

## **The Orchid, the Wasp and the Text: Encountering Bodily Becoming through Deleuze and Feminism**

La philosophie est la théorie de multiplicités. Toute multiplicité implique des éléments actuels et des éléments virtuels. Il n’y a pas d’objet purement actuel. Tout actuel s’entoure d’un brouillard d’images virtuelles. (Deleuze 1996: 179)<sup>1</sup>

Non pas en arriver au point où l’on ne dit plus je, mais au point où ça n’a plus importance de dire je. Nous ne sommes plus nous-mêmes. Chacun connaîtra les siens.

Nous avons été aidés, aspirés, multipliés. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 9)<sup>2</sup>

### **A Philosophy of Flows**

This chapter seeks to unpick the philosophy of becoming of Gilles Deleuze, in his sole-authored work and in collaborations with Félix Guattari,<sup>3</sup> to trace their connections to the theorisation of the body in feminist thought, and to unearth therein some conceptual grains with which to fertilise my readings of the female body in contemporary women’s writing in French. I am hesitant to posit the aims of this chapter as forging a solid, unmoving theoretical terrain, or as focusing a narrow lens, which would no doubt be illuminating, but which might also restrict the view into the literary texts I read. This book is driven by encounters and interactions and, as such, does not wish to present readings of texts that are resolutely consigned to a particular theoretical grid.<sup>4</sup> It might be more helpful, then, to think of this chapter as an attempt to spin a web of interconnected ideas – ideas that will fruitfully engage with the

corpus of literary works, albeit often in very different ways – as a means of mutually enriching both theory and text.

To begin, some preliminary thoughts on the positioning of Deleuzian philosophy, and its contribution to broader trends in French poststructuralist thought from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. Like other poststructuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, Deleuze's work is driven by a desire to open out new ways to conceptualise language and identity. Poststructuralists seek to move beyond both the phenomenological model and its basis in sensory embodied experience and the structuralist approach distinguished by the exploration of systems of meaning, and want instead to destabilise the very notion of structure. By interrogating and breaking down the structures that might attribute certain meanings to life in the relation of components to one another, by recognising the insufficiency of experience as foundational or stable, meaning itself inevitably collapses. But for these thinkers, such collapse should not be viewed in terms of failure, negativity, fracture, lack or loss. Rather, the very opening out of thought and resistance to closure can be celebrated in that it seeks not to reduce the flux of the real to prescribed unities of truth and knowledge.

This openness of thought, and openness to thought, is a key characteristic of poststructuralist philosophy. If traditional metaphysical questions about being, knowledge and morality were initially displaced by Nietzsche's death of god, early-twentieth century thought has nonetheless been characterised by an anxious relationship between the individual and knowledge. Poststructuralist thought strips certainty away to the extent that the search for knowledge, even within the arbitrary

systems of structuralist thought, or the flux of phenomenological experience, is replaced not only by a conscious destabilisation of these structures and experiences, but of the very place of the subject within them. A recurrent notion that threads through the work of poststructuralist thinkers is that systems and systematisations inevitably constrain and contain the vitality of existence. Foucault's genealogical investigation of institutionalised structures of power, for example, demonstrates the historical and contingent nature of what he terms the order of things. For Derrida, such constraints lie not only in historical legacy, but are to be found in the structures of language, which serves to privilege certain themes and concepts over others, creating a hierarchy of difference: presence over absence, identity over difference, masculinity over femininity. In Deleuze's work, the unfolding of thought and language beyond systems and systematisations rests on what might be termed a philosophy of dynamism, a 'belief that "life" is frequently imprisoned and that it could be freed' (Marks 1998: 4). To grasp the immanent flux of 'life', for Deleuze, is to engage with flows, encounters, rhizomes, multiplicities, differences, nomadism and becoming, philosophical paradigms that are seen as liberating rather than constraining. Moving beyond the fixity of being, truth and knowledge, the Deleuzian celebration of dynamism means that 'possibility' itself becomes a key concept. As such, his philosophical project is not so concerned with conventional metaphysical questions such as 'what is?', 'what can I know?', or 'how should I act?', and experiments instead with the vitality of 'what is possible?'

Philosophy, according to Deleuze and Guattari, no longer provides a simplifying structure or framework through which to understand and interpret the universe. It does not involve contemplation, reflection or communication, but gestures

towards the concept in a creative act: ‘la philosophie est l’art de former, d’inventer, de fabriquer des concepts’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 8).<sup>5</sup> Concepts are not there for the taking as pre-established forms, nor do they crystallise as facts once they are created. A concept implicates itself *within* itself in touching the flux of difference; it is a multiplicity of components, an event rather than an essence (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 26; 1994: 21). Concepts do not explain, give meaning or aspire to conclusions, then, rather they allow difference to emerge. As Todd May (2005: 20) rather evocatively puts it, concepts palpate, in the way that a doctor might palpate the body in order to understand a lesion that they cannot see, creating a ‘zone of touch’: ‘Concepts palpate difference, and by doing so they give voice to it. It is a strange voice, eerie and penetrating.’ Deleuzian thought involves being unsettled, and open to jolts and disturbances. It is nomadic, it passes and flows across the surface of immanence, in the vein of Nietzsche, for whom, as Deleuze writes

À travers tous les codes du passé, du présent, de l’avenir, il s’agit [...] de faire passer quelque chose qui ne se laisse et ne se laissera pas coder. Le faire passer sur un nouveau corps, inventer un corps sur lequel cela puisse passer et couler: un corps qui serait le nôtre, celui de la Terre, celui de l’écrit. (Deleuze 2002: 352-3)<sup>6</sup>

A philosophy of possibility undercuts codes and invents new bodies within and across our immanent reality, bodies of thought and bodily thought that intersect the actual and the virtual. As we shall see, a Deleuzian approach to philosophy as *flow* thus holds immense appeal for a project of this kind that aims to open out perspectives on

the body in contemporary culture, to think through – or across – the body while respecting its suspended becoming.

### **The Reception of Deleuze in Feminist Thought**

The past twenty years have been witness to an explosion of critical interest in the work of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, in keeping with Foucault's (1994:76) claim that 'un jour, peut-être, le siècle sera Deleuzien'.<sup>7</sup> Whether we translate the 'siècle' here as 'century' or as something akin to an 'inner circle' or 'in-crowd' (see Faubion 1998: xix, xxxix), the scope of thinking about or after Deleuze in academic circles would seem to fulfil this prophetic point. And yet, moving beyond the possible elitism of the 'in-crowd', what has been particularly striking is the range of criticism that strives to read Deleuze 'with' or 'and' something else, something that is either perhaps perceived not to be so obviously Deleuzian or that might commonly invite a non-Deleuzian, and, perhaps non-esoteric, approach. This is evidenced by the recent appearance of journals such as *Deleuze Studies* and *Deleuze Connections*, whose volumes place Deleuzian philosophy in conversation with various subject areas, including politics, feminism, queer theory, postcolonialism, the body, geography, space, cinema, performance, art, music and literature.<sup>8</sup> My own critical thinking is in keeping, then, with a revitalised interest in Deleuze's work, and in particular with a desire to set his thought in motion beyond the confines of the 'in-crowd' of French poststructuralist philosophy, to bring it into a contemporary realm and to engage it with political, cultural and aesthetic debates.

Deleuzian philosophy has historically experienced a troubled relationship with the work of feminism, compared to other areas of poststructuralist thought, which have been mobilised in a great deal of feminist writing from the 1970s onwards. While Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction provided Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva with helpful ways of thinking about the place of the female subject within symbolic or logocentric structures, Foucault's groundbreaking work on the history of sexuality has given rise to a wealth of valuable critical thinking in feminist and queer theory, most notably the work of Judith Butler. However, from the outset, Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari have been heavily criticised by feminists for a number of theoretical concepts that would seem to indicate a disconcerting lack of attention to sexual specificity or a 'masculinist' approach, and it has taken a great deal longer for feminism to find any value in their work. Irigaray has heaped critical coals at these philosophers' feet, claiming that their vocabulary of multiplicity and nomadism necessarily extinguishes any kind of specificity, and thus denies women their identities and desires in a dangerous erasure of sexual difference. For Irigaray, the collapsing of the subject that Deleuzian philosophy entails can be nothing but an impossibility for women, arguing as she does, quite rightly, that one cannot take apart an identity which has never fully been inhabited in the first place: 'ne faut-il pas avoir eu au langage et au sexe – aux organes – un rapport que les femmes n'ont jamais eu?' (Irigaray 1977: 139).<sup>9</sup> Irigaray further objects to the terminology of machines, technologies and assemblages that peppers Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy (in that it signals a technocratic discursive tradition which has historically excluded women), and to their elegy of the schizophrenic as another minoritarian figure alongside women (as reinforcing a damaging association between women and madness, and overly romanticising

suffering). Similarly, in the Anglo-American context, feminist thinker Alice Jardine (1985: 217) rejects Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy on the basis of the concept of becoming-woman, which, she argues, invisibilises female materiality while continuing to appropriate the feminine within male discourse.

