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Rachel Dark

*Cedarville University*, oldtimegirl@comcast.net

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Cedarville University

“An Obscene Power”

Desire, Capitalism, and Identity in Geraldine Brooks’ *March*

Rachel Dark

English Seminar

Dr. Deardorff

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Geraldine Brooks' Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *March* re-tells the story of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* from the perspective of the four heroines' father. Despite the prestige of Brooks' novel, almost no criticism exists on this work. However, the protagonist's journey of fragmentation and loss of moral certainty provides an excellent contrast to the heart-warming adventures of his little women. Simply known as March, the protagonist is an intriguingly complex character who becomes increasingly disillusioned with himself and his ideology as he realizes that his good intentions have harmed the people he sought to help. In addition, while March is attracted to Marmee, his wife, and to a courageous slave woman named Grace, he others them and tries to suppress their essential characteristics. He is both sexist and racist, yet these characteristics stem from something deeper than patriarchy or racial stereotypes. As he discovers his destructive attitudes, he becomes totally disenchanted with his ideology. His disillusionment causes him to question his identity both as a good man and as a part of his family. This paper attempts to answer why March's conflicting desires deconstruct his identity and propel him toward moral uncertainty.

In order to determine how March's identity collapses throughout the story, it is essential to understand what his identity is to begin with. One way to interpret March's character is through the lens of Bronson Alcott, father of Louisa May Alcott. As other reviewers have noted, March is heavily based on the life of Bronson Alcott. Brooks herself admits that she referred to the Alcott's papers while researching for the novels, since they "are perhaps as complete a record of a Victorian man's interior life as any you could find" ("A Conversation" 5-6). Accordingly, identifying similarities and differences between March and Alcott helps the reader understand March's initial identity more fully. For example, both men have a similar past. Like March, Alcott spent his youth working "on the family farm...before heading off at eighteen for Virginia"

to peddle “tortoise shell combs, sewing needles, tin wares and other notions that might tempt the wives of planters” (Brooks, “Orpheus” 3). Similarly, Alcott also married, had four daughters, and later fell into debt and was supported by his close friend and fellow transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (8). However, while Brooks borrows from Alcott’s life to create March’s backstory, she also ensures that the two men share similar ideologies.

Perhaps the greatest similarity between March and Alcott is their intense idealism. Like March, Alcott was a deeply compassionate humanitarian who developed his own educational philosophy. March’s vegan lifestyle also alludes to Alcott, who “eschewed cotton and sugar, products of slave labor, and also silk, because it required the death of caterpillars” (1). Likewise, just as Alcott founded an ill-fated commune known as Fruitlands, March notes, “I had it in my mind to found a Utopian community one day, when the girls were older; a ‘place just right’ where men and women of learning could live with Nature, but without its exploitation” (Brooks, *March* 122). Although Alcott is probably most known for the Fruitlands escapade, his ideals included progressive education, women’s rights, and the emancipation of slavery. This last point is perhaps the most significant ideological similarity between Alcott and March. March risks his reputation, his financial stability, and his life to shut down slavery, and it is the issue of abolition that makes him vulnerable to the negative impact of idealism.

Both Alcott and March also suffer the consequences of blind idealism. The choices that Alcott made during his time at Fruitlands alienated him from his family and his closest friends (Brooks, “Orpheus” 12). Similarly, March’s idealism is challenged during the Civil War when he realizes that his attempts to help slaves have ended in hurting them. However, this is also the point where March diverges from Alcott. After the Fruitlands escapade, Alcott recovered his family’s trust and continued to develop his Transcendentalist ideals. On the other hand, March

learns through his experiences in the Civil War “that he is not at all the ‘manner of man’ he had imagined himself to be” and that “the life of the mind is not impervious to the promptings of self-interest, cowardice, and lust” (Hubbard 724). His experience differs from Alcott’s in that he loses his grasp on his own identity. In one interview Brooks remarks that she doesn’t think March can return to his moral certainty and that such a return would not necessarily benefit him. Rather, “he sees more clearly the cost of his ideals, and understands that he is not the only one who must pay for them” (“A Conversation with Geraldine Brooks” 5).

Another major difference between March and Alcott is that Alcott is known for his extreme Transcendentalism, while Brooks seems to downplay this aspect of March’s character. Alcott was an influential member of the Transcendentalists; in fact, he founded the philosophical movement in 1836 along with Emerson and other significant figures (Brooks, “Orpheus” 7). In her biographical essay on Alcott, Brooks recognizes that he “was even more original, courageous and visionary than his more famous contemporaries: the most transcendent transcendentalist of them all” (2). Alcott’s Transcendentalism diverged even from Emerson’s, leading Emerson to think of Alcott as “a man whose entire being was high in the clouds” (Schmidt). Indeed, “[b]y refusing to succumb to the persuasions of his prestigious friend [Emerson], Alcott developed his own personalized brand of Transcendentalism” that would eventually become known as Personalism (Schmidt). March, however, shows little interest in Transcendental philosophy, and Brooks’ primary recognition of Alcott’s involvement in this school of thought comes in the form of Henry David Thoreau and the Emersons, who appear in the novel as March’s friends. Brooks does hint at March’s Transcendentalism through Marmee’s description of March being “wafted off on some contemplation of the Oversoul” (Brooks, *March* 222). However, Alcott rejected Emerson’s concept of the Oversoul (Schmidt). While this may be an oversight on Brooks’ part, it

also reveals that Alcott's philosophy is not relevant to March's character. While March is highly idealistic and values some of the same social causes that Alcott did, he is clearly not the fervent Transcendentalist that Alcott was.

Whereas Alcott is a Transcendentalist, March seems more interested in material gain. As a young man peddling wares to the Virginia planters, he finds himself enticed by the wealth and leisurely lifestyles that he observes. He notes, "Not even a century separated me from the great-grandparents who had wrested our fields out of pine and stone and oaken wilderness...But somewhere along the York or the James, I had ceased to long for" home (Brooks, *March* 13). Nowhere does he find this lifestyle more seductive than at Mr. Clement's plantation. For peddlers like March, the plantation lifestyle could lead someone astray through "idle dissipation" (20). While March eventually resists Mr. Clement's justifications of slavery, he does give in to his longings for wealth and possessions. When he first dines with Mr. Clement, he silently promises himself to "reserve some part of [his] profits for a decent suit from a New York tailor when [he] returned north," a promise he keeps when his time in Virginia has ended (19). After leaving the Clement plantation, he expands his peddling business and eventually returns home with enough cash to speculate, which leaves him with enough capital to invest in several New England factories (44). As March says, "by my early twenties I found myself rich" (45). Although he uses his wealth to advance his education, and later to further his goals of social reform, his primary concern seems to be amassing capital.

