

## "FROM THE I TO THE WE": DESIRE AND BECOMING IN CARSON MCCULLERS' *THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING*

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### **Abstract**

Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* depicts the anxieties and issues of a tomboy approaching adulthood and her difficulty connecting properly with her peers. Frankie's seemingly peculiar behaviour and ambivalence regarding gender issues isolate her from her peers. However, her demeanour regarding identity and gender discover her underlining desire. Drawing on the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze regarding subjectivity, gender, and desire, this article argues that Frankie, through her positive desire, becomes a nomad who sets foot on new horizons of experience, and her hopes for the upcoming wedding is an example of such longing for adventure. It is also argued that while she is highly under the influence of affects, instead of striving to become a member of the wedding, Frankie yearns for novel encounters to *become* the wedding itself, and finally become reconciled to the world in its entirety.

**Keywords:** *The Member of the Wedding*, Gilles Deleuze, desire, affect, becoming

## Introduction

*The Member of the Wedding* is one of Carson McCullers' notable works of fiction. It is the story of a vivacious and energetic girl who also depicts the everyday concerns and struggles of other girls on the verge of adulthood. The story happens in a southern American town replete with prejudice, racial issues, and segregation, which "not only divides the races but divides the white southern mind" (Brinkmeyer, 2009, p. 2). As a result, there is an outstanding clash between the two races, holding different opinions and doomed to live together. Within this context, McCullers sets the story of Frankie Addams and her falling in love with the wedding of her brother Jarvis. Frankie is a twelve-year-old tomboy who tries with her heart and soul to become a group member. The fact that she is entering puberty, along with her innate masculine traits, which hinder her from creating proper relationships with her peers, all add up to her seemingly grotesque character. What we see in this novella and especially the things that happen at its end all bring to mind the loneliness and isolation of Frankie, Berenice, John Henry and the pessimistic hopelessness of reaching adulthood in a southern town. However, it includes rich and abundant clues pointing to hidden layers expressing positivity, continuity, and vitality..Accordingly, Frankie's life and countenance exemplify a site of vitality and a struggle to practice new and heterogeneous forms of life, while sometimes entrapped within the boundaries of the cultural structure.

Although many of McCullers' critics have mostly focused on the abnormal aspects of Frankie's demeanour and isolation, some still insist that her actions embody energy, optimism and movement. Westling (2005) assumes that Frankie is an "ambitious tomboy on the brink of puberty, baffled by incomprehensible changes in her life" (79). Discussing Frankie's ambitions and intentions, Westling (2005) asserts that Frankie "herself is a piece of unfinished music" (81), who hardly fits through the social requirements of a southern town. Hoogland (2016) also believes that McCullers' invention of Frankie is "an aesthetic creation, which functions as a space of energetic possibilities that underlies and generates radical arrangements of language and life" (114). Regarding the ambivalent intentions and anxieties that Frankie feels about her position in the world, through a Deleuzian analysis of the idea of Diagrams, Hoogland (2010) assumes that

"Whereas the hugeness of these feelings scares her, the line of light that takes her out of her (former) self also promises a range of novel possibilities for being" (122).

To many readers, the ending of *The Member of the Wedding* is reminiscent of the victory of social codes over the free practice of desire. However, others, including Gleeson-White, Adams, and Young, believe that Frankie's productivity is not hindered at the novella's end. Gleeson-White (2001) asserts that with the deterioration of Frankie's hopes at the end of the story, it still "offers some good" (36), meaning that "[a]lthough her grand dreams. . . may seem immediately thwarted, there are still hints of the imaginative little girl in the new Frances." Believing that Frankie's reaching of adulthood is no end for her, "Frankie will continue to emerge beyond the ending of [her] narratives" (Gleeson-White 2001, 37). Considering the queer aspects of the work, Adams (1999) believes that the ending displays Frankie as a site for new productions, without merely surrendering to social roles, in a way that "she may be able to transform her experiences of gender confusion into more productive energies, rather than repressing them in favor of a socially acceptable heterosexual femininity" (559). Through an examination of the elements of escape, Young (2014) states that instead of viewing the wedding as a goal, Frankie views the wedding as a means for "possibility and mobility" (87). Believing that Frankie's final friendship with Mary Littlejohn represents no confinement within the boundaries of femininity, Young (2014) assumes that "the ending of [*The Member of the Wedding*] emphasizes that Frankie is essentially a traveller, for whom the objective lies not so much in reaching one particular destination as in being *on the road*" (96).

