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# Micropolitics of Media Culture

**Reading the Rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari**

*Edited by*

*Patricia Pisters*

*with assistance of Catherine M. Lord*

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## 9 How to Endure Intensity

### Towards a Sustainable Nomadic Subject

Rosi Braidotti

#### Introduction: 'eco-philosophy'

Deleuze's philosophy of becoming is neither the swinging of the pendulum of dialectical oppositions, nor is it the unfolding of an essence in a teleologically ordained process. His philosophy of becoming does not lead to the establishment of a supervising agency – be it the ego, the self or the bourgeois liberal definition of the individual. Rather, the Deleuzian becoming is the affirmation of the unalterably positive structure of difference, meant as a multiple and complex process of transformation and a flux of multiple becomings. Accordingly, the thinking subject is not the expression of in-depth interiority, nor is it the enactment of transcendental models of reflexive consciousness.

The fact is that this model of subjectivity stresses complexities and multiplicity. However, it does not produce an infinitely regressing relativistic scheme. In this essay I will try to counteract the charge of relativism and moral nihilism that is often made against nomadic views of subjectivity. I would want to argue that there is much to be gained from Deleuze's radical philosophy of immanence, especially after all the dust and polemic about relativism have finally settled down. I am not proposing this in a spirit of philosophical corporatism, but rather out of a deep conviction that a qualitative leap is necessary for thinkers to emerge from the aporias and paradoxes that our historical condition imposes upon us.

Nomadic becoming is essentially an ethics of transformative forces. According to Gatens and Lloyd, it is an ethiology that defines Deleuze's project of philosophy as the imaginative reinvestment of reason and its application to social critique.<sup>1</sup> I also think that it is an aesthetic mode of absolute immersion of one's sensibility into the field of forces – music, colour, light, speed, temperature, intensity – which one is attempting to capture. Deleuze argues that painters make visible forces that previously were not, much as composers make us hear sounds that have never before been heard. Similarly, phi-

Iosophers can make new concepts thinkable.<sup>2</sup> It comes down to a question of style, but style here is no mere rhetorical device but a set of material co-ordinates. Once these are assembled and composed in a sustainable and enduring manner that allows for the expression of the affectivity and the forces involved, these co-ordinates thus trigger the process of becoming.

In his discussion on the history of philosophy, Deleuze describes the study of classical philosophical texts as a set of portrait-studies – of landscapes as well as faces. By tending to each detail and nuance attentively, the apprentice learns gradually to *approach* the use of colours. Concepts are to philosophy what color is to painting. To learn how to approach them, however, one needs modesty, hard work and, ultimately, time. These are long-term endeavours. Moreover, the process of creativity/becoming is impersonal in that it requires the complete concentration of the author, be it the philosopher, writer, painter, filmmaker or composer, upon the field/territory s/he is immersed in. What is at stake is not the manipulation of a set of linguistic or narrative conventions; nor is it the cognitive penetration of an object or the appropriation of a theme; instead, the aim is to develop the ability to find orientation in a territory. Thinking here is the skill that consists in developing a compass of the cognitive, affective and ethical kind.

An exercise in cartographic bearings and orientation requires concentration upon the outside. In turn, this implies the abandonment of the self and of the century-old habits of inward-looking self-reflexivity. Quoting Spinoza but also *Zen and the Art of Archery*, Deleuze calls for an ascetic surrender of the self – of one's cherished but ultimately limited identity and the opening up of one's perceptive apparatus into a complex of multiple connections, sensations, perceptions and imaginings.<sup>3</sup> To create music, colours, concepts means to be able to render in a sustainable format this complexity of intense but impersonal affects, as well as being capable of sustaining the internally dissonant forces that structure these affects. The activity of thinking in this respect is closer to that of mindful breathing than it is to the exercise of the sterile protocols of institutional reason.

Whereas psychoanalytic theories of artistic creation play this back upon the holy Hegelian trinity of Lack, Law and power of the Signifier, an intensive or nomadic approach stresses the productive, rather than the regressive, structure of these forces. Shedding the mental habit that consists in Oedipalising the process of creation by indexing it indefinitely on an economy of guilt and unpayable ontological debts, what I find in rhizomatics is an overcoming of the dialectics of negativity. Nomadic, rhizomic thinking offers simultaneously a point of exit from the linguistic-semiotic, vicious circles of absence and negativity, as well as an empowerment of affective and unconscious forces as active, expressive, productive. At the heart of

rhizomatics is a reading of the human as a positive, pleasure-prone machine capable of all sorts of empowering forces. It is just a question of establishing the most positive of possible connections and resonances.

A new philosophical concept, say an alternative view of subjectivity, or a new system of representation, a new sound or an alternative image produces a break-through in old mental habits. What is produced is a concept and affect that break through the established frame, illuminating a territory by providing orientation co-ordinates; made visible/thinkable/sayable/hearable are forces, passions and affects which were not perceived before. Thus, the question of creation is ultimately *technological*: it is about how. It is also *geological*: it is about where and in which territory. Ultimately, it is *ethical*: it is about where to set the limits and how to sustain the processes of change without hurting self or other. Resisting the aesthetics of nihilistic self-destruction is crucial also as a way of exiting the Romantic imaginary that still surrounds this debate in Europe. The issue about intensity is how to endure it, sustaining the altered states and the heightened intensity which the processes of becoming inevitably entail.

The concept of sustainability is no easy matter. I am of the generation that lost so many of its specimens to the dead-end experimentations of the narcotic, political, sexual or technological kind. Although it is true that we lost as many if not more of our members to the stultifying inertia of the *status quo* – a sort of generalized 'Stepford wives' syndrome – it is nonetheless the case that I have developed an acute awareness of how painful, dangerous and difficult changes are. They need to be dosed and timed carefully, according to one's threshold of sustainability. For the moment, let me stress then that the process of becoming is this trip across different fields of perception, different spatio-temporal co-ordinates. It is simultaneously a slowing-down of the rhythm of daily frenzy and an acceleration of awareness, self-knowledge and the senses. When dosed correctly it can lead to shifts in one's sense and orientation in the world – nothing as grandiose as Huxley's drug-induced hope of throwing open the doors of perception. Rather something more humble, like a quickening of one's perception, a being-there with and for other entities, forces, beings, so as to be transported fully into the magnificent chaos of life.

The notion of sustainability is not only an economic but also a social and ethical one. I see it as a positive answer to the crisis that accompanies the processes of transformation of late postmodernity. I think that postmodernity as a historical moment marks the decline of some of the fundamental premises of the Enlightenment, namely the progress of mankind through a self-regulatory and teleologically ordained use of reason and of scientific rationality allocated at the 'perfectibility' of Man. This

liberatory project entails a view of subjectivity which excludes several 'boundary markers' also known as 'constitutive others': women, the ethnic or racialized others, and the natural environment are the three interconnected facets of structural difference which simultaneously construct and are excluded in modernity. As such I have argued that they play an important – albeit specular – role in the definition of the norm, the normal, the normative view of the subject. They represent a category of devalued otherness who historically have been perceived as different in the sense of being 'less than'.<sup>4</sup>

These structural 'others' re-emerge in postmodernity as the indicators, expressions or symptoms – some would say the 'cause' of the crisis – at a time when the project of modernity shows great strain, if not actual exhaustion. Deleuze and Guattari in their re-reading of 'capitalism and schizo-phrenia' bring the case against the pejorative relation to 'difference' to the point of implosion. They also propose powerful, affirmative and, in my opinion, highly necessary re-readings of subjectivity after the decline of naturalized and dialectically ordained humanistic paradigms. Significantly, Deleuze and Guattari express their new vision in terms of 'eco-philosophy'. This is to be understood primarily as a shift away from anthropocentrism, towards a new emphasis on the inextricable entanglement of material, bio-cultural and symbolic forces. It is a bio-centered egalitarianism which Deleuze is bold enough to define as 'life-forces'.<sup>5</sup>

I think that the emphasis Deleuze and Guattari place on the embodied and embedded nature of the subject – through the notion of radical immanence – gives to their philosophy an eco-logical dimension. Knowledge claims rest on the immanent structure of subjectivity and must resist the gravitational pull towards abstract transcendentality. According to Deleuze and Guattari, we need to rethink the knowing subject in terms of affectivity, interrelationality, territories, resources, locations and forces. In so doing, we shall take our leave from the spatiotemporal continuum of classical humanism. Similarly, we need to move beyond the reductionism of social constructivism, which tends to underplay the continuity of the factors that provide the empirical foundations of the subject and which are mostly related to affectivity and especially memory and desire.