Not only is March's capitalism essential to understanding his character throughout the novel, his economic principles also correspond with the historical context of the novel. In fact, March's economic success throughout his early years follows the pattern of early America's progress toward capitalism. March notes that his great-grandparents independently wrested a

living from the land, representative of a pre-capitalist agrarian lifestyle (13). After the American Revolution, however, Northern farmers “became dependent upon successful market-competition for their economic survival—they became agrarian petty-commodity producers in the last two decades of the eighteenth century” (Post 148). As March grew up, his family and neighbors would have become increasingly dependent on commodities produced by other family farms and factories. At the same time, Southern plantations and tenant farms adhered to the agrarian system of the previous generation. While Northern farmers “became a growing home-market for capitalist-produced consumer and capital-goods,” the Southern economy continued to encourage “independent-household production” (150, 148). This explains why the wives of Virginia planters show little interest in the petty commodities that March peddles as a young man—the trinkets he offers can either be made on the plantation, or the landowners are wealthy enough to afford better-quality items (Brooks, *March* 15). Still, March earns his own fortune thanks to “[t]he dominance of merchant-capital in the US prior to the 1840s” that “was rooted in the noncapitalist character of commodity-production and the resulting shallow social division of labour” (Post 150-151). When March returns home from the South, he transforms his newly-earned merchant-capital into industrial capital by investing in factories and in the Thoreaus’ pencil-manufacturing industry, marking a transition in the economic progression in the North. As “industrial capital became the dominant form of capital in the 1840s and 1850s,” antebellum factories and industries marked the beginnings of American capitalism, an economic structure that would continue to develop after the war (152).

Historically speaking, capitalism also accounts for March’s interests in both abolition and the Civil War. Although he is mainly concerned with slavery on a humanitarian basis, there are specific economic reasons why March would favor abolition as a capitalist. First, the overthrow

of the feudalistic system of slavery in the South would advance the interests of capitalism's development in the North. Karl Marx argued that, in the American economy, "[t]he overthrow of slavery was the necessary first step in the full development of the proletariat and, along with the institution of political democracy, the necessary precondition for the struggle between capital and labour and, thus, the road to socialist revolution and human emancipation" (Nimtz 173). In order for the proletariat to rise, Marx saw that capitalism must develop into a full-fledged economic system. Emancipation would accelerate the development of capitalism "by enabling the deepening and expansion of capitalist relations of production throughout the US" (188). In theory, both the Northern bourgeoisie and the enslaved Southern proletariats would benefit from the total destruction of plantation slavery. In practice, Northern capitalism would benefit particularly from keeping the South in the Union, which was one of the chief goals of the war. Northern manufacturers wanted "reliable access to Southern primary goods, particularly 'King Cotton,' without fear of having to pay international tariffs (Liscow 39-40). As a result, while March never mentions that economic reasons contribute to his decision to fight for the Union, the Northern cause would further the interests of both his humanitarian ideology and his capitalist motivations.

Accordingly, March's capitalism does not seem incongruous with his ideology; in his early years his fortunes grow alongside his intellectual pursuits, friendships, romance, and social sensibilities. Perhaps the most accurate illustration of this is March's comment that, "though I like to think of myself as a philosopher, this did not deter me from gathering most gratefully what came honestly into my hands" (Brooks, *March* 44-45). Indeed, his ideology stems from his capitalism, as he uses his newfound wealth to advance his academic interests and his social status within intellectual circles—until he meets and falls in love with Marmee (45). Nowhere is

March's capitalism more evident than in his pursuit of Marmee. When he discovers where she lives, March intentionally moves to Concord "on the pretext of business" to court her (76). However, his "business" ends up being productive in more ways than one. He invests in the Thoreau family's pencil manufacturing industry to support "proposed improvements," pleased that "the amount of capital required to implement them was really very little" (78). Along the way, he wins the friendship of Henry David Thoreau and the Emersons, in addition to Marmee's love. After marrying Marmee, March continues to use his financial resources to please her. He comments, "My mission was to provide Marmee with complete liberty of mind so that she might tend to her twin passions—the education of our little women and the cause of abolition—without having to trouble about the least detail of housekeeping," even though she "chided me that the large staff left her little more to do in a practical way than 'tend her pocket handkerchief'" (113-114). Consequently, March's capitalism encourages both his intellectual ideologies and his social life.

Although March finds his wealth useful in furthering his own purposes, his business interests and his personal relationships tend to destroy each other. Once again, this principle is best exemplified by his relationship with Marmee. For instance, he illustrates his disgust with her short temper in capitalist terminology: he is surprised that "this gently bred young woman" could be more intemperate than "a market wife" (84). His reaction to her anger is not merely the indignation of a patriarchal man in the presence of a rebellious woman but that of a capitalist shocked that someone from a bourgeois background could act like a proletariat. March's capitalist values of class structure hinder his relationship with Marmee, as he defines her as a threat to his bourgeois reputation, a person who could transcend class barriers in socially unacceptable ways. On the other hand, his attempts to please Marmee lead to the depletion of his

capital. Particularly, he wants her to see him as a heroic figure, but he realizes that his humanitarian ideology pales in comparison with the “blood-dipped oratory” of John Brown (122). March concludes, “If I could not earn my wife’s esteem, perhaps at least I had the means with which to purchase it” (122). As a result, he invests all his money in Brown’s exploits; not only does March lose his money in this endeavor, but he is devastated to discover that Brown used the money to fund an uprising in which the first casualty is “a free black man” (169). This is a double blow for March, who discovers both that his money has harmed the people he sought to help and that his wife and daughters must now live in poverty. As March laments, “it is a hard thing when a man is ruined by the very idea that most animates him” (112). In this case, his idealistic desires to free the slaves and to impress his wife have ended in depleting his wealth. These examples demonstrate that, while March’s ideology springs from his capitalism, both function as different motivations that can diverge and conflict.

The reasoning behind the destructive tension between March’s ideology and his capitalism can be explained by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s theory of schizoanalysis. As defined in their collaborative work *Anti-Oedipus*, schizoanalysis reacts to Freud’s concepts of psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex. Deleuze and Guattari view the Oedipus complex as a capitalistic mechanism that centralizes the nuclear family as “the model and nucleus for social relations” through the representative roles of “Daddy—Capital, Mommy—Earth, and their kid the Worker-Consumer” (Holland 28). For Deleuze and Guattari, this structure demonstrates “the complex of social and institutional pressures by which psychoanalysis tries to make us conform and repress our desires,” while defining our identities in ways that transform subjects into consumers (Sim and Van Loon 117). In contrast, the theory of schizoanalysis attempts to expose the repressive nature of both psychoanalysis and capitalism. The primary goal of schizoanalysis

is “to show how, in the subject who desires, desire can be made to desire its own repression” under the capitalist system (Deleuze and Guattari 105). In their attempts to expose how capitalism can undermine a person’s identity through the repression of desire, Deleuze and Guattari also describe how a person can resist this repression through a more fluid identity. Accordingly, schizoanalysis is not a Marxist theory in the sense that it seeks to overthrow capitalism through revolution; rather, it functions “as a strategy for survival under capitalism” (“Schizoanalysis” 269).

