

Deleuzian Reading of Suzan-Lori Parks's Concept of Time in *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1,2&3*

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Abstract

The present study has aimed to read one of Suzan-Lori Parks's recent plays, *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1,2&3*, from new aspects borrowing Deleuzian notions about time. Parks, as a postmodern female black playwright, depicts her main concern about the ambivalent condition of black characters, caused by the dominant power, while the relationship between their ambivalency and the meaning of time is palpable; however, the reality of time and the historical past events are put into question as well. Besides, Parksean structure of the play illustrates different layers and an amalgamation of actual and virtual, history, fantasy and mythology, representing Deleuzian multi-layered and multi-dimensional crystallized structure. In this regard, Deleuze's accounts, mainly focused on exploring time and their relation to image in the cinematic world, are utilized to read the theatrical images dramatized in Parks's play. The article concludes that, by finding traces of Deleuzian philosophical notions, Parksean dramatization of the black characters has been shaped by Deleuzian becoming different as a way of resisting the dominant power. The Bodies without Organs, created by the ambivalency imposed by the hierarchical system, now enquire about the reality of the White historical and mythological events to mark the black place in Western historiography.

Key Words: Ambivalency, Becoming, Deleuze, Parks, *The Father*, Time

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3/ Deleuzean Reading of Suzan-Lori Parks's Concept of Time in....

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فصل‌نامه علمی جستارنامه ادبیات تطبیقی
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خوانش دلوزی از مفهوم زمان در نمایشنامه بازگشت پدر از جنگ به خانه اثر

سوزان-لوری پارکز

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چکیده

پژوهش حاضر سعی دارد یکی از نمایش‌نامه‌های جدید سوزان-لوری پارکز بنام *بازگشت پدر از جنگ به خانه*، قسمت‌های ۱، ۲، ۳ & ۴ (۲۰۱۵) را از دیدگاه دلوز بر اساس مبحث زمان بررسی نماید. پارکز به عنوان یک نویسنده زن سیاهپوست، شرایط سرگردان و متلون برده‌های سیاهپوست را که توسط قدرت سلطه‌گر ایجاد شده در نمایشنامه‌اش ترسیم مینماید در حالی که ارتباط بین سرگردانی آنها و مفهوم زمان و همچنین راستی و درستی وقایع تاریخی را به چالش می‌کشد. بعلاوه ساختار نمایشنامه به گونه‌ای چیدمان گردیده که لایه‌های مختلف معنا از تاریخ و اسطوره، حقیقت و مجاز در کنار یکدیگر قرار گرفته‌اند به نحوی که ساختارچند وجهی کریستالین دلوز را به نمایش گذاشته است. بنابراین نظریات دلوز در باب بررسی مفهوم زمان و تصویر در فیلم‌های سینمایی در اینجا بکار گرفته شده‌اند تا تصاویر خلق شده در نمایشنامه پارکز خواننده و تفسیر گردند. این مقاله، پس از بحث و بررسی نمایشنامه پارکز از دیدگاه دلوز به این مهم می‌رسد که شخصیت پردازی پارکز در راستای *شدنی متفاوت*

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به عنوان راهی برای تقابل با قدرت سلطه‌گر شکل گرفته است. بدن‌های بدون هویت، که توسط استعمارگر ایجاد گردیده‌اند، اکنون به پرسمان حقیقت وقایع تاریخی و اساطیر غرب، همان گونه که در کتب تاریخی سفیدپوستان درج شده پرداخته‌اند.

کلمات کلیدی: پارکز، پدر، دلوز، زمان، شدن، سرگردانی.

