

Ec-static existences

Roca Lizarazu, Maria

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ARTICLES – RETHINKING MINOR LITERATURES

Ec-static Existences: The Poetics and Politics of Non-Belonging in Sasha Marianna Salzmann's *Außer Sich* (2017)

Maria Roca Lizarazu

University of Birmingham, GB

M.RocaLizarazu@bham.ac.uk

This article examines the work of contemporary German-Jewish writer Sasha Marianna Salzmann through the framework of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minority. Focusing on Salzmann's debut novel *Außer Sich*, I investigate how the text complicates ideas of familial, national, linguistic and gendered belonging, which results in a fundamental deconstruction of the very concept and possibility of belonging. I argue that the framework provided by Deleuze and Guattari needs to be extended in Salzmann's case, by bringing it together with Judith Butler's thoughts on the "ec-static" character of the self and interpersonal relationships. Based on Butler's notion of ec-stasy, I demonstrate how Salzmann's text develops an innovative politics and poetics of non-belonging, which connects their writing with a broader "postmigrant" trajectory. Apart from helping us question facile conceptions of belonging, Salzmann's work thus also enables us to shift our current understanding of the cultural location of German-Jewish writing.

Tweetable Abstract: This paper examines minority and ec-stasy in Salzmann's debut novel *Außer Sich*, staking out these concepts' innovative politics and poetics of non-belonging.

*I don't know how many souls I have.
I've changed at every moment.
I always feel like a stranger.
I've never seen or found myself.
From being so much, I have only soul.
A man who has soul has no calm.
A man who sees is just what he sees.
A man who feels is not who he is.*

(Pessoa, "I Don't Know How Many Souls I Have", *Selected Poems*)

1. Introduction: Embracing Ec-stasy

The title of this special issue on “Rethinking ‘Minor Literatures’ – Contemporary Jewish Women’s Writing in Germany and Austria” references Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s seminal thoughts on “minor literature” and being “minor” more generally (*Kafka; A Thousand Plateaus*). The aim of this collection is to probe the productivity of these concepts when reading contemporary Jewish literature by women writers in Germany and Austria. This piece contributes to the project by elucidating how the notions of “minor literature” and being “minor” do indeed provide a productive lens for reading the work of the Russian-born, German Jewish novelist, playwright and activist Sasha Marianna Salzmann, whose plays have received some attention (Landry, “Jewish Joke Telling”, “On the Politics of Love”), but whose novelistic and essayistic production has gone virtually unnoticed.¹ While reading Salzmann’s work through the framework of “minor literature”, I intend also to show that their writing suggests an innovative reorientation of Deleuze and Guattari’s thoughts on minority, which adds to ongoing redefinitions of German Jewish writing (Garloff and Mueller; Morris). Salzmann’s queer, German Jewish stance provides an opportunity to recalibrate established discourses on minority (writing) which in turn enable us rethink what we mean by (German) Jewish literature.

To this end, I suggest re-reading Deleuze and Guattari’s thoughts on minority as, fundamentally, deliberations on belonging and non-belonging in that they describe our shifting relationships with hegemonic discourse, with norms and various interpellations. Being “minor” and “major” thus concern the ways in which we comfortably belong, are asked to prove our belonging, are being made (and sometimes forced) to belong and/or are being excluded because we do not belong or fit. It is for this reason that Deleuze und Guattari decidedly divorce their idea of “minor” languages and literatures from a purely numerical approach: “The opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 122). They illustrate this with the example of the adult, white, heterosexual (from today’s perspective we would probably add: cis-gender, middle-class and able-bodied) male who by no means represents the majority of the world population, yet has been constructed as the “standard measure” by which forms of subjectivity are evaluated, enabled and impeded. What being “minor” means in relation to this “standard measure” is not that the minority is necessarily less numerous, but that it is underrepresented, disempowered, marginalised and potentially oppressed.

While thus describing relations within a power network as well as degrees of proximity or distance to a norm, the minoritarian also always harbours a potential, described as “creative and created” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 123), to transform this network and hence the “standard measure” or norm: “Minorities [...] must also be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 123). Being “minor” is thus a description of an individual’s or group’s relationship with(in) power structures, while, as a form of becoming, it may also serve as a creative means to dislodge those power structures – we can all become “minor” within the majority discourses that we (are forced to) inhabit. Being “minor” can thus be both a property of minor(ity) groups and a strategy for challenging power relations and hegemonic

¹ I am aware that including Salzmann’s work in a special collection on “women’s writing” is potentially problematic, as so much of their work is concerned with trans- and/or non-binary characters and the deconstruction of gender binaries. However, if we approach this collection of articles as a broader attempt to give voice to “minor” positions in German-Jewish discourse that have been largely overlooked, it will become obvious why Salzmann’s writing is still a good fit.

discourse. This is also why the “minor” in minor literatures “no longer designates specific literatures [or subjectivities] but the revolutionary conditions for every literature [or subjectivity]” (*Kafka* 18).

Several reviews of Sasha Marianna Salzmann’s debut novel *Außer Sich* [Beside Myself] have observed that their text probes “Zugehörigkeit jenseits konventioneller Zuschreibungen wie Heimatland, Muttersprache oder Geschlecht” [belonging beyond conventional categories such as country of origin, mother tongue or sex/gender] (Kegel),² re-examining notions of belonging in a way that potentially qualifies it as “minor literature”.³ The extent of this probing can already be gleaned from a short summary of the text: it tells the story of a protagonist who the readers first encounter as Ali(ssa) and who, after her missing twin brother Anton sends a postcard from Istanbul, travels to the city in search of him. It becomes obvious pretty quickly that the search for Anton is also a self-reflexive search for Ali, who, having lost her other half, now tries to reconstruct her origins by attempting to recover her Jewish and Eastern European family history. The novel thus jumps back and forth between various geographical locations and historical events, including Russia and Eastern Europe in the early and mid-twentieth century, post-1989 Germany and contemporary Turkey. The dizzying rotations of this historical and geographical “Drehscheibe” [turntable] (*AS* 275; *BM* 236),⁴ are accelerated when Ali, who is introduced as female at the start of the novel, decides to transition to the male gender and become Anton. The journeys and transformations recounted in the text are complemented by a narrative that switches between third- and first-person approaches and Ali/Anton’s and brother Anton’s perspectives (although we do not know for certain whether or not Ali/Anton has invented the chapters told by brother Anton).⁵

This article will explore how Salzmann’s text complicates various modes and models of belonging. Focusing on issues of language, memory, poetics and community in particular, I will argue that *Außer Sich* does not simply reject established norms and mode(l)s of belonging, but suggests inhabiting them differently by deterritorialising them. These “minor” uses of “major” concepts such as mother tongue, nation and community, the transparent self, or hetero- and cis-normativity in Salzmann’s text result in a more fundamental deconstruction of very concept and possibility of belonging, which can be grasped via Judith Butler’s notion of the “ec-static” character of the self and human existence more broadly (*Undoing Gender, Giving an Account of Oneself*).⁶ If we follow Butler’s argument that the subject is always constituted by histories, norms and Others that lie beyond it, and that it cannot think or give an account of itself without recourse to this realm of the beyond, then what follows is that we are always “minor” in a sense, because the self only ever exists in a deterritorialised or, as

² Unless otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

³ Salzmann’s novel will henceforth be cited as *AS* in the text.