Considering the above-mentioned critical literature, we will offer a new outlook toward the interpenetrating forces within the story of Frankie Addams, drawing on the vitalistic and positive philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. As Zamberlin (2006) notes, dealing with a literary work through a Deleuzian lookout requires one's dealing with "the operations of the text until one produces with and through them to drive them on. This kind of reading rather than interpreting involves listening to a text as one receives a song. Understanding or not is no longer an issue, concepts are like sounds, colours or intensities" (10). Hence, in this analysis we aim to make use of a number of Deleuzian main concepts, including becoming, desire, lines of flight, body without organs,

and desire, in order to explore the way Carson McCullers reveals to the reader such energetic and vivacious perspectives of life which tend to conquer the loneliness of life.

## Theoretical Framework

Deleuze's philosophy mostly focuses on things, substances, their energies, and their interactions. Holland (2013) believes that Deleuzian thought is highly influenced by Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche and Bergson, who once were considered peripheral philosophers. He assumes that the basis of Deleuze's ideas is an amalgam of philosophical concepts such as, "instinct (from Hume and Jung), *élan vital* (from Bergson) and will-to-power (from Nietzsche)" (5). Accordingly, Lechte (2008) categorizes Deleuze as a "vitalist-inspired" philosopher whose view of life is "active and changing, not static and eternal" (364), and whose thought, "radically horizontal, or rhizomatic, always intent on dismantling hierarchies" (379). In a sense, it is safe to assert that Deleuze considers life as a changing space that entails continuation and progress.

Central to Deleuzian philosophy is the concept of becoming. As Stagoll (2005) suggests, "becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms and tending towards no particular goal or end-state" (21). According to Colebrook (2002), Deleuze's argument regarding the notion of becoming has its roots in his objection that "[t]he problem with western thought is that it begins in *being* . . . it has tended to privilege man as the grounding being" (XX). Clearly, this view regards man as a privileged centre, represented with an identity and labelled as a subject and knower. However, Deleuze upholds a worldview that accentuates becoming, change and fluidity. In this way, one can feel the way a flower or an animal perceives the world, and in the same vein one can become a woman, a child, a black, an animal, etc. Holland (2013) stresses that becoming is a "[movement] away from the majority toward the minority, away from the oppressor and toward the oppressed" (107). This is in line with Deleuze's (1987a) statement that "all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings" (277). That is to say,, "[b]ecoming-woman is not imitating this entity or even transforming oneself into it" (275); instead, it is "emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a micro femininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman" (Deleuze 1987a, 275). In other words,

becoming a woman is a break from the fixed ideology about women, their history, and whatever suppresses their abilities. Accordingly, one can discuss other becomings including, becoming-animal, becoming-black, becoming-child, etc. to analyze the forces that clash and try to escape the pre-made mindsets within our societies.

Based on Deleuze's view of life as a collection of interacting forces, what becomes significant is the way these forces connect or disconnect. As Lorraine (2005) observes, Deleuze tends to "consider things not as substances, but as assemblages or multiplicities, focusing on things in terms of unfolding forces" (147). About Lorraine's discussion of Deleuze and his categorization of three kinds of lines which include "molar lines", "molecular lines" and "lines of flight," we get to see how we are interacting with these lines in our lives, how we affect them, and how we are affected by them. She explicates that the molar lines create "a binary, arborescent system of segments" while the molecular lines are "more fluid although still segmentary," and finally, the line of flight "ruptures the other two lines" (Lorraine 2005, 145). Here, what becomes essential is the matter of experience, which is the result of the clash between these lines. Robert Hurley (1988), in his preface to Deleuze's *Spinoza*, posits that "the environment is not just a reservoir of information whose circuits await mapping, but also a field of forces whose actions await experiencing" (II). This indicates that by following molar lines, the means for creativity are blocked and it is through experiencing and crashing false territories that flight lines are created.

