



Cinesexuality

Patricia MacCormack

ASHGATE e-BOOK

CINESEXUALITY

Queer Interventions

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Cinesexuality

PATRICIA MACCORMACK

ASHGATE

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Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Gower House
Croft Road
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 3HR
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05401-4405
USA

Ashgate website: <http://www.ashgate.com>

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

MacCormack, Patricia

Cinesexuality. - (Queer interventions)

1. Sex in motion pictures
2. Gaze in motion pictures
3. Homosexuality and motion pictures

I. Title

791.4'3'019

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

MacCormack, Patricia.

Cinesexuality / by Patricia MacCormack.

p. cm. -- (Queer interventions)

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-7546-7175-6 (alk. paper)

1. Homosexuality and motion pictures.
 2. Sex in motion pictures.
 3. Gaze in motion pictures.
- I. Title.

PN1995.9.S45M24 2008

302.23'43--dc22

2008008234

ISBN-13: 978 0 7546 7175 6



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
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www.fsc.org Cert no. SA-COC-1565
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall.

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For Antonio Moleta

Series Editors' Preface

For the Love of Cinema

What does it mean to want cinema as a lover? This desire is within us all according to Patricia MacCormack: 'It knows no gender, no sexuality, no form and no function'. How more precisely might we understand cinema, not as an object, but 'a territory of desire'; a space where transformations take place through the encounters that unfold there? 'Cinesexuality', the neologism of this book's title, facilitates MacCormack's lavish meditation on the messy entanglements of spectatorship, in which she draws on the ideas of a wide range of thinkers including Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Baruch Spinoza, Rosi Braidotti, David N. Rodowick, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Rancière, Elizabeth Grosz, Maurice Blanchot, Paul Virilio, Georges Bataille, Michel Serres, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault. *Cinesexuality* is a philosophical text for 'cinema is itself a philosophy' and 'the true philosopher of cinema is the spectator'. MacCormack does not write so much about images (making them central) but probes around and through them (decentring and disorganising them). Her book is, as she says, 'cinematically filmy' rather than about films. MacCormack chooses, for her purposes, not the award-laden pickings of the so-called avant-garde but the 'extreme' pleasures of low-budget horror films. This openness to the Other is significant when we think of this book's refusal to be constrained by the proscriptions of boundaries or the prescriptions of proper objects; its author's commitment to pushing the limits of what has been deemed possible or acceptable. MacCormack has produced a treatise on 'cinesexual desire' which in her words, 'is not for anything, it is found in the coming to and openness toward images'. It is defined in other words, not by what we take, but by what we are willing to give.

This openness before cinema, 'an unresponsive element', is one of supplication, a gifting of the self before the image which is not based on the sense of sight alone. It is the cinesexual event of spectatorship. As MacCormack reminds us, cinesexuality is present in acts of 'seeing with our viscera as our eye squints in delicious aversion'. It is the giving of our/selves in ways we cannot know in advance. The cinesexual relation is an embodied one; a desire for neither specific films nor images, but for the experience of such a relation and the affects it produces. It is expressed, as the quotation above illuminates, in desires we do not even know we have: 'The body is a thousand plateaus, as is the event of cinesexuality'. When MacCormack writes that cinesexuality is a-signifiable, that it exceeds signification, we begin to realise that cinesexuality cannot be grasped (and thus mastered, neutered and rendered 'safe') but must be felt. This is a risky endeavour as we cannot be certain what we are laying our/selves

open to or the effects of such an encounter. Part of the pleasure then inheres in the pain of waiting because pleasure is not necessarily pleasurable: 'When we open to cinematic pleasure there is a presumption that the pleasure will be nice to us'. Cinesexual desire is not about trusting in the Other but requires a sacrifice, a loss of the self we think we know. For the folding into cinema is always also an unfolding resulting in a decentring of the 'I'. MacCormack terms this process 'cinemasochism', an 'active passivity' in which submission does not equal destruction but liberation from subjectivising regimes.

MacCormack comments at the outset that her book's purpose 'is to describe the event of spectatorship as the very thing which makes thinking about and describing "the" or "a" spectator impossible'. In *Cinesexuality* we witness the spectator entering into a becoming with cinema. An alliance with cinema, which is not an object but a place which enacts a space of desire, does not result in an identity based on object choice but moves the spectator towards a becoming-otherwise. 'Becoming' signifies not the movement through identification from one category to another – being via becoming to being – but the understanding that change is all there is. Opening up, of course, requires letting go, loosening one/self from an identity category that we may believe is the very exemplification of what it means to 'be' us. Becoming involves the shedding of the chimera of stability and certainty wrought through our attachments to objects towards the awareness and acceptance of the unrelenting dynamism that underpins the act of living itself. This is the becoming-cinesexual of the spectator: 'we are all already cinesexual'. The term 'cinesexual' does not represent another identity that we can cling to (there is no such 'being' as 'the cinesexual') but is the figuration of 'larval desire [which] does not need the noun as we refuse to be a noun'. Invertebrate and unformed, thus unfettered from the demands of identity politics, larval desire is multiple and fluid. Becoming-cinesexual involves abnegating our power over the image – the drive towards enslaving it through interpretation – in favour of 'allow[ing] the image to enjoy us'.

Cinesexuality is enticing. MacCormack seduces the reader, enfolding us into her text in a cinesexual relation. Cinesexuality is neither comparable nor reducible to sexual identity categories currently jockeying for prominence under the rubric of heteronormativity. MacCormack is not interested in mimicking such technologies of power. Her employment of terms such as 'impossible', 'unrepresentable', 'unrevealable', 'indiscernible', 'indescribable' and 'uncommunicable' points to the excess which cannot be categorised, that which is not or cannot be expressed through language; the queer remainder. MacCormack challenges the heteronormative organisation of knowledge into discrete taxonomies in addition to how queer theorists have hitherto formulated the relation between the spectator and film. Cinesexuality as process evokes queer as verb, a destabilising and creative metaphor for literally 'thinking outside the box'. The Queer Interventions book series publishes theoretical scholarship that intervenes in current debates about subjectivity, identification, relationality, ethics and politics; work that stretches the contours of such debates to their limits and beyond. One question which remains with the reader long after the

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work of reading has been completed is one which will preoccupy theorists in years to come and propel thinking on gender and sexuality in exciting new directions: 'Certain film theorists have attempted to relate cinesexuality *back* to hetero and homo gender/sexuality matrices. Can we relate sexuality *forward* to cinema?'

Noreen Giffney

Cinesexuality is an encounter with the outside, thought of the event and an event of thought, one that takes us out of a *cul de sac* in film-philosophy two traditional approaches to which have been to argue how film can illuminate a variety of philosophical concerns or, conversely, how philosophy can help us to explore film. *Cinesexuality* takes a post-dialectical approach so that the rigid separation between philosophy and film is dissolved. For Patricia MacCormack, philosophy *and* film, viewing subject *and* image cannot be readily distinguished; self and image are mutually articulated on the same plane of haecetic immanence. What this lamination of subject and event renews is the possibility for redefining the truth of the event of spectatorship and the condition for this philosophy is love. This conjoining, calculated to produce an emancipatory politics of the subject and a democratisation of the image, takes as its interlocutors a diverse array of thinkers and in the spirit of this series *Cinesexuality* intervenes, invents, events, adverts. This experiment in the field of cinema, inventing new names, new things, promises to actualise virtual possibilities in the ethico-political field, ones which we cannot yet anticipate but must 'await openly'.

A preface of course comes after the event, *nachträglich*, yet prefaces what is to come, what lies before the reader. Rather than summing up MacCormack's argument, we might instead think about what *Cinesexuality* does to us as readers. It is MacCormack's *Pervert's Guide to Cinema* perhaps even her 'evil book' as Lyotard described his *Libidinal Economy*, in which he exhorts us to spread open our bodies and rupture binarity so that the body is transformed into a 'great ephemeral skin'. The performative effect of MacCormack's text is to eviscerate the body of the viewer/reader, moving imperceptibly from one concept to another, making unnatural alliances between ideas and thinkers. This pellicular book, text-as-tattoo, interrupts the flows of our thinking, endlessly forging new connections, lines of flight. The cinesexual intensifications – nanosplachnological proliferations – of reading see the reader's body affectively unwound into a 'great visceral ribbon'. This unbinding is what MacCormack calls 'cinemasochism', both a passive and an affectively active surrender to, a trembling before the image. The cinesexual regard shares much with Bracha Ettinger's 'matrixial gaze' which avoids the phallic psychoanalytic gaze to think the relation of viewer and image as one predicated on 'borderlinking', by which Ettinger means a being-with, a com-passionate wit(h)nessing. Similarly, for MacCormack, cinesexual spectatorship reconfigures the viewing subject who is dispersed, dissipated, self-shattered in order to re-connect with the world. Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit call this fracturing of the subject to make way for a communicative ethics *ébranlement*, Lyotard calls it infancy or the affect phrase,

while for MacCormack it takes the names ‘cinecstasy’ or ‘cinesexual openness’. This submission at the threshold of the visible, a Blanchotian ‘going under’, is described by Ettinger as ‘non-phallic *erotic co-responsibility*’ and this should help us to understand MacCormack’s invention of the concept ‘cinesexuality’ to reimagine queer spectatorship.

The event has preoccupied many of the philosophers evoked here including Derrida, Lyotard and Deleuze. But one thinker of the event who is not mentioned is Alain Badiou. It is understandable why Badiou is absent as he is highly critical of Deleuze’s *Cinema* books and often of film, which falls for him between art and non-art. Yet, with its emphasis on illegitimate couplings, *Cinesexuality* potentialises nuptials against nature between Badiou, film and queer theory. Both philosophers share certain understandings (with obvious differences) of the event and the four key terms for a spectatorial ethics that link them, are grace, chance, intervention and love. For Badiou the event has a theological character and for MacCormack what we could call the *cinevental* site, is marked by the subject’s conversion, supplication, salvation. In Badiou, the event surprises the subject, its occurrence resembling an instance of ‘laicised grace’, and as for Derrida the event is unanticipatable, unforeseeable. If Badiou’s event, like Slavoj Žižek’s, has an exceptional character, for MacCormack, like Deleuze, the event’s evanescence is to be found in the mundane situation of cinema spectatorship. What *Cinesexuality* argues is that we must remain faithful to the exceptionality of, the grace in, spectatorship. And they agree that this cinevental situation is an instance of chance: hazardous, contingent, turbulent. As Badiou explains, fidelity to the event, intervention, is not alone transformation of the world and MacCormack’s intervention is an ‘ecosophical contract we make with the world’. The cinesexual event as ‘an event of love’ is in the form of a transport between subject and image, the creation of a new space (‘gazing is an act of creation’) where the relation we have to the world is not based on the one but from the point of view of the two: ‘if two bodies touch there is no distance, they fold’. MacCormack argues that ‘the entity with which we have love relations is the image’ and we could say that cinesexual *jouissance* is what Badiou dubs the ‘unnameable’ of love, bringing out the sexual dimension of MacCormack’s joyful ‘becomings to-come’.

‘Open spectatorship’ happens, events, in our giving ourselves over to the other, to the screen. We offer ourselves up, gift ourselves to the image and the dispersal, the de-significance, of the gazing subject is adestinal, alteration of the self ‘without aim’. *Cinesexuality* translates *Le Destin des Images (The Future of the Image)*, the title of Rancière’s recent book on the politics of the aesthetic regime since cinesexuality includes within it the possibilities of destiny and destination, and the distinction between the future (the predictable, reachable) and the *à venir* (the to-come). Cinesexuality, ‘opening up to the becomings of others’, is solicited by the incoming of the other, the arrival of what is coming (‘the film to-come is where we create’), and by the ‘adventure in the labyrinthine fold’ of the future. MacCormack claims that the future of the image depends on a minoritarian politics in which those who cannot be seen or heard in the majoritarian order – women, perverts, queers – are emancipated, but that we

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cannot predict from what sources. Those who have no part in what Rancière names the 'distribution of the sensible' are able to remap the territories of the visible, thinkable, sayable, doable, knowable. Re-distribution of the sensible, democratisation of the image widens apertures for the political subjectivisation of disincorporated subjects, 'elastic bodies' distending the world. In this way *coming to images* anticipates what Rancière calls a 'community to-come', the becoming-queer of *all* viewers. Our 'passibility', those moments of possibility where *Cinesexuality* touches us, is not unlike the wonder to be found in the folding of image with viewer. In that clinamen, Serres's 'coital collision', the event of spectatorship and of reading 'makes us shine', wraps us in its clingfilm. To paraphrase Jean Baudrillard, *we are all cinesexuals now*.

Michael O'Rourke

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Acknowledgements

I wish to express enormous gratitude both on a professional and personal level to Noreen Giffney and Michael O'Rourke and Ashgate. Their enthusiasm for my work has both inspired me and refined my writing, and their support has been unfailing and exuberant. As both editors and philosophers they represent the brave, authentic, cutting edge (and perverse) new revolution in queer theory. They are at the forefront of the becomings to come of sexuality studies. Thanks also to Neil Jordan for his patience and excitement, Carolyn Court and all staff at Ashgate.

For philosophical invigoration and support I want to thank those who have given their time, comments, talents, and shared cinema ecstasy. Thanks to Rolando Caputo, James B. Hollands and *The Horse Hospital*, Andy Ford, Emanuela Evangelisti, Jonathan Seltzer, all at *Senses of Cinema*, Giovanni Lombardo Radice, Nigel Wingrove, Veronica Pravadelli, the organisers and participants of the NOISE summer school in Bologna in 2006, Ba'al Man, Damien Cody, Anneke Smelik, Claire Colebrook, Ian Buchanan for his tolerance at me working on this book while I was working on ours, Steve Cain, because of whom I met icons, Maria Desposito for being a real example of putting her flesh where her becomings are, Taffy, Leon Tencer, Ivana Selebran, who was responsible for assisting me complete the final stages of this book. To my colleagues in the Department of Communication and Film, past and present and to the many generations of students for their passionate discussions. To those responsible for the formative parts of this book (and formative parts of me), Elizabeth Grosz, Maryanne Dever, Rachel Fensham, Zoe Sofoulos and especially Gerald Fitzgerald for convincing me Greek Tragedies are Classical Gore films. Love, appreciation and gratitude I especially express to my two greatest supporters and mentors, David Rodowick and Rosi Braidotti.

