are forsaken by the state to which they committed their efforts,

supposedly in exchange for protection from foreign threats. In this sense, a fearful, menacing tone marks the text from beginning to end. Not even when Esther and Lisa reunite with the girl's father, in the final pages, does the narrative convey relief and joy. Notably, moreover, *We Are on Our Own* does not have a pre-war plot, except perhaps for its initial panels, in which Esther and Lisa read the family bible, retelling God's creation of darkness and light as a means to introduce the wartime prevalence of darkness, symbolized by a Nazi flag descending upon a window (see figure 1).

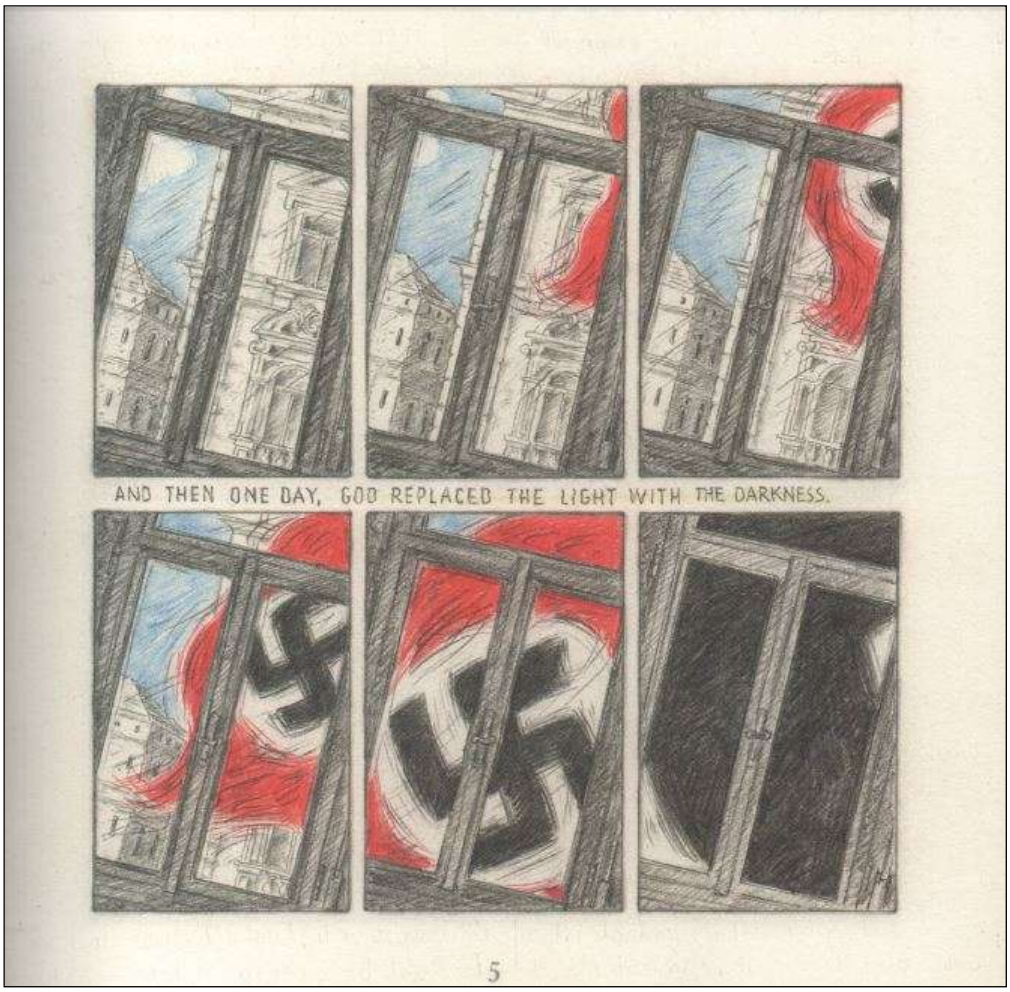


Figure 1. A descending Nazi flag obscures a window (Katin 5).

In the image, the Nazi flag shuts out the light coming from outside. That flag, a symbol of the ideology of the Third Reich, is, therefore, as responsible for the literal darkness in the room inside that window as Nazism is accountable for the metaphorical night in Jewish lives. The

text, however, affirms that it is God who "replaced the light with the darkness" (Katin 5). There is, in this sense, an association between God and Nazism in the narrative, as if the horrors of the Holocaust were not only allowed but caused by God. This interpretation anticipates the religious resentment and the feeling of abandonment that pervade the text. It also reveals Katin's representation of war as a force that transforms spaces from light to dark, from hospitable to hostile.

The absence of a pre-war period is, furthermore, explainable because the narrative relates the memories of a child still very young in the last years of World War II. This lack of peacetime has, in this sense, a symbolic meaning for Lisa and the Jewish generations to come, who would never know a world free of the darkness of the Holocaust. No matter how distant in the past, that war is a constant and uncontainable influence on Lisa's and her people's identity.[52] It does not end in 1945, for it continues to affect beliefs, relationships, and, as it is of interest here, mobility. Throughout the narrative, Esther and Lisa pass through at least three distinct spaces, during different periods: Budapest in 1944, the Hungarian countryside in 1944 and 1945, and New York in the 1970s. Mother and daughter's migrations from one location to another, as well as the physical and socioeconomic characteristics of those places, are determined by the course of war. Such varied contexts, as I now discuss, entail changing interactions between the characters' axes of subjectivity and their relationships with power; they also contribute to the negotiation of unstable, fluid identities.

In relation to the pervasiveness of war in Katin's narrative, it is also important to highlight that, aside from lacking a pre-war plot, *We Are on Our Own* does not distinguish

[52] As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, Elizabeth Bowen (1948) writes that "[w]ar being global meant it ran off the edges of maps: it was uncontainable" (347). Mackay (2009) reads Bowen's statement as "describing the impossibility of keeping in mind the multiple locations of war on and around the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific Oceans" (1). I would moreover argue that one can understand that *uncontainability* in the sense that, to those most affected, war is not limited to its historical, official time span, nor to geographical locations, as vast as they can be, for it may continue to repeatedly happen in one's mind, affecting behaviors and relationships indefinitely.

between battle and homefront in any of the scenarios selected for analysis. That may be because, as I commented in the first chapter, to the persecuted Jews and even to other civilian groups, World War II was not limited to combat, reaching all those who participated in wartime efforts and who suffered its consequences. In this sense, Esther and Lisa struggle to survive, perhaps even more than Károly, the girl's father, who is serving with the Hungarian forces, because of the vulnerability of being Jewish and women in that context. Therefore, in *We Are on Our Own* some of the feminist, political functions I have previously attributed to the literature of war written by women can be noticed, such as the denunciation of their wartime conditions and ordeals, the exposure of the contradictions of the "idea of women as a home front," and the undermining of views of authority, authenticity, and exclusivity in male accounts of war.

The first of the narrative scenarios in discussion is the Budapest of 1944, "a city of lights, culture and elegance" (Katin 7). This image of the Hungarian capital is not only textually, but graphically represented (see figure 2).


Figure 2. View of the city of Budapest in the top illustration (Katin 7).

This illustration opens the story and depicts the city, the river and the bridges. After that, a sequence of scenes shows Lisa, Esther, her friend Éva, and the dog Rexy in an expensive café by the river, which they only leave to go to the movies. All those urban places are portrayed in strong, although black and white, lines that convey richness of detail, differently from the scribbled drawings found later in the memoir. In her interview with Baskind (2010), Katin justifies this choice of pattern with the emotional connection she feels for Budapest. It may also be seen as Lisa's early perception of the space around her, before the darkness of the Shoah deformed everything.

By that time, Budapest is in transition from a free city to a Nazi territory. Several Jews still live there, as we notice, for instance, from the substantial number of people at the place where Jews are forced to turn in their pets. Anti-Semitic feelings are not publicly expressed yet, so that the Levy's landlord, for example, is sympathetic towards Esther in

public, but curses the "dirty Jews" (Katin 13) in the privacy of his house. Similarly, a waiter at a café politely serves her, but frowns at the mention of the word "Jewish." This contradictory behavior is associated with the fact that, although progressively losing their rights in Budapest, Hungarian Jews are still seen as part of a social class that imposes respect. The Levys' upper-middle status is verified, for instance, in Esther and Lisa's fancy clothes and jewelry, in the large and well-furnished apartment they rent, in their educated language and manners, and in their being able to afford a maid in times of general financial depression.

With the enforcement of anti-Semitic laws and deportations, the war transforms Budapest from a beloved home into a menacing place. This change is visually observed as the space of the city becomes crowded with soldiers and decorated with swastikas (see figure 3). In this scenario, Esther and Lisa are gradually deprived of everything that reiterates their performance of Jewish "cosmopolitan lad[ies]" (Katin 24): the dog they are no longer allowed to have; the house and belongings they must hand over for governmental use; the city they are expected to leave for labor camps; the documents, pictures, and the family Bible Esther burns because they might give away her "real identity"[53] (Katin 19) when she decides to escape; and, finally, their Jewish names, exchanged for those of a servant girl with an illegitimate child.

[53] It is important to clarify that, although "real identity" is a phrase in Katin's *We Are on Our Own*, that is not an idea this thesis supports, given its theoretical and critical basis in locational feminism. As I discussed in the previous chapter, identity is not fixed, but fluid and unstable, so that there could not be one configuration of it that would be truer than any other.

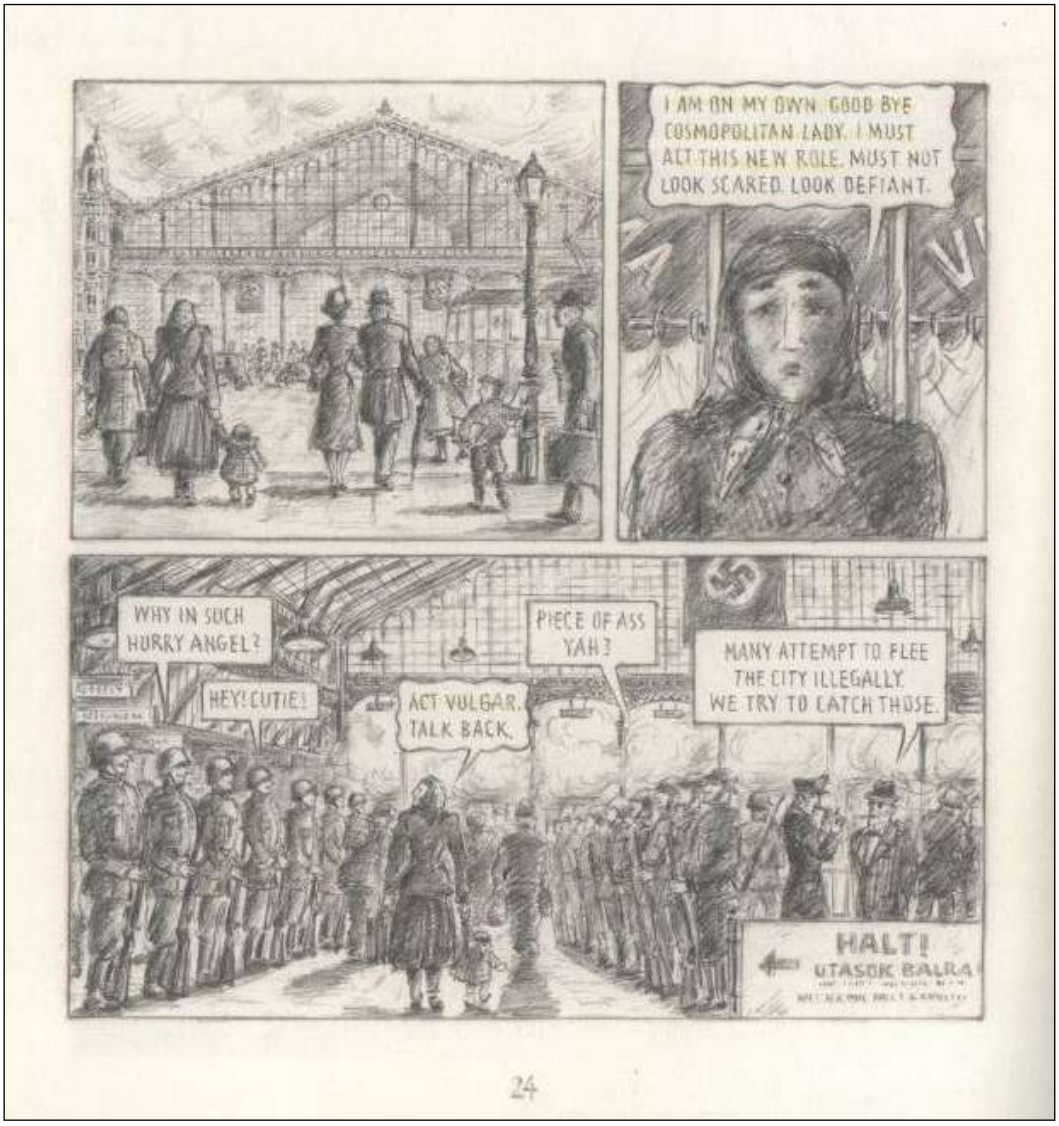


Figure 3. German soldiers and swastikas are part of the scene in occupied Budapest (Katin 24).

In the context of growing hostility determined by the German invasion of Budapest during the war, Esther and Lisa occupy an intersection of multiple subject positions, made up of class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and gender, as they perform an identity of upper-middle class, Jewish, Hungarian women. The relations between some of these axes of subjectivity are, in this situation, contradictory. For instance, on the one hand, their social class is a site of privilege, such as the availability of food, money, and a comfortable home. Moreover, the power associated with that axis prevents gender oppression to a certain degree, for Esther does not have to give in to the state's wartime exploitation of women's work force

in order to provide for her child. Nationality, on the other hand, entails subjugation, since their country is under foreign rule.

As anti-Semitic politics increase, however, it is the characters' ethnicity that is emphasized over all other subject positions. This effect of war is, in fact, so strong that it affects other constituents of identity, and renders these women completely oppressed. That is because, once they are destitute of their possessions, Esther and Lisa fall into a lower social class. As a consequence, Esther sews, cleans, and cooks to earn a living for herself and her daughter. At the same time that working expands her possibilities as a woman, even after the war is over, her job as a maid puts her in a position that is vulnerable to harassment, something she never suffered before, and about which she is afraid to complain. Because all their axes of subjectivity are related to powerlessness, mother and daughter have no other choice but to entirely abandon who they are. In this sense, the burning of documents, memories, and belongings represents those women's symbolic death, or "a way to vanish" (Katin 19) into a new (re)configuration of their identities.

The transition from Budapest to the Hungarian countryside takes place on a passenger train. It is significant that Katin chooses to represent the liminal space between those two locations in the narrative. By depicting the station in Budapest and parts of the journey by train, she emphasizes the characters' war-driven movement between geographical and subjective positions. The station and the train function, in this sense, as thresholds towards renegotiated, different identities. It is at the station, for instance, that Esther first appears as a servant girl: "Good bye cosmopolitan lady. I must act this new role. Must not look scared. Look defiant … Act vulgar. Talk back" (Katin 24). In this passage, as she imposes upon herself the behavior she associates with that of a servant, single woman, Esther seems conscious that "this *new* role" implies certain actions and attitudes very different from those

of that old role of "cosmopolitan lady." She is, then, aware of how her social class status may affect her performance of gender.

On the train to the countryside, moreover, Esther lets Lisa eat a piece of pork sausage a woman gently gives to the starved little girl. Esther's first reaction is to decline the offer, claiming that Lisa "is not hungry" (Katin 26). Her refusal is, in fact, founded on kashrut, the set of Jewish dietary laws that, among other proscriptions, forbids the consumption of unclean animals like the pig. It may also be due to her embarrassment of needing the solidarity of strangers. Lisa, however, is too young to understand why she must not accept the sausage and reaches out for it. The realization of her daughter's hunger is enough to change Esther's mind. As she allows Lisa to eat, the situation suggests a gradual abandonment of Jewish habits and the reiteration of attitudes that reinforce their disguise. It is on the moving platform of the train, therefore, that the characters transit between places and renegotiated identities.

Narrative space is redefined after Esther and Lisa's first migration. There is, in this sense, an immediate contrast between urban and enlightened Budapest, and the rural landscapes of the wine country, as their train crosses a devastated land, in a panel similar to the graphic representation of Budapest (see figure 2) in size, position on the page, and point of view (see figure 4).


Figure 4. View of the train from Budapest crossing the landscape of the wine country (Katin 29).

This new space is also affected by the war: the villages and farms are abandoned due to threats of invasion and pillaging. There, the danger is not only the German, but the Soviet army, advancing towards Nazi forces in the capital. Another relevant change brought by migrancy relates to the temporal structure of the narrative, now attentive to the passing of the seasons, perhaps because of the new bucolic routine of farming and waiting, different from the hectic rhythm of the city. In this context, the influence of war is noticed in the desolation and hopelessness of the setting and people, reflected in the pattern of the illustrations. The drawings become more and more abstract and scratchy as time passes by, and as living conditions harden. It is important to point out that, although I consider the Hungarian countryside in 1944 and 1945 one of the analyzable parts of *We Are on Our Own*, that is not a single space where Esther and Lisa remain fixed for more than a year. As I will show, they run away from one house or region to another for various reasons, and it is along with such migrations that their identities are delineated.

In this poverty-stricken scenario, Esther and Lisa first find refuge in Miklós's small vineyard, where Esther offers to help his mother with domestic chores in exchange for a

room. This job, as well as the mother and daughter's worn-out clothes, simple manners, and few demands, reinforces their reconfigured identities of a penniless maid and bastard child. In this sense, because Esther does not reveal her place of origin and her ethnicity to Miklós and his mother, and since Mária Vaszari, the name to which she now answers, conforms to that new setting in a way a cosmopolitan lady would not, she is able to successfully hide for some time. Although it might appear that social class is the most highlighted axis, in terms of powerlessness, of Esther/Mária's identity in that context, it seems inaccurate to think of ethnicity as irrelevant, or relegated to the background. After all, since the Nazi persecution of Hungarian Jews continues, their Jewish ethnicity is the reason why they disguise themselves in the first place. In addition, the ethnic axis continues to affect the relationship between other subject positions and power. While in Budapest ethnic vulnerability led to a loss of socioeconomic privileges, in the countryside, it relates to gender oppression.

A Nazi officer visiting Miklós's vineyard is attracted to Esther but suspicious of "those dark eyes and olive skin," and well-spoken German (Katin 39). He has Esther investigated and, even though Mária's papers are perfectly in order, he notices her fear and decides to take advantage of it. The officer thinks it is too late for deportations because "the war is almost over" (Katin 39). However, there is still time, he decides, for psychological and sexual abuse. In frequent visits to Miklós's house, he bribes young Lisa with chocolates and coerces Esther into having sex with him. He does not openly accuse her of being a Jew, but her silent subjugation suggests she gives in to his harassment to guarantee Lisa's and her own protection. As Miklós puts it to his mother, "[s]he's got no choice" (Katin 42): either assenting or denying implicates violence.