Considering the concept of becoming woman and Deleuze's (1987a) insistence that even "the woman as a molar entity *has to become woman*" (275), we come to question the very long history of oppression of women which have obstructed their potential to embody their creativity and productivity. One of the characteristics women stand out and are often denigrated for is their chattering and gossip, which demonstrates them as sites of energy and intensity. However, within the view-point of the signifying and patriarchal systems, feminine small talk is considered as taboo or petty. Sotirin (2005) contends that "small talk is a threshold, a becoming-woman that articulates the singularities of mundane events and asserts the immanence of everyday life", which means that they experience these traits innately and create "wild lines of resonance" (105) to become a woman. From this vantage, women and their feminine characteristics should be

considered sites of energy that they pass to one another through secrets, innuendos, wishes and betrayals.

As for the relations of connection and disconnection between the three lines, another subject to consider is the concept of "affect," which is essential within Deleuzian philosophy. As Grattan (2019) contends, "Deleuze is perhaps the philosopher most associated with and responsible for the contemporary interest in affect" (334). Based on what Deleuze (1987b) states, "[e]verything is simply an encounter in the universe," in which bodies are "[defined] by what they can do, by the effects of which they are capable- in passion as well as in action" (60). Accordingly, Colman (2005) defines affect as the result of "change, or variation that occurs when bodies collide or come into contact" (11). Based on this, whatever we do in the world comprises of affects, which result from the encounter of bodies with one another. Deleuze's (1987a) statement that "affects are becomings" proves that within the realm of effect resides a production and novelty, which should be considered in our literary work analysis. Since bodies have a language specific to themselves, it is their affects that should be examined, in order to perceive their collision and motivations. A book or a movie is not simply a series of statements or recordings but a site of affects that reside and are worth paying attention to.

Another concept worth mentioning related to affect is the concept of "desire," which takes a radically new meaning within the Deleuzian frame. Deleuze's (1987b) discussion of desire has been built upon psychoanalysis, by which (in his opinion) we "will be taught about 'Lack', 'Culture' and 'Law'" (77). Here, Deleuze objects that psychoanalysis's interpretation is not a proper solution: "And when we move from interpretation to significance, from the search for the signified to the great discovery of the signifier, the situation does not seem to have changed much" (77). He also maintains that "[t]he unconscious is a substance to be manufactured, to get flowing a social and political space to be conquered" (Deleuze 1987b, 78). This means that it is not the unconscious that shapes our behaviours and experiences. Instead, as opposed to what Freud suggests, our experiences and behaviours shape our unconscious.

Along with this statement, we get that the unconscious is quite malleable, and it is the product of our desires. Deleuze (1987a) also urges us "to produce the unconscious and with it new

statements, different desires" (18). Thus, this view of desire is quite productive and positive, and instead of being constrained to any pre-given system, it praises progress, experience, vitality, and the creation of the new. It is the desire which in fact opens the way for bodies to collide and interact to produce new lines

Regarding Deleuze's promotion of fluidity, the issue of sexuality is no exception. Colebrook (2002) asserts that within Deleuzian philosophy, "one produces one's sexuality through desire" (XV). This means that it is through desire that one specifies their unstable sexuality. Thus, one can turn from one sexuality toward another, or as Deleuze (1987a) states, they can occupy the "between" position so that they can choose their sexuality regardless of the norms and laws that limit us. (19) They can also become a mixture of many sexes, as Deleuze explains: "For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes" (1987a, 213). This also indicates that one's personality cannot be limited to one specific norm. It is the norm which puts us in the category of subjects or persons. According to Colebrook (2002), "by the time we have come to think in terms of 'persons,' desire has already been repressed" (103). Therefore, we understand that it is only through creation of lines of flight that one can practice new forms of fluid desire for a free and open sexuality to be practiced.