۱. Introduction

Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1,2&3 (۲۰۱۵), staged at The Public Theatre in New York City in ۲۰۱۴, brought about the Obie Award, in ۲۰۱۵, for Suzan-Lori Parks (۱۹۶۴-). The play portrays the events during the American Civil War and is presented in three parts: *A Measure of a Man*; *A Battle in the Wilderness*; and, *The Union of My Confederate Parts*. Playing with the meaning of freedom and slavery, the drama's triptych structure reveals three different stories, in different situations concerning an African slave, Hero, later Ulysses, who is going to be sent to war while he is in quest of being free. The first part, *A Measure of a Man*, occurs in a plantation in Far West Texas, during the spring of ۱۸۶۲, some months before the abolishment of slavery rule in federal territories when Hero's Master has ordered him to accompany him in the war, while has promised freedom, but Hero is doubtful about it and cannot make decision whether to go or stay at the farm. Overwhelmed with the ambivalency and undecidability, Hero finally decides to go, whereas, the real measurement is going to happen for Hero as he is in the middle of war. *A Battle in the Wilderness*, in medias res of a battle, Hero and his Master, now a Confederate Colonel, have captivated a Union Captain, Smith, "a white man, not a Union nigger" (Parks, ۲۰۱۵:۱۱۷). This part ends as Hero decides to set the Captain free, but finally obeys to follow his Master Colonel towards the south. The third part, *The Union of My Confederate Parts*, is the depiction of Hero's returning home, after the abolishment of slavery rule in the summer of ۱۸۶۲, in a "slave cabin in the middle of nowhere" (۱۹۰). The act begins with a discussion between a group of Run-Away Slaves and Homer upon convincing Penny, Hero's wife, to accompany and leave the farm. Unexpectedly, Hero's loyal dog, Odyssey Dog, called Odd-See, comes to announce the entrance of his master. Hero, now renamed Ulysses, arrives to surprise Penny and Homer, who expected his death. Pretending to be a loyal wife that has been waiting for her husband, Penny, after understanding that Ulysses's new wife, Alberta, is about to come, justifies herself to leave him and run away with Homer. The play ends at this moment when Ulysses reveals his letter of freedom.

Following the theme of black slavery and racism, the main concern portrayed in *The America Play* (۱۹۹۴) and *Topdog/Underdog* (۲۰۰۱), during the American Civil War period and after the abolition of slavery rule, the present play highlights a vaster area of understanding dealing with ontological questions and

psychological ambivalence for the characters, the black slaves, under the regimentation of white historicism of the colonization. As Parks's main conception, in this play, is the depiction of the undecidability of characters caused by the dominant power, one can trace a relationship between the ambivalent condition- Parksean images and the meaning of time; however, the reality of time and the historical past events are put into question as well. Moreover, Parks's dramatic structure, depicts different layers and an amalgamation of actual and virtual, history, fantasy, and myth, towards becoming different, representing Deleuzean folding-crystalline structure, whereas crystallized formation, which has been shaped throughout a process of time, requires a co-existence of various layers of structure and meaning.

In this regard, the present study, borrowing Deleuzean notions, aims to read *Father Comes Home From the Wars, Part 1,2&3* (abbreviated *The Father*) from different perspectives. The study hypothesizes that, though, Deleuze's accounts about time deal mainly with the cinematic world of post-World Wars, the close affinities between the cinematic and live performance of the dramatic world of theater, and the 'images' that both produce, have encouraged the researcher to utilize Deleuzean notions of 'time' and 'image' in 'movement-image' and 'time-image' films to read the postmodern theater of black playwrights, in this case, Suzan-Lori Parks. In the end, it is concluded that though the inability of the characters to find a solution or make decisions, as in time-image films, has overwhelmed the play, it entails positive meaning as well. The questionability of time and past events enlightens how the Parksean characters can escape the imposed boundaries of the stereotyped definition of identity and move toward 'becoming' different to change the future, on the other hand, mimic the colonizers' name, language, and identity to destabilize its dominancy. Meanwhile, the multi-layered structure of the play, which is amalgamated with flux of mythical names, historical, biblical, and dramatic references plus the slave narrative, resonates with Deleuzean folding or crystalline structure, reflecting both the aesthetics and political aspects of Parks's work to disrupt the stability of the ruling system and to mark the black position, once omitted, in White History.

۲. Literature Review

The present study has aimed to read a black dramatic work, from a different perspective, borrowing Deleuzean notions about the concept of time, rather than postcolonial matters. In this regard, since the subject of the study is novel and interdisciplinary and enriched with Deleuzean conceptions while reading Suzan-Lori Parks's play, the researcher could not find any related scholarly articles. Meanwhile, some scholarships, focused on reading the present play, *Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1,2&3*, from other perspectives, that should be noted here. Guerrero, in "Reformulating Freedom: Slavery, Alienation and Ambivalence in Suzan-Lori Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Part1-3*" (۲۰۱۸), has investigated the ambivalence in the characters of the play. The writer believes that this condition is produced by war, which results in characters "betray [their] roles that they initially perform, restarting the historical cycle of

