Life in a Foreign Tongue: Mapping Nomadic Becoming in the Transatlantic Poetry of Liliane Welch

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1. Introduction

"It is not down in any map; true places never are" (Melville 45)

Shortly into Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, the narrator, Ishmael, makes the above remark. Today a well-known quote in the literary world, the passage refers to Kokovoko, the fictional island that is home to the character of Queequeg. The quote talks about an island in the South Pacific Ocean, the home of a primitive tribe—mystical, far away, and fictional. That is, however, not why Melville's speaker here questions the 'truth' about the place—he is, after all, part of the fictional universe of *Moby Dick*, and to him, Kokovoko is real. Instead, the quote associates the truth of a physical place with the connections that a person has to it. Even if Kokovoko is not locatable on a globe or a map, the place is real to Queequeg, who holds memories in, and of, Kokovoko from before he "sought a passage to Christian lands" and went on a journey to see the world (45).

The cited passage associates the 'truth' of a physical place with the past experiences a subject may have had in that place. This sense of finding truth in space reflects the groundedness of people in locations to which they feel connected, be it directly or indirectly. In the case of Queequeg, who left his island to discover the world, this 'truth of location' has another dimension. As a stowaway, a migrant, and a traveller, he has a political role cast upon him in every place he moves through after Kokovoko. As he enters the negotiation with spatiality, his subjecthood is altered through movement in space, while the space is equally transformed by his arrival, and reaffirms his role as a migrant. In this way, one can say that the pilgrim himself becomes a geopolitical location, highlighting questions of influence and

power over space and territory (Dodds 4). The quote from *Moby Dick* thus points towards the constitutive relationship between subjecthood and spatiality.

The idea that humans are significantly impacted by their movement through space holds up not just in literature, but in real life as well. This is demonstrated, among other things, in the categories that humans may be classified by: citizens, residents, immigrants, emigrants, refugees, nomads, tourists, and the list goes on. Depending on a subject's role within a nation-state, their social, political, and cultural powers may be impacted. This is seen in the fact that non-national residents do not have the right to vote in many countries, for instance, although they significantly affect the inner functioning of the nation. In this way, the concept of the nation-state is problematised, and in need of investigation. How does the nation imprint on a migrant? How does the migrant interact with, and create "true" space? And, in this thesis, more specifically, how does literature give authors a way of negotiating this interaction between the migrant and space?

As I shall demonstrate in the following chapter, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and its literature are paradigmatically complex cases of migration and transculturality. The small country, which lies snugly between Germany, France, and Belgium, counts an immigrant rate of about 50% of the population. Within the country, nations and cultures meet, intermingle, and interact on a daily basis—putting all Luxembourgish residents in an inevitable experience with transculturality, continuously crossing physical and metaphorical boundaries. To investigate this relation between space and subjectivity further, this thesis project will be looking at the transatlantic poetry of the Luxembourgish-Canadian author Liliane Welch, published between the years 1979 and 2010. Although her writing reaffirms national and cultural boundaries, it creates an undeniable tension between them, highlighting the nomadic subjectivity of the Luxembourgish writer. The latter is ever-influenced by the transcultural

nature of Luxembourg as a country, as well as her continuous state of 'becoming' as a pilgrim writer.

In the analysis of my cultural object, I shall rely most notably on three distinct yet intersecting theories, namely Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity theory, Stuart Hall's understanding of cultural being and becoming, and the insights on how power and materiality structure movement in the New Mobilities Paradigm. I shall use these perspectives to gain a nuanced understanding of how the subject, through her movement through space, finds herself in a continuous state of becoming. The research question asked is: "How does Liliane Welch's lived experience demonstrate that writers on the move between places and languages create new nomadic subjectivities?" In this endeavour, two major subquestions will be analysed. The first is: "What is Luxembourgish literature, and how is Liliane Welch's writing a paradigmatic example of it?" and the second one is: "How can digital mapping be useful to trace instances of nomadic subjectivity, while acknowledging the tension between the national and the transnational?"

I use Liliane Welch's experience as an example of Luxembourgish literature to investigate the larger question about the rootedness of the nomadic poet within spatiality—how is her subjectivity affected by the continuous movement? How do transnational and transcultural experiences define her? In this endeavour, this thesis is relevant not just academically to the study of migration literature and *Luxemburgensia*, but also to me personally, since it investigates the literature of my home country, which remains largely understudied in the international scope of scholarly research. The 'tailor-made' theoretical framework of this research, informed most notably by Stuart Hall, Rosi Braidotti and Mimi Sheller and John Urry, allows me to situate Liliane Welch's poetry in a transnational locality that leads me to reflect on how precisely her experience as a

repeat-migrant shapes her subjectivity. The combined theories will be used to analyse the unique position of the migrant poet, whose authorship is defined by the existence as an "imaginative writer who, by choice or by life circumstances, experience[s] cultural dislocation, live[s] transnational experiences, cultivate[s] bilingual/plurilingual proficiency, physically immerse[s] themselves in multiple cultures/geographies/territories, expose[s] themselves to diversity and nurture[s] plural, flexible identities" (Dagnino 1). The focus lies not on the origin of the migrant, but rather on the permanent interaction process between a subject with itself, the nation, and culture. In this way, this thesis contributes to the growing field of migration literature and tests a framework that is beneficial in tracing the unromanticised rootedness of subjectivity in space.

To answer the questions raised in this thesis, and to investigate the relationship between space and the subject, this thesis develops a method based on what Franco Moretti has coined as "distant reading"—the use of quantitative methods to analyse patterns and trends within literature. More specifically, I shall use digital humanities tools to actualise Rosi Braidotti's idea of a "cartographic method" for the humanities (*Nomadic Theory* 4), which traces how people interact with dominant cultures, institutions, others, and their selves. This thesis is therewith a contribution to the development and analysis of methods used in literary studies, while simultaneously highlighting their interdisciplinary nature. By employing digital cartography to trace the nomadic subject as it flows between subjectivities, I also put forth a grid that may be used in further studies to trace the changing conceptions of subjectivities in becoming, in the works of other authors, genres, or epochs.

These kinds of geospatial humanities are a significant branch of digital humanities, constituting "the practice of applying Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and other quantitative technologies to the study of the representation of spatiality in texts" (El Khatib

and Schaeben 2). Using the quantitative data gained from this emerging method, I am able to analyse Welch's movement as shaping and enabling her subjectivities, and thereby illustrate how writers on the move between places create new subjectivities as they enter into dialogue with different spaces. In this thesis, distant reading and close reading are not opposing methods, but rather enhance each other and exist in a complementary relationship with one another. Combining the two methods provides me with new perspectives that go beyond the scope of simple close reading. Therefore, a thematic close reading solidifies my claims in this thesis, while simultaneously suggesting that Liliane Welch's nomadic nature can be detected otherwise. We shall see, in the close reading, that her self is not only impacted by the places she interacts with, which are traced in the maps by the place names she mentions throughout her poems, but also by specific themes that come up repeatedly in her poetry, namely multilingualism, writing, and heritage. These themes, I argue, confine Welch to a continuous cycle of *becoming* that is located in the cracks of spatiality, thus representing her nomadic wandering as both literally and metaphorically grounded in the spatial realm.

In the following chapters, I shall first lay out the foundation on which I build my reading of Liliane Welch's literary work: the historical, theoretical, and methodological frameworks. In Chapter 2, I will lay the very foundation of this thesis by introducing the most critical debates in Luxembourgish literature. While inherently ascribed to the nationalist conception of the Luxembourgish nation-state, I will argue that Luxembourgish literature, in its essence, is always transnational. It is here that I begin to develop my own definition of Luxembourgish literature as marked by the existing, irreconcilable tension between the national and the transnational, which is one of the central tenets of this thesis. An author who illustrates this claim, as I argue in this thesis, is Liliane Welch. Both in her biographical history and the literature that embodies it, the latter is characteristically transnational and

transcultural. In the second part of the second chapter, I shall introduce this little-known Luxembourgish-Canadian author, by presenting her life's history as well as her literary work.

In chapter three, I shall introduce three distinct theories, all of which are utilised to hand-craft my thesis's theoretical framework. The three theories, which build upon each other and work together in this thesis, are the New Mobilities Paradigm, transculturalism and transnationalism as informed by Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity in the diaspora, and nomadic theory. The New Mobilities Paradigm lies at the base of this study which, at its very essence, is preoccupied with mobility and movement. I will argue that a direct consequence of modern-day globalisation is the deconstruction of the rigid conceptions of the national and the cultural, which enter into a discourse with the *trans*national and the *trans*cultural within the subject on the move. Contrary to how this may sound, I shall argue in this section, that the national and the transnational, as well as the cultural and the transcultural, are not directly opposed to one another but rather are part of the same subjectivity negotiation dynamic. Overall, I will demonstrate that these concepts are relevant to the discussion of Liliane Welch's poetry and, more generally, to the definition of Luxembourgish literature. Finally, I will introduce Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadic subjectivities—an innovative theory that offers a post-structuralist approach to understanding subjectivity and identity. By proposing that identity is not fixed but rather constantly in a state of becoming, Braidotti demonstrates how the nomadic subject is in constant exchange with its surrounding social and cultural contexts.

To complete this text-to-map project, I have made use of Digital Humanities tools, which I shall introduce to the reader in Chapter 4. Here, I will lay out the methods of this thesis, beginning with the basics of Carto, the mapping tool used to construct the maps on which my subsequent argumentation is based. I argue here that Digital Humanities tools can

serve us not just to analyse specific works, but that they can also be used to create patterns or models that may be used as methods to be applied to other works. However, although geospatial humanities demonstrate that "the process of research prototyping is in itself a form of knowledge production" (El Khatib and Schaeben 1), I will complete my collected quantitative data with a close reading of Liliane Welch's poetry. In the second place, therefore, this chapter also lays out an introduction to the close-reading methods used in gathering the qualitative data.

Chapter 5 begins the analysis of Liliane Welch's literary production by drawing five conclusions from the digital maps created using her poems. Five different results can be read from the Digital Humanities tools. Firstly, Liliane Welch predominantly uses place names as topical markers, each place leaving impressions on the pilgrim poet. Secondly, the places in Welch's poetry frequently evoke specific personal memories within her, especially in Italy and Luxembourg. Thirdly, and by extension, Liliane Welch identifies with particular locations where memories are rooted, rather than nations as a whole. In the fourth place, we see that Welch moves freely and continuously between spaces, both mentally and physically—a practice that helps her consolidate what was then the "Old World" with the "New World." Lastly, the maps show us that the themes of nature and literature are the two themes that most prominently accompany Welch in her movement. In the discussion of these results, I shall tie them individually to the thesis question of this work.

Chapter 6 offers a more direct insight into Welch's poetry, by introducing some of her poems and offering a thematic close reading of them. Specifically, this chapter will focus on themes around nomadic subjectivity that are not invoked by the places that the quantitative data focused on. Instead, this section will present a thematic analysis of six poems, focusing namely on Welch's multilingualism, her writing, and her heritage. These three themes, I will

argue, respectively and jointly contribute to the multiple subjectivities of Welch, and demonstrate how, though certain identitary aspects are fixed in a state of being, the subject finds herself still in a state of continuous becoming, paradoxically sometimes due to the fixed attributes of her being.

Finally, the conclusion offers a conceptualisation of the results of my research, combining both sets of data that I have previously analysed with one another. In this context, I shall list my findings and revisit this thesis' main questions. More specifically, I shall argue that Liliane Welch's poetry demonstrates how combining Hall and Braidotti's theories can yield a productive analysis of the migratory subject as a becoming nomad. The combined ideas, when contextualised through the New Mobilities Paradigm, allow me to show that the migrant's experience, rather than being purely metaphorical, is a lived experience that is situated in space and time. In this context, I shall also demonstrate how the conclusions on Liliane Welch's poetry affect Luxembourgish literature more generally, and what we can learn about nomadic subjectivity from the approach of combining digital mapping with close reading techniques.

2. Background and Context

An academically understudied literature often consists of works produced by relatively unknown authors. Therefore, to introduce Luxembourgish literature more generally, I shall open this thesis with the contextualisation of my object of analysis, the corpus of Liliane Welch's poetry. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly introduce Luxembourgish literature and the most notable questions that arise from it, as well as Liliane Welch, one of the first and

most well-known Luxembourgish writers who, after emigrating to Canada, put pen to paper in English.

a. Luxembourg, its Language, and its Literature

Just like the country itself, measuring an overlooking 82 kilometres in length and 57 kilometres in width, the corpus of Luxembourgish literature is not vast. To many, it is no surprise that both in recreational reading and in literary scholarship, Luxembourgish literature tends to be overlooked or downright disregarded. Ever since the beginning of Luxembourgish authorship in 1829, when the very first work of literature in *Lëtzebuergesch* (Luxembourgish) was published, the country has largely remained an unmarked spot on the literary world map—despite the euphony of literary voices coming from it. So, what is it that, in a country as small as Luxembourg, which has three official languages, and a population that is half composed of immigrants, comes to define the written literature? Which characteristics, if any, do the literary works that are attributed to Luxembourg have in common?

In a pamphlet on the Luxembourgish language, the Press Service of the Luxembourgish Government tentatively puts a question mark behind the concept of Luxembourgish literature. The header of "Luxembourgish literature?" not only introduces a sub-topic of the pamphlet but evokes a much broader, and highly relevant question: Does Luxembourgish literature exist, and if so, what is it? Considering that Canadian author and editor, Edward Hartley Dewart, knew in the 19th century that "[a] national literature is an essential element in the formation of national character" (qtd. in Gerson 888)—I believe that it is indeed high time to address this question. In an attempt to do so, the Government pamphlet explains that, though many exist, Luxembourgish literature is not limited to works written in the Luxembourgish language. Instead, it claims, "various influences of other

languages can be witnessed in the literary landscape of the Grand Duchy" (Information and Press Service of the Government)—including, but not limited to, German, French and English, reflecting the rich linguistic make-up of Luxembourgish society.

For the sake of this thesis, let us consider national literature as any kind of literature that is contained within the borders of a nation-state. Generally speaking, in the case of American or French literature, for instance, these borders can be not just geographical but also linguistic or cultural. However, in Luxembourgish literature, none of these defining boundaries holds up. Instead, the National Library of Luxembourg classifies the polyphonic production that is characteristic of Luxembourgish literature under the collective term of *Luxemburgensia*. The government pamphlet elaborates that *Luxemburgensia* encompasses all literary works "written by Luxembourgish nationals, produced in Luxembourg or with Luxembourg as their subject, regardless of the language used" (11). Rather than only being bound to language, geography or culture, Luxembourgish literature is thus defined by its relation to Luxembourg. The Luxembourgish authors' lexicon takes this vague definition a step further, by including all authors in its encyclopaedia that, regardless of their citizenship or place of residence, have a direct effect on or for Luxembourgish literary life:

> Die interkulturelle Perspektivierung der Literatur in Luxemburg, wie sie anhand der zuvor erwähnten Beispiele deutlich wurde, bedingt, dass all jene Autoren in das Luxemburger Autorenlexikon aufgenommen wurden, »die unabhängig von der Staatsbürgerschaft in Luxemburg veröffentlicht oder auf das literarische Leben gewirkt haben« (Goetzinger and Conter 7).

Über Grenzen: Literaturen in Luxemburg (Across Borders: Literatures in Luxembourg), published in 2004, is a collection of essays that is generally regarded by

scholars as a suitable work of reference when it comes to discussing the characteristics of Luxembourgish literature. In many ways, it is a ground-breaking study in which different authors analyse works of different languages to distil key elements of Luxembourgish literature. In this endeavour, a few main characteristics could be defined. Indeed perceived as one of the most notable aspects of Luxembourg's literature is its multilingual markup, which creates a uniquely multicultural literary corpus. Since the beginning of the 19th century, authors have published texts in Luxembourgish, German and French—often even publishing various texts across multiple languages (Conter 119). Michel Rodange, the author of the *Renert* (1872), a verse epos said to be one of the most significant works from the beginning of Luxembourgish as a literary language, proves this thesis by using not just Luxembourgish but also German in his writing in different publications (Honnef-Becker 389), for example.

The reason for this multilingual and inherently transcultural writing is the proximity of Luxembourg to its neighbouring countries, as well as its small size. Embedded in the Romance traditions of neighbouring France, and affected by the Germanic influence from Germany, Luxembourg quickly saw the birth of a "Mischkultur"— a mixed culture (Conter 130). Although this perception of Luxembourgish culture as being mixed has changed over the years, as the country has developed and maintained a more autonomous culture, Luxembourgish literature is still viewed today as a "third," resulting from the intermingling of the Roman and Germanic literary traditions. Therefore, the idea of a "Mischkultur" had a longevity to it that can still be seen today (Conter 130)—and remains one of the literature's and the country's most striking defining features. Most notably, since the 1960s, Luxembourg has turned into an "intercultural microcosm" (Conter 124), in large part due to the internationalisation of Luxembourg City, which has since become the central siege of many European institutions, including the European Court of Justice and the European Investment

Bank. Since the 1960s, English, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish have become increasingly represented across the country, as well as in the literature of *Luxemburgensia*. This multilingualism hints towards a transculturality that is inherent not just to Luxembourgish society but also, and by extension, to its literature and its authors.

The corpus of *Luxemburgensia* includes works in many languages, published in various places across the globe. It represents a remarkable literary corpus and a unique starting point for literary analysis, making it even more surprising that writing categorised as "Luxembourgish literature" is so vastly understudied in academia. Though many works are written in German, French, and English—three languages which have extensive literary scholarship attributed to them, most Luxembourgish literature is not analysed as part of it. Writers Nikolaus Welter (1871-1951), who wrote in German, and Félix Thyes (1830-1855), who wrote in French, are both considered pioneers of Luxembourgish literature (Hausemer 3) within Luxembourg. In German and French literary studies, however, they are not given much attention at all. Instead, it is predominantly scholars from Luxembourg University who focus their research on the literature of their home country—and in doing so, they most notably focus on those works written in either of the three official languages of Luxembourg: Luxembourgish, German and French.

If we look at the numbers of the Luxembourgish author lexicon, a platform initiated by the Luxembourgish Centre of National Literature which introduces authors who have published at least one book in the corpus of *Luxemburgensia* since 1815, we see that this tendency has a reason. Out of the 1502 authors represented on the platform, 59% (890 authors) have written some or all of their work in German. Another 41% (621 authors) have published work in Luxembourgish, and 38% (579 authors) in French. These numbers illustrate not just the fact that most authors have a tendency to publish in either one of the

three official languages—but they also demonstrate how most of them feel comfortable publishing work in more languages than one. “This situation arises from the fact that a Luxembourger's mother tongue is usually not the language in which they have received a formal literary education and in which, as far as writing conventions and literary traditions go, they feel most at ease,” explains Sandra Schmit in her essay “Literature From Luxembourg in English”.

Literature written in English, though increasingly published in Luxembourg over the past century by authors such as Hugo Gernsback (1884-1967), Liliane Welch (1937-2010), and Pierre Joris (1946-)—continues to find itself in the background of both cultural production and analysis in Luxembourg. Consequently, a considerable amount of the literature stemming from the Grand Duchy is disregarded, even within Luxembourg. If we look at the number of authors who have published in English, we see that the number is comparatively low, only at about 11% (159 authors). Much of Luxembourgish literature in English is produced by migrants, who have either moved to Luxembourg from abroad, or who have left Luxembourg for the English-speaking world. The latter write in English not solely by inclination and choice but often out of necessity in their new English-speaking environments (Schmit). From their literature, and the multilingual Luxembourgish literature more generally, the international literary scholarship can take away new valuable insights, notably on conceptions of multilingualism, hybridity, transculturalism and diversity—all of which play a significant role in migrant literature.

Coincidentally, the category of migrant literature is one that many of Luxembourg’s more influential authors over the decades would be attributed to, either due to their emigration to the English-speaking world, or their immigration to Luxembourg. Here, I argue that Luxembourgish literature, whether written by someone who immigrated or emigrated, or

someone who was born and raised in the Grand Duchy, is inherently transcultural, shaped by its author's interaction with, and connection to, a wide array of different cultures and nations. Consequently, Luxembourgish literature highlights the solid existing tension between the national and the transnational. Though seemingly vague at first, the definition of *Luxemburgensia* put forth by the National Centre of Literature, as any kind of literature with a direct effect on or for Luxembourgish literature, encompasses this claim. Literature becomes Luxembourgish not by being written within the borders that delineate the country, but rather through a network that exists, in some form, between the work and the nation. Nonetheless, these works are defined as "Luxembourgish," and thus this definition simultaneously deconstructs and reaffirms the country's national borders and the literature's confinement to them. Rather than the national and the transnational being mutually exclusive, Luxembourgish literature proves that they co-exist, though in tension, as different aspects of the same debate. I shall elaborate more on this point in the continuation of this thesis.