For a better understanding of relational and situational subjectivities in this part of *We Are on Our Own*, one might contrast the portrayals of Esther/Mária and of the German officer's wife. As I have argued, ethnicity primarily constitutes Esther's identity in the

context of World War II and of the Holocaust, mediating the association between oppression and gender, for instance. Still in this regard, one observes that the powerlessness of Esther's ethnicity and gender paradoxically, and somewhat ironically, entails privileges reserved for higher socioeconomic classes in that scenario. That is because, when she becomes the Commandante's mistress, she receives favors, gifts, and supplies that put her above the poor peasants with whom she lives. The German wife, in turn, is a white, aristocratic woman who conforms to the normative nationality, ethnicity, class, and politics benefited by the ruling regime. She exercises her power by persecuting destitute women like Esther, and attempting to control the fate of subordinated soldiers, whose life she terrorizes, for example, only to get information: "you won't tell me where he [the German officer] is going. I can have you sent to the trenches you know!" (Katin 44). In spite of the privileged position she occupies, the wife is, nevertheless, subjugated for her gender because her power is tied to her husband and depends on the success of her marriage. This is clear in the scenes in which she is beaten up by the Commandante. Having discovered his affair with a Jew, she accuses him of treason, only to be beaten and threatened with death. Therefore, the axes composing the wife's identity interact with and may contradict each other depending on the situation she is in, and on whom she relates to in that occasion.

The end of World War II approaches, as predicted by the German officer, and it affects narrative spaces and characters' movements and identities once more. Like the beginning of the war, this event is also represented through the visual portrayal of windows and flags, without any text this time, so that meaning is conveyed solely by the illustration in context (see figure 5).

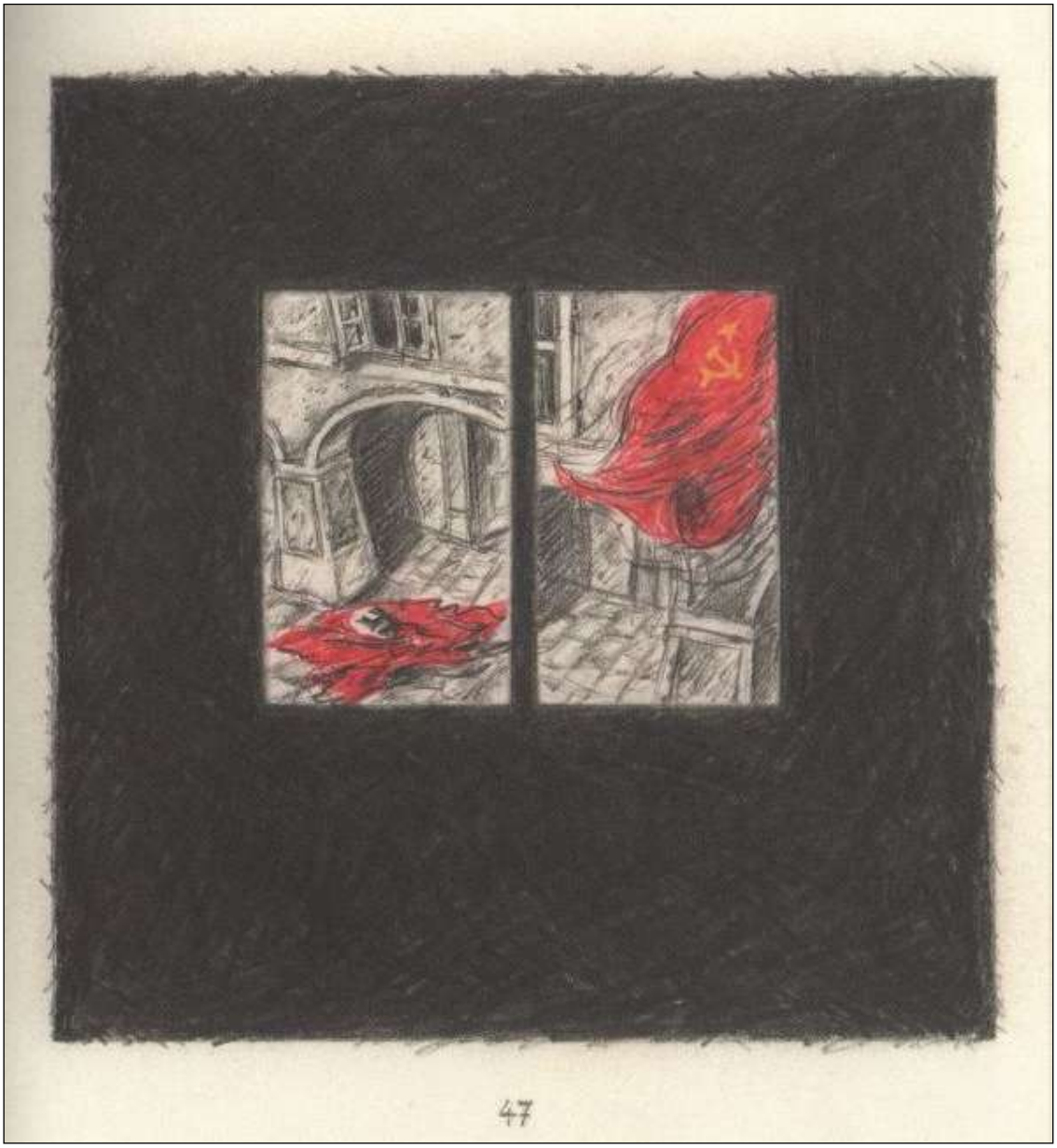


Figure 5. A Soviet flag gradually replaces a fallen Nazi banner, covering a window (Katin 47).

In the image, the fallen Nazi flag symbolizes the German defeat, which temporarily suspends the darkness of the war as it clears the window. That banner, however, is replaced by a descending Soviet flag, suggesting that the end of the occupation does not result in the return of light and peace, but in the maintenance of that same darkness by other hands. It foreshadows, in this sense, that, although the Nazis are nearly gone, violence and fear will remain, now brought by the Soviets. In this way, the wine country that served as a refuge for

Lisa and Esther is turned into a battleground. The Soviet forces bomb the land because, according to Katin, they do not perceive the Hungarians as victims of the Germans, but as their allies during the war: "[f]or them, we are the same as the Germans, we are enemy" (Katin 54). In this context, we can say that the most highlighted axis of the characters' identity is no longer ethnicity, gender or class, but nationality. Still, the category of gender is once more emphasized as the Soviet army advances through the countryside.

The destruction brought as a consequence of an imminent allied victory is evident when all women from the village take shelter in Miklós's house for a night. They come desperately reporting that "[t]the Russians are looting and burning! They took all the men to work! We are only the women and children! They are drinking and raping!" (Katin 54). From this passage, one infers the relevance of gender to the determination of the Hungarians' fate, for men are taken to forced labor camps, while women suffer sexual abuse. As a matter of fact, Miklós is the only man left in the house when the Soviets take it over, plundering his cellar, and gang-raping women and girls in disturbing images. This wave of violence causes Lisa and Esther's second migratory movement. This time, therefore, they are not forced to go away because of ethnicity, although anti-Semitic feelings are common among Soviets and Hungarians as well, but because of the powerlessness of their nationality and gender.

The morning after the assault on Miklós's house, Esther, Lisa, and their dog, the girl's only friend, run away through a blizzard, chased by Soviets who blame Esther for the death of one of their soldiers on that fateful night. The scenes that follow portray, once again, the mother and daughter's journey between locations, connecting them through the depiction of other liminal spaces. Like the station and the train journey in between Budapest and the wine country, the snow-covered roads allow characters, scenarios, and subjectivities to move and change. The mother and daughter's escape is drawn in black-and-white, nearly abstract scribbles, in panels with very little text. In this sense, these images reveal a direct contrast

with two colorful flash-forwards of Lisa's present in the United States, which I discuss later. Their flight seems to be a traumatic and transformative moment in Lisa's life, influencing the way she constructs and understands her identity as an adult. Until this point in the narrative, she has a naïve comprehension of God as a benefactor, in a way that she considers herself "the God of [her] doggie" (Katin 34) when she gives it something to eat. Lisa also says the German officer is "[s]uch a nice man. Maybe he is God. The chocolate God" (Katin 42) because he brings her candies. This innocent view, however, changes permanently after the violent escape through the snow, when she experiences fear and sorrow, as her dog is shot in its attempt to protect them. Disheartened and angry, the girl reflects that "'[t]he darkness did not help and the light did not help. … The snow is all red around doggie and it is so cold'" (Katin 69). The voice of a rare narrator, perhaps the adult Lisa, adds that "then, somehow she knew that God was not the light and God was not the darkness, and not anybody at all. Maybe, God was not" (Katin 69). This realization indicates Lisa's early loss of faith in Judaism, or in any religion for that matter, anticipating her posterior embrace of atheism. Despite the relevance of this event to the religious, cultural axis of her identity, Lisa often refuses to recall that memory, in a demonstration of her possible inability to cope with that trauma.

Esther and her daughter are rescued from the storm by a farmer looking for his sisters. He takes them in despite his wife's protests about lack of food and room. To appease her, Esther gives the woman her own wedding ring, an attitude that suggests a degree of detachment from herself as a cosmopolitan lady and an upper-middle class wife. This devastated location is still torn by allied attempts to annihilate the remains of Hungarian resistance. In the middle of this struggle, Esther realizes the impact of war and ethnic oppression on her body, and contemplates the consequent powerlessness of her class and gender, as she finds herself pregnant with the Commandante's child. Desperate, she

considers: “I can’t! I can’t have a child … I want to die! No! Not that! I can’t even kill myself! She [Lisa] needs me” (Katin 78). She is, at the same time, too miserable to afford a proper medical solution, and too committed to her role as a mother to take her own life. In this sense, one can say that her body becomes an ethnic and gendered territory marked by the horrors of war. Unable to stay at the farmer’s house in such conditions, Esther and Lisa leave for a refugee aid center in the town of Borosvár.

This migration takes Esther and Lisa to yet another setting. Regarding space, one notices the increased mobility of the characters, allowed to move between places more frequently than before. In this sense, means of transportation such as carts, trains, and motorcycles become recurrent elements, as they carry mother and daughter through villages, refugee aid camps, and, finally, as I discuss next, to a friend’s house. Transitional spaces like train stations and roads are also often depicted. At one of those small country stations, Esther abandons Mária Vaszari and reclaims her Jewish name and ethnicity. One might recall that it is precisely at the train station in Budapest that she performs Mária for the first time. The text seems, therefore, to constantly reaffirm a relation between those transitional spaces, which imply movement and changes in identity. In this manner, the memoir appears to construct subjectivities, as Friedman (1998) puts it, as “narratives of formation … sequences moving through space and time as they undergo development, evolution, and revolution” (8). Friedman’s locational feminist notion suggests, as I have observed for the characters of *We Are on Our Own*, that the fluidity, mutability, and relationality of identity go along with geographical movement.

In relation to time, this is already the postwar period, in its first spring. This means that ethnicity partially loses its emphasis as an axis of identity. I say “partially” because, although persecution and genocide are officially over, Jewish people still suffer discrimination. A case in point is when the wife whose trust Esther buys with her ring advises

her to go to Borosvár because, as she says, "I hear that they are pretty helpful there nowadays with *your sort*" (Katin 78; emphasis added). Similarly, in Borosvár, the town people judge "[t]hose Jews. Getting by without working. Like always. Christ killers" (Katin 106). During the war, ethnicity, as I have considered, implicates powerlessness and loss. After it, the Jews attempt to reestablish their place in the world, renegotiating their identities within a new sociopolitical scenario.

This postwar scene is dictated by new global systems of power that, controlled mainly by the United States and the Soviet Union, are allegedly contrary to the laws and practices of the Fascist regimes with which Hungary had so far been allied. For this reason, just as Jewish ethnicity does not necessarily entail powerlessness anymore, other previously oppressed subject positions may now be sites of privilege; class, for example. At the refugee aid center in Borosvár, Esther runs into David Blau, a former well-off acquaintance, whose family owned a regional brewery before the war. Recently returned to his town, David dreams of reopening that business without his parents, who died during the war. While he is still not able to do so, he works for the organization that provides Jewish refugees with money, meals, and tickets, as well as with a service to locate their relatives. Moved by Esther's despair over her repulsive pregnancy, David offers her medical help for an abortion and a place at his own house while she recovers. There, she and her daughter live not as servants, but as guests, regaining the social status they once had in Budapest. As evidence of this improvement, one notices that they wear better clothes and gradually lose their "rough country ways" (Katin 89). Lisa takes French, ballet, and etiquette lessons with Mademoiselle Delachaux, David's governess. Esther, in turn, does not have to sew for money, making dresses only for her daughter instead.

It should be acknowledged that, although Esther and Lisa are no longer in danger for being Jewish, they are in a position of submission in relation to David as a lingering

consequence of wartime ethnic oppression, which cost them every possession they had. David, on the other hand, appears to not have been so extensively harmed, even though he is also a Jew, since he retains his socioeconomic privileges. As a result, Esther is on unequal terms with him, and that is the point in which the axis of gender, as affected by ethnic and class powerlessness, is once again brought to the foreground of her construction as a character. David protects Esther not only out of sympathy for her sorrows, but because he is attracted to her. Conscious that, without him, mother and daughter have nothing to their names, David insinuates himself with Esther several times, and proposes that they form a family in the United States or Palestine, common destinations of diasporic Jews in that period, in spite of her traumatic fear of being sexually abused again and of her proclaimed loyalty to Károly, for whom she waits.

The graphic part of *We Are on Our Own* ends as Károly, discharged from service, tracks Esther down from Budapest to Borosvár, and the family is reunited. There is still, nonetheless, one final period to discuss: the late postwar. One learns about the Levys' destiny through the book's epilogue, and through flash-forward depictions of Lisa's adulthood in New York throughout the story. The epilogue significantly alters the structure of the narrative, replacing the illustrated panels with a linear prose text. Furthermore, in the majority of the written part, on the one hand, the narrator's voice is limited to very few passages setting time and place, such as "1944 Budapest: a city of lights, culture, and elegance" (Katin 7), or reporting the characters' thoughts and feelings in third person, as in "somehow she knew that God was not the light and God was not the darkness" (Katin 69). In the epilogue, on the other hand, there is a first-person narrator whom one might associate with Katin because of references to her career in animation studios. This section of the book also contains reproductions of letters from her father during the war, and a picture of her and her mother in 1946. Those elements strengthen the autobiographical pact the phrase "a memoir

by Miriam Katin," on the cover of the book, establishes with the reader.[54] The need for such reinforcement may lie in the author's self-representation through a character with a different name, Lisa, in the depiction of events and thoughts to which Katin would not have had access, and in her acknowledgement that her writing involved imagining "the places and the people my mother told me about" (Katin 125), all of which suggest a degree of autofiction.[55]

The flashes of Lisa's adulthood in New York in the 1970s also unsettle the literary structure of *We Are on Our Own*. That is because they interrupt the chronological sequence of events, taking the reader back and forth in narrative space and time. In this way, while on one page the reader is in the Hungarian countryside in the winter of 1945, in the next autumn leaves are seen falling in the yards of a New York suburb in the 70s (see figure 6). Another contrast brought by the flash-forwards is that they are portrayed in full color, whereas the remembrances from the war are black and white.

[54] In regard to the autobiographical pact, in his conceptualization of autobiography, Philippe Lejeune (1989) explains that "as soon as we include the [title page] in the text, with the name of the author, we make use of a general text criterion, the identity ('identicalness') of the *name* (author-narrator-protagonist). The autobiographical pact is the affirmation in the text of this identity, referring back in the final analysis to the name of the author in the cover" (13-14). In *We Are on Our Own*, one notices the incongruence between the name of the author, Miriam Katin, and the name of the protagonist, Lisa Levy. The narrator, in turn, changes from a third-person to a first-person voice in the epilogue, perhaps to refer back, as Lejeune proposes, to the name of the author on the cover in the final analysis.

[55] The definition of what Serge Doubrovsky first called "autofiction" in 1977 is under debate until today. Luciana Hidalgo (2013) argues that changing the author-protagonist equivalence, as one sees in *We Are on Our Own*, illustrates, as I translate, "a common point between the most varied autofictional exercises: the possibility of erasing, or at least of blurring, the limits between self truth and fiction, even if that revolutionizes the idea of the autobiographical pact defined by Philippe Lejeune, opening new reading perspectives – the reading simultaneously referential and fictional of a same text" (221).

Figure 6. Juxtaposition of black-and-white depiction of Esther and Lisa's escape through a winter storm in 1945, on the left, and colored representation of Lisa and her son on a fall day in 1970s New York, on the right (Katin 62-63).

One explanation for this pattern is the association between time, memory, and color. In this line of thought, memories are expressed in black and white because they are distant and blurred in Lisa's mind. The present, on the other hand, is a clear moment stored in color in her consciousness. This technique for the representation of temporal difference is often used in film, for instance.[56] Another reading of the opposition between colorful and colorless images relates to affect. In this sense, black and white are used to express times of grief and war, and the contrast between light and darkness, peace and terror, repeated throughout the narrative. Colorful depictions, in turn, imply a period Lisa can finally enjoy, for "[e]veryone seems so calm and secure" (Katin 6). Dana Mihăilescu (2015) argues that the role of the American location in the story is to be "a place of protection, happiness and family reunion" (166). In this way, New York functions as a safe zone where Katin/Lisa is able to revisit and reconstruct her story, putting enough temporal and spatial distance between herself and the

[56] Movies that use black and white images to convey a sense of past include, for example, Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983), Kenneth Branagh's *Dead Again* (1991), and Tony Kaye's *American History X* (1998).

past, in a paradoxical position of geographical detachment and psychological engagement with her memories.

In the epilogue, the reader learns that Lisa/Katin and her parents leave David's house after their reencounter and return to Budapest. There, they attempt to conciliate the cosmopolitan, upper-middle class people they once were with their affected identities reconstructed during the war. In the efforts to resettle and to rebuild the city, one notices an interaction between gender and class recurrent in postwar times. After the conflict, Károly goes back to his previous job at a publishing company, but Esther does not simply resume her housewife duties. Instead, she continues to sew and sell her products, following a path towards emancipation traced by several women who took up male occupations or whose families suffered substantial personal and economic losses during the war. This way, as an effect of war, Esther changes from an upper-middle class housewife to a working-class woman, a role she, in fact, began to perform when she played Mária Vaszari. It is interesting to observe that, even though Esther is not a servant with an illegitimate child like Mária, the two figurations share, in the end, their social class position.[57]

According to the epilogue, the Levy's stay in Budapest comes to an end after the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.[58] Although the narrator does not specify which results of that movement cause the family to abandon the city, she states that changes emerging in the aftermath of the rebellion, perhaps economic recession and enforcement of Soviet politics, motivate their migration. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that, once more, the extended consequences of a conflict, even if not a war, influence the characters' trajectories. They move, this time, to the state of Israel, newly-established on Palestinian land.

[57] To review the meaning and relevance of the concept of figuration to discussions of contemporary cartographies, see chapter one, footnote 44.