power and violence to protect the mythical order of the battlefield that dominates the Eurocentric discourse" (۲۰۱۸:۴۲). Guerrero concludes that Parks's play revisits the past to reveal the unexpected condition of characters at war while she tries to redefine the black identity as well. On the other hand, what Parks has dealt with is the mark of the marketplace in measuring people by capitalism, Jaros notes, in the article "Unhappy is the Land that Needs a Hero: The Mark of the Marketplace in Suzan-Lori Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1-3*" (۲۰۲۰). The writer ends the article insisting that the characters, in Parks's play, are the representations of all people and humanity suppressed under the regimentation of the economic system, during history, and their self-valuation is entangled with the marketplace and capitalism. Meanwhile, Apene, in "Intertextuality Across Genres: A Study of Homer's *The Odyssey* and Suzan-Lori Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars*" (۲۰۲۳), has utilized a comparative analysis tool to investigate Parks's usage of mythic themes in her play. What the writer concludes, at the end is that intertextuality is "not limited to a particular genre of writing, be it prose, poetry or drama but can equally cut across genres. Intertextuality foregrounds the notions of interconnectedness and interdependence in culture" (۲۰۲۳:۸۱) and Parks, like Homer as social critics, has used intertextuality as a way of criticizing the social malevolences that plagued their society. Moreover, Sato, in "From O'Neill to Parks: A Faux Hero in *Father Comes Home from the Wars*" (۲۰۱۹), compares *Electra* by O'Neill, with Parks's *Father Comes Home from the Wars* to get to this notion that Parks's play is "less realistic, and more comical in its tone [and] still, Hero is no less a tragic character than Ezra and Orin". The writer believes that Parks's play has reexamined the meaning of the historic war in the United States for an enslaved black man, for whom the war was nothing but "an impasse and never created a black hero in a true sense" (۲۰۱۹:۱۰-۱۱). In this regard, she has created a masterpiece comprising the history of American theatre from the seemingly "parasitical, minor perspective of a black slave who does not ultimately benefit from the Great Man history" (۱۳).

Apart from what has discussed, Deleuzian philosophical notions have been the subject of various studies and scholarly articles so far, in particular his ideas about time in cinematic world. However, his notions regarding the definition of time and its relation to the process of becoming in the theatrical world, have been less investigated. In between, Poorkasmaei et al, in the article "The Investigation of the Concept of Time in Performance Art According to Gilles Deleuze" (۲۰۱۹), explores Deleuze's concept of time in performance art to conclude that Deleuze, borrowing Bergsonian definition of time as duration, has broadened its meaning to escape any quantitative scales which stresses on the linearity of past, present and future. The researcher believes that since performance arts get formed throughout a process, it is their process of becoming, and consequently utilizing Deleuzian perspective is helpful for their investigation and analysis. Moreover, Rouhani et al, in "Henry Bergson's Theory of Memory-Time and its Influence on Contemporary Iranian Cinema Narrative" (۲۰۱۶), discuss the concepts of time and memory from both Bergson and Deleuze's perspectives to analyze these conceptions in some selected modern Iranian films. Clarifying these concepts

lengthly and tracing the influence of Deleuze and his master Bergson in the narrative of these films, the article concludes that the narrative in modern Iranian cinema, while copying the Western cinema, is based on the inner, subjective and qualified perception of time by the characters as a positive point. Moreover, they believe that the cinema based on memory, benefited from the concept of time which makes it inevitable to be read from Deleuzo-Bergsonian's perspective.

Following what aforesaid, reading the new aspects of *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1-3*, borrowing Deleuzian critical notions, the present study has aimed to utilize the concept of time and its relation to the image in the cinematic world to investigate the theatrical images in Parks's drama. Moreover, Deleuze's notions about the crystal-image and crystalline structures have enlightened the way to read Parks's dramatic work as well. In the end, the article concludes that Parksean drama is aligned with Deleuzian becoming different due to the ambivalent condition imposed by the dominant power, creating new personalities while enquiring about the reality of the historical names and past events to subvert the linearity and supremacy of historical events over the present situation.

