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## Spaces of in-between

‘Hybridity’, self-identification and agency of change in personal narratives of non-belonging

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*”Bortsköljd av drömmarnas skummande glömska  
själen min stiger ut ur en osannolik labyrint  
vars dodekafoniska yta  
är lika med det kabbalistiska talet Aleph,  
viskande en blek sarabande  
till gryningens barn”*

-Francois Arbouz, Stockholm, Sweden. Sent to my mobile phone,  
October 21, 16:56:05, 2010.

## **Abstract**

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Narratives of non-belonging and identity formations surrounding the concept of 'hybridity' in autobiographic material are discussed and interpreted. Conflicting views existing between ethnocentrically and multi-pluralistically based self-representations in personal experiences are highlighted. The issue proposed to scrutiny is as follows: Is 'hybridity' a meaningful vector expressing true cultural diversity? Or what role does this concept play in relation to a white, heterosexist society and cultural imperative in general? Post-colonial and psychoanalytic theories and perspectives, and a comparative discourse analysis are used as methodological approaches. According to my findings, the construction of this particular hybrid subjectivity appears to be correlated to a set of multifarious dimensions like western colonial versions of indo-European myths of origin, racial objectivation and superiority, and other factors like religious affiliation, sexuality and remnants of the bourgeois conception of the nuclear family.

**Keywords:** Hybridity, Identity, Nationalism, Body-politics, Transraciality

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“What you bring forth will save you. What you don't bring forth will kill you”.

-Saint Thomas of Aquino-

## 1. Introduction

2010 has definitely been a year of need to put everything together. Collect every scattered trace and piece of experience into one form and figure of analysis. It started at the beginning of the year when Swedish artist, Linda Shamma-Östrand sent me an e-mail after having read one of my shorts stories on feelings of non-belonging. This story about living and moving in-between cultural spaces, never quite feeling at home in any of them, were published two years earlier on the Internet.

“As a person like yourself, with parents from different countries, I am always compelled to describe my parents’ origins instead of my own, when people ask me where I come from. Hence I can intuitively identify to what you are writing”, Linda wrote.

The artist was on her way to end a project leading to a Master of Fine Arts Degree, from the program of *Art in the Public Realm* given by the Swedish University College of arts, crafts and design (Konstfack) in Stockholm. During her research on hybridisation, she had found something in my text that had resonated well to her project. She asked me if I could elaborate further on the concept *Mellano*<sup>1</sup> (*void*) I used as an expression. This word was aimed to describe my conflicting feelings of (non) belonging and of feeling like a cultural dissident in several situations. After some hesitation, unsure of the meaning it had to me now, I replied and gave my consent for her to use it for her artistic endeavours (Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p.71.). The result of her project became *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio*- a hybrid frog produced in captivity<sup>2</sup>. The “×” sign indicates that it is a hybrid and the names on either side indicate the parental species. The birth of such biological entity baffled me to the core.

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<sup>1</sup> Mellano can be described as a void or abstract locus and something of a motor to start articulating ones’ own personal experiences, experiences that has no given language within existing symbolic field of articulability. It also describes a political position or identity formation to where you as a betweenary can relate. The board members of the Betweenship coin the term.

<sup>2</sup> Please see figure 1, page, 4

The piece was presented in May this same year at the Swedish National Museum of Natural History, Stockholm, Sweden (Shamma-Östrand, 2010). At a first, glance, I found it utterly repulsive. Genetics! Isn't that way too far? Engaging in a search for yourself in some organic and cellular unconscious memory or construction? But then, ha! And the absurdity and twisted humour of the thing invited me to return to it. Now I was suffused with fascination, curiosity and a desire to listen to it. Who is this patient? What is the identified problem? What is its history? What is the etiology and causal stressors?

I find in *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* multiple forms of associations, the violent imprints of 'primordialism'<sup>3</sup> and the repression of its Eurocentric, heterosexist and racist origin. There is endogamy, ancestral memories, the Oedipal scenes, -myths and taboos, all coexisting in the same form, under the same letter. I also see the creative potential of 'transgression'<sup>4</sup>, of letting go, of moving into the future and a new cultural landscape. The frog is fertile. It is a life-generating thing.

The mythologist Josef Campbell describes the 'monomyth' in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (2004); "It is not until the patient has let go of much of his neurosis, infantile fixations, and has started to reshape his world and progress into the future that the full journey of the hero reveals itself" (Campbell, 2004, p.38). The hero in Campbell's 'monomyth' is the figure of a person cast away from life, forced to face the inevitable death, erring in a 'Bardo'<sup>5</sup> state, and successfully being able to return to life, to rejoin the world of mortals, providing new wisdom and insights for their collective future. So what can we learn from this witness? What evidence is there to decode from this hero's experience?

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<sup>3</sup> 'Primordialism' is related to the concept of nationalism which holds that the world consists of natural nations, and has always done so; that nations are the bedrock of history and the chief actors in the historical drama; that nations and their characters are organisms that can be easily ascertained by their cultural differentiae; that the members of nations may, and frequently have, lost their national self-consciousness along with their independence; and that the duty of nationalists is to restore that self-consciousness and independence to the 'reawakened' organic nation (Smith, 2003 p.146 )

<sup>4</sup> 'Transgression' is a term that refers to the violation of a law, command, or duty as well as the exceeding of due bounds or limits

<sup>5</sup> 'Bardo' is the Tibetan term that literally means 'intermediate state' or 'transition state'. In Sanskrit the concept is called 'antarabhava'. The term is an indication of the state in which you reside upon death until being reborn thus indicating a consciousness that is not connected to any physical existence.



Figure 1, *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand, 2009).



Figure 2, Left, *Wedding photo picturing Britt-Marie Östrand and Fares Shamma* (Lundberg 1978 in Shamma-Östrand 2010), Right, *Dark room processed photograph* (Shamma-Östrand and Emilie Ohlsson, 1995 in Shamma-Östrand 2010).

Despite Europe's long tradition of migration and population flows, both as a receiver and sender. It has failed to welcome people of foreign descent into its inner chambers. A migrant stays defined as migrant all through out life, regardless of time spent on European soil. This definition and its predominant symbolic principle of 'jus sanguinis'<sup>6</sup> is passed down for several generations and often transferred to children who have never seen anything but Europe. The core identity of Europe, the image of a true European, is still a Caucasian/white, Christian conservative stereotype. Alienation, or the feeling that one is alien is unavoidable when people keep asking "so where are you from? No, really, where are you from?" Slowly you will also learn how to avoid those depressing environments that impair on your well-being. Even if this means that you'll have to invent a whole new world of existence.

This thesis has as its vantage point to show how accelerated globalism and contemporary 'European bodily regimes' give birth to an inception of a 'body-out-of-place genealogy'. It also unveils the existence of the 'outsider within'. A position related to a space of a specific 'diasporic' meaning-production. Recently we have seen the emergence of autobiographic narratives in literature, art and film, addressing issues around feelings of exile and cultural ambiguity. They show the embodied psychological reality among many people having mixed cultural background in Europe and the western countries, similar to *Oophaga vicentii* × *Oophaga pumilio*. Linda Shamma-Östrand was born in Sweden in 1979 with a mother from Sweden and a father from Palestine. She has been involved in the fields of art since 1995. The piece that has attracted most attention to her work is a public sculpture placed in the open area outside the *Swedish Art School (Konstfack)* in Stockholm. The piece is called *Älg i postformulerat tillstånd*- or the so called- *camoose* when translated into English, indicating that what we see is a hybrid construction of a camel and a moose.

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<sup>6</sup> In Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller's book *The Age of Migration*, (2003) the three different ways by which an individual can obtain citizenship status is presented. These three principles are closely linked to what the states general migration control policies are. The laws on citizenship are simplified; 'jus sanguinis', 'jus soil' and 'jus domicili'. The first one allows citizenship by right of inheritance, i.e. The individual get automatic citizenship if one of the parents is native born. The second principle is through the law of territory. For instance, if one is born in the state or union one obtains automatically the status of citizenship. The third principle enables the individual to obtain citizenship and naturalisation by residence in that country for a long time, sometimes with the requirement that one gives up one's other nationality. How generous a country is with the issuance of citizenship is very much linked to the prevailing myths of nation-building.



Other works by the artist include a self-portrait of the anthropomorphism of herself as a dog<sup>7</sup>.

In parallel to these fable-like self-images there has also been a growth of social organisation and political activism around issues of bi/mixed/multi-cultural/racial identity in Europe and the western countries<sup>8</sup>. Despite these divergent stories and references to their 'mixed identity', a common denominator expressed in these narratives is the feeling of standing 'in-between' or 'outside', established norms of consensual cultural and national identity formations. Being culturally rejected and not having access to neither western, nor non-western cultures, white-nor non-white forms of identification. Or of being portrayed as being the bridge between seemingly opposite cultural values.

Even if *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* might have transcended much of its feelings of psychological alienation and exile, and claimed authority to speak for itself, it does also unveil the representation of a figure constantly being on trial to do so. In many ways, I can hear the echoes from the words and feelings expressed in Donna Kate Rushin's *The Bridge Poem* (1983). Together with the additional voices of the authors in this anthology called *This bridge called my back. Writings by radical women of colour* (Anzaldúa and Moraga, 1983) it can be considered as one of the central texts grounding the production of a queer non-white feminist subject position.

“ I've had enough,  
I'm sick of seeing  
and touching both sides of things  
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody”

(Kate-Rushin in Anzaldúa and Moraga, 1983)

There is this constant feeling of standing in-between cultures, of undergoing constant translating work, and the process of integrating seemingly contradictory values and norms that is expressed here. This is also what the 'queer' and 'chicana' feminist writer Gloria Anzaldúa has described as inhabiting the 'borderlands' and the

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<sup>7</sup> Please see figure 2, page. 4

<sup>8</sup> A list of links to self-identified 'mixed' identity communities including their own discussion forums, bibliographies and filmographies on the internet is provided at the end of the reference list on page: 64

psychological reality characterising 'the mestiza conscience' or 'La conciencia de la mestiza'(1987).

These numerous possibilities leaves *la mestiza* (my italics) floundering in uncharted seas, in perceiving conflicting information and points of views she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concept or ideals in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are suppose to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behaviour; these patterns and habits are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. (Anzaldúa 1987, p.79)

The 'borderland' is in this way a position of belonging, yet not belonging, which generates a form of 'double consciousness', an implied tolerance for contradictions and ambiguity. Feminist writer Patricia Hill Collins chose to call this position, the 'outsider within'. It is like a gut reaction and response to the social injustice a person is confronted to (Collins, 1998, p.5f).

Despite presumed anguish, and feelings of displacement and exile, social theorists involved in postcolonial critical studies have an interest to portray individuals, literally moving in-between nations or outside prescribed, fixed cultural concepts and locations, as a potential locus, 'a third space' of cultural understandings. Viewed as social representations, either resisting or producing counter-strategies in living against hegemonic norms linked to traditional images of national and cultural belonging. In a conversation with Jonathan Rutherford in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (1990), post-colonial theoretician Homi. K. Bhabha develops his views on 'hybridity' and about the meaning of what he calls the 'third space'. 'Hybridity' appears here as a concept, although bearing traces of two seemingly opposite objects/subjects, including the very transversion of the two, a 'third space' of cultural understandings (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). It is a fantasy on and as a utopian position placed between and beyond two entities. It includes the embodied figure of the cosmopolitan, something close to a quintessential being<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> The term 'quintessential' comes from the medieval Latin, 'Quinta Essentia, or 'the Fifth Essence', what we would now call, "The Fifth Element." That which is quintessential is the fifth element that would come after the four classical elements (earth, wind, rain, fire). "The 'fifth essence' of ancient and medieval philosophy, supposed to be the substance of which the heavenly bodies were composed, and to be actually latent in all things, the extraction of it by distillation or other methods being one of the great objects of alchemy." The Fifth was thought to be the fabled Philosopher's Stone, which the alchemists sought, a Stone that could cure illness, extend life, and turn base metals into gold and silver. How to combine the four elements to make the Fifth was the great problem of alchemy.

However, what has been insufficiently theoreticized in postcolonial feminist research on the meaning of hybrid identity formations is how the concept is historically related to forms of oppression and power. In a desire to undo fixed notions of ‘racial and/or ethnic categories’, the fear of re-inscribing race as an ontological given, a habit has often been to exclude in the analysis how ‘whiteness’ as invisible norm and master signifier continues to ‘purloin’ discursive meaning, and what role this concept have in this continuous suppression and marginalisation of the Others (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000).

As an example, we can exemplify this statement by adding to the discussion Spivak’s rhetorical question, “Can the subaltern speak?” (1988). This raises a couple of question marks on how to substantially interpret and understand the language and performativity of ‘la mestiza’. She underscores as follows; “There might it in fact be that two representations being run together, ‘representation as speaking for’ as in political terms and ‘re-presentation’ as in art or philosophy” (Spivak, 1988, p. 275).