In post-structuralist thought the unity is posited in terms of time. A subject is a genealogical entity, possessing his/her own counter-memory, which in turn is an expression of degrees of affectivity and interconnectedness. Viewed spatially, the post-structuralist subject may appear as fragmented and disunited; on a temporal scale, however, its unity is that of a continuing power to recollect. The genealogical ties create a continuity of disconnected fragments: this is a discontinuous sense of time, which falls under Nietz-

sche's sense of the Dionysiac as opposed to the Apollonian which, nevertheless, provides the grounds for unity in an otherwise dispersed self. Deleuze documents this discontinuous sense of time with reference to classical philosophy. He borrows from the ancient Greeks the useful distinction between the molar sense of linear, recorded time (*chronos*) and the molecular sense of cyclical, discontinuous time (*aión*). The former is related to being/the molar/the masculine, the latter to becoming/the molecular/the feminine.

### Becoming, temporality and endurance

A post-humanist and post-anthropocentric philosophy gives time a much more central place in the structuring of the subject. Deleuze's 'nomadology' as a philosophy of immanence rests on the idea of sustainability as a principle of containment and tolerable development of a subject's resources, understood environmentally, affectively and cognitively. A subject thus constituted inhabits a time that is the active tense of continuous 'becoming'. Deleuze defines the latter with reference to Bergson's concept of 'duration', thus proposing the notion of the subject as an entity that lasts, that is to say, that endures sustainable changes and transformation and enacts them around him/herself in a community or collectivity. In this perspective, even the Earth/Gaia is posited as a partner in a community which it still to come, still to be constructed by subjects who will interact with the Earth differently. In some ways close to 'deep ecology', but radically anti-essentialistic in their understanding, Deleuze and Guattari turn to Spinoza to find philosophical foundations for a vitalistic yet anti-essentialistic brand of immanence. We need to rethink continuities and totalities, but without reference to humanistic or holistic world-views. As G. Lloyd put it, this subject's mind is 'part of nature' and therefore is embedded, embodied and, in other words, immanent and dynamic.<sup>6</sup>

The notion of time is crucial here. For Deleuze, the molar streamlined and linear historical time of, for instance, emancipatory politics is both unavoidable and confining. The more effective time-span is the cyclical, dynamic and molecular time of becoming. To use an example dear to my heart, at the level of chronos, feminist women at this point in history have been legitimated in their pursuit of 'molar' positions, claiming a woman-centred redefinition of their political subjectivity and identity. In this respect, they cannot easily become 'molecular', maybe they cannot afford to undertake a full-scale deconstruction of their sex-specific identity. The feminist engage-

ment with linear historical time, however, neither replaces nor encompasses women's relationship to the discontinuous time of becoming (aion).

It is to Deleuze's credit that he can see such a distinction in time sequences, but he fails to pursue it to its logical conclusion and thus envisage the genderisation of both time and history. He thus fails to see the scope of the theoretical horizon opened by sexual difference. In Kristeva's and Irigaray's work, the dyssymmetry between the sexes stretches all the way to the most fundamental structures of being, including space and time. By comparison, Deleuze's theory of becoming and philosophy of time appear naively undifferentiated.

Feminists have argued that a complexified time-structure helps to clarify the tension and the paradox inherent in the feminist position. Thus, Irigaray rests on this analysis of the double structure of time to call for women's sense of their own genealogies, based on a bond of grateful recognition of the maternal as the site of origin. Kristeva, on the other hand, stresses the two-tiered level of time and argues for a distinction between the longer, linear model of history and the more discontinuous timing of personal genealogy and unconscious desire.<sup>7</sup> Kristeva couples this distinction with the analysis of various historical forms taken by feminist subjectivity: a form of which fits in with the linear historical time, whereas others are more attuned to cyclical patterns of repetition. By identifying the first kind with the Enlightenment belief in equality and the second with contemporary affirmations of difference, Kristeva sexualises historical sequences, developing a sense of women's own specific becoming. Although this way of associating certain forms of female subjectivity with certain moments of historical consciousness has been criticised for its Eurocentrism,<sup>8</sup> the associative procedure still marks a deep divergence from Deleuze's no less ethnocentric and considerably less feminist standpoint. There may, however, be a way of productively engaging Deleuze's sustainable subject with a more non-eurocentric, 'feminist' approach, by more profoundly articulating or bringing into deeper conceptual understanding what is meant by this sustainable subject and the way in which it becomes and endures in time.

The concept suggests a slice of living, sensible matter activated by a fundamental drive to life: a *potentia* (rather than *potestas* – by the will of God, not the secret encryption of the genetic code) and yet this subject is psychologically embedded in the corporeal materiality of the self. The enfolded intensive or nomadic subject is rather an in-between: a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding-outwards of affects. As a mobile entity in space and time, an enfolded kind of memory (and this is a concept to which I will return), this subject is in-process yet capable too of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations.

faithful to itself. This idea of the 'faithfulness' of the subject is central to the project of the 'sustainable self' that I want to defend here. This 'faithfulness to oneself' is not to be understood in the mode of the psychological or sentimental attachment to an 'identity' that often is little more than a social security number and a set of photo albums. Nor is it the mark of authenticity of a self that is a clearing house for narcissism and paranoia – the great pillars on which Western identity predicates itself – it is rather the faithfulness of duration, the expression of one's continuing belonging to certain dynamic spatiotemporal co-ordinates.

In a philosophy of temporally inscribed radical immanence, subjects differ. But they differ along materially embedded co-ordinates; they come in different mileage, temperatures and beats. One can and does change gears across these co-ordinates, but cannot claim all of them for all of the time. The latitudinal and longitudinal forces which structure the subject have limits of sustainability. By latitudinal forces Deleuze means the affects a subject is capable of following through its degrees of intensity or potentia, that is, the power to affect and to be affected. Longitude defines the span of the subject's extension, its speed and slowness.

Sustainable subjectivity re-inscribes the singularity of the self, while challenging the anthropocentrism of Western philosophies, understanding of the subject and of the attributes usually reserved for 'agency'. This sense of *limitis* is extremely important to prevent nihilistic self-destruction. To be active, intensive-nomadic does *not* mean that one is limitless. That would indeed be the kind of delirious expression of megalomania that you find a lot in the cyber-freaks of today, ready and willing to 'dissolve the bodily self into the matrix' – as the fans of THE LAWN MOWER MAN (and THE MATRIX) will know. I want to argue instead that quite to the contrary, in order to make sense of this intensive, materially embedded vision of the subject, we need a sustainability threshold. The containment of the intensities or enfolded passions and the limitation of their duration is a crucial pre-requisite which allows them to do their job. Their task consists in shooting through the humanistic frame of the subject, exploding it outwards. The dosage of the threshold of intensity is both crucial and inherent to the process of becoming.