Special thanks to artist un- for the cover art, especially for extending his talents from CD cover to book art.

To Jacinta MacCormack and Tony Moleta, my dearest family. The incredibly talented Magic Lantern artist and greatest example of a cinesexual, Mark Ferelli. Gratitude to my infinitely interesting friends. And finally to Robert Allen and Charlotte ... forever remain.

The author and publisher thank the following editors and publishers for kind permission to reproduce altered versions of the following:

Paulette Dooler and Taylor and Francis for permission to reproduce parts of 'A Cinema of Desire: Cinesexuality and Guattari's Asignifying Cinema' from *Women: A Cultural Review* (2005) 16:3. www.informaworld.com.

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Michael O'Rourke, Carol Siegal and Ellen Berry for permission to reproduce parts of 'Necrosexuality' from *Rhizomes* (Fall 2005/Spring 2006) 11:12. www.rhizomes.net

This book was completed with a research leave grant from Anglia Ruskin University Centrally Funded Sabbatical and funding and support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Chapter 1

Spectatorship: An Inter-kingdom Desire

Cinesexuality is the desire which flows through all who want cinema as a lover. It knows no gender, no sexuality, no form, and no function. It describes a position of supplication before an unresponsive element. Cinesexuality occurs in a particular space of relation between spectator and cinema. What cinema is cannot be known, its affectivity and our ecstasies are limited only to the extent we limit desire, and, as all cinesexuals know, cinema brings to us the unbearable excesses of the simplest planes within an image. Cinesexuals do not want this film or that, cinema is not limited to films we love, do not love and are yet to see, objects to our desiring subject. We desire cinema as an intensity, which creates a particular aesthetic terrain. We want all cinematic images because we want to launch the becomings available through this most special of relations. Dialectic collapse and involution with a voluminously materially affective image invokes spectatorship as a territory of desire. *As* desire cinema moves through us and we through it. This flow is the ethical imperative of cinesexuality because, as Blanchot expresses, ‘everything is at stake in the decision of the gaze.’ (Blanchot 1981, 104)

Viewing creates a distribution of intensities. These are not necessarily specific to the case of cinema, but they are especially sought after by the cinesexual who is enamoured of the image and relishes connecting with the plane of desire of or from cinema. Cinesexuality does not describe cinema as an object of desire. It does not promise satisfaction for desire that lacks, but rather offers an alliance that cannot help but transform the qualities and speeds of intensities of self. Desire for cinema is often incarnated as a desire before the fact, but singularities of intensity, even in repeat viewings, cannot be assured. Thinking the self as flux, convocation, and involution makes redundant a repetitive performance of desiring narratives. Although all desire is incapable of repeating itself, the desire to repeat must nonetheless acknowledge the impossibility of the drive to be satisfied. Desire can be a project of experimentation, but like metamorphoses of desire – becomings – it cannot be turned on and off. Desire is a continuity that changes trajectories of relations and saturations. Desire is redistribution of self and world, self in the world, the world in self, and self as world. Although pleasure cannot help but mobilise the subject, the discourse describing it may be relatively immobile, and should be mobilized to acknowledge the inextricability of discourse from existence.

Beyond dialectics, cinema can be thought as involuting self and image on a libidinal plateau, twisting textures of intensity including, but not limited to, vague

notions of visceral, genital, and cerebral pleasure. The dissipated, enfolded self repudiates certain aspects of the body itself as signified, but the explicitly fleshy or visceral body is necessarily the libidinal and the cerebral corporeal. Cinesexuality is an anomalous sexuality. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, ‘the anomalous is neither an individual nor a species; it has only affects, it has neither familiar or subjectified feelings, nor specific or significant characteristics’ (1987, 244). While all sexuality is an unnatural alliance with aspects that defy signification and defeat satisfaction, cinema intensifies the multiplicity of all libidinal alliances. Heterosexuality and homosexuality strictly define their objects to reign in the a-signifiable characteristics of even the most banal sexual acts. We can ask ‘what is it you have sex with?’ The answer ‘male’ or ‘female’ is imagined as a stable enough term to explain sexuality. But if we answer ‘cinema,’ questions proliferate beyond, rather than refer back to, a pre-established system of desire. Clearly no systemization of desire, no stratification of the body through which pleasure and desire are organized, can be anything more than tactically signified here, despite the investment culture places in regulation in this way. Male or female, all flesh and desire exceeds signification; a-signifiable and beyond objectification, identification, and recognition. Certain film theorists have attempted to relate cinesexuality *back* to hetero and homo gender/sexual matrices. Can we relate sexuality *forward* to cinema? After all, every libidinal moment could be described as a version of cinema in its bombardment of excessive intensities in ways that are desired (in whatever way, and this does not of course preclude unexpected desire and so forth), but entirely unpredictable. The image is no less material, but of a different sort. Like all art, and all flesh, there are infinite and inexhaustible possible intensities that we can never know in advance. Far from suggesting that all affect is simply a re-presentation of perceived effect, I want to emphasize that all affect is a corporeal and material sensorial redistribution of energy or desire. Blanchot suggests reception of art is a ravishment (1981, 97). The image is as capable of materially transforming and affecting its disciple as is the flesh of the lover, albeit perhaps through different configurations of libidinal plateaus.

Traditionally how we watch displays, to ourselves and others, our subjectivity and sexuality. How we see what we see is inextricable from how we ‘are seen to’, systems of visual apprehension do not differentiate between the real and the represented because a relation of perception is always present. In this sense our spectatorial selves are already experienced before any image arrived – to be seen to be seeing in a certain way informs cinematic pleasure. Spectatorship is an event which cannot be witnessed. It is an event of unrevealable interiority. It repudiates the great system of visual signification in modern culture – that of ‘to be seen to’. As long as we are seen to be something, seen to desire something or seen to have something, exploring the risks and pleasures of opening to desire are unnecessary. Desire continues to seep through, in the cracks and hollows we cannot ‘see’ in cinema but which affect us. These aspects vary, and can include forms or actions, but always upon the image as a plane where adjectives are more important than nouns performing verbs. Colour saturation, gesture, angular and corporeal inflection, timbre, camera velocity and trajectory,

the familiar become unfamiliar are only a few of the many elements of an image that compel us. Beyond description however, cinema seduces us in ways we can never describe but, like pleasure and desire, affect us nonetheless. The big and most basic question asks who are we when we are no longer part of a system of description, of objects with which we form sexual dialectics, and images we read, comprehend and therefore believe we 'know'? Desire beyond dialectics is the vertiginous nothing that is fully present through us and we through it. Reifying cinema as part of repetitive systems of heterosexuality, homosexuality, male, female and the many other binaries which are the paradigmatic spine of the social corpus not only preserves those systems but allows the very idea of the human to emerge via the way the spectator inserts themselves into the possibilities of self an image offers. Representation creates and precedes the reality of subjective self. The spectator is invited to ask 'where do I fit in here? What of me and my reality does this reflect? What other realities than my own (always in opposition to rather than within) are here?' The evaluations which may follow of whether a film is pleasurable or not, be it artistically or for entertainment (a moot bifurcation), is most often based on the comforts of affirmation or escapism which directly posits an image as not of this world. Ideologically escapist films are frequently more resonant with paradigmatic, if not aesthetic, realities. Images do not represent or describe entities but make their possibility in the world.

Spectatorship is an event but not between self and the manifestation of a work of art as 'the exhibition' Deleuze and Guattari critique, which reduces aesthetic concepts to 'product displays (historical, scientific, artistic, sexual, pragmatic)' (1994, 10). What makes the specific event of spectatorship any different to another social experience or situation? The basic answer is nothing. This book takes cinema because it is a, perhaps the, dominant mode of modern communication. It is able to mask ideology behind claiming to be fictional. It affirms possible realities. It is marketable, exportable. It has received huge academic attention. This attention has come primarily from structuralist theories of sexuality in psychoanalysis and linguistic semiotics. Increasingly it is receiving elaborate attention from philosophy. While this book is about spectatorship its purpose is to describe the event of spectatorship as the very thing which makes thinking and describing 'the' or 'a' spectator impossible.

Cinematic spectatorship is a timely issue. Visual culture entices the most ubiquitous act, the turn to looking. Modes and specificities of visual communication are collapsing into a single plane. Communication is increasingly, after Baudrillard, transforming to information where the subject is a node through which a message passes. This book will explore spectatorship and image transmission by what Blanchot states is the 'appearing and disappearing essence of the Book, [or image] and to its incessant oscillation – which is its communication' (2003, 242). What remains, what reminds the subject of their collective intensities and specificities is desire, because desire cannot be 'passed on'. It can be ablated with symbols of capital, it can be deferred for other signifiers, it can be oppressed, repressed, confessed through regimes of signification. It is so alienated from its own condition and self that desire is

no longer about flesh, submission to pleasure or longing. To bring desire back to embodied selves is to destabilize the systems which colonize and restrict it. Obvious systems such as capitalism, church and schools are matched by techniques of self which encourage and limit desire emergent through finite sexual possibilities. Sexual dialectics are repeated on all screens from cinema to mobile phones. The sexual dialectic is resonant with the capital image, or rather, the reverse is true. To see on-screen ‘things’ we want or we want to want us repeats the epistemic concentric homogeneity of all systems which emerges through language and knowledge that describes our desire and our selves only through the language available to us.

Cinesexuality argues spectatorship is a more fundamental issue than film content in cinema studies and the ways in which film encounters sexuality and sexuality encounters film. This is not a new claim, nor does it repudiate the continued need for film analysis. Spectatorship is a creative process which inflects with social reality. The inexhaustible interface between continental philosophy and cinema is being paralleled by a new turn by cognitive and analytic philosophy toward film. For reasons of space and focus I supplicate myself for sometimes diluting philosophies in my summaries and for those unfamiliar with philosophy for over-populating this summary with philosophers. All relevant philosophies will be explored in depth as they are raised but here I wish to invoke certain collectives of philosophy currently orienting cinema studies trajectories. Like these theorists I argue that cinema is itself a philosophy more than films being objects of analysis to read and know. I acknowledge, however, that in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari see philosophy as necessarily extricated from the other two major systems of art and science. I am not here attempting to argue against their premise but to challenge cinema (and all art) as structurally understood through discursive paradigms resonant with science – reified objects of analysis apprehended by observing subjects in a search for their essence. Similarly sexuality itself oriented around object, subject, gender, signification of bodies and acts evinces that art, science and philosophy are not simply relevant to their social function but systems encroach on others so that ideology and techniques of thought are not reserved only for particular environments and purposes. Many continental philosophers have pointed out that oppression and revolution are not found in certain objects (including people and oppressive laws) but in the systems through which we encounter all social, including aesthetic and libidinal planes. An inconsistency arises in my privileging of spectatorship. Using cinema as involving an art retains a problematic residual insistence on ‘the work’, giving that work a dividualated (albeit material) persona, straying back to the artists, understood variously as genre, theme, topic or other tentative nomenclaturing descriptions. To negotiate this dilemma *Cinesexuality* will most often use the word ‘images’ rather than ‘films’. ‘Films’ tends to suggest things which are discrete and often point to an internal narrative or an object which may be described, categorized and so forth. My use of the term ‘cinema’ may be even more problematic. Cinema technically is a place rather than a thing in that it is traditionally understood as where we watch films. Two provisos can be raised here. First we now watch films on any screen; our

portable music player, mobile phone, computer and so on. This means that cinema has gone from being a place to a space. Later I describe this as both a philosophical and actual territory. Studies of differences between the content and experience of television, pre-recorded film in private places and cinema experiences as collective assemblies similar to church congregations, football crowds and even Oedipal families are now also addressing the dematerialization of the image from analogue to digital, the actual to the virtual and medium to simultaneous multi-media. D.N. Rodowick's *The Virtual Life of Film* (2007) takes this very issue as key to thinking the future, or what he calls the fate, of cinema studies. I am exploiting the de-specification of the cinematic space here to emphasize what this book does not address – the death of film as matter in the digital age, the collapse of film with other kinetic imagery. As 'art', perhaps all cinema describes is a certain waiting, an expectancy. This means it is up to the cinesexual to define 'cinema'. To say 'I love film' is to say 'I love certain films, I wonder if I will love this film?' To say 'cinema is my lover' awaits all cinematic images, not within narratives but as their own moments, from a single frame to a film marathon, from memory to expectancy. Cinesexually, desire and thus images, are fragmented, vague, abstract, imperceptible sensorial moments or a whole film or a series of relations between certain images and affects between films or any number of infinite combinations, and this before the encounters with the infinitesimal selves formed, forced and folded through spectatorship. All that matters is that something is a cinematic image. Rather than using 'films' I use scenes, moments, whole films, genres, fractals and folds of what is called 'cinema'.

Cinesexuality is the launch upon a line of desire where the outcome cannot be known – desire for an inflection of light, speed, quality of frame, gesture, angle, saturation, timbre and contrast. While Benjamin claims that, unlike painting, the spectator's eye and contemplation cannot be arrested by film (1968, 238) I would tend to describe as cinematic any moving image which emphasizes impossible real-life perception, and film stills. Television documentaries which show something as simple as a slow-motion drop of liquid alter the natural physics of perception, disanchoring the movement of the form from the pedagogic nature of the image's function. The encounter between nature documentary and film seen in, for example, the opening credits of Jack Cardiff's *Mutations* (1974) offers an elegant example of the cinematic elaboration of almost anything as extraordinary, in this case the unfurling of plants through sped up film. These natural world credits do not seem extricated from the fiction precisely because how they show is emphasized over what is shown. Film stills compel imaginative phantasy of how an image comes about – its relation to the film it refers to. Often stills are infinitely more pleasurable than the films they encourage us to seek. The narrative of finding the film to contextualize the image proves that cinematic pleasure is always extricated from notions of narrative (including our own 'search'). In stills then, cinema is photo-painting, and in the act of filming something cinema is movement. While this may decontextualize my whole argument, indeed book, as being about cinema I am here simply pointing to elements which may escape us when we navigate

what planes can be described as cinematic rather than what is constituted as ‘a’ film.