⁴ All translations of Salzmann’s novel are based on the official translation by Imogen Taylor entitled *Beside Myself*; the English version of the novel will henceforth be cited as *BM*. It should be noted that the translation of the title as “Beside Myself” represents a significant – and potentially problematic – change to the German original, which literally translates as “Beyond/Beside *Oneself*” (emphasis mine). By introducing the reflexive pronoun “myself”, the translation arguably strengthens the idea of the stable, self-sufficient “I” that can belong to itself, which is exactly what Salzmann’s novel tries to deconstruct. The essay by Judith Butler, which inspired the title of Salzmann’s text, also uses “oneself”, for exactly this reason – see fn 5.

⁵ In the following, I am using the pronoun “they” and the name “Ali/Anton” to refer to the protagonist, as this probably best captures their genderqueer identity as well as the novel’s central idea that the “I” always comprises “many souls”, as Pessoa puts it.

⁶ One of the essays in *Undoing Gender*, entitled “Beside Oneself: On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy”, apparently provided the title for Salzmann’s novel if the publisher Suhrkamp is to be believed: *Sasha Marianna Salzmann Außer Sich*. Suhrkamp.de, 2017, https://www.suhrkamp.de/sasha-marianna-salzmann/ausser-sich_1462.html. Accessed 18 April 2019.

Butler puts it, “dispossessed” fashion (*Undoing Gender; Giving an Account of Oneself*). Being or becoming “minor” is thus not only a description of a power relation and a strategy to counter that relation, but also a description of our very subjectivity. Salzmann’s novel, I contend, is ultimately concerned with the question of how we can artistically express and politically embrace this fundamental deterritorialisation or dispossession. Embracing ec-stasy constitutes an ethical and political stance, since it implies countering “major” discourses, premised on disavowing the ec-static condition in the service of ideological notions of the full, transparent and coherent self and of ‘proper’ belonging, which can become means of oppression.

In the following, I will show how Salzmann’s text questions and extends notions of monolingual belonging and the mother tongue (section 2), of the full and transparent self (section 3) and of community and togetherness (section 4). Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Butler and Salzmann all share an interest in the question of how embracing the “minor” and/or ec-static might enable us to think “another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility” (*Kafka* 17). My analysis will therefore not only examine how Salzmann’s text questions various mode(l)s of belonging, but also whether and how it suggests new ways of being (with) and how these might be expressed artistically (section 4). This relates to a much broader question, namely whether the novel’s conscious poetics and politics of non-belonging can be identified as a wider strategy in contemporary German-language Jewish literature but also in so-called (post-)migrant writing. I will therefore conclude this article by examining whether the poetics and politics of non-belonging in Salzmann’s oeuvre point to a (yet to be realised) revolutionary praxis that enables a different, “postmigrant” understanding of German Jewish and other forms of minority and minoritarian writing (section 5).

2. Excessive Expressions and Treacherous (Mother-)Tongues

As a Russian native speaker who came to Germany in the mid-1990s as a young child, Salzmann – and their main character Ali/Anton – approach the German language from a perspective that differs from someone who grew up with and surrounded by it. Additionally, Salzmann is first and foremost known as a playwright, so most of their work in German to this date has been written for the stage. In *Außer Sich*, this position translates into a perspective that complicates the “major” status of the German language both as a carrier of national identity and as a bastion of certain (bourgeois) literary traditions, particularly the *Bildungs-* and the *Familienroman* [novel of formation and the family novel]. The novel’s “minor” approach to German thus has political as well as poetological implications that concern German national identity on the one hand, and the novelistic form in its connection to canonical literary traditions on the other.

When examining Kafka’s “minor” use of the Prague German of his time, Deleuze and Guattari differentiate between two modes of achieving deterritorialisation: one artificially inflates language with meaning and symbols, while the other involves desiccating and impoverishing language, so as to give rise to “asignifying *intensive utilization*” (*Kafka* 22) [emphasis original]. Both methods are excessive in that they force language to go to its limits and beyond itself. Arguably, Salzmann’s text embarks on the first route, by overloading the German language with a plethora of tropes in what one critic has described as a “*Gestus des Zuviel*” [gesture of too much] (“*Laudatio zur Verleihung des Mara-Cassens-Preises*”). In the opening pages of the novel, we encounter a language that is saturated with comparisons and metaphors: “*Papas Hände glänzten schweißig, sie sehen aus wie ungewaschene Teller*” [Dad’s hands are shiny with sweat]; “*Mein Bruder wächst aus seiner Tasche wie ein Halm*” [My brother is growing out of his bag like a stalk]; “*Mama kommt in den Flur, in dem ich stehe, ihre Stirn hängt über*