In this way, I argue that Luxembourgish literature is a paradigmatic case of today's contemporary global dynamics, and shall be studied as such in the scope of this thesis. *Luxemburgensia* illustrates the new conceptions of mobilities in the modern world, which shall be discussed in a later chapter. Due to its uniquely transcultural character which gives new insights into s migrant's negotiation within space, Luxembourgish literature deserves a mark on the international literary map. To support this claim, I will use the poetry of Liliane Welch, a Luxembourgish-Canadian author, who grew up in Luxembourg and became a Canadian citizen later in life. As a person, Welch embodies what it means to be Luxembourgish, and to grow up in a transcultural and multilingual country. Her poetry, duly, embodies the tension between the national and transnational to display the Luxembourgish

author's inherently transcultural subjecthood—and thereby illustrates the ever-becoming nature of *Luxemburgensia*.

b. Introducing Liliane Welch (1937-2010)

Liliane Welch is a Luxembourgish author who, after emigrating to Canada later in her life, also acquired Canadian citizenship. An avid writer and a professor of French literature at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, she published numerous poetry collections, essays, and academic papers during her lifetime. Though given several awards for her poetry, such as the Alfred G. Bailey Award for Poetry, and the F.G. Bressani Literary Prize, it seems as though Welch's work was never widely read—neither in Luxembourg nor in Canada. As mentioned in the previous section, this thesis will argue that her work, which is deeply affected by the transcultural aspect that emerges from her transatlantic move to the Northern Americas, is paradigmatic for Luxembourgish literature. The inherently transcultural character of *Luxemburgensia* is reflected in Liliane Welch's poetry which, as will be demonstrated in the continuation of this paper, flows continually and effortlessly between Europe, rich in history and culture, and barren North America. Studied in the light of nomadic theory and transcultural studies, which will roughly serve as the theoretical frameworks for analysing Welch's poetry, her work gives evidence of how writers on the move between languages and countries create new subjectivities to situate themselves in relation to the world.

Liliane Welch (born Meyer) was born on 20 October 1937 in Esch-sur-Alzette, in the South of Luxembourg, to a mother of Italian heritage and a Luxembourgish father. Growing up in a bi-cultural household directly at the border between Luxembourg and France, young Welch was exposed to the transcultural character of her home country from the very

beginning. Rather than a fascination with its diversity, however, Welch struggled with the small size of Luxembourg, which, as her writing reveals, she conceived as suffocating and oppressive. She felt "estranged from the land and people of the Old World" (*Seismographs* 50), and already at eight years old, she was "up to [her] knees in fantasies about America" (25). Having fallen in love with the English language, her "belated mother tongue" (40) and its literature, it was in the year 1954, at the ripe age of 17, that young Liliane Welch decided to take part in a year-long secondary school exchange programme. This brought her to the West Coast of the United States (Wilhelm). In California, the teenager was quite literally met with the opposite of the life she was used to. Hailing from small, densely populated, and cold Luxembourg, she was now faced with the vastness, and the warm nature of the United States' so-called golden state. In a land that has continuously been praised as offering its potential to immigrants from across the globe, including many of Welch's fellow Luxembourgers, the young woman got a glimpse of a life that could be hers.

It is in this context that the author, who felt increasingly alienated by Luxembourg and its society after her return to the homeland, decided to move away from the Grand Duchy permanently. Aged 19, she emigrated to the United States. Along with her future husband, Cyril Welch, Liliane attended the University of Montana and obtained a Bachelor's degree in Romance philology (Wilhelm). In 1964, she completed her PhD in French Literature at Pennsylvania State University. Her education in the States in French and Romance literature, reflects at once Welch's international heritage, her multilingual character, and her incessant desire to see the world. After more than ten years, Liliane Welch's *séjour* in the USA ended in 1967, when she moved up north to Sackville, New Brunswick, in the bilingual province of Canada. Here, she worked for 30 years as a professor of French Studies at Mount Allison University—until she retired and became a professor emerita in 2004 (Bell). Even when fully

settled in Canada and granted Canadian citizenship, Liliane Welch made it a habit to return to her home country of Luxembourg regularly, and she would spend several months at a time in Luxembourg during the summer. Though having felt estranged from the Grand Duchy in her early years, a certain degree of attachment to Welch's home country becomes evident in later works, in which the author writes fondly about her childhood home in Esch-sur-Alzette, attempts to remap the traces of her ancestry, and captures the changes of the country she had once felt so alienated by.

Sprinkled between Luxembourg and Canada, her writing also focuses on other European landscapes, such as the Italian Dolomites, and various Italian cities. In Italy, Welch often explores cultural centres that are submerged in literary memories and attributions. She "blends the old world with her new home" (Bell) to offer the perspective of "an artist aware of a vast cultural heritage, torn between a rich European culture of the past and the promises the New World still holds for her" (Hansen-Pauly, "Liliane Welch" 12). Crediting several writers as her literary influences, Welch began writing poetry in the 1970s (Bell)—and set off a writing career that reflects her heritage as a Luxembourgish migrant, and ponders on her multiple emerging senses of subjectivity. Her biggest influences, some of which she exalts in *This Numinous Bond* (2004), stem from various literary traditions: French writers Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé; German poet Rilke; Italian philosopher Dante Alighieri, and American writers Faulkner and Dickinson.

In addition, her work is influenced by her Catholic upbringing in Luxembourg, and frequently discusses similar themes. In more than 20 poetry collections, as well as her prose work, she ponders on, among others, the relationship between art and reality, feminism, her passion for mountain climbing, but also the simple, domestic life. The themes that will be most relevant in this thesis, and which will aid in demonstrating Welch's paradigmatic

character not just as an author of Luxembourgish literature but also as a nomadic subject in a Hall-like state of becoming, are her travels between North America and Europe. Through detailed descriptions and vivid imagery, the reader gets an insight into Welch's mind, and "enters [her] poems as one enters the rooms of a beautiful home, sometimes fragrant, morning-lit, sometimes music-filled rooms of night, hosts and skylights, in which Welch recreates the numinous connections of our lives" (Brynne Harding qtd. in Welch, *Dispensing Grace* 93).

In drawing on the connections of her life, and the networks she finds herself embedded in, Welch's work, like most migrant literature, is rich with impressions and comparisons of both her childhood home and her newly found one. While "[h]er early works, like the chapbook *Winter Songs* (1977), are coloured with first impressions of the new world, displaying images of cold crisp New Brunswick winters" (Bell), her later poems are increasingly concerned with the so-called Old World that she left behind, as well as the connections she carries with her in both. The beauty of her poetry lies in the immigrant's ability to give the perspective of someone from a different place. Equally, to her fellow Luxembourgish compatriots, Welch's poetry represents a way of emerging into an utterly unimaginable life across the Atlantic—while relating to impressions and memories of Luxembourg.

3. Theoretical Framework

Having laid the foundation of this thesis by outlining the key aspects and conflicts within Luxembourgish literature, and introducing Liliane Welch, it is now time to introduce the theories that will be employed to fulfill this thesis's research aim. To analyse Liliane Welch's

poetry from a contemporary standpoint, taking into account how her multifaceted experiences in all parts of the Western world not only engage with each other, but also contradict each other, we must look at the effects of her movement on her subjective self: how is subject-formation relational to its environment? In doing so, in this present work, the concept of identity shall be removed from its nationalistic character, and instead be examined as a fluid phenomenon.

In this chapter, I shall therefore introduce this thesis' main theoretical concepts, namely the New Mobilities Paradigm, Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjectivities theory, and my definitions of transnationalism and transcultural becoming, as informed by Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." I argue that becoming is a matter of transcultural subjectivity, since the nomadic subject is shaped by its specific spatial memories as well as experiences that exist in-between these spaces. Therefore, I also argue that combining these three distinct frameworks is highly beneficial for the analysis of migrant literature. The theories of Rosi Braidotti and Stuart Hall, which I will introduce in this chapter, though highly metaphorical, reflect the lived experience of the migrant. The New Mobilities Paradigm, with its critical stance towards the nation, becomes crucial in this analysis, as it allows me to ground nomadic subjectivities and transcultural becoming the real, spatial experience.

a. The New Mobilities Paradigm

In the present stage of advanced globalisation, "all the world seems to be on the move" (Urry, Sheller 207)—from people and objects to ideas and modes of communications. The advanced interconnectedness of the world has not gone unnoticed in academia; hence, the systematic movement of people, materials, and information is increasingly studied in both the social

sciences and humanities. Since the so-called mobility turn in the 1990s, often viewed as an extension of the 80s' spatial turn, researchers have become heavily interested in the study of movement in its broadest sense, and its social and cultural implications. In more recent years, "new mobilities" have been the frequent subject of analysis by scholars around the globe—investigating the impact of phenomena such as the Internet, terrorism, and refugeeism on global politics. This paradigmatic turn, which is centralising on people's movement, has found its way into migration studies—but how can it be beneficial to the analysis of migration literature and, more specifically, the reading of Liliane Welch's work?

Sociologist John Urry (1946-2016) of Lancaster University was one of the leading scholars in the New Mobilities Paradigm (NMP). Together with Mimi Sheller of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, he wrote a paper on this new paradigm—which will serve me in the following paragraphs to outline its importance for the study of migration literature. The NMP focuses on new technologies and places that enhance the mobility of some, while simultaneously limiting that of others (Graham and Wood, Verstaete qtd. in Urry and Sheller 207). It comes in response to preceding theories in the study of anthropology and sociology, and in doing so, undermines sedentarist theories. The latter, loosely derived from Heidegger's idea of *wohnen*, or dwelling, "treats as normal stability, meaning, and place, and treats as abnormal distance, change, and placelessness" (Urry and Sheller 208). In other words, one may say that the NMP considers movement and cross-border travel as the 'new normal' of the 21st century, and thus dismissed the idea of human subjectivity as being grounded in authentic places, regions, or nations. While I believe it is questionable whether this cross-border movement is genuinely new, because, indeed, our view of the past is often tinted by the predominant sedentary lens, there certainly is an intensification of this movement thanks to recent technological developments. In this context,

the NMP argues that, rather than identity being concentrated in one place, it relies on networks of connections which "stretch beyond each such place and mean that nowhere can be an 'island'" (208–209).

Reminiscent of Paul Gilroy's ideas in *The Black Atlantic*, in which he argues that the modern Black experience transcends the notions of ethnicity and nationality, and calls for an "explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (Gilroy 2405), the NMP further contests the rigid conception of nation-states. The emergent mobilities paradigm "adopts a relational view of space, which sees space as constructed not by its stagnant borders or natural content, but by the relationships that exist within and across it" (Adey and Sheller qtd. in Everuss 7)—a view that I argue is similar to the tension previously explored in Luxembourgish literature. Space, as Ishameal mentions in *Moby Dick*, is not locatable on the map, but rather in its cracks, in the connections that exist within and across national frontiers. Contrary to what we will extract from Braidotti's work in the subsequent section, the NMP contests, however, that the idea of states and nations as "containers for societies" (209) is outdated. Instead, while appreciating how theories of liquid modernity put an end to static social sciences, Urry and Scheller criticise the fact that this research agenda, in their view, glorifies new mobilities as a "supposed form of freedom or liberation from space and place" (210). As they mention in their paper, there must be a general awareness of the disparate power relations within postnational deterritorialisation, where rights to travel are uneven and skewed. It is in this way that their theory distinguishes itself from other, often highly metaphorical and romantacised conceptions of space in times of globalisation.

The reflections of Urry and Scheller on emergent mobilities are not only helpful in contextualising Braidotti and Hall's work, as we will see when I introduce their respective theories. Raising questions about mobility, migration, and transculturalism, all

simultaneously enabled and complicated by new forms of mobilities, the NMP also offers a suitable starting point for the analysis of Welch's poetry and her social standing and subjectivity as a member of Luxembourg's society. The inhabitants of the small country, in addition to being polyglot and almost half made up of immigrants (47,1%) (Information and Press Service of the Government, "Une Population Ouverte Et Cosmopolite"), largely cross national borders on a weekly, or even daily basis. We see in this society a high number of connections to other countries, for various reasons. Luxembourgers find themselves in permanent contact with other cultures, be it through contact with immigrants living in the Grand Duchy, by grocery shopping across the border, or by consuming media in other languages. Even Luxembourgish nationals born in the Grand Duchy can have a tendency to feel displaced in it—partly due to frequent contact with other cultures and nations, which makes them wonder where they belong. It would not be false to claim that many residents of Luxembourg likely feel a small-scale sense of Bhabhadian hybridity, feeling connected to both Luxembourg and one of multiple other countries—by it directly through heritage or indirectly through contact with technologies that reflect the new mobilities. This lived experience represents a timely research topic to be analysed via the lens of New Mobilities.

As we have seen in the previous section, Liliane Welch is a paradigmatic example of this Luxembourgish feeling of displacement. Feeling suffocated by Luxembourg and its social climate, she felt the need to escape her birthplace for the vast American North. As her writing suggests, it was very early on in her life that Liliane Welch felt a certain hybridity in her sense of subjecthood—and after her year-long stay in the United States, this became a feeling that she was unable to overcome. In uprooting her life to escape a climate she viewed as restrictive and oppressive, Welch was inherently influenced by her transnational and transcultural experiences, and was placed in a continuous cycle of self-discovery and

becoming. This nomadic wandering, both literally across borders and oceans and figuratively by acts of self-discovery, ultimately made Welch a prime example of a nomadic subject as Rosi Braidotti would define it.

b. Transnational Networks and Transcultural Becoming

In this thesis, I utilise the poetry of Liliane Welch to argue that the migrant poet's experience is marked most notably by their transcultural and transnational dialogue with their selfhood, as it travels through space and time. The subject continuously *becomes* through their negotiation with spatiality and culture, and in this way, their subjectivity undergoes constant revision within the transcultural and transnational experiences (Hall 225). So, how can we define transculturalism and transnationalism? How does the concept of transculturalism relate to the tension that exists between the national and the transnational? And lastly, how do transculturalism, transnationalism and multilingualism interact to create, define, and reshape subjectivity?

Transnationalism, as it is defined by scholars such as Steven Vertovec, Dagmar Vandebosch and Theo D'haen, is "strikingly characteristic of contemporary societies" (Vandebosch and D'haen 1). In 2009, Vertovec even started his much-cited book, *Transnationalism*, with the claim that "[t]oday transnationalism seems to be everywhere" (2). In the context of this thesis, I adopt Vertovec's definition of transnationalism as referring to "sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation-states" (Vertovec 2). Indeed, the concept has entered various fields of academic research, which stands at the forefront of exploring how our contemporary life is embedded in, and influenced by transnationalism. In a society which, as the New Mobilities Paradigm argues, is defined by accelerated globalisation and cross-national movement, the

importance of transnational studies within various fields in academia seems evident. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraino-Russian war, two very recent developments in global politics, are suitable examples of the complex geopolitical contexts of the globalised world, which influence the movement of people. While the global pandemic restricted all kinds of travel, especially across national borders, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered yet another wave of enforced displacements—contributing to the ongoing refugee crisis by causing the involuntary cross-border movement of thousands of people. As global issues such as these continue to constrain and initiate movements, questions on mobility politics, belonging, and nationality are ever-relevant.

Transnationalism refers to the networks that are created by the flows and exchanges of people, goods, and ideas across national borders. Oftentimes, these flows are caused by developments in advanced globalism, and new mobilities. In this way of thinking, national borders and the communities within them simultaneously enable the exchange of people, information, and goods, while also giving national institutions and those in power the control to restrict it. Transnationalism thus causes what Hannam, Sheller and Urry call infrastructural and institutional moorings. The latter concepts refer precisely to the fact that decisive institutions, events and organisations may simultaneously enable and restrict mobility. Theories of transnationalism oppose traditional thinking of nationalism precisely on these grounds—by criticising the concepts that rigidly attempt to ‘ground’ contemporary social life in specific geographic localities. Nations (as countries) allow their people to move around within, and sometimes outside of national borders, giving them a certain degree of freedom in movement. Simultaneously, however, the nation-state rigidly defines its people based on the place they were born in, often imposing restrictions, beliefs, and culture on them.

"A country is a threshold," Liliane Welch writes in her poem "Italy glimpsed"—and she thereby makes a claim that I identify as addressing the core argument at hand within transnationalism. If we consider the meaning of the word "threshold," we note that the noun, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, refers to a "place or point of entering" but simultaneously, to an "end," or a "boundary" ("Definition of Threshold"). Beyond the threshold lies something, a nation, in this case—and "to be on the threshold," involves the act of being at the cusp of crossing a particular border, just as you would with a country. At the same time, the threshold is an end, or a boundary, and by stepping within the threshold, you submit yourself to the rules and limits of this boundary. Hence, a nation-state opens the door to possibilities while simultaneously setting boundaries for its inhabitants' ranging from movement to cultural affiliations, and even beliefs. The concept of the nation in itself can thus be considered a mooring at its very essence.

It is essential to note the national grounds that transnationalism criticises. A tension developed early in this thesis, in the discussion of the nature of Luxembourgish national literature, is the tension between the national and the transnational. It was then argued that Luxembourgish literature is simultaneously national and transnational—and that the two concepts, rather than being mutually exclusive, are two different aspects of the same debate. Indeed, Nadia Lie observes, "the relation between 'national' and 'transnational' practices and realities is not dichotomic, but rather a very complex relation that, up to a certain extent, is mutually constitutive" (qtd. in Vandebosch and D'haen 3). The concept of transnationalism, by articulating a critique of the rigid borders of the nation-state, simultaneously and inevitably reproduces the borders, and reiterates the rigid frontiers of our world. Similarly, the analysis of Liliane Welch's poetry, while demonstrating its author's nomadic, nation-less

character, continually reaffirms the borders of Italy, Canada, and Luxembourg—if only to claim that they do not define Welch.

Nonetheless, transnationalism's critique of the national and the nation as a community "has had an undeniable impact on our thinking about categories such as space, identity or social groups" (Vandebosch and D'haen 4). Identity politics based entirely on socially-constructed nation-states are questioned, and these tenets of transnationalism become particularly relevant to the study of migrant identities—or subjectivities, as Rosi Braidotti would instead call them. It is indeed in the context of migration studies that the ideas of transnationalism are most frequently applied. The national space with its constricting borders, though it clearly exists and has real consequences for those inhabiting it, is transformed by transnationalism's critique. Spaces, rather than being defined by nations and borders as they are in the national, come to be determined by the NMP's interconnections in the transnational—and become networks that dissociate identity from a geographical place (Vandebosch and D'haen 5).

Besides transnationalism's separation of subjectivity from nationality, and the importance of connections and networks, many scholars are interested in the interplay between transnationalism and multilingualism. I will briefly elaborate on this point since it will be highly relevant to the close reading of Welch's poems. The scholars most notably occupied in this research are Amaury Dehoux from the University of Louvain, and Tomás Espino, affiliated with the University of Granada. In his text, "Liquid Spaces: (Re)thinking Transnationalism in an Era of Globalization," Amaury Dehoux investigates the flowing nature of language and literature in the transnational context. In considering how world-literature groups literature into territories where a language is collectively spoken, such as *Francophony, Anglophony*, and *Hispanophony*, he argues that "far from going beyond the

nation, the conceptual background of those spaces remains largely dependent on the national paradigm" (29).

Dehoux's claim that language is bound to the national space highlights the importance of mobility in regard to transnationalism in literature and language. Since "language is actualized by its speakers, it is irremediably related to their "flow" [through the world]," and "the movements of each human being are eventually equivalent to the mobility of the idiom s/he speaks" (30-31). Therefore, literature written in a language that is not native to its author, as in the case of Liliane Welch, is transnational in many ways (Espino 51). Whether writing in a second language contributes to the trauma of migration, or constitutes an act of liberation—it axiomatically crosses linguistic and geographical borders. This type of writing becomes "the basis of the dialectics between the local, which it preserves, and the global, which it makes available" (Dehoux 34). The ability to speak, or write in, multiple languages blurs the line between the local and the global, the national and the transnational—all while preserving the former and making accessible the latter.

If we assume that rigid borders, at least for some people, are easily transgressive, then it becomes clear that the cultures attributed to certain countries also intermingle, and are not as distinct from each other as they are often made out to be. The idea of cultural identity, as it is questioned by Stuart Hall in his 1996 seminal essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," thus becomes inherently problematised. In the place of the cultural, defined rigidly by the national, now stands the transcultural, enabled by the transnational interaction of countries, and a natural consequence of "composing cultural works in a globalizing milieu" (Dobson 203). Transculturalism is one of many concepts used in the discussion of cultural (ex)change, diversity, and contact, and is, as Afef Benessaieh, professor of International Studies at the University of Québec, claims, "central to contemporary societies" (14). In her book

Amériques Transculturelles (2010), she argues that transculturalism "offers a conceptual landscape for considering cultures as relational webs and flows of significance in active interaction with one another" (11)—but that, depending on perspectives, it holds three distinct meanings. The meaning of the term may vary not just between disciplinary perspectives, but even between authors, and all three of its definitions suggest a deeper comprehension of the rise in cultural diversity, and the ongoing cultural transformation resulting from globalisation (Benessaieh 29).