From a Deleuzian perspective, a character on the road to becoming, while experiencing a free fluidity of desire and identity regardless of the binding norms, is called a "body without organs." According to Deleuze (1987a), "[a] body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs;" instead, it is "the body opposed less to organs as such than to the organization of the organs insofar as it composes an organism" (30). It is inferred that a body without organs is a body, which contains organism and organs, but it never surrenders to codes, which label this body and its traits as if it were belonging to an organization. It also should be considered that the process of a body without organs is not entirely inaccessible to the signifying systems. As Message (2005) puts it, "BwO is a process that is directed toward a course of continual becoming, it cannot break away entirely from the system that it desires to escape from" (33). Accordingly, we understand that a body without organs is a process that tries to break with the system that has immured it, but at times it has to return to its previous condition.

## Argument

A girl of twelve years old, Frankie Addams has some characteristics of both childhood and adulthood. In parts one, two, and three, she calls herself Frankie, F. Jasmine, and Frances, respectively. All of these changes prove her struggling with maturity and entering adolescence. Comparing two near-to-pubescent female characters in McCullers's fiction, Bloom (2009) maintains that "Frankie is a more complex and evocative version of Mick Kelly [in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*]" (8). As opposed to the latter, which only occasionally deals with a female character, *the Member of the Wedding* directly puts forth the struggles and desires of a girl who has been left out from her peers due to her masculine countenance, and this adds more to her anxieties in the path of life. Now, within this process, what is of significance is the way McCullers creates a female character with such deep feelings, dreams, and visions. The story begins with Frankie's insurmountable happiness due to her brother's upcoming marriage which gives her a feeling that this will terminate her being "an enjoined person who hung around in doorways" (McCullers 1946, 3). From here on, Frankie, who despises staying at home, soothes her anxiety by believing that she will join in with the bride and groom and never come back again, and this is the outset of her entering a new phase of life, which inspires her hopes and ambition.

Moreover, Frankie's characterization reveals itself as an arid soil for the manifestation of desire from the Deleuzian perspective. Deleuze (1987b) claims: "Do you realize how simple a desire is? Sleeping is a desire. Walking is a desire. Listening to music, or making music, or writing, are desires" (95). Westling (2005) believes that "all of the specific sources of [Frankie's] anxiety turn out to be sexual" (81). However, considering the character through Deleuze's definition of desire, one witnesses that desire informs *all* of Frankie's movements and actions. In this sense, desire becomes the source for her becoming new and breaking with her previous situation to be more active. As we see in the story, by the time Frankie is informed of the approaching marriage, she is loaded "with a feeling she could not name". (McCullers 1946, 4) This feeling itself is the result of her desire to change and become something else, which is evident when she complains: "I wish I was somebody else except me" (7). Frankie has a desire to be connected to others. Still, due to her tomboy attributes and her facetiousness, she is left out from her peer gatherings, and



this leads to her resorting to other sources in order to maintain her experimentation with desire. Since Frankie continues her desire to move to higher levels, she feels she must improve herself before the wedding. This improvement requires her to identify with the image that the social codes inscribe. Therefore, the signifying system's voice is heard through Berenice's mouth, who urges Frankie: "You ought to fix yourself up nice in your dresses. And speak sweetly and act sly" (McCullers 1946, 83). The significant point is that instead of buying a pink wedding dress, Frankie buys an orange one, which in Berenice's eyes are pretty unconventional. Gleeson-White (2012) states that this behaviour of Frankie is "a mockery of what woman should be and [']naturally['] is, that is, feminine" (90). Accordingly, Frankie follows her line of desire, even if she lives in a context that limits her to pre-existing feminine codes.