mir wie eine Glocke, ein ganzer Himmel" [Mum comes into the hall where I'm standing and bends down to me, her forehead hanging over me like a bell, like the sky] (AS 11; BM 3). This imagery powerfully conveys the sense of being overwhelmed that the child Ali/Anton feels in the opening scene. Their family is going back to Russia for the first time after emigrating to Germany, but they do not understand what is going on: "Ich weiß nicht, wohin es geht, alle anderen wissen es, ich nicht" [I don't know where we're going. All the others know, but I don't] (AS 11; BM 3). On a more fundamental level, this language use blurs the boundaries between the subject and its animate and inanimate environments, which correlates with the idea of the ec-static self that I will introduce in more detail later – the father is half-human, half-crockery, the brother half-human, half-plant and the mother seems to be a human as well as a celestial body. Salzmans text repeatedly toys with the idea that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the self and its human as well as non-human Others. The tropes used by Salzman also often create the impression that the subject is not in full control, when, for example, inanimate objects or abstractions are bestowed with agency through personification: "stattdessen bekam sie einen Lachanfall, den sie zu unterdrücken versuchte, das Lachen schoss aus ihr heraus und flog gegen die Glasscheibe" [Instead she burst out laughing. She tried to fight back the laughter but it shot out of her and flew at the pane of glass between her and the two passport officers] (AS 16; BM 8); "Die Schreie der Eltern fuhren durch Alis Körper, bisschen sich im Nacken fest" [Valya's and Kostya's screams pierced Ali's body, clung to her neck] (AS 112; BM 92); "Das Hähnchenfett zitterte ihr im Rachen, kletterte aus dem Magen wieder zurück in ihren Mund" [The chicken fat trembled in her throat, climbed back out of her stomach and into her mouth] (AS 55; BM 42). Once again, these images – the last in particular – correspond with actual experiences of being overpowered: when the family leaves Russia for Germany, the children are not being told, "dass sie für immer fahren" [(that) they are leaving for good] (AS 52; BM 40), but are simply put on a train journey which ends with a completely new life, "ob man wollte, wurde nicht gefragt" [you weren't asked if you wanted to go] (AS 53; BM 40). During the journey, Ali/Anton and their brother eat a chicken that the mother has prepared for the siblings and which does not agree with Ali/Anton. When stepping out of the train and onto German territory, they thus greet their new home by vomiting on their uncle Leonid's shoes (AS, 55). Their family uses this as an occasion to teach them their first German word, "Entschuldigung" [sorry] (AS, 56), thereby associating their introduction into the new language and country with an experience of intense unease, humiliation and guilt. Throughout the story, Ali/Anton is haunted by the taste of this chicken that, even as they grow older, remains stuck in their throat, and which becomes a metaphorical shorthand for a trauma that the subject can literally not digest, a loss that it cannot acknowledge because there was no time and space to process it. The personified chicken fat thus reflects the disorientation and disempowerment that accompany, in Ali/Anton's case, forced migration; it presents a subject that is not in control of the languages it uses, the experiences it makes or of itself.

Apart from overloading language with imagery and sensuousness in a potentially excessive manner, Salzman also stretches the boundaries of German by mixing it with several other languages. *Außer Sich* is dotted with words and expressions from Russian (printed in Cyrillic script), Turkish, Romanian, and Yiddish (the latter transliterated into Latin script), most of which are translated, but not all of them. This melange of languages, which continually breaks up the flow of the German text, potentially triggers experiences of disorientation and non-belonging in the reader, who also might not speak all the languages used in the text. S/he is therefore at times lost in a similar way to the protagonist Ali/Anton. However, this disorientating and deterritorialising potential of language mixing is neutralised to an extent by

the translations that are provided by the narrator, although we do not know whether his/her translations are accurate at all times. Underlying this melange is a poetic, philosophical and political programme that concerns the question of whether language ever really belongs to us, or we to it, or it to itself. The novel highlights that every self consists of multiple “souls”, to quote Pessoa – that is, multiple aspects and versions of itself. In the same way that the language of the stable, clearly-bounded “I” is therefore always misleading, so is the idea that this self can be fully expressed in merely one language, as illustrated by the protagonist’s mother Valja.⁷ When recounting her life story, she resorts to multiple languages, since the monolingual container cannot hold the complexity that her “I” designates:

Sie sprach in mehreren Sprachen gleichzeitig, mischte sie je nach Farbe und Geschmack der Erinnerung zu Sätzen zusammen, die etwas anderes erzählten als ihren Inhalt, es klang als wäre ihre Sprache ein amorphes Gemisch aus all dem, was sie war und was niemals nur in einer Version der Geschichte, in einer Sprache Platz gefunden hätte. (AS 258)

[She was speaking several languages at once, putting them together in different combinations to fit the colour and flavour of her memories, making sentences that told a story different from the sum of their words. When she spoke, it sounded like an amorphous medley of all the things she was – things that could never have been reduced to one version of a story, or told in only one language. (BM 222)]

In *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, Yasemin Yildiz convincingly demonstrates how, since the eighteenth century, the concept of the mother tongue has functioned as an ideological construct in European discourses of identity and nationhood, undergirding what she calls the “monolingual paradigm” (2). In summary, the paradigm asserts that the self can only be truly and authentically expressed in one, namely the native, language. *Außer Sich* breaks with this paradigm by suggesting that the self can actually only be expressed in *multiple* languages, which interact with and transform each other, and that we can indeed form diverse and shifting affective attachments in/with different languages. *Außer Sich* defies the idea that I only belong to/in one language or it to me. Yildiz’s ideas are equally relevant when examining the more fundamental deconstruction of the idea of the mother tongue in the novel, which has also been voiced in Salzmann’s short essay entitled “Eigen Sprechen Laut”.⁸ The question of the mother tongue poses an eminently political issue, as is also stressed by Deleuze and Guattari: “The unity of language is fundamentally political. There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language that at times advances along a broad front, and at times swoops down on diverse centers simultaneously” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 118). The problematisation of the mother tongue has various layers in Salzmann’s writing. *Außer Sich* stresses that language, and particularly one’s mother tongue, is not a neutral or transparent vessel: “dazu muss man wissen, dass Russen, oder all jene, die sich dieser Sprache bedienen, immer alles etwas drastischer sehen, weil sie es drastischer ausdrücken [...] Russischsprechende mögen Regen nicht einfach nur nicht, sie hassen ihn” [but it’s maybe worth pointing out that

⁷ I am here using the spelling of Valja as it can be found in the German original of *Außer Sich*; in the English translation by Imogen Taylor the name is spelled “Valya”, which is why both versions can be found in this article.

⁸ It is almost impossible to translate the title of this essay into English in a meaningful manner, as it is a play on words with several elements, such as “Eigenlaut”, i.e. a vowel, “laut sprechen”, i.e. speaking loudly, and “einen Laut (aus)sprechen”, i.e. articulating something, as well as with the whole concept of “eigen”, i.e. mine/belonging to me.

Russians see everything rather more drastically because they express things more drastically [...] (Russian) speakers don't just *not like* rain; *they hate* it (AS 147; BM 124) [emphasis original]. What is interesting here is that the logic of authenticity and affectivity guiding the ideology of the mother tongue is turned on its head: language is not the true expression of an interior, "drastisch" [drastic] view of the world, but produces this extreme view of the world. This leads to a deep-seated distrust of the mother tongue in the book. When Ali/Anton's maternal great-grandfather Schura talks about the anti-Semitic persecution and incarcerations during the Stalin era which he narrowly escaped,⁹ Ali/Anton does not so much distrust the information he provides, but rather the wording:

Ich misstraute Schura nicht, ich wusste, er würde nie absichtlich eine Vergangenheit beschönigen, die ihm so viele Furchen in sein weiches Gesicht geschlagen hatte, ich misstraute der bildreichen Sprache, in der er erzählte, weil ich meiner Muttersprache grundsätzlich misstraue. Weil sie so viel besser ist als die Welt, aus der sie kommt, blumiger und bedeutsamer, als die Realität je sein könnte. (AS 167)

