

**BECOMING NOMADIC, BECOMING WOMAN:
minoritarian becomings in the Deleuzian theater**

by

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ABSTRACT

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim that within contemporary Western society, every movement beyond the normative must pass through the stage of “becoming-woman,” Woman being the dominant “other” against which the masculine political majority has defined its self-image. Becoming-Woman acts as the entryway into a nomadic theatre in so far as it indicates a willingness to inhabit positions and perspectives other than those delineated as normatively powerful and to develop according to these alternative desires. “Becoming Woman” does not, however, represent an end in itself, but plays an introductory role that may facilitate a potentially infinite number of minoritarian “becomings.” Ultimately, this nomadic theatre seeks to destabilize the stronghold that identity-based thinking has on the production and limitation of our desires. It celebrates a multiplicity of desires by focusing not on the ways abstract norms and identities are *represented*, but rather on the way in which every lived gesture *repeats* a series of images and, in so doing, makes that image into something entirely new. The question I ask here, however, is to what extent can a nomadic “becoming-woman” serve to empower women and minorities given the historical lack of strong identities that have been available to facilitate their becoming?

The first half of this thesis is dedicated to developing the strategies of minoritarian becoming in the Deleuzian nomadic theatre. I argue that while this approach allows us to move beyond received normative ways of being, it does not yet provide the necessary tools to assure that minority desires will not simply be appropriated by a political majority. The second half of this thesis therefore explores possible tools for developing approaches to cultural media that can not only serve a generalized process of becoming-minoritarian or becoming-woman, but that can do so in a manner that also furthers the desires *of* women and minorities. Here I consider the approaches of Cixous, Irigaray, Braidotti and Butler as providing possible avenues for developing these desires. My focus throughout is on how these strategies inform approaches to cultural production and I therefore show how some of these strategies work in various non-representational theatre and performance pieces, including the theatrical productions of Artaud and Cixous, the drag performances of Divine, and other approaches. I conclude by suggesting a re-reading of Deleuze that allows for the insights of the feminists I examined and that may pave the way for the development of cultural media focused on building alliances amongst women and minorities through the use of community theatre and carnival.

Dedicated to the loving memory of my grandmother

Sylvia Yassi

and to my ever loving nana

Rose Spiegel

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INTRODUCTION: IS IT DANGEROUS TO TRAVEL AS A WOMAN?

(anti-manifesto for the new troubadours)

Centered on the world's stage,
she sings to her loves and beloveds,
to her foes and detractors:
However I am perceived and deceived,
however my ignorance and conceits,
lay aside your fears that I will be undone,

for I shall not be moved.

- Maya Angelou

But you are mobile as the veering air,
And all your charms more changeful than the tide,
Wherefore to be inconstant is no care:
I have but to continue at your side.
So wanton, light and false, my love, are you,
I am most faithless when I most am true.

- Edna St. Vincent Millay

The year 2005: mobility is all the rage, rage is mobile, and the mobilization of forces under the banner of a shared identity seems to be at once the most frightening fascism and the most necessary strategy of resistance in the face of ever growing capital-driven globalization trends. In search of possible directions for change, various movements plow fast-eroding minority histories, destabilizing the identity of History as such. The question of *who* is moving what and where echoes through war-zones, tourist destinations and the TV sets of those who find themselves in a rare quiet locale. More than ever, women are taking a visible role in these movements, navigating the multiple terrestrial and cultural landscapes presented through the various forms of media at our disposal. But despite the promises of this supposedly newfound mobility there is cause to be leery. For have women not always been the classical "mobile units"

of Western culture, mediating the identities of the dominant in society? What is the relationship between mobile cultural processes of appropriation and the transformational capabilities of minorities? What possibilities can this range of mobility afford and what techniques allow it to maximize the minority desires of the historically dominated?

To move beyond the normative roles that bind our movement and enable ourselves to pursue a multiplicity of desires, Deleuze and Guattari claim that we must go through a process of *becoming-other*. By becoming-other we are able to develop minority desires that have been suppressed by prevailing regimes of power and the models and ideals that have been thrust upon us, entreating us to fashion and understand ourselves in their image. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim that within contemporary Western society, every movement beyond the normative must pass through the stage of “becoming-woman,” Woman being the dominant “other” against which the masculine political majority has defined its self-image. Feminist theorists, such as Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti, have pointed out that the privileged position afforded to “becoming-woman” itself presumes a model subject position, limiting the usefulness of this strategy of transformation for actual political minorities. At its worst, this strategy of becoming-woman has been accused of violently appropriating the very real struggles of the women’s movement for the sake of furthering the possibilities of masculine majoritarian becoming, without taking into consideration the very real conditions and issues at stake in these struggles. Women’s movements, and the causes of other appropriated minorities, become the victims of an all-consuming machine.

However, despite the potential of such a strategy to destabilize the socio-political identities that activist groups work so hard to establish, there is another sense in which “becoming-other” through “becoming-women” may be instructive to minorities grappling with particular patriarchal, colonial and heterosexist legacies. Feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray has argued that allowing a feminine perspective to permeate the political sphere and re-orient the direction of social and institutional change could have far-reaching positive implications in terms

of establishing more peaceful, respectful and environmentally harmonious lifestyles. While Irigaray's occasionally utopian brand of feminism often verges on essentializing women's desires and perspectives, a nomadic becoming-other allows for the incorporation of feminine and feminist interests, desires and becomings into the general social consciousness, without necessarily locking these interests to essentialized subjects. Deleuze and Guattari note that securing an identity for those who have historically been denied a socially visible presence may well be a necessary stage in creating a foundation from which minorities are able to pursue their desires. However, locking persons to an essential set of interests, desires and associations may inhibit the mobility of those who associate or are associated with such politically charged identities. The nomadic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari advocates a fluid movement between identities, passing through a "becoming-woman" regardless of one's biological designation. The question is, to what extent can a nomadic "becoming-woman" serve to empower women, given the historical lack of strong identities that women have had available to facilitate their becoming?

The method proposed by Deleuze and Guattari functions by rejecting the stability of an identity, traversing a range of possible ways of living in the world. Every discourse, every constellation or trope, every name connoting an association of forces, intensities and flows, presents a possible "becoming" whereby the intensities are taken up by the nomadic subject. It is not a question of mimetically reproducing the other as though there were a central concept or ideal governing their actions. Rather, they recommend allowing the flows and intensities associated with this other to guide our own becoming. Signs and gestures are understood to act directly and singularly, metamorphosizing into one another. As Foucault put it, "this is philosophy not as thought, but as theatre: a theater of mime with multiple, fugitive and instantaneous scenes in which blind gestures signal to each other." (1997, 237) In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze describes his project as being intimately intertwined with the idea of a "theatre of the future":

...it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; it is a question of making movement itself work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representation; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which touch the mind. This is the idea of a man of the theatre, the idea of a director before his time. (1994, 8)

Philosophy, theatre and lived becomings are here intimately connected, each being a singular event, produced by repetition and offering possibilities for becoming that direct one another. The first half of this thesis will be dedicated to the ways in which Deleuze constructs this “theatre of philosophy” as a particular style of “becoming-woman” that follows from the “theatre of cruelty” developed variously by both Nietzsche and Artaud. The first part will develop the ways in which Deleuze’s understanding of cruelty follows from the traditions of Nietzsche and Artaud in order to make of cruelty an affirmative principle that cuts across received ideals in celebration of the particular differences enacted by a present gesture. I will further argue that this affirmative cruelty is characterized as “feminine” within this tradition in so far as the active feminine constitutes a rebellion of the dominated lover within Western culture. The second part will explore some of the ways in which Deleuze repeats the non-representational gesturing of Artaud’s theatre of cruelty and utilizes the schizophrenia from which Artaud suffered to point the way to the embodiment of multifarious becomings. This becoming functions by way of deterritorializing and appropriating the struggles of the “little girl,” characterized as the unmarked site of potentiality. While acknowledging “her” rage at being on the cusp of patriarchal domination, I will argue that that the strategy presented by this Artaudian theatre of cruelty diffuses women’s struggles by making them instead stand for a more universal humanist condition. The third part will trace the historical movements of “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” that are drawn upon by Deleuze and Guattari and inform their strategy of “becoming-woman” as the primary means by which Westerners can

expand their possibilities through a revisiting of the corporeal. It will show how “primitive” tribalism is implicitly correlated with ideas of femininity and how these in turn are lifted from both women and indigenous persons in the service of a generalized process of socio-cultural transformation. The final section of the first part will re-examine the concept of “cruelty” as affirmation of difference, and will suggest that Deleuze’s championing of a theatre of cruelty, in his schizo-nomadic approach to philosophy, runs the risk of repeating the primary cruelty that has historically been inflicted on political minorities. I will argue that in order to promote not only a becoming-minoritarian for the majority, but an approach to becoming that can encourage the desiring production of women and minorities, further tools are needed.

The second half of this thesis looks at strategies for developing tools to serve the desires of women and minorities in order to explore the possibility of a nomadic theatre sensitive to the conditions required to best facilitate these desires. The becoming-woman of Deleuze and Guattari in many ways can be read as their response to a certain stream of women writers that have tended to employ fragmented, polyvocal and non-linear styles in their writing. They frequently take Virginia Woolf as their prime example. Their philosophy of becoming-woman, as presented in *A Thousand Plateaus*, reads, however, as a response to the treatise on Becoming-Woman presented by their contemporary, Hélène Cixous, in *The Newly Born Woman*. The first part of this section therefore compares the incorporeal becoming-woman of Deleuze and Guattari to the corporeal becoming of Cixous. Cixous’ “return” to the corporeal as the site of desiring production offers a way of bringing the living conditions to bear on their desiring-production. However, Deleuze and Guattari’s incorporeal becoming seems to open more possibilities for moving beyond the constructions of the body, thus allowing for a greater flexibility in the possibilities available. In both cases, becoming functions through singular repetitions whereby identities like “woman” are always only provisional. Cixous calls this fluidity and refusal to ground in a singular narrative *écriture féminine*, and it seems that this

same escape from narrative norms leads Deleuze and Guattari to highlight the importance of the stage of “becoming woman.”

Ironically, it is precisely the historical construction of women as “mobile units” passed between men within patriarchal institutions, and the cultural legacy that these institutions have left, that now makes it difficult for women to function as the mobile agents of becoming that philosophical nomadism advocates. Historically, women’s “mobility” has meant that a woman’s “fluid” “feminine” identity is molded by the men that possess her, and by the dictates of patriarchal institutions that keep this system of circulation alive. Whereas men may be confined by images that are too rigid, failing to take into the account the minority desires and multiplicity of forces of *real living* men, women have traditionally been limited by a shortage of adequate tools and models by which to form empowering identities. As Braidotti puts it, “how can we renounce what we never had?” The second section of this part will therefore consider the possibilities opened by a philosophy of *sexually differentiated becoming* as developed by Irigaray and by Braidotti’s formulation of a *sexually differentiated nomadism*.

Why .” difference is safe-guarded by Braidotti, while other indexes of difference are nomadized, is a question that will be addressed in the third section. Forced mobility and the rootless malleability of identity that corresponds with it has, after all, been the lot not only of women but many minority and oppressed groups. Maya Angelou’s powerful poem, “Our Grandmothers” illustrates the need to take seriously the specific identities of oppressed minorities more generally. It speaks to the specific experience of African American women slaves, who were often separated from their children and sold from slave-owner to slave-owner – an experience that was shared by their male counterparts. The refrain, “I shall not be moved,” suggests a resoluteness in the face of those who would seek to “nomadize” them in the service of increasing their own power and profits. This is less a commitment to absolute stability than a refusal to be moved and formed according to the terms of an oppressive regime.

My intent is not to subordinate the distinct experiences of either African American slaves generally, or African American *women* slaves specifically, to an abstracted, universalizing history of "women and the oppressed under patriarchal rule." Rather, what I am suggesting here is the shared way in which these conditions have been *constructed* in dominant Western systems of thought. The eroticization of non-Western peoples under colonialism has functioned primarily by "feminizing" these cultures, which is to say, assimilating them to the feminine position constructed by binary Western logic, as the Other of Western "civilized," "rational" man. Consider, for instance, the shared usage of the term "dark continent" to connote both Africa and Woman, as the unknown in need of masculine/Western illumination. Or the many portrayals of the "new world" that assimilate the people to their lush surroundings, bringing home paintings of innocent looking naked women; so many versions of the wild in need of taming, the nomadic who need to be shown their proper place. This discourse in effect uses the language of nomadism and wildness to fix the identity of such subjects in the position that Western philosophy has traditionally granted to the feminine: that of malleable "wild" matter. The suggestion that, within the contemporary Western, becoming-other must pass through the stage of "becoming-woman," may be primarily a nod to a discursive legacy that utilizes the masculine/feminine binary as a primary model for understanding and classifying other Others.

While few would now argue that race or nationality are axes that form the basis of becoming, with racial and cultural hybridity being today commonplace and mixed citizenship a regular occurrence, sexual difference continues to pervade our thinking. For Braidotti, the nomadic subject is always sexed. Without insisting upon any definition of what it *means* to be a woman, she insists that it is crucial to women's struggles that they be able to move between sites of identity *as* women. In the third section I will draw on Judith Butler's argument regarding the social construction of sex to argue that the pervasiveness of this strict sexual division may be more an artifact of a way of thinking that continues to carve out Woman as Man's other. In other words, this binary may be more a testament to the strong hold of hierarchical identity-based

thought in our culture than a testament to the preconditions for a healthy strategy of becoming. Furthermore, I will suggest that this resistance to what Braidotti calls sexual or gender hybridity may be a coercive impediment to the desiring-production of those who do not identify along this either/or axes, as well as those for whom the axis of sexual difference is *not* primary. In an ostensibly “post-slavery” society, the differentiations between movements of freedom and coercion are not always crystal clear, particularly once we understand agents to be complex and multi-faceted, without necessarily holding a stable, centralized, synthesizing and unifying soul or mind to play the part of willing subject. The uses and limitations of the nomadic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari as offering emancipatory tools given this tension will be examined, with an eye toward the embodied conditions and artistic/cultural manifestations of this struggle. Taking the differences in conditions amongst various groups seriously is invaluable to providing effective tools for a minoritarian becoming that can actually serve minorities. However, I will argue that the attempt by Braidotti to protect sexual difference may at once overlook some of the challenges of other minorities, wishing to maintain their identities, while coercing agents into a gender binary, sometimes flagrantly against their desires.

The final section of this thesis is dedicated to strategies for building effective alliances using the tools of nomadic cultural production. Here, while sexual difference will not be taken as a *primary* axis of becoming, the need to develop tools to address the unique desires of “women” and minorities will be addressed. I will suggest here that the shared and repeated desire and the common impediments and steps that need to be taken to effectively produce desires are more effective place to concentrate than an insistence on the site of identity from which these common desires emerge. This does not mean ignoring the unique and shared conditions from which desires emerge but rather to view them *in terms* of the desires produced. In this way we might avoid glossing over differentiated desires by masking them under a common name, and may also begin to find useful sites for alliances amongst those who would not otherwise “identify” with one another.

The main aim of this thesis is to think through the possibilities afforded by nomadic thought for developing approaches to cultural production that are able to address minority desires. Here I will not so much be concerned with the ability of majority culture to *absorb* these desires, but rather with the ability of the desires *of* minorities to flourish culturally. These questions are of course intimately bound up in questions of economics and access to resources, the details of which are beyond the scope of this thesis. My focus here will be on how various approaches to cultural production construct and deconstruct notions of identity and the ways in which these various approaches encourage and inhibit ways of producing desire. The first half of this thesis will offer some Deleuzian readings of Artaud's productions, showing ways in which identity is deconstructed into sites of metamorphosis to be traversed. The second half of this thesis will offer readings of Cixous' productions which develop a fluid understanding of identity based on the changing corporeal situation of the agent. It will then go on to provide reading of the virtual identities presented by Irigaray and Braidotti which create sexual difference as the horizon of becoming, and will counter with a Butlerian reading of drag performance. The final section will offer consideration of an approach to cultural production inspired by ideas of the carnivalesque and developed in terms of the serial repetition developed by Deleuze. Here, through concentration on the ways in which all participate, and the conditions of their participation, I will aim to integrate the concerns raised throughout the thesis. My intent, however, is not to offer a template for creating productions or events. No such template could hope to serve the needs and desires of a changing community. This thesis merely aims to offer some insights in understanding some of the issues at stake in the production of minority desires at the level of cultural production and the ways in which the philosophical nomadism of Deleuze might be of use in developing strategies to encourage these desires.

PART ONE: THE "BECOMING-WOMAN" OF DELEUZE'S THEATRE OF PHILOSOPHY

There are laws against vice.

But the shock stays with you.

- Anne Carson

The Platonic legacy in Western philosophy has been that thinking is conceived in terms of ideal forms. The Truth could be discovered, the Good life attained, if only we could come to know these ideals and build our world in their image. Deviants are to be subordinated and put in their place. But monstrosities occur and often they have borne the name "woman." "A monster in the shape of a woman/ a woman in the shape of a monster/ the skies are full of them," begins a poem by Adrienne Riche. Within the collective imaginary the feminine and monstrous have been deeply intertwined and this "monstrous feminine" has often been constructed as a looming threat to the integrity of the masculine form. Numerous feminists, from de Beauvoir to Irigaray and Braidotti, have argued that this is because Woman has been constructed as Man's Other; She has been a dumping ground against which Man could create an ideal for himself, labeling that which fell short or was in excess of this image "feminine." In an attempt to move beyond normative thinking based around ideals, and adopt a way of becoming capable of embracing possibilities previously condemned as deviant, many philosophers have turned to the celebration of this "feminine" as a way out. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze argues that every becoming must pass through the stage of "becoming woman." This is not so much because of any beliefs held about *actual living women*, but because through embracing and adopting those values and possibilities previously labeled and dismissed as "feminine," opportunities that previously seemed unthinkable will become available. While this openness to the values of femininity may be useful in terms of shifting thought away from restrictive paradigms, grounded on a principle of exclusion, Braidotti has pointed out that such a celebration of "becoming woman" as a vehicle for emancipating possibilities does not necessarily provide the tools for overcoming the obstacles that are faced by

women in their own becoming. She warns that taking up such a becoming-woman as a stage in a more general process of becoming threatens to obscure the very real differences experienced on the basis of sex. As such, she warns that Deleuze's nomadism threatens to construct one more philosophical meta-narrative that ends by denying differences in the experiences of becoming, thereby silencing dissident voices.