What is this threshold, however – how does it get fixed? A radically immanent intensive body is an assemblage of forces, or flows, intensities and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time within the singular configuration commonly known as an 'individual' self. It is worth stressing again that this intensive and dynamic entity is within the enumeration of an inner rationalist essence as opposed to being merely the unfolding of general information. The threshold is a portion of forces that is stable enough

at least spatiotemporally speaking, to sustain them and to undergo constant yet non-destructive fluxes of transformation. Mutation manifests but not into the nihilism of those contemporary narco-philosophers of today who celebrate 'altered states' for their own sake.<sup>9</sup> The threshold is a field of transformative affects whose availability for changes of intensity depends firstly on its ability to sustain the encounter with and the impact of other forces or affects. Moreover, the threshold comprises a radically materialist, anti-essentialist vitalism attuned to the technological era, and as such, cannot be further removed from the illusion of wilful multiplications of virtual embodiments of the contemporary techno-/teratological or cyborg imaginary.

In other words, Deleuze's enfolded, vitalistic but not essentialistic vision of the subject is a self-sustainable one owing a great deal to the project of an ecology of the self. As I argued earlier, the rhythm, speed and sequencing of the affects as well as the selection of the forces are crucial to the process of becoming. It is the pattern of re-occurrence of these changes that marks the successive steps in the process, thus allowing for the actualization of forces that are apt to frame and thus express the singularity of the subject. This is a way of containing the excessive edges of the discourse about the technologies of today, notably the denial of the materiality of the body itself in favour of fantasies of escape into the machine, while making sense of the powerful mutations that are taking place. Deleuze proposes a form of neo-materialism and a blend of vitalism that I find attuned to the technological era.

What I want to argue however is that thinking through the body and not in a flight from it means confronting the boundaries and limitations of a subject lying at the intersections with external, relational forces. Thinking through the body concerns assemblages. Encountering them is almost a matter for geography, leading to questions of orientations, points of entry and exit, and a constant un-folding. In this field of transformative forces, sustainability is a very concrete practice rather than the abstract ideal that some of our development and social-planning specialists often reduce it to. Sustainability is a basic concept about the embodied and embedded nature of the subject. The sensibility towards and availability for changes or transformation are directly proportional to the subject's ability to sustain the shifts without cracking. The border, the framing or containing practices are crucial to the whole operation, and one which aims at affirmative not dissipative processes of becoming, but joyful-becoming and *potentia* as radically ontological forces of empowerment.

G. Lloyd's remarkable studies of Spinoza and her collaborative effort with Gatens are helpful in explaining how such a vitalistic and positive

sion of the subject is linked to an ethics of passion that aims at joy and not at destruction.<sup>10</sup> If it is the case that the composition of the forces that propel the subject, that is, the rhythm, speed and sequencing of the affects as well as the selection of the constitutive elements, are the key processes, then it is the orchestrated repetition and re-occurrence of these changes that marks the steps in the process of becoming even more intensive. In other words, the actualisation of a field of forces, argues Lloyd, is the *effect* of an adequate dosage, while it is also (and simultaneously) the prerequisite for sustaining those same forces. As Lloyd put it, 'the common notions of reason are grounded in imagination and conceived in joy'.<sup>11</sup> I would synthesise Lloyd and Deleuze into the concept of a sustainable self that aims at endurance.

The temporal dimension is linked to endurance, which is concerned with the state of lasting in time, and hence is connected to duration and self-perpetuation, with all the traces of Bergson implied. But endurance also has a spatial side associated with the space of the body as an enfolded field of actualisation of passions or forces. It evolves affectivity and joyfully, with all the traces of Spinoza implied, as in the capacity for being affected by these forces, be these to the point of pain or extreme pleasure – which comes to the same – it means putting up with, tolerating hardship and physical pain.

Apart from providing the key to an ethiology of forces, endurance is also an ethical principle of affirmation of the positivity of the intensive subject and its joyful affirmation as *potentia*. Lloyd's reading of Deleuze's reading of Spinoza suggested to me the notion of *endurance* as a spatiotemporal compound which frames the boundaries of processes of becoming. This works by the power of transformation of negativity, transforming negative into positive passions through the power of an understanding that is no longer indexed upon a phallogocentric set of standards, but is rather unhinged and affective, imaginative, dynamic, complex. This sort of turning of the tide of negativity is the transformative process of achieving freedom, not through boundaries thrown awry, but through the awareness of our limits and of our bondage. This involves the freedom to affirm one's *potentia* or joy, requiring the encounters and mingling with other bodies, entities, beings and forces.

Becoming is an intransitive process. This does not comprise becoming anything in particular, but only what one is attracted to and capable of sustaining to life's edge but not over it, and hence exit Bataille. Even though not deprived of violence, becoming is deeply compassionate, forming an ethical and political sensibility that begins with the recognition of one's limitations as the necessary counterpart of one's forces or intensive encounters with multiple others. It has to do with the adequacy of one's intensity to the modes and time of its enactment. It can only be embodied and embedded,

## Reason, memory and imagination

Two notions support sustainability and make it work: memory and imagination.

Re-membering is about repetition or the retrieval of information. In the human subject, that information is stored throughout the physical and experiential density of the embodied self and not only in the 'black box' of the psyche. I find Deleuze's distinction between a 'majority' and a 'minority' memory very useful in illuminating the paradoxes and the riches of repetition as the engine of identity and coherence of the self.

First, is the notion of a 'minority' memory (*mémoire*) which is crucial to Deleuze's process of becoming. The phallogocentric subject, representing the majority of white, heterosexual, property-owning males, holds a large databank of centralised knowledge. He (and the gendering is absolutely *not* coincidental) holds the keys to the central memory of the system and has reduced the alternative or subjugated memories of the many minorities to the rank of a-signifying practices. Again, Freud's early psychoanalytic insights had caught a glimpse of two crucial notions: firstly, that processes of re-membering extended well beyond the rationalistic control of consciousness. In fact, consciousness is merely the tip of the iceberg of a far more complex set of resonances, echo and data processing which we commonly call 'memory'. Moreover, these processes of remembering are enfolded; they encompass the embodied self as a whole and therefore rest on somatic layers that call for a specific form of (psycho) analysis.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, however, Freud immediately closes the very door that he had half-opened when he re-indexes this vitalistic and time-bound definition of the subject onto the necessity to conform to dominant sociocultural expectations about civilised adult human behaviour. Deleuze and Guattari argue that Lacan operates a sort of kidnapping of the subject from the solid, bodily or somatic grounds of Freudian psychoanalysis. This has the advantage of radicalising the politics of psychoanalysis by attacking conventional morality, expectations about bourgeois propriety and the reformist impact of American-dominated 'ego-psychology'. Lacan's approach also has the disadvantage, however, of introducing into the conceptual framework of the psychoanalytic subject a heavier dose of Hegelian dialectics, mostly through the idea of desire as lack and the role of negativity in the constitution of consciousness. This emerges as a major point of disagreement between Lacan and Deleuze, which I have outlined earlier.

In Deleuze's becomings, the Bergsonian continuous present is set in opposition to the tyranny of the past. This occurs not only in the history of philosophy but also in the psychoanalytic notion of remembering, repeating and working-through, that is, the retrieval of repressed psychic material. Via Bergson, Deleuze disengages memory from its indexicalising of a fixed identity, done so because predicated upon a majority-subject. The memory of the logocentric or 'molar' subject is a huge data-bank of centralised information, which is relayed through every aspect of His activities, the gender here being anything but coincidental.

The majority subject holds the key to the central memory of the system, thus reduced to an insignificant or rather 'a-signifying' role. The memories of the minorities, subjugated, marginal alternative 'counter-memories', as Foucault used to call them, engender empowering differences. In reaction to this centralised, monolithic memory, Deleuze activates a minority-memory, which is a power of remembering without *a priori* prepositional attachment to the centralised databank. This intensive, zigzagging, cyclical and messy type of remembering does not even aim at retrieving information in a linear manner. It simply intuitively endures. It functions rather as a deterritorializing agency that dislodges the subject from his unified and centralised location. It disconnects the subject from his/her identification with logocentric consciousness, and it shifts the emphasis from Being to becoming.