[I didn't distrust Shura; I knew he'd never deliberately whitewash a past that had ploughed so many furrows in his face. But I distrusted the flowery language he used because I have a fundamental distrust of my mother tongue, which is improbably better than the world it comes from – more florid and momentous than reality could ever be. (BM 141)]

This passage establishes an interesting tension between the body, which is constructed as a medium of authenticity, and language, which harbours deceit. While the wrinkles in the grandfather's face testify to his suffering, the language he uses to speak about his experiences actually diminishes his pain – this is a process that happens against the grandfather's will, as, according to Ali/Anton, he would never intentionally sugar-coat the past. Once again, language takes on a life of its own, beyond the subject's control, which implies that what I consider to be one of the most intimate aspects and possessions of myself, one of the most immediate expressions of myself, something that, like a mother, gives birth to myself as a self, already carries traces of an outside and cannot be trusted. In another deconstruction of the "monolingual paradigm", that which has been constructed as the ultimate medium of truth and authenticity – the mother tongue – is actually a carrier of lies and deceit, and of an uncontrollable excess. For when I speak myself, I also always speak other people and things, or rather, something else might be speaking that I cannot fully control. Salzmann's novel thus defies the idea that language ever really belongs to the subject, that it is something that the subject can master, even (or especially?) in relation to our mother tongues. This is how Salzmann's text connects to Deleuze and Guattari's claim that there is "no mother tongue" – the idea that there is a pure, unified, "standard" language is ideological and already the result of a "power takeover", which presents as natural something that is actually artificially constructed, namely "the unity of language" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 118).

However, as Salzmann outlines in "Eigen Sprechen Laut", the idea(l) of the unified mother tongue is crumbling, due to the realities of migration and digitisation, but also in response to changes in reproductive medicine and family structures: "Es gibt keine biologische Muttersprache mehr. So wie das Konzept biologische Familie auseinanderfällt, so zerfällt

⁹ I am here using the spelling of Schura as it can be found in the German original of *Außer Sich*; in the English translation by Imogen Taylor the name is spelled "Shura", which is why both versions can be found in this article.

auch die Muttersprache in die Option der Patchwork-Familie" [There is no longer a biological mother tongue. In the same way that the concept of the biological family is disintegrating, the mother tongue is also dissolving into the option of the patchwork family] ("Eigen Sprechen Laut" 150). For Salzmann, these developments also destabilise the nexus between language and national identity or unity. As they rightly observe, "Sprache bildet Nation" [language creates a sense of national belonging] ("Eigen Sprechen Laut" 149), an assessment echoed by Yildiz. However, this type of community-building no longer works in an age defined by the "Verschwinden der Ländergrenzen und durch die Selbstverständlichkeit der digitalen Vernetzung" [disappearance of national borders and the ubiquity of digital networks] ("Eigen Sprechen Laut" 149). At the same time, Salzmann's short essay is riddled with contradictions here and elsewhere: the underpinning iconoclastic rhetoric of the "old" versus the "new" world seems to indicate that there was once a state where language was indeed pure, and the connection between language and national identity more linear. While this idea(l) of homogeneity has certainly been integral to processes of nation-building and the "monolingual paradigm", it has arguably never been a reality. What Salzmann claims as the new and revolutionary "hybride Identitäten" [hybrid identities] ("Eigen Sprechen Laut" 151) have probably always existed. What is therefore changing is not so much the reality of languages or the nation state, which have always been hybrid and multilingual, but our perception of these, which, through contemporary developments, is forced to go beyond the "monolingual paradigm".

What Salzmann's novel thus achieves is a "postmonolingual" (Yildiz) illustration of the tensions underlying one's relationship with (a native) language, accompanied by an emphasis on the excessive and ec-static character of language: it never fully belongs to me and can never be fully mastered. At the same time, language can also never fully contain and master the subject – or itself, for that matter. Just like the subject, language is porous and open to influence, which is what Deleuze and Guattari mean when they speak of the "polylingualism of one's own language" (*Kafka* 26). A "minor" poetics and politics, as it is developed in Salzmann's text, is one that embraces and gives expression to the inherent "polylingualism" of every language, thereby dismantling the ideology of the authentic, pure and unified mother tongue and self.

3. "Eine Nabelschnur, die ins Nichts führt" [an umbilical cord leading to nothingness] – Incomprehensible Origins, Incomplete Selves

It is not only language that does not fully belong to the subject (or the subject to it). Salzmann's novel explores the theme of (non-)belonging on various other levels, most palpably in the ceaseless, voluntary and involuntary, movements of the protagonist, who is forced to migrate from Russia to Germany as a child, then travels to Turkey in search of their brother, before eventually returning to Germany. This pattern of constant movement and migration also shapes Ali/Anton's family history in its entirety, which unfolds across various Eastern European countries and cities before parts of the family relocate to Germany. Additionally, there is the transition and movement between genders that marks the character of Ali/Anton, as well as other characters in the book. The constant spinning of all of these "Drehscheibe(n)" [turntable(s)] (*AS* 275; *BM* 236) creates a restless and disorientating effect for the reader, who is made to jump between times, places, narrators and perspectives. Echoing the self-description of the lyric I in Pessoa's poem, the narrative thus "has no calm" ("I Don't Know How Many Souls I Have"), and this also applies to Ali/Anton on a more fundamental level. They are portrayed as a character who has no stable sense of belonging, is lost and constantly drifting, and in the throes of a melancholic inability to (re-)attach. This inability to find a sense of belonging and a place in the world is reflected in Ali/Anton's inability to make decisions, but

also in their recurrent fantasies of subjective decomposition, for example when they dream of being eaten up by bedbugs and then swallowed up by their (non-)uncle Cemal's couch (AS, 20). These fantasies contrast the character's constant motion and drifting with a desire for stasis and a return to the inorganic that recalls Freud's famous description of the death drive ("Jenseits des Lustprinzips" [Beyond the Pleasure Principle]).

As a result of this inability to commit or decide, Ali/Anton is fundamentally incapable of saying and thinking themselves as an "I", that is, a clearly bounded, stable subject: "Ich dagegen fühle mich unfähig, verbindliche Aussagen zu treffen, eine Perspektive einzunehmen, eine Stimme zu entwickeln, die nur meine wäre und für mich sprechen würde. Ein festgeschriebenes Я [the word/letter for "I" in Russian]" [I feel unable to state anything with certainty, to adopt a point of view, develop a voice of my own, a voice that would speak for me. A clear-cut 'Я'] (AS 275; BM 236). This issue is reflected in the book by the continuous oscillation between a third- and a first-person narrative of Ali/Anton's life. As we find out, Ali/Anton only arrives at a point where they can say and think themselves as an "I" after they have returned from Istanbul (AS 142), and this transformation is the result of the narrative that is *Außer Sich* – the self thus emerges as a quintessentially performative category. This has consequences for the construction of the text, pertaining in particular to the question of (un-)reliable narration, which are explored in more detail in Annette Bühler-Dietrich's contribution to this volume.