The aim of the first part of this thesis is therefore threefold: (1) to develop an understanding of *how* the philosophy of difference of Gilles Deleuze might be understood as a "becoming-woman"; (2) to indicate how this becoming can be understood as a *theatre*, and (3) to raise concerns regarding the danger of this strategy as a means of developing tools for overcoming the obstacles faced by women in the production of their own desires. I will argue that Deleuze's "becoming-woman" functions through the creation of a nomadic "theatre of cruelty," following in the tradition of Nietzsche and Artaud. In both Nietzsche and Artaud, the principle of cruelty is used as the means by which ideas are determined; it is the principle that destroys forms, allowing for the possibility of the new at every moment. In both cases, this thought-provoking cruelty is characterized as feminine. From Nietzsche, Deleuze takes a feminized understanding of an affirmative eternity that affirms precisely through repeating *difference* eternally. Via Artaud, difference is realized as a process of artistic experimentation in life. The multiplicity of possibilities opened by such experimentation is articulated by Deleuze as the artistic expression of Artaud's schizophrenia.

This process is feminized largely because it arises in rebellion against the "originary" normalizing violence of the state as self-appointed mouthpiece of the "judgement of God," judgement which subordinates multiplicity and deviance to its own images and goals. In order to facilitate becoming, the "feminine" is approached as the site of potentiality and is conflated with various other minorities designated as "primitive," "natural" or "territorial." In this conflation, Deleuze and Guattari alert us to the problematic nature of such binaries. They suggest the exploration of the "dark side" of these binaries (becoming-woman, becoming-sorcerer, etc.), not

so much in terms of adopting these identities but as creating myriad paths or “lines of flight” from set identities. The question I would like to explore here is to what extent this “feminized” approach provides tools *for* those who have been the traditional victims of these binaries, and to what extent does this approach repeat this process?

feminine cruelty and the principle of difference

In the opening chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze sets out to destabilize the concept of ideal form. Instead, the world is understood as a flux of differences that repeat themselves, sometimes producing the illusion of identity, but always engaging in a process of metamorphosis. That ideal forms constitute the model governing thought, Deleuze readily concedes. However, to develop an approach that allows us to think *beyond* the set forms is Deleuze’s ambition. He draws upon the idea of cruelty to challenge these forms. The affirmation of difference, for Deleuze, is tantamount to the affirmation of life and the possibilities it affords, whereas ideal forms act as the great protectors and constituents of “state ideology”: stabilizing flux, denying and repressing difference and enforcing a normative vision of the world. Within this state ideology, difference is cast as evil, introducing movement into a system that props up its own continued stability as prototypically Good. In order to challenge such state ideology, Deleuze employs Artaud’s idea of cruelty as the very spirit of revolution and the action of thought itself:

There is no sin other than raising the ground and dissolving the form. Recall Artaud’s idea: cruelty is nothing but determination *as such*, that precise point at which the determined maintains its essential relation with the undetermined, that rigorous abstract line fed by *chiaroscuro*.

To rescue difference from its maledictory state is therefore to be the project of the philosophy of difference. (DR, 29)

Deleuze's chief opponent in articulating the philosophy of difference is Plato, and the Platonic championing of being over becoming. In defense of stability, Plato famously banished poets and actors from his republic, claiming that they would encourage affectivity, passion and a general surrender to flux, attributes which he describes as "womanish." The overturning of Platonism for Deleuze thus involves the re-creation of philosophy as a theatre of flux that functions through a becoming "Woman" in the sense Plato feared. Drawing on the work of Artaud, it performs a passionate embodied attack on form. Artaud writes, "from a mental viewpoint, cruelty means strictness, diligence, unrelenting decisiveness, irreversible and absolute determination" (1970: 79).

Artaud's theatre of cruelty is meant to manifest in direct actions designed to shock in order to awaken people from the acquiescence to set forms and stir them into thinking, drawing awareness to the passions of the present. It is occasionally, in Artaud's writing, couched in terms of a "terrible feminine" described as "the cry of the revolt that is trampled underfoot" and conjures images of the womb, "like the groan of an abyss that is opened" (1976, 272). This feminine cry springs from the depths of corporeal bodies in order to raise up against closure of represented forms, "this masculine, the sigh of a closed mouth at the moment that it closes" (274). In these cries, Artaud plays the part of a "petrified warrior," and the determination of these cries forms the basis of his theatre of cruelty. In Deleuze's writing, this cruelty as absolute determination gives rise to a demonology whereby each determination constitutes a shock to thought as unrecognizable, inassimilable difference, crossing the threshold of the unknown from whence it threatens the stability of our current conceptual habits:

It is not the gods which we encounter: even hidden, the gods are only the forms of recognition. What we encounter are the demons, the sign-bearers: powers of the leap, the interval, the intensive and the instant; powers which only cover difference with more difference. (1994, 145)

While the principle of cruelty that Deleuze uses to articulate difference as an active determination is drawn most directly from Artaud's famous *theatre of cruelty*, he argues that this theatre of cruelty is already being concocted in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. In the introduction to *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze writes that Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* "is not a reflection on an ancient theatre so much as the practical foundations of a theatre of the future," and a little further on he elaborates, "with Nietzsche, it is a theatre of unbelief, of movement as *Physis*, already a theatre of cruelty" (9, 11). In Deleuze's development of this "theatre of cruelty" we already see how entrenched within this theatre is the idea of a "becoming-woman," understood as an ancient "feminine" principle of material potentiality. By way of explaining the movements of this philosophy as a theatre of cruelty, almost immediately our attention is drawn to the role of the classic feminine anima figure:

Remember the song of Ariadne from the mouth of the old Sorcerer: here, two masks are superimposed – that of a young woman, almost of a Kore, which has been laid over the mask of a repugnant old man. The actor must play the role of an old man playing the role of the Kore. (9)

We see then, here, the rudiments of the becoming-woman of this new philosophy as theatre, whereby the actor develops his movements through inhabiting the role of an old-man philosopher, but does so at the moment when the old-man is engaged in a sorcerer's metamorphosis. This metamorphosis passes through a becoming-woman, understood as mythical feminine role of receptivity and affirmation. In other words the process of transformation as unpacked by Deleuze is understood as that of an actor whose "own" identity is indeterminate, to be determined by the roles played. In order to transform, the actor must play the role of the old empowered sorcerer and, following the lead of one who "knows," ultimately can only transform through playing the receptive and fluid feminine role as She who is open to change. In an earlier book on Nietzsche, Deleuze elaborates on the affirmative role of Ariadne:

As long as woman loves man, as long as she is mother, sister, wife of man, even if he is the higher man, she is only the feminine image of man. As terrible mothers, terrible sisters and wives, femininity represents the spirit of revenge and the *resentiment* which animates man himself. But Ariadne abandoned by Theseus, senses the coming of a transmutation which is specific to her: the feminine power emancipated, become beneficent and affirmative, the Anima. (1983, 187)

Contrary to traditional binaries, the femininity that constitutes the becoming-woman of philosophy is not Woman as Man's opposite; not Woman as a rebellious force opposing Man so as to overthrow Him. Deleuze's discussion of Nietzsche's Ariadne develops the feminine as an affirmation that affirms difference as such. Ariadne as affirmation is not Man's opposite, not the negative mirror of the Same, but a force of Her own. She is set up as the fiancée of Dionysus, where Dionysus is understood as a god of difference and eternity – a god that has undergone already a becoming-woman, undergoing a constant passionate metamorphosis that faces death and always returns, always differently. Ariadne, as a future oriented force, affirms the difference of Dionysus, promising a conjugal moment of unifying metamorphosis that is *always yet to come*. Despite the promise of unification, the differences of the presence persist and are *celebrated* as the potential out of which a future unification will emerge.

When, in a *Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari introduce the idea that every becoming must pass through a becoming woman, it seems it is Woman in the sense of Nietzsche's Ariadne that they have in mind. Understanding sorcery to be the power of transformation, they write, "becoming-woman, more than any other becoming, possesses a special introductory power; it is not so much that women are witches but that sorcery proceeds by way of this becoming-woman" (1987, 248). The actor sports the sorcerer's mask, the sorcerer sports Ariadne's mask, sings Ariadne's song, in order to transform; the invocation of newly "emancipated" feminine energy carries with it the force of affirmation, the force that says "yes"

to change, "yes" to new possibilities. But what becomes of the emancipated, once She is promised once again, this time not to man, but to the Dionysian force of a new theatre? Does she then "promise" to be eclipsed by a sorcerer? Does *she* become the sorcerer? What are the implications of the schism implied by this theatre between the woman as agent and the divine feminine anima?

In her boundary-transgressing essay, "Dirt and desire: essay on the phenomenology of dirt and desire of female pollution in Antiquity," Anne Carson tells us that in Ancient Greece women were the prototypical transgressors. According to Carson, women were understood as moving about, from social position (mobile units passed between men in patrilocal marriage arrangements), to physiology (characterized as wet and leaky); all things feminine were understood according to the logic of transgression (2000, 131-2).¹ Thus, women carried with them the immense potential to provoke anxieties of ensuing crisis, were they not adequately contained. The primary institution of containment noted by Carson is marriage, whereby a woman's metamorphosizing potential could be ordered and possessed within a male governed system. The desire Deleuze has to "emancipate feminine energy" speaks to a desire to put an end to the violent limitations that are put in place by the legacy of patriarchal institutions. However,

¹ Within Greek society and the philosophical legacy that has permeated the western world by way of Platonic philosophy, femininity has often been associated with metamorphosis and the demonic. Woman is always She who threatens to transgress recognizable boundaries and must be contained. As Mary Douglas' classic *Purity and Danger* and Kristeva's *Power of Horror* have shown, these demons have been associated with the 'polluting' quality of women. Anne Carson's boundary-transgressing essay, "Dirt and desire: essay on the phenomenology of dirt and desire of female pollution in Antiquity," underlines the legacy of this feminine threat in western thought. Carson notes the vast array of female characters in Greek and Roman mythology that undergo radical metamorphosis, suggesting the inability of the feminine to hold a form. Moreover, women pose a violent threat to masculine integrity in mythology, mainly through the threat of their sexuality: the sorceress Circe who turns men into pigs, the sphinx as woman-animal hybrid challenging men with her riddles, maenad wild-women tearing the heads off their own sons: abundant examples of mythological women can be found, unable or unwilling to maintain their form, submitting all too easily to animal passions and assaulting the form of men. In each case metamorphosis might be understood as the result of a blow of sorts; an entity is touched by another, causing it to lose its form and enter into a state of crisis. Carson writes, "the difficulty presented by any instance of contact is that of violating a fixed boundary, transgressing a closed category where one does not belong." (Carson, 130)

it is not clear that the new Dionysian nuptial theatre does not repeat, in veiled form, the same trend.

In her *Patterns of Dissonance*, Rosi Braidotti argues that the current “crisis” of philosophy was brought about in large part by the rise of previously excluded minority voices, most notably those of women. This “crisis,” she explains, is characterized by the crumbling of faith in forms, subject position, and a general destabilization of the ground from which epistemic claims can be made (1991, 7). It is the logical correlate of the emancipation of forces previously contained as the placeholders of the negative side of binary thinking. As Irigaray puts it, it is what happens when “the ground begins to speak.” Roles begin to dissipate and the destabilization of identity categories presents us with the terrifying question: now that we can no longer be sure of who we “are,” what do we want to become? While keeping in mind this pertinent question, the worry that Braidotti (among other feminists) now voices is the appropriation of “feminine” dissidence within as a genderless process of becoming-woman may serve to neutralize and silence the voices of real life women. In making “woman” act as a genderless symbol of affirmative “cruelty” or defiant rebellion, the fear is that the claims that women make and the issues they raise as particular impediments to their own possibilities for development and transformation are obscured under the pressure of a *de facto* masculine humanism. The destabilization of identity constructs allows women to liberate themselves from the restrictive identity constructs that have traditionally led to self-definitions only in terms of the role they played *for men*, but it would also seem to deny them the possibilities of creating stable identities *for themselves*.

theatre of repetition: unraveling identity, hanging Ariadne

In the *Republic*, Plato accuses the actor of obscuring truth with its representation, presenting audiences with a “copy of a copy.” In Artaud’s final public reading, “The Story Lived by Artaud Momo,” he raises the question of how truth and sincerity can be pursued in

performance. After four hours of telling and performing tales of his travels, his life, magic and the cruelty of psychiatric incarceration, he says to the audience, "I put myself in your place, and I can see very well that what I am saying isn't interesting at all, it's still theatre. What can I do to be truly sincere?" (Artaud in Dale, 85). In this question, Artaud seems to be turning away from his theatre of cruelty and from theatre generally in what appears to be a concession to the Platonic critique. However, as Catherine Dale argues in her article, "Cruel," this act ultimately serves to unravel, not the notion of theatre or performance as such, but rather the notion that it can be charged with a representational task. In so far as the "truly sincere" is thought to connote a singular truth, it is the "truly sincere" itself that is undermined. Catherine Dale explains, "By 'pulverizing' the fatal oneness of a true sincerity, Artaud creates a little sincerity overdoing (overcoming) the qualification of both true and sincere" (Dale, 86).

In Deleuze, the question of this "truly sincere" becomes the question of *desire*. It is not so much a matter of representing desire, freeing repressed desires or being "true" to these omnipresent desires. Rather, it is a question of how to engage in machines that effectively *produce* desire and a matter of what desires we want to produce. These are two separate but intimately related questions. Deleuze's answer to the question of the truly sincere is a theatre of cruelty that, rather than representing truth, is engaged in a continual process of serial repetition of previously deployed forces and images that creates in accordance with desire and produces desires as it creates. For Deleuze, this theatre of repetition is "cruel" and "terrible" in so far as it escapes the dictates of Truth, but for all this cruelty is all the more "sincere," faithfully true to desire:

The theatre of repetition is opposed to the theatre of representation, just as movement is opposed to the concept and to representation which refers back to the concept. In the theatre of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link it directly with nature and history, with a language which speaks before words, with gestures

which develop before organised bodies, with masks before faces, with spectres and phantoms before characters – the whole apparatus of repetition as a “terrible power.” (DR, 10)

The “terrible power” is that which creates each event as a singularity, and in so doing destabilizes the routines and assumptions governing the organizational regimens that preceded the event. In repeating an action, or an event or phenomenon, the force of the thing or event repeated is called upon to aid in the birth of the present.

According to Deleuze, our experience of events, and of the organisms implicated in these events, is formed through a series of repetitions where identities are formed and ideas set. Deleuze explains this process as the movement between three modes of repetition: habit, memory and metamorphosis as grounded in *eros* (love) and *thanatos* (death). *Habit* is understood as the contraction of terms such that an expectation of continuity ensues. When one term appears, a second is instantaneously expected. This second term is contracted into the very moment of the first. Here the synthesis is spontaneous; the past and future are contracted into a living present. The body itself is composed of these habitual contractions down to the cellular or molecular level; it is according to such habits that the organs perform as they do. It is on this basis that habitual actions are performed. It is this synthesis that is responsible for our principles of selfhood. The nature of habitual repetition is such that it is always changing and thus our concepts of identity are never completely stable. Deleuze writes, “habit draws something new from repetition – namely difference” (DR, 73).

Habit is at the basis of continuity, but the repetitions that create this continuity are founded on a difference; every event is singular and the habit itself must therefore be contracted for the survival of a continuous subject. The self gives birth to itself through the habits it takes on, and solidifies itself by means of memory, but it can always be more than it is. As Deleuze puts it, “Selves are larval subjects; the world of passive syntheses constitutes the system of the self, under conditions yet to be determined, but it is the system of dissolved self” (DR, 78). There is

no self apart from a constellation of habits, a series of repetitions that occur at even the minutest level.

Images are introduced at the level of *memory*. Deleuze explains, memory, “elevates the principles of representation – namely, identity, which it treats as an immemorial model, and resemblance, which it treats as a present image: the Same and the Similar.”(DR, 88) Memory forms the basis of the repetition that is repeated by the present. *Eros* penetrates the pure past, drawing up images that act as the touchstones of identity. Deleuze writes:

it is always Eros, the noumenon, who allows us to penetrate this pure past in itself, this virginal repetition which is Mnemosyne. He is the companion, the fiancé of Mnemosyne. Where does he get his power? Why is it that Eros holds both the secret of questions and answers, and the secret of our existence? Unless we have not yet found the last word, unless there is a third synthesis of time...

(1994, 85)

This theatre of cruelty uses images of the past as its basis, but rather than presenting them as memorials to truth, it allows desire, or Eros, to guide the repetition. It takes the historical as the necessary basis out of which it builds itself, and sees embodied metamorphosis and cultural revolution of all types as dependant on the ability of actors to draw upon a history out of which to build. Drawing on Rosenberg, Deleuze writes, “historical actors can act only on condition that they identify themselves with figures from the past. In this sense, history is theatre...”(DR, 91) This theatre of history, draws up the forces of the past in order to enact a present metamorphosis. In this sense, it is not so much a representational theatre, exalting the past as a memorial for its own sake or even in order to preserve its legacy in the present, but in order to serve as a basis for *action*. If it passes through a representational synthesis, it does so provisionally. The theatre of cruelty is this transformation of the past into the future in the present. Mnemosyne becomes active, thus destabilizing the binary that holds *Eros* as a phallic, masculinized drive, penetrating a pure, though malleable, image of the past. Memory constitutes

itself according to the desires, not of a stable and closed agent, but of an indeterminate future. In other words, it is desire through and through and the whole system is open.