Schizoanalysis describes the workings of desire and the ways in which capitalism manipulates desire for its own ends. In Deleuzoguattarian terms, desire is “dynamic power, movement, or energy,” a ceaselessly creative force that underlies and constitutes reality (Bell 42). Desire is constantly changing and contradicting itself, and it can be described as “an interminable becoming without being” (Roberts 116). As a noncorporeal force, desire exhibits itself in what Deleuze and Guattari call “desiring-machines.” Desire flows along desiring-machines and causes them to operate, just as energy flows through a motor. Desiring-machines can take many forms, including human beings, actual machines, and social structures (Ringrose 600). The use of the term “machine” emphasizes the productive power of desire and shows that both desire and desiring-machines continually engage “in the process of production, constantly changing in the drive to make new connections, and to grow and expand” (Roberts 117). However, desiring-machines must construct some form of identity for human beings, and the flows of desire that channel through the machines help them accomplish this task.

In order to construct identity, desiring machines operate under dichotomies that dictate social norms and rule human behavior. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “[d]esiring-machines are binary machines, obeying a binary law or set of rules governing associations: one machine is

always coupled with another” (5). In other words, desiring-machines tend to construct either-or structures that identify who a person is within a given context, along with the acceptable and unacceptable behavioral patterns that compose society. These constructions are known as “territorializations,” and they are both necessary and harmful to the normal human being. Deleuze and Guattari argue that “the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all” (5). Consequently, territorializations cause desiring-machines to break down, at which point new territorializations must be formed (8). This dynamic, destructive-productive process describes the way territorializations create identity by channeling desire in specific ways.

Capitalism exploits this channeling of desire by manipulating desire to further capitalist consumption. One of the ways it accomplishes this task is by altering the definition of desire. Whereas schizoanalysis describes desire as a productive force, capitalism renders it as a longing for something that is missing. Desire itself has not changed because of capitalism; rather, capitalism re-channels desire just as one might divert the course of a stream. This re-channeling of desire, according to Deleuze and Guattari, promotes consumerism:

The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the art of a dominant class. This involves deliberately organizing wants and needs (*manque*) amid an abundance of production; making all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one’s needs satisfied; and making the object dependent upon a real production that is supposedly exterior to desire (the demands of rationality), while at the same time the production of desire is categorized as fantasy and nothing but fantasy. (28)

Accordingly, capitalism's emphasis on lack is harmful for two reasons. First, capitalism exploits the concept of lack by manipulating desire into consumerism until desiring-machines become subject "to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied" (28). Second, capitalism minimizes the power of desire by reducing the popular conception of desire to mere "fantasy." In accomplishing these goals, capitalism distorts desire to the point that desire loses power in society. It is in the best interests of capitalism to re-channel desire, because "no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised" (116). In the process, however, this repression harms the desiring machines, as desire is no longer allowed to flow unhindered through the desiring-machines.

The distortion of desire fragments identity to the detriment of the subject and leads to the commodification of human beings. Marc Roberts notes that "capitalism's drive for profit, and ever-renewed profit" leads to "an interminable, and dynamic tendency for all established 'identities' to become 'fragmented' or 'broken up'" for the benefit of the capitalist economy (120). It is this constant destruction that makes capitalism "schizophrenic," because it leads to an almost total annihilation of identity. However, although fragmented identity is a crucial aspect of the economic system, the process cannot continue unhindered because capitalism itself would eventually self-destruct, since capitalism is also a territorialization. As a result, if capitalism destroys identity, it must also reconstruct new identities in ways that benefit the system. This is where commodification of identity enters into the equation. According to Roberts, "although capitalism breaks up all existing identities, it immediately refashions everything in the form of a 'commodity' or 'private property'" (120). This tendency is inherently troubling, because it reduces the powerful desiring-machine into a commodity that can be bought and sold—or at least manipulated to the advantage of the economic system. As Daniel Bell says, "capitalism deforms

and corrupts human desire into an insatiable drive for more that today is celebrated as the aggressive, creative, entrepreneurial energy that distinguishes *homo economicus*" (103). Bell's primary concern with capitalism is that the system not only perverts desire but, in the process, reduces humans to commodities (105). Because capitalism dissects and reassembles identity to the detriment of the subject, schizoanalysis must study the way capitalism deterritorializes and reterritorializes identity.

Deterritorialization decodes the structures, ideologies, and identities that desiring-machines have constructed. If desire is synonymous with power or energy for Deleuze and Guattari, territorialization involves energy that is "captured and striated in specific space/time contexts," while deterritorialization frees energy from these channels or restrictions (Ringrose 603). This is accomplished through "the subversion and stripping away by market forces of social codes themselves" (Holland 31). Decoding can adopt a variety of forms, but it often occurs within the system that is being deconstructed. For instance, capitalism decodes itself through deterritorialization, or it allows individuals or groups to undermine its authority and create a new territorialization that continues to further the goals of the system.

However, some forms of decoding, termed "lines of flight," involve deviant desire that avoids reterritorialization (Ringrose 603). Lines of flight occur when desire escapes from the territorializations that capitalism has constructed. Because territorializations are composed of binaries that describe positive and negative behaviors, an individual can pursue a line of flight by identifying with the negative aspect of the binary instead of blindly obeying prescribed social norms. Such an individual "breaches the wall and causes flows to move" by saying defiantly, "I am not your kind, I belong eternally to the inferior race, I am a beast, a black," and by rebelling against capitalist territorializations to achieve subjectivity apart from restrictive social binaries

(Deleuze and Guattari 277). Lines of flight provide this individual with opportunities to resist social expectations that reconstruct him or her as a consumer.