۳. Methodology

Gilles Deleuze (۱۹۲۵-۱۹۹۵), as a postmodern philosopher has brought philosophy into daily life and created that practical form of philosophy which has been neglected by the previous philosophers, from Kant to the present time. Deleuze's critical notions have had an important effect, whether politically or culturally to change our ways of thinking. As Colebrook writes, in *Understanding Deleuze* (۲۰۰۶), "At the heart of all Deleuze's thought is his insistence that our relation to the world is dynamic, not just because our ideas about the world change, nor because the world is a thing that goes through change. Life itself is constant change and creation." (۲۰۰۶: ۵۱)

One of Deleuzian main concerns, which is mostly discussed about cinema, is the concept of 'time'. His notions about time, are ubiquitous in all his critical and philosophical books but two major books, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (۱۹۸۶), and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (۱۹۸۹), are designated elaborately to discuss time, movement, and image in the cinematic world. For Deleuze, following Bergson, time entails a qualitative meaning and should not be analyzed with quantitative tools of mathematics, the same mistake made by previous philosophers discussing movement. Therefore, unlike Kant, who considered time to "comprise a homogeneous series of successive instants, needing synthesis" (Stagoll, ۲۰۱۰: ۸۰), Deleuze suggests 'duration' as a lived experience of a person that does not transcend, while proposing changes and varieties. Propounding two forms of image, 'movement-image', and 'time-image', Deleuze discusses the cinematic images in post-World War II films. 'Image', for Deleuze, refers to "our ways of perceiving and apprehending things" (Rushton, ۲۰۱۲: ۲), and the movement-image film presents an indirect image of time, while 'time', as for Deleuze and Bergson, in time-image films, is a "change" (۵) and this mode of films represent direct images of time.

He advocates the 'time-image' which has constituted the specific power of modern cinema after W.W. II. The early cinema, as Deleuze believes, is governed by the movement-image, which presents time indirectly since the world is presented through the camera's eye (1986: 108). The indirect image of time asserts that the world can be brought into a solution, "a right and stable order" (160), and then, suggests action-reaction since it aims to "ensure the fixity of relation between past, present and future" (ibid). Whereas, the modern cinema, of post-W.W. II, creates the time-image, in which the viewers do not see (moving) things, objects, or even the movement of the camera, but are invited into the virtual form of a film world. In this form of cinema, the image of time is directly presented, one can find "a little time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989: 160), therefore the representation of time is "open to change", the problem-solutions are "left to open" (161). The time-image cinema deals with the past not as a "definitive truth" but as a "territory of discovery" (Rushton, 2012: 76), in this regard, the story is left open, with a lack of resolution while the hero is only the savior of his/her own life rather than others. In modern cinema, one can not see (moving) things, objects, or even the movement and the camera itself, but are invited into the virtual. In the early-classical cinema, the image of time is indirect, and from the flows of movement, for example, the hand of a clock, the moving light on a sundial, or the progress of the sun across the sky, the spectator can think of time as the power of difference, from which movements are impelled. One does not see time itself but does see flows rather than things, sections of mobility rather than a simple sequence of events (Colebrook, 2006: 78-80).

Following Bergson, Deleuze thinks of time as not as "the sequence of similar events continuing in a series in which one moment is like another and can therefore be set in a spatial line", one can think of "time in its pure state, where time is never the same as itself, and cannot be distributed spatially into separate points." (17) This definition of time makes it equal to 'duration', amalgamated with 'flux of events', and 'lines of flight' through which progress of becoming different from one moment to another moment is evident that results in altering and change in any dominating system.

Deleuzian time duration or progression is against Cantian concept of time that stresses the linearity and chronology of time through which events are arranged and sequenced according to their happenings. Consequently, the past does not, necessarily, exist before the present, and, the past and present exist simultaneously in the present's memory. Since the person from one moment to another moment undergoes changes and his/her life is a "constantly differing flow" (Deleuze, 1986: 20), therefore, the past undergoes changes as well. Deleuze uses the concept of crystal and crystalline structure to elaborate his notions about time and time-image in the cinematic world. Since in crystal co-exist artistic and scientific conceptions, therefore the amalgamation of "virtual and actual in its various stages toward infinity" (Coleman, 2010: 60). Deleuze uses the crystalline structure to discuss the self-reflexivity and temporality of cinematic images which involve multi-layered and infinite amalgamation of "montaged realities" (ibid) and tends toward becoming chaotic.

Deleuze and Guattari, clarifies their notion about chaos, used in both philosophy and science in *What is Philosophy?* (1991), write that chaos can be defined “not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes. It is a void”. They add further that chaos “is not a nothingness but [...]containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms,” it is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance”. (1991: 204-205) Moreover, a crystal’s specific formation which undergoes a procedure to get formed, entails a process of mutation and transformation through time. Following the aforesaid, the present study is expected to read Suzan-Lori Parks’s play from a new perspective to find out the new path of becoming as she has depicted in her characters the same as her dramaturgical style which has made it distinct from her contemporaneous black dramaturgist.