The traditionally “feminine” subject becomes Deleuze’s way into imaging the nomadic subject. He draws up the image of Ariadne and her thread, leading Theseus through the labyrinth so that Theseus may become the great classical hero. Having slain the beast that terrifies the community, with Ariadne’s help, he come out himself unscathed and all the more complete in his self-image. Ariadne, however, is abandoned, and it is at this point that she becomes the fiancée of Dionysus. From the perspective of an enduring identity, this engagement to Dionysus is an engagement with utter metamorphosis, an engagement with death that follows from her abandonment, recalling that her identity had previously been determined entirely by the role she plays for *him*. The theatre of repetition for Deleuze is the theatre of Ariadne, no longer in the role of helper-mother-wife enlisted to preserve another’s identity. It is the theatre of Ariadne’s transformation. And perhaps, ultimately, of her obliteration:

Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences. Difference must be shown *differing*. We know that modern art tends to realize these conditions: in this sense it becomes a veritable *theatre* of metamorphoses and permutations. A theatre where nothing is fixed, a labyrinth without a thread (Ariadne has hung herself). The work of art leaves the domain of representation in order to become “experience” transcendental empiricism or science of the sensible. (1994, 56)

Entering the “unfixed” theatre, identity is unraveled, and this feminine helper no longer stands locked in her identity *as* helper. Rather the distinctness of the roles dissipates and each must undergo their own becoming-woman, weaving the way through the labyrinth through a series of repetitions without guidance, every guide being only provisional. Deleuze draws upon Artaud’s lived experience with such metamorphosis as indicative of the performative attitude

that must produce a new theatre of philosophy. Artaud writes in the introduction to his *Oeuvre Complète*:

I am innately genital and if we examine what this means closely, it means I never made the most of myself.

There are some fools who think of themselves as beings, as innately beings.

I am he who, in order to be, must whip his innateness.

One who must be a being innately, that is always whipping this sort of non-existent kennel. O! bitches of impossibility. (1968, 19)

Deleuze describes this process of Artaud's as expressing a "desexualized acquisition." This becoming functions by means of a violent self-fashioning that is driven by Eros in so far as it selects the ground or level from which this fashioning takes place, but the self is always elusive, always heading toward death. If desire seeks to unify the moment with the all the past, synthesizing identities in the form of memory, the whipping of the "innateness" highlights the difference that resists assimilation into a single, monolithic image of the world. The fusion of Eros and Thanatos, love and death, creates what Nietzsche calls the *eternal return*, but in a sense that it is continually "returning" to the site of intense difference. It is the repetition of that which is formless, a "return" to the ambiguous site of excess, which is always beyond the One and the Same. This is how the multiple breaks out of subordination under a singular conception of total ultimate unity. It is only that which is truly sincerely *different* that recurs eternally; only that which is not repressed under the yoke of the expected. Deleuze writes, "this is how the story of time ends: by undoing its too well centered natural or physical circle and forming a straight line which, led by its own length, reconstitutes an eternally de-centered circle" (DR, 115). The repetition of the present follows itself to the edge of its possibilities, and is thereby faces the death of its identity. The challenge of the "truly sincere" thus emerges as the seeds of its own self-overcoming. It gestures toward the habitual repetition that forms the self, while whipping it

out of its passive state. The impossibility of performing oneself as a stable innate being is always undermining the attempt and the only sincerity that can truly be pursued is that of the movement of repetition.

The ominous question now resounds as the question of nihilism: does this negate the value of performance altogether? In the famous correspondence with literary journal editor Jacques Rivière, Artaud writes, “it would be a very great consolation for me to think that even though I am not *all* of myself, not as tall, not as dense, not as wide as myself, I can still be something” (1976, 36). A year later, in his final published letter to Rivière he elaborates:

A man possesses himself in flashes, and even when he possesses himself, he does not reach himself completely. He does not realize that constant cohesion of forces without which all true creation is impossible. Nevertheless, this man exists. I mean to say that he has a distinct reality which redeems him. Should he be condemned to oblivion simply because he can give only fragments of himself? (1976, 43)

The impossibility of unfolding oneself completely and thus being truly sincere is the conundrum raised by a non-representational theatre, that is committed, nevertheless, to the creative pursuit of genuine ideas. Artaud explains, “Words, shapes of sentences, internal directions of thought, simple reactions of the mind – I am in constant pursuit of my intellectual being. Thus as soon as I *can grasp a form*, however imperfect, I pin it down, for fear of losing the whole thought” (1976, 31). This forms the basis of Artaud’s methodology. Deleuze’s reformulation of this process of theatrical fragmentation offers up a celebration of difference and multiplicity through the repetitions that constitute the fluid becoming of a metamorphosing agent. This *becoming* is all the more sincere for its fragmentation, whereby the act is always performed from a present and onto a future always yet to be determined. Following this theatre of repetition, we do away with the norms that limit our possibilities. But what is the cost of hanging our guides?

schizo-sense logic: violence and the little girl's theatre

In developing a mode of thinking, irreducible to classical image-based thought, Deleuze draws heavily on Artaud's experience with schizophrenia:

it is not a question of opposing to the dogmatic image of thought to another image borrowed, for example, from schizophrenia, but rather of remembering that schizophrenia is not only a human fact but also a possibility for thought – one moreover, which can only be revealed as such can through the abolition of that image. (1994, 148)

Although Artaud writes a host of manifestos insisting upon what is needed for such a theatrical process to take place, the virtue of a true theatre of cruelty is that it is and must categorically refuse to prostrate itself before a model. According to Deleuze, it is a “dogmatic image of thought” that accepts problems as handed down and tells us “thinking” is that which allows us to solve these problems and attain the goals that have been set out for us. This image of thought calls upon methods to attain the goals set out by the authority of others. This is the anti-thesis of the theatre of cruelty. By this means we are kept in an “infantile state,” whereby all our energies are focused on fulfilling tasks that we did not create, tasks which may have assented to or “chosen,” where choice itself is a response to a prescribed problem:

Such is the origin of the grotesque image of culture that we find in examinations and government referenda as well as in newspaper competitions (where everyone is called upon to choose according to his or her taste, on condition that this taste coincides with that of everyone else). (1994, 158)

To engage in cultural production that does not reproduce this “grotesque image of culture,” but rather awakens us to genuine multiplicity and the possibilities therein, is then the goal of the philosophy of difference, at least in so far as we are considering it as a theatre of cruelty. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze offers more concrete direction as to how Artaud's schizophrenia gives rise to an affective theatre. Here it is done with respect to the language Artaud employs.

Artaud's language, as Deleuze describes it, is the language of schizophrenia and this means it is "carved into the depths of bodies" (LS, 84). Far from being a play of meaning, it is an affective bodily experience that transports us from the surface through its cracks or crevices, into the fathomless depths. Following Freud's observation regarding "the aptitude of the schizophrenic to grasp the surface and the skin as if they were punctured by an infinite number of little holes," Deleuze describes the schizophrenic body a "sort of body-sieve" that "is no longer anything but depth – it carries along and snaps up everything into this gaping depth which represents a fundamental involution" (LS, 87).

What results is bodily expression that transforms "the word into an action by rendering it incapable of being decomposed and incapable of disintegrating: *language without articulation*" (89). Referring to Artaud's translation of Carroll's famous "Jabberwocky" poem from *Alice in Wonderland*, Deleuze claims the words are welded together as sounds, exploited for their corporeal affect and uttered as continuous howl-words or breath-words. The body generates thought based on that which it consumes (i.e. everything it comes in contact with) and that which it is able to excrete based on its bodily processing of that material. Through a focus on the body as depth, schizophrenia allows, or even necessitates, the overturning of a limited model of thought based on discrete, pre-formulated concepts. Located in the depths is the very impetus and possibility of metamorphosis; continually reaching into it, the schizophrenic brings about such a metamorphosis. The depth constitutes the well out of which expression as extension emerges:

depth is like the famous geological line from NE to SW, the line which comes diagonally from the heart of things and distributes volcanoes: it unites a bubbling sensibility and a thought which 'rumbles in its crater'. (1994, 230)

The volcanic depths of the schizophrenic are forever threatening the platitudes of the surface, delving into the abyss in which the past, present and future are synthesized. This schizophrenic language of depths is placed in contrast to the non-sense of Carroll, who is

described alternately as a pervert and as “an affected little girl, protected from all deep problems” (1990, 86). Artaud’s translation departs radically from that of Carroll’s surface monster in order to experience through this work the terror of the depths, the words that draw up from the libidinal economy of pain and desire. Deleuze quotes Artaud’s critique of Carroll’s “Jabberwocky,” as “the work of a profiteer, who, satiated after a fine meal, seeks to indulge himself in the pain of others” (84). Carroll’s word-play is described as the effect of rigorous grammatical structure and “mastering of the surface.” For this reason, Deleuze argues that Carroll and Artaud function in completely different dimensions. The crux of their differing forms of becoming for Deleuze lies in their differing relationship to the child, or more specifically, to the little girl:

Artaud thrusts *the child* into an extremely violent alternative, an alternative of corporeal action and passion, which conforms to the two languages of in depth. Either the child is not born, that is, does not leave the foldings of his or her future spinal cord, over which her parents fornicate (a reverse suicide), or she creates a fluid glorious, and flamboyant body without organs, and without parents (like those Artaud called his “daughters” yet to be born). Carroll, on the contrary, awaits *the child*, in a manner conforming to his language of incorporeal sense: he waits at the point and at the moment in which the little girl skirts the surface of the water, like Alice in the pool of her own tears. (1990, 93)

Between Carroll and Artaud, Deleuze negotiates his own theatre by way of this little girl. Carroll’s mastering takes the little girl Alice as a means of play. The little girl is She who dwells at the threshold, the borderland between the depths and the surface. The little girl still plays on the surface, ostensibly protected from the depths, but of course she will soon discover her depths. Within a perverse economy, she discovers them as the plaything of a mastering artist. This is why it is a little girl and not a little boy; the little girl’s becoming-woman in this schema involves the impending exploration of her depths and the eventual invitation of the little boy into

these depths, the little boy is taught to penetrate and master these depths. But occasionally the roles implode and the surface disintegrates. Artaud as schizophrenic is this little boy who, refusing to *be* a “man” (*qua* master), has imploded the surface, grabbing the little girl as the daughter that he might himself become - a formless daughter, no longer distinguishable on the basis of organs.

The dubious implications of appropriating the Little Girl’s becoming are explored in a particularly vivid and brutal manner in *Artaud’s* famous, if theatrical unsuccessful, re-working of the disturbing historical “great myth” previously dramatized by both Shelley and Stendal, *The Cenci*. Centered around the rape of a daughter by her father, the play uses embodied cries and the suggestion of embodied desires to demonstrate the hypocrisy of social institutions within the patriarchal civil and religious order, and ultimately, to destabilize it. While the play seems to celebrate Cenci’s primal amorality, his monstrous power is clearly bolstered by his social position of authority as father of the household, putting him in partnership with the papacy. It is only Beatrice, as the archetype of feminine youth, whose acts seem capable of destroying the social ordering and the system of judgement that keeps it functioning. The sons and the mother are equally ineffectual, unhappy with the state of affairs but apparently too much imbued with the “order of things” to overturn it. As the men deliberate the politics of Cenci’s punishment, Beatrice has him murdered and is, as a result, imprisoned and tortured by the very regime that made her vulnerable to her father’s brutality in the first place. The girl’s suffering and the force of her revolt are sublimated by the religious and political order that imprisons her and she is used as the sacrifice that allows the community to rid itself of their discomfort with the overt brutality her father brought to the surface of the community. In this way, her force is used to protect the prevailing regime.

Beatrice's rebellion becomes the way out from the brutal order, but a way out that is contained within the greater structure and divested of the particularity of the pain that she experiences. Throughout the play, we see a repetition of roles producing a doubling that destabilizes the hold of the original. In her rebellious murder she recognizes her father's own violence and the play ends with her saying, "I fear that death may teach me that I have ended by resembling him" (52). Bodies penetrate one another, but *who* does the penetrating no longer seems for the schizophrenic a relevant question. Gestures and expression are removed from their "original" agent and as such the context of the agent is minimized. In its stead, the quality of the sounds expressed is given heightened importance. The sensory impact is to have as much impact as the "meaning," for ultimately the "meaning" is generated by the serial repetition of sounds and gestures.

The great challenge Deleuze faces is the negotiation of the surface master and the schizophrenic. He writes, "Carroll and Artaud do not encounter one another; only the commentator may change dimensions, and that is his great weakness, the sign that he inhabits no dimension at all" (1990, 93). The immediacy of impact, the cruelty of every re-articulation and re-sublimation with an oppressive system is something to be thought of at a distance; we do not seem to be at serious "risk" of falling into the roles we encounter. Deleuze is caught in a double bind. On the one hand he may maintain the integrity of the little girl, toying with her challenges as a professional profiteer. Alternatively, he may submerge her in the depths, dissolving her form so that he can merge with her and "become-woman." Following this path, we may fall into depths where we may become free to create from an always undefined space of libidinal desire, but a desire that issues from a space of pain at having no identity from which to create. What Deleuze thus attempts to negotiate is the balance between manipulating the surface meaning of received identities that might act as mirror through which one can develop a theory *of* or at least *for* oneself, and on the other hand delving into those encountered, *not* as set

identities, but rather as a flux of intensity with which one will merge. From the perspective of the one whose image is at stake, however, each has its danger. The surface master creates for himself an Other that will suffer for him. However, appropriating the raging outburst of the little girl's "becoming-woman" in what Deleuze describes as a schizophrenic surveying of the depths runs the risk of repeating the systemic cruelty against her. It offers little direction in terms of constructing an alternative that would alleviate her need to re-enact the violence of which she has been the target. What needs to be established, then, is a means of approaching identity in a manner that is able to take into consideration the position of "the little girl" herself. Or, in other words, a way of understanding the unique place from which we all "become" and the tools we have for dealing with the obstacles we encounter.

capitalism and the schizo-artist: bartered bodies or expansive experimentation?

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain, "cruelty is the movement of culture that is realized in bodies and inscribed on them, belaboring them" (1983, 145). The movement of culture functions through the inscriptions of bodies, however the ways in which bodies are inscribed is hardly consistent and the various cultural eras and revolutions can be understood in terms of the changing relationships between bodies and their significance. Bodily performance functions in qualitatively different manners and thus understanding the theatrical turns of the body offers an opportunity to trace the relationship between theatrical form and social structure at work. Situating this movement in terms of the theatrics of therapy in historical perspective, Deleuze and Guattari write:

Our definition of schizoanalysis focused on two aspects: the destruction of the expressive pseudo forms of the unconscious, and the discovery of desire's unconscious investments of the social field. It is from this point of view that we must consider many primitive cures; they are schizoanalysis in action. (1983, 167)

Deleuze and Guattari trace the performativity of therapeutic practices and their role in the social construction from “primitive” shamanistic cures to contemporary psychoanalytic practices. Through this movement, we are given a clue to the changing nature and role of theatre and performance in society. This process brings to light the intimate connections between socio-economic systems and the regulation and production of desire as seen through theatrical and therapeutic practices. The “primitive” practices function by inscribing bodies with meaning. In the studies from which Deleuze constructs his analysis, following most notably the work of Levi Strauss, it is specifically the bodies of the young women in the community that are inscribed. The little girl “becomes-woman” through a ritual by which her physical body is used to carry the signs and debts of the communities. The girls are taught specific family and tribal dances to mark their belonging to the community. Through this process, bodies are transformed from the singular and indeterminate bodies of performers into a *territory*. Inscription occurs on the bodies and these inscriptions act as direct commands. Deleuze and Guattari describe such primitive rituals as *oral* in contrast to the abstracted or *detrterritorialized* system of writing that emerges with an imperial state model. This method of marking is characterized by its immediate relationship to the manifold possibilities offered by living bodies in action. Signs here have meaning, but their meaning can not be dislocated from the mode of expression:

Savage formations are oral, are vocal, but not because they lack a graphic system: a dance on the earth, a drawing on a wall, a mark on the body are a graphic system, a geo-graphism, a geography. These formations are oral precisely because they possess a graphic system that is independent of the voice, a system that is not aligned on the voice and not subordinate to it, but connected to it, co-ordinated “in an organization that is radiating, as it were: and multidimensional. (And it must be said that this graphic system is linear writing’s contrary: civilizations cease being oral only through losing the independence and the particular dimensions of

the graphic system; by aligning itself on the voice, graphism supplants the voice and induces a fictitious voice). (1983, 188)

This direct encoding of meaning in the flesh is dubbed a *theatre of cruelty*. Meanings are arrived precisely through their corporeal determinations and the collective memory of the tribe and its associated debts etc. are literally burned, carved or otherwise etched in or on the body of its members. What is inscribed is not, however, a central narrative, but rather a multitude of flows that do not need to defer to a centralized abstraction. It plays out a multidimensional system through the use of various forms of expression. Deleuze and Guattari recount a Ndembu medicine ceremony recorded by Victor Turner:

Giving [the sick person] potions, attaching horns to his body for drawing up the incisor, making the drum beat, the medicine man proceeds with a ceremony interrupted by halts and fresh departures, flows of all sorts, flows of words and breaks: the members of the village come to talk, the sick subject talks, the ghost is invoked, the medicine man explains, everything recommences, drums, chants, trances. It is not only a question of discovering profoundly – its unconscious investments by desire, such as they pass by way of the sick person's marriage, his position in the village, and all the positions of a chief lived in intensity within the group. (1983, 168)

The multiple sites of intensity called upon by such primitive cures is what earns them a place within the schizoanalysis that Deleuze and Guattari seek to develop. It functions by networks whereby the "graphism itself constitutes a sign in conjunction with the thing designated," and this sign is "continually jumping from one element to another," creating webs that do not so much designate stable object-referents as *ways* of jumping or becoming through this network (1983, 204). This primitive shamanic theatre is in contradistinction to what emerges with imperialism, namely that meanings are *deterritorialized* from the imminent site of

multiple present bodies and *reterritorialized* abstractly onto the body of the despot in the name of the empire. Words are made to carry meaning and as such singular narratives are imposed:

The voice no longer sings but dictates, decrees; the graphy no longer dances, it ceases to animate the bodies, but is set into writing on tablets, stones and books....the vocal, the graphic, and the visual ... converge toward the eminent unity of the despot... the subordination of graphism to the voice induces a fictitious voice from on high which no longer expresses itself except through the writing signs that it emits (revelation). (1983, 205)

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the shift to an imperial, written system marks the subordination of desire to abstract dictates. Whereas, bodily desire had previously been repressed by the society in which the subject participates, the shift to an imperial system was such that the dictates descended upon the body in ways that effaced bodily desire. Bodily expression and the affiliations created thereby, including familial relations, are usurped and subordinated to the dictates of the despot's written word. Here the question of exegesis sets in; what does the text mean? How do we bring out its meaning and enact the despot's script? Bodily performance now bows to a master-narrative and, as Deleuze and Guattari write, "the body no longer allows itself to be engraved like the earth, but prostrates itself before the engravings of the despot, the regions beyond the earth, the new full body"(1983, 206). Western style patriarchal rule takes a single disembodied narrative, implicitly emanating from the lived conditions of the ruler, effectively silencing and marking as blanket Other all deviants or minorities, which are now conflated in their position *as* Other.