[58] According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Hungarian Uprising, or the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was a movement of social unrest for autonomy against the Soviet control and occupation of Hungary since the end of World War II. It lasted from October 23rd to November 10th, when the USSR crushed the revolution.

There, as it may be expected in face of the violent circumstances for the creation of Israel, the Levys are not able to distance themselves from war either. They live in a kibbutz near the Egyptian border, a location Lisa/Katin describes as a place of "sunshine and freedom," even if only for the Jewish people, after "gray and mannered Europe" (Katin 126).[59] That space is, however, marked by the tensions between Israel and what is left of Palestine, since it enforces the restraints on Palestinians and supervises Israeli frontiers, contributing to the maintenance of the new country. That military role and its ensuring ideology are clear in Lisa/Katin's sense of duty towards the Israeli army, and in her assertion of that service as her "real education" (Katin 126). In such context, Jewish ethnicity and culture surface in the constitution of her identity, as those axes relate to power and determine her participation in and feeling of belonging to that community. Nationality is also emphasized in this situation, since Jews from different origins found their own homeland, severing ties with countries where they were once oppressed.

Despite her dedication to Israel, where she and her own children later reside for some time, it is Lisa/Katin's subsequent destination, New York, and not the kibbutz, that is portrayed in the narrative as her home, opposed to the hostile spaces through which she wanders during the war. According to the epilogue, Lisa/Katin moves to New York in 1963 and gets married afterward. The United States appeals to her, a moving subject transiting between Jewish, Eastern-European, and Western cultures, because it appears to be a safe place to raise a family. It also seems like a multicultural land that supposedly encourages the friendly coexistence of people of various backgrounds. The scenario represented in *We Are on Our Own*, however, is quite different from that ideal. There, she becomes part of a group of upper-middle class Jews, who, similarly to other immigrants, form a separate and proud

[59] According to Henry Near's *The Kibbutz Movement: A History* (2007), a kibbutz is a cooperative form of socialist, Zionist settlement established by the Jewish community of Palestine prior to the creation of Israel, and which had relevant roles in the foundation of that state.

community to ensure the continuity of their traditions. In a context that values shared ethnicity, the narrative points out a lingering effect of war on Lisa's cultural identity by relating her non-conformity to conservative American-Jewish life to her skepticism towards Judaism, which she only develops as a consequence of the war and of the Holocaust.

In the epilogue, Lisa/Katin states that "early in life I absorbed my father's atheism at home and the secular education at school" (Katin 126). This passage supports the interpretation I offered previously of her loss of faith as a result of the war. That is because, in the beginning of the story, Lisa is too young to attend school, and even to remember her father, and so is unable to absorb any traces of atheism or secularism during that time. On the contrary, as suggested by the opening pages of the book and by her naïve comprehension of religion, which I have previously addressed, she is used to reading the Bible, and to praying to a benevolent Creator with Esther. It is only when Károly returns, arguing that Esther should not "give thanks to a deadly sky," and that "God has nothing to do with any of this" because all of us "are on our own" (Katin 117-118), that Lisa confronts the possibility of the inexistence of God. Considering her father's views, the girl reflects on her recent experiences and recalls that, even though she prayed and prayed, terrible things happened to those around her. For this reason, she bitterly embraces her father's resentment, unable to believe in a God of love and compassion who does not answer her most desperate pleas.

Curiously, her secularism is not contested in Hungary or Israel, but only when she moves to the United States. After migration and marriage, Lisa integrates a community that praises traditional values: she states that "I had to allow for a more conservative approach to Jewish lifestyle. You had to belong and show it" (Katin 156). That entails, in the narrative, setting themselves aside by following sets of customs often different from most of the population, and by professing Judaism. The flash-forwards show that Lisa abides to such recommendations in public. In the privacy of her home, however, she questions her

husband's unconditional faith based on the sense of abandonment she felt as a child. Furthermore, she considers that premise of belonging and showing to be controversial and dangerous because she no longer wants ethnicity to be the most highlighted aspect of her identity.

Lisa demonstrates a permanent fear of the ethnic segregation she and Esther suffered. In this sense, she strongly opposes, for example, sending her son to a Hebrew school. While her husband believes it is better for the boy "to be with our own kind," and to "learn the Bible and the prayers the way I did," Lisa argues that such attitude only reinforces difference, in a separation between "us and them" (Katin 84). Here, she expresses her desire to no longer belong to an excluded minority, but to an inclusive and whole American community. Even though Lisa voices her dissatisfaction, this discussion, in the end, emphasizes the powerlessness of her gender and of her multicultural experience, since the husband's word is final, and the boy goes to the Hebrew school. It is important to observe that, although the family follows the father's decision, she continually and transgressively works to undermine that education. She tells her son, for instance, that God did not create the world as his teacher claims, and that what the bible says is "just sort of a story" (Katin 103), not the uncontestable truth.

The flash-forwards in *We Are on Our Own* mainly portray Lisa's conflicting ethnicity and religious views in New York, and the degree of gender oppression she experiences in that context, as I have discussed previously. They also contain, nevertheless, evidences of how some axes of her subjectivity account for privilege in that scenario. The fact that she lives in a suburb, an often expensive area of residency, for example, suggests socioeconomic power. As in 1944 Budapest, that position implies certain respect, even if sometimes laden with mistrust, due to her Jewish ethnicity. Moreover, as a naturalized American citizen, Lisa

enjoys the freedom of movement and the favorable reception that often comes with a first-world nationality.

In the end of the epilogue, a final graphic panel pictures a slightly older Lisa looking at a map. Bellow the image, one reads:

> For many years after the war I used to peruse a tattered old map with mysterious pencil marks. The very same map my father carried around while tracing our steps trying to find us. Somehow, like so many other things this old map too vanished. (Katin 158)

This section recreates that tattered, mysterious map, retracing not only the places Esther and Lisa have been, but the subject positions of power and powerlessness between which they have flowed, delineating, in this manner, the contours of their identities. In a sense, this is a map of war as well. It does not illustrate the strategic maneuvers and territorial acquisitions of national forces, but it shows the personal, individual level in which war is also felt and fought. Moreover, it emphasizes the potential a war has to alter systems of power, transform spaces, change situations, and cause displacements. Particularly, this map shows World War II from the perspective of two women, exposing the extension of its effects on multiple and intersectional axes of subjectivity, and reinforcing the importance of studying women's writings of war with a focus on gender and beyond.

## 2.2. Inimitable Selves: Effacement and Renegotiation of Identities during Revolution and War in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*

Azar Nafisi's autobiographical narrative alludes to movement right from its front cover. The title, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, recalls Edward Said's discussion about travelling theory in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983). In that text, Said asks "whether by virtue

of having moved from one place and time to another an idea or a theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different for another period or situation" (226). In that line of reasoning, one may also wonder how the reception of a literary work differs if that text moves to a cultural context other than that of its production. Throughout Nafisi's memoir, as suggested by its title, one follows the forbidden trips of Nabokov and other authors' novels to Tehran, where they are admired by some readers but condemned by the Islamic authorities. At the same time, Nafisi's work is allowed to travel West, out of Iran and into our own cultures.

Still on the front cover, the subtitle "a memoir through books" conveys, with the use of the proposition "through," the idea of moving from the end of a story to the beginning of another. In this literary journey, it is as if one read different novels while perusing Nafisi's memoir. The intertextuality proposed in the title and subtitle is reinforced by the structure of the narrative, organized into four parts: "Lolita," "Gatsby," "James," and "Austen." In each of these sections, Nafisi compares the events, emotions, and opinions she recounts to the plot and themes of fictional works by Nabokov, Fitzgerald, Henry James, Jane Austen, and other writers like Woolf and Saul Bellow.

Among the geographical and metaphorical movements portrayed in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, I shall first consider Nafisi's return to Tehran in 1979, after seventeen years living in Europe and in the United States. While she is away pursuing her education, she idealizes Tehran as she saw it as a child: "a hospitable and magical place" (81). She comes back, however, to a city that, in spite of maintaining the natural splendor of its mountains, is transformed by the dream of a revolution. From the airport where Nafisi arrives to the streets she walks, and to the university where she teaches, Tehran has become a place of revolutionary Islam.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a movement to depose the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, collapse the Iranian monarchic order, and establish an anti-Western and theocratic Islamic Republic of Iran. To Said Amir Arjomand (1988), the Iranian Revolution is "as unprecedented in world history as the French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917" because "[f]ew considered the rise of a theocracy in a modernized state a possibility, and even fewer thought it might result from a popular revolution" (3). As Arjomand points out, that movement was marked by massive popular support. It was also characterized by its relatively non-violent actions. Although violence would become a trait of the Islamic Republic, in 1978 and 1979 most Iranians would join peaceful demonstrations and strikes. Perhaps because of this ideal unity, among other reasons, this revolution seems to have had a mythical character, built around the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini from exile as a leader and a savior of the country from Western corruption.

The ongoing revolution, in particular, does not surprise Nafisi when she arrives in Tehran. She, in fact, shares the dream of a Republic of Iran. While at the University of Oklahoma, for instance, she joins the Iranian Student Group, a chapter of the World Confederation of Iranian Students, and participates in protests "shouting slogans against US involvement in Iran" (Nafisi 86). In Tehran, she also marches with the crowds that demand the fall of the Shah. What startles her, therefore, is not the revolutionary scene, but the inflexible, authoritarian tone of the Islamic ideology that is the basis of the movement, expressed by a "somber and slightly menacing" atmosphere, "like the unsmiling portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini and his anointed successor, Ayatollah Montazeri, that covered the walls" (Nafisi 82), for instance.

Differently from my examination of *We Are on Our Own*, this first analyzable scenario of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* does not correspond to a moment of war. It may be said, however, that it emerges, in a sense, from the global order consolidated after World War II,

when the United States, as the most victorious nation, influenced and funded governments in oil-producing countries like Iran. Still, the Revolution itself is not a war, according to O'Connell's (1995) definition, for it apparently lacks premeditation, planning, and the willingness to engage in warfare. Nevertheless, because it provokes displacement and affects spaces and women's axes of subjectivity in a manner similar to the war in *We Are on Our Own*, I consider the late 1970s and 1980s revolutionary Tehran a proper context for this thesis. Nafisi states that, once consolidated, "the government had waged a war against women" (111). These words are not to be taken literally, for, as harsh as it can be, the limitation of women's rights in the Republic does not characterize a war. Nevertheless, Nafisi's statement leads one to reflect on the meanings war may have in different cultures, since, to radical Muslims, purging Iran from Western ways and influence is part of the efforts of the holy war.[60] Another reason for my interest in revolutionary Tehran is that the popular Islamic movement for political change is among the main causes for the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted from 1980 to 1988. The eight-year-long conflict composes the second narrative context I will discuss in relation to the opposing, but complementary, private and public, fictional and "real" spaces between which the characters transit in wartime Tehran.

In the beginning of the "Gatsby" section, Nafisi revisits the episode of her arrival at the Tehran airport as an observer, referring to her former self as "she," different from the narrator's "I," a woman filled with the nostalgia and anticipation of coming home. As that expectation is broken by political and personal conflicts in the following years, "she" gradually becomes "I," a critic of the extremism of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and an advocate for the value of difference and imagination. Although "she" is incapable, or

[60] In relation to the concept of holy war, Arjomand (1988) explains that, to radical followers, "Islam is a revolutionary ideology and a revolutionary practice, which aims at destroying the social order of the world totally and rebuilding it from scratch … and *jihad* (holy war) denotes the revolutionary struggle" (104). *Jihad* is in fact the Arabic word for struggling. Within Islamic ideology, that struggle is both personal, against internal impulses to disobey sacred laws, and external, directed towards the reformation of the corrupt world through debate or warfare.

unwilling, to realize by that time, "the home she had left seventeen years before, at the age of thirteen, was not home anymore" (81). Instead, it is an estranged place constantly watched by "an ayatollah staring down reproachfully," his look translated in "the black and bloodred slogans: DEATH TO AMERICA … AMERICA IS OUR NUMBER-ONE ENEMY!" (81). Like World War II does to Budapest in *We Are on Our Own*, the Iranian Revolution transforms a hospitable Tehran into a hostile city for Nafisi.

Nafisi begins to feel that hostility shortly before her return to Tehran. In the Iranian Student Group, still in Norman, Oklahoma, she recalls that:

> [W]e talked meeting after meeting … about what the masses in Iran wanted. Apparently, as the movement grew more radical in the seventies, the masses wanted us to serve no alcohol in our celebrations and not to dance or play "decadent" music: only folk and revolutionary music were allowed. They wanted girls to cut their hair short or wear it in pigtails. They wanted us to avoid the bourgeois habits of studying. (86)

In this passage, Nafisi seems to ironically criticize both the group of which she is part and the Council of the Islamic Revolution in their attempt to speak for the masses from a privileged socioeconomic and political position. Claiming to know "what the masses in Iran wanted," while denying their access to power, those leaders, for their own benefit, attribute to the voice of the people a desire to be controlled and punished. This manipulated popular discourse acquires validity as it is repeated and obeyed, reproducing intolerance against deviating behavior.

Back to Iran, Nafisi experiences that increasing intolerance before actually stepping into her city. At the Tehran airport, the narrator recalls, "a morose young man stopped us: he wanted to search me … But why? This is my home, I wanted to say, as if this should have offered me protection against suspicion and scrutiny" (82). At that moment, Nafisi's

idealization of home as a place of warmth, hospitality, and security begins to crumble in face of her country's growing hostility towards what she values the most: freedom of expression, imagination, and cultural exchange. Already aware of the discrepancies between Nafisi's expectations and the revolutionary scenario, her mother and friends meet her at the airport filled with the anxiety that would soon be part of her life. Although such initial discoveries are shocking, it is at the University of Tehran, her workplace, that Nafisi mainly experiences the transformations brought by the Revolution.

Nafisi joins the faculty of the English Department of the University of Tehran in 1979. Soon afterward, the newly-founded government establishes the grounds of the University as the site of its weekly Friday prayers. In this way, that democratic space once shared between different religious and political groups acquires an official Islamic orientation. To Nafisi, that maneuver is comparable to a "victorious army … position[ing] itself on the most cherished site of the occupied land, at the heart of the vanquished territory" (89). The occupation of the University asserts the authority of the regime, as it reaffirms its dominion over the entire nation, including possible spaces of dissidence. Other demonstrations of power ensue: mourning ceremonies and processions that would become a mark of that Republic are held at the University's surroundings; radical Muslim students demand that Nafisi include "more revolutionary material" in her syllabus (98); male and female classmates sit separately; and, finally, the government orders the closure of schools.[61] Suddenly, the open and diverse University of Tehran becomes a closed, unyielding hostile place.

[61] Closing universities was one of the immediate measures of the Cultural Revolution proposed by the Islamic regime. This revolution aimed at the "desecularization of the educational system … for the creation of an ideological state advocated by the new Islamic fundamentalist ideology … [and] to eradicate all traces of Western cultural influences from the universities and high schools" (Arjomand 142). In 1980, Khomeini ordered the creation of the Commission for Cultural Revolution to administer the Islamization of universities. That commission was responsible, among other actions, for judging whether professors were committed to the revolutionary cause, and for expelling those contrary to the government.

The radical politics of the revolutionary regime affect other spaces of the city besides the university. Parties' offices and private residences are broken into as if they were public spaces in searches for "corrupt elements" (Nafisi 83). The Ayatollah Khomeini also orders the arrest and execution of anti-revolutionaries, monarchists, and communists. As a result, people's routine at work, school, and at home is often "interrupted by death or assassination" (Nafisi 96). These places, therefore, become sites of hostility. Nafisi realizes that "[h]ome is constantly changing before my eyes" (145), as she notices how unrecognizable are the very streets of Tehran, covered in Islamic propaganda, with bookstores closed and movie theaters burned down.

One of the most emphasized axes of subjectivity in the revolutionary context represented in this part of the narrative is gender. After all, as Nafisi puts it, "from the very start, the government had waged a war against women, and the most important battles were being fought" in that period (Nafisi 111). In this passage, once again, she resorts to the metaphor of war to portray the authoritarian Islamic regime as an enemy. The battles she mentions consist of public demonstrations in which women march together and speak against the intended re-imposition of the use of the veil, and against the curtailment of their rights. Nafisi argues that the reestablishment of mandatory veiling would symbolize the final victory of the Islamic revolution over the attempted modernization of Iran through, among other things, the unveiling of women mandated by Reza Shah in 1936. Her use of war metaphors is very significant in this sense, for she seems to imply that, as it often happens during disputes over land, the possession and control of the female body, a vexed territory, corroborates one's conquest of an area.

Nafisi's depiction of the Islamic revolutionary regime as an enemy stimulated most of the criticism to *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Hamid Dabashi (2006) and Fatemeh Keshavaz (2007), for example, echoing Nafisi's most radical students, accuse her of supporting

American imperialism. They believe she demonizes a protectionist political system that values tradition over Western capitalist, globalizing influence. Dabashi and Keshavaz, in my view, fail to acknowledge that, although Nafisi makes generalizing claims such as "the government had waged a war against women," she also focuses on specific cases like Mahshid's, a devoted Muslim woman who has always observed the veil and acted according to the strict laws of Islam. To Mahshid, at least at first, the policies of the new regime mean, if anything, that others must behave like her. By telling such stories, Nafisi relativizes her experience in revolutionary Tehran, and suggests that power and oppression, in this scenario, are not only a matter of gender, but of how that position intersects and interacts with others beyond itself.

While still a professor at the University of Tehran, Nafisi begins to experience a feeling of irrelevance: "I became irrelevant. Just over a year after I had returned to my country, my city, my home, I discovered that the same decree that had transformed the single word *Iran* into the *Islamic Republic of Iran* had made me and all that I had been irrelevant" (150). This irrelevance follows the realization that her thoughts, teachings, and emotions have no place in the revolutionary context, and that she is, therefore, excluded from her own home. It is through that sensation that Nafisi experiences the powerlessness resulting from the relations between her gender, education, and political and religious orientation. As I indicated above, the Islamic government imposes restrictions and penalties on women's behavior. They insist on mandatory veiling, condemn prominent women politicians to death for "violation of decency and morality" (Nafisi 113), command the public stoning of adulteresses and prostitutes, and deny women the right to divorce, for example. These laws, as I have previously considered, do not affect all women indistinctively. They do, however, influence the relations between power and Nafisi's identity as a secular, democratic, intellectual woman.

At this point, it is important to notice how Nafisi's positioning as an intellectual and a democrat are influenced by her social class. She comes from a socioeconomically and culturally privileged family, whose members "prided themselves on the fact that as far back as eight hundred years ago – *fourteen generations* ... the Nafisis were known for their contributions to literature and sciences. The men were called *hakims*, men of knowledge … the Nafisi women had gone to universities and taught at a time when few women dared to leave home" (Nafisi 64). In addition to this tradition, her family is also known on the political scene because her father was one of the mayors of Tehran during the rule of the Shah. Another evidence of Nafisi's socioeconomic power is that her family can afford her secondary and higher education in private schools in Switzerland, England, and the United States. One can say, therefore, that her positioning as an intellectual derives from the learned environment within which she was raised, and from the educational opportunities her class privilege allowed her. Her democratic alignment, in turn, results from her awareness of the advantages and drawbacks of different political systems, acquired through her studies and experiences in foreign countries.