4. Discussion: To Be or Not to Be Free

Father Comes Home From the War, Parts 1,2&3 (abbreviated as *The Father*), ostensibly, comprises of three-act plot sequence, a triptych peinture which portrays different stages in the life of the main character, Hero. The first part of the play, *A Measure of a Man*, illustrates Hero’s ambivalency vis-à-vis whether to stay at the farm with his wife, Penny, or not, which means remaining a slave; since his master has promised freedom if he accompanies him in the War. In the second part, *A Battle in the Wilderness*, Hero is in the middle of the war, following his master, and, the captive Union Soldier, Smith, is lingering after them. The battle in the second part, bolds the war and perplexity resided in Hero who finally gets to a deep understanding of his condition in the world, whereas, the third part, *The Union of My Confederate Parts*, represents a new portrait of Hero, as he returns home, now Ulysses, who, by showing the photo of his new wife, Alberta, reveals his betrayal to Penny. However, Penny claimed to have been fervently waiting for Ulysses during these months, decides to run away with other slaves from the plantation.

In between, the play’s structure disrupts the classical form of plot sequence; exposition, climax, and resolution, since the characters’ indecisiveness and their inability to make decisions, have overwhelmed the play, as if swinging between two dissimilar points, while creating a flux or chaos of events. Besides, the chaotic situation is more intensified by the disruption of time sequence, whereas “it is in the middle of nowhere” and it seems to be an “hour before dawn” (Parks, 2010: 18) but in fact “the sun he hides, [d]on’t see his face, [t]he night he crowds, [a]nd death no leave a trace” (19). Parks begins the play with a description of a chaoslike, dark, and confusing condition that will be unveiled through the characters’ dialogues as if time is lingering while no action is taken by the characters. Deleuze and Guattari, explicating about chaos, define it as “a void,” not “a nothingness, but a virtual containing all possible particles and drawing all possible forms. [...] Chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance” (1991: 204) which is “always a consequent of instability” (205). The chaotic and confusing state, as if intruded by the outside forces upon the characters, involves a dualistic meaning, causing both perplexion and apprehension for the characters.

As the play proceeds, it becomes clear that the 'flows of various forces' imposed upon the characters from outside and inside, whether social or personal, are layered with historical and mythological names and references. In this regard, Parks's selection of mythic and heroic names - Hero, Homer, Ulysses, Penny, representing Penelope- for her black characters, has deepened different signification levels for broadening *The Father's* meaning. As Deleuze notes "cinema [is] a mode of thought" (1989: 54), theater and playwrighting can be the revelation of a playwright's state of mind as well, since both cinema and theater use images and performance whereas time is a constituting element for both. Therefore, returning to the past and revitalizing historical events represent pictorial images, enquire about the validity of historical facts, and advocate "a change in the configuration of the world" (Conley, 2010: 280) to subvert their truthfulness. However, the characters' undecidability to make decisions not only reminds, psychologically, the ambivalent condition exerted by the dominant system but also portrays the non-heroic action of the characters who cannot think clearly about their condition to find a resolution.

At this level, *The Father* portrays ontological entanglement, one of the embedded layers of Parks's multilayered structure, that evokes Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1959) while questioning some key elements regarding the philosophy of existence, and history exerted by the dominant power. The setting of the play reveals that night has not yet finished and the day has not yet arrived, it may be "an hour before dawn" (18), depicting a morbid disposition, which evades measuring time scales, as the chorus expects that the morning will end their waiting "all we know is the sun's gonna rise, God willing," and Hero will make his decision, but again they doubt: "When it comes to Hero, we gotta wait for his word to know what he's doing" (23-24). On the other hand, the chorus's dialogues reverberate Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon, Didi and Gogo, as they are expecting the arrival of Godo, but with a distinct difference. The chorus converses elongatedly whether Hero- the black slave or Godo, will arrive or not, or will go to war or not, and whether he leaves his wife, Penny, or not. No one is sure about what he/she is saying, as if their conversation has got the form of ambivalence and bewilderment: "I'm just making sure you know what you're talking about" (26), ironically no one knows what they are talking about. They rigorously compare the two conditions of staying on the farm and going to war, and each one tries to convince the other, since as Hero goes to war "maybe written up in one of the great Histories" (28).