In capitalism, this process of deterritorialization is complete. Whereas, in both the territorial systems as well as the imperial systems, representation designates *objects*, with capitalism, Deleuze argues, "representation no longer relates to a distinct object, but to productive activity itself" (1983, 263). Whereas the imperial state appropriates and mimics the familial and tribal relations of a territorial system, capitalism uses the territorial elements as

mere material for the production and amassing of capital. The flows of capital reduce the material conditions and persons that fuel it to a play of images, generating mass imagery for the private consumption of individuals whose identification rests on these consumed images. Persons become personifications of the capitalist system, whereby according to Deleuze and Guattari, “even destitution, despair, revolt – and on the other side, the violence and the oppression of capital – become images of destitution, despair, revolt, violence, or oppression” (1983, 264). What was once inscribed on the moving bodies of family members has since been abstracted and now it is the image of “The Family” that appears with every public production. Everything public is fed as a metaphor for the personal but through this process the truly singular experience of persons is effaced and replaced by a simulacrum.

This creation of a universalizing private theatre culminates in the production of psychoanalysis and the Freudian tendency to answer every discontent with an image of the Oedipal family and the complex it suggests. Through the myth of Oedipus, Deleuze and Guattari trace the system of representation from the Classical Greek theatre of Sophocles and the on-set of the Western city-state, to Freud’s privatization of the myth within a capitalist context:

In Oedipus there is a recapitulation of the three states, or the three machines. For Oedipus makes ready in the territorial machine, as an empty unoccupied limit. It forms the despotic machine as a symbolically occupied limit. But it is filled and carried to completion only by becoming the imaginary Oedipus of the capitalist machine. The despotic machine preserved the primitive territorialities, and the capitalist machine rescuscitates the Urstaat as one of the poles of axiomatic, it makes the despot into one of its images. That is why Oedipus gathers up everything, everything is found again in Oedipus which is indeed the result of the universal history, but in the singular sense in which capital is already this result. *Fetishes, idols, images, and simulacra*. – here we have the whole series: territorial fetishes, despotic idols or symbols, then everything is recapitulated in the images

of capitalism, which shapes and reduces them to the Oedipal simulacrum. The representative of the local group with Laius, the territoriality with Jocaste, the despot with Oedipus himself: “a motley painting of everything that has ever been believed.” It comes as no surprise that Freud looks to Sophocles for the central images of Oedipus-the-despot, the myth becomes tragedy, in order to make the image radiate in two contrary directions: the ritual primitive direction of *Totem and Taboo*, and the private direction of modern man the dreamer. (1983, 267)

The Freudian psychoanalyst, functioning within the deterritorialized setting of late capitalism completes the “Oedipalization” of mass consciousness, set in motion by the Classical Greek theatre. Oedipus-the-despot, once a theatrically enacted myth learned by tragedians is, under late capitalism, internalized and played out in the “private theatre” of the analyst’s office. It is finally the imagination that has been colonized, transformed from an amorphous factory of “desiring-production” to a private (scripted) classical theatre. There is no longer any need to look beyond the family structure in “healing” ourselves; social ills can all be reduced to the illness of our relationship to the maternal and paternal forces around us, and our desire can all likewise be traced to such genealogical formations. Through the use of this mythology, desire is contained and limited. Roles are stratified, such that singular events can be classified and analyzed according to set meanings, instituting a division of labour: mother = corporeal territory, Father = Culture, Son = the one who *desires*, penetrating the corporeal territory and mastering Culture. The little girl, as we have seen, falls outside of this trinity, thereby signifying raw potentiality. The schizoanalysis developed by Deleuze and Guattari is therefore dedicated to destabilizing the classical representational theatre that has taken hold of the unconscious.

It is in the interest of such destabilization that Artaud-as-schizo-artist is called upon. The schizophrenic, according to Deleuze and Guattari, does away with the representational code modeled on familial structures. Rather than looking toward origins in order to tease out and confess to the perversion of which the sufferer must have been guilty, schizoanalysis follows the

network of relations at every level. Artaud as schizo-artist is drawn on for the pursuit of a recording system that either rejects the structure of representation, or repeats it only to parody it. Artaud's poem "Here Lies" is quoted:

I don't believe in father

in mother

got no

pappamummy

(Artaud in Deleuze, 1983, 14)

and later

I, Antonin Artaud, am my son, my father, my mother and myself.

(15)

It is this serial parodying of representation that forms the basis schizoanalytic practice. The psychoanalyst functions by acting out, and thus resuscitating, the role of the supposedly slain father of the classical Oedipal drama, exonerating the child for his betrayal of the father and transgression of the laws laid out. Rejecting this model, schizoanalysis breaks open the private theatre, removes the analysis from the confines of the "father's" office, and allies it instead with an experimental production of "art-as-process" which they very explicitly distinguish from a theatre. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that tribal medicine ceremonies constitute schizoanalysis in action, referencing Artaud's writings on his experience with the Tarahumuras indigenous tribe of Mexico in the late 1930s. Artaud's intention in visiting Mexico was to learn the means of instigating a Cultural Revolution from what he understood to be the revolutionary atmosphere of Mexico. In the peyote rituals of the Tarahumuras, he thinks he has found the means of developing cultural modes of expression no longer ruled through hegemonic decree but rather through attentiveness to the movements of desire made manifest in physical and mental expressions. In his earlier manifestos on a theatre of cruelty, he notes the power of respiration

and of how and when words are uttered and gestures played out. He explains that he came to Mexico in search of “a real physical source of this revolutionary force” (1976, 368). Here we find a sense of nostalgia for a territorial system, but one that decidedly grows out of a modern capitalist environment. Much of Artaud’s account of his time with the Tarahumuras was recorded while he was institutionalized in the asylum at Rodez, and he laments the barbarism of modern Western “treatment” in contrast to the ceremonies of the Tarahumuras. His account, written in a state of delirium induced, in part by the conditions under which his illness is being treated, could apparently never be confirmed by subsequent scholars, the Tarahumaras tribes having apparently no recollection of his visit. In these accounts, Artaud seems to be decoding the rituals so as to be able to assign to them a new function within Western culture.

These accounts resonate in many ways with Artaud’s accounts of various oriental theatrical forms, and can be seen as part of an overarching project to create a new civilization through study of the performative techniques employed by various cultures in the service of galvanizing, maintaining, and healing their communities. Here, these primitive rituals have been extricated from their original context, deterritorialized to be reterritorialized onto the bodies of contemporary performers and therapists. This process of decoding and of following desires in multiple, seemingly incommensurable directions that unite only at a “deep” level, at once transcendent and corporeally imminent is characteristic of the schizo-flow of which Deleuze and Guattari write. This process is a celebration of the territorial systems, but one that destroys its territoriality through its very celebration. Deleuze and Guattari explain the processes at work in such de-coding:

Our societies exhibit a marked taste for all codes – codes foreign and exotic – but this taste is destructive and morbid. While decoding doubtless means understanding and translating a code, it also means destroying the code as such, assigning it an archaic, folkloric, or residual function, which makes of

psychoanalysis and ethnology two disciplines highly regarded in our modern societies. (1983, 245)

Artaud, however, is neither psychoanalyst nor ethnologist, but schizo-artist. Thus, as much as he is engaged in this activity of de-codification, his purpose is markedly different. Rather than utilizing these decoded codes to bolster an axiom of capital acquisition and production, his process can be understood as challenging the very axioms according to which capitalism functions. Deleuze and Guattari continue:

for capitalism it is a question of binding the schizophrenic charges and energies into a world axiomatic that always opposes the revolutionary potential of decoded flows with new interior limits. And it is impossible in such a régime to distinguish, even in two phases, between decoding and the axiomatization that comes to replace the vanished codes. The flows are decoded *and* axiomatized by capitalism at the same time. Hence schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death. (1983, 245)

What characterizes the schizophrenic process is precisely that its focus *is* the process itself and not its re-organization into a salable item. It can not be slapped with a representative label and resists reinsertion into the Oedipal drama of prescribed desire, (the capitalist's answer to the psychoanalyst's suggestion: "so that is what I want"). It is a process oriented toward becoming, whose value is found in the intensity of the transformation and not in the successes it has attained. Deleuze and Guattari insist that the value of art lies truly in the process of experimentation as such and not in the product it produces, or even in post-facto appraisal of the success of the experimentation. The intensities of transformation in which the magic of the artist or the practitioner engages can never be codified and reproduced. Artaud's attempts to decode the various elements of the Peyote rituals of the Tarahumuras, his systematization of the breathing hieroglyphics of the Cabala and the gestures and sounds of the Balinese are attempts to

access the fissures, the guttural depths of truth that he thinks he can find in these territorial systems.

Artaud acknowledges the theft involved in this type of de-coding, designed to allow for the appropriation of the power of these traditions. Artaud writes, "a White, for these Red men, is one whom the spirits have abandoned. If it was I who benefited from the rite, it meant so much lost for themselves, with their intelligent sheathing of spirit. So much lost for the spirits. So many spirits that could not be utilized again" (1976, 384). He records how he had to endure an "incredible comedy," as the Tarahumaras attempted to dupe him in an effort to prevent him from amassing and decoding the energy of their true ritual. However, as understood by schizoanalysis, his attempts are oriented toward a release of the colonial legacy that allows one group to amass wealth through the appropriation of another group's power under the name of axiom that acts as law. Released from a commodity economy, the energies are sent to circulate freely. Deleuze and Guattari explain:

the theatre of cruelty cannot be separated from the struggle against our culture, from the confrontation of the "races," and from Artaud's great migration toward Mexico, its forces, and religions: individuations are produced only within fields of forces expressly defined by intensive vibrations, and that animate cruel personages only in so far as they are induced organs, parts of desiring-machines (mannequins).

It is not a matter of enacting the role of a shaman or a sorcerer, or of representing the ceremonies. Much less is it a manner of believing oneself to have become a personage to whom one apprentices. Rather the relationship of the theatre of cruelty to the various "races" and cultures engaged is characterized by a desire to awaken the intensity accessed. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the tendency in modern physics to use proper names to designate certain fields of intensity and potentiality as a process continuous with Artaud's use of historical and cultural names and rites. In such cases, it is clear that when the name is invoked there is not a

specific personage being called upon but rather the force with which they are associated. As they put it, "history is like physics: a Joan of Arc effect, a Heliogabalus effect – all the names of history, and not the name of the father" (1983, 86).

The theatre of cruelty explodes the model that declares performance to be representative, resisting the dictum that would re-inscribe all the names as subsets of a subsuming law or axiom. Instead, it suggests a process of becoming-other, whereby the other is not mimicked, but rather the intensities which they call up are called up by the performer who deploys these forces as so many effects. The metamorphosis that ensues is therefore conceived as a real metamorphosis of intensities and not, as is sometimes supposed, the mimicry of a specific personage.

For Deleuze and Guattari, art functions as a desiring-machine, that "short-circuits social production" and "interfere[s] with the reproductive functions of technical machines by introducing an element of disfunction" (1983, 33). The philosophy of difference as a philosophical theatre of the future attempts to explode the mythologies on which traditional theatres and modes of cultural production are ostensibly based by postulating a principle of metamorphosis and becoming, rather than on the production of images and identifications. The basis of such metamorphosis, and perhaps the most influential idea Deleuze and Guattari take from Artaud: that of creating "a body without organs." The creation of such a body without organs becomes the method by which persons can begin to engage in such a theatre of difference. In the radio play, *To Have Done With the Judgement of God* (1947), Artaud writes:

When you have made [man] a body without organs,
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions
and restored him to his true freedom.

Then you will teach him again to dance wrong side out
as in the frenzy of dance halls
and this wrong side out will be his real place. (1976, 571)

In this radio play, Artaud equates the organs of man to a new vision of god that has taken over. The “judgement” of this god is manifest in the very way that bodily is understood – namely, as discrete and defined, with determinate functions and potentialities. Having killed god, organs are created as the microbe god before whom man now cowers. According to Artaud, the understanding of the body in terms of these organs is what allows man’s vitality to be stolen from him and given over to the state for the purposes of reproducing. What are to be created through these organs are not persons but soldiers that will mindlessly defend the interests of American style capitalism. It is thus now only in releasing man from this “judgement of god” and making him a body-without-organs, that man will be allowed his dance of freedom. The body-without-organs allows for a fluid metamorphosis and regeneration. This body-without-organs is the site of the schizo-theatre; the place where capitalism is run-off its limits and the self as cog in the in productive machine of “enlightened” individualism, overturned. It is, in other words, the site of Artaud’s great resistance to the contemporary organization and institutionalization. He announces it as the basis of his rebellion:

For tie me up if you want to

there is nothing more useless than an organ (1976,576)

Where capitalism re-inscribes myths to create private soldiers for its cause, the body-without-organs resists the reterritorialization of vital energies onto the organizational structures as they have been taught in the schools. It is this utter rejection of institutionalization that maddens the institutional masters to not cease to scrutinize the situation for a way of confining it and appropriating the energy produced. This is the battle of Artaud’s to which Deleuze alerts us and it is through this struggle that Deleuze shows us the extent to which the psychoanalyst is complicit in promoting the representationalism that confines desire to set of nicely delineated organs:

Where psychoanalysis says, “Stop, find your self again,” we should say instead,

“Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO yet, we haven’t sufficiently

dismantled our self.” Substitute forgetting for anamnesis, experimentation for interpretation. Find your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It’s a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out. (1987, 151)

The body without organs, this space where everything is played out, is anti-imagistic, yet it thrives off of the appropriation of images and rites of the oppressed, abstracting them from their context to be played out serially by the amorphous body of the Western schizo. The body-without-organs morphs according to all the intensities it come in contact with and uses all of these intensities to rail against its shackles. It draws up the powers of animal spirits, of sorcerers and gods, importing any and all techniques that facilitate an intense metamorphosis. It seems to find resonance with territorial systems of primitives, but abstracts itself through its rapid metamorphosis and rises into an incorporeal state that rejects the territory. Renouncing the American obsession with artificial production, Artaud writes:

Rather than a people who feed their horses, cattle, and mules the
last tons of real morphine they have left and replace it with
substitutes made of smoke,
I prefer the people who eat off the bare earth the delirium from
which they were born,
I mean the Tarahumura
eating Peyote off the ground
while they are born,
and who kill the sun to establish the kingdom of black night,
and who smash the cross so that the spaces of space can never
again meet and cross.

And so you are going to hear the dance TUTUGURI. (1976, 557)

This smashing of the cross is the celebrated cruelty that does away with the godly forms, and the distinctions thereby instituted. Beginning with this smashing of the cross, Artaud wishes to follow the Tarahumara into the black night, the indistinct abyss where the dance occurs. This is the orgy of becoming which refuses to limit desire to the sanctioned forms. The cross stands as the symbol of the spiritualization of the body; it is that which crucifies the body and keeps it from dancing. Each of the four directions of the cross is overseen by a priest, seeking to spiritualize, limit, and thereby betray desire. As Deleuze and Guattari elaborate, "every time desire is betrayed, cursed, uprooted from its field of immanence, a priest is behind it" (1987, 154).

To abolish the cross requires a rite by which the light of religion, with its "illuminations" of forms, can be snuffed. Such a rite allows the "self" to escape from the models that have co-opted and formulated it. That is why it is immanently theatrical and it is why the theatre of cruelty, as a non-representational site of becoming, can become for Artaud and Deleuze *a line of flight*. Unlike the capitalist co-opting of otherness by the self-same principle of production, the schizo-artist's body without organs refuses to be bound to an axis of production and correlated mythology.

The dance of Tutugari, as Artaud presents it, features seven men. The seventh of these men is the "sun/ in the raw," intermittently presented as a horse and as a man leading a horse, but as Artaud explains, "it is the horse/ who is the sun/ and not the man." Six of the men begin by rolling on the ground, "leap up one by one like sunflowers" and surround and finally up-root six crosses, while the seventh, the horse-man, comes galloping up naked and "holds up/ an enormous horseshoe/ which he dipped in a gash of his blood" (1976, 558-9). This dance is invoked as the rite by which the body extricates itself from bondage to its assigned organs and reterritorializes itself onto the "natural" body of the earth. The body without organs is this liberated body, free to enter into the play of earthly metamorphosis. The rite turns around a

becoming-horse, a becoming-sunflower, etc. This transformation is understood as occurring in a very real sense. It is not a matter of mere mimetics but is rather realized so as to affect a significant change in the universe. However, there is another sense in which the transformation must be understood to be incorporeal, for clearly, the men don't *really* become animals, plants, the sun, etc., at least in so far as we understand these entities as having stable physical identities. Deleuze and Guattari explain such becomings as ultimately process driven, as opposed to being oriented toward the ultimate forms into which they metamorphose:

Becoming produces nothing other than itself. We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed term through which that which becomes passes. Becoming can and should be qualified as becoming-animal even in the absence of a term that would be the animal become. The becoming-animal of the human being is real, even if the animal become is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real even if that something other it becomes is not. (1987, 238)

The body without organs is the plane of consistency that allows for the fluidity of becoming, a fluidity that depends on the rejection of organization. That is why, on the one hand, the body without organs must appropriate territorial forms of becoming, and on the other must abstract these territorial becomings from their embodied context. The rite of becoming-sun does away with the "real" sun; black night is approached. It no longer matters whether, in the human act of becoming-other, any accurate conception is held of that which one becomes. In its destabilization of the fatherly judgement of God as Father/Priest, the Maternal body as territory is equally desecrated and depicted as a construct that forms the precondition for patriarchal systems of judgement. Artaud describes the body of the earth as that out of which the crosses are embedded and the mother's embrace as "foul." The desecration of the mother serves to

destabilize the binaries according to which the mother is depicted *as* the ground of a masculinized culture.