It is also relevant, as part of my analysis, to relationally examine Nafisi's stance as a secularist. In *We Are on Our Own*, on the one hand, Lisa's atheism is, as I have discussed, a consequence of her disillusionment with a benevolent God in wartime. Notably, that same situation happens in *Persepolis* (2000), Satrapi's graphic narrative of the Islamic Revolution and war in Iran. After her uncle Anuch is executed by the regime, the protagonist Marji, angry because God did nothing to prevent the assassination, purges him from her thoughts, and denies religion afterwards (see figure 7). In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, on the other hand, Nafisi's secularism is not a consequence of conflicts and disappointment, but of the skepticism she develops along with her intellectualism. She sees religion as "an instrument of power, an ideology" (Nafisi 273), with which she refuses to comply.

Nafisi, therefore, experiences powerlessness in revolutionary Tehran not only because of gender, but for her intellectual, political, and religious positioning. The interaction between these axes makes her a traitor in the eyes of the government, and irrelevant in her own perception. Perhaps the only emphasized aspect of subjectivity that continues to entail power in this context is her social class, as it allows the privilege, for example, of a continuous supply of goods, such as imported books, records, clothes, and international television, even if they are scarce and more expensive. Those public and private figurations of identity are strikingly different from what Nafisi would have expected at home.


Figure 7. In Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Marji angrily sends her imaginary friend God away after her uncle is executed by the Islamic revolutionary regime. The original text in French is translated into English as: "Everything will be all right." "Marji, what seems to be the problem?" "Shut up, you! Get out of my life!!! I never want to see you again!" "Get out!" (Satrapi 70).

In the United States, while Nafisi suffers some discrimination for being Iranian, she also experiences a degree of sexual liberation and certain progress towards gender equality, at least inside the university. Moving back to Tehran, where her ethnicity and nationality do not

signify difference, she expects that much-dreamed revolution to found a democratic republic based on egalitarianism, concerned with the rights of marginal groups. As she realizes how hostile her country has become in the hands of authoritarian and intolerant governors, she reflects, in relation to Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925):

> What we in Iran had in common with Fitzgerald was this dream that became our obsession and took over our reality, this terrible, beautiful dream, impossible in its actualization, for which any amount of violence might be justified … I myself was just beginning to discover … how similar our own fate was becoming to Gatsby's. He wanted to fulfill his dream by repeating the past, and in the end he discovered that the past was dead, the present was a sham, and there was no future. Was this not similar to our revolution, which had come in the name of our collective past and had wrecked our lives in the name of a dream? (144)

In this passage, she compares revolutionary Iranians' dream to recover a glorious Persian past free of foreign domination with Jay Gatsby's wish to win Daisy Buchanan's love as he thinks he once had. Like Gatsby, the revolution appeals to whatever means are necessary to approach that goal: lies, deceit, murder, and treason. The dream, however, is unachievable because it only exists in the past. Those people are left, then, with a sham, an impression of that dream that does not fulfill it, and with a constant look backwards that confiscates the possibility of future. In Gatsby's case, that confiscation comes in form of death. In Nafisi's, of war.

According to historical sources, such as Morillo *et al*. (2009), the Iran-Iraq War was declared when Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq, "[s]eeking to exploit the chaos following the overthrown of the Shah and to gain both a favorable settlement of border disputes and regional hegemony … attacked in 1980" (581). The chaos to which Morillo *et al*. refer is represented, in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by demonstrations of resistance against the

government by feminist, student, and secular groups, often met with violent retaliation. That the war lasted for the following eight years, however, indicates that Hussein and his allies[62] underestimated the potential of the use of war as a justification for national union against foreign threats. Nafisi says that Khomeini repeatedly called the war "a great blessing for us" (158). Indeed, if "us" implies the Islamic revolutionary regime, the war can be seen as beneficial, for it consecrated their rule as the means to defend the republic from enemies. The conflict had typical characteristics of modern warfare. Trenches, battlefields, and armed combat filled with increasingly younger soldiers caused, by the estimate of Morillo *et al*., more than a million casualties. The civilian population was highly affected as well, mainly through the heavy shelling and bombing of Tehran and Baghdad in what became known as "the war of the cities" (Nafisi 77).

It is significant that Nafisi's memories of that war are arranged in a section named "James," in reference to the Anglo-American writer Henry James and his vast oeuvre. Born in New York, James did not serve in the military forces either in the American Civil War or in World War I, the wars of his lifetime. During the latter, nevertheless, living in England, he was particularly active, as his letters and journals from that period indicate. James played a diplomatic role, mediating between the United States and Great Britain and demanding American intervention in favor of the Allies. He died, however, in 1916, with his request not granted until a year later, never seeing peace again. Nafisi dedicates an entire chapter to James's wartime efforts and texts. According to her, his profound disappointment with the American position of neutrality was the ultimate reason why he asked for British citizenship in 1915. She also claims that his writings reveal that "the war that had evoked his horror also

[62] John Bulloch and Harvey Morris point out in *The Gulf War: Its Origins, History, and Consequences* (1989) that the United States restored diplomatic relations with Iraq in 1984, and supported that nation's war efforts in order to detain Islamic expansionism. The alliance did not last long: after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a US-led coalition launched an assault on Iraq and on Hussein's forces stationed in Kuwait. Years later, in 2003, during the so-called War on Terror, the dictator was captured by American forces. He was tried and condemned to death for crimes against humanity in 2004 and hanged on December 30, 2006.

mesmerized him" (213). Like other authors, James was paradoxically terrified and fascinated by that "terrible beauty," in William Butler Yeats's words, the collapse of the civilization that Europe symbolized to him.[63]

Nafisi's sympathy towards James's ambivalent relationship with war leads one to ask whether she shares that simultaneous repulsion and fascination for the conflict she experiences. Her horror is expressed in her recollections of countless sleepless nights when she "seemed to think that somehow, by staying awake, [she] might throw a jinx and divert the bomb from harming [their] house" (186). It is also evident in the "savage relief" (207) she feels when the house next to hers, and not her own, is hit, guiltily knowing that her survival means someone else's death. She seems, nevertheless, to be enthralled by the chaotic nature of war as well. She states, for instance, that at the beginning of the conflict:

> I had become an avid and insatiable collector. I saved pictures of martyrs, young men, some mere children, published in the daily papers beside the wills they had made before going to the front. I cut out Ayatollah Khomeini's praise of the thirteen-year-old boy who had thrown himself in front of an enemy tank and collected accounts of young men who were given keys to heaven to wear around their necks as they were sent off to the front … What had begun with an impulse to record events in my diary turned gradually into a greedy and feverish act of hoarding. (159)

This confessed obsession for information and stories suggests a strong desire to impose a sort of narrative order upon the disarray of war, in an attempt to apprehend and understand that

[63] Vieira (2013) appropriates Yeats's oxymoron "a terrible beauty," found in the poem "Easter 1916," for characterizing the nature of war and of war stories: "war is terrible because it kills and destroys. War is beautiful because it seduces and attracts" (19). This ambivalence is noticed in several other accounts of war. In *The Things They Carried* (1990), for instance, O'Brien writes: "War is hell, but that's not the half of it, because war is also mystery and terror and adventure and courage and discovery and holiness and pity and despair and longing and love. War is nasty; war is fun. War is thrilling; war is drudgery. War makes you a man; war makes you dead" (76).

magnanimous event. Another way to do that, Nafisi later realizes, is by rewriting that story as she does throughout her memoir.

Despite partaking in James's duality towards war, Nafisi expresses ideas that also align with Woolf's arguments about that topic. As a matter of fact, the similarity between their reasoning is so often observed that, if not to pay homage to a monarchist friend, a former professor and James scholar who loses everything after the overthrown of the Shah, Nafisi could have named that section of the book "Woolf" instead. A case in point is her resentment at her husband Bijan's "peace and happiness" (169) in post-revolutionary and wartime Iran. Bijan's architecture and civil engineering firm finds relative prosperity in those days because of the new construction projects of the Islamic regime. This gives him a sense of being "of some service to his country" (Nafisi 169), fulfilling the duty he feels he has towards the nation regardless of the government. Nafisi, contrastively, has by then "lost all concept of terms such as *home*, *service*, and *country*" (Nafisi 169). This opposition illustrates one of Woolf's central points in *Three Guineas*. As I have previously discussed, in that essay, Woolf claims that the nation-state denies women the same rights and privileges granted to men. Therefore, while it is expected that men have the obligation to serve and protect the nation, women, if aware of their subjugation, will not act in the same way, for they have, after all, no country in the world deserving of their loyalty. In this sense, as she loses her notions of home, country, and service because of the revolution and the war, Nafisi begins to perform the role Woolf (1938) advises to women in wartime: to become an indifferent subject.

To Woolf, "indifference" is the proper response to the question of how women are to prevent war. Because conflicts are a traditional and predominantly male activity waged by patriarchal states that relegate women to their margins, they should avoid contributing to it, be it with their own services or by motivating combatants and refusing governmental attempts to command their efforts. Nafisi seems to subscribe to this idea when she adopts

"silent resignation" in face of the war and increasing authoritarianism as "the only form of dignified resistance to tyranny:" "[w]e could not openly articulate what we wished, but we could by our silence show our indifference to the regime's demands" (210). As Woolf suggests, Nafisi opposes the warring regime with one of the few weapons she has left: her dignified indifference towards the appeals for her support for the war.

Friedman (2013) calls attention to the distinction between what she names "antinationalistic love of country" (24) and patriotism in *Three Guineas*. While the first designates an emotional attachment to a certain geographical location, the latter entails one's submission to a patriarchal construct, the state rather than the land. To Friedman, Woolf denounces how "[i]n wartime, nation-states attempt to mobilize their populations to support the war effort through appeals to patriotism and fear – love of country and fear of the other" ("Wartime Cosmopolitanism" 33). That is, governments appeal to one's love of country as a strategy to inspire patriotic support for the war, usually claiming that demonized foreigners threaten the stability of that beloved space. Nafisi experiences that nationalist feeling through her "ambivalence towards the war, for my anger was mixed with feelings of love and a desire to protect my home and country" (158). Woolf warns that, to overcome such a dangerous and "obstinate emotion," a woman exercising indifference should attempt to "to give to England," or, in this case, to Iran, "first what she desires of peace and freedom for the whole world" (*Three Guineas* 109). That is a lesson Nafisi learns somewhat painfully throughout those eight years, when what Morillo *et al*. refers to as "an upsurge in patriotism" (251) in the Republic encouraged increasingly strict Islamic laws and the continuity of the war.

In Nafisi's view as an intellectual woman opposed to the authoritarian Islamic rule, "[a]t all times, from the very beginning of the revolution and all through the war and after, the Islamic regime never forgot its holy battle against its internal enemies" (158). It is as if that regime fought the Iran-Iraq War on two fronts: the international, against Hussein's

forces, and the domestic, against the perceived infidels. The latter conflict intensifies, as I have discussed above, as a result of the wartime pretext for unity and collective effort, in an attempt to convey the image of a cohesive nation fighting a common foe, and to, in the process, reassure the power of the revolutionary government.

For those purposes, Islamic laws are enforced, and the use of the chador or of a long robe and a veil becomes mandatory for women at all public spaces and workplaces, while makeup and jewelry are forbidden. Western literary books, satellite dishes, and alcoholic beverages are confiscated whenever found. These and other regulations are implemented by force: "[d]isobedience was punished by fines, up to seventy-six lashes and jail terms. Later, the government created the notorious morality squads: four armed men and women in white Toyota patrols, monitoring the streets, ensuring the enforcement of laws" (Nafisi 167). Besides those patrols, houses are often raided in search of prohibited items, and discreet public behavior is expected from men and women, who must not shout or touch each other. Even the mourning of war victims is controlled, for they must be celebrated as martyrs. Nafisi describes that, after an area is bombed, riders in motorcycles, "emissaries of death," come to "prevent any sign of mourning or protest" (211), shouting slogans in favor of the Islamic regime and stopping people from helping the wounded or lamenting the dead.

More than on revolutionary days, wartime Tehran is a hostile place, covered by Islamic propaganda against America, "the great Satan" (Nafisi 189), and Iraq, amid the destruction caused by bombs. Nafisi describes that context as a time when "[t]here were sirens and the mechanical voice that commanded you to attention, the sandbags in the streets and bombs usually early in the morning or after midnight; there were long or short periods of calm in between the bombings and their resumption" (188). In a scenario in which she is increasingly powerless, one notes Nafisi's gradual withdrawal from the public sphere.

While the sociopolitical changes brought by the revolution cause Nafisi's growing feeling of irrelevance, it is during the war that the oppression resulting from the relation between power and her gender, class, education, and religious and political orientation provokes an impression of invisibility. This sense of invisibility follows two main events: the obligation of the use of the veil and the loss of her teaching job. Nafisi and a group of other professors are expelled from the University of Tehran for opposing the increasing Islamization of higher education and the surveillance of campus life. Without the work that helped her endure the revolution and the war so far, and covered by "a piece of cloth … that made [her] look at the mirror and hate the stranger [she] had become" (Nafisi 165), she is forced to assume somebody else's identity, while her former self disappears.

In the public spaces of the Islamic Republic, her subjectivity is effaced, as she merges into a uniform mass of Muslim women of undistinguishable class, sexuality, age, ethnicity, and education. Within that crowd, she claims: "I felt light and fictional … as if I had been written into being and then erased in one quick swipe … my whole body disappeared: my arms, breasts, stomach and legs melted and disappeared and what was left was a piece of cloth the shape of my body that moved here and there" (167-168). In this passage, she describes the public, veiled Nafisi as a character whom she plays for the guards of the regime. That character is fictional because it does not correspond to Nafisi's figuration of herself as an intellectual, secularist, democratic woman. On the contrary, it empties her of those meanings, and transforms her into an illusion, a wandering veil under which nobody can see.

Although Nafisi will later return to teaching at the University of Allameh Tabatabai, the powerlessness entailed by the foregrounded axes of her identity leads her to recede into the private sphere in this point of the narrative. This passage from an open professional and political position to a state of domestic and personal reclusion may be seen as a movement from the public to the private space motivated by the war. In an analysis of *Reading Lolita in*

*Tehran*, mapping identities in both spaces seems necessary to understand how Nafisi constructs her resistance against the wars of the Islamic regime. For that purpose, as I will discuss, it is also important to compare how axes of difference are manifested in the "real" and imaginative spaces of the narrative.[64]

At first, Nafisi seems to conform to the gendered, political, religious, and social oppression she suffers. Along with her teaching position at the University of Tehran, she loses her status as a professor and her financial independence as a working woman. Nafisi, then, bitterly confines herself to the domestic space and to traditional gender roles. In less than two years during the war, she gives birth to her two children, whom she nurtures while also caring for the house. In spite of this apparent resignation, however, she does not give in to Islamism or to support for the authoritarian regime. Nor does she renounce intellectual knowledge. She continues to be an avid literary reader, and she does occasional work on translations and papers. As a matter of fact, "books," Nafisi claims, "were the only sanctuary I knew, one I needed in order to survive, to protect some aspect of myself that was now in constant retreat" (170). She seems, in this excerpt, to be aware that some axes of her subjectivity relate to powerlessness, but she chooses to preserve them as a form of resistance, instead of allowing their complete disappearance. From the private space of her house and of her own body, Nafisi remains, therefore, indifferent, in Woolf's sense, to the war and the government, and conscious of her obstinate opposition.

After Nafisi spontaneously leaves her job at Allameh, her reclusion to the private space acquires a stronger political stance. That is because, this time, she does not conform to gender expectations, but transforms her home into a workplace, a small version of a

[64] I am aware of poststructuralist and psychoanalytic challenges to the idea of reality, especially when it comes to literary analysis. Therefore, I use terms such as "real," "fictional," and "imaginative" spaces here as Nafisi distinguishes them in her narrative: the "real" are the spaces represented as part of the Iranian setting, while the "fictional" or "imaginative" are the literary universes of the novels she reads and discusses, as well as the affective, detached space of the class she creates within her hostile "reality."

university unconstrained by Islamic rules. For two years, every Thursday, Nafisi and her seven best and most committed female students gather in her living room with pastries and cups of tea to discuss Western literature in relation to their lives. The affective space of the class is described as "an active withdrawal from a reality that had turned hostile" (Nafisi 11). She refers to this movement as "an active withdrawal" because, contrary to that normative reality, it permits the existence and negotiation of differences effaced in the public sphere.

The contrast between public effacement and private celebration of diversity is evident in Nafisi's remembrances of her students' arrival: "rain or shine, they came to my house, and almost every time, I could not get over the shock of seeing them shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color. When my students came into that room, they took off more than their scarves and robes. Gradually, each one gained an outline and a shape, becoming her own and inimitable self" (6). This excerpt suggestively opposes veils, scarves, and robes to color, shapes, and selves. In this way, Nafisi once more implies that the veil disguises different subjectivities for Muslim women, erasing idiosyncrasies. The act of unveiling, of lifting the veil, in this sense, signifies a revelation to Nafisi, as it gives back to those women the right to perform identities plotted on different subject positions. Critics of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* would argue that Nafisi denies, in passages like this, the existence of women who willingly follow Islam. The portrayal of Mahshid and Yassi, however, indicates the contrary. While the other girls shed their scarves, those two remain veiled as a symbol of their faith. The religious orientation revealed by the observance or rejection of the veil becomes, in this sense, one of the several differences expressed and articulated in the private space of the class. The members partake in the same positions of gender and education, but they differ in regard to class, sexuality, religion, age, and political orientation, for instance.

The hospitable environment of the class allows differences to be manifested, acknowledged, and renegotiated. Nafisi encourages debates about her students' backgrounds

and points of view. Most of the time, she does not intend to reach a consensus but to establish dialogues between voices often unheard outside that living room. As one might expect, the juxtaposition of difference generates friction, and conflicts often emerge between participants. The narrative particularly emphasizes Mahshid and Azin's confrontation. Mahshid, as I have previously suggested, is a single, devoted, and discreet Muslim. Azin, on the other hand, is an outgoing, exuberant woman who flaunts her two marriages and sexual experience. The former is referred to as "my lady" (Nafisi 4), and the latter, as "the wild one" (Nafisi 5). The tension between them grows whenever questions of sex, marriage, and adultery come into discussion, for example, during analyses of *Madame Bovary* or *Anna Karenina*. Nafisi believes that "Azin's outrageousness was partly defensive" (54), a way of overcoming the sexual repression imposed by the Islamic rule. Mahshid, in turn, thinks "Azin was dismissive of her traditional background, her thick, dark scarves, her old-maidenish ways" (Nafisi 54-55). She recognizes in Azin's behavior the prejudice she suffered because of her religious devotion before the Revolution that privileged that axis of her identity. Their troubled relationship shows that the expression and renegotiation of differences that take place in the private space of the class are important to those women's consciousness of their location in an intersection of multiple subject positions. It also suggests how those processes of subjectification can be rather difficult and painful.

