Ali Zamanpour (Montreal): “Deterritorialized Male Subjectivity and the (Im)Possibility of Becoming ‘Man’ in the ‘Shadow’ in Rawi Hage’s *Cockroach*, *De Niro’s Game*, and *Carnival*”

Abstract

Rawi Hage’s illustrates the underlying layers of the urban life in his semi-fictional cities: Bayrout, Montreal or an anonymous metropolis in North America. Immigrant male subjects, the anti-heroes of his novels, are in constant motion to survive their social and economic marginalization. There is no longer the question of accepting social roles as ‘men’, but there is only an ‘ethical’ (Deleuze) rejection of structure. The subjects in the ‘empire-of-seen’ can only survive through the modern notion of ‘liminality’ (Szakolczai) not as a ‘passage’ but as a permanent form, a pure flux of deterritorialization. John Welsh’s appropriation of the concept of ‘shadow’ as a machinic apparatus in capitalism’s topology gives readers a chance to view the emerging forms of masculinities through movements away from what Guattari calls ‘traps of science’, and subjugation and towards ‘ethico-aesthetic paradigms’. Hage also takes on a more personalized approach that is oriented from inside-out, rather than from outside-in.

The political demands for recognition and visibility emerge within the system of power, within its socio-institutional pattern of recognition and put the subjects in Hage’s novels in binarized positions of minority/majority or subaltern/hegemony. The Narrator of *Cockroach* calls such a recognized condition as “being trapped in the cruel and insane world saturated with humans” (Hage ch.1). Hage’s approach to the various images of ‘deviant’ male subjects, in his novels, is uncanny. His male characters are sometimes disgusting and invisible like cockroaches or wild and brutal wolf-like thugs. Nevertheless, the reader can empathize with their inhumane condition and comprehend some of their brave and (un)ethical choices.