Alfred Lopez book about the production of ‘whiteness’ in *Postcolonial Whiteness-a critical reader on race and empire* (2005) And Richard Dyer’s groundbreaking work *White* (1997) are two scholarly works that have contributing to this debate by leading us to ask whether ‘la mestiza’ is now a position of genuine multiplicity and cultural ‘hybridity’? Or is it still the effect of white hegemony? Understanding the true meaning of ‘la mestiza’ invites me to further explore this concept in relation to ‘hybridity’, and the prevailing norms regulating this form of self-identification.

## **2. Main objectives**

This thesis has as its aim to investigate what role the concept of ‘hybridity’ play in naming new forms of non- belonging in personal narratives like *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand, 2010). My point of departure is to understand how this is linked to contemporary European bodily regimes and systems of marginalization- the power distribution and social markings and marginalisation of bodies in today’s modern western societies.

This thesis might, however, raise more questions than answers, since I do not attempt to produce any formalised knowledge on the factual relationship between today's European norms and symbolic inclusion and exclusion of the body as part of its self-image. Rather this an attempt to provide an interpretation of how individuals have been obliged to recognize themselves as subjects of 'hybridity' as an effect of this power and process through forced psychological exile and marginalisation.

This is in extension, a commitment to make visible a number of themes related to the images that accompany this concept, in order to contribute to the debate about contemporary European norms and individual self-representations. I will show how psychoanalytic, post-colonial and critical race theories and ways of seeing have rendered possible understanding of the emergence and effects of the being and life form called *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* with the use of this critique.

## 2.2 Research Questions

I have analysed how an autobiography on non-belonging as *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* has come to recognize itself as a subject of 'hybridity' through the operationalisation of these following questions.

1) Which are the central themes and metaphors constituting a narrative of non-belonging and a 'body-out of place genealogy'? These questions bring forth the themes and images contained in my material.

2) How has the concept of 'hybridity' helped support these fantasies and imaginary productions? The analysis is based on multiple discourses found in literary works, art productions and epistemological issues.

3) How do these imaginary productions reflect a hegemonic discourse on 'whiteness'? How do they mirror unconscious European cultural norms and assumptions? These issues are related to norms (re)productions and discourses of power structurally stratified hidden in these narratives. I will look at how race, class, gender, sexuality and nation are mutually intersecting systems of power.

## **2.3 Overview**

The theoretical framework that follows exposes my assumptions on how to construct the object/subject of this study. In this section I'm also including a discussion motivating my choice of theories and definitions. In Chapter 4, I'm mentioning previous studies done directly or indirectly connected to my object of study. My selection is based on what I have found particularly relevant to highlight in order to carry out an analysis of the subject. In chapter 5, I continue a discussion about some of the methodological standpoints that have come to motivate my selected material. In chapter 6, I present the result of my analysis and provide for the full thematic illustration of my findings. This section is divided into three different but related parts to better illustrate and underscore my analytic approach. I have divided them as follows: 6.1. Highlights the different expressions related to the experience of alienation and fragmentation, 6.2. This section put emphasis on the issues raised and negotiations made by the subject when confronted to the 'liminal state'. 6.3. This part finally provides for the interpretation of the possible rebirth of the subject and the reconnecting to the outside world, including the insight linked to this new identity. These steps are consequently grounding the chronology and historicity of the methodology I have used. Finally, in chapter 7. I summarize and conclude this discussion based on my previous observations and remarks.

## **3. Theoretical framework and definitions**

My analysis are mainly based on more or less radical interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis proposed by e.g. Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, Kristeva, 1991, Lacan, 2002, Žižek, 2008. Postcolonial and critical race theories and perspectives are added (Bhabha, 1990, Dyer 1997, Seshadri-Crooks, 2000, Hooks, 2000). A view on cultural phenomena as a dialectic form of meaning-making between corporeality and orientation in the world and thought or psychological inner landscape, inspired by Ahmed, 2006, Augé, 1995, Anzaldúa, 1987, Collins, 1998, Grosz, 1994, is also taken. Michel Foucault's concepts of state 'panopticon' and the birth of 'bio-politics' will be a complement to this models mentioned above (2008).

In her essay “the mark of gender”, The French feminist Monique Wittig (1985) express this reality as follows: “Language casts sheaves of reality upon the social body, stamping it and violently shaping it, The effects of oppression on the body - the shaping of its form, gestures, movements, motor development and its very muscles-, take their origin in the abstract domain of concepts through the words that formalize them” (Wittig, 1991, p. xv).

Furthermore, fantasies of ‘hybridity’ as and embodied reality, in contrast to only a mere notion of the body as a surface of inscription, are central objects for my analysis. In contemporary feminist thought, a common notion is that the psyche is a projection of the body’s form. This means that the formations of the body are corresponding to the constitution of the mind. The constitution of the subject as an integrated wholeness actively constitutes the body. It provides the subject a body having particular, socially distinctive, and culturally determined attributes and abilities (Grosz, 1994, p. 27). A spatial and temporal frame inspired by Marc Augé’s (1995) “supermodernity”, building modern society and collective meaning-making is taken into account. He argues that the link between individuals and their surroundings is more characterized by the use and mediation of words in our present society. In relation to the establishment of imagined and lived spaces (Augé, 1985, p.94), and feminist discourse, my concept of ‘hybridity’ has now a time and space locality and embodiment that can be studied.

### **3.1 Bio-politics and power**

By bodily regimes I am referring to Michel Foucault’s discussion of the modern liberal or neoliberal forms of ‘governmentality’ and what he calls the birth of ‘bio-politics’. This new form of ‘state power’ is not to be found at the level of surface structures like laws and regulations, but exist at the level of individual praxis. It is expressed through the functions of norms, prohibitive and disciplinary means. His version of the ‘panopticon’ is a metaphor to describe the tools and supervision of this ‘bio power’. It acts within the systems of behavioural control. This means, that this new form of power becomes more of an internal process of self- regulation as well as the monitoring of others. It is thus a very sophisticated and hidden system of recognition and moral sanction (Foucault, 2008, p. 67). In psychoanalytical words it is

the moral “law” through which primal mechanism of oppression and power is enacted by the function and operation of language and speech. This Foucauldian perspective on power is correlated to my construction of the object/subject ‘hybridity’ since it is invisible and at the same time connected to the daily practice of individuals constructing the Other, the ‘hybrid’. In this way the concept becomes visible from its invisibility because it now has a form and shape in time and space when it existed before only in meaning production.

### **3.2 Psychoanalytical perspectives and interpretation**

Psychoanalysis is a powerful tool to unveil hidden narratological structures in language and art productions. It reveals unconscious material in relation to the constitution of the so-called subject. A psychoanalytic reading allows me however to free this subject from a fixed signifying chain and draw from it, a rich orchestration of multiple meanings (Brown, 1970, p. 56f). Consequently this let me explore both some of the negative and positive aspects that come with an appropriation of the concept of ‘hybridity’ in narratives of non-belonging. This gives me the opportunity to investigate aspects both related to the reproduction of repressive power exercised at the level of speech as well as the potential for articulating a feminist discourse on agency and social change.

My argument for a psychoanalytic reading and interpretation of my material is in many ways opposite to some feminist assumptions and their objections to the role of the psychoanalytical discourse. To them it results in exploiting the subjects’ need to communicate. It is a form of symbolic violence. French feminist Monique Wittig has for example made the point that discourses oppress in the sense that they prevent from speaking unless the subject speak in its own terms. In other words, the analysand can only repeat the language the inquisitors want to hear (Wittig, 1991, p.24f). Although I agree with this statement, my position is a middle term and I see a more constructive need of preserving the basic meaning of psychoanalysis. This is, that talk is healing. I also lean towards a notion that views discursive power not only as repressive but equally productive since it provides an imperative for investigating who the ‘I’ will be in relation to a certain established set of norms (Butler, 2005, p. 41f). In other words, I believe that even if it is only through the adoption of a certain

language that we can operate, the historical and spatial context in which the subject resides will also have an effect upon the building of discourse. Hence motivating why we should stimulate the process of articulating lived experience and becoming.

### **3.2.1 Analysing art**

In the object of art I see the psychoanalytic interpretation showing the unconscious needs of the artist. These needs are also social representations of the constant struggle between the ‘Eros’, life and ‘Thanatos’, death (Brown, 1970, p. 76). I aim at showing that this struggle exists also within the ‘hybrid’ as a social construction.

In line with Adorno, I view art as something that has the power to refuse definition and as something that opposes its very own concepts and declares its own uncertainty and instability (Adorno, 2002, p.2). Consequently it has in its very nature and re-presentation the power to exceed fixed meaning production and recognised symbolic phenomena. A psychoanalytic reading becomes then the very potentiality to escape a fixed understanding of a text, transform this relationship, and move on into new imaginaries (Brown, 1970, p.56f). Finally I am arguing that since a piece of art also points to the imaginaries of a non-verbal or preverbal existence it also becomes a reflection over human experience that comes before language and the repressive moral ‘law’. My concept of ‘hybridity’ also exists at this preverbal level and the object of art can hence unveil its presence. Then again this is my way to bring form and shape in space and time from its invisibility to its visibility.

### **3.3 A Lacanian view on ‘experience’ and subject formation**

I consider narration and speech to be fundamental for our conceptualisations of reality and the (re)constitution of self-identification and identity. When we begin to decipher our narrations we can find out how a variety of embedded knowledge about the social life appears to us, and i.e. how race, class, gender, sexuality and nation have become intersecting and mutually constructing systems of power. Autobiographies and personal reconstructions over their lives and life experiences is hence a useful material to get access into how individuals make meaning, transform, negotiate and make use of inter-subjective knowledge and social discourse. Investigating the



phenomena of a 'hybridity' and a 'body-out-of-place' narrative means that I am putting emphasis on how individuals make meaning of 'racialised discourse' and social constructions of 'belonging'.

The psychoanalytic experience has rediscovered in man the imperative of the word as the law that has formed him in its image. It manipulates the poetic function of language to give his desire its symbolic mediation. May that experience enable you to understand at least that it is in the gift of speech that all the reality of its effects resides: for it is by way of this gift that all reality has come to man and it is by his continued act that he maintains it (Lacan, 2002, p. 264:322).

My understanding of 'experience' and subjectivity is inspired by this Lacanian notion that stress that it isn't individuals that have experience but subjects who become constituted through and by experience. As the title of my work suggests, my ground of inquiry lies in the ways 'hybridity' have helped shape new forms of self-identifications and social aesthetic practice. The 'law' in psychoanalytic terminology is hence based on the idea that this cultural imperative that comes with the use and adoption of language is not necessarily only oppressive, but productive and is part of the creation of the subject. A Lacanian understanding of the subject also adopts a view that sense of self, personal identity and reflectivity as only part of the subject's totality, and unlike the phenomenological subject, it can't fully know itself through reflexive practice. This is also something that goes in line with Judith Butlers understanding of subject formation and a post-modern understanding of 'experience' as an ongoing process of interpellation by which the subject come to recognise itself.

There is no ontologically intact reflexivity to the subject which is then placed within a cultural context; that cultural context, as it were, is already there as the disarticulated process of that subject's production, one that is concealed by the frame that would situate a ready-made subject in an external web of cultural relations (Butler, 1995, p.46).

Consequently to work with a Lacanian perspective leads one to interpret the appropriation of 'hybridity' as a mere 'symptom' and effect of the 'law'. What we need to include in our analysis is 'the sublime object of ideology' that invites the reader into a critical examination of 'Ideology' or working of concepts such as 'hybridty'. The challenge for me as the analytic is to decipher this concepts function in the production of 'false consciousness' and search for what it is that remains 'hidden', and inarticulate in relation to a particular social and cultural context

constituting social phenomena. Finally, what to be unveiled through analysis is not only the content hidden by the form or language but also the very secrets to this form and language itself (Zizek, 2008, p. 3f). From this perspective I have chosen to study the concept of ‘hybridity’ as symptom.

### **3.4 A white, heterosexist culture and the (non) dialectics of ‘sex’**

To make use of psychoanalysis in order to identify how the subject of ‘hybridity’ is an effect of ‘whiteness’ in the first place, one has to understand how this is conjoined in the process of ‘sexual differentiation’ (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000, p.3). My understanding of sexual differentiation derives from the notion that neither ‘sex’ nor ‘gender’ is ontologically given but the effects of historical moments, concepts and ideas. ‘Woman’ is for instance something one becomes, pluralistically, in the process of social recognition, with reference to a specific time and space frame. Consequently this is also much thanks to feminist discourse and interventions in the subject.

During the third wave of feminist discourse (1960-1980) voices of previously marginalized feminists, such as non-whites and non-heterosexual groups- and the increased recognition of differences with emphasis on class, race/ethnicity and sexuality had evolved feminist consciousness into something that emphasised how differences in ‘gender regimes’ affected ‘women's’ social conditions and awareness (e.g. Collins, 1998, Hooks 2000). Butler’s critique of ‘sex’ as something often ontologically given in feminist discourse and the sex/gender binary as a misleading conceptualization with the power to mask ‘sex’ as a social category and design contributed to feminists now having a huge body of literature that not only explores the links among sex, gender, class, ethnicity/race, and sexuality, but also how ‘gender’ is produced through these overlapping articulations of power (Visweswaran, 1997, p. 591).