The minority-memory propels the process of becoming by liberating something akin to Foucault's 'counter-memory': a faculty that, instead of retrieving in a linear order specific catalogue memories (*les souvenirs*), functions instead as a deterritorialising agency which dislodges the subject from his/her sense of unified and consolidated identity. It destabilises identity by opening up spaces where virtual possibilities can be actualised. It is a sort of empowerment of all that was not programmed within the dominant memory. Minority-memory bears a close link to the idea of a traumatic event. A trauma is by definition an event that shatters the boundaries of the subject and blurs his/her sense of identity. Traumas cancel and even suppress the actual content of memories. As memory is the databank of one's identity, the struggle to remember or retrieve the embodied experiences that are too painful for immediate recollection is a formidable struggle. It also makes for no less formidable narratives.

Remembering in this mode requires composition, selection and dosage. The careful lay-out of empowering conditions allows for the actualisation of affirmative forces. Like a choreography of flows or intensities that retrieve adequate framing in order to compose into a form, intensive memories re-



takes the form of a constant quest for temporary moments when a balance can be sustained, before the forces dissolve again and move on. And on it goes, never equal to itself, but faithful enough to itself to endure and to pass on.

Of course, the question of the 'lived temporality' of the subject has wider implications. There is a genetic, even evolutionary side to it: the specific information contained in the organic layer of the individual is crucial to the unfolding of one's life span and the vicissitudes of one's organic existence. Deleuze refers to this question in a sort of zigzagging dialogue with G. Saint-Hilaire and Darwin, in terms of the 'animality' of the self.<sup>12</sup> The substratum of the radical immanence of the self which is a life has its own biological clock built-in; its duration is limited and only partially negotiable. The inner heat of life is portioned off and partitioned carefully. The 'I' that inhabits the specific portion of space and time within which it moves is not the owner of that life. Instead, s/he rents it on a time-basis. Memory is fluid and flowing, opening up the unexpected or virtual possibilities, transgressing these in that they work against the programmes of the dominant memory-system. This continuous memory is, however, not necessarily or inevitably linked to 'real' experience, or what I consider as one of the more radical conceptual attacks on the authority of 'experience' and the extent to which the appeal to experience both confirms and perpetuates the belief in steady and unitary identities.

Deleuze is more inclined to link memory to the second of the two notions I want to discuss in connection with immanence: imagination. The imagination plays a crucial role in enabling the whole process of becoming-minority. The imaginative, affective force of remembering, that which returns and is remembered/repeated, is the propelling force in this idea of becoming-intensive. When you remember in the intensive or minority-mode, you in fact open up spaces of movement and of deterritorialization that actualise virtual possibilities which had been frozen in the image of the past. Opening up these virtual spaces is a creative effort. When you re-member to become what you are, a subject-in-becoming, you actually reinvent yourself on the basis of what you hope you could become with a little help from your friends.

It is crucial in fact to see to what an extent processes of becoming are collective, intersubjective and not individual or isolated. 'Others' are the integral element of one's successive becomings. Again, my quarrel here is with any notion of the subject that would imply an ethics of individual responsibility in the bourgeois liberal model. A Deleuzian feminist approach would rather favour the destitution of the sovereign subject altogether and consequently the overcoming of the dualism Self/Other, Sameness/Difference

which that vision of the subject engenders. Subjects are fields of forces that aim at duration and joyful self-realisation and which, in order to fulfil them, need to negotiate their way across the pitfalls of negativity that phallogocentric culture is going to throw in the way of the fulfilment of their intrinsic positivity. As far as I am concerned, then, exit Hegel and Lacan to give the stage to Spinoza and Nietzsche as they are re-read with Deleuze.

Remembering in this nomadic mode is the active reinvention of a self that is joyfully discontinuous as opposed to being mournfully consistent or as programmed by phallogocentric culture. The tense that best expresses the power of the imagination is the future perfect: 'I will have been free'. Quoting Virginia Woolf Deleuze also says: 'It will have been a childhood, though not necessarily my childhood.' What occurs here is a shifting away from the reassuring platitudes of the past to the openings hinted at by the future perfect. This is the tense of a virtual sense of potential. Memories need the imagination to empower the actualisation of virtual possibilities in the subject. They allow the subject to differ from oneself as much as possible while remaining faithful to oneself and enduring. Thus, a Deleuzian feminism seeks not to pursue Hegelian or Lacanian identities, based on the need for a phallogocentric position, however equal or unequal; rather, if such a feminism as a mode of becoming is to be articulated, then it is to do so through a becoming as breathing gender, as shifting pressure points, as molecular transformations of gender itself. What takes place, then, is a radical challenge to any notion of a self that plays itself out in a matrix of having and/or lacking, self and Other as psychoanalytic or transcendental categories. Indeed, a personalised overthrowing of the internal simulacra of the self constitutes a kind of imaginative recollection of the self which is more about repetition, and less about forgetting to forget, or what could be paraphrased as Freud's definition of neurotic symptoms.

The imaginative force of this operation is central to what I would consider as a vitalist, yet anti-essentialist theory of desire. Desire is the propelling and compelling force that is attracted to self-affirmation and to the transformation of negative into positive passions. The desire not to preserve, but to change. A deep yearning for transformation or a process of affirmation is to enact the different steps of this process of becoming. In order to do so, one has to work on conceptual co-ordinates. These are not elaborated by voluntaristic self-naming, but rather through processes of careful revisitations and retakes which can be compared to filmic shots. These are ways of describing the figures of nomadic yearning.

Empathy and compassion are key features of this nomadic yearning for in-depth transformation. The space of becoming is a space of affinity and correlation of elements, between compatible and mutually attractive forces:

a space of sympathy between the constitutive elements of the process. Proximity or intellectual sympathy is both a topological and qualitative notion through both geography or meteorology and ethical temperature. It is an affective framing for the becoming of subjects as sensible or intelligent matter. The affectivity of the imagination is the motor for these encounters and of the conceptual creativity they trigger off. It is a transformative force that propels multiple, heterogeneous 'becomings' of the subject.

The notion of 'figurations' – as opposed to 'metaphors' – emerges as crucial to Deleuze's use of the imagination as a concept. Figurations bring into representation that which the system had declared off-limits. There are situated practices that require the awareness of the limitations as well as the specificity of one's locations. They illuminate all the aspects of one's subjectivity which the phallogocentric regime does not want us to become. Brian Massumi refers to this process as the actualisation of philosophical monstrosity.<sup>3</sup> In this kind of philosophical teratology or transgression, a shift of paradigm does occur towards a positive appraisal of monstrous differences (deviances or anomalies) not as an end in themselves, but as steps in a process of recomposition of the co-ordinates of subjectivity in techno-culture. Though this is neither a romantic valorisation of otherness *per se*, nor is it a move towards political and cultural decadence. It is rather an attempt to disengage the process of becoming from the classical *topos* of the dichotomy self-other. It is also a direct engagement with the issue of how to disengage the notion of 'difference' from its hegemonic and negative implications.

There is something extremely familiar and almost self-evident about these processes of transformation of the self through an other who triggers processes of metamorphosis of the self. That is precisely the point: this theory of radical immanence is very simple at heart, and it is intuitively accessible. What happens is really a relocation of the function of the subject through the joining of memory and the imagination into propelling a vital force that aims at transformation. As a rigorous reader of Spinoza, Deleuze suggests a positive and equal relationship between reason and the imagination. Overthrowing the traditional hierarchy of intellectual and mental faculties, which had discriminated against the imaginative and the oniric, Deleuze locates the potential of affirmation firmly on the side of the imagination. In doing so, he produces a new theory of desire.

## Shame and ethical transformation

Deleuze speaks openly of the 'shame' of being human. He does so in relation to Primo Levi and the issue of the Holocaust which marks the fundamental moral bankruptcy of European civilisation. In this respect, Deleuze can be compared to Bauman in that he takes the Holocaust as a point of no return and is committed to elaborating an ethics that faces up to the complexities engendered by the historicity of Europe's genocide.<sup>4</sup> Contrary to Bauman, however, Deleuze connects this ethical failure of European culture to the historical decline of an Enlightenment-inspired faith in humanism. It is in response to this failure that he formulates an alternative ethics.