Another point regarding Frankie's desire is related to her bodily desire, which is typical of a girl approaching puberty. As we see in part one, Frankie and John Henry, apart from their apparent discords, express a specific affiliation toward one another. The narrator informs us that Frankie has little John with herself in the bed for a night. The description follows: "his chest white and naked, and one foot hanging from the edge of the bed. Carefully, she put her hand on his stomach and moved closer; it felt like a little clock was ticking inside him and he smelled of sweat and Sweet Serenade. He smelled like a sour little rose. Frankie leaned down and licked him behind the ear." (McCullers 1946, 15) Presumably, this gives us the tidings of Frankie's deviation in terms of psychological or social behaviour under the influence of familial or social oppressions. But the fact is, by probing John Henry's body, Frankie enters a new realm, which is the realm of experience. The attraction that Frankie feels toward little John is an example of what Colebrook (2002) calls "pre-personal" desire (104). This means that Frankie is not desiring John the same way a person desires another for sensual pleasure. Instead, she is desiring a new continuation and production, and as Colebrook (2002) maintains, this desire is "alien to structure, organization and extended systems" (104). Only in this way does desire move and shatter the already-established systems that tend to oppress it.

Based on Deleuze's (1987a) philosophy, Frankie shapes her way of life and grows her unconscious through desire and experience: "The issue is to produce the unconscious, and with it new statements, different desires" (18). This proves that Frankie's attempt to be included

throughout the story indicates her wish to grow and find new experiences. Another example is her encounter with the red-headed soldier at the Blue Moon café. She is so enamored of the soldiers because "they came to town on holidays and went around in glad, loud gangs together, or walked the sidewalks with grown girls" (McCullers 1946, 57). By the time Frankie and the soldier go to the café, she feels dignified walking with a soldier who represents adolescence, maturity, and experience. Even if the ways and means she is pursuing her desire are similar to those offered by the norms, her pursuit of desire in the Deleuzian sense demonstrates her wish to perceive and experience the world.

Based on the arguments above, Frankie is located within the process of a "body without organs," which Deleuze (1987a) assumes to be "a body populated by multiplicities" (30). This body cannot be measured by any means and is constantly jumping from one action to another and from one mindset to another to deterritorialize any structure. The same is precisely applicable to Frankie. Actually, she practices becoming and desire in the premises of a cultural structure, from which she intentionally escapes and to which she necessarily returns. She is fond of grown people dating and at the same time considers gossiping about sexual affairs as "nasty lies" (McCullers 1946, 12); she goes out with the soldier and at the same time hits him in the head with a pitcher; she is obsessive about her unusual height growth and at the same time has got a filthy elbow. Frankie has been enclosed within a system that she cannot thoroughly escape. Hence, all she does is come and go and leave behind her lines of flight and imperceptibility.

One of the most critical issues regarding Frankie's countenance is her masculine traits which make her unfathomable. However, besides her physical characteristics, she also has some feminine obsessions and sensitivity. It is plain that Frankie is a tomboy whose motivations and tendencies are far beyond matters of gender and sexuality. Her life struggles indicate that her actions cannot be easily categorized within groupings of masculine or feminine. That is why Westling (2005) calls her "a piece of unfinished music" (81). She changes her name to F. Jasmine to become a new person, and we witness this very change in the story. When her hopes for escape increase, she feels that a feminine name such as F. Jasmine suits her better. The main problem Frankie faces in changing her name is the overtones attached to the name itself as a symbolic product of the linguistic system, which in Halberstam's (1998) words, is "a structure

that fixes people and things in place artificially but securely" (7). Captured within this very constraining structure, Frankie desires to receive a new identity by changing her name; nevertheless, she finds an obstacle to her desire when Berenice urges her that "[n]aturally it is against the law" (17) to change her name since "[t]hings accumulate around your name" (McCullers 1946, 113). This is precisely what Colebrook (2002) argues regarding the representation of language in Deleuzian philosophy: "We tend to think that systems of signs or representation produce our world as meaningful or socially code" (XXXI). He maintains that Deleuze's view against this background of representation is that "there are nevertheless essential powers or forces which make any act of thought or representation possible. (Colebrook XXXII) Therefore, it is found that Frankie has been entangled within a system that constrains her movement of positive desire; however, in response to Berenice's statement about the law, Frankie firmly insists: "Well, I don't care." (McCullers 1946, 18)