This latter insight have provided for an understanding that a simple separation and ‘adding’ of social categories might not necessarily be the most appropriate discourse for considering the kinds of power relations within which ‘gender’ is formed and regulated. Feminist theorist, Bell Hooks has underscored that we can’t understand how bodies become socially marked without taking into account the historical and global changes that intersects in the social production of designated

gender attributes and power- asymmetries. In her referential to slavery as a historical phenomenon she has located how these discursive element have contributed to white women's dominance and high status over the black woman, and which has come to rendered the former as symbol and representation for an independent self-reliant person who is able to live a life of her own, with complete mastery over her inner and outer person, synonymous with modernist notion of individuality (Hooks 2000, p.374f).

What is therefore necessary is not only a simple understanding of how historical and cultural processes has come to produce sexual and human difference but also how these also become asymmetrical in character. Taking use of a Lacanian and psychoanalytic interpretation of sexual differentiation one can argue that there is in fact a non-relation between the sexes. This means that in the symbolic order, or the existing field of articulability, there is only one recognized sex existing, the masculine or the fatherly moral (law). The féminine or the (m)Other is always elsewhere (Butler, 1994, p. 16ff). Post-colonial feminist and cultural critiques Bell Hooks has also in a very illustrative manner chosen to uses the phrase “white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy” to give name to the core formula that governs and regulates sexual differentiation (Hooks, 2000, p.374f). ‘Whiteness’ and the ‘masculine’ is as I argue consequently conjoined in her analysis, providing for a view on the breakdown of the subject as both racially and sexually castrated when made its way into the recognized symbolic order. ‘Whiteness’ is consequently the master signifier without a signified, which not only structures relations of social moral norms, inclusion and exclusion but also provides the whole pattern for designating human difference (Seshadri- Crooks, 2000, p.4). In other words, for me both sexual and racial difference has a discursive life, and is irreducible to discourse. When the body makes its entrance into the symbolic order it is already both sexed and raced through its connection to its historical, temporal and global specific forms of production. Beauvoir’s proclamation in *La deuxième sexe* (1949) that the body is a situation is therefore in my belief still a valid illustration for a non-essentialist notion of ‘sex’ ‘race’ and ‘gender’.

### 3.4.1 'Whiteness' and Otherness

No position is as privileged as the one of just being human. In Richard Dyer's book *White* (1997), Dyer asserts that 'racialised' people can only make a statement about an interest of 'racialised' people while 'non-racialised' can speak about the general. 'Whiteness' remains therefore a superior position precisely because it is not considered a category of colour but as a neutral. 'Whiteness' is thus imagined as a heterogeneous complex and changeable figure. Consequently this means that white people or people passing as white can more easily embody the ideals of the enlightenment and the understanding of human development without any 'visual' mark that contradicts this neutral surface (Dyer, 1997, p. 14ff). However what is commonly assumed is that these 'visual' markers or 'white skin' that are cultural and historical constructs are the only thing that defines a person's 'whiteness'. And what is often neglected outside psychoanalytical discourse as we have seen above is a more intricate analysis of how 'whiteness' as a 'master signifier' has come to govern the politics of difference and how it works as a whole cultural imperative that regulates norms for 'passing' and social mechanism of inclusion and exclusion (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000, p.4).

Scholars within the field of post-colonial and critical race studies have therefore commonly stressed that the challenge of the new cultural politics of difference is to make 'whiteness' visible for the first time by making 'whiteness' strange (Dyer, 1997, p.4). Through their varied studies 'whiteness' appears to be an arbitrary relation for individuals to gain credential for classification and to pass as 'white'. And at the same time a fixed set of distribution of symbolic capital with the effect of marginalising people in relation to a national physical space.

Homi K. Bhabha (1984) has termed this instability 'mimicry', which calls for an understanding of 'whiteness' as an act of performance, or a discursive process without an original. In his words "Mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha, 1984, p.127). 'Mimicry' is consequently understood as a form of 'camouflage', or act of certain displayed resemblance according to a logic of 'almost same but not quite' which exposes its unstable play of power and reveals that it is in fact a category without content (Bhabha, 1984, p. 127ff).

### 3.5 A theory of 'hybridity' and the 'féminine', absolute Other (void)

To investigate some of the possibilities and limitations that come with an appropriation of the concept of 'hybridity' within this context of hegemonic whiteness, I would like to first continue a discussion about my interpretation of the concept of the 'féminine' or 'the absolute (m)Other' as it is used in psychoanalytical discourse. Feminist theoretician Hélène Cixous has in her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa"(1976) elaborated on the concept of the féminine to describe the effects of the masculine symbolic order and the possibility to undo fixed meaning production.

It is impossible to define a féminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded-which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate (Cixous, 1976, p. 883).

I argue that what we see here can be interpreted as a direct link between the concept of the 'féminine' and 'hybridity' as the 'potential third space' and 'locus' for the production of counter-cultural narratives. Consequently my understanding of 'the potential third space' is thus derived both from Bhabha's work on 'hybridity' and Helene Cixous' text on the 'féminine' and the peripheral position (1976). In Cixous' description of the 'féminine' she uses the metaphor of the Other body as a polymorphous site with endless possibilities of speaking, using its multi-translational tongue and not restricted to 'phallogocentric' notions of logic and desire (Cixous, 1976, p.884).

I am suggesting here, also in line with Elizabeth Grosz, that this enables an understanding of 'hybridity' as a concept that gives the subject the power to self-identify with a body and sexuality 'outside' discourse or independent of the prevailing norms of cultural understandings that is regulated by the masculine, white, master signifier. "This sexuality should be regarded as an indeterminate and un-decidable sexuality - a sexuality that, although perhaps ontologically given, should be regarded as a sexuality without qualities and attributes" (Grosz, 1995 p. 76).

This potentiality of the 'féminine' leads us, however, further to the question by what can we say that an employment of 'hybridity' is located in the 'féminine' or not? Jacques Derrida has claimed in the *Secrets of the Archive* (2003) deconstructing the

meaning of masculinity and the conception of 'geniusness' that never to his knowledge has one recognized, in the 'féminine', the geniuses of woman. (Derrida, 2003, p.5) The signifier 'Woman,' or what in my regard would be a 'hybridity' without (white) hegemony could thus be seen as something always placed 'outside' language. And what we see in the operation of language is merely the traces and 'symptoms' of our struggle to define and articulate it. The representations of 'hybridity' that emerge can thus be said to be no more than shadows from the unfathomable reach beyond language and reality (Void) (Campbell, 2004, p. 249f).

#### **4. Research on 'racialisation' and non-belonging**

In contemporary social studies, several researchers stress the importance of including a global perspective in the study of local social practices and phenomena. They put emphasis on an analytical focus that seeks to include cross-border connections, and underline how we must create new sets of theoretical questions for understanding this emerging transnational reality.

The last decade has shown increased attention in academic circles to address and render visible in research agendas, a social group formed around 'racialised mixed/multi-racial or bi/multi-cultural identities'. This growing body of work, mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom attempts to provide a theoretical framework for better understanding the emergence of different diasporic realities and the new bodily, cultural and ethnic geographies of today's modern western societies (e.g. Anzaldúa, 1987, Brennan et al. 2002, Ifekwunigwe, 2001, Parker and Song, 2001, Suki, 2003). These studies have shown that 'racialised' identity formation does not only produce victimised marginalised subjects but also produce specific 'diasporic' forms of meaning-space. As critique have stressed, researcher has tended to celebrate and interpreted these spaces as subversion and as key sites of a progressive and liberating counter-cultural discourse (Mitchell, 1997, p.257).

In Jayne Ifekwunigwe's article and telling example "Let Blackness and Whiteness Wash-through: Competing Discourses on bi-racialisation & the compulsion of Genealogical Erasure" (Ifekwunigwe ed. 2004, p. 183f), Ifekwunigwe shows by focusing on self-representations of a group of non-white British

participants, how the national bodily regimes and the production of individuals as non-compliant with stereotyped notions of British bodily standards, consequently were 'psychologically deported' and expected to identify with other forms of cultural identification other than British/white. This form of social marginalisation created a 'space' where these psychologically internally displaced individuals was forced to reshape, and constantly seek new social objects for further identity building (Ifekwunige, 2004, p.183f).

The experience of living as a non-white in an almost all-white environment and what it means in terms of ones opportunities to identify and imagine something other than normative notions of national identity and origin is also something that occupies much of the work made by third wave feminist scholars. Already mentioned contributions are Anzaldúa's mediation over the 'mestiza consciousness' in *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza* (1987) and Collins work *Fighting words. Black Women and the search for justice*, in which she invents the concept of the 'outsider within' (1998). These are works that has enabled us to assume a link between the embodied experiences of 'racialisation' and the production of specific forms and constitutions of the mind and psyche. Franz Fanons *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) is also a classical Lacanian inspired work worth mentioning here. A study based on his own reflections and articulations from a position and consciousness based in his 'racialised' experience of inhabiting a 'white' world.

Qualitative social research from Sweden with the aim of highlighting the effects of 'racialisation' and social discourse upon individual experience has also shown by drawing on interviews with transnational adoptees, how a predominantly white surrounding constantly reminding of their 'racialised non-white bodies' rendered them constantly potential markers of 'exile', 'foreignship', and 'immigranthood' hence placing the subject in a 'space' somewhat diasporic in character. Research consequently showing how these individuals become displaced victims of marginalising circumstances, but at the same time supporting the creation of their own inner psychological worlds and production of new imaginaries and life worlds (Hübinette, 2007, p. 114).

#### 4.1 Sociological accounts on ‘racialisation’ and citizenship

Social research on citizenship and residential segregation have also provided useful material of how national bodily regimes and cultural systems of classification works at categorising and single out groups and individuals in order to exclude them from economic and symbolic resources related to privileged ‘whiteness’.

A telling example from American research is for instance “The social position of multiracial groups in the United States: evidence from residential segregation” (2010) where Pamela Bennet provides an analysis of the discursive limits of ‘whiteness’ by drawing on the outcome of a US naturalization case in 1922 (Bennet, 2010, p. 709). Sociologic research from Sweden (Lundström, 2010, Mulinari 2008) has also showed how individual feelings of national belonging do not always include their factual inclusion in society. This research has revealed how society often adopts a strategy of ‘inclusive subordination’. ‘Racialised’ groups have been granted citizenship, but become forced into subordinated positions in different areas of social strata, e.g. the labour market (Mulinari, 2008, electronic resource, p.6).

This sharp division between what counts as a true ‘Swede’ and ‘non-Swede’ reflects the idea of a white ‘origin’ and non-white as ‘foreignness’ which strongly manifest the reluctance to rearticulate ‘whiteness’ or a Swedish national identity along the lines of changing demographic patterns (Lundström, 2010, p.3).

Another examples on how ‘whiteness’ functions as a sign of shifting signification, has been illustrated by studies focusing on the effects and aftermaths of the historical event of 9/11 (Jamal and Naber, ed. 2008). Showing how the ‘American-Arab body’ moved from a silenced and marginalised subject position of ‘white but not quite’ (Bhabha, 1984) in ‘racialised’ discourse on ‘whiteness’ to that of super-visibility and as sign of non-white Otherness. Consequently highlighting how this produced Otherness was in fact used to single out the Muslim Other to prevent the ‘white sheep of the family’ from being able to identifying with privileged ‘whiteness’ (Jamal and Naber ed. 2008, p. 318f).



## 5 Methodological motivations

### 5.1 *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* as a point of departure

I refer to *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* in my work as a form of autobiography. Shamma-Östrand's art piece constitutes, as a result, my point of departure and framework for bringing out an analysis about 'hybridity' as it functions in narrations of non-belonging. The method that I'm using is a form of comparative intertextuality and discourse analysis which means that I'm comparing *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* with additional produced discourse about 'hybridity' and non-belonging, from both scientific and fictional cultural fields and mediums such as art, film and literature.

In line with Elisabeth Grosz' argumentation on speech acts, I work with the notion that I as an analyst cannot simply presume an identity between the 'énoncé or statement and the énonciation, or utterance, when talking about autobiographies. And that the researcher has to make a distinction between the 'I' who writes the autobiography, including the corporeality, and the text's utterance, as well as the 'I' who is produced in this text. This implies that since every text exceeds its author/artist we can't consequently make a proper interpretation of its meaning merely through knowledge about the author or artist. However, as proposed by Grosz' general turn to the corporeal aspects interrelated with meaning making, some traces to the production of the text still remains. With other words meaning that some sort of personal account and cultural background still remains useful to explore (Grosz, 1995, p.19).

This conclusion supports a choice of adopting a form of 'genealogy' and discursive archive or link between *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* and other narratives about non-belonging produced by self-identified bi or mixed cultural/racial individuals. Meaning that in order to understand what Linda Shamma-Östrand's art is trying to communicate I will draw my analysis from these cultural productions as well as earlier research on 'racialised' experience and non-belonging. Taking benefit here of material from self-identified 'mixed' individuals own communities on the internet, their published bibliographies and list of filmographies that deal with issues of

culturally 'mixed identity', 'hybridity', an non-belonging (e.g. Chandra, 2006, Gaffney, 2003. Singh and Tauber, 2010, Walker, 2001, Zsemes, 2009).