Layers of expectation, pleasure and satisfaction are redistributed in the act of watching and so our desire must also redistribute. The intent of something created as a film matches the intent to want something ‘filmy’, even if it is only a moment. Indeed probably the majority of the films discussed in *Cinesexuality* are most likely to be viewed in the home. In this book cinema is that which we await and want as what Blanchot calls a conjugal territory. Use of the word ‘cinema’ follows Deleuze’s use of ‘cinema’ over ‘film’ in *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, despite my inattentiveness to movement, time or a syntax and classification of cinematic semiotics (and Deleuze’s cinema books themselves). Pragmatically ‘cinesexuality’ sounds better than ‘filmsexuality’. I wish to explore cinema as an aural, visual, kinetic medium. It differs from other art little in the ways the following section understands ‘art’ as described by continental philosophers. My focus on cinema comes because it is the medium which has most seduced me and has been particularly compelling in sexuality studies and studies of gender but seems to have gained less (though increasing) attention from continental philosophy than psychoanalysis or structuralist theory. Salient to this, much of the work using continental philosophy has focussed on Deleuze’s cinema books. This book will attempt what Deleuze and Guattari call inter-kingdom becomings through experiments in philosophy and spectatorship, feminism, desire and other, more extreme, topics from zombies, monsters, masochism and necrophilia, to abstract art and ethics. These films are overwhelming and strange in their spectacle and in the effort required by the spectator to create a conjugal territory. They therefore require a love where the self is the first sacrifice.

While the term ‘queer’ will appear sporadically in this book, I have resisted anchoring cinesexuality as a specific form of queer desire. Queer initially, and rightly, sought to multiply sexual subjective spaces – from gay as homosexual to *and ... and* lesbian and intersex and transgender and so forth. Simultaneously queer also refuses the imperative to talk (or confess) one’s identity based on sexual object and act. In this sense cinesexuality is queer as it orients around the image as a queer object where act, desire and thus identity are not laid out in advance.

Where queer concerns the *and* there is a limit to how many *ands* can emerge within the negotiation of two genders, even if queer does increasingly tend toward the in-between and the presence of both. Identity, rather than desire, is considered in flow. The primary concern of the work of Serres, the ‘perverse’ Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze and especially Guattari takes first the repudiation of any residual notion of the subject. And continues to infinity while creating infinite interstitials between, before and beyond each term, or what Deleuze and Guattari call the *and* toward *n*. Feminism has come from somewhere and the risk of all identity politics is political mobilization through an expansion of spatial categories rather than radical politics which is tactical, non-narrative, that is, without origin and defined future result. While queer is a subjective performance of desire, desire in the work of these theorists is what precedes

subjectivity as a kind of forceful chaos which makes the subject reel and dissipate into molecular arrangements with other molecules. Political strategies come from a schematic but not fixed mapping of this chaos, and as elements change so too must the map. Rudimentarily queer uses the body to perform discourse to show it is arbitrary and malleable. Desire sees discourse itself as corporeally enfolded. Where in the first instance the world is discourse and the body (emergent through discourse but still, especially for Butler, something somehow before discourse) a challenge, in the second the world is flesh and the binary is itself a discursive construct. This is why Guattari claims abstraction is the only way to configure desire – it abstracts the possibility of subjective spaces and places. Subjective differentiation itself is no longer hetero-, gay, lesbian, trans-, male, female or even human (indeed for Deleuze and Guattari, Lyotard and Foucault the human constitutes subjectivity so this category is made redundant). Perhaps this element of continental philosophy is why current publications on queer show a marked focus on the post-human. The question for ‘real life’ politics however is still a crucial issue and a problem in the turn to these male philosophers and their lauding of femininity as the first point of alterity. While my (unforgivably but tactical) interpretation of queer may seem to set up antagonisms, this is neither my aim nor possible. Queer and the vital issues of everyday identity inclusion and the manipulation of discourse by minority subjects is precisely why we need to challenge subjectivity itself as having always been one kind of subjectivity. Desire is what initially mobilized the study of sexuality and gender as a primary concern for deconstructing humanism and hom(me)osocial discourse, both of which refuse women as the first point of alterity.

Cinesexuality takes the act (technically a queer concern) of watching. Collapsing the binary of discourse and body also collapses act/object dialectics and the image is flesh, or an expressive force of desire. Space of and between object and subject disappears. Act is decision or turn rather than demarcated moment so time goes beyond sexual narrative. Cinesexuality describes subjectivity at most as a necessary impossible in reference to modes of activism and accountability, but because aberrant molecules which rupture reified paradigms are sought, subject positions and inclusions cannot be present. Sexual act and (and as) political spatializes both desire and subjectivity and eventually creates political groups based on similarity rather than alterity. Cinesexuality includes all spectators and acknowledges none are the same, nor each as present and thus the same to themselves.

A short history of spectators and their (thousand corporeal) plateaus

Recent work has resonated around two streams in film philosophy. The first is work on Deleuze and, to a lesser extent, other continental philosophers. Second there is a surge of arguments positing film as philosophy which takes film with philosophy in similar ways to, for example, Blanchot’s work on literature, Deleuze’s work on painting, Adorno’s work on music and Lyotard’s

work on the sublime in art. Summarizing key texts I will try to explain where Cinesexuality diverges from these two streams. Work on Deleuze and Guattari, Deleuze's philosophy books and the work of other philosophers such as Foucault, Blanchot, Lyotard and Irigaray with cinema – but specifically with spectatorship over content – remains relatively minimal. The increasing interest in film and philosophy understood through, indeed as each other, thus far has been restricted to non-continental philosophers. Continental philosophers are, ironically, considered by analytic and cognitive philosophers more appropriate to literary and other 'art' studies.

Until the early nineties perhaps the two most influential systems which informed and created theories of reading films extended to spectatorship were, from the work of Freud and Lacan, psychoanalysis and, from Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology. To an extent structuralism and semiotics, found in the work of Metz for example, represents another stream of film theory. The corporeal experience of film emphasized the crucial node of film theory which somewhat escaped structuralism – the spectator. Watching became as important as reading. Psychoanalysis and phenomenology emphasize that it is the experience of film which makes it meaningful. Beyond meanings created and nomenclatured within the screen, the third dimension of film was privileged, that of the outward projection of the image. Renegotiating the privileging of text over flesh, present as far back as Aristotle's demand that art was about the text and not the imagined performers or readers (1956, 39–41), these two theoretical trajectories not only introduced the spectator as subject but as embodied; fleshy and able to perceive and apprehend images beyond their meaning to their effect on the being-in-the-world of the subject. Psychoanalysis invoked by Mulvey (1975 and onward) and phenomenology by Sobchack (1992, 2004) defined spectatorship as an explicitly gendered and corporeal system. The phallic eye means the castrated female spectator is denied a specific gaze. Women's to-be-looked-at-ness as objectifying them from subject to flesh extended to all spectatorship as sensorial as well as perceptible. Psychoanalysis suggested all spectatorship is masculine; phenomenology that the spectator is always feminine to the extent that traditionally women have been aligned with the body and men with the brain. Both evince the inherently and frighteningly gender ambiguous nature of spectatorship. Hallucinations are apprehensions of singular unreal entities within real planes, deliria describes the entire world as hallucination. Hallucinations describe aberrant forms in a normal situation, such as gender-ambiguous subjects. Delirium is the world itself as phantasmatic vision and thus through the act of watching we are made ambiguous. Cinema, understood as a delirium of vision, incarnates what Todorov emphasizes: 'visions' are necessarily 'ambiguous vision' (1973, 33).

Cinema's move away from psychoanalysis and linguistics came to continental philosophy primarily through the work of Deleuze in his film books. Deleuze's *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, where his choice of films is canonical and conservative, have informed the majority of the encounter of continental philosophy with film. Aspects of this encounter include the emphasis of content over spectatorship even when the content is thought as directly affective of the brain

of the spectator. Deleuze concludes that ‘cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce as conceptual practice. For no technical determination, whether applied (psychoanalysis, linguistics) or reflexive, is sufficient to constitute the concepts of cinema itself’ (1989, 280). I will not here elaborate the ideas within these texts as they form little part of *Cinesexuality*; however the development of interest in these books was a revolution in cinema studies. Early on Ropars-Wuilleumier emphasized the relation between philosophy and cinema, claiming: ‘It is neither a question of applying a philosophical theory to cinema, nor even of constructing a new theory for the cinema, but rather of thinking with this object, working at one and the same time in and outside its field’ (1994, 255). It was Rodowick’s extraordinarily influential *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* which arguably incepted the enormous body of work still being published on Deleuze’s cinema books. Coming from an explicitly philosophical position, Rodowick nonetheless queries the perplexing absence of work on Deleuze’s cinema books by Deleuzian scholars. Concomitantly I would argue that the philosophical work of Deleuze, Deleuze with Guattari and particularly Guattari alone still escapes cinema studies or at best are considered inherently secondary and are used most usually for content analysis more than spectator theory with some notable exceptions. The most powerful aspect of Rodowick’s work is his mantra that cinema invokes thought rather than reflection, and here he explores Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze’s *Foucault* and *The Logic of Sense*. Rodowick claims ‘To think is not to recall or reconsider the past but invent the future’ (1997, 202). For Rodowick, Deleuze’s main contribution to cinema theory was to understand the image through its quality and potentiality (1997, 64). This idea demands a reconsideration of the relation between sight and knowledge with sight and thought, where to see itself is to create, opening up a pure force of the image as outside and beyond itself and the spectator. Rodowick’s most powerful notion is the ethical choices involved in the creation of futures through negotiating spectatorship. Bogue (2003), Buchanan (2007), Kennedy (2000), Pisters (2003), Powell (2005) amongst many others have continued this legacy.

Anthologies such as Gregory Flaxman’s *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema* (2000) include a focus on perception as affection and the brain as it relates to thought is privileged over movement and time in film. Affection, defined in this much-quoted excerpt

is not a sensation, a feeling, an idea, but *the quality of a possible sensation, feeling, or idea*. Firstness is thus a category of the possible: it gives a proper consistency to the possible, expressing the possible without actualizing it, whilst making it a complete mode. Now, this is exactly what the affection image is: it is quality or power, it is potentiality considered for itself as expressed. ... the singular combinations that it forms with other affects form in turn an indivisible quality, which will only be divided by changing qualitatively (the “dividual”) (Deleuze 1988, 98–9).

Deleuze remains within the realm of the image here, however the unique phylum formed through the relation between affective qualities of firstness and the spectator necessitate we as spectators must ourselves become possibility

and pure potentiality. Our selves come to the image not as subjects but qualities of possibility which are created through affectivity and which disappear as soon as they are formed, giving way to other potentialities. This would suggest that affection in cinema based on Charles Sanders Peirce is less relevant for *Cinesexuality* than Deleuze's most important use of affection as an ethical mode of production based on Spinoza's philosophy: 'the affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present in us, we shall call images of things... and when the mind regards bodies in this way we shall say that it imagines.' (Deleuze cites Spinoza 1984, 48) In the cinema books the image is the acting power – Spinoza's image affections or ideas, in *Cinesexuality* it is the spectator – Spinoza's body feelings-affects. A certain preference for the affective over the many sign-chains of cinema which occur in movement and time has developed, particularly among feminist theorists interested in exploring the specificity of subject positions as they apprehend images, emphasizing the body in which the brain should be considered visceral-corporeal rather than designating thought as mind over body. Viscerality in spectatorship presents in Marks (2000), Pistors (2003), Kennedy (2000) and Olkowski, particularly *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (1998) where she connects Deleuze's affectivity with the work of Irigaray. The affective-sensorial could perhaps be a link between phenomenological film theory and what is now being called Deleuzian 'haptic' perception in film, although Olkowski demarcates explicitly the ways in which affectivity acts on a body which is temporally and spatially fluid, thus technically it cannot be proprioceptive (1998, 65–6). 'Haptic' is loosely described as the sensation of space, and is elaborated by Deleuze most extensively in his book *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (2003). These works share the foregrounding of the leap the spectator's brain makes in connecting time-images, describing a space of pure potentiality of relation between these images and spectatorship as sensory-perceptive. The ways in which images relate to one another is crucial in the way they are invested with their own identity, value, meaning and effect. *Cinesexuality* multiplies to exhaustion these spaces as they exist between elements of any one image-moment, between image and spectator and between spectator and self – a thousand tiny in-betweens.

The importance of enfleshment underpins Shaviri's influential *The Cinematic Body* (1993). It shares four particular trajectories with *Cinesexuality* – insistence on the fleshiness of spectatorship; emphasis on the ambiguity of all desire, pleasure in unpleasure and vice versa in, for example, the masochistic gaze; use of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy books and works by Blanchot, Foucault, Derrida, Bataille and Lyotard; and choice of films. Forsaking Deleuze's cinema books (or perhaps due to its pre-Deleuze-and-cinema time of publication) Shaviri's book is 'a traversal' (vii) cutting across many disciplines exploring the involution of cinematic images and culture as primarily a relation of unpredictable pleasures and desires. His, as my, accidental preference is for the ambivalent pleasures of horror images, because 'horror is the failure of correspondence and coherence' (Koch 1989, 163). Ambivalence and failure map a territory where the gaze becomes, after Blanchot, fascination. Neither book is *about* these films, certain ideas simply tended to resonate toward them, and

in *Cinesexuality* particularly the visceral gory spectacles and perverse sexualities of Italian horror. Unlike Hawkins' (2000) insistence that Euro-horror is avant-garde sleaze and Powell's *Deleuze and Horror Film, The Cinematic Body* and *Cinesexuality* seem to have stumbled, on their respective journeys, over certain films that happen to be enigmatic in relation with the philosophies explored, as does another great work on Deleuze and Guattari and film, White's 'Once They Were Men, Now They Are Landcrabs' (1995). Powell understands terror as affect; I understand it as submission *before* the film. She says it maintains 'retention of unequal power roles' (2005, 66). There are not two powers per se, and affect only comes from what is within the film while explicitly in my work on cinemasochism the content is irrelevant to an extent. The unequal power roles presume images have power. Images cannot express contingent reconsidered volition (that is, images cannot choose, or change their mind) and so the spectator is both aspects of the unequal power role, the spectator is unequal to itself within itself.