While deviant behavior might appeal to a person who recognizes the destructive pattern of capitalism, one must remember that “lines of flight can be destructive, productive or both” (Ringrose 611). To demonstrate the difference between positive and negative lines of flight, Jessica Ringrose presents a case study about how Louise, a British schoolgirl, has used positive and negative lines of flight to cope with cyberbullying. After discovering that Marie has been spreading gossip about her on the internet, Louise confronted Marie at school and ended up hitting her. The school authorities acted as a “dualism machine” that exerted “a binary between Marie as victim and Louise as aggressor” (610). The territorialized identity constructed by the school pathologized Louise because she acted in opposition to the school’s conceptions of femininity; at the same time, Marie’s verbal violence against Louise remained unpunished, since Marie acted within the characteristically feminine side of the binary. Ringrose clearly presents Louise’s physical violence as a negative line of flight, but she also shows how Louise was able to construct a positive line of flight on the internet that helped her escape from the territorializations of the school. After the incident with Marie, Louise used a social media site called Bebo to create “a virtual space to talk back to the injurious comments and difficult conditions of the school assemblage... to disrupt the feeling rules and order-words at the school that insist she remain friends with Marie” (612). This line of flight allowed Louise to release the repression that she experiences at school, and it also enabled her to form an online community with people who have experienced similar situations. She has escaped repressive territorializations by aligning “with the ‘war machine’ which refuses to sit still and passively accept either the normative affective striations around being desirable or feminine, or the cruelty of disciplinary binaries

enacted at school” (612). As a result, while lines of flight can be destructive or constructive, positive lines of flight can help an individual resist repressive structures in healthy ways. Still, all lines of flight are important to note in schizoanalysis, because they indicate the means through which an individual can achieve subjectivity.

While lines of flight are an important concept in schizoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari assert that, within the capitalist system, the deconstruction of identity is almost always countered by reconstruction. Deterritorializations are “accompanied by global or local reterritorializations, reterritorializations that always reconstitute shores of representation” and that “[o]ur loves are complexes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 316). Capitalist reterritorialization creates new identities “fashioned in the image of capital,” which results in the commodification of identity (Roberts 120). When capitalism spreads to a new geopolitical area, it deterritorializes pre-capitalist structures and ideologies in order to create new social structures and mores that benefit a free market economy. Once capitalism establishes itself as the dominant economic structure, it deterritorializes its own structures and replaces them with newer ones that reinforce its power over consumers. Eugene Holland presents an excellent example of this second instance of reterritorialization in the fashion world. He notes that “fashion codes endow basically interchangeable and meaningless commodities with a semblance of aesthetic value and meaning—at least for the duration of the fashion season (after which another cycle of decoding and recoding will commence anew)” (31). In any case, this constant reterritorialization channels desire in paths that benefit capitalism in order “to neutralize and crush resistance, to block the flow of desire that would escape the capitalist discipline” (Bell 67).

Reterritorialization often takes the form of representation; through reconstructing identity, capitalism creates narratives by which people conduct their lives. Capitalism

“introduce[s] mythological representations, eschatological narratives or salvation myths into the unconscious” in order to establish new territorializations through which individuals can identify themselves (Roberts 123). Reterritorialization is inherently symbolic, so someone who hopes to map the paths of capitalist reterritorialization should look for ways in which capitalism illustrates itself through social structures and narratives. One famous example of this symbolism occurs in the capitalist conception of the Oedipal family structure. Deleuze and Guattari note along with Marx that this structure uses familial roles to illustrate the dynamics of capitalism: “Daddy—Capital, Mommy—Earth, and their kid the Worker-Consumer” (Holland 28). Since the capitalist discipline of psychoanalysis sets up the nuclear family as “the model and nucleus for social relations” and therefore imprints “the Oedipal psyche with the structure and dynamics of the capitalist economy,” this family structure preconditions a person to identify himself or herself based on his or her role in the nuclear family, and consequently, his or her role in the economic structure (Holland 28). Deleuze and Guattari argue that, because of its preoccupation with the Oedipal complex, psychology is a capitalist structure that recodes the nuclear family to reform individual identity. In any case, the narratives that reterritorialization provides create false consciousness, causing individuals to align their identity within the prevailing economic structure. Not only does this process repress desire by channeling its flows along socially constructed paths, reterritorialization creates narratives that people wish to follow, causing individuals to pursue the repression of their own desire (Roberts 121-122).

Since Deleuze and Guattari see reterritorializations as inherently repressive, they oppose capitalist recoding. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari primarily criticize capitalism for its constant reterritorialization. They argue:

[S]ocial production produced the sick schizo: constructed on decoded flows that constitute its profound tendency or its absolute limit, capitalism is constantly counteracting this tendency, exorcizing this limit by substituting internal relative limits for it that it can reproduce on an ever expanding scale, or an axiomatic of flows that subjects this tendency to the harshest forms of despotism and repression. (362-363)

In other words, recoding halts the process of decoding and can make the individual figuratively ill or mad through the unnatural repression of desire. Repression stunts the productivity of desire by subjecting its flows to the narratives created by psychoanalysis and capitalism (Roberts 123). Ironically, Deleuze and Guattari employ the cycle of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the attempt to subvert capitalism and psychoanalysis through schizoanalysis and schizophrenia. Within the theory, however, they privilege the “schizophrenic” process of deterritorialization while condemning capitalist reterritorialization as paranoiac and repressive, because “decoding frees difference while recoding subordinates it to identity” (Holland 34-35). As a result, schizoanalysis must find a way to inhibit capitalist reterritorialization and to provide a healthy alternative to repressive territorializations.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that, in order to counter the negative effects of reterritorialization, deterritorialization must be allowed to proceed unhindered. If capitalism’s constant decoding and recoding “is a form of madness,” the solution is to intensify “the madness, continuing the process of deterritorialization until desire is free of all order” (Bell 141-142). The goal of this intensification is to free desire from the repressive territorializations and reterritorializations that restrain and minimize the power of desire. As such, “schizoanalysis engages in the on-going ‘destruction’ of all territorialities” (Roberts 124). Because territorialities

create identity through binaries, schizoanalysis attempts to decode socially constructed binaries and dichotomies. The individual who pursues constant deterritorialization will not adhere to a dichotomized identity but will seek lines of flight that allow him or her to escape repressive binaries. According to Deleuze and Guattari:

He does not confine himself inside contradictions; on the contrary, he opens out and, like a spore case inflated with spores, releases them as so many singularities that he had improperly shut off, some of which he intended to exclude, while retaining others, but which now become points-signs (points-signes), all affirmed by their new distance. The disjunction, being now inclusive, does not closet itself inside its own terms. On the contrary it is nonrestrictive. (77)

According to this model, those who constantly deterritorialize their identities do not need to succumb to the social constructions that pressure them to live according to existing binaries. They are free to deviate from standard behavior, and they can become seeming contradictions by embracing both sides of the binary; both actions allow them to resist reterritorialization. Consequently, “the ultimate aim of schizoanalysis is the free proliferation of difference” (Holland 37). While the primary goal of schizoanalysis is destructive, since it seeks to deterritorialize the constructions of capitalism and psychoanalysis, the decoding process frees desire from the constraints of artificially imposed identities. While deconstruction is vital, complete deterritorialization is impossible, since schizoanalysis itself is a reterritorialization of psychoanalysis. Instead, schizoanalysis argues that the person who lives under capitalism must learn to identify unhealthy territorializations and develop appropriate lines of flight that will help him or her escape capitalist repression of desire.