'Genealogy' or the image of a discursive archive leads to the association of some sort of organisation and systematisation of texts and documents based on specific principles. My approach to this is by 'abduction'- an epistemological definition related to both induction and deduction processes that show constant moving between theoretical and empirical level enabling a gradual understanding of the emerging phenomena. My use of a 'genealogic approach' also reveals that I have taken use of a Foucauldian methodological standpoint that views phenomenon as emerging out of different forms of truth regimes and systems of thought (see my deduction in chapter 3). This means that when I am speaking of 'hybridity' as a concept that has come to inform self-identification in narratives of non-belonging I lean towards this view. What my analysis of this discourse should seek to decode is hence the elements that constitute it by linking it to three different axes of analysis. (1) The formation of sciences that refer to it, (2) The systems of power that regulate its practice, (3) The forms within which individuals are able, and are obliged to, recognise themselves as subjects of 'hybridity' (Foucault, 1990, p.9).

In the American movie *A Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995), by Carl Franklin, the character of Daphne Monet acted by Jennifer Beals' is 'coming out' as 'mulatto' in front of Denzel Washington. And this 'transracial' act reveals everything that previously was held in the dark. The movie illustrates in this way how marginal subjects that attempt to emerge from a domain of silence and invisibility, into an order of history speech and visibility, is thus not only part of a larger cultural politics of difference and recognition as social theoreticians have claimed, but also by the specific norms and negotiations involving the position, the role and function of the researcher.

Critical theories of how meanings of bodies become historically created, consequently not only has as simple aim to deny the social meanings of bodies, but rather help to illuminate phenomena that may give bodies /subjects a chance for the future. Cultural practices whether they are generated from writings outside the academy or a body of feminist, post-colonial and critical race research agendas do consequently not simply mirror identity formations, but also favour their construction thus so doing. Providing for a possibility and emergence of new forms of subject positions.

Adopting a certain theoretical framework and terminology therefore definitely makes me responsible for articulating a certain kind of discourse with relation to ‘hybridity’, non-belonging and identification. My positionality from where I give voice to an understanding of *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* is, in addition, derived from my own affiliation with the growing community of ‘outsiders within’ in Sweden and Europe through my engagement with *The Betweenship*<sup>10</sup>.

## 6. Unveiling *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio*

In Shamma-Östrand’s art project, two perspectives are being juxtaposed. The first one is based on her attempt to find a new unnamed and fertile hybrid frog. The other, concerns ‘hybridity’ being studied through her own identity. What I see instantly reflected in this narrative, is the artist’s awareness that her own unconscious perspective on how ‘hybridity’ shaped her identity will probably overwhelm and exceed her conscious understanding of it. This means that she deliberately left things unnamed and unarticulated. This is the ‘hidden’ of her own identity. And therefore she is inviting us to re-create, the subject of this inquiry. This frog is her ‘speech’.

As my parents grew up in Jericho, Palestine and Söderhamn, Sweden respectively, I explain my background as being positioned somewhere in between these places; something that has made me into an *original* as well as a *bastard* or *hybrid* (Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p. 8)

These lines reveal a narratological structure of a body-out of place genealogy and this is incorporated in *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio*. Showing it is an ‘in-between’ positionality discourse. I have identified its themes as follows:

- 1) The body in exile/ the body as Other to the I of ‘whiteness’

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<sup>10</sup> *The Betweenship* is a non-profit organization based in Stockholm, Sweden with the aim to raise debate on non-belonging, crossing-border identity, affiliation and participation of young people with foreign backgrounds in today’s European societies, [www.betweenship.com](http://www.betweenship.com)

I argue here for an interpretation that understands the body/mind dualism as constituted by being brought up in a pre-dominantly 'white' setting, and a subject consequently come to identifying and viewing oneself as 'white,' although this classification is something that society denies full access to.

2) The compulsory reference to the parental figures, infancy and childhood

I see a compulsory need to always refer and justify ones identity with regard to ones parent's origin. A process leading to estrangement and internal exile

3) 'Passing' and transnational/racial embodiment

'Passing' as 'white' hinges on collective affirmation of ones belongingness. 'Transnational/racial embodiment' is a concept used here to highlight this rupture. It helps to understand how imagining cultural hybridity involves mind and body representations. It shows how the corporeal situation of experiencing oneself as a body-out-of-place influences this bodily awareness. I argue that this subject express a transnational/racial fantasy of being able to transcend everything, a feeling connected to the freedom of physically crossing borders, moving in and out of cultural settings unhindered. An awakened 'jouissance'<sup>11</sup> related to residing in intermediate places and 'liminal' spaces. This also depicted by physical spaces such as airports, aircrafts and transportation vehicles.

I see in *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* a narrative that goes back to the state of infancy and the primal scene of its creation. The photography of the narrator's parents is a symbolic representation of the act of (un)naming *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio*<sup>12</sup>. It acts as an absence of belongingness. The subject presents itself as a figure predominantly as the offspring of *Oophaga vicentei* and *Oophaga pumilio*. The x sign indicates that it is a hybrid. This narrative also reveals that *Oophaga Vicentei* is the scientific name for the male specie and *Oophaga Pumilio* the name of the female specie of the poison dart frog family. Including this, the narrator informs

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<sup>11</sup> 'Jouissance' is here used as a concept that refers to, a logic 'outside' the phallic symbolic order and what is prohibited in speech per se. It can only be said between the lines by anyone who is subjected to the Law, since the Law is founded on this very prohibition (Lacan, 2002, p. 696:822) I will further develop this line of arguments under heading 6.2.4, Liminality, féminine jouissance and social transformation on page: 49

<sup>12</sup> Please see figure 2, page: 4

that the former lives in the highlands of Panama while the latter lives in the lowlands. We also get to know that when (un)naming this breed *Vicentei*, the male, stands before *Pumilio*, the female (Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p.78).

At a first glance, one can be lured into making a hasten conclusion that my object, this patient, has the power to self-identify as an original. And it seems to define itself as, although descending from a patriarchal structure, it is at the same time standing free from this Oedipal cultural drama. Since it remains unnamed and unaddressed, it also seems to be able to dodge the violent act of interpellation.

Consequently, I read it as standing free with the power to contest any historical and ancestral meanings and imprints. In other words, I understand it as saying; “Although emanating out of an asymmetrical relationship, I do also imply the very transversing of this duality”. This is orchestrating Bhabha’s ‘third space’, and the embodied potential locus for contesting matter and consensual cultural understandings (Rutherford, 1990). This subject also expresses a critical standpoint that rejects cultural essentialism and conceptualizations connected to origin, culture of origin and belonging (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211).

However, as psychoanalysis lets us know, about most stories of originality or individuality, there lies hostility towards the birth and the separation from the mother. The psychoanalytic feminist and theorist Julia Kristeva, for instance, described in her book the symbolism surrounding constructions of nations and nationalism (1993). They are referring to childhood or infancy. They reflect the story of exile and of loosing footing. This means that the person who has been estranged from life, reveals himself at the time of his banishment and death of his mother. The cult of origin, Kristeva explains further, is the displaced persons reaction of hate towards her/his mother. Consequently, even if the child thinks she/he is omnipotent, it can be seen as a response to the passivity imposed on this self. What is expressed in a speech of originality in this sense could therefore be interpreted as an automatic and traumatic response to state violence that compels the subject to withdraw into a private state of the un-nameable. Kristeva has further described this as an act of ‘aloofness’ into a weird primal paradise (Kristeva, 1993, p.3).

This own proclaimed ‘third space’ of originality should instead be read as a new space born out of reaction against the cultural institution of the heteronormative family. However, this maintains the idea of a child in helpless dependence on the parental figures. Besides Kristeva’s insightful formulations, I use also radical feminist

thinker Shulamith Firestone formulation of the social function of the construction of childhood in western bourgeois culture. In her book *The Dialectics of Sex. The case for feminist revolution* (1970), she argues that in all narrations that goes back to the stage of infancy there is a pathological acting out of the social myth of childhood happiness. This is can be said to be mandatory because it satisfies the needs of the alienated person, a belief that everyone has at least one good period in their life. This implying that this is something that the adult can't expect having, according to prevailing normative scripts about social reality (Firestone, 1970, p. 94).

I deduce from these representations that this form of repression, forced exile, is related to socially castrated adult. And it is from here we can begin to consider how this castration is related to 'racialisation'. Passing as 'white' becomes in this way the capacity to perform the right display of symbolic capital in adulthood.

The hallmarks of secession from the process of passing as 'white' are, according to me, what leads the subject to as a reaction, adopt a body-out-of-place narrative. The castrated subject will consequently try to restore this wound imposed on it by proclaiming itself as an original, free and disconnected from any referential to the parental figures. The interpretation that follows this form of self declared individuality must hence be understood as a response to fear of castration since it means separation from a feeling of belonging and of having a sense of origin and rooting. Plausible conclusions we can make are thus as follows: while appearing to take up a unique space of belonging and declares it as its own, it is not evident how this can reflect a place where new imaginary ways of living and counter-hegemonic narratives of origin, national belonging and the body are written and articulated. I will follow my analysis examining how the discourse of both exile and originality appear further in my patient's 'speech'.

### **6.1 No name can be bestowed on someone who is alone in its genus**

"No specific name can be bestowed on a specie which is the only one in its genus"(Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p.4). This utterance which specifies this chapter is also the first thing Shamma-Östrand as *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* tell us during her own self-reflexivity. This was a statement first pronounced by Carl von

Linné, the man who laid the foundation for our modern views and systematisation of grouping animal and plants at the end of eighteenth century.

I find this juxtaposed positionality about originality, a culturally exclusive status, and the narrator's emphasis on fertility especially interesting in this context. First of all, because it stresses the number one burning question inherent and interrelated to the concept of 'hybridity'. It exposes an open reflection about if the hybrid really can reproduce itself. Or will it forever be alone in its specie? Secondly, fertility as a metaphor have a historically connotations in feminist cultural critique related to the act defining counter-culture (Rich 1977).

In a number of separate essays about hybridization (1842-1844) leading to Charles Darwin's theories of *The Origin of the species* (1859), the offspring of crossing of species was seen as giving rise to a weaker breed and sometimes even leading to infertility in animals, such as in the case for the mule for instance. Hybridisation was even portrayed as a threat to the continuous production and evolution of distinct types and varieties within species (Barrett and Freeman 1987, p. 74ff). The 'hybrid' concept developed was consequently also employed and integrated in the nineteenth-century colonial project and the field of the so-called the 'biology of races'. In contemporary 'mixed-race' research, a common notion is therefore that the fear and prohibition against mixed cultural parentage or 'miscegenation' was representing a central part of the colonial project and hence keeping substantial remnants in contemporary cultural perception of 'hybridity' (Brennan, et. al 2002, Hübinette, 2010, Ifekwunigwe, 2001, Suki, 2003, Young, 1995).

'Mixed-breeds' or 'Half-breeds', 'half-caste' 'mongrel' were concept used to categorise children of mixed cultural parentage in terms of both physical and psychological characteristics. 'Intermarriage' were named in the Spanish colonies as 'casta' or 'mestizaje' and in French as 'métissage', while the mixed themselves were called 'mestizo' / 'mestiza' and 'métis' / 'metisse'. In Portuguese language they were titled 'pardo', The Dutch called them 'gemengden', in Russian they were known as 'intermiksa', The Italian referred to them as 'razza lose' and in German the were named 'Mischlinge'. In the British colonies including the United States a variety of derogatory names, such as 'miscegenation', 'hybrid', 'mongrel', 'half-breed' and 'half-cast' were also used (Hübinette, 2010). A meticulous exposition of the various canons of physical aesthetics related to each combination was included. A detailed and sophisticated taxonomy emerge presenting 'mixed' children, divided and named

according to origin, parental combinations, degree, level, and percentage of 'whiteness' and 'non-whiteness'. Even if infertility in humans as result of intermarriage was something that few doubted, what was discussed was whether a union of different people was a fertile thing or not (Young, 1995, p.175f).

The symbol of motherhood in feminist thinking and in psychoanalytic feminist discourse has been viewed as metaphor for defining counter-culture. The American poet and feminist Adrienne Rich has for instance in her book *Of woman born-motherhood as experience and institution* (1977) argued that women's bodies and fluids historically have been loaded with cultural symbolic contradictions. Including symbolic connotations to both 'ambivalent immanence' passivity and 'transcendence' and the potentiality of bringing forth and nourishing new life forms. In this book Rich explains how women's blood has been viewed as different from the blood of men because it is associated with menstrual taboo and of defloration. But also because of cultural mysteries of transformation related to birth and fertility itself (Rich, 1977, p.117).