Frankie's countenance, which entails becoming while escaping a signifying system, displays abundant novelty. Colebrook (2002) suggests that "one produces one's sexuality through desire" (XV). Correspondingly, Frankie has chosen her gender based on the context she lives in and the desires she follows. It is in this way that she produces an unfinished sexuality, which is regarded as mean and abnormal in her milieu. As the narrator mentions, in some of their gatherings, Frankie, Berenice, and John Henry discuss some of their wishes, which are in line with Deleuzian fluidity of gender. Apart from Berenice's wishes, which are racial and political, Frankie's and John's remarks are noticeable. Frankie wishes she could change the world in a way "people could instantly change back and forth from boys to girls, whichever way they felt like and wanted" (McCullers 1946, 97). Little John also believes that "people ought to be half boy and half girl" (McCullers 1946, 98). Deleuze's (1987a) opinion regarding sexuality is that "the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes" (213). Regarding the above statements, it is understood that the reason Frankie is terrified by the images of growth and sex is that *she considers these images as blocks against becoming*. This fact is also confirmed by Phillips (2005): "maturity, truth, knowledge [blocks of becoming]—is a mystery to her" (66).

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One of Frankie's characteristics demonstrating her abundance of energy and liveliness is her excessive feminine chattering and gossip. As commonly known, gossip and chatter are labels mainly attributed to feminine behaviour and are evaluated as petty, nosy, and feminized. Another matter that brings to mind feminine manners is their extravagant attention to mundane details, often taken as mean and narrow-minded in common view. As for Frankie, as soon as she hears of the imminent wedding, a new energy enters her body, and she is permeated with an unmanageable urge that she should inform everybody of the event. Thus, discussing the wedding with a worker, pedestrians, the soldier, and the café owner, each time she rambles on to strike up a conversation: "She told her plans in a way that made them sound completely settled, and not in the least open to question . . . [t]he thrill of speaking certain words—Jarvis and Janice, wedding and Winter Hill— was such that F. Jasmine when she had finished, wanted to start all over again." (McCullers 1946, 59) This is a feminine trait in Frankie, which shows the extent of her strong desire and hope, while it distances her from any social or sexual oppressions. In other words, Frankie attempts to extend her desire toward wider horizons through her small talk. It is through her feminine cunning and secrecy that she plans to go to new places after the wedding. All these trivial and petty feminine actions are themselves of significance in Deleuze's (1987a) words: "You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off" (292). This indicates that through these mundane details, Frankie paves her way for taking flight from the majority and common sense and finally achieving becoming a woman. Then she becomes a woman exactly in the sense that Deleuze's philosophy implies in Sotirin's (2005) words: "having secrets, telling secrets, keeping secrets, but mostly passing secrets along" (106).

Gleeson-White (2001) postulates that "[t]he fact that the girls are on the threshold and so unfixed means that they promise new configurations of human being in terms of becoming, and so resist the strictures of limits" (111). This provides us with the idea that, despite being a vivacious tomboy, Frankie is a girl, whose identity is neither masculine nor feminine; further, she is located on the threshold between childhood and adulthood. As Deleuze (1987a) suggests: "girls do not belong to an age, group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes; they produce *n* molecular sexes on the line of flight concerning the dualism

machines they cross right through" (277). The same applies to Frankie who experiences different sexes within different ages and subverts all the pre-made prejudgments about her age by becoming imperceptible. In this way, she destroys the molar lines, which represent girlhood and womanhood and becomes a molecular character who tries to create novelty.