Benessaieh argues that transculturalism may be used in one of the following meanings: *cross-cultural competence*, *identitary continuum*, and *plural sense of self* (21). In anthropology, transculturalism is regarded as *cross-cultural competence* with two distinct tendencies. While one considers the contrasts between cultures in a multicultural setting, the other focuses on similar clusters of significance and behaviours across them (Benessaieh qtd. in Hendrichs 44). A second definition of transculturalism stems from psychology, where transculturalism is regarded as an *identitary continuum.* Transculturalism here refers to a "continuous coherence of certain traits, beliefs, and practices" that are independent of time and place (Benessaieh 24). In the third and final connotation, authors use the term transculturalism to denote a *plural sense of self*, "a transformational process in which individuals no longer perceive themselves under one single culture" (Benessaieh 25). The "embodied situation of cultural plurality" (25) is experienced by individuals and communities who either have mixed ancestry or have gone through a complex globalisation-related predicament, often occupying the geopolitical location of the immigrant or refugee. Ultimately, keeping all three definitions in mind, Benessaieh concludes that transculturalism "can be understood as a cross-cultural competence, a cohesive identity that transcends frontiers or time, or *a plural sense of self for individuals and communities who see themselves*

as continuously shifting between flows and worlds" (29, emphasis added). This third, emphasised understanding of transculturalism is the most beneficial for the analysis of Liliane Welch, who, through contact with other cultures, takes on multiple subjectivities, or plural senses of self.

This notion of transculturalism that I am adopting for this thesis highlights the idea that the separateness of culture is socially and historically constructed as different for the sake of nation-building (Jacky Bouju qtd. in Benessaieh 25). This, in turn, deconstructs the rigid border between both nations and cultures. The term of transculturalism is frequently used interchangeably with other terms, such as multiculturalism and interculturality. These, however, Benessaieh argues, "suggest that some sort of "pure" culture exists or precedes the mixture, or that cultural diversity and change are novel features of a globalizing world"—and are thus similar to the idea of the rigid, clearly-delineated nation or identity (15). Transculturalism is distinct from these concepts in that it questions the premise that cultures are separate, stable, or even different from each other (18). This, precisely, is my main reason for employing transculturalism in the analysis of Welch's poetry.

Based on Benessaieh's definition of transculturalism, I develop the notion of 'transcultural subjectivity,' which can be compared, though cautiously, to Stuart Hall's understanding of cultural identity. In his seminal essay, titled "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall emphasises that the experience of the Caribbean diaspora is deeply grounded in colonisation, slavery and forced movement. This resulted, he claims, in cultural hybridity in which cultures mix and intermingle. As a consequence, Hall argues that "instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think of identity as a production which is never complete, always in process" (Hall 222). While I acknowledge the very complex context of Hall's theory, I argue

that some of his ideas can be applied more globally to the transcultural subjecthood of the migrant, and by extension, Liliane Welch.

I posit my conception of 'transcultural subjectivities' as a new way to understand Hall's 'cultural identity'—one that is not static and nation-bound, but plural and highly mobile, thus informed by the NMP. The cultures that Liliane Welch, and any other refugee or migrant, comes into contact with, imprint on her subjecthood, and contribute to redefinitions of the author's self. Nonetheless, even these nation-bound cultures are not 'pure'—hence my use of 'transcultural.' The concept of identity, here, is similar to that of the nation, or the singular dominant culture, in its understanding as "already accomplished" (Hall 222). In truth, it is not a stable, rigid concept but rather affected by transcultural, transnational, and interpersonal affiliations and connections. Transcultural subjectivity can therefore replace the concept of "cultural identity," which Hall argues to be purely retrospective (237), in the way that it is bound to the *ongoing* becoming of the subject, that is shaped through transcultural intermingling located in space. Though certain aspects of subjecthood remain more or less stable, such as one's heritage or mother tongue, as I will argue in the close reading, these aspects can constitute elements that lead to continuous self-discovery, and, therewith, evolving. In this way, even those aspects of subjecthood that Stuart Hall may define as 'being'—as stable, and offering a sense of commonality—point towards the 'becoming' nature of the subject. Being and becoming thus find themselves in dialogue within the nomadic subject.

Some theorists, especially in the social sciences, have compared such transcultural experiences to mosaic-like patterns, in which each tile represents these intersecting and interacting transcultural experiences that have been internalised by the subject (Benet-Martínez and Cuccioletta qtd. in Vauclair et al. 12). Due to the becoming of the

subject, which happens continually, the transcultural experience of each person is inherently unique. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, different people have different types of cross-cultural experiences; secondly, different people have different ways of learning from cross-cultural interactions; and thirdly, different people choose, whether voluntarily or not, other elements to incorporate into their subjectivities (Vauclair et al. 12). It is in this way that transcultural subjectivities become fluid, and find themselves in an infinite state of production. Indeed, the migrant's subjectivity constantly changes, imprinted upon by various experiences, connections, and networks—nomadic imprints, as I shall call them henceforth.

Since transculturalism regards cultures as existing in a permanent state of intermingling with one another—it fits into my thesis in three ways. Firstly, the term transculturalism can be related not just to Welch, but to Luxembourg and its literature more broadly. As I have defined it at the beginning of this thesis, Luxembourgish literature is characterised most strongly by its "Mischkultur" (engl. mixed culture). This "Mischkultur" comes into being through the blending of all the cultures present within and beyond the country—and questions, just like transculturalism itself, whether "cultures are separate, stable, or even, for that matter, different from one another" (Benessaieh 18). After all, if we can say that a culture is primarily 'made up' of other cultures, then naturally, and in its essence, it becomes transcultural.

Secondly, in creating the transnational and transcultural nomadic subject, language plays an integral role, just as it does in Liliane Welch's life and writing. The Luxembourgish poet's transatlantic migration necessarily results in "a life between languages, between cultures, between worlds" (Ette 63). Polyglots like Welch effortlessly shift and flow between languages and language communities, and similarly, language also belongs to the space that continually flows between distinct nations and cultures (Dehoux 30). If we follow the thought

process of Ottmar Ette, professor of comparative literature at the University of Potsdam, and consider how migration means an existence between languages, then transnationalism and transculturalism are evoked in the plurilingual character of the migrating subject. Liliane Welch's mastery of multiple languages gives her a more unique and, arguably, more complete grasp of the world. Being multilingual, thus, at its very core, is transnational and transcultural.

Lastly, my definition of transcultural subjectivities, informed by Hall's becoming, overlaps with Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity. Though, in the latter, subjectivities are inherently linked to one person, they continually interact with each other and are imprinted by experiences, other people, and places. In combining the notion of transculturalism with that of nomadic subjectivity, as I will in the subsequent section, Braidotti's theory shall give the right access point to see how Welch subjectively enters into dialogue with her surroundings, while the notion of transculturalism helps develop my claim that her writing is inherently paradigmatic to the literature of Luxembourg. In addition, the concept of transculturalism shall allow me to indicate when, in Welch's writing, transcultural experiences imprint on her subjectivity, and shapes who she is. The selfhood of the person, I argue, is imprinted with transcultural experiences, and in that way, a Braidottian nomadic subject comes into being.

c. Rosi Braidotti's Nomadic Subjectivity

In Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," he puts forth the question: "If identity does not proceed, in a straight, unbroken line, from some fixed origin, how are we to understand its formation?" (226). Though Hall proceeds to answer his own question, by positing that cultural identity is constructed as much by a state of 'being' as it is by 'becoming,' I would

take his argument a bit further, and argue that the notion of 'identity' inherently suggests a fixed cultural state. It is, therefore, that I have proposed the concept of transcultural subjectity to replace that of cultural identity. We see this ambiguous subjectivity in Liliane Welch's writing, as we shall see in the close-reading section later on in this thesis, caused by her reluctance to identify with a particular nation-state or culture. As a person who lives a transnational and transcultural experience, we witness a difference in imagery, theme and tone between Welch's writing about Luxembourg, Italy and Canada. One could say that she adapts a fluid style in her writing, while seamlessly crossing borders—both the rigid physical ones between countries, but also the metaphorical borders of her selfhood. To understand this complex way of writing and existing, and to further interact with Hall's questioning of cultural identity, I shall now put forward the poststructural feminist nomad theory of Rosi Braidotti.

Rosi Braidotti is a contemporary scholar of philosophy and feminist theory at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She has put out innovative post-structuralist formulations on subjectivity in her books titled *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, and *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. The latter two works will be of utmost importance in the analysis of Welch's work in this thesis, and will allow me to investigate the link between Welch's transatlantic migration and her ever-changing subjective self. Rosi Braidotti was born in Italy, and moved to Australia to pursue her higher education, before finally completing her PhD at the Sorbonne in Paris. Since 1988, she has worked and lived in the Netherlands. It is no coincidence that the transnational character of Braidotti's academic career and life bears such close resemblances to that of Liliane Welch—who left Luxembourg to study in the USA, before working as a professor of French philology in Canada. Instead, the parallels between the two women's

lives point to a way of life that is becoming increasingly prevalent in contemporary society—a life in which one is not sedentary but, as the New Mobilities Paradigm suggests, continually moving.

Braidotti partially bases her theory of feminist nomadism on her own life as a repeat-migrant and polyglot. In her theory, put forth in her 1994 book *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* and its 2011 successor *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*[1], she develops a new paradigm of nomadic subjectivity rooted in feminist thought. To do so, she applies Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's idea of nomadism, established in their co-written book, *Mille Plateaux* (1980), to a broad poststructural understanding of feminism. In their book, Deleuze and Guattari came up with the concept of the nomad—an idea that has "infected contemporary social thought," according to John Urry in his *Sociology Beyond Societies* (27). The nomad is a person who, though they can be, is not necessarily bound to an actual nomadic lifestyle of continuous movement. Instead, "[t]he nomad [represents] a tendency towards deterritorialisation … that can be found to some degree in all phenomena" (Buchanan). In simple terms, Deleuzian nomadism represents a way of being in which one refuses dominant codes or discourses—a refusal to be tied down by set societal categories, which also deconstructs the ties between culture and nation.

In her work, Rosi Braidotti uses this Guattari-Deleuzian understanding of nomadism to develop a new paradigm of subjectivity. She combines nomadic and feminist thought to create *feminist nomadism*. The combination of nomadism and feminism allows Braidotti to break away from hegemonic definitions carried throughout history. A good starting point to

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[1] Throughout this thesis, I shall cite these two sources as *NS* (*Nomadic Subjects*) and *NT* (*Nomadic Theory*) respectively.

begin thinking about the concept of feminist nomadism is a quote from Virginia Woolf, whom Braidotti frequently references in her writing. Specifically, a passage from her novel *The Waves* comes to mind, where one of the protagonists, Jinny, utters the following lines: "I feel a thousand capacities spring up in me. I am arch, gay, languid, melancholy by turns. I am rooted, but I flow" (393).

Women are subjected to structures they must follow, even though they did not create them—often making them involuntarily sedentary, both socially and physically. The only way for them to be free from such structures is through Deleuzian nomadic thought, which refuses the dominant discourses that keep women in their place, such as the male-dominated symbolism of the patriarchy. In this way, one may say that nomadic thought takes the form of a new mobility—it becomes a mobile, forward-moving act of resistance. When relating Woolf's quote to feminist ideas and nomadic thought, Braidotti offers the idea that we need to be more fluid in feminism—and break away from the "paralyzing structures" we inhibit (*NS* 30). Though we are *rooted* in the systems of a society that pre-exists us, that is, the patriarchy, we must *flow* in between its cracks with awareness and resistance. In that context, Braidotti notes that "[n]omadism is an invitation to disidentify ourselves from the sedentary phallogocentric monologism of philosophical thinking" (*NS* 30). By laws of nomadism, feminist nomads may escape sedentary thinking and instead become fluid, ending the cycle of the confined borders of what it means to be a feminist.

I would argue that someone who shares many similarities with the female subject is the sociopolitical entity of the migrant. The 'moving body' that is the migrant often clearly falls under the category of the nomadic subject. Just like women, migrants tend to be at the forefront of issues and discussions surrounding inequality and equal rights. Taking up a marginalised position in society, they continue to strive for equality, even in an increasingly

"borderless" world. This explains the frequent mention of the migrant group in Braidotti's work. Although the nomadic subject is not necessarily tied to veritable physical movement, we see that the latter may intensify the experience of the nomadic subject. The migrant, for instance, is frequently pushed to the peripheries of society, and therefore does not feel a sense of belonging. While they feel like they are merely passing through, migrants refuse to identify with a place, and thereby disidentify their selves from "sedentary phallocentric monologist" discourses by those in power, which rigidly categorise them according to the arbitrary concept of their nation of origin (*NS* 30). In doing so, they emphasise the idea that origin bears little relevance in the nomadic subject, whose becoming takes place continuously, in the present as much as in the future and the past.

Thus, even if removed from its feminist origin, Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity theory offers a way of rethinking the self, and can represent a new entity that is defined and affirmed in the confrontation of differences and its resistance to dominant discourses. In this way, the idea of a nomadic subject essentially becomes a critique of fixed and rigid identities. Rather than a rigid identity, the self comprises a multitude of fluid, non-unitary, and ever-changing subjectivities, created by the nomadic, metaphorical or veritable movement. Braidotti's mobile subject is someone who connects, and relates, but never identifies—similar to how transnationalism and transculturalism view the nation and culture not as standing rigidly and separately, but rather continuously interweaved with other countries and cultures. This pattern also recurs throughout the work of Liliane Welch, who, though considering herself a pilgrim rather than a nomad (Welch, "Ascension" 131), harbours countless connections in and to different places.

Although one may think that this increased mobility and destabilisation of fixed borders would create more equal opportunities, the opposite is true, as Urry and Sheller

pointed out in the NMP. In truth, mobility does not resolve power differences and other forms of structural inequality; but rather, in some way, it even intensifies them. Like a mooring that secures a ship, the institutional powers that are in place both enable and hinder people's mobility—they become institutional moorings (Hannam et al. 3). Movement, therefore, comes to represent a crucial dimension of unequal power relations, where social, economic and cultural factors shape people's mobility patterns (Kauffman et al. 750). This illustrates that Braidotti's ideas and arguments, though often highly metaphorical, are grounded in the subject's lived experience.

In the close-reading analysis of Welch's work, we shall see that, rather than identifying with a nation-state, there are many instances in which Welch disidentifies with certain spaces. This occurs mostly when the author expresses feelings of displacement, for example, and when she discusses her multilingualism. The connection between nomadism and multilingualism is not arbitrary. In fact, Rosi Braidotti frequently uses the term 'polyglot' to define the nomadic subject throughout her texts. Like a nomad, a polyglot, someone who speaks multiple languages, can weave in and out of different subjectivities, and crosses linguistic borders continually. Braidotti writes in *Nomadic Subjects*:

> The polyglot is a linguistic nomad. The polyglot is a specialist of the treacherous nature of language, of any language. Words have a way of not standing still, of following their own paths. They come and go, pursuing preset semantic trails, leaving behind acoustic, graphic, or unconscious traces. (8)

Though this theory is highly symbolic, and metaphorically relates the polyglot to the nomad, it also refers to an actual lived experience. Braidotti further explains:

> The polyglot surveys … situation[s] with the greatest critical distance; a person who is in transit between the languages, neither here nor there, is capable of some healthy skepticism about steady identities and mother tongues. In this respect, the polyglot is a variation on the theme of critical nomadic consciousness; being in between languages constitutes a vantage point in deconstructing identity. (*NS,* 12)

Just like the polyglot, the nomadic subject (and the feminist) must become fluent in a variety of metaphorical dialects, jargon, and languages; in styles and disciplinary angles (*NS* 36)—to situate themselves in relation to the world, deconstruct stable identity, and to resist discourses they do not wish to be a part of.

Through the "hypermobility of capitalism" (*NT* 18), the nomadic subject becomes highly aware of their transcultural and transnational status, and of the fact that nation-states and cultures are nothing but structuralist constructions. This awareness becomes even more prominent in the polyglot, who actively flows between languages, cultures and nations. Nomads, migrants and polyglots often literally exist in a foreign language, making their existence inherently transnational and transcultural. This also reflects the previously evoked views of Espino and Dehoux, casting multilingualism as inherently transnational. Braidotti similarly claims that the polyglot intimately knows what Ferdinand de Saussure teaches: that the connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary (Tyson 213)—just like the arbitrary delineations between nation-states which create imaginary cultural communities.

Finally, since "subjectivity is the effect of these *constant* flows of in-between power connections" (*NT* 4, emphasis added), and subjectivity-formation takes place as much in the present as it does in the past and future, Rosi Braidotti claims that subjectivity "produces a methodology that is very important for nomadic thought: the cartographic method" (*NT* 4). Events, movements, and social constructs that shape and create subjectivity, rather than

linearly and unitarily, must be traced cartographically, since they occur at all times. In making this claim, Braidotti views cartography as a method as "a theoretically-based and politically-informed account of the present that aims at tracking the production of knowledge and subjectivity and to expose power both as entrapment and as empowerment" ("A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities"). In other words, the cartographic method allows the school of nomadic theory to track how and where non-unitary subjectivity is formed, shaped, and shifted within the nomadic subject.

To illustrate her conception of the cartographic approach, Braidotti offers the example of passports. She writes: "Having no passport or having too many of them is neither equivalent nor is it merely metaphorical, as some feminist critics of nomadic subjectivity have suggested. These are highly specific geopolitical and historical *locations*" (*NT* 15, emphasis added). Again, Braidotti's claim here evokes the tension between the national and the transnational, which is rapidly emerging as a red thread throughout this thesis. Passports are simultaneously linked to a specific nation-state, to which they literally belong, while also allowing people to transgress its borders. To that, Braidotti adds the notion of geopolitical locations. The cartographic method then becomes a way to represent the intimacy of relation between what we perceive, experience and express and "what is going on out there" (Braidotti, *Cartographies of the Present*). The nomadic subject's experiences with power, both as entrapment and empowerment, become geopolitical locations, or figurations, which are used to trace how, when and where a subject's subjectivity is altered. "The figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the non-unitary subject's self," and social positions, such as those of refugees, migrants, and tourists, become social locations pinned on this map (*NT* 14).

Due to its innovative perception of subjectivity, Braidotti's theory of nomadic subjectivity is extraordinarily well suited to the analysis of Liliane Welch's poetry through a transnational and transcultural lens. Much like Braidotti herself, Welch's poetry frequently rejects the idea of a stable, rigid, and sedentary identity. As a "vagabond daughter" ("Léif Mamm," line 9), Welch describes herself as continuously "rid[ing] into another life" ("Unlearning Ice," line 14). As we shall see on the cartographic map of her poetry, the author clearly harbours connections and relations to many different places, most notably Luxembourg, Canada and Italy— a kind of transnational "'networked' patterning of [her] economic and social life" (Hannam et al. 2). As a nomadic subject, the Luxembourg-born Liliane Welch sees her sense of self shift in accordance with her transnational movement (both physical and metaphorical) and her transcultural experience. As she refuses any form of rigid identification, the reader witnesses a continuous change in her subjecthood, even in seemingly stable aspects of her life.

d. In this Thesis

I have asserted, in this chapter, that central to my thesis is the rejection of three rigid concepts: identity, nation, and culture. Respectively, and with the help of the introduced scholars and their theories, they are replaced by the notions of subjectivity, transnationalism, and transculturalism. After presenting all of these most significant concepts and theories, let me briefly elucidate how they will intersect in my analysis of the poetry of Liliane Welch, and why.

Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjectivities theory is of the utmost importance within this paper, and takes a central role in my reading of Liliane Welch's poetry. It is within her unique conceptualisation of subjecthood, as well as her rejection of a stable, rigid identity, that my

argument is rooted. We shall see that in the nomadic subject, it is much less about the national and cultural origins of a person, and much more about the processes of movement through nations and cultures, which cause subjectivity to be highly relational. By seamlessly crossing borders, making connections, and leaving traces in the spaces she travels through, Welch finds herself in a continuous state of becoming. By extension, although Braidotti and Deleuze both argue that the figure of the nomad does not necessarily depend on physical movement, I make a direct link between the Braidottian shifting subjecthood and the transnational, transcultural experience that comes along with the migratory movement. In this way, the concept of the nomadic subject allows me to engage with the tension between the national and the transnational in a meaningful way, and aids in understanding this conflict that is at the very core not just of Liliane Welch's poetry, but of Luxembourgish literature as a whole.

The subject's nomadic wandering, both across borders and as a way of self-discovery, reflects Stuart Hall's conception of identity as continually evolving, or becoming. At the same time, some aspects of the nomadic subject reflect Hall's idea of being. Though stable identitary fragments, I will argue that they paradoxically contribute to the fluid, ever-becoming nature of subjectivity. In this way, nomadic subjectivity comes to be linked to Hall's conception of identity. It is here, as I have argued in relation to Hall, that I conceive my idea of "transcultural subjectivities" as a Braidottian redefinition of cultural identity, a notion made up of two terms that are intrinsically static and rigid.

As Welch takes on a nomadic, ever-becoming subjectivity by crossing borders and oceans, she simultaneously challenges and reaffirms the rigid concepts of a unitary identity, nation and culture. I initiated this chapter by introducing the New Mobilities Paradigm. The NMP helps contextualise this thesis, and Hall and Braidotti more broadly. At its core, rooted in movement and migration, this thesis necessitates the NMP, with the help of my digital

maps that I shall introduce, to analyse how the mobility of Welch across physical, social, and cultural spaces leads to the formation of transnational connections which shape her subjectivity. The NMP therewith shifts the focus from the metaphorical conceptions of Braidotti and Hall to the lived situatedness of the migrant in space, affected by the transformative effects of Welch's back-and-forth transatlantic movement.