If there is a primary conflation here of the maternal and the territorial or earth-body, the push to develop a body-without-organs sets about destabilizing this relationship. In Artaud's work, however, this seems to be developed by a frequently violent disregard for the situation of those who have occupied this position. While, on the one hand, creating a body-without-organs allows for an expansion of performative possibilities, consideration of the lived situation *from* which these possibilities are performed becomes a glaring omission. In developing their schizo-analytic approach, Deleuze and Guattari use Artaud's artistic tools to begin unraveling normative ideals. By historicizing these tools, Deleuze and Guattari expose the ways in which such an approach grows up within a capitalist economy. However they maintain that, while capitalism organizes by sublimating multiple becomings to an axiom of capital production, the process of artistic experimentation encouraged by schizoanalysis breaks open this axiom, offering a possibility to move beyond an obsession with capital. Moreover, they suggest that in this move beyond, minority desires can flourish, being allowed to break out the norms that hitherto had sublimated them. Here it is suggested that the forces of the marginalized be brought to the foreground and celebrated in the open. The extent to which such a celebration benefits those who have been systematically marginalized, however, remains to be seen.

the cruelty of appropriation

Creating a "body without organs" allows us to be open to a variety of possibilities and forge new ways of pursuing our desires. According to the Deleuzian-Artaudian approach, as long as one is capable of engaging in the process of creating a body-without-organs, it would seem that the horizon of possibilities is infinitely expanded. This approach is inspired by a principle of constant consumption that cannot be re-inscribed within an overarching principle of capital accumulation. Artaud writes, "to be cultivated is to eat one's destiny, to assimilate it

through knowledge" (1976, 359). The question, however, is the sort of knowledge that one eats in this instance, available and empowering to all, or does it presuppose an "eating" agent, in a position of dominance relative to that which is eaten? This need not necessarily presuppose an economically dominant agent, but is, rather, oriented toward the question of what is required to be a mobile, consuming, agent. Is the sort of knowledge required to "eat one's own destiny" a knowledge which necessarily presupposes a certain sort of agent; one whose knowledge of *their own history* and whose position as a mobile individual is secured.

This model of becoming based on consumption seems relatively innocuous so long as what one becomes is a sunflower or a horse. Its implications are all the more urgent when the becoming is engaged in destabilizing the identity of a cultural minority: the Tarahumuras for instance, or the Balinese actors. Not only do territorial systems of representation suggest a becoming-other, the body-without-organs follows such systems through a becoming-primitive that enters into the territoriality of selected traditions only to deterritorialize and decontextualize the traditions from which it draws. The rites described in *To Have Done With the Judgement of God* are written up ten years after Artaud's visit to Mexico during the period that he was in and out of the Asylum at Rodez. Artaud's accounts of the various theatrical traditions on which he writes in *Theatre and Its Double* are notoriously sketchy and inaccurate from a factual perspective. We know what interests him are the intensities of the becoming. But what is the effect of appropriating the names and rites of others while discarding the importance of their "reality" in themselves?

The focus on future-oriented performance advocated by a Deleuzian reading of Artaud functions by appropriating what we might call a collective memory – having done away with the principle of personal identity. While in the case of Artaud, this process may be "reterritorialized" onto the body of the schizophrenic, Deleuze further deterritorializes this to make it a principle of thinking and living. Here, an understanding of schizophrenia as a principle of life-as-experimental-art, and desire as the production of experiments in living, is created.

This principle dislocates gestures that constitute identity and utilizes them in the service of “producing” new desires. There remains, however, at any given moment a recognizable agent of desire, and these agents *do not* begin from the same position and with the same cultural tools. Despite the fact that the performed desires may celebrate multiplicity by bringing “minority” desires into the foreground, it is less clear that actual identifiable minorities will be in a stronger position to produce and pursue their desires by following this approach. To the extent that minority “identities” are consumed by those previously identified as the majority in an attempt to broaden *their own* possibilities, there is a very real danger that what ensues is not so much the advancing of *minority desires*, but rather the sublimation of these desires *as tools in the pursuit of majority desires*. This is not to say that the theatre of difference as a principle of nomadic living is *necessarily* detrimental to the desiring-production of minorities. However, it falls short of providing the tools by which such desiring might take place.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, every “becoming” within contemporary Western society must pass through the stage of “becoming-woman,” since “woman” as a category has been constructed as the dominant minority against with the masculine identity, as the politically dominant majority, has been formulated. Woman comes to symbolize the possibility that the *desired*, as body, ground of experience and Other, has to produce its *own* desires. This destabilizes a way of thinking based on ready-made distinctions and, as such, is described as the destruction of boundaries through a rebellious, but affirmative act of “cruelty” that allows for the celebration of marginalized desires that fall between the norms and ideals that are typically promoted. However, how this strategy can be of use to women, and the extent to which passing through a stage of “becoming woman” in the Deleuzian sense of destabilizing identities through fluid, multifaceted mobility remains to be seen.

PART TWO: STAGE SETTINGS FOR A "FEMINIST" NOMADISM

I am an instrument in the shape
of a woman trying to translate pulsations
into images for the relief of the body
and the reconstruction of the mind

- Adrienne Riche

In many ways the title of this section appears as a paradox, for how can we "set" nomadism? Philosophical nomadism as developed by Gilles Deleuze, furthered in his partnership with Guattari, functions by way of destabilizing identities as forms that house being. Instead the world transforms in a flux of becoming. We inhabit images and forms only temporarily, passing through them in a process of desiring-production that recreates the form as a singular immediate gesture. From a radically nomadic perspective, the idea of a "feminist" nomadism is already paradoxical in so far as it retains a base of "woman" or even "women" or "femininity" as a stable concept from which the nomad takes off. It is as though this "feminism" provides a sanctuary in which the nomad can galvanize forces, free from the persecution that may elsewhere be encountered, before continuing on with a journey that occasionally may lead into a war zone. We might ask, however, if a "feminist nomadism" is really nomadic at all? Who or what are these "feminists"? Who or what are these "women" of which they speak?

hysterical theatre: newly born, but still forlorn?

In 1975, Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément together published their now classic treatise on feminine becoming, *The Newly Born Woman*. This text is not to be read as putting forward a singular argument. Rather, it plays with the idea of feminine expression as a fluid process of becoming that issues from the body in what they often describe as "hysterical theatre." This

theatre functions as a revolt against the prevailing “phallogocentric” model of thought and the patriarchal order it defends, while offering itself up as an alternative medium of becoming. In many ways, the discussion on becoming-woman in Deleuze and Guattari’s “Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal” functions as a response to this text.

The “hysterical theatre” of Clément and Cixous utilizes the multiple resources of the body as a way of breaking out of the limitations imposed by prevailing language structures. The nomadism that Deleuze and Guattari develop retains a strategy of multiple expression which, in keeping with the theorization of Clément and Cixous, they characterize as a “becoming-woman.” However, extending their version of the Artaudian schizophrenic “theatre of cruelty,” Deleuze and Guattari develop an approach to becoming that seeks to expand possibilities through an *incorporeal* metamorphosis, whereby change takes place through virtual contact, transcending the limitations imposed by existing organic structures. This incorporeal becoming frees agents from corporeal conditions and allows for metamorphosis to take place. Deleuze and Guattari are interested in what a body can *do*, rather than what it *is*. But it might be that they have taken an awareness of libidinal desire for granted. For those bodies that have systematically been robbed of their desires along with their identities, the identity of these bodies may still be a matter that needs attending in so far as it may help to develop the desiring capacity of these bodies. Clément and Cixous refuse to allow the body to be taken up as a tool in incorporeal transformation, and insist, instead, on letting the body speak. In so doing, they retain a concept of agency that disappears in the incorporeal nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari. Unlike the combined text of Deleuze and Guattari, Cixous and Clément each author their own pieces to make up *the Newly Born Woman*. This stylistic difference in co-authorship itself belies a difference in the concept of agency and development at work. In the case of Deleuze and Guattari, the identities of the authors blur and it no longer becomes possible to assign a given thought to one author or the other. In the case of Clément and Cixous, multiplicity is championed in a manner that allows for discrete voices that are distinct from one another, even

as they both engage in a flux of transformation based on what and whom they come into contact. This allows for a celebration of difference in their work, conceived as a giving voice *to* the other. This voice is that which issues from the body at a given moment rather than the identity that has come to be associated with it. In the present analysis, I will focus primarily on the way Cixous articulates this hysterical theatre of the body, or *écriture féminine* as it is more commonly called. I will compare the tools she develops through this theatre of “feminine” becoming to those developed by Deleuze and Guattari via their Artaudian schizophrenic performance. Through this comparison, the utility of using bodily desire as a means of protecting women from potentially disempowering fragmentation at the hands of others will be investigated.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use “feminine” cruelty to create a demonology, tracing a path of becoming through a becoming-woman. In their analysis of Kleist’s play, *Penthesilea*, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate the possibilities opened through the violent love of Achilles and Penthesilea. Achilles undergoes a becoming-woman and Penthesilea a becoming-dog that results in the death of both – Penthesilea attacks him in the manner of her pack of dogs, ripping him to shreds and killing herself. Despite its repetition of a classic fear scenario of the deadly danger of feminine animal passion, it is celebrated by Deleuze and Guattari as that which is needed to liberate thought from its repressive molds and allow for the free play of desire and possibility. In their view, Kleist “offers a wonderful explanation of how forms and persons are only appearances produced by the displacement of a center of gravity on an abstract line, and by the conjunction of these lines on a plane of immanence.” (1987, 268) The distinctions of form, the affinities of love and clashes of violence that muddy these distinctions; all this is a matter of perception based on speeds and slowness, the rate at which metamorphosis occurs. Cruelty for Artaud retains something of the fear and suffering typically associated with it in the modern lexicon, depicted as the necessary pains of truly living and thinking. However, in the work of Deleuze and Guattari the pejorative gloss disappears, with the result that such cruelty is depicted as the height of affirmation and the celebration of life.

Following the literary plane of consistency that Kleist creates, they remark “even death can only be conceptualized as the intersection of elementary reactions of different speeds” (268). There is no need to fear the becomings of Penthesilia; they are not the signs of evil but a demonstration of the fluidity of form over time.

This becoming-Kleist advocated by Deleuze and Guattari reads as a response to Cixous’ reading of Kleist in “Sortie,” the second essay in *The Newly Born Woman*. While Deleuze and Guattari describe their approach as a nomadic transversal of (in this case, literary) planes of imminence, Cixous describes the experience as “finding a place,” if only temporarily. “Sometimes I find where to put the many-lifed being that I am. Into elsewhere opened by men who are capable of becoming woman,” writes Cixous and elaborates, “I was Kleist’s Penthesilia, not without being Achilles” (98). The movements of force and violent becomings in this play are the fluid and natural flows that move beyond the laws that carve up identities and reign in desire:

One gets beyond everything with Kleist. And it is not called transgression.
Because passion suddenly flares up in the world where that idea does not exist.
(1986, 98 - 99)

Boundaries are transcended and possibilities expanded through becomings fueled by a passionate desire to inhabit another and transform through this passionate contact. Each becomes pregnant with the other and is remolded with the other. For Cixous, the becomings function according to a logic of reversal fueled by love: Achilles “becomes” Penthesilea, Penthesilea “becomes” Achilles. Each becomes receptive to the other, resulting in the transmutation of identity. The wounds inflicted are the wounds of love; the puncturing of identity and the “transgression” of boundaries that comes with letting another in and allowing them to move you. This is cruelty by the terms of *écriture féminine*:

One has to have won; but this victory does not have the meaning of a masculine triumph. He dominates to destroy. She dominates to not be dominated; she

dominates the dominator to destroy the space of domination. Because the one knocked down is helped to his feet. And she leads the one who is “conquered” into her world – a world he has never dared imagine. (Cixous, 1986, 116)

Cixous’ logic of reversal that sees Penthesilea becoming-Achilles, (rather than the analysis of Deleuze and Guattari that focuses on her “becoming-dog”), suggests the potential difference between a masculine “becoming-woman” and a feminist philosophy of becoming *for* women. Beginning from a masculine position, presumed as the starting point of Western discourse, identifying with “man” Deleuze and Guattari can be read as taking Cixous up on her invitation into the world of Woman. Cixous’ reading, however, begins from the position of she who has suffered domination, and thus suggests that becoming may need to pass through a becoming “masculine,” which is to say, a becoming dominant.

The logic of reversal, however, has its dangers. The image of feminine cruelty has often been constructed so as to confirm a masculine position of power. From a masculine position of dominance, a becoming-woman may repeat the masculine position that is able to affirm itself through a choice to undergo this feminine cruelty. Men may submit to a “feminization,” but so long as they do so by calling an image of Woman to serve his becoming, has he not trivialized the feminine condition? The feminine becoming-man does not necessarily open itself to the same possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari claim there can be no becoming man because man is the philosophical position of being that insists on non-transformation through recourse to the being of its static form. By “becoming” the dominant figure of being, women may facilitate a masculine becoming. However, such reversal does not necessarily free women from the discursive economy that has traditionally constructed them as victims.

Deleuze’s discussion of the women of Masoch in *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty* presents the danger of the ostensible role reversal in a contractual agreement that maintains the basic master/slave dialectic. Representations of feminine cruelty can be elevated and the woman torturer revered, but this may be but one more repressive image, contracted to titillate a

masculine imagination without presenting any real possibilities for feminine becoming.

Deleuze writes:

What characterizes masochism and its theatricality is a peculiar form of cruelty in the woman torturer: the cruelty of the Ideal, the specific freezing point, the point at which idealism is realized. (Deleuze, 1989, 55)

In the writings of Masoch, women take on the identity master. They distribute violent blows and humiliate their men, who prostrate themselves before these women. But this ideal is always a position she has taken on by contract, and often out of love for her "slave" who has willed her into this role. This is clearly not the sort of domination that Cixous has in mind for feminine becoming. But where in lies the difference? How can she be sure that her love driven dominance will not make her into a chilly despot, alienated from her flows of desire, donning the disguises of masculine ideals?

Cixous' famous essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa" is instructive in this respect. Here the gaze acts as the weapon of cruelty. Medusa embodies a looming threat of the theatre of cruelty. She displays that which happens when the image gazes back. Whereas many of the other hybrid beasts force transformation, the Medusa petrifies, turning those who meet her gaze to stone. Her gaze prevents the mobility that the heroic masculine figure has come to expect as master of his fate. She offers him the destiny to which, gripped by fear, he clings: namely to maintain his form forever, though at the expense of his life. The warrior who approaches this demonic snake-woman hybrid, (typically with the intent of slaying her), risks in the process, falling victim to his own brand of cruelty, namely, to his Platonic impulse for preservation which, if he fails, will lead to his demise through a poetic magnification of his impulse. Cixous mocks the rigidity of the masculine penetrating phallus. She correlates it with an arousal-terror response to the fluidity of feminine *jouissance*, writing, "[men] need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that give them a hard-on!" (134). The Medusa's cruelty is

only that she returns the masculine gaze and dares to enjoy it, but this is enough to freeze the Platonic man in his place. She is then neutralized once she is beheaded, deprived of her own mobility and used as an instrument of cruelty on behalf of her beheader. Cixous' Medusa is one who laughs, who expresses her desire and displays her joy publicly; a performative writer or a theatrical being, but one who is her own bodies' author. Her "cruelty" is affirmative, never deadly, and is not designed to freeze in place. Contrary to the masculine projected fear, it is merely the pursuit of her desire, her gaze, which is neither there to inhibit or encourage the pursuits of he on whom she gazes. Cixous' Medusa expresses the need to begin this project by rereading hitherto feared images of femininity in an affirmative light.

Cixous rewrites the canon, positing positive *feminine identities*. In actively repeating and embodying the pulsations of real women's bodies, she is able to override the flat images of the feminine that set abstract boundaries on corporeal possibilities. This is why *theatre* becomes an important medium of feminist activism for Cixous. In her manifesto on feminist theatre, "Aller à la mer," Cixous explains the legacy of the feminine body in the theatre and the necessity of resuscitating this body as a political gesture of change. The subordinate role of women in the cultural media is due, she claims, to a silencing of real women's bodies and it is thus through providing mediums for these bodies to speak that the situation can be changed:

This "Vieux Jeu" (Old Hat/ Old Game) still involves playing the Role, maintaining the *ancien régime* of performance and mirror-gazing; it encourages the double perversion of voyeurism and exhibitionism, and division of labour and of "jouissance" (pleasure) (who is "in" the theatre, who works, who is exploited by whom?), and it reinforces the opposition between the real and the imaginary which benefits those in whose interests the pretence exists...