Finally, regarding the story and the character of Frankie, the concept of affect is also worth paying attention to since it is quite visible throughout her interactions. To put it simply, affect is the capacity that brings bodies together. McCullers (1981) herself makes use of the word love instead of affect to delineate this very capacity: "Love is the bridge that leads from the I sense to the We, and there is a paradox about personal love. Love of another individual opens a new relation between the personality and the world" (260). This statement indicates that McCullers herself views life as consisting of elements that move beyond matters of tragedy. With this view, one reaches a positive and productive status through the power of love, and this productivity bears evidence that McCullers' fiction burgeons hope and optimism by including tragic elements. As Deleuze (1987b) puts it: "Everything is simply an encounter in the universe" (60). This proves that Frankie, on the verge of puberty and biological changes, is highly influenced by her encounter with the world. The collision of Frankie and the body of the wedding leads to the creation of limitless affects, which direct her life in a way that produces new becomings. Now, the concepts of time and place become essential here. Millar (2009) views affect as "an impersonal force into which the subject is drawn as a necessary result of its belonging to the world, then the individual ceases to resemble a subject and is revealed as more of a conduit in a broader process of emergence and change" (95-96). It is in this sense that, as a result of being under the strong influence of affects brought upon by the wedding, Frankie experiences the body of the wedding itself: "Because of the wedding, these distant lands, the world, seemed altogether possible and near: as close to Winter Hill as Winter Hill was to the town. It was the actual present" (McCullers 1946, 72). By this time, in Hoogland's (2016) words, "Frankie herself ceases to be a subject to become an event" (119). Hence, she can see through the wedding and dream about it so that she can imagine new possibilities that the wedding breeds, which is the true becoming in the Deleuzian sense. The wedding is, therefore, a source of connections for her, and this connection is the sense of belonging to the world, which Frankie has desired for long:

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"Because of the wedding, F. Jasmine felt connected with all she saw... the world seemed no longer separate from herself and when all at once she felt included" (McCullers 1946, 49).

Another example which proves Frankie as being under the influence of effects can be traced in her notable statement about the bride and the groom: "a thought and explanation suddenly came to her, so that she knew and almost said aloud: *They are the we of me*" (McCullers 1946, 42). Again, this manifests the very moment in which she stops being Frankie and experiences a "becoming-wedding," which in Hoogland's (2016) view is "a specific reality, a creative involution, which involves her not as a distinct subject, but as a creature of affect" (118). This moment involves Frankie "who was an I person who had to walk around and do things by herself" (McCullers 1946, 42) to stop being I and become a We, which entails her connection with the couple, as well as the whole world. Because Frankie is a body without organs, through her production of desires and affects, she can engender new relationships between herself and the society she lives in, by being included in various multiplicities on one occasion and deterritorializing herself in a different multiplicity on another.

Due to her being affected by the upcoming wedding, Frankie's hopes for changing her place begin to escalate. From the moment she hears of the wedding, she counts back the seconds to escape the town toward Winter Hill and then to other unknown places: "I wish I was going somewhere for good" (McCullers 1946, 7). This statement shows that Frankie is a nomadic character for whom being kept in a given territory is impossible. She is a practitioner of both physical nomadism and nomadic thought:

As she walked along, it seemed as though the ghost of the old Frankie, dirty and hungry-eyed, trudged silently along not far from her, and the thought of the future, after the wedding, was constant as the very sky. That day alone seemed equally important as both the long past and the bright future – as a hinge is important to a swinging door. And since it was the day when past and future mingled, F. Jasmine did not wonder that it was strange and long. So these were the main reasons why F. Jasmine felt, in an unwonted way, that this was a morning different from all mornings she had ever known. And of all

these facts and feelings the strongest of all was the need to be known for her true self and recognized. (McCullers, 64)