Ultimately, this tailored framework allows me to make the connection between the qualitative and quantitative data to gain a unique and meaningful insight into the migrant's trajectory. Welch's interconnections and networks within the world are the consequence of what I have called nomadic imprints—experiences that have impacted and altered the writer's subjectivity directly. These are traceable on the map thanks to the differences in her subjective exchanges with specific geographical spaces. Much like Theseus, who unwound a ball of yarn as he entered the Labyrinth to slay the Minotaur, Welch's experiences will be sketched out on a map, precisely identifying the ways, impressions, and experiences that lead to different shifts in her subjecthood. At the same time, the close reading, as we shall see, demonstrates a new metaphorical locality in which the subject's subject-formation takes place, namely within herself. By illustrating how acts of redefining herself take on a formative nature, Welch's poetry demonstrates a tension between Hall's becoming and being. In that way, Welch's poetry is grounded as much in space and becoming as it is in selfhood and being. This twofold importance is highlighted thanks to the NMP, investigating questions of power within space, as well as Hall and Braidotti, whose theories question the rigid nature of fixed identity.

4. Methods and Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis has a three-fold research goal. It aims to find answers to the three following questions: (1) How does Liliane Welch's lived experience demonstrate that writers on the move between places and languages create new nomadic subjectivities? (2) What is Luxembourgish literature, and how is Liliane Welch's writing a paradigmatic example of it? (3) How can digital mapping be useful to trace instances of nomadic subjectivity, while acknowledging the tension between the national and the transnational? In an attempt to find answers to these questions that go beyond the scope of what a simple close-reading analysis could offer, this thesis combines close reading and distant reading, by using digital humanities tools to add a spatial dimension to the analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data are combined to analyse Liliane Welch's poetry—offering more complete and more comprehensive insights into the essence of her nomadic subjectivity.

To collect the quantitative data for this research, I have read Liliane Welch's poetry by paying close attention to a set of pre-chosen categories. The gathered information has then been collected in a dataset, and organised by these categories. Using a digital mapping tool called Carto, the dataset has been used to create digital, interactive maps of Welch's poetry—a Braidottian cartographic illustration of her life's literary representation, so to speak. This method allows me to determine whether or not there are recurring connections between places and specific themes or emotional states within the author's literary projection, which, as I argue, demonstrate a nomadic shift in subjectivity such as the one described in Rosi Braidotti's theory. In this text-to-map project, the digital maps that I have created using Carto represent not just digital literary geographies, but also the geopolitical locations that Braidotti proposes to be a part of them, which define the people that move through

space—"it's history tattooed on your body" (Braidotti, *NT* 15). Ultimately, with its quantifying method, this research aims to offer an innovative way of analysing migration literature, which may be used as an exemplary grid of digital mapping that can be applied to other literary works, in order to aid the understanding of instances of nomadic subjectivity in authors or their characters.

Subsequently, with the help of a close reading analysis, I have collected qualitative data to gain supplementary insights into the manifestation of Welch's nomadic subjectivity. This allows me to identify overarching themes and draw new conclusions that digital tools alone cannot furnish. In the qualitative and analytical close-reading, I relied on the theoretical framework that I hand-crafted in the previous section, inspired by Braidotti, Hall, and the NMP. In Braidotti and Hall's claim that the static, unitary subject does not exist, and that, instead, subjectivities are continuously flowing and becoming, their theory has proven useful to analyse how Welch's poetry portrays subjectivity shifts within the individual, even as it is not rooted in space.

Finally, since "[n]either cartography nor narrative on their own can capture the essence of place, [and] both are required to get a better sense of it" (Caquard 224), my analysis, and thesis, will be concluded by the combination of qualitative and quantitative data. With this combined method, I ultimately aim to uncover new information on the reciprocal interaction between movement and subjectivity, and demonstrate how integrating both types of data is useful, and arguably even necessary for the discipline of literary studies.

a. Before the Data Collection

To tackle my aim of combining the qualitative and quantitative data on my literary material, I had to start by acquiring the literature in question. The latter, indeed, proved to be a task in

itself. Since Liliane Welch is a relatively unknown author, especially outside of Luxembourg and Canada, the large majority of her work is not readily available, neither for sale, online, or in libraries outside of Luxembourg. Once I had acquired the books available to me, through the Luxembourgish National Library, the Luxembourgish Literature Archive, and the Internat Archive, I was tasked with making decisions. As I had previously decided to centre my research around places and countries, I had initially intended not to include any poems by Liliane Welch that do not explicitly mention either a specific place *in* the writing, or a place *of* writing—which Welch frequently mentions at the introduction of a chapter, or in the notes section of her collections. I did, however, make a conscious decision against this strategy. Had I overlooked all the works that did not include a direct reference to a place, I would have missed out on poems that have proven to be extremely useful for the overall argument of my thesis, and for the general understanding of Welch's situation as a subject in a state of becoming. Some of these poems will be analysed in the close-reading chapter of this thesis. This decision demonstrates that, though digital humanities tools are useful, and increasingly finding their way into literary studies, it remains necessary to go beyond mere functional data collection.

Nonetheless, some texts are more suitable for this thesis than others, and the proficiency with which Welch wrote meant that I was forced to exclude some of her work from this analysis. Based on poetry collections' availability for acquisition and suitability to my research, I selected books to include in my thesis. Out of the thirteen collections that I managed to obtain, either online or at the library, nine have been included in the dataset for the digital maps, namely: *Anticipating the Day* (2007), *Crossings* (2010), *Dispensing Grace* (2005), *Fire to the Looms Below* (1990), *Gathered in Memory's Hands* (2006), *Stealing the Flowers of Evil* (2008), *Syntax of Ferment* (1979), *This Numinous Bond* (2003), and

Unlearning Ice (2001). Out of the thirteen works I could access, these were the ones that were written in verse, and were therefore selected in order to provide as a base for the dataset a unified corpus of verse poetry.

The following step was to make a distinction between the poems that would be close-read, and which ones would be included in the dataset. Though many more are incorporated in the database, I intentionally limit the number of poems to close-read to two per theme, leaving me with six poems to close-read in total. The poems selected for close-reading analysis are distinct in the themes they cover, collectively contributing to Welch's character as a nomadic subject. The themes addressed within the analysed poems range from multilingualism to the craft of writing to Welch's heritage. The poems selected for close reading are: "Another Language," "Lëtzebuergesch," passages from "Tools," "All that winter, mapping," "Origins, Not All in Place," and "Léif Mam." Out of the latter selected poems, none figure among the quantitative data, simply because they do not explicitly mention a place in them. We see that many of Welch's poems, though they do not reference a location, still comment on her feelings and experiences as a diasporic person, such as "Another Language," or address themes relevant to her continuous becoming subjectivities, such as "Origins, Not All in Place." I determined that these instances are indispensable to my study and that, in order to offer a complete picture of the nomadic subjectivities of Liliane Welch, they needed to be included in the analysis.

With these initial decisions and selections made, it is time to move to the three methodological components of my analysis, to which I offer separate introductions below, before presenting my results and analyses in the following chapter.

b. Quantitative Data and the Dataset

Before being able to use the mapping tool, Carto, to proceed with my project of creating maps that represent the movement of Liliane Welch, I ought to create a dataset in Excel. This was the primary and most essential step in collecting my quantitative data. The literature included in this spreadsheet exceeds that which will be closely analysed in a qualitative manner. The reasoning behind this decision is simply due to: (1) my sheer inability to close-read Welch's entire oeuvre in the scope of this Research Master's thesis, and (2) the fact that as much quantified data as possible is needed to create a study that reveals valuable insights. Since "[d]igital projects reflect the data that fuels them" (Khatib and Schaebens 5), the dataset on which I base the maps of this thesis, I have included each poem that I could access that directly references a physical place.

To start compiling the dataset, I read through the previously selected poetry collections, to determine any overlaps or distinctions that could be summarised in a pre-determined grid. Here started the gruelling work of deciding what information to include and why. I decided to use the same columns to compile information for all poems, to ensure they would all be subject to the same criteria and ultimately comparable to each other. The selected columns are primarily inspired by the classifications made in the context of Dorine Schellens and Carmen van den Bergh's forthcoming project "Mapping the Modernist Novel," which digitally maps the two modernist novels *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Quattiere Vittoria*. In the final version of the Excel dataset, I included the following columns: *latitude, longitude, latitude_longitude, location, real_approximation_random, typology, country, activity, emotion, theme, weather_condition, poem_title, book, publication_year, page,* and *passage*.

The three first columns, *latitude*, *longitude*, and *latitude_longitude*, are self-explanatory. These are the coordinates of the locations Welch writes about in her poetry. Since precise coordinates are required for each individual point of the map, I was forced to take the liberty to include some approximations, since exact addresses are rarely mentioned in Welch's poetry. To mark this distinctive detail, I have included the column *real_approximation_random*, in which I specified whether a mapped location is an existing location, such as the Dome of Milan for instance, or whether it is an approximation made by myself, such as the location of Welch's childhood home, which we know is at walking distance of the Esch-sur-Alzette train station, or lastly, whether a mapped point is more or less random. This is the case, for instance, when a poem simply mentions the name of a city, without a street name or other hints that could help make an educated guess. In the *typology* column, I specify the kinds of locations Welch writes about. Possible categories here include, for instance, monuments, churches, nature, towns, and cities.

The category of *country* refers to the respective country that a poem directly mentions. Though Welch writes about other countries as well, most notably France, Austria, Germany and Switzerland, I have decided not to include these in the grid, and to instead focus on the countries with which she has the most substantial ties and writes about most frequently. These are Italy, where her maternal grandfather is from, Luxembourg, where she grew up, and Canada, where she lived for most of her life. Though, therefore, other countries are excluded, I am mentioning them here, because they do illustrate Welch's character as a nomadic, transnational and transcultural subject. Welch also frequently wrote poetry based on works of literature or famous paintings. Any locations mentioned in these poems are also excluded from the dataset.

Under the *activity* column, I have summarised the most essential activity described in the poem, or in the passage from which the quote is taken. *Emotion* refers to the speaker's emotion, or the poem's overall tone, while *theme* refers more broadly to the object described in the poem—childhood memories, nature, or literature, for instance. Under the *weather_condition* column, I made notes about the weather of the passage, to see whether the harsh, icy Canadian weather affects the poet differently than the warm, sometimes welcoming, sometimes oppressive Italian heat. The last four columns, respectively, include basic information such as the poem's title (*poem_title*), the book it appeared in (*book*), along with its year of publication (*publication_year)*, followed finally by the poem's page number (*page*), and the actual quote in which the specific location is mentioned (*passage*). I note here that some poems refer to multiple locations. In this case, the same poem will be included multiple times, with passages that refer to the respective locations.

It is essential to note the nature of the study that will be offered in this thesis. The data collected for this research on Liliane Welch and nomadic subjectivity is limited to a number of subjectively selected works of a singular author. Though this makes for a very small-scale research experiment, it serves as an example of the different usages for which the quantification of literature can account. In the case of this thesis specifically, these methods from geospatial academic studies are utilised to study one writer specifically, to draw conclusions on the corpus of *Luxemburgensia* more generally. Yet, similar quantitative literary studies, such as Randa El Khatib and Marcel Schaeben's endeavour to create digital maps of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Dorine Schellens and Carmen van den Bergh's forthcoming project "Mapping the Modernist Novel," which digitally maps the two modernist novels *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Quattiere Vittoria*—illustrate that my project builds upon new emerging research trends in the field of geospatial literary studies. My thesis' methods,

along with those of the aforementioned projects, show a potential for further studies, in which more extensive datasets may allow for more complete, and, thus, more significant results. Studies of that type could reveal new insights into entire selected literary epochs, genres, or writers.

c. Digital Mapping as the Braidottian Cartographic Method

In writing like that of Liliane Welch, or any other migrant, nomad, refugee, or traveller, location is of primary significance—and I argue that it is indispensable to highlight the intersection between places, movements, and subjectivities. As shall be demonstrated, digital mapping, based on the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS), is a digital humanities tool that is extraordinarily well-suited for the type of analysis that this thesis presents. Using it to study the spatiality of Welch's work allows me to "reconstruct the world named within [her] texts, and to reflect on the semantics of place, much as we might by study changing semantics over time or across genre in a corpus-based analysis of literary texts" (Biber qtd. in Wrisley 246). The digital mapping also represents a way of actualising Rosi Braidotti's idea of the cartographic method, with which we can trace the intimacy of relation between what the literary character or author, perceives, experiences and represents, and their surrounding geolocations—both spatial and institutional. This thesis will use the digital map, thusly, to identify geopolitical locations that trace how, when and where the subject's subjectivity is altered. Thus, as Cooper and Gregory do in their 2010 study on "Mapping the English Lake District," I employ GIS technology as a tool for a veritable critical interpretation, rather than mere spatial visualisation. (90)

The specific GIS tool used in the collection of quantitative data is Carto. Carto is an easy-to-use online mapping platform, that allows users to visualise spatial data in a digital

and interactive way. It requires a dataset, such as the one described above, which includes geospatial information in the form of latitude and longitude columns. The decision to use Carto over any other digital mapping tool is purely based on personal experience and skill. Since it requires the needed information in an exact manner to mark precise locations on a map, I have had to determine a specific point for each location. In a process called geoparsing, which involves identifying all locatable place name references and matching them with their corresponding coordinates, I was forced to take the liberty to give rough estimations, if not random allocations at times, for particular places mentioned in the poems. This does, however, not influence the results of the study, since the analysis will be based on disparities between countries, cities, or regions, and therefore does not necessitate precise addresses.

Using the CSV (comma-separated values) file with the dataset that one feeds into it, Carto creates an interactive map. It marks locations on the map and allows users to read each point's information, that is, the data about the location that was marked down in the dataset, as illustrated in the screen capture below.

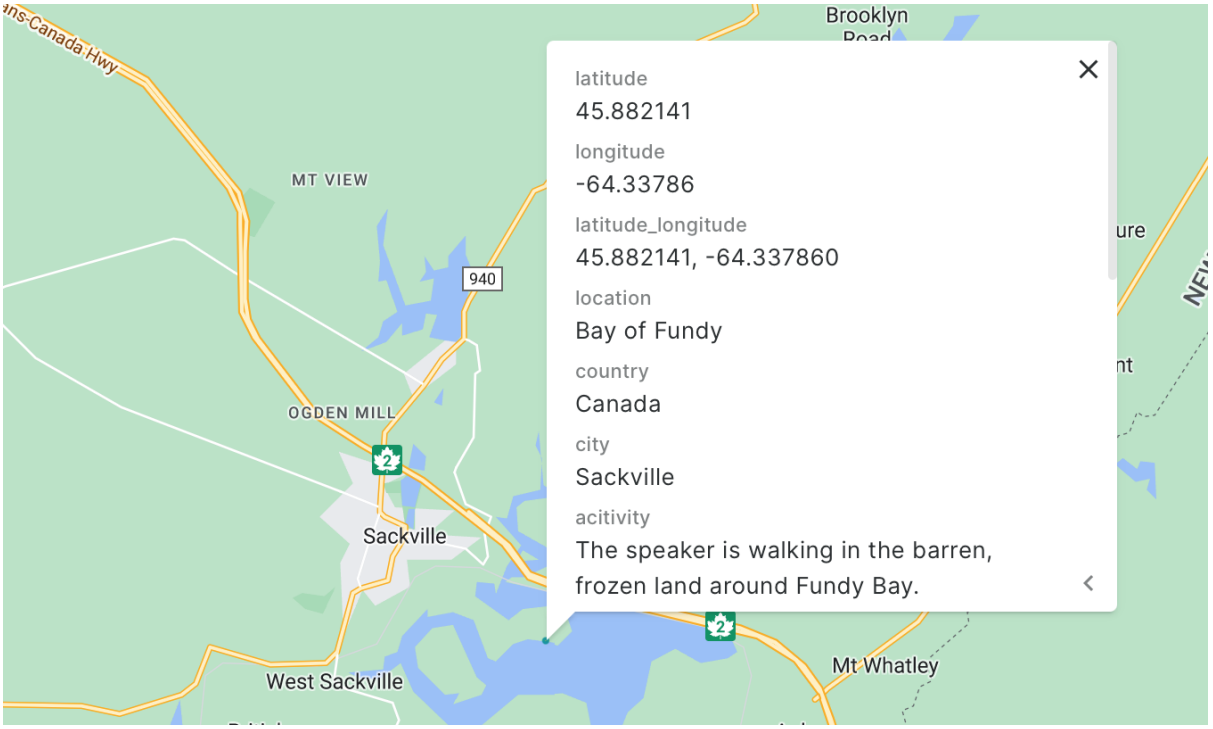

Fig. 1: Screen capture taken from my digital map created using Carto.com, showing a marked point in Fundy Bay, Sackville (near Liliane Welch's home).

Another, and perhaps the most useful of Carto's features, is that it allows users to filter data based on selected criteria. It enables me thus, for instance, to filter for locations in which the "emotion" noted in the dataset is "melancholic"—or to see at what locations Welch's writing is thematically focused more on "nature" rather than "architecture," or on "mythology," rather than "personal memories." In this manner, I can use Carto to determine how different locations impact Welch's subjective feeling of self, to cartographically represent her shifting nomadic subjectivities. As Braidotti's cartographic method, along with her theory of the nomadic subject, suggests, this digital map shall allow me, then, to trace a person's subjectivity as it *becomes*, in a fashion that is not temporary and linear, but rather scattered over, and defined by, all three tenses: present, past, and future.

d. "What a Text Conceals:" Close-Reading Liliane Welch

Though close reading is the last listed in this methodology section, it is among the first steps that needed to take place in practice, preceded only by the acquisition of the primary literature in question. Interpreting various of Welch's poems allowed me to determine the most noteworthy characteristics of Welch's writing, all while deriving meaning from them that will allow me to complete the interpretation of the quantitative data collected using digital humanities tools.

This thesis' quantitative data, in its very nature, is very language-based. Since the gathered and quantified data is limited solely to instances in which a country is explicitly mentioned, it would inevitably give an incomplete picture of Welch's oeuvre. For this reason, I have paid closest attention when close reading precisely to those aspects that cannot be quantified, or those that are excluded from the dataset. This includes, for instance, poems in which a place is not explicitly mentioned, but simply alluded to in the descriptions of the landscape, or poems which evoke aspects that are linked to my theoretical framework, such as mobility, cultural exchange, or what I have called nomadic imprints. In this way, the qualitative data harvested from the close reading will help contextualise the quantitative data and model the interdisciplinary collaboration between literary studies and digital humanities.

The more in-depth knowledge that can be gained from the immersion into Liliane Welch's texts allows me to closely observe those details that GIS technologies cannot conclusively illustrate, such as the bibliographic elements that surround a text and place, for instance. It allows me to come closer to the concealed meaning of Welch's texts, and thereby acknowledges the origin of Welch's own appreciation for literature:

> I had not yet unlocked the meaning, but I acquired instead the courage to acknowledge that a book contains much more than we ever suspect, that we need to go on reading to come closer to what a text conceals. (Welch, *Seismographs* 40)

Specific elements that I paid attention to include some of the same ones that I collected quantitively, namely emotions and tone. Beyond that, however, the close reading analysis also accounts for such aspects as poetic devices, choice of vocabulary, and the study of specific experiences, rather than solely the tones and emotions created by places. In the analysis of Welch's work, I have adopted the position that New Criticism, the practice that dominated literary studies from the 1940s through the 1960s, criticised (Tyson 129). I have significantly taken into consideration the author's lived experience, and assume that the first-person speaker in her poetry echoes the voice of Liliane Welch herself. In doing so, I acknowledge that my close-reading analysis assumes the form of biographical-historical criticism, rather than solely being based on "the *text itself*" (Tyson 130).

Finally, since the close-reading analysis aims to demonstrate instances of nomadic subjectivity in Liliane Welch's work, I have critically read her texts with Rosi Braidotti's and Stuart Hall's theories in mind. That being said, the goal was not to simply *apply* Braidotti and Hall to Welch, but rather to have them enter into a discourse with each other. In such manner, the theoretical framework has helped enlighten and understand some of Welch's writing, while Welch's poetry has allowed me to test, question, and criticise Braidotti and Hall's understandings of subjectivity.

5. A Life on a Map: Five Conclusions

> A place name is a bridge that communicates a place to the people of the world. It not only has a fundamental allegiance to the place it belongs to but, much like its DNA, it is a repository of the people, their language, history and ecology of the place. *A place name performs diverse functions* (Anu Kapur 2, emphasis added).

In Liliane Welch's poetry, spanning from Italy, Switzerland, France, and Germany, to Luxembourg, through the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the USA, and finally Canada, names of places are recurrent on almost every other page. Whether used to describe famous artworks, recount personal memories, or simply to illustrate to the reader her day-to-day life—a place name does indeed, as Anu Kapur writes in her book, perform diverse functions.