Fertility as metaphor conjoined in a general identification with 'hybridity' interrelated in our patient's speech, can with the inclusion of this feminist interpretation be seen as reflecting a search of recognition and *raison d'être*. Blood and the image of the imagined community have always been a myth that is interconnected. As we for instance can see being reflected in the principle of 'jus sanguinis'. The emphasis on fertility here, becomes as I see it a mean to help qualify the 'hybrid' despite its racial associations and connotations to concepts such as a 'mixed-blood' and/or 'bad-blood' in a nationalistic discourse of purity. And besides this stressed ambivalent anguish also become a figure of self-determination as well as a collective act of defining culture on it's own terms, irrespectively of its doubtful origin. What is connected to our narrator's speech about originality and fertility, as a conclusion, is this wish to break free from its historical colonial heritage and representation that has come to constitute its self-identification. How the patient is negotiating these strategies will be presented more closely in the following sections.



### 6.1.1 Ambivalent images of 'hybridity'

'Mixed-bloods' or 'half-breeds' were by the colonial power perceived as the first to 'take on white ways'- to start farming and acquire an education, or to become a natural link between barbarism and civilisation. They were in addition viewed as the very failure to live up to 'white' expectations and became known as 'faulty stock' because of their pertinent close affiliations to tribal life over 'white' lifestyles (Riley, 2002, p. 58). The diverse historical traits to this image of 'hybridity', as a figure balancing between 'white' and 'non-white' ways, has in my view, informed and become evident in many of the narratives of 'bi-or mixed cultural non-belonging' that I have analysed.

Rebecca Walker is a feminist activist and an important representative of the third wave feminism in the United States. Walker is the author of *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* (2001) and *Baby love- choosing motherhood after a lifetime of ambivalence*, (2007). She has also edited and written forewords in a series of anthologies that involve mixed cultural experience, including, e.g. *Mixed- an anthology of short fiction on the multiracial experience* (Prasad ed. 2009.) and *Blended Nation- Portraits and interviews of mixed-race America* (2010).

In these accounts, her experience of being brought up with parents from different cultures reveals feelings of being expected to perform and relate to ostensibly conflicting standards. When reading these stories, her negotiations between the 'racialised' and colonial discourses of being 'white but not quite' is revealed and expressed. It exposes a view on her identity as emerging out of constant exclusion from the racially entrenched cultural norm to the other.

Never have I been so frightened by my own mother. She sat me down and called me, in addition to a liar and a thief "someone who think she is a good person but really isn't. She told me that because I wasn't from the south and didn't have the full memory of slavery (read: I am half white) that I don't know what it feels like to be sold down the river. For the twenty-five thousandth time, I apologized for telling my truth in a way that hurt her, and told her that I tried to protect her the best way I could (Walker, 2007, p. 80).

Shamma-Östrand's self-portrait as a 'hybrid breed'<sup>13</sup> crossing the borderlands between dog and human also lead my associations directly to this balancing act. Within a specific context of territorial and national space, this picture evokes the ambivalent relationship between her own conflicting identification and integration of social representations and images of the coloniser and the colonised. And the image shows on an indecisiveness in terms of social positionality, group affiliation and feelings of belonging and socially representing the minority or majority.

Swedish historian of religion, Mattias Gardell, showed in his recently published research on *Islamophobia* (2010) (my translation) that the Muslim Other has a long history in European consciousness. In medieval European drama and art, a common thing among the Christians was to illustrate the Muslim as a worshiper of devils and demons or of being connected with creatures from the underworld. A common image that circulated was Muslims as dogs or red devils with horns, bloodthirsty ruthless men, and monstrous man-eating werewolves. Often including the picture of the Prophet Muhammad as a dog himself. In Sweden the assumptions about the Muslim and/or Arab as a man-eating dog that chased after Christian flesh circulated until the 1940's. Muhammad as a dog is also a recently evoked image as we have seen in 2000's anti-Muslim caricatures (Gardell, 2010 p.61).

In *The politics of the Veil* (2000), the historian Joan Wallach Scott also questions the media image depicting islamophobia as something of a contemporary phenomenon, mainly linked to the events of 9/11. She shows instead how Islam historically, within a European context, has systematically been interpreted and regarded as something of a contradiction in relation to Western notions of secularism. This has produced persistent stereotypes of the Muslim and/or Arab as a being largely bound to tradition, and someone impossible to assimilate and adjust to the requirements of modernity.

My point is here that Shamma-Östrand's exposition of herself as a 'hybrid', crossing the world domains between humans and dogs consequently draws me to the conclusion that this reveals her experience of being confronted by this 'Western colonial double' that also expects of her to deal with these assumed conflicting standards and loyalties (Bhabha, 1992 p.84). In other words, I see this as bearing witness to the European 'racialisation' discourse she is confronted to, and that

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<sup>13</sup> Please see figure 2, page 4

position her as being 'white but not quite'. She is human (white) and 'racialised' non-white (dog).

Consequently, 'hybridity' as a 'third space', and a space in-between Sweden and Palestine, becomes here the mean for her to move beyond this reductionist binary- relationship between the colonised and the role of coloniser. Hence, this enables her to build an identity not only around the image of a mere 'shapeshifter' but something more closely linked to the role of 'master of both worlds' (Campbell, 2008). Consequently creating a position of someone residing in neither of these camps but becoming an intermediary militant transcending these limited transcripts enabling a way out of complete self-annihilation.

### **6.1.2 Melancholic mourning, 'hybridity' and the western Other double**

In psychoanalytic reading, a narrative that embarks on disassociation and of seeking refuge in a created space of its own expresses not only a language of transformative potential but also an image of a subject in melancholic mourning. Freud distinguished between "mourning" and "melancholia" (1917) and described the former as a normal response to loss and the latter as a pathological reaction to it. Mourning is, as he argues, a normal reaction to the loss of a loved one, or to the loss of some abstracted entity, such as for instance one's country and the possibility to self-identify. In the case of normal grief, the subject recognises its loss after a period of depression. The melancholic in contrast, makes the subject resistant to confront the loss of the object. He/she keeps it as an integrated part of the self. Mental representations constituted by an imaginary racially hybridised anatomy - the whole idea of a body composed by two halves-, can consequently be understood as a subject who didn't fully recognise loss of something. In this case, it is the opportunity to identify to a cherished embodied ego, free from colonial discourse and hegemonic 'whiteness'. This 'race melancholy' can be analogically exemplified by Judith Butler's notion of 'gender melancholy'. In her book *Gender Trouble* (1990), she tells that our culture suffers from 'gender melancholia' because of heteronormative hegemony, and cultural taboos of incest and same-sex love. They deny any kinds of cross identification in the subject (Butler, 1990, p. 78f).

My deduction is here in *Oophaga vicentii* × *Oophaga pumilio*, there is a hidden narrative mirroring white hegemony and image of a subject violently denying colonial racism and historical and cultural changes. The features of melancholia are, according to Freud, a profound and painful rejection, a cessation of interest for the outside world, and delusional expectation of self punishment (Freud, 1917 p. 3041f). This leads us to further investigate in the following part our melancholic patient's relation to 'outside' social representations of norms, prohibitions and punishment.

### 6.1.3 Sexual desire and social punishment

What is this fantasised fear of punishment our subject seems to mourn on? This wandering off into unknown territories? Is it a lack of an opportunity to look at ones self-image? Can it be a persistent obstacle related to a collective 'racialised' discourse creating colonial disgust about 'hybridity' 'intermarriage' and 'miscegenation'? Is it an uncanny fear of being perceived as the monstrous offspring of this prohibited and unsanctioned act? Or due to symbolic capital, cultural and religious affiliations other than those found in Christian modernity?

Endogamy is the practice of marrying within a specific class, or social group, rejecting others on such bases as being unsuitable for marriage or other close personal relationships. Endogamy can serve as a form of self-segregation from 'hybridisation' and it helps a community to resist integration and merging with surrounding foreign populations. Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu, Beverly Skeggs, underscored in a lecture on modern forms of affective scenes; that there is nothing that was once private that are supposedly private in modern societies. The purchase of intimacy, love, caring and domestic investment in reproduction, is a result of accelerated mediated broadcasted phenomena like the reality shows. Class performances and distinctions become part of explicit forms of intimate investment. The ability of negotiating social meanings, value and moral assessments of relationships are also shown. Failing to perform the right connection between love, intimacy and morality will resultantly lead to individual punishment and judgement of being unruly or uneducated<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Skeggs, Beverley, 2011, "The value of relationships; Affective Scenes and Intimate Capital" lecture at Uppsala University, 2011-03-24

In the article “A stubborn quest for roots” (my translation) by journalist Hanna Welin published on the Internet, by the Swedish newspaper *Sydsvenskan* in November 2010<sup>15</sup>, introducing to the life story of Swedish Björn Johnsson. Johnsson explain to the paper that he is often confronted with the question; where do you come from? And people are unsatisfied when responding to be just a Swede. As a child of a Swedish mother and unknown father he has been cast away on a desperate journey to seek his roots and cultural background. That leads him to the act of carry out a number of DNA tests in the search of his true father and origin.<sup>16</sup> In other words, his act becomes the effect of a discriminatory Swedish bodily regime aiming at socially de-classifying and morally punishing his mother because of non-compliance to heteronormative standards and norms of intimacy. This shows in return how the normative function of moral intimacy of is closely related to institutionalised heterosexuality and the ideal of the nuclear family constellation.

The concept of being a bastard, which is what Shamma-Östrand uses as part of the speech about herself as ‘hybrid’, takes place in the original meaning of illegitimacy<sup>17</sup>. However, her self-projection as a ‘hybrid’, residing in a space between and independent from the parental figures, shows a subject clearly undisturbed by this cultural and colonial historical legacy. She chose instead to show up a fetishlike image and unabashed pride.

Using a psychoanalytic interpretation we can understand this as a story conveying a subject that sees itself as unaccountable because one’s parents are o unaccountable and morally dismissed. Feeling poorly loved by its own cultural ground, including oneself, the subject wanders into another world. It doesn’t acknowledge this loss and remains ignorant and unaware of its strategies and symbolic investments. What is left is its grandiose speech, as Kristeva noticed, a recurrent mantra: “ It is not ‘You’ who have caused me harm, it is ‘I’ who chose to leave” (Kristeva, 1991, p.4). What remains an unconscious element is consequently the unrecognised loss of the possibility of loving one’s parents due to cultural taboos and prohibition against ‘miscegenation’. The unique status connected to standing

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<sup>15</sup> Please See: <http://www.sydsvenskan.se/inpalivet/article1297451/Envis-jakt-pa-rotterna.html> 2011-05-23

<sup>17</sup> Please see extracted part of this monolog above, page 27.

alone in its genus becomes a violent expression of strong nostalgia and longing back to a primitive infantile and ethnically homogenised stage of society.

#### 6.1.4 What am I if not a movement child?

Specific to the *Oophaga* family is that they have developed the most refined parental care that has come across within the poison dart frog species (Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p.78).

There is a special resentment conjoined with sentimentality connected to the speech of *Oophaga vicentei* x *Oophaga pumilio*. I find this especially interesting to analyse further. The reference to the parental figures in this section reflects in my view, the other side of the coin related to colonial and racist discourse. In this perspective, prohibited sexuality and ‘white transracial desire’ become part of the construction of ‘hybridity’ as social representation. For example giving rise to self-identification with transgression<sup>18</sup>. And also used here as sign of cultural ‘warriorship’ and ‘mediatorship’ between various communities. I have observed a recurrent pattern in my material:

We come from open-minded lovers, I like to tell people about my siblings to maybe get a laugh and ease the feeling that we are different from everyone else. It can be lonely sometimes to see people stare and struggle to figure out your ancestry. Since I was child I have been asked. “What are you anyway? The question used to hurt but as you can see we are the new face of America and its noble ideals of equality and freedom (Tauber and Singh, 2010).

‘Mixed-race’ research has shown that persons of ‘mixed cultural parentage’, as social representation, have evolved from being regarded and treated as tragic, marginalized and pathological beings in the classic colonial era, to gain the role of mediator and bridge builder between majority and minority populations in contemporary post-colonial modern western societies (Hübinette, 2010, Ifekwunigwe 2001, Parker and Song, 2001, Suki, 2003, Young, 1995).

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Transgression’ is a term that refers to the violation of a law, command, or duty as well as the exceeding of due bounds or limits

Although the perception of oneself being composed by two halves and the result of cultural or ethnic ‘mixing’ is not in any way a singular script and narrative, there are a few themes in these autobiographies that highlight this issue. For instance, as we have witnessed above, the subjective feeling of being viewed as the physical proof of an increasing global society, there is a consciousness showing that people want to objectify you when they are constantly searching after a trace of a mother and a father one your own body. This is, however, not only negative cultural projections but also just as much a result of positive racial social stereotyping.

In an artwork called *Transgressions* (2002) by queer film maker Stuart Gaffney, the audience is invited to his poetic reflection on the meaning of ‘hapa’ a term used by many mixed-identified people to describe ones ‘euroasian’ heritage. Stuart Gaffney made films and videos about his ‘hapa’ and ‘queer’ identities since 1994. His works were screened and broadcasted worldwide. In this excerpt, Gaffney returns to the primal scene of his creation. We are confronted with the same burning questions as in *Oophaga vicentii* × *Oophaga pumilio*; Am I the product of interracial desire and transgressive love?