I want to focus here on the question of (post-)memory and its relation to the broader issues of the ec-static self and of accountability, as they are outlined by Judith Butler in *Undoing Gender* and *Giving an Account of Oneself*. Salzmann has stated in an interview that they have "so ein vages Gefühl, dass Erinnerung das zentrale Thema des Romans ist" [a vague feeling that memory is the central topic of the novel] ("Wenn das Ich"). The perpetually lost main character of Ali/Anton tries to gain a sense of self by turning to their Jewish family history, as Salzmann confirms: "Ich muss wissen, wo ich herkomme, um zu wissen, wo ich hinrenne. Und dann habe ich gedacht: OK, Ali, dann müssen wir jetzt eben deine Familiengeschichte aufarbeiten" [I have to know where I come from if I want to know where I am going. So I thought to myself: Okay, Ali, we will have to work through your family history then] ("Wenn das Ich"). This makes Ali/Anton a member of what Marianne Hirsch calls "the generation of postmemory" (*Family Frames; The Generation of Postmemory*), since they are trying to reconstruct a family past that they have not personally lived through, marked by experiences of violence, war and persecution. As part of the generation of postmemory, Ali/Anton is faced with various gaps in the family narrative, caused by the ruptures of multiple migrations, the largely suppressed experience of anti-Semitic discrimination and persecution in Eastern Europe, and the violence of the Second World War in Russia. Additionally, Ali/Anton's family carries an internal history of alcoholism, mental health struggles, broken interpersonal and intergenerational relationships and violence, which is potentially a result of but also avoided via the family policy of emotional suppression: "Zusammenbrüche wurden in unserer Familie stets aufgeschoben, vertagt auf die Einsamkeit leerer Räume" [We always put off breakdowns in our family – postpone them to the solitude of empty rooms] (AS 259; BM 223). This produces a painful conundrum for Ali/Anton: they need to know where they come from in order to gain an understanding of who they are, but at the same time they have very limited access to the facts of their family story. Most of it is hearsay, ever-changing stories and anecdotes, transmitted in an inter- and transgenerational game of Chinese whispers. The only halfway solid sources of information comprise a couple of enigmatic photographs and a meagre, ten-page manuscript their great-grandfather Schura composed shortly before his death. Ali/Anton is thus largely dependent on speculation, a succession of "Vielleichts" [perhapses]

(AS 86; BM 69) – what Hirsch calls “imaginative investment and creation” (*Family Frames* 21) – and this creates a fundamental sense of groundlessness. In the following scene, Ali/Anton imagines themselves in their mother’s womb, reflecting on their postmemorial position:

ich habe keine Erinnerungen, habe eine Nabelschnur, die ins Nichts führt [...] höre Fetzen von dem, was Valja sagt, und bringe sie zusammen mit anderen Bildern aus Quellen, für die ich nicht bürgen kann. Was davon ein Film war, über dem ich spätnachts eingeschlafen bin, oder die Zeile eines Liedes in meiner Muttersprache, die mir vorkam wie die Zusammenfassung eines Lebens, das ich kenne, kann ich nicht auseinanderhalten, ich kann mich an nichts festhalten, ich weiß, das hier, das wurde mir erzählt, aber anders. (AS 86)

[I have no memories. I have an umbilical cord leading to nothingness [...] I hear scraps of what Valya says and combine her words with images from sources I can’t vouch for. Scenes from a film I fell asleep over late one night mingle with snatches of a song in my mother tongue that seemed to contain the essence of a life I once knew. But I can’t tell them apart; everything eludes me. I know I was told all this – but it was somehow different. (BM 69)]

Außer Sich is thus not so much a *Familienroman* [family novel/romance], but a deliberation on the failure of the family novel – understood both as a literary genre and as a psychological strategy which, according to Freud, is about the creation of stable yet fictitious origin narratives (“Der Familienroman der Neurotiker” [Family Romances]). This explains the novel’s lack of a clear chronology, of linear connections between cause and effect, or of an authoritative story that is more than merely one possible version of events.

While the concerns outlined here are central to many recent so-called family or multi-generational novels (see Eigler; Fuchs; Horstkotte; Souchuk & Gruber), I would argue that Salzmann’s text goes beyond the nowadays popular obsession with familial origins and blind-spots. It offers a more fundamental philosophical and political account of how, as subjects, we are structured by an outside that does not belong to us and of the resulting instability of *any* narrative that is created about the self:

Immer wenn ich merke, dass es für Menschen eine Vorstellung von der Welt gibt, auf die sie ohne Zweifel bauen, fühle ich mich allein. Ausgeliefert. Sie sprechen davon, Dinge mit Sicherheit zu wissen, sie erzählen, wie etwas gewesen ist oder sogar wie etwas sein wird, und ich merke dann immer, wie sehr ich nichts weiß von dem, was als Nächstes passieren könnte. Ich weiß ja noch nicht mal, als was ich angesprochen werde – als ein Er oder eine Sie? Mein Gesicht überrascht mich jeden Morgen im Spiegel, und ich bin skeptisch gegenüber jeder Prognose. (AS 261)

[Hearing people talk of the world as if they could rely on it always makes me feel lonely and helpless. They speak of being sure about things; they tell you how something was or even how it’s going to be, and it always makes me acutely aware of how little I know about what might happen next. I don’t even know what I’ll be addressed as when I go to buy cigarettes – a he or a she? Each morning I’m surprised by my own face in the mirror, and I’m sceptical about any attempts to predict the future. (BM 225)]