Schizoanalysis does not merely involve the negative task of deterritorialization, but it includes the positive task of identifying and describing the workings of desire and desiring-machines (Deleuze and Guattari 322). In order to reconstruct the damage of capitalism and psychoanalysis, one must recognize the tenets of schizoanalysis: “[D]esire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, a machinic arrangement—desiring-machines. The order of desire is the order of *production*; all production is at once desiring-production and social production (296). According to Deleuze and Guattari, this “recognition of desire” is crucial because it “refers to an order of real and actual productivity,” in contrast to the social constructions of capitalist reterritorializations (130). If desire flows through desiring-machines, and if capitalism interrupts and represses these flows of desire, then the schizoanalyst must become a mechanic to learn how to liberate desire and fix the desiring-machines. The schizoanalyst must be able to identify “what a subject’s desiring-machines are, how they work, with what syntheses, what bursts of energy in the machine, what constituent misfires, with what flows, what chains, and what becomings in each case” (338). Since desire is inherently productive, learning to identify the problems with a desiring-machine and then fixing them will set “desiring production back into motion,” mending the actions that capitalism has taken “to silence and suffocate this production” (130). Schizoanalysis, then, attempts to liberate desire and mend desiring-machines by exposing the artificial constructions of capitalism and rediscovering the true nature of desire and desiring-machines.

Deleuze and Guattari also provide an archetype of the fully-functioning desiring-machine: the schizophrenic. In using the terms “schizophrenia” and “schizophrenic,” Deleuze and Guattari do not attempt to communicate within the traditional psychological definitions. Neither do they attempt to romanticize the mental disorder of schizophrenia. Rather, “in a

manner analogous to the way that schizophrenia as a psychiatric condition is commonly understood to ‘dissolve’ or ‘fragment’ a person’s ‘identity’, ‘desire’ is said to be characterized by an on-going and *productive* ‘dissolution’ of any fixed identity or organization” (Roberts 117). A schizophrenic in Deleuzoguattarian terms, then, is a person whose identity is fluid. Since deterritorialization fragments identity and reterritorialization constructs identity, and since schizoanalysis promotes the deterritorialization of social codes, the person who follows Deleuze and Guattari’s theory would naturally possess a fragmented identity. However, this disjointed or dissolved sense of identity is appropriate, because the alternative—a fixed identity within capitalist territorializations—are artificial and repressive. Trapped in capitalism’s ceaseless process of decoding and recoding, “we ‘struggle’ for a subjectivity ‘beneath’ the notion of a fixed identity” (Roberts 126).

The schizophrenic embraces the struggle for subjectivity by saying, “Far better to be multiple personalities than a single dysfunctional one” (Sim and Van Loon 117). As a result, the schizophrenic develops strategies to transcend identity. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “the schizo has long since ceased to believe in [the ego]. He is somewhere else, beyond or behind or below these problems, rather than immersed in them” (23). The schizophrenic is “the one who can no longer bear ‘all that’: money, the stock market, the death forces,” and the artificially imposed structures of identity, and so simply escapes through lines of flight (341). These lines of flight enable the schizophrenic to be “a free man, irresponsible, solitary, and joyous, finally able to say and do something simple in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever” (130). The schizophrenic still lives within the system of capitalism, but as long as he

or she resists the false structures of identity, there is no need to worry about capitalist repression of desire.

In light of schizoanalysis, Brooks' novel *March* clearly depicts a protagonist whose desires are repressed by capitalism and who eventually reaches a state of schizophrenia. March's early life demonstrates how early American capitalism rechannels his desire to transform him from a New England farmer's son into a successful businessman and consumer, but as the novel progresses, he becomes a schizophrenic in Deleuzoguattarian terms. The circumstances he encounters during the war deterritorialize his identity, and he ends with a fluid identity that transcends capitalist territorializations. Along the way, Marmee and Grace function both as deterritorializing forces and as examples of how to navigate the territorialized binaries while retaining subjectivity.

In this novel, March's ideals function as desire that capitalism rechannels into ideology. One could argue that March's sexual desire for Marmee and Grace is at stake in the novel, but a close reading reveals that his ideals underlie most of his motives, especially his romantic attractions. For example, when he meets Marmee he is drawn to her intellectual fervor and her passion for social justice. Similarly, he is drawn to Grace because she represents his hope for the African-American people. As Grace says, "He loves, perhaps, an idea of me: Africa, liberated" (Brooks, *March* 242). Accordingly, March's ideals form the basis of his personality. At the same time, however, capitalism re-channels his ideals and reshapes his identity to further the goals of the capitalist economy.

Capitalism territorializes March's ideals by transforming them into narratives—or ideologies—that provide March with an identity. These ideologies usually support March's capitalism. When March loses his fortune, for instance, he remarks, "I was glad to give up the

garments on the peg rail that spoke to me of slave labor, worm slaughter, and sheep theft—for is not fleece the rightful property of the sheep? And why should the humble silkworm be sentenced to death for our finery?” (126). March’s territorialized identity as a vegan and an abolitionist correspond with his capitalism by helping him save money during a time of need. The problem with his ideology, however, is not with the ideals themselves but with the fact that capitalism channels his ideals in ways that benefit the economic system at the expense of other people. Brooks herself remarks that March will always be an idealist but that by the end of the novel, “he sees more clearly the cost of his ideals, and understands that he is not the only one who must pay for them” (“A Conversation with Geraldine Brooks” 5). How March is able to deterritorialize his capitalist-constructed ideology while retaining his idealism is a process that spans the entire novel.

March’s capitalist ideologies are deterritorialized and reterritorialized to reinforce the power of capitalism in his identity. This pattern of decoding and recoding follows the progression of capitalism throughout the novel. Just as capitalism deterritorializes pre-capitalist territorializations as it spreads to a new area, capitalism enters the novel when it decodes March’s agrarianism to reshape his identity. This is clearly seen during his early days as a peddler in Virginia. He comments, “I used to look forward to the day I would return with profits from my peddling in hand,” but his experiences among the wealthy planters cause him to long for a life apart from his parents’ rustic existence (13-14). March’s time at the Clements’ plantation is the turning point at which wealth entices him with promises of intellectual growth and humanitarian pursuits. His cerebral conversations with Mr. Clement and Grace, the opportunity to educate a slave child, and free access to a well-stocked library all show him how financial success can support both academic and humanitarian ideologies. These experiences

play with his desires, re-channeling them to make him feel his lack of wealth and his lust for prosperity. Lust, in fact, is “the only word accurate to describe the sensation” he feels during his first hours in Mr. Clement’s library (18). During his time at the plantation, he becomes aware that both intellectual and sexual lust can be coupled with power. When he first kisses Grace, he remarks that he feels “[a]larm at the potency of my lust. And guilty awariness [*sic*] that I had an obscene power here. That if lust mastered me, this woman would be in no position to gainsay my desire” (34).