I am the product of inter-racial desire  
Transgressive love is in my genes  
To touch someone of another race  
To see the different colour and texture of the skin  
To sense so much difference in what is familiar  
How do we resist it? How do we stand it?  
What did my parents think touching each other for the first time?  
Could they have thought as they saw their different hues against each other of what shades they might produce in their children?  
Could they have thought that their transgressive love would produce another transgressive love in me?  
Did they think of it as transgression at all?  
Is this my parents on the screen?  
Is this the document of their desire?  
My primal scene the moment of my creation  
Is this my mother?  
Am I the product of a fetish?

I am characterized by ambiguity  
I am defined by lack of definition  
I am the product of inter-racial desire  
Transgressive love is in my genes

I recently read an article suggesting that there is a cellular memory in our bodies  
People we have known, loved and lived with are imprinted on us, in us, physically  
I don’t know if it is true but certainly my parents are imprinted in me physically and my body contains the memory of their desire. If I search deep enough I know I will find it, that burning remembrance of

their love, they divorced when I was a small child and I never knew them to love each other. Yet somewhere buried in me I do know it I live it. I am it (Gaffney, 2002,<sup>19</sup>).

Even in Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of 'la mestiza', we can see a strong link to this assumed 'transracial' quintessential being. In her elaboration of what constitutes the identity of 'la mestiza', she uses the philosopher Jose Vasconcelos' illustration of 'la raza cosmica' - the cosmic race, the fifth race, embracing the four major other races of the world (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.77).

In an article about 'transracial' fantasies, published in a Swedish journal called *The fourth world* (my translation) Tobias Hübinette (2011), drawing on material from contemporary fictional work, shows that the new Third World-inspired political left-wing from the 1960 and 1970 were invested by a desire to live with and to become the Other. This was also one of the main ingredients in the rising of the quasi-religious 'new age' movements at that time. These cultural productions reflected a post-colonial desire to be non-white and to live with and even to be educated by the Other (Hübinette, 2011).

This is, as I see, still a desire that is predominant and explicitly expressed even by today's cultural representations. A telling example and contemporary historical document is the movie *Avatar* by James Cameron (2009). In many ways this film makes explicit this western desire of 'transraciality' and merging with the Other, to become the Other in both 'physical form' and 'mental constitution'. They desire to partake in the cultural rituals and teachings of the Other.

In other personal narratives that I've studied, we see cultural traces of similar discourse. In *Mixed- an Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience*, (Prasad 2009) writers with mixed cultural heritage residing in different western countries contributed with short stories about their own experiences. Obviously, these self-representations in these texts reveal that 'racialised' individuals have encountered this European colonial discourse in different manners. Some of these stories are taking place outside the academic department of anthropology. These people joke freely about being 'an anthropologist kid'. Anyhow these narratives are unlocking the

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<sup>19</sup><http://projects.design.ucla.edu/freewaves/freewaves02/gaffneytransgressions.mov>. This link was provided as part of a filmography and list of recommended mixed roots films on the Internet. <http://wmdariotis.wordpress.com/resources/mixed-heritage-films/> available, 2011-05-21



story of a self, emanating out of this ‘transracial desire’ of ‘going native’<sup>20</sup>. The meaning attributed to the body’s form of the ‘mixed-identified person’ in these narrations can, as a conclusion, be said to be both constitutive of colonial discourse and at the same time become re-productive of this colonial language. The feelings expressed all seem to say, “What Am I, if not a movement child? Rebecca Walker takes on a serious discussion about this issue in this same book (Prasad, 2009) arguing that the obsession with race that occupies and becomes one of the deepest wounds among mixed-identified people. However, as she underscores, this is not because of mixed-identified people themselves but the result of a racist society. Conclusions one can draw is hence that the ‘in-between’ or ‘outsider within’ is a very sensitive and receptive positionality in terms of to this language and clearly captures the discursive limits and more intricate symbolic negotiations related to ‘whiteness’ and power distribution. In other words this illustrates how the construction of a ‘mixed’-cultural identity functions as a form o border guard for national identity, and constitutes the very site of cultural negotiations of what should belong and not-belong into the shared idea of the nation. The highlighted extract below captures Walkers sensible understanding of this precarious situation and how a western colonial discourse and ‘transracial’ desire still play a part in shaping the embodied reality of individuals and come to define them as non-white, hence as desired bridge-builders to become part of the Other.

The culture at large is enthralled with futuristic post race scenarios and stirring stories of ‘transracial’ redemption, acts of cultural contortion and psychic mutilation will be our constant companions (Walker in Prasad, 2009, p.16).

## **6.2 Bodies out a place and out of control**

That ‘transnational/racial’ embodiment is a product of ambivalent ‘white’ performances, and acts of mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, becomes apparent in Walkers utterance below. It marks both how traces of colonial desire for the Other is

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Going native’ is a concept commonly used within ethnographic and anthropologic academic circles and discussions aiming at describing the phenomenon when the researchers have difficulties to leave the 'field' upon completion of the study, and when one has developed a strong sense of belonging to and wanting to become a member of the 'culture' or 'people' that has been the object of one's study

installed by creating the body as Other but at the same time how this ‘non-white’ Otherness has the effect of becoming a threat and menace to this (non) dialectic relationship of ‘white superiority’. In other words, if left unguarded, the ‘racialised’ body can embark on claiming access to ‘privileged whiteness’ and the embodied ideals of enlightenment, individual freedom and autonomy. This unconscious self-regulating practice is expressed in this extracted part.

Freedom can feel overwhelming. I would not trade it, but sometimes I want to be told what to do. I want to know constraints, boundaries. I want to be told what to do. I want to know the limits of who I am. Tell me what I cannot do. Let me master myself within articulated limitations, without these I feel vast, out of control (Walker, 2001, p.4).

It has been observed in earlier research how transnational adoptees or other non-whites brought up in a pre-dominantly white community have an a-ha moment at some point in their lives when they realise “I am not white” and which usually follows this sense of expressed alienation. Sometimes including a painful self-consciousness related to comical and tragic attempts to ‘fit in’ with the imagined majority because they have internalized an unattainable body image (Hübinette, 2007, p. 110f, electronic).

In 2009, Swedish filmmaker Ziska Szemes presented her autobiographical documentary *Me and My Nose* at the Gothenburg film-festival. The film dealt with the racism she is faced with because of having a ‘foreign appearance’. This contemporary historical document is a brilliant satirical illustration, about a wish to ‘fit in’ with an abstraction and idea of a Swedish self-image and stereotype. Leading her to the thought of undergo a nose surgery. This is, of course, both a futile and grotesque corporeal attempt to adjust to an idea of an idealised image of ‘swedishness’.

Just as *Oophaga vicentii* × *Oophaga pumilio*, Szemes is always compelled to describe her parent’s origin instead of her own when people ask her where she comes from. Szemes’ mother comes from India and her father from Hungary and by requesting help and assistance from different ‘scientific experts’ she sends us out on her own primordial archaic journey aiming at exploring her true origin and identity. A thorough mapping and assessment is done over her ancestral heritage, the genetic structure and bloodline, down to the level of a hundredth.

As an audience we are expected to understand this identification to origin, and its predominate symbolic attribution of 'sanguine', something consequently informing her sense of belonging and depicting her body in exile. However, as a result, a bloodthirsty quest and claim of all kinds of citizenships become her final solution to belong in her root narrative.

Psychoanalytic therapy is much about closing the gap between the body/mind dualism of the alienated, and to return this 'self' to 'itself' or 'ourselves' to 'ourselves' (Brown, 1970, p.158). In Szemes narrative, one can make the easy assumption that what is negotiated here is following a simple normative, 'assimilationist model'<sup>21</sup> and the integration of a self. It is easy to assume a logic that simply implies a normative attempt to bring home and reconcile this western Other body into a western 'whitewashed' face of the nation. As Ahmed argues (1999), 'passing as white', supports a national desire to assimilate difference into its self-image. To give different groups and communities access to belong involves a national story of progress. What this means is that 'whiteness' continues to 'purloin' discursive meaning and has a tendency as Ahmed explains, to simply forget the forms of racial antagonism that were part of the re-definition of the nation (Ahmed, 1999, p. 93f).

What I see as a potentiality here is not only that Szemes rejects the idea of a nose surgery at the end of the film. This can, of course, be seen as an attempt to destabilise and reconstruct the idea of what should be included in the abstraction of a Swedish stereotype. However, this could also simply have the effect of supporting a western unconscious post-colonial desire, to reconcile and incorporate into its consciousness, its non-western (bodily) Other. What this narrative reflects, instead, is a story of national origin and belonging that supports a 'white logic' but as 'mimicry' and with lots of irony. Her re-writing of this roots narratives is a performance of doing 'white but not quite' (Bhabha, 1984, p.127) She makes visible a racist symbolism related to 'hybridism' at the level of genetics that clearly support a indo-European myth about nation-building and identity. However, her anarchistic claim, to all kinds of national belonging based on this blood principle consequently breaks down the whole excluding power mechanism build into the principle of 'jus

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<sup>21</sup> "The 'assimilationist model' applies the policy of assimilation. 'Aliens' are welcome to become citizens, but only on the condition that they give up their original culture, and embrace the culture of the majority (Castles and Miller, 2003 p. 44).

sanguinis'. In fact she turns back to biology and nature in an attempt to fix what culture has colonised and distorted. I consequently view this as a serious attempt to bring back the 'soul' to the body in exile and in addition, to imagine and give voice to of a whole new type of existence. Perhaps even with an aim to create a different 'physical' geography and space.

### **6.2.1 Transnational/racial bodies and queer space**

Queer cultural critiques, Judith Jack Halberstam's concepts 'queer temporality' and 'queer space' offers us additional and useful analytical tools to understand the cultural production and attributed meaning applied in the 'body-out of place genealogy' and narrative on non-belonging of *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010). She offers these concepts to show how queer subjects use space that are oppositional to normative lifestyles produced by institutional practices of heterosexuality, family life and reproduction. 'Queer temporality' and 'queer space' in Halberstam's view, is something that distinguishes the 'queer subject' from meaning merely 'sexual identities', and is more related to how people organise and develop of a way of life that challenges normative life styles. Consequently to her, 'queers' use space and time in ways that challenge conventional logics of development, maturity, adulthood and responsibility (Halberstam, 2005, p.13).

The reworking of roots in narratives of non-belonging and the revoked colonial and historical conceptualisations of 'mixed-blood' and 'racial hybridity', should in my belief also be understood as something that can lead to this breakout of a 'queer space' and consequently a discourse that clearly disrupts normative cultural time logics and cultural imperatives. In the case of the 'outsider within' or the person who has been subjected to forced deportation and exile, we can now assume has become a foreigner that does not give the same weight to origin any longer. She or he has fled from that origin, blood and soil. Even if origin is certainly something that haunts the person in exile it is still elsewhere that this person sets its hopes and where its struggle take place. Since the exiled does not belong to anything, it can easily find itself appertaining to everything and even to the whole entire tradition (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 29-32). Judith Jack Halberstam have also underscored in an argumentation

about understanding and reading sub-cultural representations of the ambiguous body in art (2005), “For some artist the creation of new bodies in the aesthetic realm offers a way to begin adapting to life after the death of the subject” (Halberstam, 2005, p.103). It is also in this way that I have interpreted Linda Shamma-Östrand’s art-piece *Oophaga vicentii* × *Oophaga pumilio* (2010). In other words, I see it as a letter or signification of resistance.

## 6.2.2 The rocking airport, liminality as my homeland

“It’s in the aircraft, between my two homelands, that I feel most at home”

- Patrik Bolling Ferrell, Founder of the Betweenship, 2003 <sup>22</sup>

As Julia Kristeva pointed out in the book *Strangers to ourselves* (1991), a lost origin leads to the impossibility to take root anywhere and she says that the space of the foreigner becomes that of a moving train, a plane in flight and the very transition itself (Kristeva, 1991, p.8). In the autobiographies provided by many ‘mixed’ identified people, ‘passing’ and the feeling of being able to transcend everything, crossing border, moving in and out of cultural settings unhindered, appears as a central theme. The airport, the flight, the moving vehicle and the physical movement of the body itself are also a common symbolic denominator in my material. In the citation from Walker below we see how a ‘white’ cultural imperative is denying cultural and historical differences to surface and this ‘cultural hybrid’ is created as a symptom, a western ‘stranger to ourselves’ for the purpose of preventing a painful past to emanate and make its way to conscious articulability and speech.

I am more comfortable in airports than I am in neither of the houses I call, with undeserved nostalgia, Home. I am more comfortable in airports than I was in any of the eight different schools where I learned all of the things I now cannot remember. Airports are limbo spaces -blank, undemanding, neutral. Expectations are clear. I am the passenger. I am coming or going. I

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<sup>22</sup> In 2003, Patrick Bolling Ferrell, a friend of mine, for the first time asked whether I wanted to write and contribute with my thoughts and feelings about being brought up in a bi-cultural manner for his project and compilation of an anthology about (Mellanförskap) or Betweenship- a topic and term he had invented himself.

am late, on time or early. I must have a ticket, I must have identification. I must not carry a weapon. Beyond these qualifications, I do not have to define this body. I do not have to belong to one camp, school or race, one fixed set of qualifiers, adjectives based on someone else's experience. I do not have to remember who I or anyone else thinks I am. I am transitional space, form-shifting space, place of at thousand hellos and a million goodbyes (Walker, 2001 p. 3f).