The inability to know what has been, what will be, or who one is, is partially founded on the postmemorial experience of groundlessness. However, echoing their criticism of the mother

tongue, Salzmann's text also makes the case for a more fundamental incomprehensibility of the self and of what we perceive to be our (his-)story. As Judith Butler has argued in *Undoing Gender* and, in more detail, in *Giving An Account of Oneself*, we can only become and think of ourselves as subjects in relation to various outsides – both in the shape of norms, discourses, interpellations as well as actual and fantasised Others – that become the precondition for the emergence of the self. She draws on Hegel's thoughts on the master–slave dialectic here, which highlight the necessity of mutual recognition for the development of self-consciousness and the supposedly autonomous subject. Butler emphasises that there is no sovereign, fully constituted subject going into (or out of) the scene of recognition, but an ec-static self that is only ever constituted in and by the encounter with the Other. There is no self *before* the scene of recognition, as being addressed/recognised is what enables the constitution of the subject. However, due to this ineluctable dependence on the/an Other, the subject that emerges *after* the process of recognition is also not autonomous – hence, we need to acknowledge that “the relation to the other is ecstatic, that the ‘I’ repeatedly finds itself outside itself, and that nothing can put an end to the repeated upsurge of this exteriority that is, paradoxically, my own. I am, as it were, always other to myself, and there is no final moment in which my return to myself takes place” (*Giving an Account of Oneself* 27). Thinking of myself as an “I”, and developing an interiority, is thus always premised on an exteriority which is largely inaccessible to me – norms that precondition what counts as a recognisable subject, interpellations that determine what kind of subject I should and should not be, but also various real and fantasised Others. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler furthermore suggests that, by virtue of our bodily existence, we are also always exposed to Others, who can turn us into objects of desire or of violation, and can cause us both pleasure and pain. The subject is thus fundamentally “außer sich” [beyond/beside itself], to quote the title of Salzmann's novel (and the German translation of one of Butler's essays in *Undoing Gender*). Butler develops an ethics that is premised on embracing this unavoidable ec-stasy, stressing “the value of being beside oneself, of being a porous boundary, given over to others, finding oneself in a trajectory of desire in which one is taken out of oneself, and resituated irreversibly in a field of others in which one is not the presumptive center” (*Undoing Gender* 25).

This notion of the subject as a “porous boundary” and as exposed to various outsides and others is central to Salzmann's text: I have already mentioned the porousness of language, and the previous paragraphs have shown how the “I” can only (re-)construct its origins through the narratives of others which, however, remain largely inaccessible to it. In a similar vein, the novel's focus on erotic and sexual encounters reiterates Butler's point that we are always open to others who, to use Sara Ahmed's term, “impress (upon)” us (Ahmed 6) – in other words, leave their mark on us, shape who we are and become, physically as well as emotionally, intellectually and psychologically. The importance of encounter also de-centres the subject in Butler's sense, as the “I” is only thinkable as a network of relations. I would argue that being “außer sich”, in the space of the novel, signifies exactly this unavoidable entanglement with others to whom we need to address ourselves and by whom we need to be addressed in our existence as subjects. This constitutive dependence is reflected in the twin motif in *Außer Sich*, which is taken to its extreme by the recurrent suggestion that brother Anton might actually be a figment of Ali/Anton's imagination as well as by the incestuous relationship between the siblings. The psychological and physical enmeshment of the twins illustrates quite literally how “I” am always dependent on an Other to construct a sense of self, to think myself. This ec-static character of the self is also demonstrated by the fact that Ali/Anton can only conceive of themselves and tell “their” story in dialogue with the stories of their family members and the stories of the people they encounter in Istanbul. While Ali/Anton eventually manages to perceive of themselves and tell their story as an “I”, this “I” is

thus not presented as stable, sovereign and clearly bounded, but as open, porous, fluctuating and transforming. The stable origin narrative is replaced by the image of the umbilical cord which leads “ins Nichts” [into nothingness] (AS, 86). Yet this very detachment from, and abandonment of, the notion of a single, pure origin, enables the subject to realise and embrace the ec-static and entangled condition. *Außer Sich* urges us to endorse our dependency on others to think ourselves, who we can at the same time never fully comprehend or control; we are defined by “all die Leben [...], die ich nicht kannte, in die ich eingesponnen war und die ohne mich weiterliefen” [all the lives I didn't know, all the lives I was entangled in, lives that went on without me] (AS 364; BM 316).

4. The Poetics of Possibility and the Politics of Being-With

Ali/Anton's epiphany of unavoidable exposure and all-encompassing entanglement at the end of the novel constitutes the text's main ethical stance. It connects to two central questions, one relating to poetics and the other to politics: how can one narrate the ec-static, exposed self, given that “[t]he 'I' is the moment of failure in every narrative effort to give an account of oneself” (*Giving An Account of Oneself* 79)? And how can one foster a sense of community and collectivity from all of this?

As Butler notes, the condition of ec-stasy implies that we can only ever approach our origins and our emergence as a subject in the mode of speculation – as a fiction or fable: “I am always recuperating, reconstructing, and I am left to fictionalise and fabulate origins I cannot know” (*Giving An Account of Oneself* 39). While fiction is here presented almost as a crutch, employed by a subject that is never in full possession of itself, I would like to turn Butler's statement on its head, by asking to what extent fiction might actually allow us to come to and embrace a different conception of the subject. When posed in this way, the question recalibrates fiction as a central ethical and political tool. Butler emphasises that the necessary “moment of failure” in every self-narration does not preclude storytelling as such; however, “we will not be able to be very authoritative” (*Giving An Account of Oneself* 37) about the stories we tell. What would such a non-authoritative narrative look like? Arguably a lot like the novel *Außer Sich*, which employs some of the capabilities of fictional discourse in the service of what I would term a poetics of possibility and potentiality, of “Vielleichts” [perhapses] (AS 86; BM 69). It presents both the subject and the stories that it/we tell as merely one option among many and as open to influence and change. This is also where Salzmann's text differs from the established patterns of the family novel and many forms of so-called migrant or minority writing. It replaces an obsession with origins and the recuperation of belonging with “mobile and changeable belongings” and with speculations upon “the possibility of opening up new cultural and imaginative futures” (Bromley 37; 42).

The poetics of possibility inform the text's anti-chronological and non-linear narrative, which stresses contingency and the “Kausalitätslosigkeit der Geschichte” [absence of historical causality] (AS 274; BM 236) rather than linear relationships between cause and effect. The family and origin story of Ali/Anton is recounted in flashes, or, as Ali/Anton themselves puts it, “Fetzen” [scraps] (AS 86; BM 69) which do not sufficiently explain anything. The origins, motivations and trajectories of many of the protagonists in the family's story are presented in an episodic fashion and hence remain opaque to Ali/Anton and to the readers; this actually approximates *Außer Sich* to a theatre play, as is also suggested by the list of characters at the beginning of the novel (AS, 9). Additionally, the novel experiments with narrative reliability, as is emphasised by Annette Bühler-Dietrich, in a manner that questions the authority and the authorship we have over the narratives of our lives. Ali/Anton is unreliable because, as they repeatedly stress, their memories are failing them and they cannot bring order into their narrative; their (potential) recollections “ergänzten und widersprachen sich” [complemented and contradicted one another] (AS 138; BM 114). The result of this amnesia