These are stark and seemingly valid criticisms and I shall return to their persistent implications later in this chapter, and, indeed, throughout the book. And yet, since the 1990s a variety of feminist and queer thinkers have reassessed Deleuzian philosophy as a means to think through contemporary female corporeality in terms of multiplicity. Much productive work has been done in this area towards a so-called 'corporeal feminism', by thinkers who include Claire Colebrook, Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, Tamsin Lorraine and Dorothea Olkowski, among others.<sup>10</sup> In focusing on folding, flux and becoming, my own positions are perhaps closest to those of Braidotti and Grosz. Braidotti argues that the relevance of French poststructuralism to feminism lies not so much in what it might or might not have to say about women, sexuality or the body; of greater importance is its redefinition of thinking, and its opening out of the theoretical process towards a creative envisioning of subjectivity (Braidotti 1994a: 100). Braidotti's own work thus projects subjectivity as intensive and multiple, 'rhizomatic, embodied, and therefore, perfectly artificial; as an artifact it is machinic, complex, endowed with multiple capacities for interconnectedness in the impersonal mode' (Braidotti 1994b: 162). She repositions gendered constructions of subjectivity within the contemporary millennial climate in which the body is subject to multiple layerings and interconnections. As she writes:

there is no question that what, even and especially in feminism, we go on calling, quite nostalgically, ‘our bodies, ourselves’ are abstract technological constructs fully immersed in advanced psycho-pharmacological industry, bio-science and the new media. This does not make them any less embodied, or less ourselves, it just complicates considerably the task of representing to ourselves the experience of inhabiting them. (Braidotti 2000: 161)

Braidotti thus compellingly argues that the Deleuzian concept of nomadism holds great promise, insofar as it offers contemporary feminism a way of acknowledging the multiplicity and difference of subjectivity, of occupying different subject positions at different times, and of combining coherence with mobility, contingency and transformation. Nomadic ruptures or shifts open out spaces for new and different forms of agency to be engendered, she argues, and as such they mobilise ‘a creative sort of becoming; a performative metaphor’ (Braidotti 1994a: 6).

Elizabeth Grosz also highlights the relevance of multiplicity to a contemporary theory of the corporeal subject, and in particular signals the reversal of Platonism as a crucial common target shared by Deleuzian philosophy and feminism (Grosz 1994b: 190). Grosz presents a persuasive set of arguments that illuminate the advantages of a Deleuzian framework to contemporary feminism. These include (Grosz 1994a: 180): i) the ‘flattening out of relations between the social and the psychical so that there is neither a relation of causation (one- or two-way) nor hierarchies, levels, grounds, or foundations’, ii) the refusal to ‘duplicate’ the world into real and representation, iii) positing an ‘in-between’ as a critique of binarism, iv) the demassification of the entities that binary thought counterposes against each other,



and v) the incessant refusal of a single explanatory paradigm. Braidotti and Grosz variously draw attention to the ways in which Deleuze enables the rethinking of bodily subjectivity as an overlapping between nature and culture, and between interiority and exteriority, rather than placing bodies in categories that are pulled back to the putative oppositioning of earlier feminist debates around biological essentialism or social constructionism. While Braidotti focuses largely on nomadic becoming and metamorphosis, Grosz highlights aleatory desire, the Body without Organs, and the folding of corporeality, which she figures through the model of the Möbius strip. Thinking through Lacan, neurophysiological discourse, Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, Foucault and Kristeva, Grosz formulates a model of female corporeality that draws significantly on Deleuze in its theorisation of the torsion of the body, and in its interrogation of the conventional relationship between depth and surface:

The Möbius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another. This model also provides a way of problematising and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside and the subject, its psychological interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside. (Grosz 1994a: xii)

The work of these feminist philosophers forges new ground and offers stimulating perspectives on contemporary female corporeality in its engagement with Deleuzian thought. Moving away from the positions on sex and sexual difference of

the second wave that oft give rise to concerns about essentialism, these thinkers reconceive female subjectivity within the very terms of dynamism, vitalism and possibility that govern Deleuze's work. However, drawing on Deleuze as a feminist is not achieved without some margin of reserve. As we shall see, certain Deleuzian concepts and turns of phrase continue to provoke critical consternation for the feminist thinker, in particular the contested concept of 'becoming-woman', and, as such, Braidotti, Grosz and others tend to stress the process of counter-position that is involved in Deleuzian feminism, which is invoked as 'Deleuze and feminism' or 'Deleuze with feminism'. Feminist approaches to Deleuzian philosophy often require taking a certain risk on the potential use-value of Deleuze's thought, rather than strictly adhering to its principles. Accordingly, Braidotti (2002: 83) refers to her 'nomadic feminism' as 'zigzagging through Deleuze and feminism'. And as Jerry Aline Flieger (2000: 62) remarks,

like the orchid and the wasp, the relation of Deleuzian thought and feminist thought may be 'mapped' or interwoven in a kind of productive disjunction. It is perhaps neither a matter of window-dressing, masquerade and cosmetic solutions, nor of conflict and irreconcilable differences, but a matter of paradox.

In itself, this seems a way of thinking that corresponds to a philosophy of flows, a gesture of thought that touches upon difference and allows it to emerge rather than strictly encoding it, an encounter with Deleuzian thought, such that Deleuze himself might advocate (although, as we shall see, an encounter or dialogue that he might not have put into practice himself). The analysis that follows is indebted to the work of Braidotti, Grosz and others, which provides a conceptual springboard for my own

readings of Deleuze in this chapter. As a feminist literary critic, however, my purposes both overlap with and depart from these thinkers. My concern in this book is with how reading Deleuze can help us to understand contemporary *experiences* of female corporeality, but also with how reading Deleuze opens out perspectives on contemporary *expressions* of female corporeality. It will be important to hold in view here the relationship between body and text. Is there room for more engagement with Deleuze in thinking about the female body on the level of the literary rather than the literal? Can one take more risks with Deleuze in such a context? And what would be the point? I shall return to these questions briefly at the end of this chapter and throughout this book. First, however, we will take a closer look at some key areas of Deleuzian thought – the philosophy of transcendental empiricism, desire, the Body without Organs, notions of becoming, nomadism and difference – in order to establish something, at least, of a grasp on their relevance to a theorisation of contemporary female corporeality.

### **Transcendental Empiricism: The A-subjective, the Event and the Fold**

Deleuzian philosophy proposes a vital rethinking of the relationship between subject, object and universe. In Deleuze's formulation of transcendental empiricism, the subject is not merely repositioned but rather dislocated, allowing a philosophy to emerge that is instead shaped around an a-subjective consciousness. The potentially negative implications of a-subjectivity for the purposes of feminism are immediately apparent. For how can one reconcile the a-subjective with a philosophy or politics whose impetus is precisely to emphasise a localisable subject? In other words, if one does not have a starting point from which to speak, how can one possibly begin to

identify as, for example, a woman? And if one cannot, then, is the entire purpose of feminism not rendered futile? My position here is that while the Deleuzian a-subjective invokes tensions with a conventional feminist politics, it nonetheless opens out illuminating perspectives on the folds and flux of consciousness that go some way to inform contemporary experiences and expressions of corporeality, even as it may be conceived of in feminine terms. As Claire Colebrook (2000: 113) observes, questions of sexual difference have traditionally been aligned to a transcendental philosophy: ‘the recent debate over sexual difference concerns nothing other than the possibility that the gendered subject may not just encounter a world, but that sex occurs as a specific relation to the world.’ In countering transcendence, however, the Deleuzian philosophy of transcendental empiricism explodes that relationship between the subject and the world, and seeks less to provide meaning for the given, than to open out responses to what is taken as given. The implications for questions of sexual difference will be drawn out over the course of this chapter, but as this section will begin to reveal, any kind of theorisation after Deleuze thus requires trying to think ‘without the illusion of transcendence’ (Colebrook 2000: 125).