Nafisi appropriately describes their classroom as "a place of transgression" (8). There, they break the laws of the Islamic regime by reading forbidden literature, by wearing makeup, jewelry, and nail polish, and by criticizing the country's rulers. They also trespass the walls of silence built between them, as in Mahshid and Azin's case. They are, moreover, encouraged to transgress the limits between their reality and Western fiction. The stories invite them to look beyond their circumscribing context, towards imaginative worlds. Within the fictional universes created by Nabokov, Fitzgerald, James, and Austen, for instance, they

can (re)imagine themselves in the place of women of other ethnicities, nationalities, classes, and orientations, such as Lolita, Daisy Buchanan, Daisy Miller, and Elizabeth Bennet. It is perhaps in this regard that Nafisi states that "[e]very great book we read became a challenge to the ruling ideology" (289). The movement, as she puts it, "in and out of the novels we read" (8) allows them not only to acknowledge their differences, but to think about how those axes would be resignified in other situations and places.

The first and the last sections of the book, respectively, "Lolita" and "Austen," narrate Nafisi's post-war memories of Tehran. "Austen" mainly portrays the Thursday morning meetings and the students' discussions about women's rights and visibility in Iran and in the fictional universes they discover in that class. Nafisi reflects that "war and revolution had made us even more aware of our own personal ordeals … marriage … and individual freedom" (262). The chaotic experience of war fails to arouse in them patriotic support and voluntary subordination to the Islamic regime. On the contrary, the regime's contradictory rhetoric and violent actions awaken those women's dissatisfaction towards its laws. As an extensive consequence of the Revolution and of the Iran-Iraq War, many of them begin to consider the possibility of moving abroad. In this sense, the effects of movement on one's subjectivity become a central point of their debates. They think, for instance, that "over here," in Iran, "we are somebody, but over there…" (Nafisi 271), or that "over here we have an identity" (Nafisi 287), as Mahshid argues. During a short visit to Damascus with her husband, the student Mitra describes that "she had become a stranger even to herself. Was this the same Mitra, she asked herself, this woman in jeans and a tangerine T-shirt walking in the sun with a good-looking man by her side? Who was this woman, and could she learn to incorporate her into her life if she were to live in Canada?" (Nafisi 326). As circumscribing as life in Tehran may be, the girls are anxious about moving away because they fear the unknown. They are afraid not only of a new country, a new space, but of a different

configuration of their identities. That is because, depending on where they go, certain subject positions privileged in Iran, such as ethnicity and nationality, may be emphasized and powerless. Others, like gender and religion, in turn, might not be negatively marked anymore.

Despite being a woman in transit between geographical locations, or public, private, and fictional spheres, Nafisi also hesitates in face of the choice of leaving Tehran. After years of denial, the government finally issues her a passport, but she is paralyzed by the possibility. Paradoxically, she feels as if she has already been going away for some time: "the more attached I became to my class and to my students, the more detached I became from Iran" (Nafisi 317). What draws her is no longer the country or the notion of home it once represented, but the affective space of resistance she creates. Still, in order to motivate her students to teach their own classes, Nafisi decides to move back to the United States. Her return to America is also due to a desire to be relevant and visible in the public sphere again. The narrative does not depict her reconfigured setting and identity, except for present-tense, self-reflexive statements that indicate that it is in the new location that she writes her recollections. In her memoir through books, as I have discussed, this present-day Nafisi revisits Iran and its diverse spaces once more, retracing her trajectories as if mapping a mobile subject's steps.

## 2.3. Like Old War Movies: Ethnicity, Geopolitics, and Refugeehood in *Goodbye Sarajevo*

Reid and Schofield's narrative *Goodbye Sarajevo* reconstructs the two sisters' individual experiences during the Bosnian War. The conflict broke out in 1992, when Bosnia and Herzegovina demanded its separation from Yugoslavia. The state of Yugoslavia was created in the aftermath of World War I to merge Slovene, Croat, and former Austro-Hungarian territories with the Kingdom of Serbia. In 1945, this "patchwork quilt of seven 'national republics' – consisting of Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Macedonians, Slovenians, Montenegrins, and Albanians –" (Barash and Webel 131) formed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The government of a popular but authoritarian Communist leader, Josip Tito, held the multiethnic republic together during most of the Cold War. Tito's death in 1980 and the progressive disintegration of the USSR opened space for the nationalist unrest that lead to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. While Slovenia and Macedonia gained independence somewhat peacefully, Croatia acquired sovereignty after engaging in a conflict against the Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). Reid and Schofield explain that "the war in Croatia was still raging when in April 1992, following a national referendum, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serbs attacked Muslim and Croat countrymen, overrunning large swathes of the country with the help of the JNA" (Prologue). The Serbs and the JNA subsequently surrounded the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, undermining with bombs and snipers any resistance. The siege lasted four years and killed over 10,000 of the 100,000 people who died during the entire war, according to Reid and Schofield. It also displaced an estimated number of 1.8 million civilians, including the writers.

Hana and Atka are separated in the first weeks of the siege, as Hana and her other sister Nadia leave Sarajevo in a United Nations' (UN) convoy. Atka stays in the city with her father, grandmother, and other younger siblings who could not be evacuated. Meanwhile, her mother and her other sister Lela are away negotiating the liberation of her brother Mesha

from the JNA. Hana and Atka's separation is portrayed in the first chapter of *Goodbye Sarajevo* from Atka's point of view. From then on, each girl alternately narrates her own experience. As in *We Are on Our Own*, their stories do not have a pre-war plot. References to that period are represented by absence when the sisters try to recall memories of peacetime. Such remembrances offer a contrasting background against which to measure the effects of war on spaces, systems of power, and subjectivity. They reveal, for instance, that before the war the family was socioeconomically privileged. The father was a well-known professor and author, they owned a house in a good neighborhood, and the ten children had access to education. The family had a Muslim name, but, besides the grandmother, nobody practiced that faith. They also lived in a friendly relationship with Catholic Croatians and Orthodox Serbs in Sarajevo until the war destroyed that scenario.

Once separated, Hana and Atka experience the war in different ways. Hana suddenly becomes a Bosnian refugee in the Croatian city of Zagreb. She is first taken into shelters and friends' houses. Then, she transfers to a refugee center based in a hotel in Primosten, but soon returns to Zagreb to live with Nadia and Lela. Atka, in turn, struggles to survive and to minimally provide for her family in war-torn Sarajevo. An English major in peacetime, she works as a translator and interpreter for foreign journalists who cover the war, and falls in love with one of them, the New-Zealander photographer Andrew Reid. After Atka gets pregnant, the couple moves to his country to care for her poor health and high-risk pregnancy. Eventually, the Reids manage to offer asylum to Atka's whole family in New Zealand, where the narrative ends with the promise of new beginnings, still marked by traumatic memories. In this section, I first map the war and its effects on Hana's subjectivity as she transits between Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Primosten. Then, I discuss the impact of the Bosnian conflict on Atka's identity and mobility.

Hana is the most mobile character in the narrative. Once she leaves Sarajevo, the twelve-year-old girl is constantly displaced. Because of the war, she moves between cities and within them, from one hotel room, house, or neighborhood to another. Hana and Nadia arrive in Zagreb without any money, documents, or place to stay because their national currency is worthless and, in the haste to board the UN bus, they leave their papers behind. All they have are few clothes, a little food, and telephone numbers of family friends who reside in Zagreb. This lack of preparation suggests that the girls do not envision a long period away from home. As a matter of fact, they think they "might be away for a while, maybe even two or three weeks" (Reid and Schofield 2). To Sarajevans, the Serbs' violence is so preposterous that it will certainly end soon: "[t]he world won't stand by and ignore what they're doing. It's so uncivilized, surely there will be a military intervention" (Reid and Schofield 4). Contrary to expectations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the UN will only demand the lifting of the siege three years later. Hana does not return to Sarajevo, moving through hostile environments instead.

Although Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have a common cause and enemy, the increasing flow of Bosnian refugees into Croatian lands generates a degree of ethnic, geopolitical, and religious intolerance. Hana is intrigued by the disrespectful manners of the soldier of the Military Defense Force who inspects the UN bus at the Croatian border: "Croatians had always been so kind to us. I couldn't understand why he was being so rude now" (15). She does not realize by then the difference between entering Croatia as a tourist, as her family did every summer, and as a refugee. Each category carries its own social significance and triggers a set of consequences. The tourist is a socioeconomically privileged individual, who can visit different places and pay for services in the foreign country, contributing, in this sense, to the local economy and cultural exchange. The refugee, on the other hand, is dispossessed and, therefore, unable to reciprocate hospitality. The

powerlessness of their class, nationality, ethnicity, and religion, among other axes of identity, precludes them from easily giving back to the host country and provokes marginality and abjection.

Within the two days and the hundreds of miles between Sarajevo and Zagreb, Hana becomes a refugee. Unlike Esther and Lisa in *We Are on Our Own*, Hana does not expect this sudden reconfiguration of her identity. Esther consciously abandons her name and life in Budapest to seek asylum in the countryside. Hana, in contrast, abhors that condition: refugeehood is as abjectly stereotyped to her as it is to Croatians. She refuses that label – "I'm not a refugee … I have a family and a home" (Reid and Schofield 16) – because she hates "the feeling of being unwanted and a burden" (Reid and Schofield 20). Hana only begins to understand the heterogeneity of lives and subjectivities masked by that generalizing term while living with different refugees in the hotel in Primosten. After that, she even agrees to have a refugee card, her only document, issued upon returning to Zagreb. However, settled in the capital for the second time, she still does not fully accept her condition. Her constant attempts to blend in with locals, which I discuss in detail in the next chapter, reveal her resentment at her position of ethnic and geopolitical oppression.

Hana is only relatively aware of the powerlessness of her ethnicity and nationality before leaving Sarajevo. After all, it is to fulfill the "ethnic cleansing" of disputed territories that the JNA starts to systematically kill and starve her fellow townspeople. Nevertheless, within the hills that surround the city, ethnicity is not foregrounded. Atka emphasizes that, all their lives, "Sarajevo had been a multicultural city where marriages between Serbs, Croats and Muslims were common" (23). More than part of an ethnic group, they considered themselves Sarajevans. This is evident once the siege begins: allowed to abandon the city and join the attackers in the mountains, several Sarajevan Serbs choose to stay and face the war with their neighbors. It is, therefore, only during the trip to Zagreb that Hana first experiences

ethnic oppression closely. On that journey, she witnesses atrocities that would become part of Bosnians' routine during that war.

The UN convoy, although carrying only women and children, faces heavy gunfire on the outskirts of Sarajevo. Travelers have to get off the bus and take shelter from snipers trying to kill them. As the trip continues, they are stopped at several Serb army control points, where soldiers search the vehicle for Bosnian men attempting to escape. Regardless of political position, age, or class, any man found is immediately executed. Only women are allowed to pass, but not unharmed. They are insulted, threatened, and some suffer physical aggression and sexual abuse.

As the war between Serbs and Bosnians foregrounds ethnicity as a constituent of identity, it also affects the power relations of gender, social class, and education in intersection with that axis. In regard to gender, Hana's condition is similar to Esther's in *We Are on Our Own*. Hana is only allowed to leave Sarajevo because she is a woman. However, in a foreign and wartime context, gender aggravates her vulnerability as a Bosnian refugee. Like Esther, she is under the constant threat of the sexual abuse commonly perpetrated by the enemy. It adds to her powerlessness that Hana is no more than a child when she finds herself in another country. Differently from Esther, she has never been away from her parents' careful eyes. Ethnicity, gender, and age make Hana a potential victim of Serb systematic rape. Although it does not happen to her, other young girls she meets are assaulted under the pretext that soldiers "were spreading the Serb seed" (Reid and Schofield 49). To Serbs, when they violate and impregnate Bosnian women, they emasculate their enemies and defeat them by taking possession of their wives, land, and future generations. Once more, the control of the female body seems to symbolize the conquest of disputed territories.

In Zagreb, Hana and Nadia briefly stay with Mdlena, a compassionate woman who helps them contact Omer, one of their father's friends. Omer and his family share their small

apartment with the girls in spite of financial difficulties. They also accommodate Hana's mother when she arrives from Vienna. A volunteer for the Mothers for Peace Organization,[65] she has been away with other women in demonstrations "demanding that [their] sons be released from the [JNA] army" (Reid and Schofield 46). Unable to return to besieged Sarajevo, she goes to Zagreb to meet her daughters, and to try to improve their living conditions.

The women struggle with their reconfigured social position in Zagreb, very different from the privileged class status they enjoyed in Sarajevo. Hana constantly misses, for example, her belongings and the educational opportunities she had there. Although grateful, she is also often embarrassed at Omer's solidarity. The powerlessness of Bosnian ethnicity and nationality, moreover, does not allow Hana's mother to change their socioeconomic situation. This is clear when she is denied work. Hana narrates her mother's interview for a house-keeping job, a position that "under normal circumstances Mum would never look at, but because board was provided she decided to apply" (47). She describes that "it was strange to be listening to my mother applying for a cleaning job … it turned out that she [the wife of a government minister] couldn't employ a refugee because there could be complications with our status" (48). From these passages, one discerns Hana's bewilderment at their condition. To her, only in abnormal, extraordinary circumstances would her mother, a learned and politically engaged woman, seek a position she considers inferior. One also notices that ethnic and geopolitical prejudice hinders the socioeconomic empowerment of those refugees, reiterating their marginality and victimization.

[65] Reid and Schofield may be referring to the non-profit organization founded in 1969, in San Luis Obispo, California, by mothers, grandmothers, and non-parents who shared sadness and frustration at the losses of lives in the Vietnam War. According to the Mothers for Peace website, the group acts globally "to make the world safer and more humane for the generations to come."

Unable to provide for her daughters, Hana's mother arranges their move to Primosten, while she remains in Zagreb volunteering at the barracks. Located on the Croatian south coast, Primosten is relatively preserved despite the war. In peacetime, the town is a popular summer travel destination. However, as locals put it, "the war has killed tourism and with so many empty hotels on the coast, our government decided to house refugees here" (Reid and Schofield 71). Hana and Nadia are taken into a hotel maintained by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In general, their situation is as precarious as in Zagreb, as it stands in stark contrast with their previous visits to the seaside. Then, they transited through that space with their family as tourists, whose socioeconomic power entailed privileges. This time, as an effect of war, they walk the same streets nearly invisibly, or regarded with prejudice. Hana, for instance, is discriminated for her Bosnian ethnicity and Muslim name when she befriends a Catholic Croatian girl: the girl's mother humiliates Hana and abruptly ends the friendship.

Primosten serves as a temporary residence for war refugees before they move away to seek asylum in Western countries. While most leave, as they say, for "Sweden, Norway, Germany… whoever'll take us" (Reid and Schofield 98), Hana and Nadia go back to Zagreb because they still hope to return to a peaceful Sarajevo. Hana's second migration to Zagreb is strikingly different from the first. Almost a year before, she encountered a city marked by a war that filled sports stadiums and schools with victims. This time, she does stay briefly at the refugee barracks, where misery and desperation seem worse than in Primosten. However, as her mother decides to risk a trip to Sarajevo alone, Hana and her sisters Nadia and Lela find a benevolent landlord, Danica, to cheaply rent them a small house next to hers in a suburb.

This new setting inaugurates an improvement in Hana and her sisters' condition. Ethnicity is still the most restrictive aspect of their identity as subjects displaced by the war,

which harms Bosnians not only in Sarajevo, but throughout the country. Nevertheless, in Zagreb, that axis seems to entail less discrimination than before because Nadia and Lela are allowed to work and Hana is finally accepted at a school. In wartime, education is a prerogative of a few. In fact, Hana is the only among her siblings to pursue her studies in that period. This opportunity mainly ensues from the relationships established in this new space. Danica invites Hana to live with her and her daughter Andrea, who attends the same classes, in their comfortable house. The girl is, then, reinserted into a middle-class family context that brings about privileges she used to enjoy in Sarajevo. As I discuss in the next chapter, this reintroduction into a home and a school provokes the superimposition of elements and relations on a same subject that characterizes hybridity. It also produces internal conflicts: is this Hana the Bosnian girl who left Sarajevo, or the adopted child of a Croatian family? Hana claims that "Sarajevo … that's where I belonged. Everything and everyone I loved was there" (254). She also feels embarrassed at people mistaking Danica for her mother: "I wanted to tell her that Danica wasn't my mother. *My* mother was in Sarajevo" (253). In spite of the reassurances, after months without seeing her family, she struggles to recall their faces, and sometimes wonders if they are real. Hana's contrasting emotions often cause her to feel guilty for her having left her city, and undeserving of the chances at hand.

For most of the narrative, while Hana is displaced abroad, Atka is in Sarajevo. Her account conveys the impact of the war on the urban space and citizens, contrasted with Hana's descriptions of Primosten and Zagreb. Atka's words portray the progressive collapse of Sarajevo. Her beloved landscapes and touristic sights are replaced by ruins and debris due to daily bombing and shelling. The once lively streets are turned into deadly sniper lanes through which few dare to walk. Those who venture outside to collect water or food are at

risk even in bread lines.[66] There are so many casualties that, as Atka puts it, since "[t]he main city cemetery was too exposed and too dangerous for any burials to take place there … the city parks and soccer fields that had once been packed with cheerful crowds were rapidly filling with freshly dug graves" (52). Atka's depictions of war-torn Sarajevo express grief and hopelessness as destruction and assassinations lead to the death of the people and of the city as she knows it.

Those who survive are prisoners in their own houses. They face hunger, severe winters, and personal losses. Some join the Bosnian Army, but their resistance is undermined by the UN arms embargo. This embargo is initially imposed to "promote peace and security in the region" (Reid and Schofield 119). It not only fails that purpose, but also limits Bosnian possibilities of defense against Serbs. Sarajevans' old, handmade, and contraband weaponry poses no threat to the JNA forces that surround the city. Meanwhile, other citizens' claims for international intervention remain unanswered. As a result, the general feeling is of desperation and abandonment. The inhabitants of the capital of the recently proclaimed country of Bosnia-Herzegovina experience the powerlessness of their nationality and ethnicity as malnutrition, wounds, and diseases deteriorate their oppressed bodies.

Shortly after Hana and Nadia leave, the UN suspends evacuations due to eminent Serbian attacks. Atka, the eldest daughter at twenty-one, suddenly sees herself in charge of her house and family because, as mentioned, her mother is away as a volunteer for a peace organization. The father, on the other hand, although in Sarajevo, is gradually lost to wartime

[66] During the siege, JNA snipers and explosives often targeted people in food lines as an effective strategy to provoke many casualties at once and spread fear. Among a number of such attacks, one at the end of May 1992 became notorious. That is because, according to John F. Burns's (1992) article to *The New York Times*, the cellist Vedran Smailovic honored the twenty-two fatal victims with that same number of subsequent daily performances of Tomaso Albinoni's "Adagio in G Minor." Burns reports that "[t]he spot he [Smailovic] has chosen is outside the bakery where several high-explosive rounds struck [the] bread line." In *Goodbye Sarajevo*, Reid and Schofield mention not only Smailovic's deed, but the fact that Burns was awarded the 1993 Pulitzer Prize in International Reporting for his coverage of the destruction of Sarajevo and of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

depression. Atka, then, must perform both roles in order to guarantee their survival. In this sense, she manages food parcels, prepares meals, collects water, and arranges a bomb shelter in the basement. Besides, she protects, nurses, and comforts her father, grandmothers, and five younger siblings. A student of English in peacetime, Atka also works as a translator at the local radio station for a little money and supplies. From the beginning of the siege, therefore, one notices the characteristic wartime inversion of gender roles, in which women replace men in their traditional social functions, but in fact Atka is a young adult who occupies not solely the position of the father, but of the mother, both equally unusual to her before the war.