In the corpus of Welch's verse that was available for this thesis, as mentioned before, I excluded all place names that were used in the descriptions of artworks, those that were used in fictional accounts, and those that related to places outside of Italy, Luxembourg, and Canada. The reason for this is the fact that this thesis aims to create a cartographic account of Welch's life by focusing most closely on the three locations that impacted her life the most. Concurrently, in the 78 poems included in the dataset, place names from within those three countries are found a total of 131 times.

Figure 2: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Liliane Welch's poetry in Carto, filtering for different countries.

Out of the 131 place name mentions across nine books and 78 poems, Carto shows us that 61 refer to a location in Italy, where Welch's grandfather grew up, 60 refer to Canada, where she lived most of her life, and 10 refer to Luxembourg, the country in which she was born and lived the first 17 years of her life. We see in Welch's poetry, and the map created using it, that her subjectivity is made up of geographical places, each of which has a unique personal meaning. Although these places *do* exist on the map, unlike Kokovoko in *Moby Dick*, which was referenced in this thesis' introduction, their true meaning is nonetheless given to them by the associations and connections that Welch has to them. Her poetry becomes "a map of where s/he has already been; s/he can always reconstruct it a posteriori, as a set of steps in an itinerary," and, therefore, "the nomad's identity is an inventory of traces" (Braidotti, *NS* 14).

Analysing the maps that I have drawn up using the dataset with information gathered on Welch's poems, five distinctive conclusions can be drawn, on which I shall elaborate individually below.

a. Place as a Topical Marker

The first, and perhaps most evident conclusion that can be drawn from the cartographic representation of Welch's poetry, is the fact that different places tend to evoke various topics within her writing. In short: Welch uses place predominantly as a topical marker. This can easily be read from the map by examining the colours of the markers in each country, each representing a distinct theme.

Figure 3: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Liliane Welch's poetry. Each coloured marker represents a different theme in Welch's poetry, and we observe a clear difference in the colour scheme between Europe and Canada.

While Welch's writing about Luxembourg predominantly focuses on her childhood and her upbringing, often in a melancholic, or nostalgic tone, her poems about Italy are very diversified, both in tone and theme. This distinction can be seen in the colours on the map. The Italy-based poems often have a joyful tone, and deal with personal memories with friends, religion and mythology, and the rich Italian culture. At the same time, Italy reminds Welch of her heritage, of her mother and her mysterious grandfather. "When I explore the paths of my background, I write poems," writes Welch in *Seismographs* (19)—and the

mapping of her poetry proves this to be true. Her mother and the latter's death are primarily dealt with in the "Léif Mam" (Dear Mom) poems, many of which are set in Sicily, where the writer ponders on her relationship with her mother. This concentration is illustrated by the predominantly green colour of the markers in Sicily, which represents the "heritage"-theme.

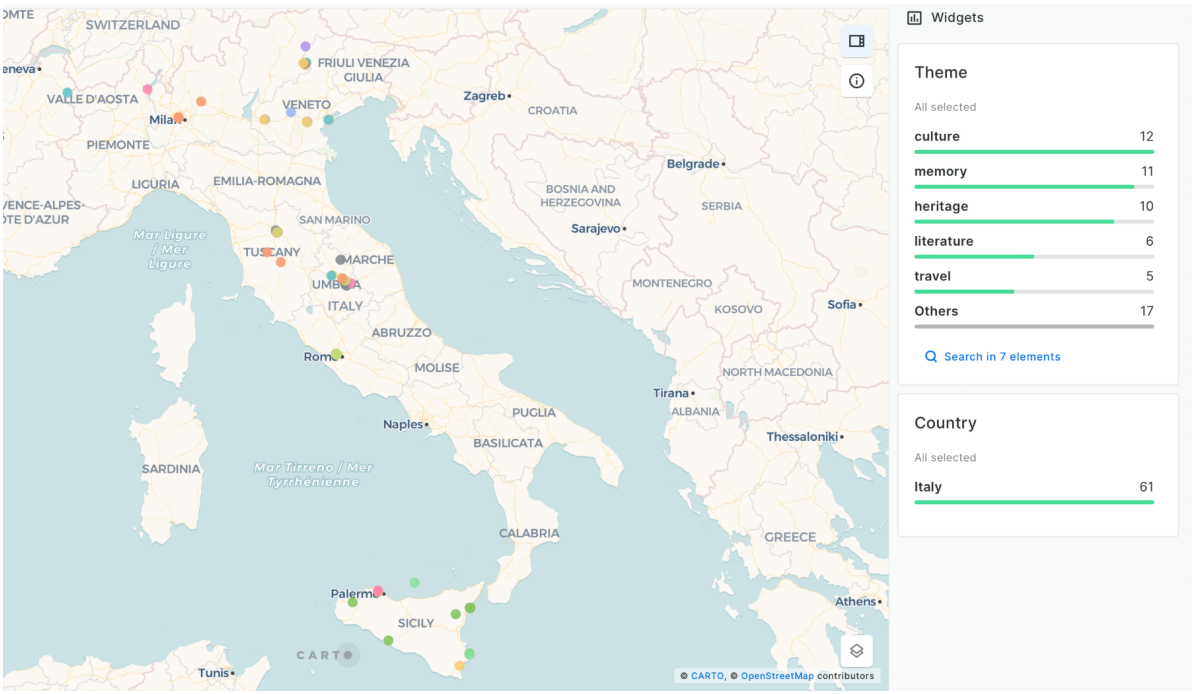

Figure 4: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Italy, representing Liliane Welch's poetry and filtering for different themes.

If filtered by theme, the map of Welch's poems in Europe contains a mix of colours, including tones of yellow, green, and muted blues and purples, each referring to a distinct theme. The digital map of Liliane Welch's Canada poems looks significantly different, and most of its location markers are turquoise. The poems written about Canada, in which the author mainly describes Sackville and the nearby Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick, frequently deal with themes of nature and the colonial history of the area (the Acadians)[2]. A

[2] This part of Canadian history dates back to the 17th century. "The French settlers who colonized the land and coexisted alongside Indigenous peoples became called Acadians. Acadia was also the target of numerous wars between the French and the English. Ultimately, the colony fell under British rule. Many Acadians were subsequently deported away from Acadia." (Landry and Chiasson)

desire to travel to Europe, as well as homesickness for Luxembourg or Italy, also emerge as frequent central themes in these poems.

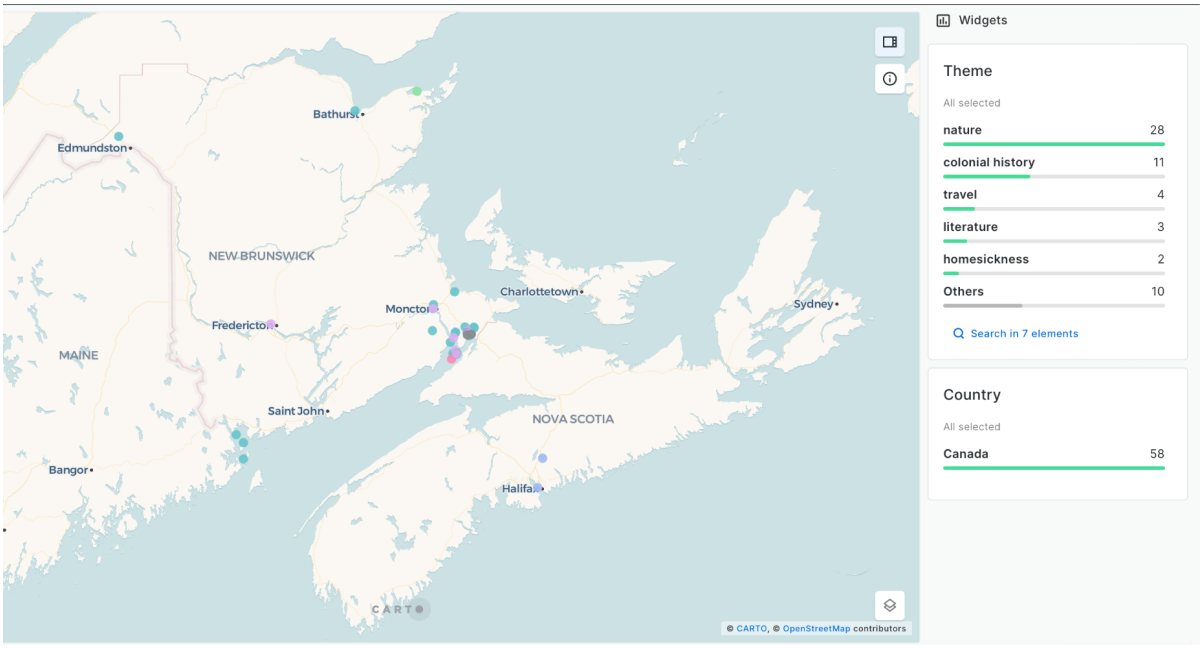

Figure 5: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Canada, representing Liliane Welch's poetry filtering for different themes.

At the same time, some topics cross borders and oceans, such as those of nature and literature, which are present in both Europe and Canada. I shall expand more on this in the close-reading section.

The topical markers that places come to represent throughout Welch's work illustrate Rosi Braidotti's main claim of nomadic subjectivity, that subjectivity is constantly in a state of becoming, shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts. Depending on the spaces she finds herself in—be it physically or mentally while writing—Welch is influenced by such aspects, causing themes to become more or less dominant depending on the space. In this way, via both the physical movement through space, but also the metaphorical movement through cultural themes, memories, and associations, Liliane Welch's writing becomes

inherently transcultural. It captures the cultural and historical importance of a specific location in place and time, as it is perceived or created by Welch herself.

b. Places are Linked to Memories

A second conclusion to be drawn from the digital maps of Welch's writing is that the places in her poetry are frequently linked to specific personal memories. This is especially true in the case of the poems about Italy and Luxembourg, where the dataset categorises the mentions of these places as 'memory' a total of 13 times, as opposed to one time in Canada. This makes it the second most recurring theme in the Europe-poems, following only that of culture. The frequent reference to memories illustrates not just Liliane Welch's diverse experiences in these different places, but also how these experiences, at once, come to define certain places in Welch's mind. To the nomadic subject, space and subjectivity become mutually constitutive, as the writer makes memories in space, while space also directly impacts the writer over the course of her life.

We see Welch's space-rooted memories all throughout her poetry. In this way, for instance, the Dolomites are heavily associated with fond memories of rock climbing, as can be read in "Inaccessible Peaks," but most tragically, with the death of Welch's dear friend Renzo Timillero. The Italian region of Umbria, in turn, is closely linked to memories from "[a]lmost three decades ago, studying / Italian with an Angelo in the Palazzo / Galengo," where she "lost [her]self in [its] streets, / stairs and passageways ("Salve Perugia," lines 10-13). Luxembourg, in turn, evokes a "muffled murmur of childhood" and "records from long-ago" ("Billet-doux to Esch-Uelzecht," lines 14, 8).

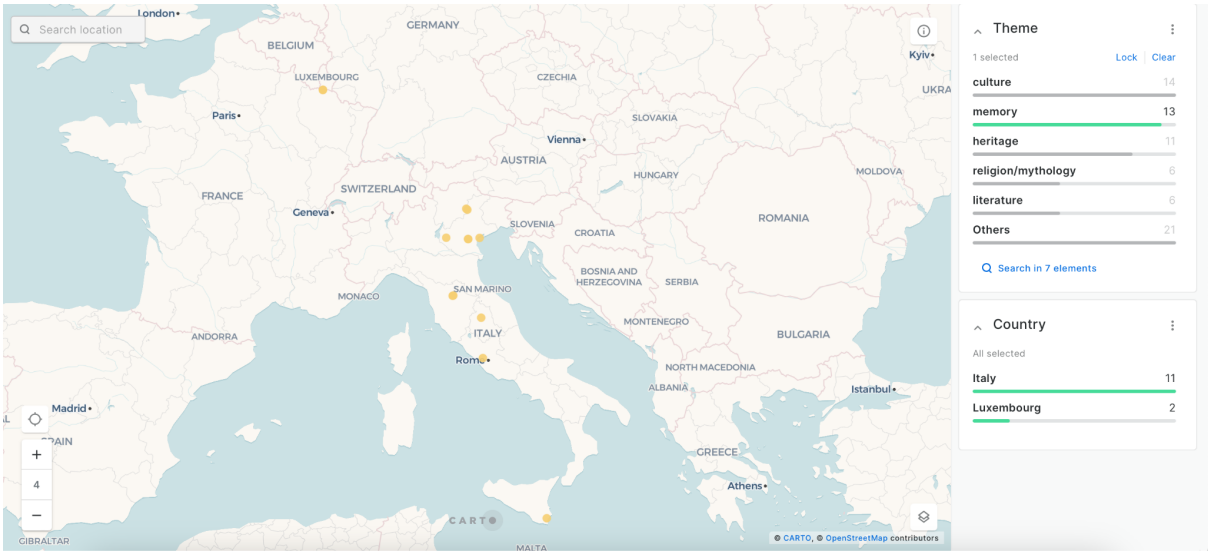

Figure 6: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Europe, representing Liliane Welch's poetry filtering for the thematic category of memories.

The nomad writer uses specific place names not just to describe incidents in her life and how they happened, but to emphasise the importance of spatiality within her writing and, by extension, in her life. These moments clearly shaped the nomad writer, and remain closely associated with the locations they took place in. As these memories from the past continue to affect Welch's present and future, they locate the subjectivity-creation simultaneously across all tenses—in the past, present, and future. Memories thus become events frequently rooted in movement that shape and create the subject's subjectivity (Braidotti, "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities"). The subject harnesses power from her ability to move between spaces and languages, seamlessly, and create memories across nations and cultures that shape her permanently. In this way, Welch's poetry, if translated into Braidotti's cartographic method, becomes an "account of the present that aims at tracking the production of knowledge and subjectivity and to expose power … as empowerment" (Braidotti, "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities").

c. Subjectivity is Grounded in Locations, not Nations

The rootedness of memories in specific places, discussed in the previous point, once again emphasises the tension between the national and transnational. If we look at where specific experiences of Liliane Welch are anchored, we see that the experiences that have most shaped the speaker's subjecthood, and which she deals with in her poetry, are linked not necessarily to a nation, or a country, but rather to specific locations within cities, nature, or villages. Welch's transcultural subjectivity is made up in itself of hybridities formed from many different influences and roots. Rather than identifying with a nation, the nomadic poet has laid roots and networks in many places *within* a country, through friendships, family, and experiences—all of which are shaped by the distinct culture of a specific location. We recognise a difference between different places within the same country, indicating that cultural differences exist not just between countries, but also *within* countries. In making this distinction, "[w]e shift the political debates from the issue of differences between cultures to differences *within* the same culture," as Braidotti writes in *Nomadic Theory* (245).

In the Italian mountains of the Dolomites, where Welch is an avid climber and explorer, her experience affects her in a vastly different way than it does in Perugia—the city where she experienced an "awakening to [her] grandparents' plights and adventures," and where she rediscovered "the thread of the Latin heritage which shaped the story of [her] life" (*Seismographs* 20). Similarly, while she rejects Luxembourg as a nation and a country on multiple instances throughout her life's work, the map marks fond memories in the city of Esch-sur-Alzette. The second-largest city in the country, and a symbol of Luxembourg's steelmaking past, is also the place of Liliane Welch's childhood home. Here, as "a girl, [she]'d / study winter evenings between oak table and / tile stove, in [her] parents' cozy kitchen, early / nineteen fifties," when "Dvořák's *New World Symphony* / one night unrolled

from the radio box / vast fragrant wide open spaces / and the urgent hustle of huge cities / with exotic names begging to be / told" ("New World," 2-10)—unleashing her incessant desire to travel, and her calling towards the so-called New World. I suggest here, that this intra-national difference in which the nomadic subject inserts herself, clearly challenges the monocultural idea of a nation-state.

Quoting Braidotti's words, one may say that Welch's poetry illustrates the idea that "globalization is about a deterritorialization of social identity that challenges the hegemony of nation-states" (*NT* 246). To that, I would add that the deterritorialisation of Welch's subjectivity inevitably leads to the questioning of the singular, unitary, or dominant culture. Space, then, gives the author different subjectivities, each of which challenges the monocultural views of the nation. In deconstructing the nation and its apparently concurrent culture, Welch's poetry evokes the critiques made in transnational theory by theorists such as Nadia Lie, Micol Seigel and Katherine Pence and Andrew Zimmermann, where transnationalism is "a hermeneutic perspective that questions and decentralizes the nation as an analytical category" (Vandenbosch and D'haen 1).

As a result, Liliane Welch, rather than identifying with a country and nation as a whole, more profoundly connects with the concrete locations in which her memories hold her. By moving across the map, both literally and metaphorically, and by revisiting these memories, Liliane Welch is constantly in a state of *becoming*. Rather than a rigid conception of identity that is primarily rooted in a person's nationality, Liliane Welch's multiple, ever-changing subjectivities come into being through the constant connection and reconnection with particular towns, mountains, and cities—*not* nations. At once, in Welch's poetry, we witness the deconstruction of the nation, the unitary culture, as well as of the conception of identity that is based on them. In the Luxembourgish poet's experience, we

thus see the convergence of nomadic subjectivity theory and Hall's cultural identity theory, which reject the unitary identity and argues for fluid subjectivity instead.

d. Movement is Free and Continuous

Another characteristic of transnationalism is the existence of the borders which are being crossed in a back-and-forth movement—a practice that we see in Liliane Welch's poetry maps, as well. Though "Welch's earlier poetry and book reviews focused almost exclusively on her new life in the New World, she [eventually] began writing poems about mountain-climbing in the Italian Dolomites during summer holidays, [and later], the Europe of her childhood and return visits" (Lemm 12). Through all of her writing that is included in the digital maps, Welch moves freely and continuously through the world. Lines about Italy, Luxembourg, and Canada figure in the same books, chapters, and sometimes even poems, as Welch's mind, along with her pen, wanders through the world. This can be read from the maps when we filter the markings by book. Out of the nine books included in the dataset, each book but two contains points marked in both the Old World and the New World. The continuous travels also explain why Welch can capture place extraordinarily well, as she is well-acquainted with both continents, and highlights the opposites and comparisons she finds between the locations she moves through. Moreover, this free movement hints at Welch's nomadic character, and reiterates the importance of place to the creation of her subjecthood. The sheer scale of the global movement that we see in Welch's poetry challenges any assumption of monoculturalism—and in doing so, reaffirms the main ideas of transculturalism.

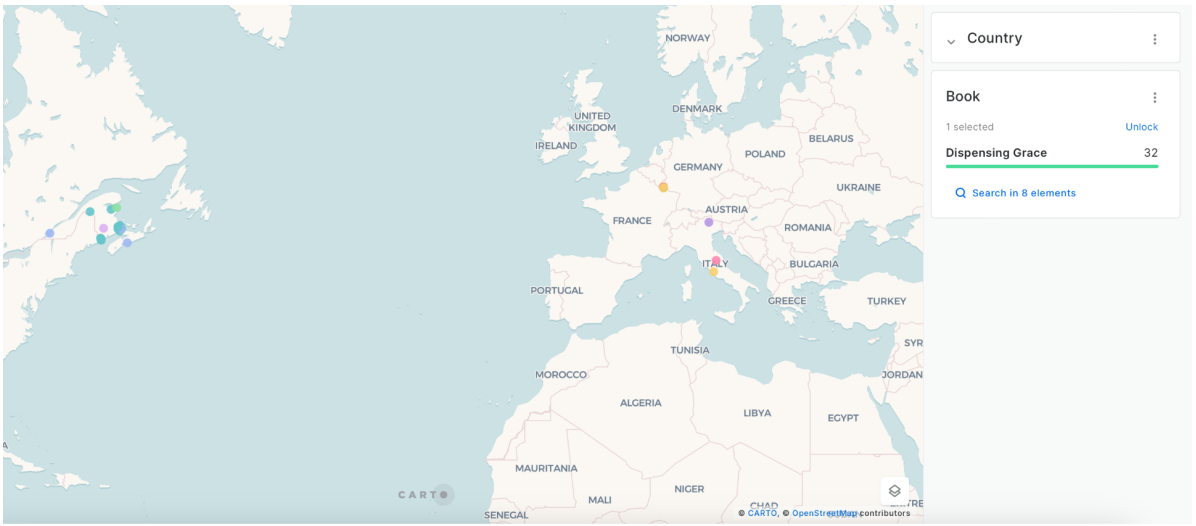

Figure 7: Screen capture taken from a digital map of Liliane Welch's poetry, filtering for the book Dispensing Grace. *We see that location markers are spread across countries and continents.*

In "Praising the Earth With Our Feet," from her essay collection *Seismographs*, Welch reflects on her practice of being in constant movement. "For years I've been walking, since my earliest childhood days," first through a mining town in Luxembourg, then "with priests for six weeks over glaciers and peaks in Switzerland," she writes. Through all of her travels, she explains, "I wandered alone, often estranged from the land and people of the Old World" (50). Her estrangement from Europe, which was ultimately the reason why Welch emigrated to the USA, then Canada, creates in Welch a "psychic pull" towards different places, it embodies "the never-completed dialogue/argument/love-hate affair with the original heritage and place" (Lemm 12). She finds herself, thus, in a constant back-and-forth migratory movement, pulled into all directions at all times. She describes this feeling in her essay "Sackville, New Brunswick Locus of Migration":

> After the Canada Geese have honked their way back north over our territory, my own migration instinct awakens and I long for the nomadic life of the road, for the crags and streets of Luxembourg, for the peaks and friends of the Dolomites. Yet when I leave New Brunswick for Europe in the spring, the ground withdraws from under me:

> … far from Sackville—the village locus for Fundy's vast marshes, mudflats and misty bogs—I begin to search again for that home ground where I'm fated to live. (Welch, *Seismographs* 52)

Though arrived at the "ground where [she is] fated to live," Welch's estrangement and the movement caused by it takes a dominant role in her poetry, and take over her life. We see that the pull of those "Luxembourg streets," of the Dolomite mountains, and of the vast, icy Fundy Bay landscapes coexist, and lead to the "construction, deconstruction and renewed signification of those origins … amidst the walking and poem-making" (Lemm 12). In this continuous back-and-forth movement, origins cease to exist, and Welch's free movement makes new identities available to the subject. In Canada, Welch is first an immigrant, later a citizen. In Luxembourg, she is first a citizen, then an emigrant; and in Italy, she is at once a mere tourist, while also a self-discovering subject tracing the roots of her ancestors. In all places collectively, however, she is a nomad, who effortlessly shifts between the subjectivities known to her, while continuing to be marked by her new experiences.

e. Themes Travel with the Nomadic Writer

Lastly, I read from the cartographic representation of Welch's poetry that some themes overlap between locations, crossing the frontiers between countries and continents, and following the author in her life's pilgrimage. My argument here is that these crucial aspects of the subject's life illustrate the fact that Braidotti's flowing subjectivities do not only follow one after another chronologically and linearly, but instead, they co-exist, overlap, and interact with one another. Moments that have shaped the subject in the past, thus, interact with subjectivities from the present and even the future, and in that way, may be associated with Stuart Hall's tension between being and becoming. In the poetry of Liliane Welch, and its

visualisation created with Carto, we recognise that for her, the themes that travel with the writer are those of nature, and of writing, which is classified as "literature" more broadly. This can be read from the map, as we note that these two themes are located not exclusively in Europe or North America but are marked in both. Nature, we read, is written about 28 times in relation to Canada, and 5 times in relation to Europe. The theme of literature can be filtered 3 times in Canada and 6 times in Europe. Though these numbers may not seem particularly significant, it is worth noting that no other theme crosses the transatlantic boundary more than once.