Meanwhile, Hero arrives, and after disputing abundantly regarding whether he will go or stay, between The Chorus, Hero, and other slave characters, when the sun rises, abruptly announces his decision to go to the war. Since he believes that "my need to leave is clear. Not run off, Homer, Although I can see here's a value in it, But it's not my road. I'll go trot behind the Master," (38) he ends their undecidability. At this moment, Hero's reaction in declaring his leave for war has astounded everyone to end their waiting. On the other hand, Hero has found "a value" in going to war and trotting after his master while he confesses: "The non-Hero that I am. Odd-See!" (ibid). The action-reactions between the characters have overwhelmed the first act where the perception of the condition

is entangled by the Master's action-images. Nonetheless, Hero's admittance of being the "non-hero", reverberates Deleuzian non-heroic character in time-image films, reflecting the mental condition of modern subjects living in the modern world. Besides, though it seems to be an odd thing to see, Hero of the play is not the hero or the savior of other characters in the play, Hero is in pursuit of his wants or 'values'. Deleuze's distinction between two modes of cinematic images, 'movement-image' and 'time-image', whereas the first mode expects an end or solution for the problem and needs to take action to solve the problem, but the other mode induces the inability of the characters to find a solution which results in that the story is left unresolved and open. His notions support attributing the first act as an amalgamation of both modes which foreshadows the oscillation and bewilderment of characters, as they need to take action against the Master's ruling power, throughout *The Father*.

On the other hand, The Chorus of *Less Than of Desirable Slaves*' ambivalency and absurd discussion, not only subverts the role of the classical chorus but their betting action alludes to another modern dramatic work revealing another image or level of meaning in the play. The Chorus's vague attempt to measure day/night and their debate about the role of chance in the life of Hero while betting on his life, reflects the hierarchical-imposed dichotomies by the dominant powers to rule the subjugated, such as going/staying, coming/going, waiting/leaving, being free/captivated, loyal/disloyal, and real/unreal in the play, but, indirectly, suggests Tom Stoppard's tragicomedy *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) as well, one of the images in Parksean multi-dimensional play.

As *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, the minor characters of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, try to examine their chance of living and bet on tossing a coin, Parksean Chorus's challenge, is to bet on Hero's chance of becoming free. However, Stoppard's characters' psychological and ontological entanglement resulted from the supernatural and sub-natural elements, whereas, Parksean Chorus' conversations reveal the role of Master in Hero's chance of being free or not since everything even "time is still owned by the Boss-Master" (20). Parks, here, likewise, discloses the role of outside forces, Master or colonizing power, in creating docile bodies concerning their living. These subjugated bodies, Hero and other slaves on the plantation, are forced to live in the stratified system of dominant power resembling Deleuzian Bodies without Organs (BwO). In Deleuze's account, these slaves, BwO, are not organ-less bodies but oppose and question the hierarchical systems while they "offer becoming" different (Stagoll, 2010:21). It can be inferred that 'becoming a new body' instigates a 'line of flight' for the black characters, as Deleuze proposes, to question the stability of dominant power.

The characters' direct references to time and their vague effort to measure night, day, darkness, and daylight, and the use of words such as sun, moon, and stars, may be the semblance of direct images of time but meanwhile, they cannot make decisions what time of day is and try to measure it by "a hand to the sky, measuring the night as best [they] can" (21). This blurring and confusing situation divulges that time, in the first act, has evaded conventional classification to be entangled by the presence of the colonizer, as if time, like the

other slave characters, is enslaved by the Master. The stage direction at the beginning of the act notes that it is "one hour before dawn" (1^), but the dark-blurring moments are going to last forever as Second cries out: "Don't look like an hour for me" (1^): it seems to be an hour before the sunrise, but it took too much for them.

Parks, in creating time-images, steps further than Deleuze to indicate that time for the slaved characters evades the attributed clear-cut definitions of Western philosophy, since, black people are deprived of their past and history, and time has become obscured for them. They are in need of malleablizing time and history since time for the black slaves can be experienced as "a little time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1^1^:1^1^1) and the future has remained open for them to be altered. In this regard, she has merged the actual, black's lost historical moments, with the virtuality of white history that omitted their presence to "mark" and reassert the black people's position and resurrect the dead body of the black history, in the books of white-western historiography that "maybe wrote up in one of them great Histories" even "in the Boss-Master counting book" (1^). Accordingly, Parks has utilized the word 'mark' about 1^0 times in the play as a motif to reminisce the notion that the word, 'mark', not only can be denoted as "the mark of the marketplace" (1^1^1) used by the power for bargaining and purchasing the black slaves but is the 'mark' for recalling and revitalizing a lost history. Therefore, her Hero, though not the hero and savior of other black people, can be, at last, the hero of the self, believing in himself to become a different body than what is imposed by Master.