For Deleuze, a major problem in the tradition of Western philosophy emerges in that experience is always already imparted to a fixed and pre-existing subject. From the moment of the Cartesian *cogito*, the subject is thus constructed as a ‘plane of transcendence’, whereby it is imagined that there is some stable meaning or truthful foundation behind that which we create as identity. Deleuze wants to collapse Descartes’ ‘I think, therefore I am’ on the very grounds that it presupposes a thinking subject that exists externally to the rest of the world. While for Descartes the possibility of thought itself proves the existence of the subject, there unfolds for

Deleuze a problematic assumption that the way one relates to the world is necessarily rooted in knowledge and judgment, that the world exists before the subject as a set of facts to be represented. For Deleuze, the flux of the real, or the 'plane of immanence', is a field of flows of difference, a collection of energies and multiplicities, which lies in opposition to the world as mediated through subject and object. Rather than ordering experience in a Cartesian manner, then, ideas are instead the effect of experience. It is from immanent experience itself that an image of the subject is formed, and that the contrasting 'plane of transcendence' is produced from the given. Deleuze's philosophy is shaped here by his reading of Humean empiricism, and he explains that, 'Du donné, j'infère l'existence d'autre chose qui n'est pas donné: je crois. [...] Dans la même opération, et en même temps, je juge et je me pose comme sujet: en dépassant le donné. J'affirme plus que je sais' (Deleuze 1953: 90).<sup>11</sup> It is important to highlight that the mind receives ideas and connections that create the impression of a transcendent subject, and that the subject does not create ideas but is constituted by them. Deleuze (1953: 150) thus maintains an important distinction between subject and mind: 'Par lui-même, l'esprit n'est pas sujet: c'est une collection donnée d'impressions et d'idées séparées.'<sup>12</sup> Humean empiricism entails the substitution of a psychology of the mind, in and of itself, by the ways in which the mind is 'affected' (Deleuze 1953: 1; 1991: 21). The mind is thus not nature, or a system, but is identical with the very collection of ideas that exist in the mind, and it becomes subjected under the effect of the principles of passion and association. As Deleuze (1953: 15) writes, 'L'esprit n'est pas sujet, il est assujetti. Et quand le sujet se constitue seulement dans l'esprit sous l'effet des principes, l'esprit se saisit en même temps comme un Moi parce qu'il est qualifié.'<sup>13</sup> If the subject is the product of principles within the mind, though, it is also the mind that transcends itself. In other

words, the mind exists as a collection of impressions and ideas, but it is the repetition of connections between these that produces the transcendent subject. The mind thus becomes subject through the principles of passion, through its *vividness*: ‘*quand il mobilise sa vivacité de telle façon qu’une partie dont elle est le caractère (impression) la communique à une autre partie (idée), et d’autre part, quand toutes les parties prises ensemble résonnent en produisant quelque chose de nouveau*’ (Deleuze 1953: 151, original italics).<sup>14</sup> But further, such repetition and connection result in the anticipation of them, producing through the principles of association – contiguity, resemblance and causality – the transcendent subject through the fixing and naturalisation of the mind (Deleuze 1953: 5; 1991: 24). Belief, then, rests on anticipation and invention, and ultimately on turning the given itself into a nature (Deleuze 1953: 152; 1991: 133).

Through Hume, Deleuze thus formulates the coming into being of the transcendent subject, which his own philosophy of transcendental empiricism wants to undermine. In contrast to transcendence, transcendental empiricism refuses to attribute experience to a subject, liberating thought from metaphysics, and opening out the immanence of experience. The notion of the event, as Deleuze conceives it, further dislocates the subject, and it also provides a way to think through the relations between the actual and the virtual that underpin his philosophy of countering transcendence. Following the Stoics, Deleuze makes a distinction between bodies and their corresponding states of affairs, and incorporeal effects. The former can be understood in Deleuzian thought in terms of the actual, or the immediate perception of experience, whereas the latter can be understood as the virtual. The event is a virtual or incorporeal effect. Yet there is a double movement involved in the event

insofar as it is actualised in, or attributed to, bodies and states of affairs, while nonetheless containing an altogether different, virtual dimension, ‘une part ombrageuse et secrète qui ne cesse de se soustraire ou de s’ajouter à son actualisation: contrairement à l’état des choses, il ne commence ni ne finit, mais a gagné ou gardé le mouvement infini auquel il donne consistance’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 148).<sup>15</sup> This element of the event is virtual insofar as it is distinguished from the actual. But it is also real, because, rather than corresponding to the immediate materiality of the actual, there remains, in what is not actualised from the event, pure immanence. This dimension of the event is thus immaterial, incorporeal and, indeed, unliveable (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 148; 1994: 156).

Though this aspect of the event is described as unliveable, in countering transcendence, one must nonetheless aspire to be worthy of the event. Perspectives on the event can only be established in an acceptance of it as separate from the subject in its transcendent form, in other words, in counter-actualising the event. Again, Deleuze follows the Stoics in his discussion of the ethics of *amor fati*: being worthy of an event, recognising its existence *before* the subject rather than its relation *to* the subject. Here he refers to Joë Bousquet’s notion of the ‘wound’, which proposes that suffering should not be experienced as something that happens to the subject: ‘Ma blessure existait avant moi, je suis né pour l’incarner’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 80).<sup>16</sup> Rather than suffering an event, then, one rather aspires to the event that supersedes the subject. Being born to embody the event involves accepting the wound in its non-actualised form, and acknowledging its virtual immanence. As such, being born to embody the wound paradoxically involves being able to disembody it, to counter-actualise it by affirming the dimension of it that slips away from the actual. In

another example of counter-actualising the event, Deleuze proposes that the abject desire ‘to be loved’ might be substituted with the power ‘to love’. This is not merely reversal of passive and active action. ‘To love’ should not be understood as specifying either a subject or object of that love, or an identification with the universe, but the power to love as pure event:

dégager le pur événement qui m’unit à ceux que j’aime, et qui ne m’attendent pas plus que je ne les attends, puisque seul l’événement nous attend, *Eventum tantum*. Faire un événement, si petit soit-il, la chose la plus délicate du monde, le contraire de faire un drame, ou de faire une histoire. (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 81)<sup>17</sup>

As we can see, Deleuze pays close attention to language in the formulation of the pure event, substituting passives for actives, and nouns for verbs. Elsewhere, he again draws on the Stoics in their supplanting of the statement ‘the tree is green’ with ‘the tree greens’, thus rendering the event neither an attribute nor a quality, but the incorporeal predicate of a subject of the proposition, and putting manner in the place of essence (Deleuze 1988: 71-2; 1993b: 53). ‘The tree greens’, or ‘the greening of the tree’, is the language of the event, then, that serves to dislocate further the illusion of transcendence: ‘quand les substantifs et adjectifs se mettent à fondre, quand les noms d’arrêt et de repos sont entraînés par les verbes de pur devenir et glissent dans le langage des événements, toute identité se perd pour le moi, le monde et Dieu.’ (Deleuze 1969: 11)<sup>18</sup>



In his reading of Leibniz, Deleuze takes the notion of the event one step further, suggesting that the universe itself might be viewed as pure event, an incorporeal, virtual predicate, which is included in every subject who then extracts from it those manners which correspond to points of view. As Deleuze explains, ‘Le monde est la prédication même, les manières sont les prédicats particuliers, et le sujet, ce qui passe d’un prédicat à un autre comme d’un aspect du monde à un autre’ (Deleuze 1988: 72).<sup>19</sup> It is the concept of the fold that shapes Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz here, and which posits the universe in terms of continuous variation and difference. For Leibniz, matter is composed of an innumerable quantity of monads that have no parts, no doors nor windows, and yet contain the universe within them. The monad is thus a unity that envelops a multiplicity and that refuses the hierarchisation or organisation of parts, instead revealing matter through inflection, folds and pleats. The fold relies on what remains hidden, since the division between inside and outside depends on the very fact of the thing being folded, which in itself is neither inside nor outside. Unfolding thus involves opening up another fold. As Deleuze writes, ‘Plier-déplier ne signifie plus simplement tendre-détendre, contracter-dilater, mais envelopper-développer, involuer-évoluer’ (Deleuze 1988: 13).<sup>20</sup> Yet, at the same time, what is folded is always enveloped, and thus included. Folding remains a virtuality that only exists in that which envelops it (Deleuze 1988: 31; 1993b: 22), and the fold thus provides another way to think through relations between the actual and the virtual, the subject and the universe. As Deleuze explains,

le monde entier n’est qu’une virtualité qui n’existe actuellement que dans les plis de l’âme qui l’exprime, l’âme opérant des déplis intérieurs par lesquels elle se donne une représentation du monde incluse. Nous allons de l’inflexion à

l'inclusion dans un sujet, comme du virtuel à l'actuel, l'inflexion définissant le pli, mais l'inclusion définissant l'âme ou le sujet, c'est-à-dire ce qui enveloppe le pli, sa cause finale et son acte achevé. (Deleuze 1988: 32)<sup>21</sup>

In his theorisations of the a-subjective, the event and the fold, Deleuze thus formulates a philosophy that counters the given. As Alain Badiou explains, the fold offers a concept of the multiple as an irreducible 'labyrinthine complexity', an anti-dialectic notion of the event, and an anti-Cartesian or anti-Lacanian concept of the subject. In Badiou's words, 'the fold allows us to conceive of an enunciation without "enouncement", or of knowledge without object. The world as such will no longer be the fantasy of the All, but the pertinent hallucination of the inside as pure outside' (Badiou 1994: 52).<sup>22</sup> In its dislocation of essence, in reconfiguring relations between subject, object, universe and knowledge, and in the possibilities of counter-actualising the given through the event and in the continuous variations of the fold, Deleuze thus opens out experience beyond the illusion of transcendence.