The persecuted Bosnian ethnicity and citizenship negatively foreground the axis of social class there as well. Atka reports that in the context of the siege "bank buildings were closed and abandoned, everyone's savings had gone. Like most people, my father no longer had any work and we had no income" (53). Food consists of "minute rations of flour, oil, cheese and canned fish" (Reid and Schofield 53) provided by the UN and other humanitarian organizations. The little money Atka makes she spends at the flourishing black market that profits from Sarajevans' misery. Her once privileged middle-class family becomes poor in wartime. This socioeconomic decadence affects the majority of the townspeople. Nevertheless, wealthier families that could not be evacuated still enjoy advantages such as telephone lines, gas, water, and medicine. That is the case, as I will discuss, of foreign visitors too. In Atka's household, however, family jewelry, furniture, fruit trees, and valuable objects soon become currency in exchange for food and firewood. In addition, they often burn doors, window frames, floorboards, books, and leather shoes to fight off the cold. As an allegory of the deterioration of her city and body, Atka's house, a previous symbol of power, begins to decay as it is emptied, shattered, and sacrificed for survival.

To understand the entanglements between power and axes of identity such as ethnicity and nationality portrayed in the memoir, it is relevant to contrast the wartime conditions of Sarajevans like Atka and of foreign emissaries, journalists, and photographers assigned to that region. On the one hand, as I have discussed, Bosnians experience extreme hunger, cold, thirst, and violence. Foreigners, on the other hand, lodge at the Holiday Inn, where, contrary to the rest of the city, there is electric power, running water, food, a bar, and frequent welcoming and farewell parties. When Atka starts to work for Andrew, she is shocked at those disparities. She reports, for instance, that, although food is plentiful there, "after a year of going hungry I was only able to eat a little bit at a time" (199). Her body seems now unaccustomed to privilege. She also describes how "[t]he stark contrast between life in the hotel and life in the city became even more apparent in the evenings. The lights from the large chandelier illuminated the atrium, music was playing quietly in the bar and the hotel restaurant was bustling with journalists who were sitting down to continue their heated discussions over dinner" (191). From her depiction, it is as if the hotel and the city were located in different spaces: the former, a protected and peaceful place from where it is possible to observe the destruction of the latter at a distance. The foreigners witness another war, one they can choose whether, when, and how much to see or ignore. To Sarajevans, however, war is ubiquitous.

The journalists are important to Sarajevans because they denounce wartime atrocities and injustices to the world, increasing hopes of intervention. However, their presence also raises disturbing questions: why are their lives worthier? Why are foreigners granted human rights and advantages as Bosnians perish? Such inquiries stem from the realization that there is no essential difference between those people. Instead, geopolitical constructs devised and reinforced by nations, such as ethnicity and citizenship, prescribe one's power or oppression, reassuring at the same time the authority of some states over others in an international

scenario. Their lives matter because they come from first-world, Western, capitalist countries that entitle their citizens to watch unharmed the wars their governments commonly stimulate. Some of the journalists in *Goodbye Sarajevo* are aware of that condition. Andrew's motto, for instance, is "No war, no work" (Reid and Schofield 240), as he admits that powerful people like him may profit from the misery they often cause upon the weak.

Questions of gender emerge in such a contrasting wartime context as well. Some Sarajevan women get romantically involved with foreigners and enjoy their partners' privileges. After a time working together, for example, Atka and Andrew fall in love and start to date. Soon, he arranges contacts and money to cover her family's needs: "he offered to buy supplies from the UN depot at the airport, probably realising that the money I earned wouldn't go far on the black market. I'd never heard of this depot, but Andrew told us that … he'd befriended one of the French legionnaires who worked there" (Reid and Schofield 197). He also facilitates the communication between Atka and her sisters in Zagreb. Moreover, because of his efforts, Atka is later granted permission to travel to the United States and to New Zealand, despite the strict Serbian control of Bosnian borders. Empowered by the axes of class, ethnicity, nationality, and gender, men like Andrew extend their privileges to those with whom they relate. It is in such circumstances that it is possible to identify two parallel forms of subjugation of women.

Sarajevans disrespect Bosnian women in relationships with foreign journalists. They consider those women weak traitors and prostitutes who trade their bodies for safety and material advantages because they lack the courage to stay and resist. One of Atka's friends, for instance, bitterly suggests that she will "hook up with one of those journalists and get the fuck out of here" (Reid and Schofield 195) as she gets closer to Andrew. Another colleague sarcastically asks her to "send us a postcard" (Reid and Schofield 247) from her vacation in America as the war continues to destroy her home. This blunt disapproval is among the

causes for the depressive episode Atka has when her supposedly brief stay in the United States turns into permanent residency in New Zealand. Atka displays symptoms of survivor's guilt, a debilitating sense of shame and undeservedness for being alive and safe while others suffer.

Whereas Bosnians demand women's loyalty, foreigners consider themselves their saviors. This scenario resembles Spivak's (1988) discussion about the British prohibition and criminalization of the colonial rite of widow immolation on the husband's funeral pyre, which she synthesizes in the ironic formulation "white men are saving brown women from brown men" (296). Spivak argues that, while Imperial law proposes the protection of the victimized widows, and locals praise their determination to preserve cultural traditions, the women's voices disappear into "something other than silence and nonexistence, a violent aporia between [the] subject and object status" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 306) that is imposed upon them, respectively, by brown and white men. Analogously, it is possible to describe the situation represented in *Goodbye Sarajevo* as foreign journalists saving Bosnian women from Bosnian men, who expect them to fight the Serbs. Although the historical context in the memoir is different from the Indian colonial scene Spivak addresses, a similar pattern of women's oppression seems to emerge, in both cases, from ethnic and geopolitical conflicts.

Differently from Esther, Lisa, and Hana's trajectories, it is not the war that at first incites Atka's mobility. On the contrary, given the Serb blockade, the conflict precludes movement. Her passion for the city also discourages migration: "It had never occurred to me to leave Sarajevo. This was my city, my home, my identity. Our roots went deep. Even as children, my friends and I sang songs of love and loyalty to our home-town" (Reid and Schofield 89). Unlike Nafisi, Atka does not lose her concepts of home, service, and country during the war. That may be due to the fact that, while Nafisi is openly robbed of her job and

rights because of political alignment, Atka does not perceive the work that empowers her as an institutionalized tool of wartime subjugation of women's efforts. Besides, like Nafisi's students, she demonstrates a fixed notion of subjectivity as irreversibly tied to Sarajevo, and fears who she would become were she to move somewhere else. With that in mind, she protests Andrew's invitation for a trip. To convince her, he guarantees to leave her family attended to while they are gone and insists that she meet his parents and watch the end of his yacht race from Los Angeles to Hawaii with them. Therefore, it is Andrew who initially motivates Atka's geographical dislocation.

Atka and Hana leave Sarajevo in different circumstances. At first, Atka is a tourist, not a refugee. This political status derives from her relationship with Andrew, especially now that they are engaged. In spite of such a privileged position, Atka, in Zagreb and in the United States, experiences the ethnic discrimination she did not suffer among Sarajevans. A case in point is that she is initially denied an American visa. As Hana reports, at the embassy, "the woman in charge of visas demanded, in a patronising and unpleasant manner, to see Atka's last bank statement and show her some proof that she was not intending to seek refugee asylum in America" (261). Frustrated, Atka realizes that, despite how much her people need international aid, hers is "probably the most worthless passport in the world at the moment" (234) because "[e]veryone's sick of Bosnians" (259). The distance from the war allows her to contemplate the extensive effects of the conflict on her ethnicity and citizenship.

It is because of the Reids' contacts in the United States that Atka is granted an American visa. After that, the couple travels to New York, Florida, California, and, finally, Hawaii. Even before leaving Sarajevo, Atka is uncertain about the trip because she feels as though she is "walk[ing] out on everyone" (Reid and Schofield 268). In those transitional locations, her health begins to deteriorate: she finds herself pregnant and too sick from her multiple nutritional deficiencies and kidney infections. Consequently, she is unable to go

back to Sarajevo after the yacht race because the baby's and her own life are already at risk. The conflict that had hindered her departure from Bosnia now precludes her return. It is in this sense that war determines Atka's mobility, as the Reids arrange her emigration to New Zealand as a future family member and a refugee in need of medical care.

As much as Atka and Hana wish to return to Sarajevo, the New Zealander city of Christchurch is their final destination in the narrative. Atka moves there before her relatives. As she and Andrew focus on her pregnancy and recovery, his parents, Bill and Rose, handle long and bureaucratic processes to offer asylum to the Bosnian family. After a year and a half in a warzone, the peace and beauty of Christchurch are not soothing, but disturbing to Atka because they trigger guilt. The affirmative power of the socioeconomic axis of her identity in this context is unusual and outrageous to her. Feeling unworthy, Atka refuses to enjoy privileges by countering them with disapproval. She states, for instance, that "[b]eing in a peaceful place with an abundance of food made me feel so guilty and in a strange way I felt that the pain I was in was some kind of connection to the rest of my family" (279). She also often condemns the comfort of the Reids' house as a means to detach herself from their benefited social status. She bitterly remarks, for example, that she wishes they could send to Sarajevo some of the wood with which Bill and Andrew feed their fireplace because "[e]ach load of firewood you bring in would last us a week at home" (280). The only advantages Atka willingly accepts are the medical treatment for her and her baby William, born with a critical condition, and the possibility of pulling her family out of Bosnia to ease her self-reproach.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is important to map, besides the socioeconomic axis, the development of gender and ethnic relations in this geopolitical space. As I have argued, in wartime Sarajevo women were oppressed as expiatory subjects and objects of protection. The institutionalized subjugation of their efforts, nevertheless, as I have also commented,

contradictorily allows them to work, perform unconventional roles, and acquire a degree of agency and emancipation. That is Atka's case until she meets Andrew and emigrates to New Zealand. At the beginning of their relationship, Andrew and Atka share the function of providing for her family. The situation changes, however, when they move to Christchurch. There, Atka is confined to the private sphere of fragility, domesticity, and motherhood.

Atka falls into a position of object of protection because her agency is compromised by her poor health and refugee status, conditions that preclude the possibility of working and pursuing an education. Once again, war has a negative and extensive effect on her axis of gender, as it is the chief factor determining the weakness of her female body and her move to New Zealand. Her gender powerlessness is aggravated as she gives in to marriage. Her former plan of finishing her college degree before starting a family is altered because of the ethnic oppression of Bosnians in a global scenario. That is because her official union with a citizen of New Zealand grants her the status of permanent resident and facilitates the withdrawal of her family from the Balkans. Although she loves Andrew, she claims she is not "in the right frame of mind to think about a wedding" (285). In this sense, when the celebration does take place, she feels "strangely removed from it all, as though it were someone else's wedding" (Reid and Schofield 286-287). This estrangement reveals that the New Zealander, upper-middle class mother and housewife is so distant from the shaping of her identity in Sarajevo before the war that she feels alienated, removed from herself.

Although Bosnian ethnicity continues to entail powerlessness in an international context, New Zealand, according to Atka, is particularly a multicultural space where "no one looks down on me because I'm from Bosnia," for "there are so many nationalities, Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Italians, and Greeks" (299) in the country. One may think that such favorable reception is also a consequence of Atka's benefited social class. In any case, when

Bill and Rose finally manage permissions and tickets for her entire family, her grandmother, father, mother, and nine siblings are most welcomed to Christchurch.

Similarly to *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, the narrative in *Goodbye Sarajevo* ends without an account of the characters' establishment in and adaptation to the new location. It leaves possibilities open for imagining how subjectivities will be reconstructed in relation to this different space, culture, and language. The sisters are, nevertheless, certain that they "will not forget what happened to [their] family, to Sarajevo and Bosnia" (Reid and Schofield 336), reassuring the lingering effects of war on memory and identity.

## 2.4. Convergences: Comparing Mappings of War and Subjectivity

*We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo* portray characters from various cultural backgrounds and experiences from different wars. It may seem complex to juxtapose the travels and travails of Hungarian-Jewish, Iranian-American, and Bosnian Muslim women during World War II, the Holocaust, the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Yugoslav Wars. Yet, despise such idiosyncrasies, a comparative and cartographic approach to those narratives results in a better understanding of peripheral women's representations of war, adding to the relatively established scholarship focused on Anglo-American women writers. The mappings conducted in this chapter discourage the homogenization of women's experiences and portrayals of war. Contrary to traditional gender expectations, the characters are not relegated to the homefront of wars and conflicts. As a matter of fact, that is a notion the memoirs unsettle through a depiction of the ubiquity of the war in both combatants' and civilians', men's and women's lives. Moreover, the analyses identify a variety of impacts of war on women, effects that, reaching far beyond gender,

relate to victimizing powerlessness, but also to transgressive agency and brief moments of power.

The mappings developed in this chapter indicate that war acts upon the self because it affects the relations between subject positions and power in a given narrative space and time. I have discerned the impact of conflicts on the portrayal of various places – Budapest, Tehran, and Sarajevo, for example – and of the public and private spheres. In each location, war is the main reason for the disturbances in political systems, gender roles, rights and prohibitions, mobility, and practices of hospitality and hostility. As postulated by the discourse of situational identities devised by Friedman (1998), changes in context entail the affirmative foregrounding of some axes of subjectivity, and the effacement or ousting of other positions. I have observed that, in the three memoirs, situations and migrations provoked or changed in some way by war tend to emphasize mainly the axes of ethnicity, class, nationality, and gender. This finding is coherent with O'Connell's (1995) definition of war adopted by this thesis. For example, if war, as he theorizes, has its origin in collectivity, then there may be factors affirming that collectivity and opposing it to another group, such as notions of ethnicity and national identity.

Moreover, Friedman's (1998) paradigm of relationality presupposes that the situational foregrounding of an axis of subjectivity triggers a reconfiguration of its interactions with other positions. A case in point is that, in the narratives, whenever the ethnicity with which a character associates turns powerlessness, her socioeconomic class, status, and education are affected as well. In this manner, as proposed by the discourse of contradictory subjectivities, some coordinates of identity prescribe power, while others entail oppression. In this endless process, the characters are fluidly and constantly rewritten.

Regarding the axis of socioeconomic class, it is noticeable that the narrator-writers share the privilege of access to education and the possibility of telling their own story. Their

marginality in relation to other geopolitical locations, such as ethnicity, gender, and citizenship, nevertheless, allows me to state that the study of their works promotes visibility to the ex-centric literature of war. It also permits to conclude that their writings transgress, in this sense, the borders of/off no-man's land. At the end of my analysis, I suggest that other subject positions may be represented as affected by war in yet different narratives, so that feminist criticism keeps an eye out for difference and a focus on what lies beyond.

Two final important points for discussion emerge from the study of the literary corpus. The first, in fact, reinforces Friedman's standpoint that a critical move towards gender and beyond does not implicate an abandonment of gender issues, but an informed, locational return to them. Katin, Nafisi, and Reid and Schofield's stories depict wartime actions against women that relate to what Almeida (2015) considers "a mistaken metonymic movement that slides from the territorial domain to the possession of native women … as Spivak observes, 'the group rape perpetrated by the conquerors becomes a metonymic celebration of territorial acquisition,' marking the female body not only as a place of ownership, but also as one of epistemic violence (1988, p. 303)" (97).[67] Almeida and Spivak refer primarily to sexual abuse carried out during processes of colonization, but I have indicated in each analytical section of this chapter that the same "metonymic celebration of territorial acquisition" is represented in the war narratives I address. In *We Are on Our Own*, Esther suffers such assaults when the German Commandante takes advantage of her fear and fragility; this also happens as the Russian army advances towards Nazi-occupied Budapest, plundering farms and raping Hungarian women along the way. Traumatized and impregnated, Esther submits her loathsome, unrecognizable body to a dangerous abortion in a

[67] "[U]m equivocado movimento metonímico que desliza do domínio territorial para a possessão das mulheres nativas, [...] como observa Spivak, o 'estupro grupal perpetrado pelos conquistadores se torna uma celebração metonímica da aquisição territorial', marcando o corpo feminino não somente como o lugar da posse, mas também como o da violência epistêmica (1988, p. 303)."

failed attempt to restore her previous condition. Similarly, in *Goodbye Sarajevo*, soldiers violate Bosnian and Croatian women to "spread … the Serb seed" (Reid and Schofield 49). Their alleged purpose epitomizes Almeida's observation of the female body as metonymically standing for fertile, vexed territories aggressively taken and populated by a particular group.

In a different manner, but still in the same sense, Nafisi describes the mandatory veiling of women as central to the legitimization of the Islamic rule in Iran. Reportedly, the revolutionary regime regards the control over women's clothing and behavior as a symbol of victory over the Western moral decadence of previous monarchic governments. To some women, nevertheless, those impositions entail epistemic violence and, at times, physical punishment. Through the portrayal of such similar situations, the memoirs contribute to the denunciation of women's wartime conditions and oppression, and partake in the gradual but definitive dismantling of what Rich (1986) calls "the archaic idea of women as a 'home front'" (225).

Another relevant topic for the discussion of the literary corpus is the observation that, as Fanon states in the epigraph to this chapter, in the world in which they travel, the characters are endlessly (re)creating themselves. In this sense, space appears in the works, in Wegner's (2002) words reviewed in the previous chapter, as "a *force* that … influences, directs, and delimits possibilities of action and ways of human being [sic] in the world" (181). But, at the same time that they affect those women's subjectivity and agency, the spaces of the narratives are impacted by the actions of the characters, for they are also "a *production*, shaped through a diverse range of social processes and human interventions" (Wegner 181). An example is Nafisi's reconfiguration of the private sphere into a political and affective location for the expression and articulation of differences, and for an exercise in imagination and empathy. Similarly, in *We Are on Our Own* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*, one

notices a direct association between war, space, and women's identity. Whenever Esther and Lisa, Nafisi, Hana or Atka migrate, that relationship is rewritten, but not entirely replaced. Vestiges, impressions of previous spaces and relations remain inscribed in their renegotiated subjectivities, characterizing the phenomenon of displacement and cultural hybridization of identities that I shall investigate in regard to the literary corpus in the following chapter.