In spite of deterritorialization, March’s newfound economic interest reshapes him in the image of a fully-fledged capitalist. March’s humanitarian ideology decodes his desire for Grace and eventually deterritorializes his greedy curiosity in plantation life (38-39). After his first experience with the Clements, he ceases “averting [his] eyes” to the “tempting fruits” of slavery and refocuses his energy on his work, expanding his peddling venture and eventually becoming a successful businessman (42). Because of his shrewd business practices and investments, March is able to reconstruct his identity as a scholar by using his newfound capital to buy his way into academic circles (45). Through his time at the plantation, two pre-capitalist systems—Northern agrarianism and Southern plantation slavery—are deterritorialized in favor of a new system: capitalism. Through this process, capitalism works with his intellectual and humanitarian ideologies to reshape his identity.

As we have already seen, March’s ideologies sometimes operate within the goals of capitalism and sometimes operate counter to capitalism. When ideology threatens capitalism, capitalism breaks down the territorialization or allows it to self-destruct, then reforms it into something new. This process is best evidenced in March’s relationship with Marmee.

Throughout their courtship and marriage, his capitalism and ideology remain in constant tension.

When he first falls in love with her, for example, his capitalist instincts immediately try to repress his desire for her. His reaction to his first sight of her is overwhelmingly repressive: he remarks, “Helpless, I offered a silent prayer for self-command...I took care not to glance again in that dangerous direction until...the radiance [was] safely quenched once more beneath the armor of her hat brim” (60). While March is influenced by capitalism, which represses his desires, Marmee longs to freely express her “passion...which beats at the very heart of women’s being” (63). March finds Marmee’s intemperate anger repulsive, since he has accepted the capitalist territorializations that dictate socially acceptable behavior. Now that he has already succumbed to his desire for her by accepting the fact that he loves her, his capitalism motivates him to deterritorialize her anger in order to recode her identity into that of a loving, submissive wife. He notes, “I could not conceive her insensible of her fault, nor of the need to conquer it,” and he supposes, “a husband’s gentle guidance could assist her in the battle against such a dangerous bosom enemy” (86). As a result, March’s desire for Marmee deconstructs his capitalism, but his capitalism reterritorializes by encouraging him to repress her antisocial wrath.

Although March’s capitalism re-channels his identity into that of a repressive patriarch, Marmee deterritorializes this identity and encourages the growth of his humanitarian ideology at the expense of his capitalism. True to his capitalist instincts, March comes to view Marmee as an object he can possess through the exchange of money. Throughout the early years of their marriage, he tries to buy her affection. First, he spends large sums to purchase a household that will both “provide Marmee with complete liberty of mind” and “build beauty into our daily life” (113-114). He also uses his funds to build a secret room so the couple could harbor fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad—encouraging their mutual ideology of abolition (114-115). However, his attempts possess her by repressing her temper, “to teach her something about her

new place” as a wife and mother, often fail. Although his capitalism tries to commodify Marmee, she often proves stronger. Their first night together, when he possesses her “only to find that, suddenly, it was *she* who held [him],” foreshadows her role in their relationship (88). Therefore, although March attempts to control Marmee, it is she who truly runs the family. She comments later, “[W]here he might retire to his study and be wafted off on some contemplation of the Oversoul, it was I who felt harassed at every hour by our indebtedness and demeaned by begging credit here and there; I who had to go hungry so that he and the girls might eat” (222).

Accordingly, while his capitalism reterritorialize his identity into that of a controlling patriarch of the nuclear family, Marmee deterritorializes his identity by functioning as the provider and the sacrificial head of the family.

Eventually, Marmee’s strength leads to the further deterritorialization of March’s capitalism. After a particularly troubling conflict, March and Marmee attend a lecture given by John Brown, and March sees that “Brown ignited...the lawless, gypsy elements of [Marmee’s] nature” (121). He admits, “I felt myself that moment like a child in want of her approval. I realized then that I *was* jealous. She saw Brown as a heroic figure; I wanted her to see *me* that way” (122). Rather than attempt to repress her passion, March attempts to repurchase her esteem by funding Brown’s abolitionist ventures. Both March’s desire for Marmee and his abolitionist ideology play a role in his unwise investment; he notes, “if Brown had in some way seduced her, then he had seduced me, also” (125). Therefore, both motivations are responsible for deterritorializing March’s capitalism by leading to his bankruptcy. March’s failed investments do not lead to total deterritorialization, because his capitalism recodes his ideology by reaffirming his identity as an abolitionist. Essentially, his capitalist instincts attempt to avenge his lost wealth by trying to destroy the pre-capitalist system of slavery that hinders the spread of Northern

capitalism. Perhaps he hopes unconsciously that he can regain his lost wealth in the context of the economy. Although March's ideology is his primary reason for joining the Union Army, his capitalism, while weakened by bankruptcy, remains an unconscious motivation.

While March follows the capitalist process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that represses his desires and shapes his identity, the women in his life are able to free themselves from this system through Deleuzoguattarian schizophrenia. Marmee, for instance, is a constant force of deterritorialization: a line of flight. In March's early years, she decodes his capitalist ideology, and her influence remains in constant tension with the recoding energy of capitalism. Marmee herself refuses to succumb to the dichotomized identity and rigid cultural norms of capitalist society. She even defies the standards for female beauty. As March comments, her face "was not by any means a face that the conventional world would label beautiful, and certainly the word pretty had no part in it; her skin was olive-gold rather than society's preferred pallor, the cheekbones were set rather high and wide, the nose rather long, the chin decided rather than delicate" (60). As her appearance suggests, she defies convention throughout the novel. She rebels against the standard of women's education "that is stultifying, oppressive, crippling rather than enhancing to our moral integrity and intellectual growth" (62). As a married woman, she also resists her husband's attempts to subdue her into a submissive, culturally acceptable wife. At one point in their marriage, she rails:

You stifle me! You crush me! You preach emancipation, and yet you enslave me, in the most fundamental way... You call our girls your 'little women'; well, I am your belittled woman, and I am tired of it. Tired of suppressing my true feelings, tired of schooling my heart to order, as if I were some errant pupil and you the schoolmaster. I will not be degraded in this way. (130-131)

After this speech, she resorts to a harmful line of flight—physical violence—to enforce her argument. Still, her readiness to embrace the negative side of the binary identity demonstrates that she pursues lines of flight in order to escape from the repression of capitalist social structures. Just as Deleuze and Guattari suggests, she identifies herself with negative terminology, calling herself “an opinionated termagant,” “a Harpy and a Helen” (64, 87). Whereas women were expected to be calm, submissive, and pure, Marmee embraces the culturally stigmatized characteristics of defiance and passion in order to escape from capitalist territorializations. Although March belittles Marmee for her lack of restraint, she is a stronger person than he is, because she actively resists capitalism’s constant reterritorializations.