One of the themes that move with Welch is nature, of which the poet has been an avid observer since her childhood, when she "trailed into afternoons of meadows to gather grasses for my rabbit" and "trekked with priests for six weeks over glaciers and peaks" (Welch, *Seismographs* 50). The theme of nature is especially prevalent in her Sackville poems, but also features a lot in the Dolomite poems. Nature allows Liliane Welch to overcome the tensions that exist in her life between what was then the "New World" and the "Old World," and enables her to feel harmony, although she finds herself constantly pulled in both directions. She writes in *Seismographs*: "Each spring, early April, when I walk near Fundy Bay, to watch the great ice slabs disappear in the cold brown waters, the tensions that energize my life assume new significance. I can discover the harmonies that hold Europe and Canada together for me" (47). It is, therefore, that the theme travels with her through both of her worlds.

Being able to navigate the inner turmoil caused by the hybrid tension between Europe and Canada, which pulls her back and forth, in turn, allows Welch to develop her selfhood. As she is figuratively "walking" through life's experiences and creates her transnational,

transcultural migrant path, different forms of selfhood continuously come into being within the nomadic writer, through nature:

> It seemed I was born with the need to explore and review landscapes with my feet. … I cannot live without my feet being in touch with the ground. All my self-discoveries came out of doors, not inside. They came while I participated in the primitive urge that is central to human beings and to poetry—the urge to find an orientation through our world, to feel more alive to things, to exult in an inclusion, a oneness with that world. Intense selfhood came only through the consummation of earthly things by the feet's praise. (*Seismographs* 50)

While nature takes on a remarkable role in the poems, the weather is less significant, causing me to reject the hypothesis I had made earlier, that descriptions of the weather reflect the poet's emotion. Instead, though weather conditions are often mentioned, all that we read from them is the expected pre-conceived notion that Canada is often described as "snowy," "foggy," and "icy," while Italy is "hot," and "sunny." Luxembourg is only once attributed to a weather condition, when it is described as sunny in "Against the hills at the Sauer (Moersdorf)". Ultimately, there are many more instances where the dataset labels the weather condition as "unspecified," namely in 78 out of 132 entries. Rather than a failed analysis, however, I view this rejected hypothesis as precisely illustrating the power of quantitative research, in the way that it demonstrates how these methods are able to challenge assumptions made based on close reading. As a consequence of this observation, I regard the occasional notes about the weather simply as an example of Welch's affinity with nature, of which she is every observant. Therefore, I have categorised her mentioning of weather conditions, if related to a location, under the "nature" theme in the dataset as well.

Nature takes on another vital role in Welch's life, as it becomes a source of inspiration, enabling the poet to do what she loves most: writing. Unsurprisingly, the second theme that recurs through all her work and crosses borders as seamlessly as the nomadic writer herself is that of writing, poetry, and reading—summarised in the dataset under the "literature" category. Welch satisfies her primitive "urge that is central to human beings and to poetry … to find an orientation through our world" (*Seismographs* 50) by writing. As she travels, not just physically through Europe and Canada, but also with her pen over the white piece of paper, the author lets inspiration guide her, as she leaves her mark on the places she visits. Besides the three countries in which her life and her poetry are rooted, there is thus another "location," not to be found on a geographical map, that her work is imbued with: "the immense world of books [Welch] has read and assimilated and often tries to bring to new life in her own poems" (Hansen-Pauly 11-12). In Liliane Welch's case, writing and subjectivity are mutually constitutive. It is through language and writing that Welch forms a large part of her subjecthood, and equally, her wanderings and explorations of the self are what she brings to paper in her writing. I shall delve further into this constitutive relationship in the close reading section below.

Finally, to conclude this section, I reiterate what we can more globally read from the maps of Welch's work. The five conclusions discussed above demonstrate that Liliane Welch's shifting selfhoods come into being and negotiate with each other as she travels, both across nations, and over the white paper. In doing so, she explores previously unexplored grounds—allowing her to negotiate her own selfhood within space. The question of place in Welch's literature has not just "diverse functions" (Kapur 2), but overwhelming ramifications. The locations she mentions in her writing are shaped by herself just as much as they shape her, creating a complex but reciprocal relation between subject and space. The maps of

Liliane Welch's work show that place emerges as, and *through*, the complexity of historical and natural forces as well as the writer's bodily perception, emotions and imagination, as she writes with her body.

Welch utilises place names to capture memories, record the transcultural importance of specific places, and explore her subjectivity. Ultimately, in doing this, Liliane Welch uses places more broadly to build a narrative around her life, in which significant moments or experiences are rooted in significant places. She views the concrete places, and the ideas they cause to surface within her, as a way of relating to the world. She tells Anne Compton in an interview:

> I think in those concrete places, it has something to do with our relatedness to the earth or to reality. I believe—and I don't want to push this too much because it might sound romantic or elated—our mission as poets is to bear witness to where we are and what we are doing. ("Ascension" 128)

By writing poetry, Welch's life is transformed into a narrative, bearing witness to her experiences and highlighting the most formative elements of her travels through space.

Although space has been established as an important element of Welch's life and poetry, we must remember that Melville's speaker claimed that true place cannot be found on a map. Instead, it is created in the negotiation between self and connections that span across not just places, but also and experiences. Just as identity, nationhood, and culture may not be confined to rigid definitions, Welch's nomadic subjectivity cannot be limited to her spatial experience. Therefore, in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of Welch's subjecthood, we must look beyond space to see how her subjectivity is created. This follows in the close-reading analysis below.

6. Close Reading Liliane Welch: A Thematic Analysis

The map based on Liliane Welch's poetry, while it serves as an indicator of important overarching themes, and illustrates her geographic position in the world, does not paint a complete picture of Liliane Welch's life, and her existence as a nomadic writer. The reason behind this is that the dataset is, at its very base, anchored in linguistics and geography, and focuses solely on concrete locations that are directly named in the poems. Outside of the poems that do this, there are numerous poems in which Liliane Welch discusses aspects that contribute to her nomadic subjectivity and her transnational character. Having established how Welch is transformed by localities on the map, it is now time to look in between the cracks of space—to analyse the poetic narrative she creates around her life. In this endeavour, I shall close-read six of Liliane Welch's poems in the following section, while focusing on three themes in three different sections.

Firstly, I will address Liliane Welch's multilingualism, which thus far has not been discussed yet, but represents a critical tenet not just in transcultural studies as the ones I referred to in the theoretical framework, but also in Liliane Welch's life and Luxembourgish culture as a whole. Braidotti notes the polyglot's nomadic character, while Amaury Dehoux and Tómas Espino emphasise that the multilingual migrant is inherently transnational. To investigate the importance of language in the becoming subject, and its reflection in Welch's writing, I analyse her poems "Another Language" and "Lëtzebuergesch," which deal with Welch's two self-proclaimed mother tongues, English and Luxembourgish. Secondly, I will return to the maps to analyse the border-crossing theme of writing more in-depth. In this section, I will examine how the practice of writing, as Welch addresses it in her poetry, reflects her state of *becoming* as a nomadic subject. In this section, I will use the poems "Tools," and "All that winter, mapping" as examples to demonstrate the nature of writing as a

place of self-construction. Finally, with the poems “Origins, Not All in Place,” and “Léif Mam,” I will evoke the theme of Welch’s transcultural heritage and upbringing, which are clearly reflected in her writing, and strongly affected Welch throughout her life. I will argue here, that the continuous dialogue between Welch and her antecedents, whether dead or alive, represents a kind of nomadic wandering, which I ascribe to her nomadic subjectivity.

a. Mother Tongues and Other Tongues: The Polyglot as a Nomadic Subject

When Liliane Welch grew up in Luxembourg in the middle of the 19th century, Luxembourg’s official language was a prominent topic of debate. Continuously shifting until 1984, today’s official use of German, French, and Luxembourgish was based on the grand-ducal decrees of 1830, 1832 and 1834, which allowed the free choice between German and French. French was preferred in the administration, while Luxembourgish had no official status. Shortly after Welch was born in 1937, French was banned under the Nazi occupation, and Luxembourgish was “officially downgraded to a dialect in order to justify the incorporation of Luxembourg into the German Reich” (Information and Press Service of the Government 3). However, Luxembourg’s inhabitants had strong ties to their language, and the country’s 1941 census, intended to crown the power of the occupying forces, evolved into a catastrophe. In an act of resistance, an overwhelming majority of the population declared Luxembourgish as their mother tongue, although the German forces considered it only a dialect. This anecdote makes clear not only Luxembourg’s multilingual essence, but also illustrates Luxembourgish people’s appreciation for the cultural values that they associate with their language, though surrounded by the transcultural influences of German and French.

By the nature of Luxembourg as surrounded by Germany, France and Belgium, and by the government’s regulation to have three official languages, Luxembourgers are

polyglots. Accessing different languages in different situations allows them to shift effortlessly between subjectivities with a critical nomadic consciousness. Indeed, Luxembourg's government claims in its pamphlet on the Luxembourgish language, that "Luxembourgers live their daily lives floating effortlessly from one language to another" (5). Of course, Liliane Welch is no exception to this rule. She grew up in Luxembourgish, learned German, French and English at school, and later, learned Italian to be more closely in touch with her heritage. Her multilingualism is a theme often addressed in her writing, particularly her love for the English language, which becomes the subject of many of her poems.

Though a nomadic subject from her childhood onwards, shaped by impressions of her transcultural upbringing in Luxembourg and her multilingualism, it is only upon learning the English language that Welch is able to fulfil her dreams of permanently relocating across the Atlantic. In this subsection, let me, therefore, closely read two of Liliane Welch's poems, in which she discusses both her early mother tongue, Luxembourgish, and her "belated mother tongue" (Welch, *Seismographs* 40), English. In the analysis of "Another Language" and "Lëtzebuergesch," I shall demonstrate that, while English and Luxembourgish have distinctive meanings to the poet, they also bear similarities.

Another Language

In the eighth grade, they began
to engulf me: throng,
thatch, throttle —

English words — an open breath.
Most afternoons were spent
in their jubilation; coaxing scorching sounds.

The others waited inside books, the radio —
patient, loyal, the way they reside now in my notebooks.

Words are always alive, even if forgotten and unused —
not tools but hosts who await us, slip into us
the way they invaded our forebears.

Sometimes one throws a wild
glance, a laugh — our voice,

in the flash of its footsteps, for now,
resplendent, released, redeemed.

"Another Language" was published in *Stealing the Flowers of Evil* in 2008. Aged 71, and two years before her passing of myeloma in 2010, Liliane Welch muses on the English language, and reminisces about her first contact with a language that changed her life. It was as a *lycéenne* at the Lycée des Jeunes Filles in Esch-sur-Alzette, in 1949, when she first learned to speak English (Hansen-Pauly, "Liliane Welch" 6). She remembers this notable day clearly, and she describes it in her essay "On my way to English" in *Seismographs*:

> "October 1949, I'm twelve years old. I'm on my way to the lycée. It's a rainy and cold morning. The leather briefcase in my hand is heavy with books and notebooks for today's classes. Each time I pass a store window I stop and perform. I watch my mouth pronouncing aloud English words with th's and r's: "the ruler," "the theatre," "the return," "three throbs" (38).

English words like "throng, / thatch, throttle" (lines 2-3), as she lists in "Another Language," with pronunciations that are yet unknown to her tongue, "engulf" the speaker from the very beginning (line 2). The word "engulf" is striking here, and alludes to how the English language completely overcame Liliane Welch, suddenly and unexpectedly—in a way that she still recalls almost sixty years later.

The teenager rapidly grew obsessed with the English language and its new sounds, and although the latter had involuntarily forced itself upon her, she regards its knowledge as a joyful experience, its command becoming a veritable "jubilation" (line 6). The forceful nature in which the language overcame young Welch points to a more considerable power that accompanies the acquisition of a foreign language. "The obsessive utterance of those words is the tithe paid to enter another world" (38), Welch explains in "On my way to English." Learning a foreign language allows its speaker to cross boundaries, both linguistic and geographical, and in this way, to enter other new worlds. This statement by Welch can be linked to the previously examined argument of Braidotti, though *avant la lettre*—claiming the polyglot to be a nomadic subject, "pursuing preset semantic trails, leaving behind acoustic, graphic, or unconscious traces" (*NS,* 8).

The power of the English language, in Welch's experience, goes beyond the access it provides to new cultures and nations. Instead, the author also associates it with her high school English teacher, *Joffer* (Miss) Metzler, about whom she published numerous poems[3]. In Mary Metzler's classes, "[Welch] felt as though [she] was in the middle / of the ocean, in an immensely vital and lucid / intellectual landscape, connected at once / to the outside world and to [her] American dreams" ("Teacher," lines 7-10). Most importantly, her all-female students admired Miss Metzler for "her free spirit, her / fearlessness, / and her fidelity to an ideal of female education / rooted in fierce individualism" ("Teacher," lines 41-44). A feminist role model, *Joffer* Metzler's thoughts and behaviour become a form of resistance to the dominant patriarchal discourse—a fluid, Braidottian way of thinking that allows her to end the cycle of confined borders of what it means to be a woman. Inspired by *Joffer* Metzler's mental nomadic wanderings, Welch's literal movement is set into motion, as

[3] See, for example, "Joffer," and "She Taught Me English."

Metzler's "teaching of English brought [Welch] close to an as yet unknown world for which [she] then yearned and which was later to become [her] true place" (*Seismographs* 39)—Canada.

The knowledge of English, for Liliane Welch, becomes a source of power in a twofold sense: On the one hand, it gives her access to a larger part of the world and thus a better understanding of her place in it, and on the other hand, it reaffirms the feminist values which her teacher carved out for her. Welch's rootedness "in a fierce individualism," which has enabled much of her experience as a nomadic subject, ultimately stems from her educational background. In the way that I interpret Welch's poem, it is through this powerful nature of language, that "[w]ords are always alive, even if forgotten and unused" (line 9). Language, Welch writes, is not a tool but rather a mighty "host," which invades people unexpectedly—just as it did with our "forebears" (lines 10-11). English, though not Welch's mother tongue, comes to represent language as a whole here, used as a means of communicating for millennia, and hinting towards the cultural dimension of language, which connects us to our shared history.

The English language, as the active subject of the poem, becomes the host of ideas and new possibilities. In this way, Welch suggests that languages are not simply a means of communication, but living, ever-evolving entities that shape the subject which uses them. By managing foreign languages, in particular, which represent previously unexplored grounds to the non-native speaker, the polyglot becomes a nomadic subject, harnessing liberating power from multilingualism. "Another Language" ends on this joyful note, celebrating the potential of foreign languages. Welch writes that our voice becomes "resplendent, released, redeemed" (line 15) in the eye of unexpected laughs and glances thrown at us by newly acquired words. Again, Welch here notes the living nature of language, which sometimes surprises its

speakers and listeners. As Welch describes it, our voice becomes liberated, as does the mind of the nomadic subject who speaks multiple languages. Thus, plurilingualism opens up frontiers, allowing the polyglot to be free—liberated from a previously restricting language community.

Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva emphasises this liberating potential that a new language may hold for a subject in her book *Strangers to Ourselves*: "Lacking the reins of the maternal tongue, the foreigner who learns a new language is capable of the most unforeseen audacities when using it" (Kristeva 31). Kristeva's statement becomes clear in Welch's example, where English, with its 'th's and 'r's, is the language of potential, and remains worthy of a dedicated poem until the end of Welch's life. "Writing in my silent Sackville study or landing at the windy Halifax airport, I smell, feel, hear and become thrilled all over again by the wonderful freshness of English words," (41) Welch writes in *Seismographs*—and thus reaffirms her liberation from oppressive Luxembourg, her migration across previously uncrossed boundaries, and the power gained from making a foreign language her own.

Though she acquired new language fluencies throughout her life, and wandered through multiple different language communities, Welch's mother tongue always remained paramount. As we shall see in the following poem, dedicated entirely to the Luxembourgish language, Welch's native language takes on a unique role in her life. Though associated with unpleasant memories from her childhood, Welch manages to harness power from Luxembourgish, which, in my analysis, takes the role of an act of resistance.

Lëtzebuergesch
The words invade, invade — their
music finds me wherever I am.
In memory's prism, they refract, spill, sift:

archeological finds. They never
evaporate before hitting ground. Recovery…
did I ever carve other tongues in their
likeness, new homes? I need
no compass, no map;
their beat alone will return me
to a land dismantled, its high
furnaces, closed mine-shafts, a land
where the dead still whisper.

Mother tongue,
you're never silent.
Come, join the hallelujahs I craft.

Liliane Welch writes about her first mother tongue, "Lëtzebuergesch" (Luxembourgish), in an eponymous poem, which was published in *This Numinous Bond* in 2003. As a nomad, both physically and linguistically, the Luxembourgish-Canadian poet is often far removed from the Luxembourgish language. Besides the annual visits to Luxembourg in the summer, the writer comes into contact with *Lëtzebuergesch* only in letters and calls, to friends and family in the Grand Duchy—and in vivid memories, as the above poem suggests. Despite living most of her life in a foreign language[4], Luxembourgish words "invade, invade," Welch's life (line 1)—and their music finds her wherever she goes. The poem opens with a theme that the previous poem also evoked: the powerful invasiveness of language. Welch suggests that, although she is a nomadic subject that is always moving between locations and language communities, her mother tongue always finds her.

When writing about the polyglot as a nomadic subject in *Nomadic Subjects*, Rosi Braidotti claims that a person who speaks multiple languages "is a variation on the theme of critical nomadic consciousness; *being in between languages constitutes a vantage point in deconstructing identity*" (12, my emphasis). Although I mostly align with Braidotti's

[4] *Life in Another Language* is also the title of Welch's only prose poetry collection, published in March of 1992.

arguments about rejecting the steady notion of identity, I argue that Welch's poetry demonstrates that certain aspects of one's identity can remain strong throughout one's life. As such, the mother tongue, representing a subject's rootedness in a particular place and language community, forcefully stands its identitary grounds. It becomes, in that sense, an aspect of the subject that Hall would describe as being. To illustrate this claim, I refer to Welch's questioning of whether she ever found refuge in a language other than Luxembourgish. Despite having previously called English her new mother tongue (*Seismographs* 40), she continues to wonder: "did I ever carve other tongues in their / likeness, new homes?" (lines 6-7).