This book maintains that a Deleuzian philosophy has much to offer contemporary feminism in its moves beyond the transcendent relationship between subject and world, and towards a re-envisioning of subjectivity as the site of folds and flux. Though the notion of the a-subjective may imply incompatibility with feminism, this is only the case if 'speaking as a woman' involves being tied to an essentialist understanding of sexual difference, rather than acknowledging that the subject 'woman' is, in Braidotti's words 'not a monolithic essence defined once and for all but rather the site of multiple, complex and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, defined by overlapping variables' (Braidotti 1994a: 3-4). In its

theorisations of the a-subjective, the event and the fold, Deleuze's philosophy of transcendental empiricism provides a starting point for thinking about counter-actualising the given on the level of gender and embodiment. And as we shall see, these notions hold great resonance with articulations of female corporeality in contemporary women's writing in French: in Darrieussecq's writing, for example, which explodes conventional relations between mind, subject and universe in its exploration of the folds of consciousness, or in the work of Bouraoui, where we see the shaping and reshaping of subjectivity by the flux of immanent experience.

But where does the a-subjective leave us in terms of locating the materiality, the shape and form of the body? In the last section of *Le Pli*, Deleuze considers the movements of the fold between essences and existences, between the inorganic and the organic, between the species of monads, and also in terms of its billowing between body and soul: 'C'est un pli extrêmement sinueux, un zigzag, une liaison primitive non localisable' (Deleuze 1988: 162).<sup>23</sup> These relations require further consideration at this point. Within a philosophy of transcendental empiricism and incorporeal events, can a body be materialised, or does it remain tied, sinuously, to the virtual?

### **Desire, the Body without Organs and Becoming**

The countering of transcendence in terms of the body itself is largely mobilised in Deleuzian philosophy in his collaborations with Félix Guattari, and in keeping with notions of folds and flux, relations between desire and the body are reconfigured along the plane of immanence. Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation of desire as

pure positivity allows for a critical reconceptualisation of its movements beyond the Oedipal family romance and the logic of lack that has governed psychoanalytical theory. Meanwhile, their theorisation of what they term ‘le Corps sans Organes’ (the Body without Organs), offers a way into thinking through bodily materiality and affect beyond the boundaries of the essentialised biological form and into the flux of becoming. On these counts, then, a feminist reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking affords an understanding of contemporary corporeality in terms of vitality, flux and flow, rather than negativity, abjection, passivity and/or stasis. The corporeal question upon which Deleuzian philosophy hinges is not so much ‘what is a body?’, but ‘what can a body do?’ Thinking about the body’s capacity allows corporeality to be set free from its transcendent constraints. Yet in its perpetual movements of doing and undoing, it nonetheless remains to be seen whether one can maintain a grasp on the body, or whether it will inevitably slip out of reach and flow irrevocably into imperceptibility.

In a radical and energetic departure from psychoanalytical frameworks, Deleuze and Guattari reconfigure desire both as pure positivity and as pre-personal. For the psychoanalytical thinkers Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, desire is always constituted out of a lack, turning on the search for a lost object. This object, primarily envisaged to be the mother, as the archetypal Other, is continuously deferred into a chain of unnameable, though self-signifying, desire. As Lacan explains,

Le désir, fonction centrale à toute l’expérience humaine, est désir de rien de nommable. Et c’est ce désir qui est en même temps à la source de toute espèce d’animation. Si l’être n’était ce qu’il est, il n’y aurait même pas la place pour

qu'on en parle. L'être vient à exister en fonction même de ce manque. C'est en fonction de ce manque, dans l'expérience de désir, que l'être arrive à un sentiment de soi par rapport à l'être. C'est de la poursuite de cet au-delà qui n'est rien, qu'il revient au sentiment d'un être conscient de soi. (Lacan 1978: 261-2)<sup>24</sup>

In *L'Anti-Œdipe*, Deleuze and Guattari reverse the psychoanalytical formulation of the unconscious as a kind of 'theatre' which holds the key to the truth of desire, instead suggesting an immanent conception of the unconscious, which produces, rather than represents, desire. The central psychoanalytical figure of Oedipus, they argue, functions as a force that unites various forms of transcendence, normalising desire and forcing it into its own repression. Rather than turning on a vertical or nostalgic relation that wants to recuperate a missing object, then, desire according to Deleuze and Guattari takes on a lateral movement, taking neither subject nor object and collapsing this transcendent relation. Instead, desire is conceived as a principle of immanence that is formulated through productions and processes:

homme et nature ne sont pas comme deux termes l'un en face de l'autre, même pris dans un rapport de causation, de compréhension (cause-effet, sujet-objet, etc), mais une seule et même réalité essentielle du producteur et du produit. La production comme processus déborde toutes les catégories idéales et forme un cycle qui se rapporte au désir en tant que principe immanent. (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 12)<sup>25</sup>

In Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of desire, the Freudian concept is thus reversed: desire is not something to be grasped or apprehended, rather to be produced. It is not something in front of which the subject can place itself, since its production occurs in its own perpetual movement of fluxes, connections and assemblages. Accordingly, Deleuze writes that the unconscious is a substance to be fabricated, to make flow. Desire does not aspire to attain pleasure, since, although pleasure may be agreeable, it in fact serves only to interrupt the processes of desire as constitution of a field of immanence (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 119; 2006: 74). Insofar as Deleuzian desire does not turn on lack, the fulfilment or resolution of pleasure cannot be its end goal. Desire, then, aims only towards its own proliferation and flux (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 96-7; 2006: 58) and its movements are transversal, aleatory and nomadic:

le désir n'a pas pour objet des personnes ou des choses, mais des milieux tout entiers qu'il parcourt, des vibrations et flux de toute nature qu'il épouse, en y introduisant des coupures, des captures, désir toujours nomade et migrant dont le caractère est d'abord le 'gigantisme'. (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 351-2)<sup>26</sup>

Deleuzian desire, as pure positivity, as vibration and proliferation, is ultimately revolutionary, calling transcendent structures into question and calling for ever more connections and assemblages (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 96-7; 2006: 58). As such, sexuality itself can be understood as flux, as one flux among others, a flux that enters into a zone of proximity with other particles of flux (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 121; 2006: 75). Sexuality, beyond psychoanalysis, is not formulated according to idealisation or phantasy, then, but in the proliferation of a thousand tiny sexes: 'une

trans-sexualité microscopique, qui fait que la femme contient autant d'hommes que l'homme, et l'homme des femmes, capables d'entrer les uns avec les autres, dans des rapports de production de désir qui bouleversent l'ordre statistique des sexes' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 355-6).<sup>27</sup>

Though Deleuzian desire is a free flow that both produces and exceeds bodies, the transcendent unity of the bounded corporeal subject comes into being through the very organisation of desire. Assemblages of desiring-production, otherwise termed desiring machines, produce the body as an organism, but in its very production the body suffers from its organisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 15-6; 2004a: 8). There arises thus a conflict between desiring machines that produce corporeality and the Corps sans Organes that resists the transcendent body. Following Antonin Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the CsO might be understood in terms of the body as event, as the counter-actualisation of the given. Though the CsO is a deterritorialised, destratified body, Deleuze and Guattari insist upon the fact that it does not involve negativity, nothingness or lack: 'Le corps sans organes n'est pas le témoin d'un néant originel, pas plus que le reste d'une totalité perdue' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 16).<sup>28</sup> It is important to note that the CsO does not refuse the organs in themselves, but rather the concepts of the organism, and, crucially, of the organisation of the body. In Deleuze and Guattari's words, 'Le CsO ne s'oppose pas aux organes, mais, avec ses "organes vrais" qui doivent être composés et placés, il s'oppose à l'organisme, à l'organisation organique des organes' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 196).<sup>29</sup>

The CsO, then, can be viewed as a whole, but it is a whole that does not unify or totalise its parts. In resisting its organs, and in refusing the organism and the organised, it marks the limit-point of pure multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 393; 2004a: 358). The CsO is what remains when everything else has been taken away, but it should not be interpreted as an empty vessel. Rather, its status as a surface is clearly highlighted, a surface that is populated with connections, flows, speeds and intensities. Often described as an egg, the CsO is crisscrossed with axes, gradients, longitudes, latitudes and passages. Its surface has nothing to do with the representation of a transcendent body, and everything to do with a material vitality: ‘tout est vie et vécu’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1972/3: 28).<sup>30</sup> As such, rather than the body existing in relation to desire, and despite its resistance to being produced as a transcendent body by desiring-machines, the CsO itself becomes desire: ‘Le CsO, c’est *le champ d’immanence* du désir, *le plan de consistance* propre au désir (là où le désir se définit comme processus de production, sans référence à aucune instance extérieure, manque qui viendrait le combler)’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 191, original italics).<sup>31</sup>

In their movements away from psychoanalysis, lack and psychic depth, Deleuzian theorisations of desire and the CsO offer feminism ways of conceptualising corporeality as a surface of intersections and energies, of thinking about the limits and capabilities of the body, and of reconstituting subjectivity as affectivity through the material flux of desire beyond the limits of transcendence. As Braidotti writes, the body after Deleuze can be read as ‘the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces: it is not an essence, let alone a biological substance, but a play of forces, a surface of intensities, pure simulacra without originals’ (Braidotti 2002:



21). Further, insofar as the female subject is no longer theorised through the ‘truth’ of the transcendent body (Colebrook 2000: 125-6), there is scope for the Deleuzian feminist to dispense with the notion of the given as being or as body and to think through corporeality in its various distributions: the anorexic body, for example, for Nothomb, the metamorphic body for Darrieussecq, the affective materiality of desire for Devi and Bouraoui. Rather than remaining anchored to stable, integral and integrated models, then, this book follows Deleuzian feminism in highlighting instead the affective ‘becoming’ of the body.