In Anzaldúa's account of 'la mestiza', it also appears as a figure that continuously walks out of one culture and into another and who in addition is all cultures at the same time" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.77). Conclusion one is able to draw from this is that the 'outsider within' also 'embodies' the possibility of standing as the unaffected observer and the very mediation and witnessing of all the diversity surrounding it. The feeling that one is able to reside in a transitional space of in-between also gives rise to a production of a form of 'trans-consciousness'- and a fantasy of independence and of a self no longer restricted by time and space.

Critical voices raised against the idea of 'cultural hybridity' as an presumed destabilising effects upon hegemonic notions of race, sex and national belonging has pointed at how this is also connected to a general western liberal humanistic idea – of a mind distinguished from the body and the body as a mere shell or vehicle for the mind. Consequently showing how self-representations of hybridity is also linked to neo-liberal notions and associations of individual autonomy (Mitchell, 1997). The freedom to pass across world division and between cultural domains, and to embody the position of "the master of two worlds" is also as Campbell has observed, closely linked to the religious idea of a transcendental hero like Jesus or Buddha and religious notions of trinity and rituals of redemption (Campbell, 2008, p. 212f).

Growing up I did not, ever, feel contained. I never felt the four walls of my room or my apartment or my house or my town or my culture close around me. I never knew the feeling of the extended womb (Walker, 2006 p. 4).

The personal feeling that one is never ever contained by anything or something can hence run the risk of a subject becoming involved with the act of assimilating everything into itself-image. There is in a psychoanalytic aspect also a close link between feeling wounded and recreating oneself as all-powerful as we can see a trace of when comparing these two utterances made by Walker. This cosmopolitan can thus become completely absorbed by the image of self-fragmentation and at the same time

the belief that she is the kaleidoscope of multiple identities (Kristeva, 1991, p.42). The anti capitalist critique against uncritical appropriation of ‘hybridity’ is thus very important since it describes how this subject can become involved with a continuous consumerist act of assimilation of objects that again supports the neglecting of true cultural multiplicity and difference.

The freedom associated to the slipping in and out of competing discourse can easily also become a habit or re-inscribing cultural stereotypes. Fataneh Farahani’s research on diasporic narratives of sexuality has for instance made empirical contributions regarding the discursive effects of the use of language from a position of in-between (2007). Showing how conceptualisations of sexuality and nationality became juxtaposed in her participant’s narrations revealing how the act of slipping in and out of respective languages, made language itself an assistant for talking about matters considered too taboo related to one cultural context and the other (Farahani, 2007, p.97). Even though a creolised language has the power to allow for this form of in-between subject positioning, that also may resist essentialising national narratives of cultural belonging and authenticity, it can also become productive of spaces of colonialism and capitalism (Mitchell, 1997, p. 262). In other words it also works in a way that re-installs binary-relationships and fixed set of categories supporting a ‘panoptic’ vision of cultures as monolithic entities. What we are expose to in the narrative of *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010) is an act of secession and a trace of cultural ‘hybridity’ that re-inscribe cultural differences and stereotypes and reestablishes this ‘white’ colonial Other.

### 6.2.3 Intermediary militants

My body seeks subsistence in a condition. I am trying not to break out of it by putting it into words (Shamma-Östrand, 2010, p.85).

In the studied monologue of *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010) we witness a subject that appear as speechless above all. Using psychoanalysis, we are however interested in helping our patient, the ‘hybrid’ to translate this silence into speech. Lacan have affirmed that it is actually beyond speech where we can find the whole structure of the unconscious and hence also the totality of our patients experience (Lacan, 2002 p. 413:495). Our task is thus to help free our patient from its

neurotic frightened position, into the field of social space and articulability, for it to begin converting these emotions into feelings and hence restore or (re)establish a link to the outside world.

To fool one's predators into thinking that one is more toxic than one actually is and to perform a type of 'false trademark' or 'mimicry' may of course be a good strategy and a way out of annihilation, but to be really poisonous? Isn't this a more effective way to escape ones predators? The dart frog species belongs to the world's most poisonous creatures and they are dangerous only if one attempts to touch them. Their strong colours serve as a warning to prospective predators that actually avoids devouring it<sup>23</sup>.

The aggressive silence that permeates our patient's presence and 'speech' and its unwillingness to articulate the feelings connected to what it has experienced, should therefore, as I see it, be interpreted as an act of political resistance and performance. In a way, I view this as reflecting a wish to stay defined as 'alien' or as an 'outsider within'. Kristeva have argued that common for alienated persons is a mantra very similar to this, She says: "When one is oneself uprooted, what is the point of talking to those who think they have there own feet on the soil? The ear is receptive to conflict only if the body loose it's footing" (Kristeva, 1991, p.17). The effect of not having any origin does naturally also render a feeling of uncompromised notion of having no necessity to 'perform' or supplement any idea of a nation. With other words 'hybridity' as represented in Shamma-Östrand's art piece (2010) appear here as narrative involving a more anti-social positionality. Implying that the most effective counter narrative includes a wholly negative response. Deconstructing everything and refusing to construct anything that can be loaded with meaning that has relation to the existing conditions and forms of society. It is also obvious that *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010) exposes this gut reaction and self-protection towards a hostile world and the violence that has come to define it. And this silence is clearly expressing a fear of repeating and performing existing cultural imperatives that is a colonial entrenched language.

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<sup>23</sup> National Geographic, "The poison dart frog", [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/amphibians/poison-frog/)  
<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/amphibians/poison-frog/> available 2011-05-19



However, there is a danger to this anti-social position with reference to ‘melancholia’ as we have discussed earlier. If our patient neurotically stays in this dark, hidden, silent domain and uncritically continue to mourn its fragmented self or loss of a whole racial identity, it will run the risk of only repeating this western cultural resentment and hence only re-inscribe a fascistic and nationalistic discourse.

Julia Kristeva’s entry above, stressing the special form of receptivity that is connected to the silence of the alienated, can nevertheless be useful for us to understand the true motive of our patient’s withdrawal. In my view it has much correspondence to Cixous’ notion of the possibility to perform and articulate the *féminine* and to provide for a counter-cultural script. As Cixous argues in her essay about the destabilising effects in the laugh of the medusa (1976) this instability to the meaning of the signifier is possible for those figures that are peripheral and that no authority can subjugate (Cixous, 1976, p. 883). Wanting to violate all existing logics and prohibitions, to disagree constantly about everything, and of being with compliance with no one as we see in Shamma-Östrand’s hybrid (2010) hence also exposes the uncertainty and ambivalence inherent in this speech or non- speech about how to talk about ‘hybridity’ in general.

#### **6.2.4 Liminality, ‘*féminine jouissance*’ and social transformation**

The feeling of self-fragmentation and non-belonging, is however not a singular neurotic expression. In fact there is a huge amount of a ‘*jouissance*’ expressed in these narratives about residing in a dark intermediate places and ‘liminal’ space. In my former analysis, I highlighted the normative restorative elements latent in the speech of ‘racial’ and ‘cultural hybridity.’ This part focuses on the elements that have the power to overthrow this imperative and the logic of ‘white, capitalist patriarchy’, and help this subject move into new imaginaries and cultural landscapes. ‘*Jouissance*’ is here taken as a concept referring to subversion and a logic ‘outside’ the phallic symbolic order. Lacan reminds us, ‘*jouissance*’ means what is prohibited *per se*. It is something that is in fact denied to whoever speaks, but he admits that there is a specifically ‘*féminine jouissance*’, which is beyond the phallus, a ‘*jouissance*’ of the Other. Consequently this is only something that can be expressed between the lines

by anyone who is subjected to the Law, since the Law is founded on this very prohibition (Lacan, 2002, p. 696:822)

The ‘symptom’ related to a persistent clinging to the parental figures and the re-invoking of the fantasy of the primal scene should not be interpreted as a mere automatic response of the stigmatising effect of violence related to a racist and heteronormative cultural scheme or logic that supports an idea of cultural disgust over the ‘mixing of blood’ ‘miscegenation’ or ‘exogamy’. The reference to infancy and childhood in these narratives is not in my view a simple reproduction of the institutional practice of the ideal of the bourgeoisie heterosexual family.

It actually captures the function of Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’. It appears to mean the same but still doesn’t (Bhabha, 1984, p.127). When Anzaldúa talks about ‘la mestiza’, as subjected to a “swamping of her psychological borders” (Anzaldúa 1987, p.79), it is also where she reveals what lies as potentiality in the fantasy of an otherwise racially castrated and neurotic subject. Her speech illustrates the symbolic influx of all those polluted and prohibited elements that flow in from the outside and our culture’s unconscious domains.

We can of course assume that ‘la mestiza’ is still a position that is subjected to the law and that these fantasies of exogamy still derived from a reality presupposed by the Name-of-the-Father (Lacan, 2002, p.613:729). The mere result of a western created double Other. Nevertheless, in psychoanalytic terminology children are ‘polymorphously perverse’ and explore in indiscriminate and anarchistic fashion all the erotic potentialities of the human body whereas the adult sexuality through this moral law is an un-natural restriction of the erotic potentialities (Brown, 1970 p.27). Associations to a ‘third space’, implied in ‘hybridity’, renders associations to a ‘third body’ and new imaginaries of how race, sex, gender, and sexuality should be understood and interpreted. Hence we can understand this situation as a fundamental collapse of reality and the symbolic meaning of ‘white’ logic, moral and reason. This is the ‘mestiza consciousness’. No matter how problematic this desire might be, it is not about a patient in a sterile melancholic depression. It is a psychotic and joyful anti-Oedipal subversion, enjoying this transracial fantasy (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983).

In James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009) as an example, the idea of ‘transracial and transnational ‘hybridity’ also includes the transformation of sexual desire and the whole erotic economy. In the lovemaking scene between the human/Na’Vi hybrid

Jake Sully and his love object Neytiri from the Na'Vi tribe, the marking of sexual organs have completely disappeared and Jake's assumed exclusively carnal desire have consequently become deeply transformed into a more pluralistic kinaesthetic and tactile form of desire. Consequently these psychosexual imaginaries related to the embodiment of the transnational and hybrid body opens up for a re-reading and dismissal of a simple traditional patriarchal white and heterosexist look on desire. The transnational hybrid body is in this way also a transgender/transsexual body.

However, I don't simply conclude that 'real individuals' can be expected to embody these queer spaces in all its omnipotent counter-logic since there obviously are no real racial hybrids. But the, whole mixed-blood, 'transracial' or 'transnational' 'hybrid' schizophrenic idea and appropriation can be seen as giving rise to different associations of the body and its orientation to the outside world. This is precisely because this 'transnational', 'transcultural' or 'transracial' body challenges the whole idea about embodiment as site for fixed notions of cultural and social understanding.

Ali Suki's (2003) research on children who self-identify as 'mixed-race' have for instance showed how they came to take use of social discourses on race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in their readings and identification with the meaning of the body in popular culture. The 'mixed' identified children in her study perceived themselves both to be like the parent of the 'same sex', but 'racialised' aspects were also part of the process which informed their mirroring. This allowed them also to identify to their 'racialised' parent of the 'opposite sex' (Suki, 2003, p. 176). In Gaffney's work on 'Hapa', 'racial hybridity' we see another example of how this position and identification leads to a reworking of the heteronormative cultural framework of the primal scene.

Is this me on the screen? Is this the document of my desire?  
And if so which one is me? The Anglo or the Asian?  
Where am I in this picture? Are these two trying to merge and become one like my parents?  
And if they merged and became one, would he be me?

I am not bisexual but I should be  
The other day at a party I met a bisexual man who really resented people who assumed he was gay.  
At first I was put off by his reaction but then I realized that his resentment was actually the same as my own. Seeing only two options, people fit him into the options convenient  
So is it for biracial looks, again there are only two options  
Dean Cain is identified as 100% white and plays superman while Russell Wong is identified as 100% Chinese and plays completely Chinese characters. Both are 100% Eurasians but neither is identified as Eurasians by the mainstream media or asked to play Eurasian roles.  
There are no Eurasian roles. From now on I will say that my sexuality is queer and my race too is queer.  
How can 'Hapas' reproduce themselves?

Causally I answered a personal add from a 'Hapa' woman for a 'Hapa' man. She is advertising for 'Hapa' sperm, her child will be 'Hapa' just like me, just like her. 'Hapa' born of 'Hapas', continuing the family line.

I don't look or love like my parents. Who are my 'Hapa' ancestors? Travelling in Chinese Central Asia we entered a museum in Urumqi where we came upon a 3000-year-old Eurasian mummy. The sign said: A test reveals both Mongolian and European racial characteristics. It belongs to a mixed type of the two races.

Is this my long lost mother?

Do I come from a long line of 'Hapas' transgressing their way across central Asia?

Mother is that you?

Mother?