The sense of shame about being human does not encompass only the macro-events of our culture, such as the Holocaust of the Jews, fascism, colonialism, the economic exploitation of the many by the few, it applies just as easily to the micro-instances of life on this planet. It also covers most effectively the practice of philosophy and the much-discussed 'role of the intellectuals'. A very modest man himself, with an extremely low profile in the media, Deleuze carefully avoided the circus of self-promotional activities that mark intellectual life in the West at the end of the millennium. He explicitly criticised the intrusion of the media and its 'star-system' into the work of research and study which should remain the philosopher's main task. Deleuze kept his low-status job at the University of Paris VIII to the end of his life and never enjoyed the benefits of fame and wealth which so many of his peers indulged in. Notably, he steered clear of the Trans-Atlantic academic exchange market, a major cash nexus which established so many originally marginal French philosophers in well-endowed chairs in the USA, particularly in California. I think that Deleuze both practised and preached an ascetic style which conceptually expresses his rejection of a morality of negative passions, such as guilt, envy, resentment and anger, and his commitment to positive passions, namely affirmation, desire, sympathy, connection. His asceticism, as Goodchild astutely observed, takes the form of a critique of the thinker as the judge (or the priest) of reason and affirms instead the potency of creativity and interconnections.<sup>5</sup>

Examples of the micro-instances of reactive or negative morality are all the self-aggrandising gestures that mark social, professional and institutional life. Narcissism and paranoia are the two pillars on which most social institutions are erected. In ethical terms, this means that institutions generate, instill and reward the reproduction of negative passions upon their

ordinarily embittered participants. Deleuze counters the circus of academic

propel academic, institutional and social life with the distance and the compassion of someone who simultaneously knows that this negativity affects him/her, too, but also knows that s/he has nothing at stake. I think it important to clarify this paradoxical position, which in my opinion holds the key to the materialist and posthumanistic ethics which Deleuze proposes.

I find this one of the most striking and also most touching aspects of Deleuze's philosophical practice: his capacity to call himself out of the game of potestas (negativity), while partaking in it, as if he had no stakes in it, as if he were already part of the rattrace. This capacity to disconnect from the paranoid-narcissistic-self-nexus so as to activate a more affirmative set of passions enacts simultaneously an act of withdrawal (a minus) and of addition (a plus). The subject subtracts him/her-self from the reactive affects by stepping out of the negativity circuit. By virtue of this, s/he transcends negativity, thereby generating and making room for more affirmative forces. In other words, what the subject ultimately calls off is the cycle of repetition of the negative passions which mostly structure social and institutional life by declaring a priori that s/he has no stake in that kind of game.

I think that the ethical moment, however, is not so much the ascetic withdrawal from the world of negativity/potestas with its quick, short-term, hit-and-run successes. It rather rests in the act of transcending the negativity itself, transforming it into something positive. This transformation is only possible, however, if one does not sit in judgement either upon oneself or upon others, but rather recognises within oneself the difficulties involved in not giving into the paranoid-narcissistic-self nexus. In fact, it is only at the point of utter destitution of one's 'self' that the activity of transformation of negativity can actually be undertaken. This effort requires endurance, pain and time, calling for creativity, in so far as one needs to provide precisely what one does not immediately dispose of, namely, positive passions. These have to be created. The conditions which allow for this creation must be immanent and therefore depend upon external circumstances, as well as an internal disposition of self-irony, a non-tragic sense of one's failings. One has to think the unthinkable and imagine the unimaginable, that is to say contemplate the unedifying spectacle of one's Lack(s) and then – over and against centuries of established logocentric philosophy which compel us to fill the Lack by rationalistic over-compensation – have the courage to sit on the verge of the abyss, look into it and let other forces come to the rescue. The best part of the exercise is that they inevitably do.

In other words, there is no judgmental, self-imposed distance here, but rather an active effort to reconnect oneself to the game of social exchanges, after one has subtracted oneself from their more destructive interrelational effects. The ethical moment consists in overcoming the slight sense of

shame, the ethical nausea which marks the recognition of the intrinsically negative structure of one's passions. In other words, the ethical act consists in relinquishing the paranoid-narcissistic-self-nexus and installing instead an open-ended, interrelational self instead. Left to itself, in fact, the sense of shame about humanity can breed very negative effects such as misanthropy, fear and anger. This would defeat the purpose of this materialist ethics by re-instating negative passions. It is the empowerment of the positive side that marks the ethical moment of transformation, the reversal of the negative dialectics and its eternal repetitions, and the transcendence of one's starving ego. What matters most is the process by which the transformation takes place, which is neither painless nor self-evident. As Villanelle, the endlessly self-transforming but self-repeating narrator of Jeannette Winterson's *The Passion* puts it: 'you lose you play, you win you play, you play'.<sup>16</sup>

### Whatever gets you through the day

Crucial to the ethics of affirmation is the transformation of negative into positive passion through the concept of limit. For Spinoza this limit is built into his affective redefinition of reason, in that affectivity is that which activates an embodied subject, empowering him/her to interact with others. This acceleration of one's existential speed or increase of one's affective temperature is the dynamic process of becoming. Because of this, it follows for both Spinoza and Deleuze that a subject can think/understand/do no more than one's embodied, physical spatiotemporal co-ordinates are capable of. Potentia has built into it its own limits. Alternatively, what bodies are capable of doing – or not – is biologically, physically, psychically, historically, sexually, emotionally specific, and by this I mean it is partial. Ultimately, the thresholds of sustainable becomings are also their limit. Thus: 'I can't take any more' is an ethical-energetic statement, not the assertion of a defeat. Learning to recognise thresholds as borders or limits is crucial to the work of the understanding.

Deleuze has an almost mathematical definition of the limit, as that which one never really reaches. In his *ABÉCEDAIRE* Deleuze discusses with Claire Parnet the question of the limit in terms of addiction. Reminiscing on his own early alcoholism, Deleuze notes that the limit or frame for the kind of alterations that are induced by alcohol is to be set with reference not so much to the last glass, because that is the glass that is going to kill you. What matters instead is the 'second-to-last' glass – the one that is going to allow

you to survive, to last, to endure – and consequently also to go on drinking again. A true addict always stops at the second-to-last glass once removed and, therefore, from the fatal sip, or shot. A death-bound person, however, usually shoots straight for the last one, without any desire to repeat the experience or start again tomorrow. In fact, there is no opening towards the future in the unfolding of the death-drive: time folds in upon itself and creates a black hole into which the subject dissolves.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari speak out clearly against the unsustainable lows of transformation induced by drug consumption. Before we go on to misread this as moralistic, we would do well to remember that both 'mind-expansion' and 'mood-enhancement' drugs are something that neither Deleuze nor Guattari are a priori against. What they are against is the addiction to drugs, which tips over the threshold of tolerance of the organism. Addiction is not an opening up, but a narrowing-down of the field of possible becomings. It locks the subject up in a black hole of inner fragmentation without encounters with others. The black hole is the point beyond which the line of flight of becoming implodes and disintegrates.

I want to stress that Deleuze's position on the thresholds of sustainability attempts to strike a new position that would coincide neither with the 'laissez-faire' ideology, nor with the repression and moralism (which for me are synonymous). A Spinozist-nomadic notion of the limit, of 'not going too far', is a far cry from mainstream culture's appeal to moderation and savvy management of one's health. This renewed appeal to the individual's management of his/her bodily resources, health potential and life-capital is the distinctive feature of contemporary neo-liberalism. As Jackie Stacey has critically noted, it results in a misappropriation of the notion of 'responsibility' and a mistranslation of the term into styles of self-management based on 'prevention' and the pursuit of 'a healthy life-style'.<sup>17</sup> This cultural obsession with healthy, clean, functional bodies is the corollary of the proliferation of the monstrous, gothic imaginary. Both entail social, cultural and bodily practices which are simultaneous but in open contradiction to one another.