While Marmee pursues lines of flight, Grace has already achieved the fluid identity of schizophrenia that Deleuze and Guattari endorse. Grace’s appearance and lifestyle defy categorization. The most noticeable aspect of Grace is her voice, which Marmee describes as “Southern, but as educated as an aristocrat” (216). This illustrates the fact that, although Grace was born a slave, she has been raised to live differently than most slaves. Born before Virginia law condemned the education of slave children, she has been well-educated by the Clements to provide her mistress with companionship (29). As a result, her place in the Clement household is neither that of a subservient slave nor that of a free member of the house. Grace’s dual identity continues after she wins her freedom and begins working at a Union hospital in Washington, D.C. She does not live with the white nurses or the black laundresses, choosing to find her own place by living with a surgeon’s wife, whom she knows on a first name basis (236). Grace both embraces and rejects the black/white binary; she is a literal and figurative mulatto. Just as she defies racial and cultural expectations, she also rejects March’s attempts to define her identity in terms that are convenient to his abolitionist ideology. Whereas March expects all slaves to long

for freedom, she chooses to stay at the Clements' plantation (55). Through defying March's idea of the oppressed slave who is willing to cut all family ties to escape slavery, she shows March that she will gain her freedom on her own terms and that "[a] free people must learn to manage its own destiny" (268). Consequently, Grace advocates a fluid identity apart from the repression of binary territorializations, and she offers March a model for how to function as a schizophrenic.

In order to reach a state of fluid identity, however, March must undergo constant deterritorialization while resisting reterritorialization. The events of the Civil War function as a continually deterritorializing force that deconstructs March's identity as the novel progresses. First, the war decodes March's ideology of war as a glorified cause. When he first joins the Union army, he sees the war as God-ordained opportunity to promote freedom and equality (182). However, his experiences reveal the brutality of war. His trust in the Union cause is shaken when he sees his own men molesting Southern women, and when he learns that "there're about as many genuine abolitionists in Lincoln's army as there are in Jeff Davis's" (68, 70). March begins to lose faith in the war when he discovers that not all Northerners share his religious and humanitarian ideology. In addition, he begins to doubt the strength of his own ideologies when he commits his own wartime sins. He feels responsible for Silas Stone's death throughout the novel, because he thinks that he should have been able to rescue the boy from drowning (7). He also regrets his illicit passion for Grace when he returns to the Clements' plantation. His actions shake his faith in his own moral character, as "it was a grave transgression to have entertained those longings, and to have acted upon them even so far as I did," even though "at that moment I believed that the most moral act I could perform would be the one that

would unite us, completely” (73, 56). Consequently, March’s actions begin to deterritorialize his ideology as he loses faith in his ability to act on his sense of morality.

If his choices during the war deconstruct his humanitarian ideology, his time at Oak Landing deconstructs his capitalist ideology. Ethan Canning’s role at Oak Landing is essentially that of an early sharecropper. In theory, the idea of sharecropping should appease March’s capitalism. As “a transitional form between feudalism and capitalism,” sharecropping would seem like an appropriate reterritorialization of slavery (Mann 415). However, as March discovers, the conditions at Oak Landing promise nothing but misery for both the landowner and the workers within the sharecropping system. The plantation is understaffed, and working conditions are extremely hostile. Distrust builds between Canning and the workers, as they shirk their duties and he punishes them severely for minor offences. March immediately sides with the workers, arguing, “Why shouldn’t they prefer to work a crop that can sustain them, when they have seen no evidence that a penny profit from the inedible one will flow back into their hands?” (Brooks, *March* 135). However, he comes to see that while Canning is “a hard and ungenerous man, he [is], at heart, a fair-minded one” (152). The problem at Oak Landing, then, lies not in the workers nor in Canning, but in the sharecropping system itself. March sees that, because of this system, the workers labor even harder than they did during the days of slavery, and that the landowner receives very little profit. As a result, his observations at Oak Landing deterritorialize his capitalist ideology as he sees that the semi-capitalist system of sharecropping harms freed slaves rather than helping them achieve equality. This experience decodes March’s capitalism and shakes his territorialized identity.

Instead of reconstructing his capitalist instincts, March begins to free his ideals from capitalist ideology by interacting openly and honestly with the workers, without fear of

transcending territorialized boundaries. He begins to show kindness to the people around him without expecting any return and without trying to define their identities in relation to his own. His first success in this area occurs when he rescues Jimse and earns the respect of the baby's young mother, Zannah (140). After this incident, he begins to appreciate his pupils for "their eagerness and their high spirits, even if it would take some time to effect the kind of order [he] desired for learning" (141). In addition, while Canning, still fully motivated by his Northern capitalism, protests that "[t]hese people must learn that as they are paid, so, too, must they pay in turn to satisfy their wants," March fulfills his ideals by freely giving to people in need without expecting payment (149). In return, however, the workers respond in good faith by respecting March and Canning, and they "set to their tasks with a new willingness" (151). This new spirit of generosity, vastly different from March's capitalist ideology and his patronizing humanitarianism, builds a community where individuals are respected, not commodified or forced into a particular identity. For March, teaching at Oak Landing is a cathartic experience that deterritorializes his capitalist identity and reminds him of the person he used to be. As he comments, "This was the school I had yearned for as a young wanderer...I had found the work I was born to do" (141, 144). Living in this way not only deconstructs March's ideology, it also frees his ideals to function apart from restrictive territorializations. Without the restraint of capitalist repression, he can now operate according to his ideals—or, as Deleuze and Guattari would say—his desire.

As a result of his experiences during the war and at Oak Landing, March's capitalist identity has been deterritorialized, and he must learn to live with a fluid identity. He has grown disillusioned with his ideology and with himself, especially after the slaughter of his pupils and Canning at Oak Landing. When he returns home, he describes himself not as the "person of

moral certainty, and some measure of wisdom, whom many called courageous,” but as “a fool, a coward, uncertain of everything” (270). The deterritorialization of his ideology has led to a loss of moral certainty, as he can no longer identify who he is and what he believes. His saddleback fever, which appears after his complete transcending of boundaries by dancing with the workers after the cotton harvest, symbolizes this new identity. This identity is fluid and does not need to align itself with the binaries of master/slave or liberator/liberated. Like the fever, fluid identity is chronic: it will stay with March as he re-learns how to live within a capitalist society without succumbing to repressive binaries. More immediately, March will have to learn how to deal with the violence and murder that he has witnessed at Oak Landing. He will have to overcome the idea that he is “somehow at fault in all the ill things that have happened” (266). First, he needs to overcome the unproductive guilt that capitalist territorializations enforce upon him, as Grace suggests (268). Second, he needs to embrace his new, fluid identity to build a new life for himself. As Grace tells Marmee, “Speak to him of [his daughters], remind him of their needs, his duty...he is a good, kind man. But I don’t think he sees himself that way anymore. It will fall to you to convince him of it, if you want him to live” (246). March’s new identity is simply that of “a good, kind man,” not that of an abolitionist, a liberator, a businessman, or a capitalist. It is only through embracing this identity, freed from restrictive territorializations, that March can survive.