Shaviro sees masochistic spectatorship as cathartic, not of a particular anxiety but the anxiety inherent in the excess or remainder within all desire. Cinema seduces by 'mimetically exacerbating erotic tension' (1993, 57). I argue the spectator exacerbates cinema, and the self is further exacerbated toward encounters with the outside of self within self that colludes with images. Shaviro turns to molecular sexuality, a key concept in Deleuze and Guattari's work and elaborated through many corporeal feminisms. Through molecular desire sexuality's gendering of identity creates what Grosz calls a thousand tiny sexes (1994). Continuing the emphasis on enmeshment as thought, with continental philosophy corporeal feminism has created its own philosophical stream. Examples which traverse everything from zoology to happiness and cerebral desire to cinema include work by Lorraine (1999), Colebrook (1999 and many others), Griggers (1997, 2000), Howie (2002), Goulimari (1996) and particularly Braidotti, who has also used horror film in her work (Braidotti 1997). Braidotti, Lorraine and Grosz introduce what I would suggest is the key feminist continental philosopher, Irigaray who, while not essentializing gender, acknowledges the importance of morphology, and regimes of the visual–solid–phallic in relation with oppression, both ontological and social. Other feminists, such as Cixous (1990, 1991) and Le Doeuff (2002, 2003) address similar issues. Irigaray's focus on the importance of visual systems in the construction of flesh in science and art makes her essential for studies which address specularly and physics.

The body is a territory as it connects with the world – affect as a mode of production. The importance of imagery and imaging in the construction of sexuality, identity and gender means that as feminists we seek any territory where the potential for revolutionary molecular shifts are promising, and cinema is *Cinesexuality's*. Through the pleasures and horrors of the molecular dissipation of embodied subjectivity and desire minoritarian modes of perception reconceive the world. To an extent in continental philosophy sexuality and gender are, finally, ablated. Foucault's historicization of sexuality and Deleuze and Guattari's call to becoming-woman on the way to becoming

imperceptible are two examples of continental philosophy seeking to be done with the identity politics of gender and sexuality which begins with the first two sexual minoritarians – woman and ‘the’ sexual pervert. The issue of inequality is here important, where images collide with the social (although neither is discrete from each other). Cinema is a thousand tiny images, or a thousand tiny molecular intensities. Beyond Powell’s claims that we should not lose the focus on what horror films are ‘about’ (2005, 207) and that ‘philosophical thought does not have to be abstract... in nature’ (2005, 204) particularly in Chapter 2, I argue that only through abstraction can we avoid transcendental reductions of spectatorship. For an image to necessarily be about something similarly reduces its function and meaning to a certain essence.

According to Deleuze and Guattari the body itself is an abstraction and so through abstraction we can negotiate and mediate situations as chaotic spaces where we are compelled to create concepts as tactics for thinking these spaces rather than working within and therefore only via the rules of an established finite field. Guattari is adamant that only through abstraction can we avoid essentialism and the ubiquitous homogenization of all systems and ideologies through what Foucault would call the capitalist episteme. ‘By *episteme*, we mean, in fact, the total set of relations that unite, at any given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems.’ (Foucault 1992a, 191) Whether we speak of science, art or philosophy we speak within the same system through the same ideology and language. Foucault identifies the epistemic territory of any given time as the ‘field of concomitance (this includes statements that concern quite different domains of objects... [but] serve as analogical confirmation, or because they serve as a general principle)’ (1992a, 58). This is why Deleuze and Guattari are adamant that ‘what is philosophy’ must also ask ‘what is science?’ and ‘what is art?’, because the discursive practice that is present and consistent in all fields is the territory to be changed. Perilously, as Colebrook states, ‘philosophy is, in many ways, an unavoidable essentialism’ (1999, 133). Spectatorship is always about desiring subjectivity, images are always real and reality imagistic as long as each is understood through a field of concomitance, but their significations and affects are not determined. Abstraction should not be confused with obscurity and does not herald the flippant, pure relativism which much post-modern ideology has lauded. Abstraction is ethical and this claim will be the focus of the final chapter of *Cinesexuality*.

From film to philosophy

Recently there has been an increase in film studies through other philosophy streams, particularly cognitive and analytic philosophy, incepted by Carroll (1988, who seems to have a fetish for using the word ‘philosophy’ in the titles of his books) and taken up by cognitive philosophers (Currie 2005, Livingstone 2006). The connection between desire and cinema seems explicitly structural in these studies. Resonant with psychoanalysis in explaining narrative desire, Currie

claims cinematic desire occurs along two axes. The desire for or to be a character is matched by the desire for satisfaction from happy endings, resolution and other desires emphasizing the investment we have in narrative (2005, 139–140). Goodenough summarizes the reasons why philosophers go to the cinema. These are: 1. Interest in apparatus and technology; 2. Social and psychological aspects of film-going; 3. Interest in perceptual nature of film experience. Goodenough says film ‘illustrates philosophy’ (2005, 3) which suggests film is always and already about philosophical and social reality. Explicitly setting itself up as using analytic philosophy Allen and Smith emphasize how much film theory has already used continental philosophy, laterally criticizing continental philosophers as obscurantist. This could be understood as similar to abstraction. Guattari’s urge to abstraction describes abstraction not as alienating, which is how Allen and Smith see obscurity, but as curing the alienation certain oppressive systems such as capitalism, religion and education cause. Allen and Smith invoke Lacan, Althusser, Foucault’s structuralist work, Benjamin, Derrida’s deconstruction work, Heidegger and Deleuze’s cinema books. I would not describe the selection or interpretations of these authors as continental philosophy beyond deconstruction. Allen and Murray see continental philosophy as belonging to the arts. They say ‘continental thought was given credence in departments of literature where it was free from the kind of scrutiny analytic philosophers routinely bring to their own work ... the reasons for continental philosophy’s influences are “bad reasons”’ (1997, 2–3). The discrepancy affirms their idea that continental philosophy comes from literature and film is included as a literary text. What they fail to understand is that continental philosophy sees life as a literary text and thus film as creating reality so the spectator is important and the film to come is where we create (even if we have come at it before). Later in the introduction I will elaborate this idea using Blanchot’s writings on ‘the work to come’. Most amusingly, they call analytic philosophy a ‘church’ (1997, 3) before they call Derrida an ‘epistemic atheist’ (1997, 12)! I am not seeking to vindicate continental philosophy and repudiate analytic or cognitive philosophy. This is nothing more than philosophy coming at film from a different philosophical school. The themes and concepts remain relatively consistent – meaning/authorship/representation/ethics/aesthetics and what they term ‘emotional response’ which I would call spectatorship (although the words ‘spectatorship’ and ‘gaze’ are notably absent from the index of their book). The questions are largely consistent, but the paradigms of exploration diverge. The philosophy is multiple, cinema remains constant. Frampton’s *Filmosophy*, (2006) while coming predominantly from continental philosophy, exemplifies possible sympathies between the two.

Wartenberg and Curran sets up an idea that the shift from film theory to film philosophy is one of demarcating the nature of film as *an ontology* (2005, 2). Aligning them with Murray and Allen’s text they extend Althusser’s concept of interpolation and Lacan’s of ideal projection to include the spectator, but they see spectators as ‘conscious subjects capable of interpretive and critical appropriations of the films they watched’ (2005, 3). According to Wartenberg and Curran film analysis has two functions; ‘film as conveying philosophical

truths and film as implementing and reflecting social structures' (2005, 3). These are not antagonistic questions but the definition of 'philosophy' here is incommensurable with that of post-structuralism, where the film viewer is incapable of achieving (the myth of) transcendental self and the idea of philosophical truth is an anaethema to post-structuralism. Hutchinson and Read (do cognitive philosophers only come in pairs?) also see film as its own mode of cognitive philosophy (2005, 82, 88). Similar to my use of Blanchot they explore Wittgenstein's claim we do not seek based on what we know before the search but on our coming to it (2005, 81). Desire occurs before the object, as cinesexuality occurs before an image is seen. Wittgenstein critiques the idea that things have to *be*, that is, that things exist interiorly before they are encountered. Rudrum uses Levinas and the face to great effect, interesting in comparison with Deleuze's work on the face in his cinema books and his work with Guattari on the ethics of the face in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The idea is compelling, the philosophical attitudes different. Rudrum calls films parables (2005, 125), showing the ethics within the film rather than an ethics of spectatorship, both of which are relevant to Levinas. Derrida's critique of Levinas connects Rudrum's work and *Cinesexuality* as both use Derrida's later ideas on violence and alterity rather than his work on deconstruction, trace and differance. These brief mentions of other philosophies of film exemplify cinema's applicability to a variety of philosophical paradigms. That many of the texts are very recent points to a hopefully open discussion which will come from the desire for and belief that philosophy and film do not defer to the domination or privileging of one another but involute with each other as art and philosophy involute with society and cultural ideologies.

The image is the object as catalyst, not for analysis. In simple terms cinema is a social, sensorial thing. Cinema comes to have a function within but not discrete from ideological systems. In this sense it could operate as a science. Deleuze and Guattari define the objects of science as 'not concepts but rather functions that are presented as propositions in discursive systems,' (1994, 118) the various elements of which are called functives. Deleuze and Guattari are explicit in their demarcation of art (percepts and affects), science (function) and philosophy (concept), however spectatorship in this book is less about the object of analysis, apprehension or perception and more about the means by which that object is experienced. Here I could tactically call the spectator, after Deleuze and Guattari, a partial observer. Partial observers consist of singularities effectuated and stimulated both independently of and integrated with the observer/observed described as a site, rather than a dialectic – or what I later explore as a monad. The site is one of force (a philosophical plane) and not act (a function toward fulfilling a preformed proposition). 'The role of a partial observer is to *perceive* and to *experience*, although these perceptions and affections are not those of a man, in the currently accepted sense, but belong to the thing studied.' (1994, 130) This reflects their description of the scientific functive. Feminism has long been critical of the absent observer, in actuality creator, of scientific truth. Traditionally the scientist is male and Deleuze and Guattari's use of 'man' is both telling and appropriate. As cinematic spectatorship can

be understood and experienced as scientific, artistic or philosophical, so too can acts of scientific observation. The pleasures of science, be they pleasures of power, epistophilia or otherwise, have also been emphasized as informing the fetishisations and dominance of truth and knowledge in phallogocentric culture.

The relationships between pleasure, perception, the creation of concepts and functions are here explicitly gendered and the desire for (or as Foucault would say, the will to) truth is a sexuality of its own as it relates to a subject's desiring relation toward another thing. Deleuze and Guattari's differentiation between a will to truth and a will to possibility (1994, 54) precludes what I will seek to explore in the possibility of an ethics of spectatorship in the final chapter but also emphasizes where I begin in my understanding of cinema and images as inciting possibilities rather than inviting readings and comprehensions.

The image fills out its functions, which is to pacify, to humanize the unformed nothingness pushed towards us by the residue of being that cannot be eliminated. It cleans up, appropriates it, makes it pleasant and pure and allows us to believe... the happy dream which art too often permits (Blanchot 1981, 79).

Traditionally certain images found in, for example, avant-garde cinema, have lent themselves to this unformedness which necessitates the falling away of questions of belief as unformed images can neither be described as true nor false. Here we find the sublime. 'We find sublime those spectacles which exceed any real presentation of a form, in other words where what is signified is the superiority of our power of freedom *vis-à-vis* the one manifested in the spectacle itself.' (Lyotard 1991, 113) *Cinesexuality* will argue, beyond Lyotard and with Blanchot, that it is in *all* images we can find, indeed cannot help but find, residue and excess, which necessitates an encounter with self as always in excess of itself, not known to self and persistently antagonistic to techniques of selfhood impelled in modern culture, one of which is that of announcing and being a (or more) sexuality chosen from a finite catalogue, no matter how transgressive or post-modern the choices may be. What Lyotard emphasizes here, and Blanchot sees at stake in the gaze, is that freedom of images comes from the spectator and not from an image's content. The freedom to 'see' is an ethical act, describing not what is seen but how it is seen. (I use the term 'seen' here to include the various spectatorial terms which differentiate the look, the gaze, the glance, to see, to not see, to feel and so forth.) Against knowing and understanding an image, freedom in the gaze opens to thought. Gazing is an act of creation. Nothing is reflected in an image unless the spectator creates that image as reflecting something already known, or as Blanchot would say, cleaning it up to pacify the spectator.

Extending the increasing arguments that film is philosophy briefly discussed above, I wish to argue film is philosophy not because it is film, but because cinesexuality describes a unique consistency that is cinematically 'filmy' rather than being about films. Guattari explains:

CINESEXUALITY

When it is exploited by capitalist and bureaucratic ... powers to mould the collective imaginary, cinema topples over to the side of meaning. Yet its own effectiveness continues to depend on its pre-signifying symbolic components as well as its a-signifying ones: linkages, internal movements of visual images, colors, sounds, rhythms, gestures, speech etc. But unlike the writing and speech that for thousands of years has remained pretty much the same as a means of expression, cinema has, in a few decades, never ceased to enrich its technique ... the more it enlarges its scale of aesthetic intensities, the more the systems of control and censures have tried to subjugate it to signifying semiologies (1996, 150).

While cinema is timely, it is no timelier than, for example, news media, the internet or any other modern (or post-modern) mode of transmitted image. It is more than simply a new form of textuality equivalent to literature and fine art, but it is also not extricated from them.

Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure. Now this cannot be known before being constructed ... So long as there is a time and a place for creating concepts, the operation that undertakes this will always be called philosophy, or will be indistinguishable from philosophy even if it is called something else (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 82, 9).

By concepts, Deleuze and Guattari mean the thoughts which emerge when two incommensurable ideas collide, creating a problem. The concept comes from the desire to see problems as fissures which produce a new idea rather than one idea being victorious over another. Concepts come from problems. Philosophical will seeks not to resolve these problems but explore and encourage the ways such problems can reorient other related concepts and push boundaries, remap borders and change the nature of the field. Every time a concept is teased it affects all other concepts and the total singular whole changes its nature, function and percepts – the territory of which is an event of the production Spinoza sees as the result of affection and affectivity. This book is about cinema but certain cross-over concepts arise.

Sexuality is a single concept whose multiplicities traverse all other concepts. In this book the highlighted concepts traversed by desire are sexuality, gender, subjectivity and pleasure in images, as well as sexuality being taken as its own singular concept. Similarly cinematic spectatorship affects multiple traversals while remaining a singular with entirely internal multiples. Sexuality is crucial as it is available very obviously as a simultaneously philosophical, scientific and artistic concept. Spectatorship experiences, in all percepts, infinite possible forms. It acts creatively with visuals as fabrications. It is a little madness, a schiz flux: 'madness [is] an excess of subjectivity and [is] a passion for countering the contradictions of experience by endlessly complicating the interpretations that experiences can have.' (Canguilhem 1994, 71) Its proliferative fluid explicitly enflashed nature creates obscenity as idea rather than form, act or image.

The space between: the event-horizon of cinesexuality

What is an event? Deleuze and Guattari define an event as the entity ‘that eludes its own actualization in everything that happens’ (1994, 156). It is the series of both fissures and seams, valleys and mountains, which connect all things – prosaically, systems, bodies, thought, reality – and through which all things actualize it. It is the problem of all relations, and the point of the creation of concepts. As concepts come from problems (neither resolvable nor discrete, neither good nor bad) ‘this is what a concept means; to connect internal, inseparable components to the point of closure or saturation... to connect the concept with another in such a way that the nature of other connections will change’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 90). The spectator is the problem, in the event between spectator and image and between the plurivocality within the components of the spectator as (tactically speaking) subject. Addressing these internal components as problems emphasizes the incommensurabilities within any one entity, self as internal disagreement. Problems can shift, arise, and close off through the inter-kingdom event of spectatorship. According to Deleuze and Guattari, traversing kingdoms is the first mobilization to becoming. Kingdoms are all horizons of alterity; discursive, organic/inorganic, material/virtual/actual, female/male, animal/human, perceptible/imperceptible and image/spectator. Becomings show that these kingdom divisions are functions not categories and the act of traversal is a challenge to power more than identity. Whatever shifts this event causes will necessarily alter the non-spectatorial components of the spectator. The screen is the event-horizon and ‘it is the horizon itself that is in movement’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 38). Deleuze and Guattari see the object of science as calibrating the horizon.

The compulsion to resolve problems by excluding them from or violently inserting them into totalizing systems through rationalization and a refusal of disagreement is present in seeking determinable meaning, making the compulsion to read and comprehend images a scientific mode of communication, if not an exact science. Truth and logic homogenize the elements of the event-horizon. Sexual desire and affect from cinema will alter sexual desire in self. Gendering intensities of images will change those within the spectator. Cinesexually, desire in images is not exclusive to human bodies or even forms, and so the zones of pleasure, gesture, velocity, colour, frame, saturation, forms, sounds and so on directly alter concepts of gender and sexuality without being necessarily relevant. The event makes everything relevant and irrelevant to other concepts. In terms of this book I am inclined, with many, indeed arguably most, post-structural philosophers, to claim that all concepts are desire. Foucault claims ‘desire [is] the lawless law of the world.’ (1997a, 17) Lawless suggests, not illicit desire, but pure potentiality which also makes all other things possible. If desire is always present in events in some form, all events encourage lawlessness in all concepts.

Communication occurs between things that share no language and do not wish to learn another. ‘Dialogue is an empty gallery where light and shadow play, where the noise of words reign, a little hell complicated with illusions

and vanity.’ (Serres 2007, 245) The event of spectatorship causes events within the spectator as self and the spectator causes events in cinema through modes of experiencing images. When plurivocal modes which speak as social, as personal, as spectatorial, and as addressed by whatever means within the image – gender, sexuality and the category of ‘the human’ for example – form various shifting event horizons through the event of spectatorship, the inter-kingdom incarnations cross-breed and all are changed so that within and across one concept there proliferates multiple changes and intensities. Of course the commonality of gender or sexuality does not limit their relations to seemingly non-gender or sexuality concepts. Event and horizon are traditionally conceived as secondary to the elements between which they are found. Communication often seeks to subsume one element by the other – the argument won. The event itself is the voluminous entity and the elements are acted upon by it. It is not the empty space between, nor the infinitesimal necessary line but the most important part of communicative relations. Nonetheless it cannot be actualized independently of the concepts it itself actualizes. Blanchot comments on what in Foucault he terms ‘negative theology’, where things are nothing, and ‘its’ cannot exist independently. Things are only ‘*external* conditions of possibility... and thus give way to random series which from time to time constitute an *event*’ (Blanchot 1997, 74). While ‘random’ seems to suggest irrelevant or unpredictable, concepts come into being through events based on the contingent and continually changing relevance and events occur when new concepts form new possibilities.

Deleuze and Guattari seek in philosophy a ‘syntax that attains the sublime’ (1994, 8). Forms, whose percepts always exceed their cinematic function, resonate with the form of film itself as exceeding its aesthetic or entertainment function as the percepts of and felt by the spectator exceed their spectatorial self into self in the world. ‘Representation and perception are an “essential void”.’ (Payne 1997, 51) A concept in philosophy is a component that totalizes its multiplicity while always being within a community of other concepts. Like a brain it is constantly differentiating and integrating. Homogenous synaptic saturating repetition causes this system to atrophy and suspend, incapable of apprehending anything (new) while jerking in the spasms of over-stimulation. Traditional spectatorship then is epileptic spectatorship. However those who watch differently, or desire differently, are seen to be suffering from a perverse navigation of art and reality as their use of art and desire (function) and their pleasures (percepts) is ‘sick’ or even ‘queer’. When the nauseous or overcome state ‘I feel queer’, the cinesexual loves that queer vertigo. ‘Lovers of music and lovers of painting are people who openly display their preference like a delectable ailment that isolates them and makes them proud.’ (Blanchot 1981, 91) Isolation comes both from not fitting into established subject positions, established and affirmed by reading positions, and also through isolation of self from self, the pleasure that hurts, the alienating other that is us.

‘Of all the finite movements of thought, the form of recognition is certainly the one that goes the least far and the most impoverished and puerile.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 139) Here Deleuze and Guattari use recognition-thought more in line with what Foucault sees as knowledge. Opening up to thought as

flow frees concepts from truth. Truth concerns contracting memory to present and the hope this will guarantee the future as a repetition of the same. Art, according to Deleuze and Guattari, should concern not memory but fabulation, what they call a kind of lover's clinch. Our relationship to the event and actions of art here is explicitly one of desire. Traditional visual apprehension means we cannot recognize what we haven't already seen, or if we have not seen something, we relate, defer or exchange it with possible rational connections – Derrida's *differance*. Ironically perhaps, nothing is true where everything is deferred but the eternal deference is taken as representing an overarching truth. The virtual is 'a void that is not a nothingness... but containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 118). The virtual is everything in nothing, truth the nothing reality is reduced to when all forms are function drained of intensity, possibility and singularity. Recognizing forms through memory of their possible former apprehensions reduces them to one possible, an already always. Instead of spectatorship remembering forms, their functions and meanings, lovers of cinema need to actively forget. 'Once defined, a form is simultaneously too old and too new, too strange and too familiar, not to be instantly rejected by the purity of the wait... It is in forgetting that the wait remains a waiting: an acute attention to what is radically new, with no bond of resemblance or continuity with anything else.' (Foucault 1990, 56) Lyotard claims in art 'form domesticates [matter], makes it consumable' (1981, 185). To make something consumable robs it of anything other than its deferred signification and worth, where cinematic forms reflect real objects of desire which reflect cinematic forms which in dialectic structure reflects our own sexuality which reflects what we can and can't desire and so on ad infinitum. This before we start substituting sexy people for sexy mobile phones and other consumables, which make us forget which forms are for sex and which are for making us sexy, which are the fetishes and which the complete – too many 'things', too much meaning invested in those things which make our thingness. Everything is 'thingy', while nothing is all but before and in excess of symbol and structure. Announcing sexuality announces self. Announcing meaning guarantees its identical reception between people. All matter and forms become consumable and exchangeable on a level and undifferentiated field.

Cinematic becomings as inter-kingdom desire

How is this intensity we tactically call 'desire' important for all thought? Foucault refuses the word 'desire' (2000, 246) and in his response to Foucault Deleuze despises the word 'pleasure' (2000, 254–5). Foucault prefers pleasure as it is 'practically empty of meaning... neither fixed nor fixable,' (2000, 246) while Deleuze sees desire as 'opposed to a subjectivity it is an event.' (2000, 254) This is probably, as Deleuze points out, a matter of syntax, albeit nuanced syntax. We could argue pleasure is associated with being from or in something and desire for something. The production which occurs in an encounter where elements act as attractors without essence of quality (neither good nor bad, painful nor

pleasurable) is the simplest description of this phenomenon. Blanchot says little about desire, even though he describes reading and writing as intimacy and the pleasure of the text ravishment. Lyotard refers to it as libidinality. Guattari points out that put simply desire is what occurs before opposition and frequently emphasizes the body (1996, 46–47). Emphasizing the body is not the same as emphasizing the human body. Art events rid us of the notion of the human. Deleuze writes

today we are calling for the rights of a new functionalism: no longer what it means, but how it works, how it functions. As if desire has nothing to say, but rather was the assemblage of tiny machines, *desiring-machines*, always in a particular relation with the big social machines... human sexuality not only as a relation between the human sexes, masculine and feminine, but as a relation between human sex and non-human sex ... what is non-human in human sexuality: the machines of desire (2004, 243).

Cinesexuality invokes pleasure and desire and, ethically, what in the conclusion I call love. Cinesexuality forms a desiring-machine made up of two elements, the image and the subject. Through their relation each is launched upon a becoming that creates a hybrid or interkingdom entity. Our becomings resonate with ‘the work communicating with itself in the *becoming* that is unique to it’ (Blanchot 2003, 242). Communication comes from the becoming unique to every ‘art’; the inevitable becomings of images are the very elements of their attraction and necessarily launch our own becomings through our desire not for them but for coming to them. Cinesexual desire is not for anything, it is found in the coming to and the openness toward images. The importance of *not* speaking here is emphasized. Speaking our sexuality, which necessitates speaking our gender, places us within a stratified system of possibility of desire. When we refuse to speak we are the nothing that is before and beyond any thing. Lotringer claims the post-modern freedom to do whatever we want sexually, including the most depraved perversions, is found not in the doing – how it works – but in the saying. It is a false perception of sexuality, not sexual but discursive. Description has replaced desire and subjectivity is contingent on ticking off acts, ‘the age of the candy shop’ (1981, 275) rather than creating unique desiring machines. Capitalism has incepted shopping list sexualities. This heralds what Lotringer calls ‘defunkt’ sex, sex without sexiness, sex without fluidity and flesh, only sex as catalogue understood through described bodies, even if that catalogue cannot be exhausted. Lotringer, like Blanchot, sees sexy as only available in silence. While post-modern culture encourages the phantasy of perversion, each subject is compelled to communicate that perversion. Silence in sexuality is the most troublesome of perversions as it is nothing and everything. ‘The nature of “literature” [and all art] is to be both silent and monadic.’ (Fleming 1995, 121) It comes, as Guattari points out, both before and beyond the differentiations which form human subjectivity. No longer being male or female, hetero or homosexual, or with an object of desire and an act of pleasure, de-sexualizes sexuality and thus de-humanizes the sexual subject. Speak and you can be named a pervert or normal (even if perversion is celebrated). Remain silent and

you are no longer a subject but a molecular dissipative desiring affectivity and potentiality.

Lotringer emphasizes silence is the most profound perversion, and sexual subjects who refuses to speak the most dangerous perverts. Sexual subjectivity without a compulsion to speak to someone who can interpret and place within an established taxonomy of sexual subjectivity refuses sexuality as communication, so the pervert is alone. ‘What is truly upsetting about these truly solitary perversions is that they hardly project any shadow, or elicit any echo since they don’t seem to make any attempt to communicate their experience. It is this silence that for us epitomizes the unhuman in man.’ (Lotringer 1981, 295) The term ‘human’ is the first and most adamant of oppositional terms in that it positions the human against ‘everything else’. According to Deleuze, Guattari and Lyotard art and ethics make us explicitly inhuman because they refuse obedience to a higher order, obligation through worship of the system rather than alterity, the silent other who does not need to speak.

Desire creates what Deleuze and Guattari call interkingdom relations or unnatural participations (1987, 242). Traversal across kingdoms involves human participations with inhuman entities – animals, machines, anything that does not reflect or affirm the dominance of the human. It also makes the human inhuman, as language and meaning are two great signifiers of human existence, inhuman language is silent communication, seeing the imperceptible visible and hearing the silent audible. Two elements form a participation but the resulting hybrid entity is neither half and half, nor imitation or assimilation of one by another. Certain elemental intensities are incorporated within us when we desire as we emit intensities toward the other entity, thus creating a unique event of desire/pleasure/libidinality or whichever term is preferred. In cinesexuality the entity with which we have relations is the image. In spite of being inorganic, the image’s becoming occurs through the ways in which we open to and express pleasures which cannot be signified – neither described nor represented. Our relation with the image makes the image’s becoming organic (in that it is mobile and adaptive) and our becoming inhuman. Art’s becoming is the extent to which we open to the potentiality of the unique intensities emitted from it in relation to our own unique intensities. Thus the cinesexual entity is the in-between, the space within, where the entities are inextricable but nonetheless particles of each remain from the pre-event entity form. As the space in-between the spectator-image entity excavates the gap which Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy* call the problem and becomes the concept which results in new thought formed by the philosopher in response to problems. Deleuze and Guattari thus claim that in machinic assemblages of desire the cinesexual desiring-machine forms as not abnormal but anomalous, the abnormal belonging to a descriptive taxonomy as a noun, the anomalous belonging to a position (1987, 243–4). A lover, for Guattari, ‘does not transmit information, he creates a richly expressive situation’ (1996, 16). Put simply then, desire is the turn toward a position of anomaly, to create a desiring machine, and pleasure is the event of this desiring machine, cinematic spectatorship creates an expressive situation and cinesexuality the desire, pleasure and love we feel and are in this event.