It should be noted that the play has played out with the meaning of the word 'Father', with capital and small-initiating letters, in both the title and throughout the play, to refer to different levels of meaning by questioning 'who is the father?' or 'who is the master?', whether the master of the self or other people. In the last sections of the first act, the usage of the word 'father' has become entangled. Since, Hero begs "Father, stay with me awhile," (1^0) when he wants to depart The Old Man, but The Old Man, surprised being called 'father', unveils that:

I didn't make you from my spits.

Which makes me, I guess, a fake father.

But you Hero, no mistake, you're a real son through and through. (1^1)

As Hero understands The Old Man is not his real father but the first act ends while parodying two different biblical father-son stories, through which Parks enquires about the real measurements of a man, the truthfulness of the historical events, as exemplified in theological books: the first one is Ismail's sacrifice by his father, Abraham, and the second is the story of Jacob's long wait for his son, Joseph: "That's more than an old man can bear. I'll sit and wait for his return. He promised he'd come home." (1^1) Meanwhile, the title of play, *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, has awaited the spectators for the entrance of a father from the wars, but in the third act, Hero, who changed his name to Ulysses, returns home and these questions are remained unanswered that whose father has returned home and whether Hero or Ulysses, is the new representations of Father/Master. As Hero finds out that "There's truth in your voice now," and since the

“truth is a funny thing, you know?” (١٣٠), Parksean Hero, struggling to become a new body, once enslaved by the regimentation of his Master, has mimicked and followed his steps to be defined as a new body in lines with colonizer’s mastery. In addition to ‘father’, the word ‘Odd-See’ has been punned to reflect the paradox created by the system, which caused the perplexion of the condition of the slaves in the play. Therefore, Odd-See, a name used for calling Hero’s dog, has distinct inclinations and significations through *The Father*. From one perspective, it refers to the oddities of the events and the characters’ behavior, indicating their ambivalency and entanglement that bewildered their actions and sayings, while on the other hand, it is a name given to Hero’s dog, metaphorically representing Hero himself who remained faithful to the master’s orders, to undermine the other characters’ disloyalty. Another investigation of the word alludes to Odyssean mythology and his return after years while his wife, Penelope, remained faithfully awaiting him. It is evident that as an act of ‘mimicry’ and ‘mockery’, the word Odd-See plays with and challenges the meaning of loyalty/unloyalty and temporalty of the relationships between father and son, two seemingly close friends, or between husband and wife; whereas *The Old Man* reveals he is not Hero’s natural father, Hero has betrayed Homer by revealing him to his Master, and *The Father* ends, as Hero was not loyal to his wife, and, Penny, pretending to be loyal, now runs away with Homer.

The allusive references, creating the multidimensionality and layeredness of the play, which are not limited to the first act, reverberate Deleuzean crystallized-folding structure. Whereas, the second act, *A Battle in the Wilderness*, happens in the middle of the war between Confederate and Union Armies, in which three characters- the Colonel, Hero, and the captive Smith are new depictions of *Waiting for Godot*’s ambivalent characters. The Colonel, Hero’s master, represents Pozzo, while, Hero, who has been Godo in the first act, is now more Lucky in the second, as Homer, his old friend, mocks him reminding that if “The Colonel, he says, get over here, Hero, and do this and that, [you would say:] Yes, sir out load [...]. Sure thing, Peacock, sure thing, Peacock” (١١٧). However, when the Colonel ties a rope around Smith’s neck and hands it to Hero, it seems that the roles are exchanged and Hero is now Pozzo and Captain Smith is now more Lucky. Hero says: “If you’re lucky you could move down the hill some, lay low for a spell, then join back up with your fellahs” (١١٣).