# Chapter Three

## Beyond Borders: Mapping War, Mobility, and Hybrid Subjectivities in *We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*

> "It's something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or East to West or from island to island. Even when you arrive, you're still going back and forth."
>
> Zadie Smith

In the first chapter of this thesis, I reviewed Friedman's (1998) panorama of the theorization of hybridity and the discourse of hybrid subjectivities within locational feminism. This discourse, the critic argues, regards identity as a product of the cultural grafting that results from mobility. Theoretical discussions in postcolonial, diaspora, and cultural studies often emphasize, in this sense, the role of movement in this process of superimposition. Movement or traveling is here understood as physical or metaphorical displacements that entail cultural encounters. It refers, for example, as much to migration as to communication in a foreign language, or to the reading of another country's literary tradition. In this chapter, I investigate instances of the hybridizing effects of such varied dislocations on women's identities in *We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*.

The methodology of this chapter is specifically based on Friedman's (1998) schematization of the models of power relations and orientations of hybridity. I would like to recapitulate that, according to Friedman, the constitution of hybrid identities is usually regarded within an oppressive, transgressive, or locational model. Examinations of that process, in turn, follow an either geographical or temporal direction. The analysis I undertake combines mainly the locational paradigm with a geographical orientation. It stresses, in this sense, mutual agencies on all sides of cultural encounters, as well as the negotiations of

power implied by the principles of relationality and situationality discussed in the last chapter. Moreover, it focuses on the hybrid layering of subjectivities produced by movement through spaces and cultures.

Smith's excerpt from *White Teeth* (2000) opens this discussion because it addresses the geographical and figurative movements proper to immigrant experience. In their narratives, Esther, Lisa, Nafisi, Hana, and Atka travel a few times from East to West, and West to East. The epigraph suggests that such mobility is, however, ceaseless because "[e]ven when [they] arrive," that is, when they settle in a destination, they are "still going back and forth" (Smith 135). Smith's words do not necessarily imply incessant trips between locations. Rather, "to be going back and forth," especially because of the continuous tense, signifies a constant transiting in-between cultures, an affective lingering in some memories and influences that contrast with the discovery and acquisition of the different. It means to read *Lolita* in Tehran, or to speak with a Croatian accent while longing to return to Sarajevo. In this sense, "to be going back and forth" metaphorizes hybridity: mixed identities, divided loyalties, here and there. The way Smith puts it, this process derives from the singular experience of migration, and it seems to be unavoidable for the mobile subject because, once they are set in motion, to arrive completely is impossible even if desirable. There is no definitive arrival, but an endless movement there and back again.

In this chapter, I map the representation of hybrid subjectivities in the works of the corpus in two sections. In the first, I identify and discuss how hybridity is portrayed within the stories, observing the characters' movements back and forth, and the way they deal with that condition. In the second, I debate the idea of hybridity as also conveyed by the textual form of the narratives. In both sections, I intend to demonstrate that the hybridization of women's identities in the texts is an extended effect of war, for it prompts the movement and the flows of power that provoke the characters' spatial and cultural grafting.

## 3.1. Borrowed Lives: Mappings of Hybrid Subjectivities

This section expands the study of the effects of war and migration on subjectivity through an investigation of the hybridization of Lisa, Nafisi, and Hana's identities in *We Are on Our Own*, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo*, respectively. Although Esther and Atka's mobility and identities are also affected by wars, their narratives do not emphasize their hybridization as much as Lisa and Hana's. That may be because the superimposition of cultural layers is more intense when migrations happen at an early age. Besides, as for Reid and Schofield's memoir, the narrative does not focus enough on Atka's travels for hybridity to be noticeable. For most part of her account, she is trapped in Sarajevo. Lisa, Nafisi, and Hana's hybridization, on the other hand, is conveyed in the works through particular instances that I now indicate and discuss. It is important to observe that, even though those instances vary from narrative to narrative, they are usually related to notions of home, questions of language, religion, food, literature, and behavior. Sometimes, those manifestations are imperceptible to characters. At others, they provoke feelings of guilt, unhomeliness, and rupture.

During World War II, Lisa travels from elegant Budapest, through the impoverished farms of the Hungarian countryside, to David Blau's property in Borosvár. The illustrations in the graphic memoir reveal a hybrid layering of the young girl's identities as she moves from place to place (see figure 8).


LOUSY ROTTEN TIMES.
LISA. STOP FEEDING THE DOG!


HEY! SLOW DOWN!
SUCH A WONDERFUL LIFE FOR HER.
AND THE LITTLE BEAR CRIED OUT, SOMEBODY ATE MY PORRIDGE!
AFTER SUMMER'S EASE, AUTUMN ARRIVED WITH URGENT RHYTHMS OF THE GRAPE HARVEST.
LIKE A LITTLE DIP GIRLIE?


Figure 8. Graphic examples of the hybrid layering of Lisa's identities as she lives through different spaces and cultures (Katin 10, 35, 88-89).

In the Budapest of the early days of German occupation, Lisa is depicted in fine clothes, sitting at a traditional café, and learning good manners. In the wine country, by contrast, she is often pictured barefoot and modestly dressed, milking cows, grinding seeds, or stomping on grapes. Finally, at David's house, he encourages Mademoiselle Delachaux, his governess, to "make a perfect little lady out of Lisa" (Katin 89) through sophisticated outfits and French, ballet, and etiquette lessons. When Esther responds that her daughter "did pick up some rough country ways" (Katin 89), she puts into words the changes observable in Lisa's visual representation after her encounter with difference. In this sense, the mother's statement suggests that, just as the contact with the countryside transforms the way the girl dresses, speaks, and acts, the introduction into the governess's French habits superimposes another cultural layer on Lisa's identity. Since those layers overlap on the same subject space, the

"perfect little lady" has traces of the "rough country" girl and of the cosmopolitan Jewish citizen, signaling the palimpsest that symbolizes her subjectivity.

The Levys' return to Budapest and their subsequent migrations to Israel and the United States are extended consequences of World War II and other armed conflicts. Such displacements contribute to the progressive grafting of Lisa's religious and ethnic identity, and of her notion of home. I say that they contribute to that grafting, and not that they cause it, because, at least in regard to religion, I have discussed in the previous chapter that the girl's loss of faith is a consequence of an early disappointment with the idea of God as a protector and a benefactor. However, Katin/Lisa points out that her preference for secularism also results from her experience in Israel, where, in her words, "I absorbed my father's atheism at home and the secular education in school" (126). Despite her denial of faith, I would argue that adult Lisa has not completely abandoned Judaism. Firstly, that is because her devoted mother and an American Jewish group often involve her in their rituals. Therefore, even if only publicly, Lisa performs the role of a religious woman. Besides, her secularism is founded on resentment. Its premise is not that God does not exist, but that he has forsaken her. In this sense, one finds the character going back and forth, painfully split between Judaism and atheism, between her Israeli education and the principles of her New York community.

There are other instances of Lisa's adulthood depicted in *We Are on Our Own* that indicate the hybridization of her subjectivity not only in relation to religion, but to ethnic identification as well. On such occasions, Lisa positions herself between Jewish and American gentile peoples, or, as she puts it, "us, them" (Katin 84). A case in point is a heated debate with her husband over their son's education. The father demands that the boy "be with our own kind," and "learn the Bible and the prayers the way I did" (Katin 84) in Hebrew school. Lisa, on the other hand, wants him to attend a conventional American institution,

even though the family will continue to be part of a traditional Jewish community. Traumatized by the powerlessness once entailed by ethnic segregation, she advocates her son's contact with difference and his placement in a more powerful and multicultural American geopolitical location.

In spite of reaching out for an ideal of American multiculturalism and nationality, Lisa often returns to her ethnic identification as a Jewish woman. One notices, for example, that she adopts the United States as her homeland, and English as her language of expression. Nevertheless, in that adopted language, when she contrasts Jews and other American peoples, she includes herself in the first group by using the word "us." This object pronoun indicates that remaining ties to Jewish ethnicity and culture remain in her reconfigured, plural identity in the new country. This identity is, in this sense, Jewish-American, a hyphenation that suggests incessant movement between both parts.[68]

Similarly to Lisa in Katin's graphic memoir, Hana makes deliberate moves towards the culture of the receiving societies in Reid and Schofield's *Goodbye Sarajevo*. She also seems to perceive a divide between "us," Sarajevans, and "them," Croatians and New Zealanders. In her case, however, war and migrations through Zagreb, Primosten, and Christchurch re-signify that "us" to suggest not only Hana's citizenship, but her political status as a refugee. Lisa is part of a socioeconomically privileged community that encourages her pride in her cultural background, despite her fear of segregation. Hana, by contrast, loathes the position of powerlessness she shares with fellow displaced Bosnians and refuses association with this oppressed group. The denial of her condition distances Hana from that "us" and propels her towards "them," the locals, the hosts, from whom she does not want to differ.

[68] In diaspora studies and contemporary cartographies, a hyphenation refers to a combination of different words for nationalities and/or ethnicities that, joined by a hyphen, describe individual identities and imply hybridity.

Hana often reveals a commonplace impression of refugeehood. She declares, for instance: "I am not a refugee … I have a family and a home" (17); later she claims that refugees have "[n]o parents, no family, no home" (290). She also complains about "[w]hat a curse it is to be a refugee" (138). From such passages, one notices that Hana understands the refugee as a dispossessed and abandoned victim. To her, that condition is dishonorable: "I was embarrassed to be part of this huge influx of refugees and felt as though we were intruders" (96). Such a notion is nowadays contested by artistic works and political initiatives that question the negative meanings usually attributed to refugeehood, but it dialogues with the view of displaced persons as silenced pariahs conveyed by international media and nationalistic speech.[69] Hana goes to great lengths to detach herself from that image and blend in with locals, whom she contrastively believes to have homes and families, just like she does. As I exemplify next, she rapidly creates, through observation and imitation, a Croatian self that she daily performs, especially in public spaces. In this manner, while the hybridization of Lisa and Nafisi's identity involves longer experiences in foreign countries and cultures, Hana's process is accelerated due to her desire to "pass"[70] and avoid discrimination.

The hybridization of Hana's identity is better observed in the context of school, as it is mainly expressed in regard to language and education. At school, the character exposes herself to difference. She meets Croatian classmates and teachers and perceives cultural similarities and disparities. At the same time, she is submitted to the gaze of the other, who lays bare her unconformities. For example, classmates highlight Hana's accent in

[69] A case in point is the Campus in Camps program, a series of educational projects developed in West-Bank refugee camps in Palestine that aims at rethinking geopolitical concepts and the status of refugees. See, for example, its publications *The Suburb* (2013) and *Xenia* (2017).

[70] My use of the term "pass" derives from Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* (1929), a narrative in which fair-skinned women with a black mother or father pass as white, that is, are acknowledged within a prejudicial white community in a time of racial segregation in the United States. Analogously, in *Goodbye Sarajevo*, Hana wants to be acknowledged by a Croatian community prejudicial to Bosnians.

conversations, and a teacher reprimands her for using a Bosnian word instead of the Croatian equivalent. Such differences are at times met with prejudice. A case in point is that some of the students initially call Hana *Bosnicka*, "a derogatory name for a Bosnian" (Reid and Schofield 108). More often, however, the realization of her discrepancies serves as a lesson for Hana's reinvention of her own identity:

> I didn't want to be different; it would be easier for me if I just learnt to speak the way Croatians did. Apart from the accent and a few different words, our language was essentially the same. I paid more attention to the Croatian vocabulary and learnt to shorten my vowels when I spoke instead of stretching them out. It was awkward at first but soon I began to sound like my classmates. I knew I could talk to anybody now and no one would notice that I wasn't local. (Reid and Schofield 177)

This passage suggests the development of Hana's linguistic self-consciousness as a consequence of her education in Zagreb. Such awareness guides her efforts to change her speaking patterns to successfully perform a Croatian girl. At this point, Hana seems to acknowledge the local girl as a disguise, a fictional role played in public and distinct from her "real self." However, as I have previously discussed, "reality" is itself a subjective construction that is not fixed but constantly altered. In this sense, I argue that the reiteration and effects of Hana's performance contribute, perhaps involuntarily, to the layering of a Croatian schoolgirl identity on her hybrid subjectivity.

This rapid hybridization is clear when Atka visits her sisters in Zagreb on her way to the United States. Hana would not have to act local to Atka; she could talk in Bosnian words and accent to her sister. However, after months living in Croatia, Hana's is already a hybrid speech: she cannot effortlessly reverse to how she sounded before. The hybrid speech characteristically confounds, misleads those who try to track it, deferring attempts to determine origins and trajectories. It surprises, for example, Atka, even though she knows her

sister as a best friend: “you sound just like a Croatian” (Reid and Schofield 218), she exclaims when she listens to Hana. Her tactic also guarantees other children’s friendship and trust. Hana is accepted among her schoolmates, who even elect her class president. In regard to that, she affirms that “[i]t was strange that local girls had to come to me and ask me if they were allowed to do something but I was glad that no one thought of me as an outsider any more” (300). This idea of belonging is reinforced by the fact that, at that time, Hana is already living in Danica’s house, joining in that family’s life and learning their values. Still, it is not a fulfilling sensation, as it clashes with her notion of home and with other fragments of her hybrid identity.

At the same time that Hana wishes Croatians will not see her as a foreign refugee but as an insider, she fears Sarajevans, especially her family, will think she is not Bosnian anymore. In a sense, she wants to be simultaneously Bosnian and Croatian, even though those two nations and parts of her identity are in war with each other. Because of this irreconcilable desire, Hana seems to oscillate from one position to another, neither here nor there. In this endless movement, “us” and “them” are no longer clear and sufficient references: they merge in the in-between. In this manner, for instance, Hana settles down in Zagreb, although she often reaffirms she belongs in Sarajevo. She is painfully reminded that she is a refugee because she cannot take school trips for lack of a passport, but she is also often mistaken for Danica’s daughter. Moreover, Hana does not consciously acknowledge her hybridization: she insists on an ideal of a pure Bosnian identity even as she carries herself as a Croatian. Nevertheless, the concurrent pleasure of belonging and the guilt for abandonment she experiences suggest a resentful perception, or perhaps a deliberate denial, of the process she undergoes.

If Hana is not fully conscious or at times even reproachful of her multiculturalism, Nafisi, on the other hand, acknowledges and praises the hybrid constitution of her identity. In

*Reading Lolita in Tehran*, the representation of hybridity often reaches beyond the main character towards the spaces and people around her. A case in point is Nafisi's description of a part of her house:

> More than any other place in our home, the living room was symbolic of my nomadic and borrowed life. Vagrant pieces of furniture from different times and places were thrown together, partly out of financial necessity, and partly because of my eclectic taste. Oddly, these incongruous ingredients created a symmetry that the other, more deliberately furnished rooms in the apartment lacked. (7)

In this passage, Nafisi admits that her life and, in a way, her subjectivity are "nomadic and borrowed." According to Braidotti's (2011) theorization of mobile persons, as a nomad, Nafisi relinquishes all idea and desire for geographical and ideological fixity, and chooses, from a position of socioeconomic and intellectual power, to dwell in the in-between. Her reference to a borrowed life suggests that her identity is redesigned with characteristics she picks up from the cultures she encounters along her nomadic trajectory. Her choice of words is particularly intriguing here because the verb "to borrow" insinuates that such life and constituents of identity are not her own. They belong, instead, to the various cultures and narratives from which she temporarily appropriates, and then moves on. The verb, moreover, implies the notion of return: if she borrows elements from a culture, she gives part of herself back, as in a negotiation.

Nafisi emphasizes that, in her living room, it is the common vagrancy and apparent disharmony of the pieces of furniture and decoration that convey symmetry. Analogously, the incongruities between the Iranian, British, and American cultures, Persian and English languages, and Islamic and liberal political systems, all grafted on her subject space, configure a simultaneously cohesive and fragmented identity. Nafisi's depiction of her living room parallels the construction of her subjectivity throughout the narrative. As she treasures

that space, she also values mobility, hybridity, and multiculturalism. Perhaps it is not coincidently, therefore, that she holds her private literary sections in that room. After all, this hybrid space is more than appropriate for the students' confrontation of the differences among them, and for their cultural encounters with the foreign other through literature. Such scenario encourages exchange and acceptance, and allows for imagination and rewriting, contributing to the process of hybridization.

The fact that Nafisi holds multiculturalism in high regard does not make it less internally conflicting. One episode in particular exemplifies the often-unconscious pain and anxiety that accompanies hybridity, especially within a society intolerant of difference. Nafisi recalls:

> [E]very one of us had had at least one nightmare in some form or another in which we either had forgotten to wear our veil or had not worn it, and always in these dreams the dreamer was running, running away. In one, perhaps my own, the dreamer wanted to run, but she couldn't: she was rooted to the ground, right outside her front door. She could not turn around, open the door and hide inside. (46)

This dream epitomizes the predicament of the hybrid subject. As I have discussed regarding Lisa and Hana, here too the dreaming woman attempts to move beyond, to run away to a refuge where her axes of difference would not entail oppression. In Nafisi's case, that place is the West, mainly the Unites States, because there she develops liberal values and experiences some degree of egalitarianism. However, in the dream, as she tries to run in that direction, her roots hold her back. Again, the choice of vocabulary is significant because the image of roots frequently refers to one's birthplace and suggests deep and strong ties to that land and culture, a connection not easily severed. No matter how close to the refuge a runner may be, her roots hinder her complete escape.

It is important to note, nevertheless, that the dreamer is not rooted inside her home, but "right outside her front door." Just as she is unable to reach the refuge, she cannot come back inside either. That is, she relinquishes that place as her home by crossing its threshold, its boundaries, and cannot return to where and who she was before moving. The dreamer is, therefore, caught in a transitional space between home and elsewhere. This liminal position marks the hybrid subject, allowing for her endless and incomplete movement back and forth.

Differently from Lisa and Hana's cases, war does not cause Nafisi's first cultural and geographical migrations. As a matter of fact, her family's intellectual tradition propitiates her initial encounter with foreign languages and literatures. Besides, the Nafisis' socioeconomic power allows for Azar's international mobility and education in Swedish, English, and American institutions. Although her years in Switzerland and England are not portrayed in the narrative, one learns that she lived alone in those countries while still very young. Therefore, similarly to Lisa and Hana, even though for distinct reasons, Nafisi's cultural grafting begins rather early.

Nafisi's life in Norman, Oklahoma, on the other hand, is often remembered throughout *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, especially in the "Gatsby" section. As the narrator retells and reflects upon that time, she calls it "a schizophrenic period in my life" (85), in which she attempts to reconcile her multiple and contradictory selves: an Iranian revolutionary student, a U.S. resident, an avid consumer and admirer of Western culture. Nafisi's reference to schizophrenia is meaningful in that passage because it suggests an initial understanding of hybridity as a condition that affects one's behavior and perception of reality, provoking a sensation of fragmentation. Although schizophrenia is a mental disorder, while hybridity is nowadays discussed as a natural process, the comparison still valuably conveys the painful splitting that characterizes the development of hybrid subjectivities.