and general unreliability of autobiographical memory is that we, as readers, cannot determine for certain which components of the family story have been invented by Ali/Anton, as Ali/Anton may well be identical with the heterodiegetic narrator relating that family story. This uncertainty even extends to the two chapters supposedly told by brother Anton, which are introduced right after Ali/Anton tells us “Ich erdenke mir neue Personen, wie ich mir alte zusammensetze. Stelle mir das Leben meines Bruders vor, stelle mir vor, er würde all das tun, wozu ich nicht in der Lage gewesen bin” [I make up characters in the same way that I piece together old ones. I imagine my brother’s life, imagine him doing all the things I can’t do] (AS 275; BM 236–7). The remarks about their brother’s (potential) life highlight that *Außer Sich* practises telling the self and history in the subjunctive mood, imagining what might have been and what could (still) be. This mode of storytelling plays not only with notions of authorship, but also with the fact that any story is merely one option among many, while simultaneously problematising the ideas of redemption and closure. Towards the end of the novel, Ali/Anton imagines the fate of their transgender lover Katho, who was initially inspired to go to Istanbul because they were intrigued by the hunt for wild and rare singing birds in the city (AS, 123–5). In the last pages of the novel, Katho finally finds what they are looking for (AS, 362–4), but the fulfilment of their desires can only be told in the subjunctive mood, as this seems to be the sole mode in which some form of redemption is possible: “Der Mann *würde* [emphases mine] [...] den Vorhang mit seinen Fingern öffnen wie etwas Unanständiges, und indem Spalt darunter *wären* [emphases mine] die Gitterstäbe des Käfigs [emphases mine]” [He would pull the cloth open with his fingers, as if it were something indecent, and in the slit behind, Katho would see the bars of the cage] (AS 364; BM 316). In a similar vein, Ali/Anton comes to accept that they cannot recuperate their lost brother and ever fully know and understand what drove him, but that they can *imagine* what it might be like to be him. The chapters told by brother Anton might indeed be Ali/Anton’s invention, but this can be read as both an act of appropriation or of acceptance of loss. It thus seems that fiction, due to its potential to engage in multi-perspectival narratives, alternative temporalities and different modalities, provides a uniquely suitable platform to express and foster ec-static subjectivity. The space of the novel allows Salzmann to create and tell the stories of times, spaces and characters that *are* never anything, but are eternally *becoming* something.

A crucial question raised by Butler – which is of equal importance for Deleuze and Guattari’s considerations of “minor” literatures – relates to the “kind of community [...] composed of those who are beside themselves” (*Giving An Account of Oneself* 20). How can subjects that do not belong to themselves, that defy the very notion of belonging, belong to or come together as a collective? Salzmann’s text criticises traditional notions of belonging and collectivity, be they linguistic, national, gendered or, on the micro-level, coupled and familial. *Außer Sich* scrutinises not only the family novel as a genre and psychological strategy, but also the family as an institution, which is presented as a hotbed of abuse, violence, disease and dysfunction. The only characters who are presented as remotely positive in the text are members of Ali’s extended, adopted family, namely Ali/Anton’s best friend Elyas, and his mother Sibel and uncle Cemal, who become Ali/Anton’s surrogate family. When Ali/Anton thus stresses “[d] as Desinteresse meines Uterus” [(m)y uninterested uterus] (AS 262; BM 226), their decision to transition from the female to the male gender and engage in queer relationships also becomes legible as a rejection of reproductivity in the literal as well as the figurative sense. They refuse to carry on the biological legacy of the family, while also refraining from perpetuating the patterns of violence that run through it. Simultaneously, they also refuse to partake in the reproduction of the heteronormative nuclear family and what Butler calls “heterosexual normativity” (*Undoing Gender*, 160), which has been linked to certain exclusionist imaginaries of the nation state (Otto 2017).

What alternative mode(l)s of togetherness does Salzmänn's text suggest though? Commenting on Salzmänn's play *Meteoriten* [Meteorites], published in 2016, Olivia Landry makes the case for a "politics of love" ("The Politics of Love") in the play, which promotes a micro-level – or a "minor"? – approach that questions the "major" and monolithic collectives mentioned above: "In its radical openness, love addresses issues of social justice with relationality, community, and affective engagement at moments when sovereignty, barriers, and nationalism threaten to dominate and alienate" ("The Politics of Love" 44). Reading *Außer Sich* in conjunction with *Meteoriten* would certainly be fruitful, as both works deal with similar issues, not least in shape of the play's transgender character of Catho who reappears as Katho in the novel. Additionally, both works critically probe the inherent violence of certain modes of gendered, sexual and national belonging, with the play establishing an explicit connection between hetero- and cis-normativity and nationalism. I would, however, argue that the communities in *Außer Sich* – and potentially also in *Meteoriten* – are not so much (or not exclusively) based on love, but rather on precarity, which actually connects in many ways to the understanding of love promoted here. In a 2015 interview on the alleged anti-Semitism of Muslim refugee communities in Germany (Mangold), Salzmänn makes the case for a solidarity – rather than a violent opposition – between those whom they call, in another interview, "die Versehrten" (Salzmänn/Wildermann). In their recent reflection "Unsichtbar" [Invisible], they make a similar point, arguing that a certain "Verletzbarkeit" [vulnerability] connects all those at the margins of what they call the "Mehrheitsgesellschaft" [majority society] ("Unsichtbar" 26, 23), and that this vulnerability creates a certain commonality. The idea of being "versehrt", which can be translated as wounded, but also deficient, connects to the politics of *Außer Sich* on at least two levels: the novel presents us with characters who are "versehrt", mostly because they are perceived as outcasts or as positioned at the margins due to their ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation, which translates into various forms of violence that are inflicted upon them. These vulnerable characters do indeed form bonds, as is the case between Ali/Anton and the transgender community in Istanbul, or between brother Anton and the Syrian refugee Nour. However, if we go back to the notion of the ec-static self, we are all also "versehrt" in a more fundamental way, in the sense that we are non-complete, and exposed or open to one another. We are thus always and unavoidably related, in our very exposedness to one another. Such a community of precarity and/or precarious community is actually not, in the strictest sense, a community – as this term seems to suggest a certain stability, unity, maybe even an essence. Yet the kinds of allegiances, associations or coalitions presented by Salzmänn are constantly shifting, transforming, but also always under threat. Therefore, instead of community, the term "being-with", as coined by Jean-Luc Nancy in *Being Singular Plural* might be more appropriate.¹⁰ What is at stake in this rethinking of community is, ultimately, an entire ethics and politics: accepting our general, shared precarity as subjects might actually be the precondition for a more accommodating stance towards the specific precariousities of those at the margins of our societies, as is also suggested by Butler: "Suspending the demand for self-identity or, more particularly, for complete coherence seems to me to counter a certain ethical violence, which demands that we manifest and maintain self-identity at all times and require that others do the same" (*Giving An Account of Oneself* 42).

¹⁰ Generally, Nancy's deconstructivist thinking, which is deeply concerned with the topic of community, seems to coincide with the thoughts formulated by Butler and in this article. This is especially true, for example, with Nancy's ideas on extension and exposure, as they are developed in his writing on touch in *Corpus* and elsewhere.