The notion of ‘becoming’ itself courses through Deleuzian philosophy, in its toppling of Platonism and the foundations of ‘being’, and it requires closer attention here. Affirming becoming over being does not just mean acknowledging the value of the one over the other, but doing away with the binary distinction altogether. For Deleuze, bodies and states of affairs are neither unities nor totalities, but multiplicities. Multiplicity involves more than mere plurality: while plurality measures quantitative difference, multiplicities are rather conceived in terms of intensive differences (such as speeds). Multiplicity thus depends on internal difference, or, in other words, on what is in-between. As Deleuze writes in the preface to the English translation of *Dialogues*,

In a multiplicity what counts are not the terms of the elements, but what is ‘between’, the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other. Every multiplicity grows from the middle, like the blade of grass or the rhizome. (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: vi-vii)

A multiplicity does not commence from a state of *tabula rasa*, or from a certain point, then, but emerges from the middle and is constituted by lines ‘of becomings without history, of individuation without subject’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: vii). Deleuzian becomings are not imitative or assimilative phenomena, and can be understood instead in terms of double capture, non-parallel evolution and of nuptials between two reigns (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 8; 2006: 2). Such nuptials, Deleuze is keen to stress, oppose the concept of the couple and are against nature insofar as they collapse the opposition of binary machines, rather than involving the transformation of one stark binary term (question, masculine, man) into another (answer, feminine, animal). Using the example of the orchid and the wasp, Deleuze develops this idea of becoming as a double capture, involving two things that have nothing to do with one another:

L’orchidée a l’air de former une image de guêpe, mais en fait il y a un devenir-guêpe de l’orchidée, un devenir-orchidée de la guêpe, une double capture puisque ‘ce que’ chacun devient ne change pas moins que ‘celui qui’ devient. La guêpe devient partie de l’appareil de reproduction de l’orchidée, en même temps que l’orchidée devient organe sexuel pour la guêpe. (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 8-9)<sup>32</sup>

The becoming-orchid of the wasp and the becoming-wasp of the orchid thus coalesce into a single bloc of becoming that involves evolution in non-parallel terms. Rather, it involves involution, being in-between, ‘au milieu, adjacent’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 38).<sup>33</sup>

Deleuze employs the term ‘and’ to explicate further the in-between, in-the-middle nature of becoming. The history of philosophy, he claims, is encumbered with the problem of being, and, playing on the homophony in the French, he argues that the ‘is’ should be substituted for the ‘and’: ‘Substituer le ET au EST. A *et* B’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 71).<sup>34</sup> More than being a specific conjunction between terms, the ‘and’ subtends all relations, making them exceed their own terms. It explodes dualisms from the inside and traces a line of flight between two terms, ‘l’étroit ruisseau qui n’appartient ni à l’un ni à l’autre, mais les entraîne tous les deux dans une évolution non parallèle, dans un devenir hétérochrone’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 43).<sup>35</sup> In tracing lines of becoming, the ‘and’, as ‘extra-être, inter-être’, constitutes the multiplicity; thinking with ‘and’ rather than thinking ‘is’ or for ‘is’ thus lies at the heart of Deleuze’s empiricist philosophy (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 71).<sup>36</sup>

In becoming there is no past, future or even present, because there is no history. Becoming is thus a matter of transversal, or geographical linkages. Lewis Carroll’s Alice exists in an involuted state of becoming because she does not transform from one thing into another in a series of chronological movements. Rather, her becoming takes place transversally, as she becomes bigger and smaller in a simultaneity. As Deleuze writes, ‘le devenir ne supporte pas la séparation ni la distinction de l’avant et de l’après, du passé et du futur. Il appartient à l’essence du devenir d’aller, de tirer dans les deux sens à la fois. Alice ne grandit pas sans rapetisser, et inversement’ (Deleuze 1969: 9).<sup>37</sup> Becoming slips away from the present and from the actual into the intermezzo. The movement and flight involved in

becoming is not about movement in actual terms, then. The figure of the nomad provides some helpful distinctions here:

Le nomade a un territoire, il suit des trajets coùtumiers, il va d'un point à un autre, il n'ignore pas les points [...] Un trajet est toujours entre deux points, mais l'entre-deux a pris toute la consistance, et jouit d'une autonomie comme d'une direction propre. La vie du nomade est intermezzo. (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 471)<sup>38</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between the migrant, who moves in actual terms from one point to another, and the nomad, who is instead always geographically in between locations. The nomad is thus not marked by movement, but by the very territory that lies in between two points. Nomadic becoming may involve trajectory, but trajectory takes place within the virtual multiplicity of the intermezzo.

In keeping with the CsO, Deleuzian becoming seeks to undermine the transcendence of the subject, but it is worth thinking more carefully about how becoming itself might take place at the level of the human body. There are three specific examples of privileged sites of becoming which proliferate in Deleuzian philosophy and raise particular concerns with regard to the body and the possibility of a body politics: these are the notions of becoming-animal, becoming-woman and becoming-imperceptible. As an anti-anthropocentric encounter between terms that resists the transcendent logic of the human, becoming-animal does not mean that one merely assumes the behaviours of that animal, but enters into a mutually transformative relationship with it. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, 'Un devenir n'est

pas une correspondance de rapports. Mais ce n'est pas plus une ressemblance, une imitation, et, à la limite, une identification' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 291).<sup>39</sup> Becomings are not masks based on imitation that can be assumed and discarded at will, but at the same time they should not be misunderstood as either dream or fantasy either. Deleuze and Guattari insist upon the point that becomings are 'real': 'Le devenir-animal n'a rien de métaphorique. Aucun symbolisme, aucune allégorie' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 65).<sup>40</sup> Becomings are real in the sense that the bloc of becoming exists on its own terms, without being qualified by the purportedly fixed terms of either 'human' or 'animal'. Becoming-animal is thus not a matter of vertical or historical evolution, in terms of filiation or descendance, but a sideways alliance, or, rather, mutation: a virtual transformation in the perception of difference. Becoming-wolf, or wolfing (*lupellement*), resists the transcendence of the bounded subject and allows for the apprehension of multiplicity. This Deleuze and Guattari refer to as deterritorialisation: 'Devenir loup, devenir trou, c'est se déterritorialiser, d'après des lignes distinctes enchêvtrées' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 45).<sup>41</sup>

Just as they argue for becoming-animal, Deleuze and Guattari contend that the notion of becoming-woman does not involve the mere imitation of the female form but a movement towards a minoritarian position that resists the logic of transcendence. It is for this very reason, they argue, that becoming-man is impossible, since the concept of man implies a subject around which other things are organised. Deleuze and Guattari claim that since the concept of man can only ever occupy a majoritarian position, states of becoming must thus always be concerned with the opposite: 'il n'y a pas de devenir-homme parce que l'homme est l'entité molaire par excellence, tandis que les devenirs sont moléculaires' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980:

358).<sup>42</sup> Becoming-woman is thus a movement that takes place along the molecular plane, in opposition to being-a-woman which is distinctly molar. While the molar regulates and stratifies social identities within binary constructs, the molecular comprises the flux and micro-particles of the plane of immanence. For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman involves the production of micro-femininities along a molecular plane that evades or disrupts the stratifying rigidity of the binary codes that are imposed by molar lines. To become-woman is to open out these processes of change and reorganisation in a movement away from the molar and majoritarian and towards the molecular and the minoritarian; it is not to be female, but to create micro-femininities: ‘émettre des particules qui entrent dans le rapport du mouvement et de repos, ou dans la zone de voisinage d’une micro-féminité, c’est-à-dire produire en nous-mêmes une femme moléculaire, créer la femme moléculaire’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 338).<sup>43</sup> Becoming-woman is thus a process of destratification and demassification, the very destabilisation of female molar identity.