The Iranian Revolution of 1978 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, provoke Nafisi's withdrawal from the public sphere to the private and imaginative space of her class, as well as her final migration to the United States. Such conflicts and displacements enhance her consciousness and appreciation of her own hybrid identity and also intensify her nomadic tendencies. While living in Oklahoma, and upon returning to Iran, Nafisi pointedly reaffirms Tehran as her home, even though estrangement hits her immediately after landing at the airport. Recalling her above-mentioned nightmare, by then, she feels as if she were rooted within a house, and thus allowed to open its door and come inside. However, the revolution and war turn that idealization into a space hostile to the differences Nafisi brings home with her. Then, she begins to experience unhomeliness: "[s]ome, like me, felt like aliens in their own homeland" (Nafisi 246). This alienation derives from the contrast between the submissive Islamic woman the regime envisions and Nafisi's democratic, multicultural, and intellectual identity. Her ensuing feelings of invisibility and irrelevance mark the moment when she unconsciously realizes, through her dream, that she is rooted in the road between home and refuge. Jasmin Darznik (2008) refers to that locale as a "[h]ome … at once rooted in Iran and yet mystically beyond place" (60). The critic's description reinforces Nafisi's understanding of herself as nomad, since, according to Braidotti's theorization, that subject renounces fixity to dwell in the in-between, in what lies beyond borders. The awareness that her home is portable motivates Nafisi to move away again when she is finally issued a passport.

The three memoirs studied in this thesis coincidentally end with migrations determined by war. In *We Are on Our Own*, that ending is anticipated by the flashes that interrupt the narrative and show Esther and Lisa in New York in the 1970s and 1980s. It is also revealed in the epilogue's recollection of the dates, trajectories, and reasons for the Levys' transnational movements. *Goodbye Sarajevo* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, on the

other hand, finish off with the promise of another, undisclosed migration and of fresh beginnings. While Katin lays down Lisa's hybrid future, Nafisi and Reid and Schofield leave open for their characters a possibility of further hybridization deriving from new cultural encounters. In Hana's case, this suggestion is reinforced by the effort she is already putting into learning English when she moves to New Zealand. As I have discussed, language plays an important part in the girl's performance of a Croatian self. By narrating Hana's dedication to that new language, which involves practicing with Andrew and even pretending to be an American tourist around Zagreb, Reid and Schofield seem to indicate the probable repetition in the new home of attitudes that previously led to hybridity. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, it is the insistence on the question of what one becomes when one moves that raises the possibility of further hybridization. This interrogation is open not only to Nafisi, but to her students and children, who also emigrate.

The previous chapter traced the effects of war and displacement on the interactions between the characters' axes of identity, and on their relationship with power in various situations. This section, in turn, aimed at expanding such analysis towards a mapping of the hybrid subjectivities thus produced by the represented conflicts, movements, and renegotiations. Informed by cartographic notions, this mapping has followed a locational model and a spatial approach to hybridity and revealed the extended consequences of war on women's identities, personal relations, and even on their subsequent generations.

### 3.2. Hybridity, Textuality, and Intertextuality

In this final section, I would like to extend the analysis of the works of the corpus to the level of text construction to disclose the idea of hybridity as conveyed by the form of these war narratives. For that purpose, I shall discuss textual aspects and narrative choices

from each memoir that, in my view, allude to the notions of cultural encounter, grafting, fragmentation, and movement that I have considered so far.[71] In regard to *We Are on Our Own* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*, on the one hand, the organization of the narratives, that is, the ordering of events as one reads them and the alternation of voices, suggests the endless movement performed by the mobile and hybrid subject. As I have mentioned earlier, in *We Are on Our Own*, the linear narrative of Esther and Lisa's wartime travels and travails is often broken up, especially in the most traumatizing scenes, by flashes that take readers in space and time to New York years afterward. This creates a discontinuity and puts the reader in a back-and-forth motion throughout the narrative. Such movement propitiates an empathizing experience of Lisa's analogous oscillation between Jewish and American multicultural habits, a dualism proper to immigrants, in accordance with this chapter's epigraph.

A similar effect is produced by the alternation of narrative voices in *Goodbye Sarajevo*. Atka and Hana take turns as narrators from chapter to chapter. Since the sisters are together only in the beginning and in the end of the narrative, and during Atka's brief visit to Zagreb, this constant shifting recreates their spatial instability as refugees. In this manner, the reader travels to and from Sarajevo, Zagreb, Primosten, and Christchurch, reproducing the characters' movement between those locations, languages, and cultures. In addition, similarly to the process of the constitution of a hybrid identity, the story in *Goodbye Sarajevo* is made cohesive through the layering of fragments from Atka and Hana's individual narratives. One account refers to and provides details about the other, giving an impression of synchronicity that allows a reading of two stories as one.

Nafisi's text, on the other hand, constructs the notion of hybridity in a different way. To Rachel Blumenthal (2012), in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*:

[71] Although this section of the thesis is not intended to compare the various differences between the graphic and prose form of the selected memoirs, I would like to clarify that I acknowledge that the graphic memoir is hybrid *per se*, as it combines image and written text interactively and inseparably in the construction of the narrative.

> The deployment of the autobiographical form is itself a transgressive act … [because] autobiography is one of the glories of Western literature … not compatible with the core values of shame and honor still pertaining throughout the Muslim world. According to [David] Pryce-Jones [2007], autobiography, or any textual form that invites a critique of self, family, tribe, or Islam, goes against the grain of Islamic culture. (259)

From this excerpt, it is inferable that autobiography and other forms of life writing are held in higher regard in the Western than in the Islamic literary tradition. In this sense, the very fact that Nafisi retells her life in revolutionary Iran through that genre, rethinking self, family, and Islam, indicates a transgression of borders towards the culture of the receiving society. She metaphorically transits, as Darznik (2008) puts it, between "a native culture which has traditionally sanctioned neither women's freedom to travel nor women's autobiographical writing, and an adopted culture with an insatiable curiosity" (56). These opposing Iranian and American influences and habits meet and clash in the composition of Nafisi's hybrid subjectivity, as I have further discussed in the previous section.

More than through the deployment of the autobiographical form, the idea of hybridity in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is conveyed through the intertextual relations established by this narrative. Nafisi brings into her text literary works such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Daisy Miller* (1878), *The Ambassadors* (1903), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), *Lolita* (1955), and *Invitation to a Beheading* (1959). By recollecting the classes she taught on these classics, she traces comparisons between their fiction and the Iranian context in an attempt to make sense of her circumscribed reality, and to emphasize the importance of imagination and empathy in resisting tyranny. On one occasion, for instance, Nafisi and her students discuss the scene in Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* in which Cincinnatus's jailer invites him to dance, and conclude in a reflection about their own lives:

> The worst crime committed by totalitarian mind-sets is that they force their citizens, including their victims, to become complicit in their crimes. Dancing with your jailer, participating in your own execution, that is an act of utmost brutality … There was not much difference between our jailers and Cincinnatus's executioners. They invaded all private spaces and tried to shape every gesture, to force us to become them, and that in itself was another form of execution. (76-77)

In this passage, she pictures herself and her girls as prisoners compelled to dance with their jailers. In this metaphorical dance, they move according to that escort, or, in other words, they unwillingly imitate his gestures and attitudes. In revolutionary Tehran, that means, for instance, to dress and behave as determined by the Islamic regime. For Nafisi, to abide by such impositions is to be complicit in the destruction of one's own figuration of identity. It is also, however, something that she is forced to publicly do in order to survive.

In addition to several references to literary works, the intertextuality in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* results from this narrative's dialogue with other textual genres. Nafisi often resorts, for example, to her students' poems, drawings, photographs, and journals to reconstruct her story. Other chapters, in turn, resemble critical essays on literature that interrupt the linear flow of her memories. The tenth chapter of the first section, for instance, is entirely dedicated to an analysis of the scene in *Lolita* in which Humbert picks the young Dolores up at summer camp right after her mother's death. In another chapter, Nafisi discusses Henry James's life and writings in relation to World War I. The intertextuality in this narrative, therefore, conveys the idea of hybridity not only because it reveals Nafisi's immersion in the Western literary tradition, but also because it emphasizes the encounter and conversation between texts from diverse cultures in a negotiation that usually characterizes the process of hybridization.

Katin, Reid and Schofield, and Nafisi's autobiographical narratives reflect, in some of their textual aspects, the hybridization of identity these women undergo throughout their stories. Similarly to the grafting of their subjectivities, their self-writing also emerges from the geographical, political, and cultural displacements caused by wars. Those migrations have, as considered in the previous section, a hybrid effect on women's identities. These hybrid identities, in turn, seem to impact the narratives that retrace their development. That is because, like the subjects they portray, these stories become multicultural narratives that repeatedly, endlessly take the reader through the spaces where those women have been.

## Final Remarks

> "To end... is, in another way, to return to my beginning in the *beyond*."
>
> Homi Bhabha

Inspired by Bhabha's (1994) words, to conclude this thesis, I would like to first revisit the meaningfulness of the term "beyond." In my introduction and chapter one, I give the definition of "beyond" as an intervening space towards which critical theory moves not as an abandonment of its current position, but as a revisionary return to it. In regard to literary studies, Bhabha's indication of a contemporary tendency to "locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*" suggests that, at the beginning of a century characterized by abundant travels and effective communication, literary theory and critical practice have acknowledged that their historically logocentric position is no longer stable. Rather, in postmodernity, it has been crumbling with the disruptions continually emerging from its margins. In this sense, postcolonial, women's, black, refugee, and queer writings, for example, invite the critic to look beyond, that is, past the archaic, hegemonic limits once established by theory in order to rethink it and to contemplate the political, self-reflexive, and constant reinvention of literature.

It is important to point out that, in Bhabha's and Friedman's (1998) theorizations, "beyond" is not defined in only temporal or spatial terms: it encompasses both aspects. As Bhabha puts it, "to dwell 'in the beyond' is … to touch the future on its hither side" (7). His statement appropriately means that present and future are in mutual contact in that realm. Bhabha simultaneously emphasizes, however, the spatialized character of "the beyond" through the use of words such as "dwell," "touch," and "hither side," arguing that this trope describes, after all, "a *space* of intervention in the *here and now*" (7; emphasis added). In this sense, he levels space up to the status that the category of time has traditionally held in

literary theory and analyses. In a similar manner, Friedman considers "beyond" the future of feminist criticism, that is, the direction it shall follow to account for developments in the cartographies of contemporaneity, which advocate a compensatory valuing of space without implicating, nevertheless, a neglect of time.

This thesis has attempted to contribute to the movement of the study of women's and war literature towards gender and beyond. I believe that my goal has been achieved, in chapter one, by my discussion of the political factors and essentialist justifications behind the historical view of women as homefront spectators of war, which continues to reproduce gender oppression and to foster fallacious notions of the authority and authenticity of male accounts until today. That movement is also discernible in my reading of no-man's land as a metaphor for the place from and beyond which women have represented war. In addition, chapter one traces the development of the cartographies of identity and locational feminism, transdisciplinary fields that allow me to return to narratives of war written by women through a method of analysis of conflicts and subjectivities attentive to gender in interaction with other axes of difference in several situations.

In this line of reasoning, in chapters two and three, the intended move beyond is achieved through cartographic mappings of war and women's identities in *Reading Lolita in Tehran, We Are on Our Own,* and *Goodbye Sarajevo*. In chapter two, I demonstrate that war acts upon subjectivity because it affects the portrayed spaces and systems of power, entailing the privileging or oppression of the characters' subject positions and consequently affecting the relations between gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and other important coordinates that continually construct identities in a given context. In chapter three, in turn, I disclose how the observed cultural hybridization of Lisa, Hana, and Nafisi's identities and narratives is an extended effect of the geographical and metaphorical displacements caused by wars throughout the memoirs. As I see it, both chapters move beyond in the study of women's and

war literature because they revise and complement the category of gender in analyses based on the multiple, relational, situational, and hybrid principles of postmodern, contemporary subjectivities. Besides, those chapters follow the counterbalancing emphasis on space that Friedman (1998) envisions in the future of locational feminist criticism.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that other readings based on locational feminism and directed towards gender and beyond may follow paths of analysis different from the cartographic mappings of subjectivities employed here. In addition to the investigation of writers' and characters' constituents of identity, Friedman (1998) suggests, for example, that critics decode and contextualize the cultural narratives embedded in the texts, that is, the historically and politically located discourses of selfhood and alterity that permeate stories. For this purpose, one should inquire:

> How such cultural narratives are negotiated within the text and what kind of cultural work they perform as they are read and reread in the public domain of letters. Are, for example, these cultural narratives textual sites of contradiction, clashing against each other, or do they intensify each other in collaboration? Which ones are privileged and which ones are marginalized by the writer or the text as a whole? Do they function progressively or regressively? Do different readers bring different readings to these cultural narratives depending on their own epistemological locations? (Friedman, *Mappings* 29)

Friedman argues that, by addressing these questions, the critic considers cultural narratives of gender alongside discourses of racial supremacy or inferiority, heterosexism, religious and moral superiority, nationalism, and others. A possible study of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* in this line of reasoning would consider, for instance, whether Nafisi supports or deconstructs the Western common-sense view of Islamic women as submissive and the consequent understanding of their culture as underdeveloped.

Some positional feminist studies may not be primarily concerned with discourses of identity and constructions of subjectivity, focusing on other issues and writings instead. In this sense, alternative possibilities for research on the literature of war written by women would include, for example, a discussion of their strategies of resistance to wartime institutionalized oppression as located within a particular system of power and context. If such study were to be developed regarding the literary corpus of this thesis, it could address Nafisi's indifference to governmental appeals for support for the war, her transgressions of Islamic laws, or even Hana's deliberate performance of a Croatian schoolgirl in order to avoid discrimination. It is also necessary to point out that, despite my specific references to autobiographies, a cartographic approach may also apply to the analysis of novels, comics, poetry, short stories, and other writing genres.

Among the various literary representations of war by women, I chose *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *We Are on Our Own*, and *Goodbye Sarajevo* for my corpus because, as I have previously stated, these are 21st-century works that address, from an ex-centric positionality, the contemporary issue of mobility through the portrayal of geographical and subjective displacements as an effect of war. Friedman (1998) argues that "identity is literally unthinkable without narrative. People know who they are through the stories they tell about themselves and others. As ever-changing phenomena, identities are themselves narratives of formation" (8). With that in mind, when I devised this research project, I wanted to study first-person narratives as a way to create conditions for the unheard to speak, for these narratives allow women characters to tell their own war stories and to reinvent their subjectivities throughout the text. Although one may find it in novels and tales, this narrative situation is characteristic of autobiographies. Besides, as I discussed in chapter one, the misleading notions of the authority of experience that remain among scholars and readers of war literature often account for a privileging of women's memoirs over other writing forms in

the editorial market. These circumstances are, as a matter of fact, among the main reasons why the literary corpus of this thesis consists solely of autobiographies.

Besides Nafisi's, Katin's, and Reid and Schofield's works, other 21st-century memoirs that can be approached through mappings of war and characters' displaced identities include Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America* (2003), Aminatta Forna's *The Devil that Danced on the Water* (2003), Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* (2006), Marjane Satrapi's *The Complete Persepolis* (2007), and Helene Cooper's *The House at Sugar Beach: In Search of a Lost African Childhood* (2009). As a valuable addition to these titles, I have recently come across two first-person narratives that do not make autobiographical claims, but that similarly portray the effects of war on women's mobility and subjectivity. The first is Susan Abulhawa's novel *Mornings in Jenin* (2006), which depicts the Palestinian exodus of 1948 and the subsequent violent conflicts in the region. The story follows the Abulhejas, a family that cultivates olives in northern Palestine for generations, but winds up in the Jenin refugee camp, after the Israeli army forces them out of home and occupies the land. The narrative changes from third to first-person perspective when Amal, born and raised in the liminal space of Jenin, is given voice to tell her own story of marginality, wars, loss, and displacement. The second novel is Sara Novic's *Girl at War* (2016), a narrative that takes the reader back and forth from Zagreb in 1991 to New York in 2001 in the portrayal of Ana Jurić's traumatic war experiences, subsequent migrations, and conflicting processes of subjectification and hybridization. In spite of such a variety of literary representations, research focused on the above-mentioned works will probably face an obstacle that I have also encountered: perhaps because these are somewhat recent narratives, or because investigations into their field still seem to need some encouragement, there are few studies about them with which to engage in a critical

conversation. I expect to help supply this demand, hoping to leave open, at the close of this thesis, opportunities for future dialogues.

Through such possible dialogues, this thesis might contribute, for instance, to the construction of knowledge about space, mobility, diaspora, and multiculturalism in literature. My cartographic mappings emphasize the entanglements of spaces and identities, demonstrating how changes in setting and geographical dislocation impact subject positions. For this reason, studies regarding space and mobility in literary works may refer to this thesis for an elucidation of theoretical concepts and discourses, as well as for an example of analysis that follows a spatial rhetoric in the investigation of representations of the causes, processes, and effects of movement in contemporaneity. Since the displacements war provokes often affect great numbers of people, my research may also add to the comprehension of the phenomenon of diaspora in today's world, and to the understanding of the hybridization individuals undergo as they move through places and cultures. Considering that space, mobility, diaspora, and multiculturalism are, moreover, among the concerns of post/de-colonial theory and criticism, studies related to this field could benefit from this thesis' readings of Bhabha, Friedman, Spivak, Fanon, Loomba, and Almeida, and discussions about marginality, borders, location, and cartographies.

I expect that this thesis will converse, moreover, with future discussions about the literature of war written by women in relation to feminist fights for equality. In chapter one, I review the historic relationship between this literature and women's movements, and disclose the political function of these writings. I argue, for instance, that 20th-century feminist movements drew strength from women's increasing presence in the public sphere of work and power, which owed, at least in part, to the roles they played in World War I and II. I also call attention to how this growing feminist consciousness opened a more favorable space and audience for women to speak and write, for example, about war. In turn, this literary

production fueled feminist challenges to essentialist assumptions about gender, war, and literature. Throughout this thesis, I show that the questioning of such notions remains important today to undermine vestiges of claims of authority, authenticity, and exclusivity in war writings. I also indicate other political, feminist functions of the literature of war written by women in our contemporary world. For instance, I emphasize how narratives by ex-centric writers help deconstruct the hegemonic discourse of white Western feminism, inviting a look beyond its borders towards accounts of different spaces, wars, cultures, and feminist subjectivities. They also denounce the multiple and relational oppression women suffer in various parts of the globe as a consequence of the scattering of populations provoked by modern warfare.

To further advocate the continuity of feminist work in the field of war literature written by women, I would like to address one final point. More than once, in conferences and seminars, I have been confronted with a troubling question: "why do women want so much to be part of something as hideous as wars?" Whoever asks this is still holding on to an archaic understanding of war as an exclusively male activity. By now, I expect to have demonstrated that women, willingly or not, have historically participated in wars even if far from combat, playing important functions from the margins of societies and suffering severe effects as well. In face of doubts like this, it is within the scope of feminist studies of war and literature to reaffirm that what women want is that their efforts be acknowledged, and that their memorialistic and fictional accounts be visible and valued, instead of disregarded due to fallacious ideas of authority and authenticity. It is also the task of the feminist scholar to denounce that such an archaic understanding originates from and reinforces patriarchal, hegemonic structures of power. To ignore women's and other ex-centric subjects' roles and representations is to support a system that has generated war again and again throughout

human history. In the end, it is to fail to fully understand war, and to be, therefore, fated to repeat it.

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