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Chapter 2

A Cinema of Desire: Cinesexuality and Asemiosis

There is nothing inherently revolutionary or reiterative in images, only in systems through which they and we emerge. Cinesexuality has to love different systems not different images. Reading cinematic images along traditional paths of signification affirms the dialectic between subject and image that maintains established power structures. Spectator and screen form a machinic assemblage. ‘Machinic configurations do not recognize distinctions between persons, organs, material flows, and semiotic flows’ (Guattari 1996, 46). The spectator and screen machine is a ‘composition of deterritorializing intensities’ (Guattari 1992, 38). It is an arrangement of a body and a surface, but the machine is independent of the materiality of its parts, according to Guattari. It describes the system of connection by which components perturb and affect each other as they are perturbed and affected. Each perturbation shifts points of intensification and changes the direction of flows, making some areas dense and others dissipated. The territory is remapped, deterritorialization leading to recomposition. But the machine structure itself, the act of watching, remains the same. The indeterminability of the ways in which images will be received as meaningful will affect the levels of reorganization. An image oriented around its most predictable meaning will cause intensities to pass along frequently travelled trajectories. An asemiotic expression may reorganize the flows between the components in different directions, shifting the intensified and detensified areas of the relations. The way films are made and marketed presumes and acknowledges the machinic arrangement of viewer and film. Genre, sequel and mainstream marketable films seek to reterritorialize the machine’s intensities with sufficient perturbation balanced by a reiteration of previous flow patterns. No image or signification is guaranteed, so seeking to exploit previous flows within the machine does not prevent the flows within any image’s relationship to its meaning leaking beyond its limits. The nature of the components is malleable and volatile.

Asemiotic components may shift the intensities within the machine by exploiting our reliance on expectation in order to break it. All that can be guaranteed is the structure itself between the screen and viewer. According to Guattari, signification, ‘impose[s] a semiotic modelling on the body. And this is political. One must start modelling people in a way that ensures their semiotic receptiveness to the system’ (Guattari 1996, 22). There is power in the reiteration of signification. Semiotic structures do not subject people to meaning. They allow them to become meaningful within systems established

before their existence. 'The organization of signification rather than signifieds are the problem' (Lyotard 1984, 29). Subjection to signification – what Deleuze and Guattari call 'signification' – operates through selecting from binary options, where one term is subjugated to the other. Deleuze and Guattari call this 'biunivocalization', a selection from a series of binaries that unify into one sign. Subjugated binaries key in this chapter are women (to men), body (to mind), expression (to signification) and that which they all come under – asemiotics (to semiotics). There are benefits and risks in challenging projects of signification as they relate to feminism and alterity in general. The desiring event of cinesexuality can reorient and rupture structures of signification through a focus on expression.

Expressive cinema, gestural asemiotics

According to Guattari, semiotics and signifying systems subject the intricate and infinite complexity of expression to transmission of information, what Guattari calls a 'bit', as a coded object of exchange. Represented forms are examples of 'bits'. They exchange information taken from and able to fit back into semiotic systems. We read each bit in an image populated with forms. Here is a table, here is a dog, here is a woman, here is a man. These forms relate to each other in particular ways. A bit's form signifies its value and relationship to other bits. Gendered characters on screen are both bits to each other and to the spectator. Colour, including its saturation, sound and movement are examples of cinematic expressions. Red is given the signification of blood to make it an informative bit, gesture informs as a substitute for a word and so forth. Expression is found beforehand, and exceeds its function within a bit of information. Expression emphasizes content more than form; it is part of the content of a form but not the form itself. Colour is a singularity. Black and white are as vivid as red. Paul Virilio emphasizes the importance and fear of confronting colour disanchored from its appropriate relation to form reduced to a qualifying element and nothing unto itself. Of the colouration of black and white films Virilio laments: 'The lack of colour in a film segment or snapshot is seen as the tell-tale sign of a DEFECT, a handicap.' (2003, 70 original emphasis) Ironically, as technology both gives us more elements and unifies all images, the proliferation of elements, rather than offering additional richness of expression, has made images more easily apprehended. The more information in an image, the less effort is required to experience it and the less attention is paid to the various expressive qualities of the image. Unlike information, expression is not received but affects the spectator in indeterminable ways. Invoking Metz, Guattari emphasizes content in relation to expression: 'Other elements of the filmic text are themselves languages whose matter of content has no precise boundaries' (Guattari 1996, 150). Form as information creates a unified, comprehensible object. Meaning imposes itself on expression, remapping it as an object of information. What is it to express? Expression seems to have a proximity to abstraction. Abstract verbs describe emotions, states of minds,

intensities of feeling. Expressive elements could tentatively be called ‘feminine’ because, like women, they refuse signification but are given meaning via linkage to a higher order of signification. Colour is abstract, sound is abstract; each must be anchored by a form that it can then describe and give information about. German Expressionism emphasizes cinema as more than a series of forms to read and understand within a frame. It foregrounds movement, uncanny gestures created by imaginative editing and the cutting-up of forms with unusual shadows and angles. All images can be experienced asemiotically. Godard’s famous enunciation of ‘it’s not blood, it’s red’ can be transferred to speech as sound, movement as gesture and so forth. My selection of examples is arbitrary and inexcusably limited but the idea-territory rather than the films is what matters.

The tree-branch fingers, frozen shoulders and rat head of Graf Orlok (Max Schreck) in *Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau 1922) create circles of inter-kingdom vegetal/animal/epileptic expression, form through tension of flesh simultaneous with his becoming-insect. His movement is made by montage rather than filming him walking. His form is absence black-saturation as his shadow crawls up the stairs. Form is kinetic in his seemingly contradictory simultaneous fluid and jolted movement, and it becomes trajectory in his sweeping rising, while physically prostrate, from his sarcophagus. Form disappears into the shadows, becoming a series of intensities of light and dissolving shade more than outline. In *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Robert Wiene 1920) the form of effeminate somnambulist Cesare (Conrad Veidt) angulates with the other irrational angles within each frame. We tilt our head and the tilt is the point of spectatorial identification, or sympathy. Cesare’s outline is lost as he is camouflaged within the frame; organic, inorganic and light angles cross divergent trajectories and forms are created that do not describe objects but planes or sections of light and shade. Depth is non-Euclidian because angles structure for themselves without reference to greater structures. The content of these newly created outlines do not signify information based on form. Shadow, line of black and white, movement and intensifications of points within the frame affect the viewer. Character (inherently related to form, which signifies gender) and the metonymic relationship of forms to each other to create narrative logic are less important than the asemiotic expression from the shadows, reterritorialized lines and dramatic movements. When the spectator does not focus on male or female characters as objects of desire, what is the pleasure of jolted movement? Of chiaroscuro? When colour, gesture and sound evoke desire, pleasure exists beyond desiring a person on screen. Cinema elicits a unique form of desire through the experience of its aural, visual, visceral expression. Experiencing cinema inclusive of the aspects of expression outside of signification and comprehension of form does not rely on established genders and objects that create sexual dialectics. It is nonetheless a most compelling aspect.

Dario Argento’s *Deep Red* (1974) offers cinematic breaks in its relatively traditional narrative, showing that these breaks can (and do) occur in most cinematic production simply because it is cinema. Immediately the title of *Deep Red* speaks only of colour, which expresses content usually in need of

a noun. 'Red' is formless. As a murder mystery *giallo* it relies on narrative and forms as clues, but there are asignifying interjections that exploit cinematic expressiveness. Early in the film, psychic Helga Ullman (Macha Méril) sits on stage predicting future murders. Her words are clearly important. The camera breaks away from mid-shot to a seemingly arbitrary extreme close-up of her mouth dribbling water into the glass from which she has sipped. This image breaks the signifying chain. It disinforms the speech to which the spectator intensely listens. Perhaps retrospectively we may speak of the symbolic aspect of this image, but at the moment it ruptures outward, organizing the image as connected to us rather than metonymically to the forms of the previous and following frame – the 'what?' is simultaneous with the 'wow'. The image is one of those 'filmy' moments, an event only available in cinematic images, in which the texture of a sip of water may be experienced, in which the spitting of a mouthful becomes mesmerizing. Later in *Deep Red* there is a murder that, because of its violence and explicit gore, is difficult to watch, emphasizing the submission of spectator to film. But, again, something ruptures the chain. Psychiatrist Professor Giordani's (Gluco Mauri) head is placed on the end of a table and a knife is thrust down vertically to stab the back of his neck. The cinesexual aspect of the scene is evoked because the camera is fixed to the knife and not to the floor, and so the still forms move while the moving form is still. Vertigo through trajectory and velocity occurs, as the spectator, usually situated in a still position, watches the world thrust upward rather than the knife thrust downward.

Another example from Argento is his seminal *Suspiria* (1977), the story of a ballet student trapped in a school which is a coven for murderous witches. *Suspiria* was the last film made with special tri-colour celluloid, a film that relies heavily on basic hues of red–yellow–blue. These are also primary colours of the internal body, blood, viscera and vascular system. Red is the predominant filter, it is garish and a strain on the rods and cones. The red of *Suspiria* is a symbol for danger and violence but it also simultaneously encourages its audience to feel red, nouning the verb or, more correctly, verbing the spectator-noun. From Peirce and Deleuze we can say feeling red is asemiotic because it is not a deferral to a second aspect (colour as adjective anchoring a noun) or third (colour as symbol). Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* (1973) uses red's thirdness first – the symbolic red mackintosh, to lead back to secondness – John Baxter's (Donald Sutherland) bleeding head, creating a plane of firstness – a film that feels red. If red were simply a symbol then the exact reasons for why *Suspiria* is such a discomfoting film would be easily articulated and its power to disrupt closed off by interpreting its effect. Indeed the scene where Suzy (Jessica Harper) throws viscous red into the sink is adamantly bloody but is, in fact, wine. The effect of red is causal result, the affect of red produces. A red territory is created and becoming launched through a vibratory shared element between film and spectator that is nothing more than asemiotic intensity. The watching subject is discomfoted, disrupted and all that can be (irrationally) said is *I am becoming red with this image*. Asemiosis elicits becomings. As they are the formless-deform(alized) aspects which escape image our becomings are

visceral-connections, colour-saturation to rod and cone ache, splatter to bile planes, timbre to cardio-rhythms and blood pulse in the ear, intensities not organs of physiology, what Deleuze and Guattari would call ‘visual, chromatic, postural and gestural refrains... colour clings more, not to the object, but to territory’ (1987, 347).

‘Secrets!’ One of the first words hissed in *Suspiria*. Asemiotic timbre, like colour, disanchors speech from sound. This word immediately engages, immediately begs for answers, or *an* answer. This word troubles, dislodges and creates the possible resolution of metonymy standard to narrative by suggesting a riddle to be solved. Secrets interrupt and disturb the formula that causes us to ask what will happen next? Without this metonymic formula the comfort of the body being engaged with the images is disrupted, the concept of narrative is made redundant. Where there are secrets we cannot be the passive lazy audience. Secrets buy into the notion of perfectly described action and reaction, query and solution. But in *Suspiria* secrets dislodge. The film sets up the question/mystery early but then refuses to answer or even to co-operate with the dilemma. The film’s title shifts the paradigm from modal speech to asignifying sigh. The music is a brief screech, it may or may not be a word, which may or may not be ‘witch!’ It is indeed the recitation a poem about three witches and so is explicit in its message but amorphous in the sighing nature of the expression of that message, the significations are clear but the expression is not and as expression is privileged over information it is the asignifying and corporeal aspect of the song by which we are overwhelmed. If the audience is *listening* rather than watching they have just ‘solved’ the film’s secret in its opening credits; the murderers are witches. *Suspiria* gives away its secret in the first moments. Before the dislodging effect of the unanswered secret the body of the audience becomes corporeally involved with the film. A jarring insane violin, evoking other unpalatable sounds, nails on a blackboard, foil in the fillings, heralds the opening credits. There are minimalist white-on-black credits but otherwise, nothing to see. Coupled with nursery rhyme possessed wailing and violin is ritualistic rhythmic drums. The heart is drawn into the beatings; it is teased into beating erratically with the soundtrack even though there is not yet anything to fear. Although an irregular heart could reflect the drums, the wailing makes any lulling into the score impossible. These sounds are unnerving because they are unrecognizable as ‘music’; the rhythm jars yet the exact terms of their offensiveness are unclear. They are re-mastering the rhythms of the audience’s body before the image, before the audience is ready to invest in the film. The sounds *feel* traumatic, as the audience’s body feels. That the credits tell us everything we need to know in the first seconds, but do not perceive because the asemiotic elements bombard us, elucidates the way rather than what we watch and listen to is the most privileged orientation of spectatorship. Asemiotic affect colonizes, overwhelms, dissipates, ablates and dominates signification, including our signified selves, rather than the reverse most often being true.