To become is not to acquire a form through identification, mimesis or imitation, then, and ultimately it leads to a plane of immanence: ‘la zone de voisinage, indiscernabilité ou d’indifférenciation telle qu’on ne peut plus se distinguer d’une femme, d’un animal ou d’une molécule’ (Deleuze 1993a: 11, original italics).<sup>44</sup> This plane of immanence is a space of indifferenciation and indiscernability. If becoming-woman is posited as the key to all becomings, the processes of becoming eventually give rise to the flux of the real and to becoming-imperceptible: ‘Se réduire à une ligne abstraite, un trait, pour trouver sa zone d’indiscernabilité avec d’autres traits, et entrer dans l’heccéité comme dans l’impersonnalité de créateur’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 343).<sup>45</sup> In entering into a hecceity, becoming-imperceptible involves immanent

and molecular perception, and absolute indifferenciability. In that sense, it brings us back to the a-subjectivity with which we began. Subject and world fold into one another, and their interconnectedness constitutes the multiplicity. As Tamsin Lorraine observes, such a model ‘evokes an image of collaboration of embodied subject and world, a singular coming together of multiple lines in which the specific location and shape of the subject is impossible to pin down to any one point’ (Lorraine 1999: 126).

The undoing of specificity, boundaries and transcendence allows feminism after Deleuze to think through embodiment as a process of materialisation. It allows for an understanding of the situatedness of the body, in the sense of its becoming through a multiplicity of intersecting forces and its interconnectedness with the material flux of the world, but also for an understanding of the movements of that very situatedness, of its transience. The chapters that follow will see the unfolding of the body into perpetual becoming: becoming-child in Nothomb, becoming-molecular in Devi, becoming-animal in Darrieussecq, becoming-nomadic in Bouraoui. In these works, a vital and dynamic conception of female corporeality is mobilised that liberates the body beyond the confines of the self-identical and the transcendent. But, as we shall see, the collapsing of specificity into absolute difference and imperceptibility nonetheless arguably raises concerns for anything that we might think of as a grounded feminist politics.

### **Difference: Politics, Philosophy, Literature**

The becoming of the body according to Deleuze does not involve the iteration of the same, but takes place in a relation of repetition and absolute difference. Deleuzian

difference overturns the conventional Aristotelian principle wherein difference is produced between two terms in relation to something that they already have in common. Deleuze conceives instead of a concept of absolute difference, in which difference is not relative to that which is identical:

Que l'identité n'est pas primaire, qu'elle existe comme principe, mais comme second principe, comme principe *devenu*; qu'elle tourne autour du Différent, telle est la nature d'une révolution copernicienne qui ouvre à la différence la possibilité de son concept propre, au lieu de la maintenir sous la domination d'un concept en général posé comme identique. (Deleuze 1968: 59, original italics)<sup>46</sup>

If difference is only understood with reference to what is self-identical, it will necessarily be given a negative dimension, Deleuze argues, since it will be identified purely in terms of not being something else which *is*. A concept of absolute difference, on the other hand, must have no sense of mediation by the identical. It must refer to other differences that do not identify it but rather differentiate it:

‘Chaque chose, chaque être doit voir sa propre identité engloutie dans la différence, chacun n'étant plus qu'une différence entre des différences. Il faut montrer la différence allant *différent*’ (Deleuze 1968: 79, original italics).<sup>47</sup>

Deleuzian difference as intensive, and as internal to itself, enables feminism insofar as it allows for a conception of sexual difference beyond an external binary that necessarily rests on a principle of identity. Such a conception might instead think through difference in terms of the ‘play of multiple differences that structure the



subject' that are 'neither harmonious nor homogenous, but rather internally differentiated' (Braidotti 2002: 28). Further, thinking through sexual difference in terms of intensive difference, and looking to different bodily distributions and behaviours that posit 'different responses to the given within the given' (Colebrook 2000: 125), allows sexual difference itself to be considered as a problem rather than a given. As Colebrook argues, 'if sexual difference is not theorised *from* a metaphysics, but is confronted as a problem, then we might take the issues of sexual difference and use them to *think*' (Colebrook 2000: 126, original italics). The becoming of the body as always perpetually other than itself thus necessitates the thinking through of sexual difference as a problem that strains away from its resolution.

But it is at the two limit-points of becoming – becoming-woman as the key to all becomings and becoming-imperceptible as the end of all becomings – that the tensions of a Deleuzian conception of corporeality for the purposes of a feminist politics of difference are patent. As we have seen, the concept of becoming-woman has proved a particular point of contention for feminists such as Irigaray and Jardine, who argue that taking 'woman' as the starting point for becoming necessarily works towards the invisibilisation of femininity. Deleuzian feminists too find it difficult to reconcile Deleuze's use of terms here. On the one hand, insofar as becoming-woman involves interrogating molar roles of femininity, it would seem to constitute a welcome sense of resistance to the binary polarisation that privileges men at the expense of women. At the same time, the concept raises problems for feminism precisely because Deleuze neglects to take into account the position from which one is becoming. Even as Deleuze acknowledges becoming-woman as a move towards the minoritarian, and as such seemingly acknowledges the position of women themselves

as existing in a minority, he seems at the same time to obscure that very position. In other words, becoming-molecular-woman rather than being-a-woman may indeed prove enabling, but exactly what it involves may differ depending on the position from which one is becoming (Grosz 1994b: 207). As Braidotti notes, ‘Deleuze proceeds *as if* there was clear equivalence in the speaking positions of the sexes: he misses and consequently fails to take into account the central point of feminism’ (Braidotti 2002: 79, original italics). One might make the case that Deleuze is not exactly claiming a specifically feminist stance here, that becoming-woman takes part in a wider series of becoming-minoritarian, and, indeed, that the whole of Deleuzian philosophy is governed by the refusal of specific subject positions anyway, including those that indicate sexual identity. Nonetheless that becoming-woman is posited as the ‘key’ to becoming seems both significant and unsettling. As I shall go on to discuss further below, one of the principal difficulties of reconciling a Deleuzian philosophy with any kind of conventional or molar identity politics lies in its resistance to a stable subject position. And yet, in limiting the becoming-otherwise of gender to the concept of ‘becoming-woman’, in disallowing a becoming-man, and thinking merely in terms of reversing the binary, Deleuze would seem somehow almost to be participating in its reiteration. As Lorraine (1999: 187) argues, ‘labeling a becoming “becoming-woman” is already to trade in stereotypes that the move from identity politics to a micropolitics was meant to counter if the possibility of the becoming-man of woman as well as the becoming-woman of man is excluded.’ Despite the argument for a spectrum of thousand tiny sexes, the specific and constrained use of terminology with regard to becoming-woman would seem strangely caught between the conditions of two limit-points: on the one hand, invisibilising femininity as an entry-point to the imperceptible, and on the other,

seeming to rehearse a binary, asymmetrical logic that is cast back to the molar. As a concept, becoming-woman will be under particular scrutiny in the chapters that follow, and its mobilisations in literature indicate both the stranglehold of particular conceptions of femininity on the female body and as well as the possibilities for a micro-politics that it might otherwise reveal.

There are further concerns for a feminist politics that assemble around the limit-points of becoming. For, while a Deleuzian philosophy of absolute difference read in feminist terms might open out intensive and internal difference, for Deleuze absolute difference is in the end irrevocably tied to indifferentiation, indiscernability and imperceptibility. While the appeal of the concepts of becoming-otherwise and counter-actualising the given endures, the question for the Deleuzian feminist remains: how far can one go towards imperceptibility before losing oneself entirely? How far can one experiment with making oneself a Body without Organs? Deleuze and Guattari push at the limit: 'Allons encore plus loin, nous n'avons pas encore trouvé notre CsO, pas assez défait notre moi' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 187).<sup>48</sup> Countering transcendence seems to necessitate living on the edge, experimenting in anorexia, alcoholism or schizophrenia. Self-annihilation, or overdose, may well be a danger (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 198-9; 2004b: 177-8), but Deleuze advocates going just far enough, just enough to widen the crack, without falling into it completely. Lorraine (1999: 135) argues that, despite Deleuze's insistence on molecular becoming, 'one does not get the impression from reading his work that he really intends to disappear'. Indeed, there is an insistence upon caution, or the art of dosages, and Deleuze and Guattari appear to provide parameters that would avoid losing oneself entirely: 'On n'y va

pas à coups de marteau, mais avec une lime très fine. On invente des autodestructions qui ne se confondent pas avec la pulsion de mort' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 198).<sup>49</sup> But precisely how such criteria are upheld is rather less obvious, and this book will be concerned with seeking out the edges of female corporeality and thinking about where the limit might be located.