Based on Welch's experience, I argue that a native language represents the sole specification available for a nomad author who, by definition, cannot be ranked in any stable identity, culture, or nation. I align myself here with Spanish-Agrentinean writer Andrés Neuman, rather than Rosi Braidotti. In his lecture "Writing with two Passports," at the University of Oklahoma in 2014, Neuman compares language to luggage. A mother tongue, he argues, "represents a compact domestic sphere that the nomad writer lugs along during all his transits" (Amaury 33). The individual travelling around the world, or the polyglot nomadic subject, carries their idiom wherever they go or, as Welch puts it in "Lëtzebuergesch:" their idiom *finds* them wherever they go. Welch's conception of language here, as following her around in her pilgrimage, alludes to the involuntary act of remaining linked to the original mother tongue. Though perhaps associated with unpleasant memories, a mother tongue becomes almost like an anchor, mooring one in the specific geopolitical locality that is a language community. In this way, if we consider Hall's conception of being and becoming as the markup of cultural identity, Luxembourgish represents the sole true point of *being* in Welch's life. Though she has the option to take on new subjectivities and to

become Canadian, to *become* a Luxembourgish emigrant, to *become* a writer, she has no choice but to remain rooted in the Luxembourgish idiom.

Since Luxembourgish is unequivocally liked to Luxembourg, in the continuation of the poem, Liliane Welch evokes how her mother tongue carries memories from years past, much like other places do. Many of her poems reminisce on cherished childhood memories in Luxembourg, letting the reader assume that Luxembourgish "turns into a kind of intimate stronghold, a bastion of identity in the face of strange surroundings" (Neuman 92). However, the imagery used to describe the memories of Luxembourg in "Lëtzebuergesch" is dark and melancholic. The rhythm of Luxembourgish words transports Welch "to a land dismantled" with "high / furnaces, closed mine-shafts" (lines 10-11). The familiar yet unfamiliar sounds of her native language overcome the poet forcefully and push her, without a compass or a map (line 10), to the memories of the land she left so long ago. With the adjective "dismantled," Welch alludes at once to Luxembourg's past as a steel-producing power, its mine shafts and furnaces which are now disassembled, but also to her potentially flawed memory of Luxembourg and its language. Strikingly, in the same stanza, she describes Luxembourg as "a land / where the dead still whisper" (lines 11-12), most likely referring to the death of friends, parents and grandparents, which she is reminded of whenever she hears Luxembourgish.

Luxembourgish reminds Welch of the people in her life that have passed on, of a life left behind, and of the oppressive and restrictive climate Luxembourg embodies to her. As the Luxembourgish landscape rolls out before her eyes, Welch's description reminisces the introductory pages of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Here, something as banal as a "plash of water, the sight of her shoes and stockings awry on the path where she had flung them," triggers Sethe's vision of the Sweet Home plantation, which comes "rolling, rolling, rolling

out before her eyes" (Morrison 7). While Sethe's vision refers to her traumatic experience as an enslaved subject, I wonder to what extent Liliane Welch's sudden vision of what used to be 'home' can be linked to trauma. Indeed, according to Tomás Espino, "[f]or many bilingual authors, being cut off from the childhood echoes or associations of the mother tongue is a trauma" (55).

Nevertheless, in Welch's case, the trauma associated with her mother tongue is not only that of having left her childhood home, which was a voluntary act, but also that of her religious upbringing within the Catholic church. She describes the latter in "Books: Prohibitions and Celebrations" in *Seismographs*:

> Above all I could not conceal my hatred for the Catechism, that graveyard of rules and regulations which had to be memorized under threat of physical punishment. Whenever I asked a question, the priest turned to stone and declared, "You blaspheme again! You'll go straight to hell when you die!" … My distaste for the Church has lingered ever since. Its Catechism made God appear as an evil tyrant who controlled all life, especially children. My first notions of power stem from that book. I have never been able to hear the Catholic dogma without connecting it to suppression. (35)

The religious trauma that Welch endured during her childhood, marked by threats of physical punishment in the name of religion, and a problematic relationship with her stern father (*Seismographs* 35), makes us question the poem's final verses: "*Mother tongue, /* you're never silent. / Come, join the hallelujahs I craft" (lines 13-15). In these lines, Welch acknowledges that Luxembourgish will not leave her alone—it cannot be silenced. The author directly addresses Luxembourgish in an apostrophe, and invites it to join the hallelujahs she crafts. I interpret this final verse in two distinct ways.

Firstly, Welch may allude to the fact that she continues to use Luxembourgish in her prayers. The language of her childhood and her Catholic upbringing has kept its role as the language used for worship, even after Welch grew more sceptical of the Church's dogmas. Another way of reading this verse is by interpreting Welch's "hallelujahs" as her writing, or literature more generally. "Of all the Church's misdeeds," Welch writes in the same essay, "the most dreadful, in my eyes, was the debasing of literature" (35). Thus, in this interpretation, the "hallelujas" may refer to Welch's poems, which, rhythmic and incantational in their own way, become her scripture. In this manner, her written word, and her claiming of Luxembourgish for her prayer, becomes Welch's version of resistance to the church's strict rules, and their debasing of literature. Just like Luxembourgish became an act of resistance in the 1941 consensus, it became an act of resistance for Welch some 70 years later.

In that way, speaking Luxembourgish becomes a Braidottian feminist nomadic thought act, representing Welch's forward-thinking new mobility. By using Luxembourgish to reclaim power from a language that used to be associated with her oppression, Welch demonstrates that she has become fluent in the metaphorical jargon of the Luxembourgish Catholic language, in order to situate herself in relation to her past, and to resist the discourses she does not wish to be a part of (*NS* 36). In this way, Luxembourgish takes on a sense of Hall's *becoming*. Though rooted in the nationalism of Luxembourg, Welch's unshakeable memories, and being a fixed aspect of her subjectivity, she reclaims the language from her past to redefine herself in the present and future. By using Luxembourgish in this way, the language takes on a very complex role in the definition of Welch's subjecthood. Though it is a stable aspect of her being, it also becomes her way of positioning herself

within the narratives of the past (225). The use of Luxembourgish thus precisely represents Stuart Hall's presented tension of identity between being and becoming.

As much as Luxembourgish is a complex presence in Welch's life, her multilingualism, more generally, also represents a significant tension in this thesis. It is closely linked to transnationalism and transculturalism, and each acquired language "plays a predominant role in the characterization of the transnational or global writer" (Espino 34). The languages Welch spoke during her lifetime, limited not just to Luxembourgish and English, but also French, German and Italian, are individually anchored in a cultural and national framework. While they require situatedness in space and time, they come together within the polyglot to question precisely these rigid concepts. To the polyglot, each spoken language holds separate powers, by giving access to different language communities, for instance. Primarily, however, languages act collectively to empower the speaking subject, and enable access to new subjectivities to the migrant. In that manner, being multilingual gives access not only to the local and the familiar, which it preserves, but also to the global, which it makes available (Amaury 34).

The main conclusion that I draw from the analysis of "Another Language" and "Lëtzebuergesch" is that language has an inherently forceful power that shapes its speaker's subjectivity. In the poems, English and Luxembourgish, her "belated mother tongue" and her initial mother tongue, are described as invasive. The languages that Welch speaks, therefore, in themselves, "expose power both as entrapment and as empowerment" ("A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Posthumanities"), in the sense that Luxembourgish represents power as an entrapment, linked to trauma and oppression, and English, as well as Luxembourgish later on, represent power as empowerment, as their mastery becomes an act of liberation and resistance.

b. "I Come to Myself in Writing:" Writing the Nomadic Subject

In the analysis of the digital maps of Liliane Welch's poems, the importance of writing came to the fore—both as a theme in the poetry, but also as a mediator that constructs Welch's subjectivity. Writing is a measure of life, according to Welch (*Seismographs* 76), who acknowledges the immense importance and multiple meanings that writing bears at various instances throughout her essay collection, *Seismographs*[5]. Calling herself a "write-aholic" (*Seismographs* 52), Welch writes, for example, that it is in writing that she finds herself (76), or that she will die when she stops writing (52). Numerous of her poems revolve directly around the topic of writing as a practice, such as "Tools" (2008), "The Disease of Writing" (1990) and "Words, not Sentiments" (2010), while others muse on the theme of writing more implicitly. Naturally, the entirety of Welch's work can be viewed as reflecting on the topic of writing since, after all, her poetry *is* writing.

In this section, the practice of writing may be analysed in the axioms of poststructuralist theory. In Lacanian thought, language as a system of codes represents the primacy of structures which are constitutive elements of subjectivity. If we apply this theory to writing, which is made up of language, then writing becomes an ontological site of the constitution of the subject. In her 2014 lecture on "Thinking as a Nomadic Subject" in Berlin, Braidotti defines this transformative form of writing as "intransitive writing." She explains: "Writing is a mode of inscription into life—it's a way of formatting the intensity of life. Furthermore, it is the most democratic way of formatting the intensity of life … you need, as

[5] In "The Writer as the Outsider," for instance, Welch muses on the thoughts of Flannery O'Connor, Roland Barthes and Stéphane Mallarmé to reflect upon the role of writing in art and life. She concludes: "As writers we must try to bring out the reflective strain in art while at the same time allowing the meaning of this strain to emerge as contrapuntal to what we actually confront" (95).

Virginia Woolf explains, a sheet of paper and a kitchen table at night, and you can do it" (31:23).

Much like Virginia Woolf's prose, Liliane Welch's verse is often written in a stream-of-consciousness style. In a way that allows her to develop a narrative around her life, bearing witness to where she is and what she does (Welch, "Ascension" 128), Welch writes down her thoughts and experiences. She does indeed, as Braidotti suggests, use writing to format the intensity of life. Consequently, her work is about many things: travel, life at home, art, literature, memories—but at its heart, it is about living and writing, two concepts that I previously argued are mutually constitutive in Welch's life. To illustrate how the author relies on writing as a way of "coming to herself" (76), as she describes the practice in *Seismographs*, I shall analyse two of her poems in this section. While "Tools" is about the specific handcraft of writing, and individually addresses each item involved in the writing process, "All that winter, mapping" addresses writing more broadly, by the role that Welch ascribes to it within her life.

In "Tools,"[6] published in 2008 in *Stealing the Flowers of Evil*, Liliane Welch addresses the steps involved in the process of writing poetry. In five subheaders, Welch writes about paper, pencil, eraser, and pen—and closes the poem with the more general "writing" header. With these subheaders, Welch includes what appears like individual poems in one larger piece of literature, dedicated entirely to her beloved craft. In doing so, she experiments both with her writing style and form, and also with her perceived notions of the role of writing. She writes in *Seismographs*:

> In nearly all my poems the thought is implicit that poetry is a handcraft, that through poems we create our place. Starting from a backward glance at my own work, I am

[6] For a lack of space, I have decided not to include the whole poem in the thesis, but only separate sections. I have, instead, included the entire poem in the appendix at the end of this thesis.

> tempted to generalize (always a risky business): poetry celebrates that contact with our circumstances which we achieve, can achieve, or begin to achieve with our hand, the "organ of organs" or the "fool of tools" (as Aristotle calls it), the most central location of the sense of touch. (*Seismographs* 61)

In this excerpt, Welch argues that we *create* our place in the world through poetry. Once again, the Luxembourgish-Canadian author here produces Braidottian thought that *avant la lettre*. Poetry, and writing at large, becomes a performative action, allowing the writer to continuously create themselves and adopt new subjectivities. Poetry is a craft not just for her hands, but also represents a mental craft for her spirituality and thought. Ultimately, Welch thus becomes a nomadic subject by simply being a writer. To illustrate my claim, I shall closely read the two final sections of "Tools," which I have included below.

Pen
Upright on my desk,

seductive amulet — accomplice,
with potent and
magic ink.

O sceptre of my mornings,
guard-dog of self-
discovery!

You inscribe the last draft
and the paper

quivers with delight.

Writing
Poem, you
re-light

the candles of surprise that flicker
in my dreams!

And then, you re-chart the promise
of morning rain

when my life goes one way and I
another,

spreading welcome across the sky.

These two "in-poem" poems address the potential for creation that Liliane Welch ascribes to the art of writing. The pen, as a tool to write with, a means to an end, holds

"potent and / magic ink" (lines 3-4)[7]—a description reminiscent almost of a magician's wand, able to make any wish come true. Described as a "seductive amulet" (line 2), the pen has the power to ward off evil, and becomes an accomplice to Welch's adventures, which it captures, and her thoughts, which it brings to the surface. In this way, the pen becomes a "guard-dog of self- / discovery" (lines 6-7), allowing the writer to create, test, and negotiate ideas. By rendering the author's thoughts, writing allows the subject to organise "the dynamic and self-organizing structure of thought processes" (Braidotti, *NT* 2), and by extension, in the thought of the New Mobilities Paradigm, becomes a dynamic practice that opposes sedentarism.

As the pen brings words to the paper, and inscribes the last draft on a previously blank page, the latter "quivers with delight" (line 10). Unsure what a poem will truly be until it is completed, the craft of writing remains captivating until the very end. In this way, writing a poem is paralleled with living life. Uncertain of what may be, one keeps living and becoming, and can only look back at one's experiences and accomplishments at the end of life. For Welch, writing, which constitutes itself through life's experiences, reflects the same idea as the nonunitary entity, defined by Braidotti as "self-propelling" through constant encounters with the external (*NT* 35). Writing and becoming are both phenomena that flow, compositions that are to be constructed in encounters with others, or the external more generally.

The finished poem is addressed in the final subheader of "Tools," and re-lights the "candles of surprise that flicker / in the [poet's] dream" (lines 2-4). The poem gives hope for "morning rain" (line 6). Though unpleasant and often symbolising sorrow, morning rain is often a sign of a pleasant day ahead. This line alludes to the fact that despair can often represent a way to joy—and that poetry helps the writer navigate both sets of emotions.

[7] For the sake of practicality, I treat the subsections *Pen* and *Writing* as separate poems in referring to cited lines. In truth, they are part of one large poem, included in the appendix of this thesis.

Poetry becomes a refuge, especially for the nomadic subject who does not feel like they belong anywhere, and spreads a feeling of welcome wherever the migrant may go (line 9). A person with two passports, like Welch and also Braidotti, who can live in several places "no longer has any privileged links with any particular country, or fatherland—attaining the paroxysm of nomadism:" they become "a stranger everywhere" (Amaury 32). To the nomadic writer, the act of writing takes on this sentiment of a home, a place they can find refuge in. Therefore, writing is one of the themes that accompany Welch throughout her nomadic journey back and forth across the Atlantic, as was mentioned in the analysis of the maps—because it is her home.

In "All that winter, mapping," published in *Anticipating the Day* in 2007, Liliane Welch addresses another side to writing. Besides offering refuge to the unhomely writer who finds herself between cultures, it also provides an opportunity for self-discovery and exploration, making it more directly a Lacanian site of constitution for the subject, and a Bradottian embodiment of the subject. Welch parallels in this poem, as well as in much of her writing, the activity of writing poetry to that of rock climbing, her other passion, which she lives out when she visits the north of Italy during the summer.

All that winter, mapping
my mountain of desire:

the ascent evenings and afternoons and
early mornings writing poems about

climbing *Il velo della Cima Madonna*, its
white limestone skyway and hungry void —

often the peak glowed, an otherworldly light
throughout the house

and through me, as if some Mozartian

fire ran wild within my rapacious

fantasies and then the words on the page would raise
their faces, and, dissolving,

beseech the danger, despair, would plead *Woman*
get to it, there's no rebirth in dreams.

The speaker of this poem, which I assume to be Liliane Welch, spends the Canadian winter mapping out her "mountain of desire" (line 1). She writes poems about climbing *Il velo della Cima Madonna*, a mountain whose peak glows in an "otherworldly light" (line 6). Paralleling the vast Canadian nature to the Italian *Dolomiti*, as if the mountain was right outside her window, Welch describes the light as shining through her house, and by extension, herself. The glowing mountain inspires the writer's craft, while simultaneously standing as a metaphor for her nomadic lifestyle. The physical act of climbing a mountain can be compared to the constant movement of the nomadic subject, its ascending and descending, representing Welch's seamless back-and-forth movement between Europe and North America. In the same way, as was argued previously, the act of writing is also a nomadic wandering in itself, allowing the pilgrim to explore the geographical landscape, as well as that of her mind.

The theme of writing, though not as explicit in this poem as in the previous one, becomes prominent towards the end, in the sixth couplet, where "the words on the page / would raise their faces" and dissolve in front of the mountain (lines 10-11). The mountain and the poem blend together here, just as the act of climbing blends with that of writing in Welch's life:

> Through the unknown spaces of that outside I try to find an orientation as the writing touches the ground and casts me into an adventure every bit as severe and ritualistic

> as an alpine climb. As my pen moves over the white, empty page, a gaping void opens up; the same abyss along which my feet hesitate on an exposed mountainous traversal. My words tap reality to decipher its sounds the way my hands slap the stone for secure holds when I climb. (*Seismographs* 76)

By comparing the two activities to one another, Welch emphasises the laborious process that stands behind them, while simultaneously evoking the cathartic moment of achievement that both the climber and the writer find themselves in when their work is finished. Arrived at the summit, new territories become available, and the writer may explore previously hidden depths within themselves.

With the incorporation of the lived, bodily experience of climbing in her writing, and by assimilating them to each other, Liliane Welch here highlights how our subjectivities are intertwined with our bodily experience. This embodied nature of our subjectivity is something that comes up repeatedly in Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory. She writes in *Nomadic Subjects* that "[t]he body, or the embodiment, of the subject is to be understood as neither a biological nor a sociological category but rather as a point of overlapping between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological" (4). Our subjectivities, here aligned with the act of writing, which allows Welch to render her thoughts, are linked to our physical bodies and shaped by our experience in the world, such as the act of climbing in the Italian Alps, for example.

We see in these two poems, but also in the rest of Welch's writing, an acute awareness that her writing plays a constitutive role in creating her multiple subjecthoods. The writer uses words to not only render her own experiences in the outside world, and create a narrative account of her life, but also to explore the inside world of her mind. Writing allows the nomadic subject to self-reflect, and, therewith, to understand acquired subjectivities and

negotiate new ones in the process. It is, therefore, that Liliane Welch claims that she comes to herself in writing: it allows her to create the narrative of her life and to reshape and reframe how she views herself.

c. *Becoming* as Nomadic Wandering: Investigating Welch's Heritage

"When I explore the paths of my background, I write poems," Liliane Welch wrote in 1988 in her essay titled "Grandparents: A Fragment" (*Seismographs* 19). It is indeed but a fragment of information about her grandparents that is available to Liliane Welch, most notably regarding her maternal grandfather, Rinaldo Bravi (Hansen-Pauly, "Liliane Welch" 11). Occupying an important place in her writing and in her life, it was only when Welch was in her late thirties that she learned about her mysterious ancestor's story, which her family had previously tried to ignore as best as they could. Besides her grandfather, who "assumed a place in [her] childhood through his absence" (18), Welch ponders in her poetry the relationships with those family members who were present in her life. She writes about her grandmother, with her big hands that brought her chocolates as a child ("Grandmother"), her stern, religious father, as well as her brother, whose calls she regularly awaits from across the Atlantic ("Léif Mam"). Most frequently, Welch reminisces upon her complicated relationship with her mother, who "stood / crying on the door" when Welch "left Luxembourg / for the first time, a scholarship / in hand" ("Léif Mam," lines 3-4, 1-3).

It is on these paths, those of Welch's "forebears" ("Another Language," line 11), known and unknown, that I open this investigation into the poetic representation of Liliane Welch's transcultural heritage. Delineating her roots and uncovering family secrets, Welch claims, is as "forbidding, incomprehensible and ritualistic as a wilderness area" (*Seismographs* 20)—an activity, I argue, where the subject often finds themselves in

darkness, at a crossroads, and not knowing which way to go. Much like the processes of climbing and writing, which were previously explored as examples of Welch's nomadic wanderings, tracing her genealogy becomes a continuous journey of investigation, self-discovery, and becoming. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall argues about the Caribbean diaspora that the migrant's identity undergoes constant revision, and this is the case, among other reasons, due to the subject's attempt to position themselves in the narrative of their past (225). Many migrants, affected and traumatised by what he calls a "loss of identity," only [begin] to be healed when these "forgotten connections are once more set in place" (224-225).

Finding oneself in a continuous state of thinking and questioning, then, this kind of investigative genealogy comes to represent the dynamic nature of thought and existence, which is the central tenet of nomadic thought, according to Braidotti (*NS* 7). Moreover, more often than not, such research into one's family ties requires actual, physical movement, crossing geographical borders. This was the case also for Liliane Welch, as she writes in "Grandparents: A Fragment:" "My awakening to my grandparents' plights and adventures began when in 1978 I first went to Italy" (22). To understand this nomadic movement, shaping the ever-becoming subject, I shall analyse two of Welch's poems, "Origins, Not All in Place" and "Léif Mam," in which Welch takes her reader along as she raises questions about her heritage.

Origins, Not All in Place
Those yearly flights from the sunless, brooding
northern village to the unburdened
life of the road — the burnt fields of the south,
under a red, glaring sky, and rocks
turned to ovens. Not a thought for your children
or your wife — the stern, fervent woman
driven by her hunger for the earth.

Hello, Rinaldo, Italian grandfather.
I don't know why you eloped with her
when she was barely sixteen,
or why you stabbed her later in a field.
Were you really a no-good vagabond? Did
you keep a knife under your pillow?

Your restlessness, your unsettled
reaction to the northern Europeans'
obsession for security, may be the most
startling thing in your life —
besides your body thrown into a potter's field.