The desire for the body to feel something else, to transform, find pleasure and pained gratification in the language-exceeding terrain of asignifying

elements is in *Suspiria* found in vibrations of molecular identification through asemiotic saturation-colour and sonority-sound. Watching the film and yearning for the image in muscle, in nerve, in widened, gelatinous eye, the audience 'become' what the film evokes: rod and cone-burning red and blue, screeching and sighing tonality. The particle nature of formless colour and music invoke the molecularity of particle-spectatorship. The look no longer yearns for the picture, but the flesh yearns for the likeness of the fear the film evokes. It yearns for muscle to wind up, teeth to grit, rectum to tense, diaphragm to tighten – reassignment of receptive organs, creating a Body without Organs. The molecular version of a 'thing' however, emphasizes its potentials, its specificities and its micro-levels of being as opposed to a molar object which is irrefutably fixed in time and space, and which is more signification than matter. While most colour affect in *Suspiria* comes from undifferentiated planes rather than coloured forms, even a coloured form has tonalities which create flows and lines within and beyond itself. There is a viscosity of colour that makes the 'red wall' seem to drip and move.

Suspiria continues in 'secret', even though the real secret that the institute is a coven of witches has been disclosed. A former student is found slain; the same student who Suzy sees at the film's opening screaming 'secrets'. The institute's blind piano player Daniel (Flavio Bucci) is killed by his own seeing-eye dog. Suzy's friend Sara (Stefania Casini), who is getting close to the secret, is killed in a room of barbed wire, the presence of which is entirely irrational and unexplained. The rooms in the building exist as certain organs exist within the body, for purposes we know nothing about but which are there nonetheless, explained or not – rooms of barbed wire, the roof of maggots, bats in the windowless bedrooms. Before Sara dies however, the girls glean their information about the murders by listening to the hallways, listening to footsteps, trying to map out in their heads the anatomy of the building, they want to explore but are afraid, as the subject is of its own body. The corridors are the keepers of the secret, they swallow it, ingest it like a virus and the building must be eviscerated in order to find the answer, to expurgate the fear of the film. It is an evisceration that is necessary but disdainful, like anatomy, like surgery, a tearing away at the tender parts to find knowledge, but being disgusted by the act. Exploring the building for Suzy is *painful*. It curls the toes of the audience but not because of a horrific form or event. *Suspiria's* architecture provokes audience identification not with character but body with internal flesh as architectural viscosity. The film plays out almost entirely within these plasma walls, things are amiss, disturbing feelings of suspicion and fear occur within the building/body. The 'answer' to the mysteries, the cure for the body, is within the hidden chambers of the building. We are dislodged more and more by the events which give no answers to the 'secret', no cure for the illness, but which only disturb more uncomfortably and violently as the film progresses. It is as much an itching within the body, a feeling of the discomfort internally brought about by the action within the fleshy building, as a guarded visual discomfort that occurs.

To establish this film as 'real' the audience must enter into a logically unreal becoming-building, a Body without Organs building without rationally

designated rooms, open to a visceral, or aural organ-assemblage and cross-kingdom reality. Because the film does not look real but more importantly because it does not act like a 'real' film (in colour, in character, in plot) *Suspiria* attacks the nervous system, gall, the bile in the stomach, the borders of the subject watching, *before* it attacks the eye and/as brain as 'not quite right'. The environment of *Suspiria* is a building/body, it convokes with the internal flesh of the body with which we are familiar yet repress in order to save our 'wholeness', our symbolically enclosed, sealed selves. We know rooms exist by the way they express, through footsteps, sounds, shadows and colours. Like our bodies they exist as imaginary asemiotic elements within an amorphous map. To watch corpses and maggots trail along our eyes, secrets swallowed by the basement, is to watch some sickness or disease infect our corporeal being. Suddenly we are seduced by a camera that films Tanner's shoes walking along the attic floor, reminding us that we love what doesn't matter in film. The building is a refrain of un/familiarity with our own othered flesh just as walking becomes unfamiliar. Our becoming is through vascular and intestinal corridor intensities, worried by the itches of ogres and witches. *Suspiria's* asignifying affects are becomings of our own viscera, which has been violently and irrefutably ripped from our signified bodies – what we always and already are but what is the invisible perceptible, signified through its invisibility and ours but not ours as our viscera is the domain of medicine and disgust, death and mechanism. Suzy wanders about the ballet institute, lost when she is *inside* just as we are lost when we have to look at or listen to our insides. The internality of the viewer is reacting in a way we cannot articulate. Our eyes build interior pressure from the red, we look away not to avoid the shocking sights but to drain our bursting eyeballs and shut our ears and cardio-rhythms from the pain of the sounds. The organs shift and various liquids are ingested and expelled as a result of the film yet even though these are *our* bodies and all we are and have been forever and without which we are not, still we have no idea what is going on inside it, the architectural elements cause us to become more visceral and organic – structure as soma. The sealed self is forced to interact, however superficially, with the internal self during the film. It is forced to become the feelings it denies or else walk away from the image, both of which involve a change in the physical self, and a co-operation with the intemperance of perversity. Turbulence of interiority creates the body-building assemblage.

Many of the clues in the film are aural; truth is not necessarily visual – Suzy is almost overcome by Helena Markos's summoning of an image of Sara returned from the dead. But far from making the thoroughly tired suggestion, already so beautifully established by Italian filmmakers, seen in Antonioni's *BlowUp* (1966) and Argento's own *Blow Up* inspired *Deep Red*, that what we see isn't always 'true', *Suspiria* proliferates the idea of the material image as being real in many senses (in the physiological not intelligible sense of the word) and film as being one of the few worlds where pure possibility abounds, meaning anything can be real – from zombies and vampires to the most mundane domestic events. *Suspiria's* reality changes the very function of looking. We watch the movie, *as* an architectural structure, *with* the ears – this is what *Suspiria* asks. The visual is

used to confuse rather than enlighten but for no reason and unapologetically, saying ‘if you love film it doesn’t matter’.

Suspiria creates a space-intensity becoming. In Jan Svankmajer’s three short films that make up *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982) we are offered grammatical time-kinetic becoming through movement, texture and incommensurable relations. In ‘Passionate Discourse’ two heads of plasticine bristle, tear at each other and create a third element, but because their form is mobile they do not deform each other; neither is their progeny a repetition of themselves. Fragments of fruit and machinery spin and speed around the frame, composing and recomposing from transforming matter in ‘Exhaustive Discussion’ until they are reduced to nothing. Guattari claims Dadaists play ‘gratuitous games’ (Guattari 1996, 56), cutting up reality and thus innocently revealing reality is already an organization of cut-up pieces. In reality each piece is unified as an individual and the organization of each piece is unified, hierarchically and genealogically: arborescent. In Dadaism the pieces are pure multiplicity, they are defined by their mobile connections with other pieces and their movement, so their nature continually breaks and forms new semiotic systems: rhizomatics. Guattari sees the use of art in breaking significations as able to become the catalyst to similar breaks in reality. Surrealism addresses language more explicitly than Dadaism to deform it. In ‘Factual Conversation’ two heads poke out objects on their tongue. For each object the other head offers a corresponding object: toothbrush, toothpaste, shoe, shoelace etc. In the second section these objects meet non-corresponding objects – toothbrush to shoelace, bread to toothpaste and so on – showing breaking signification through surprising connections. The final section sees the objects meet themselves, signifying nothing without a metonymic context. How do we define one against itself rather than against its opposite or its place in a signifying chain? Svankmajer is interesting as much because of the asemiotic as the break with semiotic. More than these games, it is the movement, the jolty stop-motion, the random sounds and the texture of the plasticine – or indeed the texture of the stop-motion and the jolt of the plasticine – that I find most cinematically engaging. The texture and kinetics of the films are emphatically visceral and affect the flesh. One’s fingers twitch, stomach clenches, entirely due to the strange maneuvers of the objects and writhing of the plasticine.

Cinema is new, timely and thus relevant. Cinema’s asignification and presignification are not necessarily more radical or extreme than that of language. In this case, it is a question of the speed or slowness of immobilization. Similarly the shift from silent to sound cinema, which Deleuze sees as crucial in *Cinema 2*, includes silence as its own form of language or sound. Asignification is not the exchange of signification for no (or an ambiguous) signification but an enhancement of the zones within signification that confound and deterritorialize it, altering the geography and the pathways of the cartographies of meaning and the experiencing of it.

Cinesexuality and cinemasochism: asemiosis hurts

The relation of cinesexuality to feminism is drawn, using Guattari's notion of asemiotic bodies: the 'homosexual' (cinesexually more correctly queer or pervert) and 'woman'. Can cinesexuality ignite a form of 'becoming-woman' through shared lack of signification? The cinesexual emphasizes cinematic pleasure as asignified, pleasure beyond signification that then challenges how genders, and individuals as their own collective of disparate modalities, desire cinema. Rethinking cinema can alter the way women have been both denied a specific gaze and defined as gazing either masochistically or transvestitically, while acknowledging that spectators desire cinema in excess of the meaning of images and their deferral to established sexualities. Cinema is a nexus of reality/fantasy, offering planes of pleasurable intensity through asemiosis. These pleasures are found in all encounters. Cinema's incarnation as a plane of art is more obvious in its demand for interaction through what Guattari calls its asignifying elements, singularities and assemblages of colour, framing, celerity and sound. Desire for and in cinema reflects the ambiguities and problems psychoanalysis has found when addressing the 'question' of women's desire. Woman's desire does not necessarily fit into the phallus oriented structures of psychoanalysis, It is more fracture than lack, as Smelik (2001) demarcates, through the varieties of ways in which feminism cracks signification. Pleasure in cinema does not correlate with structures of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Heterosexual and homosexual desire are based on the affirmation of the gender of the object of desire, which, depending on whether the object is the same or different, will thus constitute sexuality. Asignified aspects of cinematic pleasure complicate the gendering project traditional structures of sexuality maintain. Challenging cinematic paradigms can inevitably alter the conception of other structures of signification of desire as all systems, while not reflecting, affect others as eddies and flows affect the whole ocean. More important to this particular project is the specificity of cinema, the unique moment of desire only available to us through that 'cinema' feeling: cinema as a lover we take, a form of sexuality that is not translatable to any other circumstance. In cinema we experience worlds that are neither available nor repeatable in the world outside the screen but impact the world just as the signified world is its own form of screen that impacts the creation and our experience of cinema.

All becomings, including those of women themselves, must pass through a becoming-woman because woman is not enough and too much. Women are 'anorganisms', between body and mind, human and animal, plethora and lack, as all becomings are the being between (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 277). '*Sexuality proceeds by way of the becoming-woman of the man and the becoming-animal of the human*', not an imitation but '*a proximity, an indeterminability*' (1987, 278–9). This section explores resonances between image–woman–desire and spectatorship's negotiation of their interaction. Cinema and feminism have been seduced and betrayed by the attractions of psychoanalysis and structuralism. Both describe the structuration of the subject: the way in which the subject is mapped through signifying systems. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the gender of the spectator as it

corresponds to or differs from, and hence desires, the male 'subject' or female 'object' on screen. When we attend to asignifying intensities: 'linkages, internal movements of visual images, colours, sounds, rhythms, gestures, speech, etc' (Guattari 1996, 150) where are gender and hetero or homosexuality? Desire and pleasure are wrenched from sexual structures just as asemiotic elements are from signification. Psychoanalytic film theory translates a particular arrangement of desire into cinematic scenarios. When the male spectator's gaze is presumed active/sadistic and heterosexual in its objectification of female forms, the female spectator is denied a gaze proper, relegated to masochistically identifying with the objectified woman on screen. Psychoanalytic film theory has much in common with other modes of epistemological mappings of the subject, from the medical to the familial. 'Like the male subject, the female subject emerges only within discourse ... Both are spoken by discourses and desires which exceed them. However, whereas the male subject has privileges conferred upon him by his relationship to discourse, the female subject is defined as insufficient through hers' (Silverman 1984, 131).

Woman's insufficiency as lack refers neither to her flesh nor to her subjectivity, but to her ability to navigate within and be conceived by systems that dam up intensities. Signifying systems defer images, experiences and intensities to established signs and the relations between them, thus crystallizing their ambiguities as meaningful objects with inherent value (or devalue). Guattari describes structuralism's project of signification as trying 'moreover to systematically inject meaning into all signifying regimes that tend to escape it' (Guattari 1996, 149–50). Women escape phallic systems and those of signification, but they also enable such systems by being examples of what the valued terms in these systems are not. Gender and binary relations, such as male/female, hetero/homo and passive/active are affirmed. Thus women are insufficient and exist sufficiently nonetheless; they are both less than one (castrated) and more than one (plethora). Women are seen as a 'question' or 'problem' in psychoanalysis and in society because they both confound and repudiate the system of one: one meaning, one object (symbolized through the phallus) and one self. While women cannot define themselves they cannot, technically, 'be'. The power of women as confounding signification is not that they offer an alternative, but they make a fiction of the power to subsume anything by 'knowing' it, while resisting being representative of a single alternative to it. Similarly the way we desire planes of cinematic intensity unique to the screen world makes a fiction that cinema is a version of actual sexuality simply repeated on screen. Cinematically woman is given meaning through deferral to the higher order of 'not-man' or 'object of desire (usually for the pleasure of the male character and/or spectator)'. Woman is not, according to Irigaray

(a) unit(y), such as a letter, a number, a figure in a series, proper noun, unique object ... by closing herself up over the unit of conception, by curling around that one, her desire hardens. Perhaps it becomes phallic through this relationship to the one? And likewise a femininity that conforms and corresponds too exactly to an idea – Idea

– of woman, that is too obedient to a sex – to an Idea of sex – or to a frozen sex, has already frozen into phallomorphism (1985b, 229).

Woman in cinema is taken as fetish (a part that stand in for a whole) or object for male desire. The female spectator's desire remains an unresolved issue. This question risks defeating its own revolutionary possibilities by being answered. As soon as woman's desire 'is', it is essentialized.