Father is that you?

Are you there?

(Stuart Gaffney, *Transgressions*. 2002)

### **6.3 Down with childhood! Enjoy your nation as yourself!**

In Zizek's essay "Enjoy your nation as yourself!"(2000), Zizek asserts that the element that holds together a given community always implies the fantasy of a shared relationship toward a thing. This thing is however challenged by a growing presence of native born 'aliens'. The position of being a 'outsider within' consequently disrupts the whole idea of a shared story of cultural origin and belonging and becomes a menace to shared notions of what informs 'us' and our shared 'way of life' (Zizek, 2000, p. 594).

Gaffney's design is a poetic aim to escape history, dismantling time and space by establishing a relationship with his 'Hapa' spirit and self to a place of birth and origin long before our present time. It is also in my view a beautiful picture that captures the idea of wanting to give birth to the emergence and multiplication of new individual and parallel existences, rather than supporting a normative logic of evolution in terms of already culturally given and distorted recognised forms of group identities and populations. These ideas of wanting to imagine new connections and assemblages of people are something that circulates in much of the cultural productions among mixed identified people I have come across in general. This can also explain the increased emergence and prevalence of mixed-identified communities, bibliographies and filmographies trying to establish connections to their outside world based on their own terms. In the book *Blended nation portraits and interviews of mixed-race America* (Singh and Tauber, 2010) that I want to highlight here, much of these thoughts are reflected as well.



Figure, 3, Anita, Naomi and mother Tanya (my cropping and editing)  
Anita (left) Half Mexican, Quarter White, One Eight African -American One eight Native- American  
Naomi (right) Quarter African American, Half White, Quarter Native-American, Tanya, Half African –  
American, Half White, Photographed in Los Angeles, California by Mike Tauber, *Blended Nation*,  
*portraits and interviews of Mixed-Race America* (Singh and Tauber 2010)



Figure, 4, Amanda, Ari and Rehana, (my cropping and editing)  
Half Indian- Half Jewish Russian-Romanian, photographed in New York by Mike Tauber, *Blended  
Nation-Portrait and interviews of Mixed Race America*, (Singh and Tauber 2010)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> For views on additional photographs see link to the project *Blended Nation*, online portfolio and  
photographs by Mike Tauber, 2011  
[http://www.miketauber.com/data/pdf/pdf\\_PROJECTS\\_Blended\\_Nation\\_portfolio\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.miketauber.com/data/pdf/pdf_PROJECTS_Blended_Nation_portfolio_1_.pdf) 2011-05-09

Even if these pictures and illustrations to some extent still reflect an archaic symbolic notion of nation-building and kinship model, based on the principle of blood and something ultimately derived from individual organic genetic reproductive units (Smith, 2003, p.147), I would like to promote a totally different interpretation that can be derived from this biologising gaze on familial and societal formation. The pictures in this book actually say much more than what is verbally being conveyed in the interviews. Although referring to their different ancestral origins based on mythical 'racialised' concepts, we can still be able to see in them new ways of understanding the building of familial, national and cultural connections. They are based on associations of difference in genetic structures rather than resemblance. This also challenges these sterile notions of national purity.

The practice of family thinking and heritage can be seen as being more urgent and it is even emphasised in the narratives of the alienated 'transracial' and 'transnational' 'hybrid'. But, the representation of this family is, however, different. The intimate scenes and family constellations in these pictures provide a serious challenge to nationalistic and heterosexist bourgeoisie concept of the nuclear family and the societal cell. In fact I see the whole remaking of the idea of the primal scene and the notions of origin and the institution of the family.

By using the blood metaphor, they challenge the whole relationship between native and immigrant, majority- minority, white-black, parenthood-childhood. The references in these pictures to the idea of family equally include representation of the single individual family, the cross- and inter generational ancestral family pattern, extended family constellations and family representations only constituted by siblings and siblings-siblings and children. Consequently this leads to a non-normative inclusion of people to the core idea of intimacy and family, completely other than merely just a reference back to the parental figures following the normative oedipal logic of mummy, daddy and me (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p.51).

Radical feminist, Shulamith Firestone said already back in the 70-ties that the deepest source of social division and inequality is among the primary thing due to the assumed natural bond between women and children. To survive in our time she said we must dismantle the constitution of the family. And the formula for doing this is by the total resolution of childhood and adulthood itself (Firestone, 1970, p.72). Psychoanalytic theorists Deleuze and Guattari have described that inherent in the nomad or the 'cultural orphan' there exists an anti-oedipal and schizophrenic libidinal

desiring machine (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Narratives of ‘racially’ fragmented self-representations including our main narrative, the ‘hybrid’ *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010) are thus not just a story about a paranoid dismantling and breakdown as cause of repression, but as well the representation of a schizophrenic breakthrough.

Gaffney’s work does also, in my view, expose in a un-discriminatory fashion, the adoptions, identifications and re-connections to both a time immemorial, as well as with future not yet materialized companions. In this way, he also challenge the notion depicting this subject as primarily identifying with the parental figures and hence as a social representation of himself as a dependent child. These both narratives raise instead a mental confusion to whether he/she is really this child? Maybe her/his spirit has more resemblance and derives from his grandparents? Siblings? Sibling’s siblings? Or future grand children? Maybe he is all of them or none of them?

These expressed visions and imaginaries have thus finally come to lead my association to Tony Kushner’s play *Angels In America. A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* (1993), where in a brilliant scene, the character Belize explains to his homophobic and racist counter-part, the McCarthy sidekick Roy Cohn, the meaning of paradise. A dialogue suggesting that a ‘white heterosexist patriarch’ and cultural script has no longer a place in the future (see extracted part below).

A big city overgrown with weeds, but flowering weeds...big dance palaces full of music and, lights and racial impurity and gender confusion. And all the deities are creoles, mulatto, brown as the mouths of rivers. Race, taste and history, finally overcome... And you ain’t there (Kushner 1993)

## 7. Conclusion

My main objective in this ‘psychoanalytic session’ was to study which role the concept of ‘hybridity’ can have when looking at new forms of narratives of non-belonging. I began constructing this object out of the imagination of Shamma-Östrand’s work of art (Shamma-Östrand, 2010). I related this to several perspectives in which we can understand the shaping of this new being *Oophaga vicentei* × *Oophaga pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand, 2010). I saw a close relationship in her quest of defining ‘hybridity’ and the theoretical construct existing in post-colonial critical

theory of Bhabha (Rutherford, 1990). I have constructed these images of ‘hybridity’ as a form of ‘symptom’ in regard to the main dominant ‘white’, ‘heterosexist’ western norm giving, as a heritage of the colonial era. So how can we finally summarise these findings?

Psychoanalytical, postcolonial and critical race studies all seem to have been suitable perspectives for critically analysing ‘hybridity’ as concept placed in a neo colonial background in which national belongingness and white European supremacy are interrelated and take place. Using a hermeneutics of suspicion methodology I aimed to investigate the artist’s unconscious self-representations and self-identity buildings surrounding the ‘hybrid’ object, the frog.

My analysis shows that this concept of ‘hybridity’ doesn’t only serve as sign of cultural multiplicity, devoid of ‘whiteness’. It is also shaped as the Other in European consciousness. This is done in order to keep the structure of the colonised Other in place. And at the same time, as psychoanalytical theory describe it, it functions as a defence mechanism called denial in order to keep in place an idea(l) of racial homogeneity, thus avoiding the threat of splitting and fragmentation of the self. Consequently also avoiding confronting the historical and cultural changes that has taken place in a contemporary European cultural context as a result of globalisation.

‘Hybridity’ is here revealed as having a double meaning in this sense. It is on one hand a sign of changes and at the same time it reveals defensive attitudes based in conventional norms of racial identity. Psychoanalysis has in this case been a very powerful tool for rending the invisible, visible. I see a clear identity between the self-representation in the world of Shamma-Östrand (2010) and the cultural patterns existing in society. I have shown how this way of reading have revealed in Shamma-Östrand’s art-piece a variety of images of cultural ‘hybridity’ still more linked to stereotyping and essentialising assumptions on bodies as sites of cultural difference. It shows, in other words, that societal norms are still supporting and re-inscribing racist slogans on genetic and physical differences aiming at dividing people and groups instead of viewing cultural diversity as discourse beyond embodiment.

Postcolonial and feminist perspectives have helped here to extend the comprehension of the ‘hybrid’ as a sexual being. He/she is sexually reproductive which means being legitimate as a new person or being, beyond conventional ‘racial’ classifications. In this way I have highlighted opportunities to articulate a counter script to these myths of origin. Here we have the presence of a liberatory power no



longer subject to ethnocentrically defined norms. In this sense psychoanalysis functions as a counter hegemonic script unveiling domination structures hidden in language itself. My interpretation of this imagined body, the 'hybrid', can be seen as a creative reworking of social reality. It articulates the subject position of self-determination and agency. It gives back the existential recognition of the individual as a plural difference.

Problems that have arisen in this study were primarily related to the fact that my object of study didn't exist before. And I had to adopt a number of critical analytical tools in order to first render it visible. I followed here a genealogy like method to reconstruct the history of *Oophaga vicentei* x *Oophaga Pumilio* (Shamma-Östrand 2010). However its presence as a trace in social discourse was obvious quite right away as the negation of the Other.

As the narrative unfolded, I saw a plausible script of research done in three steps. Using the 'monomyth' or the hero's journey inspired by the mythologist Josef Campbell (2008), I could trace the story of the old alienating identity, to the passage in the dark intermediate state, with the loss of all perspectives and the struggle to achieve a coherent self-image. Finally in the last phase, the steps taken to find a way out of this 'liminal state', leading to the rebirth of a renewed and emerging self-sense, transcending the old past dualities. This dissertation has thus been thematically structured according to the division found in the hero's journey (Campbell 2008). Beginning with the existential state of alienation, the divided self, and the story of the self and others. It is a vivid description of a state of anxiety and despair. Illustrating how Eurocentric institutional norms and assumptions about the nation-state and of compulsory heterosexuality and ideals of the bourgeoisie nuclear-family are part of constructing a body-out of place narrative among native born non-white citizens. It shows elements of melancholy connected to the recognition of the self as a subject of 'hybridity'. 'Cultural hybridity' in this sense as a result of white hegemony and the logic of 'bad blood' and 'faulty stock', a discourse of biological and social deviance. For me the hero's journey has provided a form of meta-narrative guiding me through my research project. It was a process sometimes working by intuition using eclectically means in order to achieve some form of organising principles.

For feminist thinker Donna Haraway, there are two main strategies for taking responsibility for modern myth making and achieving authority. These are either to reinterpret the story of origin and to correct it the second time, or to proclaim a

more rebellious version of rewriting a whole new story and to announce the birth of something totally new (Haraway, 1991, p.72). My feminist approach, I believe, reflects the position of moving in-between these two strategies. The phallogocentric discourse in psychoanalysis is unavoidable but combined with radical approaches offered by some theoreticians we can reach a more balanced picture, which is what I have done.

My research has revealed ‘hybridity’ as a cogent embodied reality. It has now a shape, it is bearing on meanings and it has found legitimacy through the social space. The existence of the frog in itself is a sign of resistance and the work of Shamma-Östrand is a voice to its recognition. As Haraway have argued, the working of concepts in an attempt to search ourselves is also part of the reconstruction of the problem. The very constitution of ‘hybridity’ in my work has thus very much been part of the construction of a problem, but at the same time it has become a tool for social investigation (Haraway, 1991, p.77f). Why then do this project resonate so deeply with metaphorical mythical thinking and the realm of the *féminine* and the unconscious when aiming at articulating a counter-cultural narrative? According to *The encyclopedia of queer myth, symbols and spirits*, (Conner, Sparks and Sparks, 1997), ”We are the myths”. “We have never not been here,” (Conner, Sparks and Sparks, 1997 p.26 <sup>25</sup>) According to my views this is corroborated by Gloria Anzaldúa’s notion of ‘*la mestiza*’, a figure I have had much use of. It is a mixed-blood narrator, both a cultural interpreter and mythmaker.

Finally, I would like to conclude by telling that using the medium of writing in English was in parallel symbolically representing my research process. Using foreign language is consciously taking the position of the ‘outsider within’. It is also taking the role of translator and bridge builder for the so-called mixed-identified people. This is in tune with what Monique Wittig said; “without class or group distinction, there are no consciousness or real subjects, only alienated individuals” (Wittig 1992, p. 18). This has thus been a commitment to bring divergent voices from different writers

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<sup>25</sup> I the introducing chapters, Anzaldúa elaborate further on the implied meaning for using mythology in the field of studies on marginal subjects. She says; “Focusing on the mythic and spiritual aspects of experience is also a challenge to the parameters of what defines as knowledge and to consider the value of knowledge that is rooted in the body, in the psyche and in paralogical experience”. Consequently showing how an employment of myths is necessary when seriously aiming at challenging colonial and Western superior conceptualisations of reality and reason (Conner, Sparks and Sparks, 1997, p.vii).

together. The existence of individuals, and assemblages of people identified as 'mixed' is something I see as enriching in the process of reshaping European and western cultural landscapes.

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