A philosophy that pushes at the edges of existence cannot easily be reconciled with any kind of politics in the conventional sense. Thinking about politics after Deleuze, then, requires being open to the deconstruction of very idea of identity politics, highlighting not only the flux of identity but recognising the contingent nature of politics too.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, interrogating the essentialism of the idea of identity politics is resonant with recent feminism more broadly, in particular in the work of theorists such as Judith Butler or Diana Fuss.<sup>51</sup> For Deleuzian feminists, deconstructing molar politics involves thinking through the possibilities of becoming-minoritarian in the terms of a micro-politics of desire. For desire, as we have seen, is ultimately revolutionary and through its flows and assemblages it has the capacity to transform and to destabilise the molar. Accordingly, Braidotti (2002: 84) argues for a 'becoming-nomad' as 'undoing the oppositional dualism of majority/minority and arousing an affirmative passion for the transformative flows that destabilise all identities'. A micro-politics thus goes beyond the logic of reversibility towards a Deleuzian a-subjective that transforms notions of individuality, where becoming is a 'trans-personal mode, ultimately collective' (Braidotti 2002: 85). For many feminists, grounding a politics after Deleuze also involves mapping different positions, tempering Deleuze with a more recognisable form of (identity) politics, or with psychoanalytical concepts that give

some semblance of shape or form to Deleuzian vitality.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, then, a feminist micro-politics of difference involves engaging in creative reading and writing strategies, setting Deleuzian philosophy in motion as a means to forge a new feminism.

Creating dialogues between literary articulations of female corporeality and Deleuzian philosophy, this book intends to open out further questions about the possible politics of the becoming of the body. Questions concerning the literary itself – reading, writing, creativity and art – become crucial at this point. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the three forms of thought – philosophy, science, and art – are equally creative in their different ways of confronting the infinity of the universe with the aim of tracing a map. While science renounces the infinite through the process of referential propositions and partial observations, philosophy is open to immanence and to the creation of the infinite. The relationship of art to the infinite is more reflexive and intertwined: ‘L’art veut créer du fini qui redonne l’infini: il trace un plan de composition, qui porte à son tour des monuments ou des sensations composées sous l’action de figures esthétiques’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 186).<sup>53</sup> Art struggles against chaos but with the result of being able to cast light into it and allowing the virtual to be experienced: ‘L’art lutte effectivement avec le chaos, mais pour y faire surgir une vision qui l’illumine un instant, une Sensation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1991: 192).<sup>54</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, art is not representation, nor does it have an opinion. Art intertwines with the flux of immanence and unravels the organisation of transcendent perception, creating affect and sensation. It is a becoming in the sense that it reaches beyond its own terms and enfolds the virtual, rather than representing the actual: ‘Le

devenir est une capture, une possession, une plus-value, jamais une reproduction ou une imitation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 25).<sup>55</sup> Art thus involves an interaction of the actual and the virtual, insofar as it traverses immanence and allows life in its fullest sense to be grasped or experienced through sensation. Writing, or literature, can be understood as a flow through immanence that touches the actual and the virtual. As Deleuze writes, 'Ecrire est une affaire de devenir, toujours inachevé, toujours en train de se faire, et qui déborde toute matière vivable ou vécu. C'est un processus, c'est-à-dire un passage de Vie qui traverse le vivable et le vécu.' (Deleuze 1993a: 11)<sup>56</sup>

It is in an understanding of art as an interrelation of the actual and the virtual that this book proceeds. It conceives of writing, above all, as a site of slippage. In the chapters that follow, it will be argued that literary articulations of the becoming of the body touch upon the flux of immanence, creating new forms of the body that traverse the actual and the virtual and experimenting with the edges of corporeality. As an art form, literature will of course offer more scope for the creative experimentation with the shape and form of the female body, and a Deleuzian philosophy of pushing at the limit will be easier to reconcile with literary experiment in women's writing than with a feminist conception of the materiality of experience. But in analysing forms of female corporeality, the chapters that follow are concerned precisely with testing further the relations between the actual and the virtual, between Deleuze and feminism, and between art and experience. As outlined in the introduction, the writers that I analyse in subsequent chapters do not write with a particular feminist politics in mind. If Deleuzian philosophy provides a fertile set of concepts with which to think through

their creative re-envisionings of corporeality, one can also perceive reflections between these writers and Deleuze in their ambivalent attitudes towards embodiment, disembodiment and the location of the limit. The book is thus interested in exploring that ambivalence within the postfeminist context of contemporary women's writing in French sketched in the introduction. It will also linger upon whether, despite the vital creativity of their imaginings, such writings may end up mobilising Deleuzian visions of experience around deterritorialisation, dissipation and flight, that, as Peter Hallward (2006: 162) has argued 'can only offer the most immaterial and evanescent grip on the mechanisms of exploitation and domination that continue to condition so much of what happens in our world'.

Interestingly, for all of Deleuze's insistence on encounters and on the creation of new concepts, his own practice of reading literature seems somehow to resist the openness to thought that his entire philosophy engenders. As Colin Davis argues, Deleuze's acts of literary interpretation are presented as a rather resolute and repetitive insistence on a particular set of rehearsed (Deleuzian) concepts. In his readings of Proust and Kafka, it is certainly striking that, in Davis's (2010: 79) words: 'He seems to learn little that is new from the creators to whom he nevertheless attends in such careful detail.' This book hopes not to fall into a similar trap, and intends to open out perspectives on female corporeality without reducing the creativity of different writers, texts and concepts to a resolute paradigm. My readings of the female body in subsequent chapters will address different aspects of Deleuzian philosophy, then, rather than overstating an absolute resonance for each author with a more global conception of his thought. Further, my readings of literary texts aim to instantiate the ways in which a Deleuzian vocabulary resonates with articulations of female

corporeality, but also to address its possible insufficiencies in terms of theorising the becoming of the body.

For Deleuze, if art has no opinion, it nonetheless contains a micro-political function insofar as it helps to avert the illusion of transcendence through its counter-actualisation. The writer him/herself is always minoritarian, not necessarily in that s/he belongs to a minority, but that writing always encounters a minority that does not write. Though the writer does not write on this minority's behalf, there is an encounter, 'où chacun pousse l'autre, l'entraîne dans sa ligne de fuite, dans une déterritorialisation conjuguée' (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 56).<sup>57</sup> Writing thus involves composition and counterpoint, connection and encounter. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1991: 178) words, 'Le contrepoint ne sert pas à rapporter des conversations, réelles ou fictives, mais à faire monter la folie de toute conversation, de tout dialogue, même intérieur.'<sup>58</sup> Literary counterpoint entails the intertwining of creative encounters that form a collective. As Ian Buchanan and John Marks explain:

Ultimately, the political task of writing consists in 'inventing' a people who do not yet exist. In the same way that writers do not write with their ego, so they do not write on behalf of a people. The collective emerges, in this way, from the writer's creation of pre-individual singularities. The 'collective', in Deleuzian terms, is a form of 'delirium', speaking *with*, writing *with*. (Buchanan and Marks 2000: 2, original italics)

This book suggests that, though the authors under study do not write from a clearly positioned feminist politics, their articulations of female corporeality nonetheless



mobilise in writing an encounter with the political through the very invention of the new and the interfacing of the actual and the virtual. Further, the book itself aims to participate in a strategy of ‘speaking *with*, writing *with*’. If Deleuzian feminists have engaged creatively with Deleuze as a means to think through a contemporary politics of difference, this book too wants to map encounters between different positions, and in its particular engagement with the literary, it aims to open out its own political interventions. Such a rhizomatic strategy, or epistemic nomadism as Braidotti (1994b: 177) terms it, would seem crucial to contemporary feminism in an engagement with thought beyond its own particular terms, ‘going between different discursive fields, passing through diverse spheres of intellectual discourse [...] moving on, passing through, creating connections where things were previously disconnected or seemed unrelated, where there seemed to be “nothing to see”. In transit, moving, displacing...’ In this book, then, reading is conceived as a creative and rhizomatic act. The book seeks to unearth crosscurrents and connections, allowing the literary, the philosophical and the political to inflect one another in its consideration of the becoming of the body in contemporary women’s writing in French. In so doing, it conceives of both writing and of reading, after Deleuze, not as a mimetic, representational act that fixes meaning or that submits to ideological constraints, but as an agentive, aleatory and creative connection to the immanence of experience. In Deleuze and Guattari’s words: ‘La littérature est un agencement, elle n’a rien à voir avec de l’idéologie [...] Écrire n’a rien à voir avec signifier, mais avec arpenter, cartographier, même des contrées à venir’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 10-11).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Philosophy is the theory of multiplicities, each of which is composed of actual and virtual elements. Purely actual objects do not exist. Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images.’ (Deleuze 2006: 112)

<sup>2</sup> ‘To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 3-4)

<sup>3</sup> From this chapter onwards, reference will be made to a range of sole-authored and collaborative works by Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari. To avoid clumsy and confusing phrasing, I will generally refer to ‘Deleuze’ and to ‘Deleuzian’ theories; but where specific texts or concepts pertain to co-authored works, I will refer to ‘Deleuze and Guattari’ and to ‘DeleuzoGuattarian’ theories. Of course, there will inevitably be some slippage here.