If I go to the theatre now, it must be a political gesture, with a view to changing, with the help of other women, its means of production and expression. It is high time that women gave back to the theatre its fortunate position, its

raison d'être and what makes it different – the fact that there it is possible to get across the living, breathing, speaking body, whereas the cinema screens us from reality by foisting mere images upon us. (1984, 547)

This call to bring the immediate living gestures of the theatre to bare against the foisting of thought images recalls what we have been calling the “becoming-woman” of Deleuze’s thought. These images and the delineation of roles to be played, sets the ground for the originary violence that Cixous points out has traditionally oriented against women and minorities. In the schematization of Deleuze and Guattari, the cruelty associated with becoming-woman, and becoming generally, acts as a second order cruelty aimed at this form of originary violence. However, while for Deleuze this becoming-woman is an incorporeal process, using contact with another body as the basis of a transformation that ultimately transcends the subject, for Cixous the body acts as the locus of action. What goes on in the *particular* body of a woman is of the utmost importance in allowing her to manifest her possibilities, “the scene takes place where a woman’s life takes place, where life story is decided: inside her body, beginning with her blood.” (1984, 547) This insistence on the body as the site of expression is what Cixous ultimately means by feminine becoming. The body, for Cixous, always transcends the univocity of an essentialized image of the self. Her feminist theatre is thus one that realizes the multiplicity of corporeal possibilities, moving beyond what Deleuze called the “dogmatic image of thought.” Cixous explains:

all it requires is one woman who stays beyond the bounds of prohibition, experiencing herself as many, the totality of those she has been, could have been or wants to be, moving ever more slowly, more quickly than herself, anticipating herself. (1984, 548)

As we saw in their analysis of Kleist’s *Penthesilea*, this understanding of metamorphosis as the adaptation of various speeds and slownesses is repeated by Deleuze and Guattari, but there is an important difference; namely, the difference made by the singular subject realizing within

herself a multiplicity. *She* will not be fragmented and dominated in a system of becoming, but will be cognizant of her own presence and the possibilities it opens. Cixous' theatre is thus *not* one that flows from a Body Without Organs, but rather searches after the multiple options the organs provide. She does not turn from the Mother, but searches after the possibilities the mother's body offers. This is why Cixous titles her manifesto with a word play, "Aller à la mer," that can be at once understood as "Go(ing) to the Seaside," or "Go(ing) to the Mother." Her image, a feminine theatre and feminine writing (*écriture féminine*), is one that issues as bodily fluid, its expression never predetermined, and yet always emerging from the corporeal conditions of an agent, like the creatures from the sea, the child from its mother. Every "birth" is its own, but it does not give birth abstractly to itself. Rather it emerges *from* an other and finds its love and support from this other.

This vision of corporeal becoming has the advantage of anchoring desire in a ground the agent can recognize as her own, without insisting on a stable, central or essential self to which these desires "belong." The disadvantage, however, is that it would seem to limit becomings *to* the possibilities delineated by bodily organs. And how, after all, do we know what the body is saying? In much the same way that Deleuze uses an Artaudian schizophrenic theatre as a means of breaking out of the regulations of image governed thought, hysteria is used by Cixous as a theatrical means of feminine protest. The techniques, or symptoms, of their respective theatres bear a strong resemblance to one another. Both are willing to employ violence as a means of confronting and destabilizing the "judgement of god," enlisting bodily expressions that defy ordering within the "rational" system of patriarchal Western institutions and the primary violence it levies as punishments to transgressors. Both employ contradiction, fragmentation, repetition, and sonorous outbursts in order to break apart arrangements. Internal and external binaries in both cases are imploded and in both cases the agent engages in a constant metamorphosis of role-play that allows them to transcend any role that might be imposed. Deleuze explains that the schizophrenic "plays roles that plays other roles." Cixous' hysteric

does likewise, however, for her this role-play never leaves the fluid site of the body. Cixous explores this in her play on Freud's famous hysteria case, *Portrait of Dora*.

The play displays Dora's circulation between the men; father, friend and therapist, each of whom inscribe *their* desires onto her, exchanging roles amongst themselves and imposing narratives on top of Dora's own gestures and expressions. Dora, meanwhile searches for the key to her misery, to unlocking the expression. For Cixous, it is the multiplicity of sounds that cannot be ignored and thus has the power to shift arrangements. Indeed multiplicity is the "key" for Cixous to unraveling the myths that bind. This multiplicity of bodily expression is located in the figure of the symbolic mother, Mrs. K., who, speaking in part for the Sistine Madonna, tells Dora, "there's more than one way. The body, you'll find out, has infinite resources." (41) These are continually discovered in the play through a series of role-playing, where Dora takes on, and subverts, the roles and explanatory modes of those who seek to explain her away. If the mother figure is read as a metaphor for theatre itself, we can understand it/her as giving others their voice in so far as she permits them to flow out multiply. In so far as the theatre is seen as the mother with her flowing bodily fluids, the role must be understood as active and unwilling to be shut-up by a singular myth or desire. If the idea of a unified self is effaced or sacrificed, it is only so that a multiplicity of desires can flow through the very body of the subject.

The impulse to return to the "maternal" body, in order to access our true desires has, however, been approached with some suspicion by many feminists. While applauding the spirit of feminine protest expressed by Cixous' "hysterical" theatre, Gabrielle Danes argues that Cixous' strategy of returning to the (fluid, corporeal) Mother risks re-inscribing old binaries and locking women once again in their traditional role as nurturing ground for the growth of *others*:

Cixous's omniscient Mother tends to reduce all women to Woman, a sort of maternal goddess from the perspective of the desiring child who has no needs or desires of her own (exactly as in Freud's desiring little boy's model), a model which ignores, even denies, any real differences among women. In Cixous's

rhapsody, Woman is equated with milk, menstrual blood, reproduction, nurture; that is to say, woman = (M)other = nurture = womb = cave = earth = non-male/Other. Although to rhapsodize about the virile beauty of this phantasy Woman might seem to provide a sort of defense against the (phallogentric) privileging of male over female, it actually serves to perpetuate those binary oppositions which Cixous would seek to overthrow. (2001, 245)

While this criticism strikes me as a little heavy handed, there is a sense in which the anchoring of the subject in corporeal desire may limit the possibilities women have available. Despite Cixous' frequent references to the maternal and the feminine to describe her system, she should not be read as re-instituting a naturalized gender divide. In *Sortie*, Cixous celebrates Jean Genet as one of her main examples of *écriture féminine*, and, as we have already seen, she flags Kleist as one who also writes the metamorphosis that provides the sort of possibilities for feminine becoming of interest to Cixous. In *Portrait of Dora*, the mother figure is not Dora's biological mother, and it becomes clear that what Cixous is after is not a return to an essential biological figure of a corporeal Woman, but rather the possibilities that corporeal bodies offer. The gendering refers then to the position that corporeality has hitherto been given within traditional thought binaries and the ways in which this binary has historically functioned to: (1) conflate Women with physical matter and (2) declare that Woman (qua physical matter) needs to be controlled by Man (qua mind). In declaring the body capable of thinking and speaking she resuscitates the "feminine," but not at all by declaring all women *the same*. Where, Danes' argument does strike a chord however, it that it is only *corporeal* differences among and between women (and persons, and beings generally) that can be accounted for by Cixous' feminine hysterical theatre. This means that the cultural conditions of women's differences, and the non-corporeal horizon of possibilities they might wish to pursue, would seem to be inaccessible by the terms of this feminine corporeal expression. If desire is that which arises from the bodily condition of an agent, can desire be produced that cannot be located in the

body? Or, are we limiting becoming to the possibilities (multiple as they may be) offered and sketched by the organs (breasts, womb, etc.)? Do we need, in other words to be able to designate and construct the site of desire in the body before we can take seriously the desires produced?

In his short review of Cixous' *Neutre* Deleuze focuses on the creation of possibilities, of mixtures, of fluidity in which Cixous engages. This engagement moves beyond a concern with corporeal essences and gendered divisions, into a space of experimentation that, at least in Deleuze's reading, appears *if nothing else* to embrace difference through its continual re-invention:

Cixous is inventing other speeds, sometimes crazy speeds, in relation to the contemporary. *Neutre* never tires of saying it: mix colors in such a way that through movement they produce unknown shades and hues. Writing per second, per tenth of a second... (Deleuze, 2004, 230-1)

For Deleuze, Cixous' strategy proceeds by way of a continual experimentation with the possibilities provided by images, colours, vibrations, providing a means of approaching phenomenon in terms of the routes it can provide; the possibilities for metamorphosis. Wherein lies the gap then between Cixous' "hysterical" theatre, and the speeds and slownesses that make up the transformational "becoming-woman" of Deleuze and Guattari? Not only does Cixous move beyond the category of "woman" in her exploration of corporeal multiplicity, she does so by means of a becoming through writing and through reading, in short through interactions which, within the Deleuzian lexicon, factor as *incorporeal* events. Cixous' approach grounds these experiences in the bodies engaged, thereby protecting women from the "body-snatching" that fragments women's forces, sending their bodies circulating among men. But by what standard can this body function as ground? How does the body of an agent ground desire without already presuming the borders of what this body *is*? As Claire Colebrook puts it, "any description of the body *as cause* is already within the difference and distribution of existence

itself.” (Colebrook, 2000, 41) Cixous, on the one hand, seems to want to do away with causal narratives. And yet, in grounding desire in the body she would seem to either be granting of causal sovereignty to the body (the body as *de facto* producer of its own system of meaning), or else the importation at any moment, of a system that can grant meaning(s) to the body-as-ground. To listen to the body would seem to make sense only if bodies have a way of communicating *with* one another, even if this *way* always defies codification.

Like Deleuze’s schizophrenic theatre of cruelty, the movements of Cixous’ theatre are propelled by serial repetition rather than by an attempt at representation. In her *Portrait of Dora*, characters repeat the lines and actions of other characters, playing “their” role, but always in such a way that the singularity of their own expression overrides and subverts the set role. Dora repeats and subverts Freud’s role as meaning-maker, Freud plays and subverts the role of father, Mrs. K plays at being a mother, but only symbolically and not to her “own” children... and so the merry-go-round continues. Here we are shown the instability of “character,” where the only apparent constant is the physical presence of certain recognizable bodies. Nor, does the play posit *itself* as a true representation of a state of affairs. The play mimics the structure of the psychoanalytic session, destabilizing any privileged position the “real” session might have in terms of knowing and curing the patient. It fits itself into the classic two hour time block. It places before us all the key players referenced by Freud’s famous account of the case of Dora, but the lines are a jumble, the roles radically called into question and the structure designed specifically to unravel itself. Who are the patients? And who the therapists? And how does corporeal desire in all this function to direct the movements of expression so as to ultimately prevent the “body-snatching” that threatens to silence the desires of women in the name of a general becoming that continues to allow some to dominate others? In other words, how does this answer the concerns that seemed to initially motivate the development of “feminine” expression as grounded in the body?

Cixous' play mimics at once the symptoms of the hysteric – it is fragmented, functions by repetitions that destabilize meaning, and leaves the audience with no sense of a linear narrative – and the “cure” of the psychoanalyst. However, it is difficult to see how this play enacts the expressions of feminine corporeal desire. Unless we are to take on faith that it is the expression Cixous' own bodily desire. The ways in which it engages with a repetitive structure, most notably that of Freud, but also, to the structures of modern drama that she continues to draw upon, if only to subvert it somewhat (there is still, nevertheless, a recognizable script, the presumption of an audience/performer divide, the enlisting of actors to embody her script for her, etc.) still need to be explained, and it would seem that an adequate explanation must in these cases go beyond recourse to bodily desire. In so far as the theatrical form she uses speaks not ultimately through her *own* body but through those of others, the model is further complicated.

For Cixous, part of the appeal of the theatre is precisely that by its very structure it gives voice to the other; the other that it repeats, yes, but more specifically the other bodies of actors. The body of the agent continues to be celebrated and the theatre celebrates it all the more effectively in so far as it allows multiple agents to speak at once, making it the paradigmatic cultural medium for the celebration of a community founded on multiplicity and difference. True as this might be, there are limitations to the multiplicity it is able to sincerely express, for if in the theatre multiple bodies are expressing their desire, they are not all doing it in the same way. Roles are prescribed (even if there is some room for play) and the division of labour is not insignificant. The differences in expressive modes are part of what allows each to make their difference truly different. When actors agree to take on a role in a scripted play, do they not, at least in some sense, need to begin with this script, even if in embodying this script they make use of their own (bodily) desire? Of course their own desires may guide them to the role, but these desires are already abstracted from the body of the play in so far as it is the corporeal present that is at stake. The transformation would seem to lie in the movement

between the body of the actor and that of the playwright (among other players) and via the body of the script. And this latter, which is of the utmost importance, finds its force as a mediating body that facilitates metamorphosis, *not* from its corporeal existence (it does not even need to be penned onto a piece of paper), but rather from its *incorporeal* or *virtual* relations. We could, of course, look for these relations in the brain, via memory, but then we are already relocating action in the brain/mind/conscience and away from the sensible, extended body in Cixous' sense.

While the play itself may be embodied, and its body/structure may speak for itself (the "medium is the message"), it seems nonetheless that it carries and transforms meaning at points of contact which are never, strictly speaking, corporeal. To speak of cultural expression as the emissions of bodily organs is to have always already predetermined the borders of these organs. The hesitation we saw earlier in Danes critique, regarding the tendency of corporeal accounts of feminine expression referred to the predetermination of bodily organs and the reduction of possibilities for expression to the organs a person is said to have or even to *be*. These, as Danes suggests, result in beautiful, but ultimately limiting metaphors according to which transformation might take place (writing as breast milk, menstrual fluid, etc.) Cixous' approach gives women (and men) back their bodies and offers some indication of how they might speak, but does she do so only to imprison the agent in their organs as they have been already determined and metaphorized? Moreover, for all the concerns it expresses of "giving voice" to the other, it is not clear that her hysterical theatre ultimately succeeds in this endeavor.

Allowing the bodies of others to speak through her texts seems rather to be tantamount to the subordination of others bodies to the (virtual) desires expressed by *her* script. In evading discussion of the importance of the *incorporeal* in metamorphosis, couching virtual bodies in corporeal terminology, it seems Cixous unwittingly runs the risk of repeating the theft of which she accuses traditional masculinist theatre, even if she does so in the name *of* the Other.

If, however, metamorphosis takes place through incorporeal, rather than corporeal events, how *are* we to prevent the systematic fragmentation of some bodies in the service of the empowered metamorphosis of other (dominant) bodies? If identities move about in a flux how can the differences in position and desire be taken into account without making of these differences a corporeal prison? It seems we have thus arrived back at the incorporeal “schizonomadic” theatre of Deleuze, whereby roles are played by other roles; delving into the depths of bodies but enacting metamorphosis in a virtual space, enacting the incorporeal arrangements and becomings of those temporary home-bodies traversed. The becomings then, despite their corporeality are incorporeal in as much as they traverse the incorporeal possibilities made available, *not* through corporeal mimesis but through understanding and repeating the metamorphic potentialities presented; the very principles of movement that are found in the “homes” past through. It is not, then, a question of plotting the corporeal *against* the incorporeal, but nor can it be a matter of understanding the mechanics of bodies. What a body can *do* always exceeds itself, and exceeds the terms the body can currently define. This is why Cixous’ becomings always engage in cultural texts. However, As Colebrook writes, “if the body is never at one with its effects, if becoming always exceeds any grounding being, then we also need to rethink an ethics of incorporeality” (2000, 42). This ethics, she explains, will emerge through our attempts, not to understand the incorporeal, or the corporeal situation of becoming but through our attempts to navigate the gaps.

The ethics of Cixous’ theatre is the ethics of bodies. She encourages the bodily expression and the use of bodily impulses to break out of predetermined roles and narratives. The presence of previously silenced bodies and bodily impulses expands the cultural possibilities, but these possibilities must ultimately be understood as the incorporeal possibilities of becoming, expanding the material possibilities of embodied desire. Whereas the feminine that Cixous refers to is the corporeal mode of production, she offers no incorporeal understanding of femininity or sexual difference that may serve as a means of understanding

the condition of women. This has the advantage of not grouping women together under an abstract banner that can never incorporate all their differences, but it thrusts the burden of protecting women's rights and opportunities onto an understanding of their organs.

Cixous is not ultimately a theorist of sexual difference, but rather of the body. She has no incorporeal conception of Woman as such. While, on the one hand this frees us from subordination to ideals of Woman, it is difficult to find within her work an axis for addressing the situations of women and the ways in which they can resist domination and the silencing under the banner of a generalized consumerism. Moreover, in turning to the body as a site of transformation, the burden of identity construction would seem to be merely deferred to the ways in which the *organs* have been constructed, running the risk of naturalizing and thus limiting sites of desiring-production. We will thus now turn to the consideration of sexual difference as a horizon of becoming that might protect the demands of women, while avoiding virtual imprisonment within naturalized organic limits.

sexually differentiated nomadism: virtually ha(l)ving sex

In her *Nomadic Subjects* Rosi Braidotti combines the nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari with the philosophy of "becoming woman" developed by Luce Irigaray. For Irigaray, "Woman" provides a horizon of becoming, allowing real women a way of developing and transforming themselves through images that are able to speak to their conditions. Irigaray explains this becoming not in terms of either corporeal or incorporeal becoming, but rather with reference to what she calls the "sensible transcendental," a transcendentalism that, like that of Cixous, is grounded in the sensible. However, rather than necessarily speaking *from* within the body. She uses the sensible as that which inspires the expansive images of femininity, thus broadening the possible horizon that women have available to them for a sex-specific becoming. Braidotti calls this the "virtual feminine," since the image of femininity that is drawn up is viewed as an artifact of the cultural imaginary, though it is no less powerful for its imaginary quality.

Irigaray's feminine sets about creating horizons for women related to their own morphology and cultural condition. However, in propping up such virtual feminine images as a matrix of alliance among women, she often runs the risk of effacing the differences among and between women. In order to guard against the construction of a normative feminine horizon, Braidotti draws on a strategy of Deleuzian nomadism. Employing the strategy of a schizo-nomadic theatre, Braidotti advocates an understanding of feminine becoming that moves and jumps from one "home" to another, moving through racial, class and geographical categories. She also encourages non-human, hybrid metamorphoses, thus freeing the subject from a naturalized obsession with Humanism and its correlated normative assumptions. Unlike that of Deleuze, Braidotti's subject always travels as a sexed being, such that Becoming-woman is not viewed as a stage (one becoming among many) but rather as an on-going process that intermingles with various other metamorphoses.

The impulse for developing nomadic subjects along the axis of sexual difference as "female feminist subjects" follows Irigaray's claim that women have been the excluded in dominant discourse as the "other" of man. In keeping with the Lacanian tradition, Man is understood as he who wields the signifying phallus. In so far as language is that through which desires are codified and communicated, the inability of dominant discourse to (re)present women as extant desiring subjects poses a serious threat to the ability of women to realize their desires in the world. While women may be more or less free to deploy the language of the dominant discourse, Irigaray maintains that the appropriation of this discourse is necessarily insufficient. Through the performance of this "masculine" discourse, male supremacy is reinforced in as much as such an appropriation retains the masculine as the model that it strives to replicate. Through the acceptance and replications of this discourse and the values it encodes, women are condemned to representing themselves as poor copies of men.