That Deleuze is on the side of the new monsters is quite obvious. What is equally clear to me, however, is that he is not doing so in any facile manner. E. Grosz pointed out this dimension of Deleuze's thought in terms of the pursuit of what she calls 'health'.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to normalising and homologising practices and understandings of this notion in general culture, 'health' expresses the body's capacity to continue entering relations and experience affects. It banks on and actively promotes a future. It is enduring and sustainable: it does go on. To stop is to encounter the state of ter-

capacity to express its joy, positivity and desire – to put a stop to it marks the death of desire. I think it is the purity of these states of intensity that often makes them implode into the black hole of contained, ego-indexed forces, which are likely to hurt the bodily entity. This is where drug users, alcoholics, anorexics and workaholics implode and self-destroy.

The ethics of sustainability that I find in Deleuze's nomadic thought comes a flair for and a commitment to change with a critique of excess for its own sake. I specifically see a rejection of the metaphors of excess as in the work of Bataille and other early sensualist, psychoanalytically inspired writers. I would be equally critical of the notion of 'pushing to the edge', such as has been practised in various brands of counter-cultural movements since the 1960s. There has been an ideology of excess on the far left of the political spectrum, which has merged with the global culture of 'sex, drugs and rock n' roll'. Thus, in stressing the notion of sustainability, I want to refocus the debate around the need for embodied and embedded perspectives, not the fantasy of boundlessness. I also want to reiterate the importance and positivity of *transformative* experimentations, which construct differences without going too far. Vitality and transgression need not necessitate self-destruction.

This is not supposed to fall back, however, into easy moralising or mainstream appeals to moderation. Quite on the contrary, I think that 'whatever gets you through the day' – whatever help and support one needs to get on with it – is just fine. The sharp pang at the back of your head, which Martin Amis captures with such cruel accuracy; the diabolical thumping ache in the belly, which makes Kathy Acker run; or whatever shot of adrenaline one needs in order to go, to get going.<sup>19</sup> I believe that one of the most persistent and unhelpful fictions that is being told about 'life' is its alleged self-evidence and its implicit worth. Centuries of Christian indoctrination have left a deep mark here. The secularisation of life that follows has confined into the container-category of 'sin' or 'nihilism' phenomena which are of daily significance to my culture and society: disaffection of all kinds; addictions of the legal type in the form of coffee, cigarettes, alcohol, over-work and achievement; and of the illegal kind; suicide, especially youths suicide; birth control and the choice of sexual practices and sexual identities; the agony of long-term diseases; life-support systems in hospitals and outside; depression and burn-out syndromes.

In contrast to the mixture of apathy and hypocrisy that marks the habits of thought that sacralise 'life', I would like to cross-refer to a somewhat more 'darker' but more lucid tradition of thought that does not start from the assumption of the inherent self-evident and intrinsic worth of 'life'. I

magnetic charge needs to be renewed constantly. There is nothing natural or given about it. As a consequence, I find that the non-evidence of 'getting on with it' generates another relevant question: 'What is the point?' I do not mean this in the plaintive or narcissistic mode, but rather as the necessary moment of stasis that precedes action. The question mark that both prefaces and frames the possibility of ethical agency. When Primo Levi, who asked that question *all his life*, and struggled to answer it all his life, actually failed to find the motivation for raising the question once more, suicide followed. That gesture, however, was not the sign of moral defeat or a lowering of one's standards. On the contrary, it expresses one's determination *not* to accept life at an impoverished or diminished level of intensity.

Commenting on Primo Levi's and Virginia Woolf's suicides, Deleuze – who also chose this way to terminate his own existence – put it very clearly: you can suppress your own life, in its specific and radically immanent form and still affirm the potency of life, especially in cases where deteriorating health or social conditions may seriously hinder your power to affirm and to joyfully endure. This is no Christian affirmation of Life nor transcendental delegation of the meaning and value system to categories higher than the embodied self. Quite on the contrary, it is the intelligence of radically immanent flesh that states with every single breath that the life in you is not marked by any signifier, and it most certainly does not bear your name. André Colombat in his comment on Deleuze's death links the act of suppressing one's failing body, as in suicide or euthanasia, to an ethics of assertion of the joyfulness and positivity of life, which necessarily translates into the refusal to lead a degraded existence.<sup>20</sup> Philip Goodchild quotes Deleuze most effectively on this point: 'Since destructive forces are always exchanged among people, it is much better to destroy oneself under agreeable conditions than to destroy others.'<sup>21</sup>

Because of this ethics of affirmation and positivity, a Deleuzian approach suggests that 'whatever gets you through the day', whatever life-support, mood-enhancement system one is dependent on, is not to be the object of moral indictment, but rather a neutral term of reference: a mere prop in the process of becoming. Of course 'whatever gets you through the day' may become the preface to minor dependencies, to legal or illegal forms of mood-enhancement systems. Whatever facilitates the release of adrenaline, including high levels of physical exercise; workaholicism or the standard assemblage: 'writing/books/the friendly purr of the pc/e-mails/music/concentration/think think think'. We all have the patterns of dependency that we deserve. Even the standard line of assemblage described above, however, can sure take hell-bent deviations towards excessive snacks (anorexia/h bulimia variable) or drinks (alcoholism variable) or any other (G. / G.).

cotics variable). The boundaries between these and the other, 'normalised' life-support systems, however, is merely one of degrees, not of kind.

If life is *not* a self-evident category, if 'what's the point?' is an ethically viable question, then whatever gets you through the day is an equally viable option, a suitable way of handling the problem, as well as an adequate exemplification of the question. I am absolutely non-moralistic about this. All I want to emphasise is that what is affirmed, asserted and empowered in the ethics of sustainable subjects is the positivity of *potentia* itself. What is empowered is the singularity of the forces that compose the specific spatiotemporal grid of immanence which composes one's life. This life is an assemblage, a set of points in space and time, a quilt of retrieved material. It is the project that makes for the uniqueness of one's life, not any deeply seated essence. Life as a project that aims at affirming the intensity and positivity of desire rests on the materialist foundation of the enfolded subject.

### Bio-ethics

By stressing this biological aspect, Deleuze is simultaneously addressing the issue of contemporary biology and also disagreeing with the neo-determinism of social biologists and evolutionary psychologists. In some ways, Deleuze disagrees with a great many molecular biologists as to the actual vision of the subject which they endorse. By interpreting contemporary biology with reference to the 'enchanted materialism' of empirical philosophies of immanence, Deleuze attempts to disengage biology from the structural functionalism of DNA-driven linearity and to veer it instead towards the zigzagging patterns of nomadic becoming.

Elizabeth Grosz, a careful reader of Deleuze, has recently stressed the importance for feminists of rethinking the biological structure of the human. This call for a return to the body reiterates the rejection of social constructivism which, as I noted earlier, is crucial to feminist theory in the third millennium. In her recent work on Darwin, Grosz sets the agenda as follows: 'What are the virtualities, the potentialities, within biological existence that enable cultural, social and historical forces to work with and actively transform that existence?'<sup>22</sup> I find this appeal to be invested by the kind of radical immanence and the 'enchanted enfolded materialism' that both Irigaray and Deleuze defend, in parallel but analogous ways.

This approach is made explicit in Keith Ansell Pearson's work on Deleuze's vitalistic philosophy. By reading Nietzsche and Darwin with

Deleuze, Pearson emphasises the continuum of becoming as well as the transmutation of values that is implied in Deleuze's concept of 'life'. In so doing, Pearson uses Deleuze's insights to 'begin to map non-human becomings of life'.<sup>33</sup> Combining in a skilful manner biology and technology, Pearson envisages a 'trans-human' space of pure, processual metamorphoses that asserts the infinite powers of a life that does not require the supervision of the human mind in order to endure.