It is at this moment that Frankie is most distant from her old, fixed identity; it is the moment when the boundaries of the previous “self” are trespassed in a nomadic manner, that is to say, in an act of “deterritorialization” which nullifies all fixity and constancy. The prospect of the wedding opens a new horizon onto which Frankie can project a new subjectivity and a new sense of “self-hood” previously unknown to her. In Deleuzian terminology, the wedding provides Frankie with a possibility of becoming which, through a reterritorialization of the symbolic map, fosters a new and anti-being nomadic subjectivity. That is the reason behind Frankie’s appreciation of this specific moment as essentially different than all her previous life, since it promises her a way towards a realization and recognition of “her true self”. What makes this moment absolutely important is the way it functions “as a hinge” in making becoming possible. The wedding creates a fluid line of subjectivity for Frankie against the background of a constant, never-changing sky.

Frankie wants to flee the South to find more renewals elsewhere, and it is plain that she has to change her identity and even gender as she moves on. Looking at her from a Deleuzian point of view, we find that Frankie has no certain future due to her constant nomadism. As a creature under the influence of affects, she only moves from one territory to another. Because with every deterritorialization comes a reterritorialization, Frankie creates lines of flight and escape. Although Young (2014) asserts that “the possibility of travel brings with it a sense of membership” (89), it is claimed here that, as it appears, Frankie’s search for membership is related to experimentation with new horizons. Thus, she enters new territories through her nomadic practices and escapes them constantly. At the end of the novella, when her hopes for leaving the town with the bride and the groom are dashed, she chooses physical escape. She properly paves the way for it: “The wedding had not included her, but she would still go into the world. Where she was going she did not know; however, she was leaving town that night” (McCullers 1946, 149). This proves that Frankie will continue her nomadic thought and physical movement to create new relations and possibilities while resisting the pre-made, established models produced by the centred systems.

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As mentioned above, Frankie lives in a community full of gender biases and segregation. These issues put barricades within the road of free thought, but she creates molecular lines in the middle of these obstacles. As we see, she cannot create absolute lines of flight that embody absolute deterritorializations, but she has succeeded in moving indiscernibly. In this way, we assert that Frankie becomes *itself*; her becomings, which continue for eternity, range from becoming a child to becoming a girl to becoming a woman and becoming the whole world. She becomes all these permutations of becoming since she tears down all the prejudgments and her past and future. Also, this proves McCullers's insight, whose Frankie in Adams' (1999) words, tends to "inhabit a community rooted in heterogeneity rather than sameness, desire rather than prescription" (576). For McCullers' Frankie, clubs do not represent affinity, adolescence does not represent growth, soldiers do not represent virility, and weddings do not represent belonging. Instead, she yearns to become everything and sooner or later, she leaves her traces "all over the whole world, and it would be as though she were a close kin to all of these people" (McCullers 1946, 23). Frankie Addams' struggles by no means indicate her longing to belong to the world, for instead of being merely a member of it, she betrays all memberships and becomes kin of the whole world.

## Conclusion

*The Member of the Wedding* is one of Carson McCullers' significant works, and an example of Southern fiction. Due to segregation laws, which were common in the South, people's worldviews toward race and politics are divided. On the surface, the story focuses on the isolation and hopelessness of its characters, but deep down, we find that McCullers has implied clues that promote hope, movement and vitality. Dealing with the operations of the text through the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, we find that Frankie's actions exemplify her desire to become new, or at least something other than her previous status. Thus, with the news of her brother's impending wedding, she goes to great length to create connections with people and the world. As a practitioner of nomadic and positive desire, Frankie attempts to create new lines of flight which are considered abnormal in her society. Her very ambivalent traits prove that she tends to experiment with new forms of desire which are positive and constructive. Frankie's desire to create connections with the body of the wedding results in the creation of infinite affects which



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lead to the production of infinite becomings. Through her attempt for feeling the new experience of the wedding, Frankie finds it as a possibility for further movement and hope, and this helps her *become* an event and finally *become the wedding itself*, which is a pretext on her way to be in a close relationship with the world. Therefore, this leads to Frankie setting foot on the road of becoming and eventually creating connections with the whole world.

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