Among a series of troubling quotes from the works of Plato on the subject of women, Irigaray offers an example of an early attempt at reducing sexual difference to a single (masculine) axis in his

Republic, thereby revealing the prejudices at work in simplistic models of “equal opportunity.” Section 456b reads: “all the pursuits of men can naturally be assigned to women also, but in all of them a woman is weaker than a man.” (quoted in 1985a: 158) What troubles Irigaray in this model is not so much the suggestion that woman can perform the various needed social duties only at a level inferior to that of men, but more the suggestion within this model of the *Republic* that “[woman] will only participate insofar as she is the *same* as a man” (1985a: 157). Irigaray, on the contrary, is committed to an understanding of women as having their own distinct desires and social roles as derivative of these desires. Irigaray goes so far as to suggest that, were women’s desires truly embraced and made manifest, they could offer the key to solving many of the most serious global problems from war to pollution, for it is the repression of the “feminine” and its associated values of care and sensitivity, beginning at the most immediate corporeal and interpersonal levels, that has allowed a disharmonious way of life to flourish. If the only currently available discourse is understood to be specifically masculine, and, as such, necessarily inadequate to express women’s desires and strengths, a problem emerges as to how women *are* to begin to express their desires. It is this problem that forms the starting point for Butler’s critique of Irigaray’s system. As Butler asks, “is specifically female pleasure “outside” of culture as its prehistory or its utopian future? If so, what use is such a notion for negotiating the contemporary struggle of sexuality within the terms of its construction?”(1999: 40) In other words, how, through a “playful repetition” of Western discourse, can women begin to articulate desires that, according to Irigaray, are not accessible through this discourse?

In an attempt to answer this question, an early model of the “virtual” or “divine” feminine becomes handy for Irigaray. In her analysis of Plato’s myth of the cave, Irigaray introduces the figure of Echo as the mythological prototype of the female who “dies for the love of Narcissus” (1985a, 257). Trapped within a system of representation that silences some so that the voice of others can be heard and repeated, Irigaray insists that, “even her voice is taken away.”(1985a, 263) However, if we are to take Echo as an allegory for the contemporary condition of women’s desire, then she has not really “died,” but has rather gone deep into hiding. She represents, for us a sublimated demi-god(dess), whose divinity must be recovered by

disenfranchised woman seeking to find ways to speak up and be heard in a male-dominated society. While “even her voice” may have been “taken away,” for Irigaray it seems she must retain the possibility of reclaiming it, albeit with great difficulty. According to the familiar myth of Echo and Narcissus as imagined in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Echo is a female elf able to express her desire only through repeating the words of others. When she falls in love with the male Narcissus, she can thus express to him her desire only through the selective repetition of his speech. This repetition seems to be of interest to him. However, once she presents herself to him in the open, he rejects her violently. Ashamed, Echo goes into hiding in a cave, never to be seen again, while Narcissus ends up drowning for the love of his own image as reflected to him on the surface of the water. Upon the death of Narcissus, Echo, angry and hurt as she is, repeats his dying words as a lament. It is at this point that we can begin to understand her repetition of the dead/dying man as the beginning of her own speech. Backtracking from this moment to the moment at which Echo was robbed of her powers to speak on her own, we can begin to understand Irigaray’s strategy for regaining the all but lost presence of women’s desire.

The first step in Echo’s return is the realization that, even condemned to repetition, her desires can still be expressed, if only in a highly limited fashion. If (masculine) Philosophy (qua metaphysics) is now drowning itself, having cut itself off its various opportunities for desiring-production and realized its inability to appreciate the other through its representational abstractions, Echo’s lament and continued desire for the self-affirmation of Narcissus can be heard in Irigaray’s retelling of this masculine philosophical tradition. Her repetition in the wake of Narcissus’s discourse is what allows her to begin to express her own meaning. In Irigaray, this is followed back in time through the philosophical tradition and the discourses it produces to the moment of “her” rejection by the Narcissistic male philosopher which corresponds to the disappearance of her corporeal existence, and especially her corporeal (qua sexual) desire, from their discourses. At the moment in which Narcissus finally drowns himself in his own image, completely consuming his own existence, corporeal and otherwise, Echo no longer has any choice but to reconstruct the language on her own terms, even if this begins in inarticulate bodily and sonorous expressions of

lamentation. From the site of her rediscovered body, her desires can then be formulated on their own terms. Irigaray writes, "I think the place where [feminine syntax] could best be deciphered is in the gestural code of women's bodies" (1985b, 134). The question is how can we separate "genuine" bodily expression of feminine desire from expressions that are merely reenactments of expectations men have projected onto women?

If we trace the story of Echo to the moment she loses her "freedom" of speech we find that the situation is not as simple as we might have hoped. In Ovid's version of the myth, Echo is condemned to repetition only after her "babbling" served to stall Juno, wife of the ruling male god Jupiter, thus allowing Jupiter the opportunity to satisfy his own promiscuous sexual desires. Echo's "free" speech can thus already be understood as containing female mobility, thereby allowing male desire to triumph, which is to say that, her babbling may already be complicit in the "feminine masquerade." Irigaray admits that, "since [women's] gestures are often paralyzed, or part of the masquerade, in effect, they are often difficult to 'read' (1985b, 134). Nevertheless, she continues to insist that there is still a way out from this masquerade, a "beyond" that begins to show itself, "in suffering, but also in women's laughter. And again: in what they 'dare' - do or say - when they are among themselves" (134) - and presumably, when they are not being compelled by a ruling male "god."

In many ways the impulse to generate a language of feminine desire is consistent with the suggestions made by Deleuze and Guattari that to liberate desire we must pass through a "becoming-woman." Such a "becoming-woman" is what allows us to produce "feminine" desires, thus liberating a range of previously inaccessible possibilities. But this begs the question: what *counts* as "feminine" desire? Like Cixous, Irigaray leads us "into" women's bodies as the key. As we have seen, *how* these bodies and their designating organs are understood is, however, never an entirely corporeal situation. Virtual femininity precedes the bodily experience of "womanliness" much like an Echo of the Narcissistic image of thought. According to Irigaray, it is only through such mimicry that that we are able to produce our own desires. Irigaray's "virtual feminine" is intended to pass through women's bodies, where

“women” are understood in the first instance as exactly that which has traditionally been designated as such. In this way, Irigaray’s process can be likened to an inhabitation of the Deleuzian ground of memory. This memory itself becomes the active agent of metamorphosis. From the present habits that make up the individual “woman,” we delve into the memories we have at our disposal of what women “are.” Inhabiting these memories, we identify ourselves as women and act on the desires we find there. This inevitably lead us into an always as of yet indeterminate future of possible desiring-productions. However, rather than allowing women’s femininity to get effaced in the possible futures that open up, Irigaray maintains that all of a woman’s transformations are an exploration and transformation of her possibilities *as* a woman. It is through creating possibilities for women as complex agents of transformation that the horizon of possibilities for women will expand, such that it will no longer strike women as necessary to reject their “femininity” in order to engage in other possible becomings. As the argument goes, this feminine platform is what gives women a ground from which to advocate for structural changes that might facilitate their own further becomings, *given* that they are sexed agents with distinct conditions. This does not lock women in an essential nature, but rather takes into consideration the multiplicity of elements and experience that make-up the varied conditions of women. Nevertheless, the insistence on creating specifically feminine horizons of experience that repeat a division in the sexes risks propping-up new normative understandings of womanhood.

In *This Sex Which Is Not One*, the “sameness” of women’s bodies is highlighted in order to provide the ground for a new language that can offer women a chance to express their bodily desires where the “old” “phallogentric” language failed. To the extent that recognition of linguistic symbols requires some degree of generality or uniformity, words that might be used in multiple contexts to give the would-be speakers an opportunity to “learn” the language, this would seem to be somewhat unavoidable. Irigaray is concerned that the highlighting of multiplicity amongst women is used to efface differences in the realm of sex and sexual desires.

In a double entendre that connotes at once the division of the lips of the vulva by the penetrating phallic organ the division of women on the basis of racial divisions, Irigaray writes, "you come back, divided: 'we' are no more. You are split into red and white, black and white: how can we find each other again?" (1985b, 211).

In her attempt to build solidarity, the differences among "women" are intentionally minimized. As a result, she runs the risk of discounting or otherwise passing over the priorities and experiences of those for whom it may not ring true to identify as "a woman" first and foremost. To the extent that they do identify "as women," they may find that the virtual women created, ostensibly for the benefit of all, fail to address their own struggles and desires.

Braidotti's solution has been to "nomadize" her conception of the subject, while retaining a sexual division:

Postmodern nomadic feminism argues that you do not have to be settled in a substantive vision of the subject in order to be political, or to make willful choices or critical decisions.

Nomadic feminism goes even one step further and argues that political agency has to do with the capacity to expose the illusion of ontological foundations.

(Braidotti, 1994, 34-5)

Feminist nomads are able to move about across various homes and identities, but that they do so as a sexed agent. It is not necessary to set boundaries on what it means to be a woman, nor is it inherently problematic that some of the identities traversed may contain within them contradictory terms. It is permissible for the nomad to leap and pirouette, to jump across large distances of cyber space and transform oneself into tiny particles in order to make a journey: there are always many ways to travel. It therefore becomes possible to hybridize and traverse myriad axes of experience, without having to neglect realms of experience or dimensions of one's "territories." As Braidotti puts it, "the nomad has a sharpened sense of territory but no possessiveness about it" (36).

In *Metamorphosis*, Braidotti suggests a celebration of hybridity that repeats the demonology recommended by Deleuze; a radical process of metamorphosis that passes through multiple “memories.” Many of these are non-human, passing through various speeds and slowness, in a manner that can celebrate the singularity of a gesture of becoming that challenges the boundaries of the ideals that had previously formed normative ideals of the Good and Beautiful life. Despite her celebration of hybridity, however, Braidotti is leery of sexual hybridization that effaces the binary category of sexual difference, presenting trans-gendered and androgynous possibilities for becoming. The notion that sex can be hybridized, she claims, trivializes the conditions and differences actually experienced by women, suggesting that these are categories that can be merely shrugged off. Or alternatively, that they can be reduced to powerful metaphors through which dominant cultural anxieties and neurosis can be expressed. She cites, for example, the imagery of male invagination in *Video Drone*, whereby a male character becomes impregnated by his television set with disastrous outcomes, to illustrate the ways in which gender hybridity tend to repeat sexist fears of “feminization.” Through such trans-gendered imagery, she suggests that damaging stereotypes are often repeated, exploiting the conditions of women in a manner that does not necessarily do anything to advance the concerns of those who must actually deal with the conditions metaphorized. However, the main danger of this trend, as she presents, seems to be strategic: it diverts attention away from the lived conditions of women, deterritorializing their situation, as though handing over fragments of women’s experience to be used in the production of dominant cultural narratives were enough to lead women out of a position of subordination. Braidotti’s solution is mainly to encourage women and other minorities to take up the means of cultural production in order to express their desires, thus providing tools for transformation and metamorphosis that issue from their specific conditions. But this seems to beg the question: who counts as a woman anyway?

Divine difference(s): is sex dragging (behind)?

As a virtual concept, Braidotti's "woman" need not be strictly defined, Her boundaries need not be set and yet in her awareness of territory, the nomad empowers herself by naming herself according to conditions she experiences alongside others. She may name herself according to many other variables as well: race, class, religion, etc. Some of these she seems to be able to choose. None are merely a matter of arbitrary selection at her whim. But despite the critique of the privileged position Deleuze assigns to "Becoming-Woman," sexual difference acts for Braidotti as a matrix of difference that, following Irigaray, continues to overpower all other differences. For Braidotti, it seems we can move between our various territorial positions, but only *through* those memories to which we have some kind of entitlement. While nearly every other memorial site allows for some fluidity and hybridity, sexual difference strikes Braidotti as so pervasive that we can not conceive of a subject without considering her as "man" or "woman." However, it is not clear that the pervasiveness of this division is not itself a testament to the very position it occupies within the legacy of Western thought. According to Judith Butler, that persons are so violently coerced into identifying themselves according to a sexual division, even against the urge to do away with any stable ground that would anchor and legitimate this division, is itself a testament to prevailing regimes of power that continue to structure and limit our thinking. While the highlighting of "sameness" among women has often been employed as a strategy for building solidarity, for Butler such attempts threaten to exclude women who fail to identify with the "feminine" economy of desire over and against the supposedly "phallogentric" symbolic order. As she writes, "women who fail either to recognize that sexuality as their own or understand their sexuality as partially constructed within the terms of the phallic economy are potentially written off within the terms of this theory as 'male-identified' or 'unenlightened'." (1999, 40) Moreover, Butler suggests that such 'feminist' projects of developing a radical alternative cannot help but be constructed by the very discourse from which they are trying to escape:

If sexuality is culturally constructed within existing power relations, then the postulation of a normative sexuality that is 'before', 'outside', or 'beyond' power is a cultural impossibility and a politically impractical dream, one that postpones the

concrete and contemporary task of rethinking subversive possibilities for sexuality and identity within the terms of power itself. (1999, 40)

Irigaray's insistence on escaping existing power relations would seem to either leave us bereft of signs, or to re-inscribe a totalizing discourse based on the presumption of a universal female body. In either case, change becomes impossible since there is no way to begin to speak outside of discourse. As we saw in the retelling of the myth of Echo and Narcissus, it is nearly impossible to distinguish "genuine" female expression from the babble of its betrayal as compelled by a male "god" and His own discourse of power. Moreover, as Butler argues, the presumption of this universal female body as the site for the emergence of desire threatens to silence the desires of actual individual women in the name of providing a language for the emancipation of their specifically "feminine" desire. Rather than offering specific alternatives, Butler recommends working within the existing economy of signification in order to destabilize and subvert the existing assumptions regarding the meanings of these signs. The main example of such subversion for Butler is drag performance. Three dimensions come into play here that, in contrast to Irigaray's understanding, for Butler ought not to be presumed to have an inherent connection:

We are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of these are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. (1999, 175)

Here we can hear echoes of the dimensions expressed by Irigaray in her "feminine masquerade," desire and the sexuate body. The relationship between these dimensions, however, has clearly shifted. With Irigaray the masquerade is the performance of an identity distinct from true identity as linked with potentially unexpressed and even presently inexpressible desires which are themselves grounded in the sexuate body of the individual in question. With Butler, however, masquerade becomes a performance that calls into question the possibility of any further or ultimate truths lurking behind the mask. While a

dissonance between performance (qua masquerade) and the anatomical (qua sexuate) body and its desires is made explicit in the writings of Irigaray to which Butler is responding in *Gender Trouble*, Irigaray seeks to strengthen the connection between the latter two dimensions in order to overtake the former masquerade performance. With Butler, by contrast, subversive performance is designed to *destabilize* the relationship between the latter two dimensions. Rather than grounding desire in the anatomical body, it is instead understood to be constructed by the performance itself. Gender, understood to denote sexual identity (as opposed to a biological state), thus becomes a category constantly in flux, discursively constructed by the gestures of the performer.

Braidotti's encouraging of hybrid identities provides a vehicle by which agents can explore the horizons of their *various* minoritarian becoming, thus engaging in transformation *from* where they *are*. It seems, however, that she is reluctant to permit the agent to transcend where they "are," particularly where the identifications strike her as necessary for a certain vision of political reform. Her "outside," alternative, or "marginal" expressions thus threaten to lock the most marginal amongst them in identities that forever betray their desires. With Braidotti we are able to take seriously the desires of those "outside" the universalizing categories of womanness that "white middle class feminists" had previously been accused of imposing; we are now given a strategy by which women can also take seriously their particular national, racial and economic setting (among other dimensions). However, these positions *qua* positions, raise a number of questions: how "black" does one need to be to be "black"? What equations does one need to calculate before one receives one's Indian status card, or a yellow star on one's jacket?

Braidotti is content to allow these positions to be fluid, provided that the identities themselves are not eroded, particularly on the question of sex. This strikes me as potentially problematic for several reasons. On questions of race and ethnicity, positions are nearly always hybridized, not only in terms of what it *means* to be a given ethnicity, but also in being able to locate oneself *within* a single (or even double) ethnicity. On the matter of fluidity between ethnic and national borders Braidotti is unequivocally supportive. However, *sexual difference*

strikes her as too fundamental to give up, stressing the importance of the specific processes women experience and the need to take these seriously. This amounts to a repetition of sexual difference as *the* matrix of difference which, as previously argued, may not in fact ring true to those whose primary struggle has been on the basis of the other affiliations, and the stress placed on other positions occupied. It also enacts a denial of the experiences of those who can not identify themselves with virtual images of *woman* or *man* at all. In this sense, Butler's critique of Irigaray's strategy is equally applicable to Braidotti. Why should persons need to identify with one of two sexes, simply because this is the way experience has carved up by prevailing discourses of power? Butler draws on two main examples. The first is the case of the famous Hermaphrodite Herculine Barbin who eventually suicides, being coerced into adhering to one of two sexes, neither of which provide an adequate site from which she can produce desires in a meaningful way. While this is an extreme example, it is used here to illustrate the fluidity of sexual identity even at the seemingly most basic level.

Butler then uses drag as a model for destabilizing the relationships between sexuate bodies, gender identities and gender performance. Butler is, however, well aware that the performance of drag relies heavily on the repetition of a stereotyped or stabilized relationship between gender identity and gender performance. The title of Butler's first major work of gender theory *Gender Troubles* plays on the title of the campy and subversive John Waters film *Female Troubles*, starring the drag queen Divine. In the case of Divine, a feminine identity can be suggested through a certain stereo-typed bodily performance (gesture, dress, etc.) in order to destabilize the relationship between gender identity and the sexuate body. Divine's character in *Female Trouble* literally becomes a model for a counter-image of beauty and morality that adopts standard notions of beauty and moral conduct only to turn them on their head, thus calling into question the normative assumptions of how an ideal woman should be. Ultimately, this performance appears to be designed more as an attempt to undo the process of modeling as such, rather than as the propping up a viable counter-model. Divine's character's crowning

achievement is a grotesquely spectacular show in which she finishes by shooting at the audience, killing several people. The film ends with her punishment by electrocution; a fate which she insists is the highest honour a person can receive in her line of work, characterized as it is by subversion on a criminal scale. To the extent that Divine is here adopted as a model, the extreme criminality of her behavior indicates that she is adopted as such only provisionally in order to dispense with received naturalized ideals.