In summary, Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of schizoanalysis accurately explains what happens to March during the course of the novel. March is inherently an idealist, and his ideals can be defined in terms of Deleuzoguattarian desire; they form a productive force that can be positive or negative. As a young man, March becomes a successful businessman, and his capitalism re-channels his ideals into ideologies that benefit his capitalist motivations.

Throughout his life, his ideologies are deterritorialized and reterritorialized in order to reinforce capitalism's control over him. When he enters the Civil War, his experiences constantly deconstruct his ideologies, leaving no room for capitalist reterritorialization. In the end, he still retains his ideals, but he has lost his moral certainty and his capitalist identity. Essentially, he has achieved a state of schizophrenia, a fluid identity that transcends the binaries of territorializations. While it is one thing to recognize how schizoanalysis plays out in the novel, it is another to decipher whether March's schizophrenia will actually help him overcome his uncertainty. In light of this theory, the schizoanalyst will need to account for whether or not the novel ends hopefully for March.

In many ways, the novel seems optimistic because of March's fluid identity and the changes in his family. Schizophrenia exhibits itself in the individual's resistance to territorialized identities, but it can also occur within the family. Since the Oedipal family is a symbolic construct of capitalist psychology, this structure must also undergo deterritorialization. A constant process of decoding should "eliminate the nuclear family... resituate the family triangle (Mommy-Daddy-kids) in a broader network of social relations reaching well beyond kin" (Holland 36). Toward the end of *March*, the nuclear family structure changes, providing hope that both March and his family will learn how to function in healthy ways. March as the patriarch is removed from the family due to the war, leaving his wife and daughters to fend for themselves at home. As a result of her husband's absence and illness, Marmee achieves her own leadership role in the household. In addition, although *Little Women* documents the domestic failures and frustrations of Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy while their mother is away, *March* purposely neglects to mention their difficulties. Instead, their father praises them for their newfound emotional maturity (272-273). During March's time apart from the family, then, the March women have

developed independently from their patriarch. This fragmentation of the nuclear family has benefited them by helping them achieve subjectivity outside the nuclear family. Moreover, Holland's suggestion that the an-Oedipal family include "a broader network of social relations" is taken into account, as the March family circle expands to include John Brooke and Laurie at March's homecoming (36). This fragmentation and expansion indicates hope for the March family as a whole and, by extension, for March himself.

The greatest hope for March, however, is Marmee. As the new leader of the family, Marmee remains "serene in the center of the maelstrom," a potential source of fluid stability (271). Her optimism provides March with the stability he needs, even though both of them have experienced unsettling deterritorialization. He comments that "[s]he would have me back in the boat, she would keep this craft, our family, afloat, together, no matter how damaged my state, or her own, no matter how uncertain the seas. In spite of uncertainty, Marmee looks beyond March's capitalist identity to see who he really is—an "inconstant, ruined dreamer" (259). Because she sees his ideals rather than just his ideology, she reminds him that, even though the war has deconstructed his identity, he can reclaim his subjectivity by remaining true to his ideals. She tells him, "To believe, to act, and to have events confound you—I grant you, that is hard to bear. But to believe, and not to act, or to act in a way that every fiber of your soul held was wrong—how can you not see? That is what would have been reprehensible" (258-259). As a result, she reminds him that ideals remain in the face of deterritorialization, and that these ideals—his desire—truly define who he is. If he can act according to his ideals, without allowing capitalism to repress them, and without pursuing destructive lines of flight, he can survive.

On the other hand, the novel's closing chapter is open-ended, and Brooks leaves the reader feeling uncertain whether March will actually survive. When March returns home, he has

not yet learned how to live in a state of schizophrenia. He is confused and unconvinced that he can live in the real world anymore. As he admits, “I would do my best to live in the quick world, but the ghosts of the dead would be ever at hand” (273). This in-betweenness, this schizophrenia, is what Deleuze and Guattari advocate, but March seems to doubt whether he can actually live between the worlds of the quick and the dead. In addition, he is confused about some of the changes in his family, and he is unsure of what his role will be in the new family dynamic. He reacts with uncertainty toward the presence of new family members, feeling cynical about Laurie’s boyish excitement and emotionally disconnected from John Brooke’s relationship with Meg (270-271). Despite all these alterations, however, his greatest concern is that his family will not accept him now that he has changed so much. Although he is quick to praise his daughters, no one thinks “to ask their father how a year at war had changed *him*” (273). Accordingly, while March is provided with the support he needs to endure schizophrenia, Brooks does not guarantee that he will survive. Implicit in the text is the fear that March will choose to cope with his instability by pursuing negative lines of flight, such as total alienation from his family or even suicide. March’s uncertain future is illustrated in the closing lines of the novel. Marmee lights a lamp “in the gathering darkness,” and “[f]or an instant, everything [is] bathed in radiance” (273). However, the radiance Marmee provides seems temporary, and the language of this last sentence suggests that the light may not last long before March is plunged in darkness again.

In the end, schizoanalysis accurately accounts for the character of March. Capitalism distorts and represses March’s ideals or desire, and the experiences of the war work to deconstruct his identity. This leads to moral uncertainty and fluid identity—schizophrenia. While deterritorialization frees March’s ideals, he must learn how to function apart from the binary territorializations that have previously defined him. His new, fluid identity causes him to feel

uncertain about his identity and his role in the family. Although Marmee will support him as he learns how to cope with constant deterritorialization, Brooks does not provide concrete hope that March will actually heal. While she admits, “I don’t think he can go back [to territorialized identity]. Nor do I think it is necessarily desirable,” she does not conclude that March’s schizophrenia is entirely desirable, either (“A Conversation with Geraldine Brooks” 5). As a result, while Brooks seems to agree with Deleuze and Guattari’s view of schizophrenia as the ultimate end and solution to capitalist repression, she also suggests that constant deterritorialization can either help March or destroy him completely. In order to survive fluid identity, then, March must rely on the support of his family and he must continue to pursue his ideals as “a good, kind man.” Through the story of March and his struggles, Brooks offers a line of flight for readers trapped in capitalist territorializations, or for readers who feel unstable due to schizophrenic deterritorializations. Like the fate of the protagonist himself, whether or not *March* will help these readers embrace their own fluid identities remains to be seen.

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