It's good for me to think of you
now and then, you who assume
a place in my life through your absence,
through an interdict of speech.
With you I stand at the edge
of misty origins and face a new
world of homelessness, where all residence
and relationships are transient.

Reaching for placelessness, maybe
you were a pilgrim who sought a life
endlessly fresh and forgiving,
a light still new. Your migrations
call me out of the routine-bound
flat, lowland life into of the sun of human longing.

"Origins, Not All in One Place" (2010), published in *Crossings*, is one of the infrequent poems, outside of *Wordhouse of a Grandchild*[8], in which Liliane Welch candidly addresses her family's intricate history with her maternal grandfather, Rinaldo Bravi. Already dead when Welch was a child, there lay over him an "interdict of speech which had all but forever erased his presence from the face of the earth" (18). Only in her late thirties, Welch learned

[8] In her book, *Wordhouse of a Grandchild*, unfortunately unavailable to me for the sake of this thesis, Welch puts together a fictitious account to recapture her grandfather's endeavours.

from her mother that he was an Italian migratory labourer, who broke the continuity of his family history by eloping with Welch's grandmother to a small French mining town across the border from Luxembourg. At the time of this happening, Welch's grandmother was merely sixteen years old (19). In France, she bore four children, and eight years later, returned to Luxembourg on her own, closing "her door to [Bravi's] numerous attempts to come live with her" (19):

> She let her children walk over to France to visit him, but, after he stabbed her once, she found ways of making it impossible for him to lay hands or eyes on her again. When he died alone in France shortly before the Second World War, his body was thrown into a potter's field. No one, not even her children, ever heard why exactly they lived apart or why my grandmother never consented to give him a divorce. (19)

The details of Rinaldo's life are shared with the reader in stanza two of "Origins, Not All in Place," where, in an almost accusatory tone, Welch interrogates her dead grandfather, inquiring whether the stories she has heard about him correspond with the truth. Despite knowing that she will never know his answers, Welch thinks it beneficial for her to think of her grandfather "now and then" (20). Despite his absence, or precisely because of it, a sense of identification with Rinaldo can be read from Welch's poem, most notably in stanzas four and five. The speaker claims that with Rinaldo, she stands at the edge and faces a new world of homelessness (25). Welch here evokes the unhomely she feels due to her continuous movement. "Without knowing whether he formed me as a person or a poet," Welch writes in her essay, "I see him oppressed by the long, sunless winters, the brooding northern village lands. I see him reach for another spirit of place or placelessness, the simple and unburdened life of the road. … I see him itchy and restless all over again, … now and then dreaming of the New World" (19). It is precisely through his absence that Rinaldo assumes a place in his

granddaughter's life, giving her the autonomy to let him live in her imagination, a life similar to her own.

Though she has never known her grandfather, the Luxembourgish-Canadian writer seems to identify with him more strikingly than with anyone else in her family. The migrant, or the "pilgrim," as Welch would rather call herself ("Ascension" 131), by default stands "at the edge"—of her family, her nation, and society as a whole, in the same way as Rinaldo did. In her enigmatic grandfather, Welch has found a piece of herself, and thus a part of her origin. Nonetheless, it remains but a part, and her origins, as the poem's title suggests, are not all in place. To this discussion of origin, I add that, in nomadic subjectivity, origins do not necessarily have to be tied to place, or even linearly starting at the beginning. We see this, for instance, in the fact that Welch only becomes aware of this mysterious part of her family history when she is an adult. Instead, new origins can be discovered later in life, giving birth to new meanings and subjectivities. In that way, the processes of self-discovery become much more significant than their beginnings. Aware of this fact, and also referring to her grandfather's story, Welch explains that in her life, "all residence / and relationships are transient" (lines 25-26). Instead of forcing permanence, or looking for origin, the speaker shows awareness that what matters most are the connections and networks that the nomad harbours throughout their life.

Rinaldo's story, for most of Welch's life, was held from her—her family trying to forget him as best as they could. Liliane Welch herself, however, is fascinated by his life and paints him, at least in this poem, in a positive light. Likely coming from her own experience as a pilgrim, Welch suggests that her grandfather must have had similar desires in his life, seeking "a life / endlessly fresh and forgiving" (lines 29-30). In her attempt to position herself vis-a-vis her Italian grandfather, and by likening herself to him, Welch shares with the reader

her attempt to negotiate her transcultural heritage. The conflict between the national and the transnational thereby becomes rooted within Liliane Welch, whose journey to find her true self, to become, causes her, again and again, to deconstruct the national, while simultaneously finding herself in its middle. Inspired by Rinaldo's migrations, Welch understands her desire for faraway countries, and feels called into "the sun of human longing" (line 34). Whether Welch refers with this line to the longing for travel which she has handled all her life, or the longing for human interaction, triggered by her desire to know her family, is unclear. Perhaps, this was precisely Welch's intention, and human longing, in the same vein as *la condition humaine* (the human condition), then justly refers to the insatiable general longing that comes along with life itself.

Liliane Welch's insatiable longing is evident in many ways. She longs for travel, she longs to write, she longs to know herself. To the nomadic writer, this self-discovery pertains to positioning herself within her family's trajectory, and learning as much as she is able to about her heritage. In her 2008 poetry collection *Stealing the Flowers of Evil*, whose title is inspired by Charles Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, Welch includes a chapter entirely dedicated to her mother. Under the title "Léif Mam," Luxembourgish for "dear mother," Welch includes thirteen 'letter poems,' each bearing the same title as the larger chapter: "Léif Mam." As though writing a letter to her mother, Welch uses this section of her collection to pay tribute to the latter who, aged 95, passed away on February 23, 2007. In these poems, the author enters a dialogue with her late mother. As her "vagabond daughter" (70), Welch reminisces on shared memories, "imprints [their] good days together into poems" (66), questions their complex relationship, and embarks on a journey to "knowing why I'm here" (66). In the eighth "Léif Mam" poem, on page 73 of *Stealing the Flowers of Evil*, Liliane Welch describes her intense agony, the Baudelairian *spleen* that she feels upon remembering her mother. I

shall analyse this poem below to demonstrate, one last time, how it reflects Welch's wanderings as a nomadic subject.

Léif Mam
The tiredness of snow —
early morning, the hoarfrost's
lace and sparkle over
tree branches, trucks
pulling onto the highways
and racing on: everything
forgets death. On the other side
of the Atlantic I await my
brother's phone call and am sad
beyond grief when I conjure your
last agony. Soon I'll go
into the kitchen and repeat
your adroit gestures, cooking
soup — leeks tomatoes, onions,
parsley, that sweet
odour of home. We live with our
dead, their loss,
their return. Late February, your weight
on my future, my thoughts
on your photograph. I fix
the eyes and wonder, whether
I ever knew who
you were.

Likely written in late February (line 18) from her snowy home in Sackville (lines 1-4) and remembering her mother's death anniversary, Welch ponders upon the nature of death. Forgotten by everything (lines 7-8), the world takes its course, and trucks continue driving—while Liliane Welch awaits a call from her brother in Europe, "sad beyond grief" (lines 8-10). After setting the scene of icy Canada through vivid imagery, Welch begins talking about her mother. Conjuring her mother's last agony by remembering her, Welch casts upon herself a sadness as deep as the one felt by her mother upon her passing. As though

assimilating to the “everything” which forgets death, or simply in an attempt to distract herself, Welch sets out to make soup in her kitchen, only to be reminded of her mother once again.

As she goes about her day, still waiting on the call from across the Atlantic, Welch finds that she carries part of her mother within her. Repeating her “adroit gestures” (line 13) and recreating a soup that smells of home, Welch acknowledges that “[w]e live with our / dead, their loss, / their return” (lines 16-18). The dead returns into Welch’s life unexpectedly, causing an inevitable confrontation with her heritage that forces her to situate herself within this past. It is in this way that Welch’s mother weighs on her future, as she becomes aware of the fact that heritage and previous connections and networks, as they were described by John Urry and Mimi Sheller’s New Mobilities Paradigm, are inescapable. Like moorings anchoring the subject in place, the nomad’s heritage and previous experience are inevitably imprinted upon each new wandering. The heritage, then, becomes an example of Braidotti’s conception of the cartographic method, which records nomadic imprints simultaneously in the past, present, and future. Simultaneously, Welch’s writing here echoes Stuart Hall’s tension between being and becoming. Cultural identity, he claims, “belongs as much to the future as to the past” (225), a claim that applies to nomadic, transcultural subjectivity. Those aspects fixed in the past, attributed to Hall’s being, like one’s heritage, enter into a dialogue with the future of becoming.

In the poem's final lines, Welch admits a deep longing to know her mother, as she expressed a doubt about whether she ever knew who she was. We see here that Liliane Welch is not just curious about those ancestors whom she never met, but also about those with whom she had close contact as she still, even in her mother, wonders whether she can truly know someone. This reminds us of the previously analysed poem in which Welch

acknowledged the fact that the life of someone like her, a pilgrim, a wanderer, a nomad, is a life " where all residence / and relationships are transient" (lines 25-26). It is due to this inability for permanence that networks and connections are much more valued, albeit if they are limited.

In "Grandparents: A Fragment", Liliane Welch writes the following as she reflects on the wandering that represents the tracing of her heritage:

> [W]hether remembering the web of experiences lived with my grandmother or examining the cast of characters in faded photo albums, unawares I was always penetrating from the outside of my background and antecedents into the inside of my own life's narrative. (*Seismographs* 20)

In this passage, Liliane Welch recognises that the inquiry into her heritage represents a complex undertaking, while recognising the formative power of such introspection. Liliane Welch acknowledges here that her memories and experiences, grounded in places across the globe in an intricate web, are interconnected and shape her daily life. When tracing her heritage, she writes, Welch penetrates from the outside into the inside of a story that is her own, her "life's narrative"—alluding to the idea that through the act of remembering and reconstructing, she moved from being an outsider to gradually finding herself more closely. In this way, Welch's endless *wondering* about her family, which represents her "being", turns into her *wandering*, allowing her to continually find herself and to "become."

To conclude this close reading section, I underline the complex tension that it has revealed as existing between Hall's ideas of being and becoming. In Welch's writing, both are present, and, though seemingly contradicting, find themselves related to each other. The analysis of Welch's poetry has highlighted those aspects of the subject that are most constant

and fixed: her heritage, her writing, and her mother tongue. Nonetheless, and most interestingly, the subject is continually becoming precisely through these fixed aspects. Through writing, Welch renders her thoughts and experiences in order to continually redefine and reconstruct her self. When tracing the paths of her genealogy, Welch's very subjecthood is negotiated while she situates herself in the narratives of her past and, again, she explores new things about herself. Lastly, by reclaiming the Luxembourgish language in an act of resistance, Welch demonstrates a forward mobility in her life, removing her from the sedentary, oppressive beliefs of the Catholic church. All of the aspects that seemingly demonstrate being, in that way, contribute to Welch's becoming. As a result, the close reading section has uncovered an interesting, seemingly paradoxical tension between Hall's being and becoming, as it has demonstrated that becoming can happen precisely *within* those aspects that represent being.

7. Conclusion: The Nomadic Subject on the Map and in its Cracks

The main aim of this thesis was to explore Liliane Welch's poetic reflections on how her movement through nations creates within her multiple subjectivities, and to find out how such instances may be traced and defined within her writing, and in literature in general. In this endeavour, I was interested in investigating how Welch's writing is exemplary of *Luxemburgensia*, and in creating a model for the digital mapping of poetry that corresponds with Rosi Braidotti's idea of the cartographic method. In this final concluding chapter, I shall discuss my findings and conceptualise them in the scheme of my theoretical framework, in order to offer an answer to this thesis' three-fold research aim.

If we circle back to the introductory quote from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which asserted that true places are never locatable on a map (45), but rather are created in the realm of personal experiences, I add to the initial assessment that true place, at least for the migrant, is also produced in the transcultural networks in-between places, which cross borders and create subjectivity. As Liliane Welch's writing suggests, the nomadic writer engages in the continuous process of mobility and self-investigation, which has transformative effects on her. At times located in specific geographical places, such as Sackville, Esch-sur-Alzette, or the Dolomites, this experience is also grounded in the metaphorical spaces between them, in those networks that are not always geographically locatable. We see it reflected, for instance, as Welch thinks of her Italian-Luxembourgish mother while living in Canada, or in her multilingualism, which represents the intersection of her close affiliations with all three countries combined. As Liliane Welch's poetry demonstrates, subject-formation occurs in the realm of personal and subjective encounters, aligning with Braidotti's idea of the nomadic subject's continuous engagement with diverse perspectives and experiences, resulting in the continuous becoming of new selfhoods. Just as the nomadic subject moves beyond fixed identities and geographical boundaries, Melville's quote suggests that those "places" that define the subject cannot be narrowly confined to representations like maps.

Due to Melville's suggested inability for maps to capture "true place," combined with my claim that subjectivities can be formed in the metaphorical cracks between spaces, I have used the combined method of digital cartography and close reading to offer a substantial exploration of the nomadic subject in literature. I have argued in my analysis, that the nomadic subject is shaped simultaneously through its movement through space, on the map, as well as its acts of self-exploration, self-reflection and self-definition, in the cracks between spaces. This assessment is made possible through the combination of quantitative and

qualitative data, in which the digital mapping has given me insights that the close reading would not have provided, and vice versa. Whereas the quantified maps of Welch's poetry situate her as a migrant in space, they also illustrate the exponential effect that spatiality has on the subject. In this context, I have been able to draw five conclusions about the subject who moves across borders, namely that her movement is fluid and constant, that place is used as a topical marker, that it evokes personal memories, that it represents grounds for the subject to identify with which do not necessarily align with the nation-state, and that aspects of one subjectivity may stay with the subject as it travels across borders. In the close reading section, I have highlighted how Welch's multilingualism, her investigation into her heritage, as well as her writing, though fixed aspects of her being, all tie her to the realm of the ever-becoming subject.

This thesis has demonstrated the benefit of the combination of close and distant reading, and offered an answer to my question on how digital mapping may be useful to trace instances of nomadic subjectivity. The two methods have individually provided me with conclusions about Welch's nomadic subjectivity. Whereas the digital cartography has allowed me to grasp how nomadism and becoming are grounded in the geographical experience of the subject, the close reading analysis has allowed me to investigate how the subject's becoming is located, metaphorically speaking, within the subject's inner workings. It is in this way that Liliane Welch's writing has caused Braidotti and Hall to enter into dialogue within this thesis, and demonstrated that a nuanced approach is needed to the analysis of the nomadic subject. The combined theoretical framework of Rosi Braidotti and Stuart Hall has proven productive since it allowed me to argue that my understanding of transcultural subjectivities may replace, in the nomadic subject, the static notion of cultural identity.

I have maintained that the notion of culture, just like those of nation and identity, proposes the existence of a dominant, even singular and fixed state of culture. The latter, however, as a consequence of the new mobilities of the globalised world, where there is a continuous movement of people and ideas across national borders, becomes non-existent. While Welch's experience underlines this fluid, shifting aspect of subjectivity through movement, thereby rejecting the rigid identity, it has also demonstrated a certain sense of stability, or Hall's being. Though not fixed in a narrow idea of culture, nation, or identity, some identifying aspects remained constant in Welch's writing. In that way, I demonstrated that the themes of writing and nature followed her across the digital maps, while the Luxembourgish language 'found her wherever she was,' and the inquiry into her heritage represented a search into both future and past. In this manner, I have argued that the nomadic subject, though having ever-shifting subjectivities, continues to carry with them subjectivities from years past. These take on a Hall-like presence of being within the subject's life. Thus, I have found within the close reading section, an interesting, seemingly paradoxical tension between Hall's being and becoming, as I have demonstrated that becoming may happen precisely *within* those aspects that represent being.

Though I have made arguments for the subject-formation that is locatable outside of space, locality remains an essential aspect of the nomadic experience. For this reason, I consider it necessary to contextualise my arguments with the New Mobilities Paradigm. I have argued that the nomadic experience is a natural consequence of the new mobilities of the twenty-first century. While Stuart Hall and Rosi Braidotti have the tendency to look at subjectivity construction in a metaphorical, almost romanticised way, it is important to consider the power dynamics that are involved in this process. In this context, the New Mobilities Paradigm is crucial in order to avoid this thesis resting on an entirely "romantic

reading of mobility" (Hannam et al. 4). We have seen, for instance, that Welch's migration was made possible solely by her learning of English in the Luxembourgish *lycée*. Similarly, Welch was only allowed to legally become a resident, and later a citizen of Canada due to her high-quality education, which procured her with a career at a research university. All of these opportunities were made available to her by her rather privileged position in the world—coming from a country which, since the end of the second world war, has been one of the richest on earth. This contextualisation, thanks to the NMP, also makes it truly remarkable that parts of Hall's theory, which clearly focus on those less privileged, namely the Caribbean post-colonial subjects, are applicable in this manner to Welch.

Furthermore, we have seen that, whether or not the subject physically travels through the world, they are highly likely to be confronted with their own subject position through the confrontation with different cultures, due to the very nature of the interconnected world. Space, therefore, becomes indispensable to this subject formation not just by travel through it, but also because it becomes a point of contact in which subjectivity is negotiated. It is by reason of this argument that Liliane Welch's experience is exemplary of the modern nomadic subject, but paradigmatic for the Luxembourgish subject, which, in the near-micro state, has no choice but to be engulfed in these transcultural interactions daily. Representing the essence of the Luxembourgish subject as a person, Liliane Welch's writing becomes paradigmatic of Luxembourgish literature. If we return to the initial question of "does Luxemburgish literature exist, and if so, what is it?", Welch's writing now allows me to define *Luxembugensia* by its subjects' negotiation with cultures, the self, and the nation of Luxembourg. Indeed, the geographical Luxembourgish space is less significant in the Grand Duchy's literature, while the transpersonal, transnational, and transcultural experiences take on an immense importance. I justify here the previously vague-seeming definition by the

Luxembourgish Encycopeadia of Authors, which defines the country's literature as any work that has affected Luxembourgish literature in the broadest sense (Goetzinger and Conter 7).

Though, naturally, I stand behind the conclusions that I have drawn from the careful analysis of Liliane Welch's poetry, I admit that it may be flawed to attempt to define Luxembourgish literature based on the work of one single author. It may be viewed as representing, in a broad way, what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie referred to in 2009 as "the danger of the single story" in her famous TEDTalk (0:11)—except that rather than homogenising Luxembourgish culture, Welch's poetry globalises it. This thesis is indeed focused on the Luxembourgish subject that moves across boundaries, both physical and metaphorical, and as a result, my definition of *Luxemburgensia* remains related to the fluid conception of the Luxembourgish subject. By contrast to Liliane Welch's worldly character, there may be writers within Luxembourg who are very deeply rooted in the Grand Duchy, who write in Luxembourgish, and whose transcultural experience does not go beyond the scope of speaking French to waiters at restaurants. I acknowledge that, given a larger scope, one could either solidify or question my definition of *Luxemburgensia* based on Welch by conducting a similar study on a grander corpus of works from Luxembourg. It would be interesting to see, in that context, how those who never emigrated from Luxembourg interact with the spaces they encounter, and how they express their thoughts towards Luxembourgish and foreign languages.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that Luxembourgish literature's close affiliation with that of the literatures of the Germanophone, Francophone, and Anglophone worlds, by which it is continuously influenced, reflects its inherent transcultural and transnational nature. Liliane Welch's writing reflects this quality by demonstrating the author's admiration of the penmanship of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Faulkner, for instance, to whom she makes not only

intertextual references, but also emulates their style and tone of writing. Spanning across multiple language communities, *Luxemburgensia* continues to find itself in a dialogue with different cultures, with which it creates a unique literary network that continuously evolves. In this manner, I would argue that Luxembourgish literature itself, as Hall's theory on cultural identity suggests, is deeply marked by an existence between being and becoming. On the one hand, the literature of the Grand-Duchy *is*, purely because it has to exist as the national literature of Luxembourg, for the sake of nation-building. On the other hand, just like its paradigmatic example of Liliane Welch, *Luxemburgensia* is in a state of wandering and becoming, continuously shaped by the larger, more impactful literatures of the Western European world.

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Appendix

Tools (from *Anticipating the Day*)

Paper
Virgin, how mysterious your intimate
reverie:
craving;

loneliest bride in the world;
magnet that draws, then

recovers composure.
Your snow-white gown

demands forever the prince with
the most lascivious eyes.

Pencil
Let me
sharpen your blunt
lead. My fingers
long to touch
you, seeking
words, on inoffensive
lapses,
when you look me
over with insolent
admiration. I feel
comfortable
with you,
in my pocket, await
your scrambles
for light, your first
drafts, lustrous
and black.

Eraser
Stay alert!

The poem's first sketches might
be endearing in their graphite fumblings.

But you

yank aside the curtain,
magician

of detachment — under
of words, too;

self-possessed.

Pen
Upright on my desk,

seductive amulet — accomplice,
with potent and
magic ink.

O sceptre of my mornings,
guard-dog of self-
discovery!

You inscribe the last draft
and the paper

quivers with delight.

Writing
Poem, you
re-light

the candles of surprise that flicker
in my dreams!

And then, you re-chart the promise
of morning rain

when my life goes one way and I
another,

spreading welcome across the sky.