The question to be asked at this point is then whether we can in fact afford a strategy of rejection that leaves our only constructive options at the mercy of existing symbolic fragments. Despite her utter subversion of ideals, it is not clear that the drag queen Divine succeeds in subverting the relationship between gender identity and the sexuate body nearly to the extent that Butler suggests it might. Her gender performance includes, among others, the performance of an unwanted pregnancy and subsequent motherhood, mimicking the female body. Ultimately, it is clear that as a film star, Divine's actions are mere performances that nonetheless gesture toward the schism between the sexuate body of the performer and the physiological phenomenon that she is mimicking. In affirming this schism, the film fails to challenge the oppressive material conditions that may contribute to current correlations between bodily circumstances and performances in a way that can be useful to embodied performers. Braidotti's fear is that such performances may even be to the detriment to women's movements, obscuring issues of safe birth control and other issues of "women's" health, trivializing the issues that women tend to face with the convenient dismissal: "there no such thing as Woman anyway," or "really, these aren't *women's* issues, we *all* could face them." Such responses however, strike me as problematic *only* if they serve to trivialize the issues as such. A destabilization of categories of sexual difference would be problematic if it implies the breaking down of an alliance between all those who *do* face obstacles to the production of desire, for which activist majors must be taken. The task ahead is to develop tools for building effective alliances while continuing to celebrate the mobility of desire and the changing nature of the desiring agents.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING ALLIANCES -

(nomadic activism and the carnival corpus)

The year 2005: mobility is all the rage, rage is mobile, and the mobilization of forces under the banner of a shared identity is at once the most frightening form of fascism and the most necessary strategy of resistance in the face of every-growing globalization trends. There are reasons for this rage. There is a use. In the works of Deleuze and Guattari, we have seen how cruelty becomes a principle that cuts across normative categories of thought. It is, in their work, a productive response to the quiet oppression of normative thinking which props up ideals, implicitly devaluing those who can not be defined by such ideals and ultimately restricting the possibilities of all. Rage becomes cruelty and cruelty a strategy of destabilizing the primary violence of prevailing state, or static thought. Ultimately, it is the destabilization of categories *as such* that, from the perspective of the status quo, is perceived as cruelty, since, by definition, introducing new possibilities is threatening to the prevailing order. In the works of Deleuze and Guattari, analyzed in the first half of this thesis, I argued that this cruelty becomes a productive theatre of experimentation. Following the theatrical strategies of Nietzsche and especially of Artaud, I showed how Deleuze and Guattari suggest a way of opening new possibilities by repeating the intensities and flows of others with whom, and with which, they come into contact. Events are repeated, but each repetition is utterly singular, creating an entirely new event.

For Deleuze and Guattari, this process of experimentation begins with an acknowledgment of their present situation; they are caught in late twentieth-century Western culture having inherited a legacy of patriarchal institutions, post-platonic philosophy and a host of categories largely governed by binary thinking. From this perspective, Woman appears as the penultimate Other of binary thought, having come to symbolize all that the platonic rational man defines himself against. She is associated with the body, with passivity and passion, with being unable to regulate herself according to set boundaries thus embodying the principle of metamorphosis,

as well as holding the position of the penultimate object of desire. In order to embrace a fluid process of becoming governed by desire and do away with static, hierarchical binaries, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that every becoming must pass through a becoming-woman. The first half of this thesis showed how the early philosophical work of Deleuze, as well as the later social analysis of Deleuze and Guattari, proceeds by way of such a “becoming-woman,” in order to eventually destabilize the categorical ideal of “woman” as such and flow from one type of becoming into another. I suggested that this strategy is an elaboration of the work of Nietzsche and Artaud, and demonstrate the implications of this strategy by conducting an analysis of some of the performance pieces of Artaud using the tools developed by Deleuze and Guattari. My analysis focuses on the politics of violence at work in these pieces. I argued that this strategy succeeds in opening possibilities that allow us to move beyond the normative ideals that typically organize Western institutions. However, I suggest that it also threatens to erode the fabric of its inspiration by subordinating the intensities and flows of those who have been most marginalized to the desire for liberty and mobility now formulated by the most dominant Westerners within a late capitalist social climate.

Part two of this thesis, *Stage Settings for a Feminist Nomadism*, focused on the utility of the Deleuzian strategy of “becoming-woman” for those persons marginalized as women. I compare the “becoming-woman” advocated by Deleuze and Guattari in their version of the theatre of cruelty to that developed by Cixous and embodied by her “hysterical theatre.” Here Cixous utilizes the corporeal body of the performer as the ground from which desire is produced. In so far as the body remains the locus of desire, and in so far as we pay attention to the involvement of each body, no body’s force would seem vulnerable to being usurped by others. Her “hysterical theatre” is an attempt to develop a cultural mode of expression that celebrates and legitimates indeterminate corporeal expression, without needing to determine meaning within a singular narrative.

The trouble with this approach, however, is that desire is never a purely corporeal phenomenon. Once we begin to take its virtual dimensions into consideration, we are no closer to teasing out the power politics of the movements of desires and their subordination to other desires. I therefore considered Braidotti's adaptation of Deleuzian nomadic philosophy, which retains Deleuze's basic approach to experimentation and becoming but retains the axis of sexual difference in accordance with the feminism of French theorist Luce Irigaray. For Braidotti, "becoming-woman" is not a gateway into a flux of becomings, but rather an ongoing process in which women engage as they go through various other forms of becoming. Braidotti, therefore, focuses on the ways in which sex is constructed alongside other dimensions of becoming within the cultural media (e.g. women engaging in animal transformations, machine transformations, etc.). I am sympathetic to the desire to expand the range of possibilities available to women in a manner that does not force women to renounce their sex. The insistence on making becoming *necessarily* sexed at every instance seems to reduce our possibilities to a sexual binary that may be more a function of the ways in which culture has constructed sex than a natural necessity. Moreover, in allowing nearly every other possible axis of difference to surface in its singular, hybridized form, while rejecting the possibility of hybrid sexuality, sex would seem to be given an inflated importance that may not in fact ring true to the experience of many persons.

In order to call into question sex as an absolute axis of difference, the final section of this paper considered Judith Butler's analysis of hermaphroditism and drag performance. Whereas hermaphroditism calls into question biological dualism, drag performance extends this ambiguity into cultural or virtual horizons. Understanding sex as a performance opens us to the disjunctions between corporeal existence and the typical ways of classifying becoming based on corporeal signs. Drag performance shows us the possibility of transcending predetermined limitations with regard to sexed expression. Nevertheless, to the extent that drag *mimics* ideal images of the "opposite" sex, what we ultimately see is this strategy's own limitations in addressing the lived conditions with which persons must contend as sexed as they go about their

own transformations. I argued that while Divine's drag performance in *Female Troubles* subverts recourse to ideals in conceiving gender, the ways in which issues of feminine reproduction are raised does little to expand the possibilities open to those who find themselves in the situation of an unwanted pregnancy. In fact, Divine's performance as a mother with an unwanted child may ultimately serve to reinforce dualistic thinking with regard to sex.

Butler's subversion of the category of sex through her use of drag performance is divergent from the strategy of becoming-woman employed by Deleuze and Guattari in many ways. Butler's strategy tends to function by empowering the performer through a rational decision-making process that allows for conscious self-fashioning in accordance with singular desires. To this end, repetition grounded in mimesis is employed, whereby forms are taken up by unlikely performers, thus destabilizing the meaning that these forms of being, or ideals, have come to have. Ideals are re-deployed as performative roles to be inhabited. Deleuze and Guattari also suggest a process of becoming that functions by means of repetition and by the inhabitation of roles. However, for them it is not so much the forms that are repeated but the "intensities and flows"; which is to say that they are more interested in decoding the ways in which various singularities produce and pursue desires, in order to repeat the process of desiring-production. A comparative analysis of the work of Judith Butler and that of Deleuze and Guattari would likely shed a great deal of light on how each of these strategies navigates the relationship between desire and choice by means of divergent approaches to performance. Here, however, I merely sought to show that, while the need to develop alliances along sex lines is important, recourse to sex categories is an insufficient means of doing this. I would like to suggest, at this point, some directions for re-reading the nomadic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in a manner that takes into consideration some of lessons of the sex and gender theorists examined here, in order to develop strategies for building cultural alliances that may allow for the minority activism.

The nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari provides a conceptual medium by which to travel across sites of possibilities. Through these travels, possibilities for change are discovered. It is not a matter of mimicking the sites encountered, but of actually changing oneself through the acquisition of new memories and experience which form the ground from which habits are overturned and the future forged. The memories acquired are not *images* as such but dynamic contractions, based on the minutest movements. What is learnt is thus new ways of putting things together and moving in the world. But bodies are limited in how they can move, and every body performs a gesture differently. Sometimes the modifications performed by one body provide a more effective site of repetition for another approaching body. When we come together to learn gestures, alliances are built and sanctified with a name.

For Deleuze, possibilities are established through identifying our “habits,” physiological, cultural, etc. through a process that reaches into our memories, selecting *which* memorial terms and images we will use and how we can tweak and repeat them in order to become what we would like to become. Here, as Irigaray and Braidotti argue, it is neither possible nor useful to amalgamate all differences under the rubric of the multiplicity of the One. Alliances in the form of virtual identities are necessary, as is the recognition of real differences, so long as these do not become cemented as ideal forms, nor tyrannize us as models to which we must conform. We must recognize that the sorts of possible alliances are many. The singularities that lie in the margins of distinct movements – whether they be those of a so-called individual, a trope or an army - are not inherently a threat to the desires of these movements.

We know that the mere fact of identifying as a woman is no guarantee of convergent desires, even on such issues as seemingly central to Women’s movements as reproductive rights, childcare and women’s role in the workforce. All the theorists we have examined would agree that desires do not “naturally” flow from identity forms (even culturally constructed ones), and so it may be a mistake to look to the setting of identity as a means of anchoring activist movements. As we saw in our discussion of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Capitalism and*

Schizophrenia, identities, even “revolutionary” identities, can easily be deterritorialized from the desires they previously produced and can easily become trivialized and sold, supporting the very systems against which they were previously deployed. However, attempts to prevent this deterritorialization by grounding desiring production either in the body of corporeal agent (Cixous) or in virtual divisions along a set access of difference (Irigaray and Braidotti) would seem to be insufficient means of effectively promoting minority desires.

In the case of Cixous’ corporeal desire, or *écriture féminine*, it would seem that the burden of constructed assumptions is merely deferred onto the organic body of the subject, whereby social understandings of their organs inform the possibilities from which they produce their desires. Moreover, despite its corporeal basis, the ground from which common alliances can be built remains obscure. Drawing on the virtual access of sexual difference, Braidotti and Irigaray are both able to create images of femininity through which women can expand their possibilities in a manner that takes into consideration their own conditions *as* women. This does not necessarily lock an understanding of these conditions to a single, universal image of what this might mean. Nevertheless, I have argued that the prioritization of sexual difference as *the* axis of difference, making sexual identification as either *man* or *woman* a prerequisite ground for desiring-production, at once threatens to gloss over the importance of other axes of difference, while instituting normative restrictions on the production of corporeal possibilities.

Drawing on the serial repetition of Deleuze’s nomadic version of a theatre of cruelty, I would like to suggest that it is possible to create alliances that speak to the specific positions and conditions from which desires are produced, without needing to create virtual identities that adhere strictly to a sexual binary. Throughout our discussion we have looked at various approaches to cultural production in terms of their role in the production of minority desires generally, and women’s desires specifically. Deleuze’s Artaudian schizo-nomadic approach to performance allowed us to explore the fluidity of identity, the ways in which we draw on the images available to create the present event, allowing us to transcend preconceived ideas of what

constitutes a particular identity and what a body can do. Theatre becomes ritual and ritual becomes experimentation, deterritorialized from its original context and aimed at galvanizing forces in new ways that can engage diverse desires in shared repetitions. Through this approach to serial performance we learn to ask, not what something *is*, but what desires it produces.

What we have here is thus an approach to performance that begins in theatre, but forward looking as it is, and shunning the principle of representation, it rapidly breaks down the boundaries between art and life. It is not a question of “art” mimicking “life” or “life” mimicking “art,” but a continual repetition that repeats with more or less intensity, and produces desires in a more or less effective way. The system of desiring production moves away from normative forms to be mimicked, and “returns” to the multiple possibilities of the bodies. This mode of desiring-production functions, as we have seen, through the exploration of marginalized ways of moving and becoming in the world. Specifically, it functions through a “return” to the flip side of Western binary logic, thus conflating a host of traditional Others, and making Woman (as the territorial Other) the gatekeeper to this exploration.

The system of experimentation suggested by all this functions much like a carnival or festival, whereby various masks are sported, lifted from their various contexts and brought into contact with one another at various levels and through various changing bodies. For this reason, I would like to suggest that the analysis of community based performance art in developing alliances along the lines of minority desires is a fruitful direction for future research.

The work of two performance theorists may provide particularly useful tools for embarking on such an analysis. The first is the Popular Theatre approach developed by Augusto Boal. Here members of the community come together on issues of common concern and are encouraged to enact their relevant experiences, as well as potential solutions to the dilemmas presented. The polyvocal approach creates possibilities that destabilize the notion of a True representation of the issues that may prove to open interesting possibilities for community development and a rethinking of ways of embarking on personal and global transformations.

Such an approach offers potential for developing a community-based, future-oriented activist model in which the situation and its solutions are repeated, offering community-generated “memories” from which participants can draw.

Involving the various agents of the community in active participation would seem to move toward the goal of doing away with a dogmatic image of thought. However, so long as it is merely a struggle among a collection of various “dogmatic images,” this strategy can only go so far in allowing us to rethink the possibilities of cultural media to advance minority desires. Further research into the possibilities afforded by what we have been calling the “feminine” theatre of cruelty advocated by Deleuze via Nietzsche and Artaud is needed. One way of doing this may be to combine it with Bakhtin’s understanding of the carnivalesque in order to analyze the possibilities afforded by contemporary festivals such as Burning Man, various World Music events, and New Age retreats, but also grass roots drag performances and the cultural sampling that takes place in contemporary fashion trends.

In our discussion of Cixous’ hysterical theatre we noted the importance of taking stock of the actual dynamics of, as Cixous puts it, “who is ‘in’ the theatre, who works, who is exploited by whom.” Through attention to the details of repetitions, the ways in which they reinforce and destabilize habits at every level to inform, construct and impede desiring production, we may continue to take note of the power dynamics at work in current systems of appropriation. Following the nomadic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, I have argued that alliances are built according to desires and that these desires are to be understood as being produced from certain habits (physiological, cultural, etc.); from these habits memories are called on in the pursuit of desires. I have suggested that the interrelation between these various levels will offer us some insights as to the ways in which alliances may be usefully built: what are the desires produced and along what access do they converge? Or, in other words, how can memories be used effectively to produce the desires of those who share certain habits. Key events that involve a high concentration of performers who come together specifically in order to celebrate and

perform their desires offer a useful starting point for studying these trends and for building possible alliances. However, as serial performances, the ways in which they both do and do not move beyond a contained performance event is of the utmost importance.

The nature of a changing society is such that there is no simple mechanism that “best” encourages. The aim of this thesis has thus not so much been to establish a model of cultural production that privileges one mode of expression over another. Rather I have here explored some ways of thinking about cultural becomings and the role of various approaches in terms of facilitating the desires that have been most marginalized. I have suggested that the strategy of becoming-woman put forward by Deleuze and Guattari offers opportunities for thinking beyond hierarchical binaries and facilitating experimentation in ways of becoming traditionally discounted. I have further suggested that this “feminine” approach breaks away from the rubric of closed identity politics in a manner that allows hitherto silenced voices and ways of expressing to flourish. However, I have stressed the need to take into consideration the conditions of particular becomings and the particular desires and struggles of women and other politically marginalized minorities. Such attention is necessary in order to assure that the desires that these minorities bring are not sublimated into a central machine of generalized becoming, glossing over the particular desires that are still largely unheeded. Rather than insisting on a particular site or dimension out of which differentiated desires emerge, I have suggested that sites of difference and alliance may *become* fluid and situation-specific. Our focus now must be on how fruitful alliances can be built and what role cultural media can play in building these alliances without forcing fascistic identifications.

I began this thesis with a discussion of rage, mobility and resistance and have argued that there is a form of “cruelty” that can be instrumental in resisting the fascism of Western style colonial discourse and the binary of Same and Other that it institutes. I would like to end by emphasizing the need now to focus on what we might call the mobility of love. By this I mean the need to be faithful not to vows of allegiance to a particular image or identity, a particular

model or medium, but to building alliances that move beyond these identities in order to serve the desires of those living together in the present. Here it is not a question of coercing persons into adopting even a supposedly emancipatory stance, but of creating approaches within our cultural institutions that can encourage the participation of all and accommodate not only a range of *what* is desired, but also *how* it is desired. In this pursuit we will always be negotiating a balance between our shared memories and disparate ones and the flux of desires that are produced. If mobility is now all the rage, and if rage is mobile, then we will not get very far attempting to halt the proverbial "rage against the machine." But, perhaps, heeding the conditions from which this rage desires we can develop directions for transformation that will be able to build alliances that can take into consideration the still too frequently silenced minority desires. Developing strategies for building nomadic alliances among these desires, whether these be those of women, indigenous peoples, ecological concerns or others assimilated to the "territorial," rather than consuming and selling these desires on a growing world market, may create significant shifts in the ways we think of ourselves and our communities. If this is a situation of cultural crisis, then it can only be by turning to the possibilities afforded by cultural media that we will be able to develop strategies for change.

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