5. Conclusion: Minority, Postmigrancy, Futurity

In response to the question inspiring this special issue, my analysis of Salzmänn's novel has illustrated why and how Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts on "minor literatures" and being "minor" provide a useful lens when reading contemporary Jewish women's writing in the German language. I have stressed, however, that being "minor" should not exclusively designate the properties of minority groups, but rather the shifting ways in which we all belong and do not belong to certain structures. Being "minor", when read through the prism of Salzmänn's work, can thus signify several things (at once): a (marginalised) position in a power network, a strategy for changing the balance of that network but, also, a more fundamental way of being/becoming a subject. This is where the combination of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas with Butler's arguments and Salzmänn's text has proven particularly fruitful: it arguably helps us bring out the implicit intersectionality and relationality of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts. As Salzmänn's novel and the abovementioned essay "Unsichtbar" emphasise, the minoritarian status of Salzmänn's writing and characters cannot be ascribed one label alone, but results from the complex interplay between components such as Jewish, queer, trans-, migrant, multilingual and so on. The only instance where this intersectional and relational politics might falter relates to the issue of Jewishness. *Außer Sich* at times seems to presuppose Jewishness as a bounded and stable thing, mostly in its implicit equation of Jewishness with discrimination and suffering. The only constant in the otherwise ever-changing narrative Salzmänn presents is anti-Semitism. At the same time, the novel demonstrates that the impacts of anti-Semitism are mitigated by other factors, such as class and gender, but also nationality, making Jewishness appear as an equally dynamic category. Salzmänn's work thus invites us to think more about the intersections between discourses on minority, Germanness, Jewishness and queerness.

To conclude, I suggest that such an intersectional approach to "minor literature" and being "minor" taps into some of the recent discussions on postmigrantism or postmigrancy. It seems reasonable to situate Salzmänn in this context, given their work with and for the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and the Maxim Gorki theatre in Berlin, both of which are hubs of so-called postmigrant theatre (Stewart; Sharifi). They also maintain close friendships and working relationships with founding figures of the movement – if one can call it such – such as Shermin Langhoff, Jens Hillje and Deniz Utlu. While the term postmigrancy itself appears still to be very much under construction (El-Tayeb; Foroutan; Schramm et al.; *Nach der Migration; Postmigrantische Visionen*), most scholars agree that it signifies an openness to ambiguous and multiple attachments, contradictions and dissonances of belonging, which comes with a problematisation of stable notions of identity and subjectivity. As such, the term does not exclusively refer to actual and individualised experiences of migration, but rather describes the fact that our present-day societies and lives are fundamentally shaped by migration and various intersecting forms of mobility. We thus need to rethink dominant binaries and paradigms – such as the opposition between a sedentary lifestyle that is constructed as the norm and migrant mobilities which are being framed as the exception – in favour of "the dialectic of belonging and unbelonging, the split subjectivities" (Bromley 36) that shape today's societies. It is therefore necessary to establish migration as a "perspective" rather than as the "subject" of artistic production and academic research, as Regina Röhmhild notes (Röhmhild 73), meaning that issues of diversification, mobility, multilingualism, plural attachments, transculturalism and such like should be studied as phenomena that affect all strata of society and not only those segments that are labelled as "migrant".

Salzmänn's politics and poetics of non-belonging, as they have been outlined in this article, can be seen as part of this larger "postmigrant" trajectory, insofar as they question binarisms and notions of stable belonging in favour of multiple and shifting attachments. While the

label “postmigrant” has so far largely been reserved for German Turkish cultural production, Salzmänn’s oeuvre raises the question of whether, echoing the “postmigrant” turn in German Turkish theatre, there also is a push towards postmigrantism in the realm of German Jewish writing. In her recent book *The Translated Jew*, Leslie Morris suggests a fundamental deterritorialisation of what we understand as German-Jewish writing and culture, which never comfortably belong anywhere but sit “outside the margins” and in between cultural, national and linguistic borders. Reading German-Jewish literature as a form of “postmigrant” writing, that is “inherently multilingual, transnational, always in a state of becoming” (Morris 11), would enable us to bring out the constitutive transnationalism, transculturalism and translingualism of much contemporary Jewish writing, while at the same time diversifying our understanding of contemporary German-Jewish positions. This would also encourage more intersectional, multidirectional approaches to issues of belonging, identity and migration in contemporary literature. Experiences of Jewish settlement and diaspora, mobility and immobility, assimilation and dissimilation, inclusion and exclusion, acceptance and persecution would then act as a springboard for asking more fundamental questions about facile notions of belonging, while also imagining new forms of togetherness. This perspective would further imply an understanding of Jewishness that goes beyond victimhood and the “negative Symbiose” [negative Symbiosis] (Diner), bringing Jewish stories into contact with other experiences of persecution and displacement via “touching tales” (Adelson, “Touching Tales”). The works of younger German Jewish writers, such as Alina Bronsky, Max Czollek, Mirna Funk, Olga Grjasnowa, Kat Kaufmann and Katja Petrowskaja, come to mind here, but this lens might also allow us to productively re-read established writers featured in this volume, such as Barbara Honigmann or Eva Menasse.

While Salzmänn’s text thus enables us to re-read Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas and German-Jewish writing in light of recent debates about postmigration, the recourse to Butler’s thoughts on the ec-static self arguably tightens our grasp of the political and transformative potential of “minor literatures” and being “minor”. If we read Butler’s writing as a plea to embrace ec-stasy and to think and live different forms of togetherness, this unavoidably points us to the future. This is so because the forms of being-with envisaged by Butler, Salzmänn as well as Deleuze and Guattari are yet-to-come, they are *in* the future. At the same time, however, they also require an openness to what might come and thus *to* the future – as Butler herself notes: “the future, especially the future with and for others, requires a certain openness and unknowingness; it implies becoming part of a process the outcome of which no one subject can surely predict” (*Undoing Gender* 39). Yet again, this links Salzmänn’s project to the larger postmigrant trajectory which Roger Bromley describes as “projected towards the future” (Bromley 39) in that it tries to think and bring about new forms of relationality and recognition. Salzmänn’s work thus also allows us to think Deleuze and Guattari’s writing further in the direction of recent discussions around “futurity” (Eshel; Adelson, “Futurity Now”). Refracted through the lenses of two queer Jewish authors, Salzmänn and Butler, Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking might itself to an extent be deterritorialised, allowing it to become a tool not only for analysing the present but for imagining the future. Apart from enabling new approaches to minority/minoritarian discourses in the German realm and beyond, this constellation more importantly invites a (re-)consideration of what its futures might be.

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