Meanwhile, the third act, some years after the abolishment of slavery rules, undermines *Waiting for Godot*, since, whereas, Vladimir and Estragon would remain forever waiting for Godo but Hero’s arrival seems to unsettle the others’ long waiting for him, he has become a new body. His ‘coming home’ mocks Penny and the other slaves, awaiting him on the plantation, who believed that Hero’s return would have saved their lives, as if he had been their savior but Hero of the play has not been the hero of the people in the story. Throughout *The Father*, Hero’s endeavor to save his chance of living free is palpable, first by betraying his friend’s place to the Master, then by going to war to follow the Master in exchange for freedom. But, the end of the play reveals that his freedom is endowed to him only after his Master’s death. Hero, Parksean new body, in the last act of *The Father*, once subjugated by the Master’s power, and was given

the name of Hero, now has become Ulysses of a new story. After his arrival, and unveiling his new wife's photo to Penny, who pretends to have been waiting for him during these months, Ulysses appears to be disloyal, highlighting the instability of their interaction and relationship. But, on the other hand, Hero's action can be perceived as a way of disrupting the imposed ruling system that gave him a name, a wife, living, working, and being enslaved on the farm. *A War in the Battlefield*, the second act, is the metaphor of the real war inside of Hero, who after conversing with the captive Smith, gets to a self-understanding and makes Smith /himself free. Patton writes that freedom, from Deleuze's account, is manifested in "those moments that in a life after which one is no longer the same person as before." (12) Hero, by the end of the second act, is going to become a new body who in the third act takes "a new name" to be "distinguished" (102) as Ulysses. The musician sings:

I'm long gone
I ain't sitting on your shelf
I have misplaced myself
I have misplaced myself. (126)

Foretelling the end of the play, this song summarizes the characters' escaping from the blurring-ambivalent condition that has led to their undecidability and bewilderment. Now in the last act, they are all decided: the Run-away Slaves, Penny and Hommer decide to leave the plantation while Hero, now Ulysses, decides to stay, bury his Master's corpse, and make a new living. He has changed his name since he thinks "Ulysses suits me and I chose it for myself. Any of you ever done that? Choose your own name? No, right? It's really something. Take all the time you need getting used to it." (161) New name has entailed becoming a new body for him, that though, yet, he remains in his Mater's plantation and creates his "smooth space" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991:189), but he could, at length, assert his right of living and becoming.

Parks, throughout *The Father*, stresses on becoming or progression of Hero that occurs during the time process. Time, in this sense, elaborated by Deleuze, is imbued with Bergsonian duration in which there is no succession or chronology of past, present, and future but a co-existence of different layers in a crystalized format of time (Deleuze, 1998:112). Time-crystal, a term used by Deleuze, is a metaphor for "distinct possibilities or states of the time-image in film" which reflects different images "condensed" or layered in a crystallized structure with temporal interaction (Olivier, 2016, p.28). Parksean crystalline play dramatizes the life of a group of black characters enslaved on a plantation, in Far Texas, where their behaviors, actions, and decisions, as well as time and history, are entangled and mesmerized by the dominant power. In her dramatic world, as Parks portrays, time has been lingering as if stopped and history has no sense for the black. Past, present, and future, Parks dramatizes to be malleable and changeable for the black slaves while the truthfulness of past historical events inserted in the book of White History is put into question.

◦. Conclusion

According to what has been discussed so far, the thematically multi-layeredness of *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1,2&3*, has been formed in a crystalline structure, through which Parks has depicted the condition of black slavery under the regimentation of white colonizers, whereas, has made her dramaturgical style, distinct from other black dramaturgists. Deleuze's discussion regarding time and images in the cinematic world, of pre and post-World Wars, are perceptible in both the structure and the theme of Parks's play. He believes that the early movement-image cinema has displayed an indirect representation of time by using tools such as a camera, whereas, time should be experienced as a 'pure state', and the spectator should see the flows of time rather than objects or things. He advocates time-image films while the spectators are invited to experience direct images of time and time is not defined in chronological order of past, present, and future. Time, in time-image films, is malleable and changeable since the future is left open and unresolved. Embedding these notions, Parksean world of play has portrayed an amalgamation of Deleuzian concept of time in a crystalline structure.

In this regard, the present study hypothesizes that there is a close affinity between the cinematic and live performance of the dramatic world of theater, and the 'images' that both produce, have encouraged to utilize Deleuzian notions of 'time' and 'image' in 'movement-image' and 'time-image' films to read her play. It is palpable that though the inability of the characters to find a solution or make decisions, as in time-image films, has overwhelmed the play, however, it entails positive meanings and applications as well. The questionability of time and past events enlightens the way that the Parksean characters escape the imposed boundaries of the stereotyped definition of identity and move toward 'becoming' different and changing the future. Meanwhile, the multi-layered structure of the play, which is an amalgamation or flux of mythical names, historical, biblical, and dramatic references plus the slave narrative, resonates with Deleuzian folding or crystalline structure, reflecting both the aesthetics and political aspects of her work to destabilize the stability of the dominant system and to mark the black position, once omitted, in White History.