<sup>4</sup> My approach is in keeping with literary critics such as Françoise Lionnet (1989: 27), among others, in its concern not to impose a ‘theoretical grid’ on the literary text. But it also resonates, as we shall see, with a Deleuzian philosophy of encounters and rhizomatic reading.

<sup>5</sup> ‘philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts’. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2)

<sup>6</sup> ‘it is about getting something through in every past, present, and future code, something which does not and will not let itself be recorded. Getting it through on a new body, inventing a body on which it can pass and flow: a body that would be ours, the body of Earth, the body of writing.’ (Deleuze 2004a: 253)

<sup>7</sup> ‘one day, perhaps, the century will be Deleuzian’.

<sup>8</sup> Published by Edinburgh University Press, under the series editor Ian Buchanan.

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<sup>9</sup> ‘isn’t it necessary to have had a relation of language and sex to the organs – that women have never had?’ (Irigaray 1985: 141)

<sup>10</sup> See Colebrook 2000, 2009; Braidotti 1994a, 1994b, 2000, 2002; Grosz 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1999, 2008; Lorraine 1999; Olkowski 1999, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> ‘From what is given, I infer the existence of that which is not given: I believe. [...] At the same time and through the same operation, while transcending the given, I judge and posit myself as subject. I affirm more than I know.’ (Deleuze 1991: 85-6)

<sup>12</sup> ‘In itself, the mind is not subject: it is a given collection of impressions and separate ideas.’ (Deleuze 1991: 132)

<sup>13</sup> ‘The mind is not subject; it is subjected. When the subject is constituted in the mind under the effect of principles, the mind apprehends itself as a self, for it has been qualified.’ (Deleuze 1991: 31)

<sup>14</sup> ‘*when its vividness is mobilized in such away that the part characterized by vividness (impression) communicates it to another part (idea), and also, when all the parts taken together resonate in the act of producing something new.*’ (Deleuze 1991: 132, original italics)

<sup>15</sup> ‘a shadowy and secret part that is continually subtracted from or added to its actualization: in contrast with the state of affairs, it neither begins or ends but has gained or kept the infinite movement to which it gives consistency.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 156)

<sup>16</sup> ‘My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it!’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 49)

<sup>17</sup> ‘extracting the pure event which unites me with those whom I love, who await me no more than I await them, since the event alone awaits us, *Eventum tantum*. Making

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an event – however small – is the most delicate thing in the world: the opposite of making a drama or making a story.’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 49)

<sup>18</sup> ‘when substantives and adjectives begin to dissolve, when the names of pause and rest are carried away by the verbs of pure becoming and slide into the language of events, all identity disappears from the self, the world, and God.’ (Deleuze 2004b: 5)

<sup>19</sup> ‘The world is predication itself, manners being the particular predicates, and the subject, what goes from one predicate to another as if from one aspect of the world to another.’ (Deleuze 1993b: 53)

<sup>20</sup> ‘Folding-unfolding no longer simply means tension-release, contraction-dilation, but enveloping-developing, involution-evolution.’ (Deleuze 1993b: 8)

<sup>21</sup> ‘the whole world is only a virtuality that currently exists only in the folds of the soul which convey it, the soul implementing inner pleats through which it endows itself with a representation of the enclosed world. We are moving from inflection to inclusion in a subject, as if from the virtual to the real, inflection defining the fold, but inclusion defining the soul or the subject, that is what envelops the fold, its final cause and its completed act.’ (Deleuze 1993b: 23)

<sup>22</sup> See also Badiou’s critique of Deleuze in Badiou 1997.

<sup>23</sup> ‘It is an extremely sinuous fold, a zigzag, a primal tie that cannot be located.’ (Deleuze 1993b: 120)

<sup>24</sup> ‘Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing nameable. And at the same time this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn’t even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack. Being attains a sense of self in relation to being as a function of this lack, in the experience of desire. In the pursuit of this beyond, which is nothing, it harks back to the feeling of a being with

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self-consciousness, which is nothing but its own reflection in the world of things.’

(Lacan 1991: 223-4)

<sup>25</sup> ‘man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other – not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc); rather they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product. Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 5)

<sup>26</sup> ‘desire does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined, introducing therein breaks and captures – an always nomadic and migrant desire, characterized first of all by its “gigantism”.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 322)

<sup>27</sup> ‘a microscopic transsexuality, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering – men with women, women with men – into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 325)

<sup>28</sup> ‘The body without organs is not the proof of an original nothingness, nor is it what remains of a lost totality.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 9)

<sup>29</sup> ‘The BwO is not opposed to the organs; rather, the BwO and its “true organs,” which must be composed and positioned, are opposed to the organism, the organic organization of the organs.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 176)

<sup>30</sup> ‘it is all life and lived experience’. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 21)

<sup>31</sup> ‘The BwO is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any

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exterior agency, whether it be lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it).’

(Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 170-1)

<sup>32</sup> ‘The orchid seems to form a wasp image, but in fact there is a wasp-becoming of the orchid, and orchid-becoming of the wasp, a double capture since ‘what’ each becomes changes no less than ‘that which’ becomes. The wasp becomes part of the orchid’s reproductive apparatus at the same time as the orchid becomes the sexual organ of the wasp.’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 2)

<sup>33</sup> ‘in the middle, adjacent’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 22).

<sup>34</sup> ‘Substitute the AND for IS. A *and* B.’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 42)

<sup>35</sup> ‘the narrow stream which belongs to the one nor to the other, but draws both into a non-parallel evolution, into a heterochronous becoming (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 26).

<sup>36</sup> ‘extra-being, inter-being’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 43).

<sup>37</sup> ‘becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once: Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa.’ (Deleuze 2004b: 3)

<sup>38</sup> ‘The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points [...] A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 419)

<sup>39</sup> ‘A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 262)

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- <sup>40</sup> ‘There is nothing metaphoric about the becoming-animal. No symbolism, no allegory.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 35)
- <sup>41</sup> ‘To become wolf or to become hole is to deterritorialize oneself following distinct but entangled lines.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 36)
- <sup>42</sup> ‘There is no becoming-man because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 322)
- <sup>43</sup> ‘emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 304)
- <sup>44</sup> ‘the zone of proximity, indiscernibility, or indifferenciation where one can no longer be distinguished from *a* woman, *an* animal, or *a* molecule’. (Deleuze 1997: 1, original italics)
- <sup>45</sup> ‘To reduce oneself to an abstract line, a trait, in order to find one’s zone of indiscernibility with other traits, and in this way enter the haccuity and impersonality of the creator.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 309)
- <sup>46</sup> ‘That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical.’ (Deleuze 1994: 40-1, original italics)
- <sup>47</sup> ‘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*.’ (Deleuze 1994: 56, original italics)
- <sup>48</sup> ‘Let’s go further still, we haven’t found our BwO yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled our self.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 167)

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<sup>49</sup> ‘ You don’t do it with a sledgehammer, you use a very fine file. You invent self-destructions that have nothing to do with the death drive.’ (Deleuze and Guattari: 2004b: 177)

<sup>50</sup> See Patton 2000 and Protevi 2001 for accounts of the deconstructive relationship between Deleuze and politics more broadly.

<sup>51</sup> Diana Fuss (1989: 104-5), for example, calls into question the view that, in order for feminism to be politically effective, political identities themselves must necessarily be secure and coherent. Further, she seeks to undermine the idea that politics must be ‘steady and localizable’, a notion that she believes itself can easily lead to ‘disaffection and political factiousness’. Similarly, Judith Butler (2004: 224-6) argues that any kind of social transformation must entail the recognition of its own instability and must maintain a continual process of reworking, such that it emerges ‘anew as a result of the cultural translations it undergoes’. For Butler, politically transformative work is necessarily based on uncertainty as to the future, on openness and unknowingness, and on an awareness that a certain agonism and contestation must be in play for politics to be democratic.

<sup>52</sup> Braidotti 2002, Lorraine 1999 and Olkowski 2000, for example, are interested in tracing lines between Deleuze and Irigaray, while Grosz 1994a and Driscoll 2000 track relations between Kristeva and Deleuze. Braidotti’s work (1996; 2006) also interweaves Deleuze with the cyberfeminism of thinkers such as Donna Haraway.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turns, through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 197)

<sup>54</sup> ‘Art indeed struggles with chaos, but it does so in order to bring forth a vision that illuminates it for an instant, a Sensation.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 204)



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<sup>55</sup> ‘The act of becoming is a capturing, a possession, a plus-value, but never a reproduction or an imitation.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 13)

<sup>56</sup> ‘Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived.’  
(Deleuze 1997: 1)

<sup>57</sup> ‘in which each pushes the other, draws it on to its line of flight in a combined deterritorialization.’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: 33)

<sup>58</sup> ‘Counterpoint serves not to report real or fictional conversations but to bring out the madness of all conversation and all dialogue, even interior dialogue.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 188)

<sup>59</sup> ‘Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology [...] Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping even realms that are yet to come.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 4-5)