The life in 'me' does not, indeed, bear my name; 'I' does not own it; 'I' is only passing through. In a culture saturated by egotism, 'I' is more often than not a hindrance to the project of affirming and empowering the unstoppable and triumphant return of the impersonality – or rather the a-personality – of becomings, or eternal returns. These becomings do not privilege anthropocentric subjects, but rather emphasise assemblages of all heterogeneous kinds. Animals, insects, machines are as many fields of forces or territories of becoming. Beyond the subject/object distinction that supports the paranoid-narcissistic empire of the Ego-life as eternal becomings goes on, regardless and relentless.

This enchanted, anti-essentialist, high-tech vitalism, however, echoes the ideas of Irigaray about the subject as a bodily human entity, sensitive flesh framed by the skin. I find it significant that Irigaray turns to Judaism, notably to the philosophy of Levinas, to expand on this notion. In the reading of Levinas, Luce Irigaray writes an apology of the caress as a mode of approaching the other – the erotic, respectful touching of the other's skin is distinctly posed as the basis for an ethics of sexual difference.<sup>34</sup> This respectful contemplation of the contained boundaries of another's life – his skin-cloud, enfleshed existence – is also a response to the philosophy of excess in Bataille. This cruel and violent attempt to break beyond the enclosed space of the embodied self leads him to theorise both the inevitability of violence and the desirability of a transcendence which requires – ontologically – the consumption of another's body.

As in Bataille's unreconstructed phallogocentrism, another's body is preferentially the body of the other, of woman as 'other-of-the-same' – the specular, necessary and necessarily devalorised other – Bataille's theory of transcendence is also an apology of female sacrifice. Deleuze takes his distance from both Irigaray's sexual difference ethics and from Bataille's notion of transcendence. What he proposes instead is a radically immanent concept of the subject as dynamic becoming, where the bodily self is analysed according to the concrete forces or material variables that compose it and sustain it.

I would want to argue therefore that Irigaray's emphasis on the 'enchanted materialism' of feminine morphology, essentialist

to the nomadic, anti-foundationalism of Deleuze. The ethics of sexual difference and the ethics of sustainable nomadic subjectivity are two faces of the same coin: that of an enfleshed, immanent subject-in-becoming, for whom life is embodied, embedded and eroticized. To present them as mutually incompatible is not doing justice to either. I think that a parallel reading of Irigaray's ethics of sexual difference and Deleuze's sustainable nomadic ethics can be mutually illuminating, but I will not pursue this parallel reading further here.<sup>35</sup>

The 'life' that is empowered is not the uniqueness of life as in the Christian dogma; nor is it the equally unchallenged scientific belief in the powers of biology. It is staggering to note to what an extent our understanding of the human subject is still tied up with a sense of the body as a container, or as an envelope. Containing a divinely-ordained soul, or an equally despotic genetic code. Governed by the black-box of innately sovereign reason, or by a rationally regulated libido that knows what's right for you. So much humanistic convention, packaged as human essence. In opposition to this, I would argue with Deleuze that the singularity rests in the *project* that animates one's becoming, i.e. in the minority consciousness that unfolds and expresses itself through multiple becomings.

The subject-in-becoming is the one for whom 'what's the point?' is an all-important question. A high-intensity subject is also animated by unparalleled levels of vulnerability. With nomadic patterns also comes a fundamental fragility. Processes without foundations need to be handled with care; potentia requires great levels of containment in the mode of framing. In *Viroid Life*, Ansell Pearson comments in a very illuminating manner on the distinction between personal and impersonal death in Deleuze's philosophy of becoming. The paradox of affirming life as potentia, energy, even in and through the suppression of the specific slice of life that 'I' inhabits is a way of pushing anti-humanism to the point of implosion. It dissolves death into ever-shifting processual changes, and thus disintegrates the ego, with its capital of narcissism, paranoia and negativity. Death from the specific and highly restricted viewpoint of the ego is of no significance whatsoever:

A positive, dynamical and processual conception of death, which would release it from an anthropomorphic desire for death (for stasis, for being), speaking instead only of a death that desires (a death that is desire, where desire is construed along the lines of a machine or a machinic assemblage), can only be arrived at by freeing the becoming of death from both mechanism and finalism. (...) This is to posit the world as a 'monster of energy' without beginning and without end, a Dionysian world of 'eternal' self-creation and 'eternal' self-destruction, moving from the simple to the complex and then back again to the simple, out of abundance, said / that / that / cold

ing', never reaching a final death. For death (becoming) lives on itself; it is its own food and excrement.<sup>25</sup>

Death need not be the 'unproductive black hole'<sup>27</sup>, but rather a point in a creative synthesis of flows, energies and becomings. In her critique of the vulgarity or commonness of Freud's notion of the death-drive, Olkowski underlines the extent to which psychoanalysis indexes the Ego to powers of desexualisation and emptying out of unconscious libidinal forces.<sup>28</sup> In opposition to this, Deleuze proposes endless contractions and expansions/duration and extensity in processual becomings or qualitative differentiations.

I prefer to refer to this process in terms of sustainability, and I would like to stress the idea of continuity which it entails – it does assume faith in a future and also a sense of responsibility for 'passing on' to future generations a world that is liveable and worth living in. A present that endures is a sustainable model of the future. Hence the importance of stopping at the second-last drink/smoke/shot. 'Enough' or 'not going too far' expresses the necessity of framing, not the commonsense morality of the mainstream cultural orthodoxy. 'Enough' designs a cartography of sustainability. This ethics of stopping before going too far is collectively decided; it is variable in each and everyone; it is action-orientated; it is affirmative of potentia; it banks on empowerment but invites compassion for those who cannot sustain it ('we don't need another hero', as Barbara Krueger would put it) and also asserts unrelenting hatred of the moralists.

I would like to develop this notion of sustainability into an ethics of differential sustainable subjects. I would like to propose a *public* discussion on these issues right across some of the problematic social issues of today: drugs, addictions of all kind, youth suicide, Aids prevention and sex education, euthanasia, anorexia/bulimia, abortion, the burn-out and stress related to post-industrial life styles. I would like this agenda to be taken seriously. As important at this stage is for me to challenge any claim by any conceptual, theoretical or philosophical school to the monopoly over issues of ethics and moral values. Whether in the neo-liberal brand of cosmopolitanism defended by Nussbaum, or in the neo-Kantian mode that is so prevalent in feminist theory today, such claims to moral superiority or rectitude are simply untenable, as well as internally contradictory.<sup>29</sup>

I want to plead instead for a less moralistic and conceptually more rigorous agenda that combines a broader approach with a serious commitment to think *alongside* contemporary culture and not against its grain. 'Whatever gets you through the day' as the melancholy refrain of 'fin de siècle' covers the depression of suburban opulence, as much as the despair of homeless

sombre social relations. It seems to me that a critical agenda for the next millennium, both in feminist theory and in mainstream social philosophy, cannot fail to address these issues. We need to talk about the simultaneity of opposite social and cultural effects, and to address them in a non-moralistic manner. 'Whatever gets you through the day' need not be the manifesto for self-destruction that it is often made to be. It can merely help us frame a threshold of sustainable patterns of transformative changes, of becomings as modes and moods of empowerment.

- 15 For a critique of New Left vanguardism, see Jo Freeman, 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' in *CS. Untying the Knot: Feminism, Anarchism & Organisation*. London: Dark Star and Rebel Press, 1984.
- 16 See V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of our Movement*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1975; and Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*. London: Merlin, 1968.
- 17 See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books, 1971.
- 18 Above all, anarcho-communism was seen as the heir of those Left Communists who had fought for direct democracy organised through the Soviets against the dictatorship of the Leninist party. See Maurice Brinton, *The Bolsheviks & Workers' Control: 1917-1921*. London: Solidarity, 1970; and Ida Mett, *The Kronstadt Uprising 1921*. London: Solidarity, 1967.
- 19 See Jacques Camatte, *The Wandering of Humanity*. Of course, a much diluted variant of this attack on oppressive 'grand narratives' later formed the ideological basis for the self-styled post-modernists.
- 20 In classic New Left films like weekend and themroc, rebellion against a repressive and alienating urban society was symbolically represented through a return to primitive simplicity. Curiously, both films portrayed cannibalism as the ultimate expression of liberation from bourgeois morality!
- 21 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 149-166.
- 22 Apart from its emphasis on peasants rather than nomads, Khmer Rouge ideology was very similar to the anti-modernism espoused by Deleuze and Guattari. See Michael Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975-1982*. Hemel Hempstead: Allen and Unwin, 1984.
- 23 In contrast, most of their contemporaries gravitated towards either electoral politics or post-modern nihilism. See Jean-Pierre Garnier and Roland Lew, 'From The Wretched Of The Earth To The Defence Of The West: An Essay on Left Disenchantment in France' in *Socialist Register 1984: The Uses of Anti-Communism*. London: Merlin, 1984.
- 24 From 1930 to 1933, the Surrealists' journal was called *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*. See Helena Lewis, *Dada Turns Red: The Politics of Surrealism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990.
- 25 According to Nietzsche, the culturally impoverished masses were 'herd animals' compared to the 'eagles' of the artistic world.
- 26 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. New York: Vintage, 1968. Deleuze commended Nietzsche for the 'positive task' of inventing the reactionary concept of the Superman. See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. London: The Athlone Press, 1983.
- 27 See Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*. California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981.
- 28 See Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. London: Practical Paradise, 1972. The Situationists discovered the tribal gift economy in Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- 29 See Warren O. Hagstrom, 'Gift Giving as an Organisational Principle in Science' in Barry Barnes and David Faer (eds.), *Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Sci-*

- 30 See for a discussion of the Nepstar/MP3 debate my article 'The Regulation of Liberty: Free Speech, Free Trade and Free Gifts on the Net' <hr.wmin.ac.uk>.
- 31 See Rishab Aiyer Ghosh, 'Cooking Pot Markets: An Economic Model for the Trade in Free Goods and Services on the Internet' <dxm.org/tok/cookingpot/>.
- 32 See Keith W. Porterfield, 'Information Wants to be Valuable: A Report from the First O'Reilly Perl Conference' <netaction.org/articles/freesoft.html>.
- 33 See Eric C. Raymond, 'The Cathedral and the Bazaar' <tuxedo.org/~esr/writings/cathedral-bazaar/>.
- 34 See Netscape Communications Corporation, 'Netscape Announces Plans to Make Next-Generation Communicator Source Code Available Free on the Net' <netscape.com/newsref/pr/newsrelease558.html>.
- 35 Andrew Leonard, 'Let My Software Go!' <salonmagazine.com/21st/feature/1998/04/cov\_14feature.html>.
- 36 Wired uses 'The New Economy' as a synonym for its neo-liberal fantasies about the digital future.
- 37 Alexandre Kojève, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the 'Phenomenology of Spirit'. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1969, p. 243.
- 38 Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*. New Brunswick NY: Transaction Publishers, 1984, p. 204.

## Notes to 9: How to Endure Intensity

- 1 Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
- 2 This distinction between the visible and the sayable is crucial, among others, to Deleuze's reading of Foucault's work. See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*. Trans. Séan Hand. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988. First published Paris: 1986.
- 3 In L'ABÉCÉDAIRE DE GILLES DELEUZE. Paris: Vidéo Editions Montparnasse, 1996.
- 4 See Luce Irigaray, *Spéculum, de l'autre femme*. Paris: Minuit, 1974; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- 5 See for instance the chapter on 'Geophilosophy' in Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*. London: Sage, 1996.
- 6 Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- 7 Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time' in N.O. Keohane et al (eds.), *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982.
- 8 See for instance, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'In a Word'. *Differences* 1/2, pp. 124-156.
- 9 Narco-philosophers such as Arthur and Marie-Louise Kroker, Nick Land and Jean Baudrillard.
- 10 Genevieve Lloyd, *Part of Nature*; and *Spinoza and the Ethics*. London and New York:



- 12 *A Thousand Plateaus*, chapter 10 (cf. on Cuvier and Geoffrey Saint Hilaire).
- 13 Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Boston and Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1992.
- 14 Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- 15 See Goodchild, *An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*.
- 16 Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*. London: Bloomsbury, 1987.
- 17 Jackie Stacey, *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- 18 Elisabeth Grosz, 'Darwin and Feminism: Preliminary Investigations for a Possible Alliance' in *Australian Feminist Studies*. Vol. 14/29, pp. 31-45.
- 19 Martin Amis, *Einstein's Monsters*. London: Penguin, 1987; Kathy Acker, 'The End of the World of White Men', in J. Halberstam and I. Livingston (eds.), *Posthuman Bodies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- 20 André Colombat, 'November 4, 1995: Deleuze's death as an event' in *Man and World*, Vol. 29/3, July 1996, pp. 235-249.
- 21 Goodchild, *An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, p. 208.
- 22 See Grosz, 'Darwin and Feminism'.
- 23 Keith Ansell Pearson, *Vivoid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 109.
- 24 Luce Irigaray, *Étique de la différence sexuelle*. Paris: Minuit, 1984.
- 25 See, for example, Dorothea Olkowski, 'Body, Knowledge and Becoming-Woman: Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray' in Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (eds.), *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000, pp. 86-109; Tamsin Lorrain, *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- 26 *Vivoid Life*, pp. 62-63.
- 27 *Vivoid Life*, p. 68.
- 28 Dorothea Olkowski, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- 29 See for instance Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999; and Seyla Benhabid, *The Situated Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.

## Notes to 10: Against the Doxa

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* Trans. G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson. London: Verso, 1994, p. 206.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, Helen R. Lane. New York: Viking Press, 1977 and London: the Athlone Press, 1884; *Kafka. Towards a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- 3 In particular from the existential Marxism of Sartre and the structuralist approach of Félix', in Gilles Deleuze. *Immanence et vie*. Paris: Collège International de Philosophie, 1998.
- 4 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- 5 Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, 'Les intellectuels et le pouvoir', in *Les Mots et les Choses*, vol. II, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, p. 306-307. First published in *Deleuze*, 1972. Trans. in M. Foucault, *Language, Power, and the Subject*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977. Reprinted in Russell, (eds.), *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art/MIT, 1990, p. 9.
- 6 For an account of the politics implied in Deleuze's thought – in a difference from the one I will follow here – see François Zourabichvili, 'Deleuze et l'involontarisme en politique', in Eric Alliez (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze et la philosophie*. Le Plessis-Robinson: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 1997.
- 7 As Deleuze and Guattari put it: 'The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* because each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd.' *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 105.
- 8 See E. Balibar, 'Les trois concepts de la politique: émancipation, transcendance', in *La crainte des masses*. Paris: Galilée, 1997.
- 9 *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 105.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 These processes are indeed taking place, at least, in some countries, and this is perfectly acknowledged by Deleuze and Guattari, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 291 sq.
- 12 *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 115. See also Michael Hardt, 'The Withering of Peirce', both in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin J. Heller (eds.), *Deleuze and Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998; and Paola Marrati, 'Contro la doxa: filosofia e letteratura', in Gilles Deleuze in S. Petrosino and M. Iofrida (eds.), *Filosofia e letteratura*. Bulzoni, 2000. Editor's note: The concept of faciality is elaborated in the analysis of several regimes of signs which takes into account difference and subjectivation and of social organization which is discussed more elaborately in SCHINDLER'S LIST and the face of history in this volume.
- 13 *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 209.
- 14 *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 177-178.
- 15 *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 178.
- 16 On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the differences between social, political and cultural 'agencements'. The analysis of differences is precisely one of the major issues of *A Thousand Plateaus*.
- 17 *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 105.
- 18 The theme of an 'empty place' of the universal necessary to democracy is elaborated by Claude Lefort. See Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988. On the hegemonic logic of constitution