This conundrum of demanding the power to name oneself, while risking essentialization through such naming, is one that has plagued feminism. Simply because these systems refuse to acknowledge women as independent entities does not mean women cease to exist. At the turn of the millennium A Butler asked: 'what kind of future might there be for feminist film [theory and practice]?' (2000, 73) She cites queer films, films that deconstruct masculinity and films that 'offer the pleasures of [female] specificity and a systematized understanding of femininities' (2000, 77). Butler's claim that femininity has specificity, and it should be systematized, is, at best, a reversal of patriarchy. At worst it is a colonization of the admittedly problematic but also potentially liberating asigned planes of pleasure women have received from film both in spite of and because heterosexual patterns within film theory repudiate their gaze and their control. Butler's claim raises the volatile issue of the question 'what is woman' which, even if located around history, is answered by the depressing and pessimistic response that all women are is shared oppression. Shared oppression, like power in masculinity, is a matter of degree. All subjects share forces of both, complicating the dualism of oppressor and oppressed, of power and resistance. No subject is only oppressed or only resistant. Byars, after Chodorow, claims that post-psychoanalytic feminist film theory perspectives are transgendered, and 'the male is rooted in objectivity and impartiality while the female perspective is based on a blurring of boundaries between self and other, allowing feelings to influence thought' (Byars 1990, 113). Modleski points out postmodernity and pleasure are incommensurable because postmodernity reconciles pleasure to capitalist system (1986, 158). Byars reverses value rather than challenging stereotypes. I imagine Byars means 'masculine' and 'feminine' rather than male and female. Freud already demarcated this ambiguity within each subject as a mixture of masculine and feminine. Is Byars' a really post-psychoanalytic perspective? While it emphasizes the ambiguity of femininity, does it challenge polarized significations within trans-gendered spectatorship? The problem with much post-psychoanalytic feminist film theory is the reliance on exchanging binaries and their associated terms. What happens when there is sexuality without the possibility of heterosexual or homosexual union? What happens to gender if sexuality is not based on oppositional terms? Problems with psychoanalysis come not from what it says, but from what function the form of speech has and what values and meanings this speech augments or repeats.

Guattari points out: 'Desire is power; power is desire. What is at issue is what type of politics is pursued with regard to different linguistic arrangements that exist' (Guattari 1996, 20). Becoming-woman is not in opposition to anything

else, acting as a step away from binaries by creating and then making fluid the first binary of male and female. While I would argue the human–nonhuman is the prime binary, the two dominant elements of spectatorship are subjectivity and desire and thus initially woman seems more apt. Entering the self into a participation with another element forms a unique relational structure that changes both terms and spreads forth to create a series of limitless connections with other terms. Becoming does not form a unity but a contagion. Any self’s becoming both exploits that self’s specificity and dissipates its quality through its relation to the specificities of the other becoming term, changing the organization and powers of both, through unique patternings forming mobile hybrids. Becoming is not ‘like’, or ‘as’, the other term. Becoming is a movement rather than a project towards which a goal is identified. Guattari (and Deleuze and Guattari) define becoming as ‘no longer a question of gradual resemblances, ultimately arriving at an identification. .. it is a question of ordering differences to arrive at a correspondence of relations’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 236). Neither imitation nor filiation, becoming is a form of production in which the two terms are necessarily altered by their relation. Becoming is not the marriage of forms but the alchemy of contents, content as verb (expressive, dynamic content) not noun (informative form or bit). The alliance element is usually traditionally subjugated: woman, animal and music (because, like mathematics and dance, signifiers have no default signifieds thus its signification is not stable).

Deleuze and Guattari’s maligned notion that in order to enter into a becoming–otherwise all subjects must first enter into a becoming–woman usually focuses on the misguided fetishistic aspect of ‘woman’ over the key point that ‘what is essential here is not the object in question, but the transformational movement’ (Guattari 1996, 37). Guattari’s claim resonates with his points on expression and his use of Metz to critique form. Expression is content in transformational movement. Guattari frequently cites dance as an asemiotic art because of its emphasis on movement and explicitly the body. Guattari recognizes these alignments. ‘Each time the body is emphasized in a situation – by dancers, by homosexuals, etc. – something breaks with the dominant semiotics that crush these semiotics of the body. In heterosexual relations as well, when a man becomes body, he becomes feminine’ (Guattari 1996, 47). Referring to traditional binaries, woman is historically relegated to the body in the mind/body split. The homosexual also finds himself [sic] in the subjugated side of these binaries. Cinema beyond psychoanalysis makes the image material, fleshy, because of its ability to have an effect beyond signification of objects within a frame. Asemiotic cinematic pleasure experiences cinema corporeally, not in order to transcribe images. But does that necessarily make cinesexuality feminine? And is Guattari here returning to the binary systems he repudiates? Another question that both contextualizes Guattari’s call to becoming body/woman/homo and contradicts itself asks, should women become woman/homo/body when they are yet to be granted form? Can woman be recognized form without being object of information or exchange, without being ‘(b)its’. This is a serious problem in Deleuze and Guattari’s potential fetishization of ‘woman’, critiqued by Jardine,

Goulimari, Braidotti, Massumi and others. Guattari admits to using the feminine contentiously, as a starting point, because it is the first asemiotic break in the dominance of masculine signifying systems. Similarly homosexuality is the first rupture in culture's presumption of heterosexuality as both natural and normal. Does Guattari call to becoming-woman because of its memory rather than its meaning? 'Desire is not informed, informing; it's not information or content. Desire is not something that deforms but that disconnects, changes, modifies, organizes other forms and then abandons them'(Guattari 1996, 61). Does he signify not through what one is but through the call to not-being, the very problem women have experienced and that was discussed above? If there are no longer subjective pathways, does this mean there can no longer be regiments, of meaning and power, associated with gender? And to what extent does this insinuate a year zero of subjectivity that risks forgetting oppression?

Modal memories: feminism and cinesexuality

Within the question, 'what do I see and do I desire it?' we can include 'how am I affected by the multi-sensorial visual plane?' The event of viewing includes but is not limited to a constellation of body, desire, memory, inclination, environment, image and affect, more or less important in each instance. Self is expressed as a constellation of modes. The self as modalities then forms the spectator component within the viewing machine. At any one time self is extricated from others, self as memory, self as fantasy, self as warring or contradictory desires: the subject as a particular coalescence of intensified or decreased modes. All of these modes are co-present within the one space, even before time, which transforms each plane of intensity and distributes modalities at every infinitesimal moment. While not wishing to claim women and men watch differently, even the most post-modern film theory would be foolish to claim any viewer watches independent of their history of their relationship to signifying regimes. If viewing self includes a modality of memory (including tactical individual and social history) assembled as an immanent remembered present with screen, then the particularities of that memory, including its oppressions, subjugations and powers, are co-present with the event. One's self is mapped according to the importance placed on these memories and the modal configurations they make with the present self. The self is interactive or interceded with and by memories of subjectivity and can acknowledge the importance of this subjectivity in the act of viewing depending on which modalities are intensified. Memory is the making concrete of the generalized other which Benhabib sees is essential to recognize in a making-ethical of poststructuralist theory for feminism. She points out Lyotard's contrasting of "the grand narratives" of the Enlightenment to the "*petit recits*" of women, children, fools and primitives' (Benhabib 1992, 15). She criticizes modernity and postmodernity because in both '*the paradigm of language has replaced the paradigm of consciousness*' (208, original emphasis). Consciousness is awareness of memory, not the conscious as opposed to the unconscious that, in schizoanalysis, is co-

present with consciousness as the asigned aspects of cinema are co-present with those aspects we tactically find meaning in, meaning that, as in our selves as conscious-unconscious assemblage, flees before it is apprehended. While we must think the act of viewing beyond dualisms, including those of gender, a future beyond dualism risks forgetting histories and ignoring memories of suffering and oppression, as well as the acts of power, experienced and expressed by individuals and groups of subjects.

How we can acknowledge the vital role of feminism and the rights of women when we seek to destabilize notions of fixed subjectivity and signification? I suggest through a form becoming-woman through what I have termed 'cinemasochism', a concept I elaborate in Chapter 3 using Foucault and Blanchot but here I wish to introduce the term as it relates to women, feminism and Deleuze and Guattari's contentious notion of becoming-woman. In 'Becoming-Woman', Guattari uses the (yet to be signified, or only signified as 'not-man') signifier 'woman' as aligned with the masochist, the prostitute, the homosexual and other forms of 'sexual minorities' (Guattari 1996, 41). Cinesexuality is not an acknowledged sexuality, but one in which all viewers partake; thus when cinema is read as asignifying, cinesexuality is a becoming-sexual-minority of all viewers. Stambolian paraphrases Guattari as saying 'all forms of sexual activity are minority forms and reveal themselves as being irreducible to homo/hetero oppositions' (Guattari 1996, 47). Guattari acknowledges that his deferral to binaries is a tactic to begin movement. If all sexuality is a becoming-woman, then after becoming-woman we must ask, 'what next?' When there is all, there cannot be two. Guattari claims we must all become woman; I claim we are all already cinesexual. All forms of pleasure at the cinema are bodily, beyond reading/experiencing oppositions. All images are potentially asemiotic, because all exceed signification of form and logical relation to other forms. All images rupture out while they move along. The question is not whether something is or is not a minority sexuality, or asemiotic, but to what extent it elicits the reterritorialization of intensities not reducible to affirmed or exchanged binaries.

Contradictory to much spectatorship theory that posits the gaze as powerful, cinema primarily requires the viewer to submit to the image. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the masochistic positioning of the female spectator but in the face of the cinematic image all spectators lose themselves. Cinema presents the paradox of actual worlds that are impossible in the 'real', thus confounding possibility and reality (the images may not be true, but they are real in that they exist). 'Impossible' here can mean the presentation of fantasy worlds or fantasy narratives, because they are extricated from real life (science fiction, horror) or because their neat narratives defy the complexity of reality (romances). 'Impossible' also refers to the unique patterns of framing, speed, lighting and kinaesthetics that constitute cinesexual pleasure. What is consistently impossible is describing the pleasures of cinesexuality, borne of a territory of impossible desire, and this silent reality is the only impossible that matters. Cinesexuality requires the viewer to come to cinema with openness to the pure possible. Spectators 'gift' themselves to the indeterminability of affects and breaks in

signifying systems. Submitting oneself to film is submitting to affects that indulge in the breaking down of logic and of the flesh itself: horror films, films set in fictitious worlds, dream films. Most importantly it is submitting to undifferentiated pleasure and desire, of any kind. An obvious example of the gifting spectator is the viewer of horror film, particularly gore films that exploit the breakdown of the body into asignifiable flesh, and unpalatable sexuality, both explored later in this book. No catharsis is available.

The cinesexual spectator should not expect information, by way of forms, that may translate to their sexuality. We should experience expression that enflames repulsion-desire, bodily ruptures that evoke becoming-body through inter-kingdom alliances such as that of building-body. Films which foreground these are often maligned as incoherent, too visceral, illogical, poetic, dreamlike, all 'feminine' terms. Cinema is a solitary experience that enables experiments in self and desire before any other persons are considered. This means the self is taken as the primary sacrifice in the face of cinesexual desire, and that any attempts to signify the other are prevented, which prevents falling into the problems of the oppressed signified (or adamantly not signified in the case of women) by the oppressor. Cinesexuality is expressed not in what one watches but in how one is altered. It involves a kind of passivity to the possibilities of the affects of the image, which is itself passive in that it cannot respond to us after the event of cinema. Cinesexuality then is participation of double passivity. It requires submission by all viewers, so all viewers must first place themselves as open to the pain and innovation of losing self as meaning is forsaken. All viewers take the first step that most resonates with the masochistic spectatorial position to which most film theory relegated the female spectator. Perhaps all becoming-cinesexual must first pass through the minority sexuality of becoming-cinemasochist? These questions will inform Chapter 3. Masochism here is more a form of openness, a sacrifice of signification, not a repetitive pattern of pain. Masochism describes the hurt involved in forgoing the self as signified to itself and striated within a hierarchical system in the world, its associated significations, pre-established functions and values, when entering into becomings. There is clearly pain for women in forsaking the signification as subjects they have yet to receive, but it is as important that, while much feminist film theory has called for women to be empowered spectators, we acknowledge there is power in submission to asignified desire. The more one is signified and reified the more one feels the masochist's pain/pleasure and the more one should submit. Guattari emphasizes that becoming is more urgent for men, particularly hetero men, than for those entities signified to a lesser degree. Reading an image encloses the image within the self's signification. To be affected by an image acknowledges the contagion of the image in altering the viewer, and of the viewer's act of watching as a mix of reading and experiencing.

Masochism through foregoing signification includes the physical sensations of the experience by the visceral nature of cinematic affect. It is simultaneously and inextricably corporeal as much as structural. Submission to asignification is a step rather than the taking up of a marginal position, which questions the politics and value of desiring positions of power. If sexuality is irreducible

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to binaries, desire (particularly in horror cinema) is irreducible to pleasure/unpleasure, delight/disgust, seduction and perversion. Cinesexuality is a form of sexuality enjoyed by all bodies. Blanchot states: 'But when we confront things themselves, if we stare at a face, a corner of a room, doesn't it also sometimes happen that we abandon ourselves to what we see, that we are at its mercy, powerless before this presence that is suddenly strangely mute and passive?' (1981, 80). Blanchot's demarcation of the ecstasy of desire elicited by submission to the quietest of images seems particularly resonant with cinema, which encourages us to see and to stare at the mercy of the asignified and asignifiable. The event and risks of openness to cinesexuality is the becoming-woman of all viewers, masochism as a suffering due to lack of meaning that torments the self as meaningful: a cinematic becoming-woman. This is cinemasochism. Cinemasochism refuses the notion that becoming-man of the female-owned sadistic gaze and modes of signification are the only form of cinematic spectatorial feminism. Cinemasochism exploits differences between and within subjects rather than the taking up of positions by selves. It does not require the circulation of value in spectatorial positions, just as asignification does not require the circulation of signs as meanings with inherent values. 'In the last resort', writes Guattari, 'what will be determinant in the political and aesthetic plane is not the words and the content of ideas but essentially a-signifying messages that escape dominant ideologies' (Guattari 1996, 154). Before and beyond what is watched, cinema offers us a 'how to desire' that is different to other forms of desire, both in how we are positioned within the machinic assemblage of cinesexual desire and the call to submit to forms of asignification both available to all who view images and nowhere else in the world.

Chapter 3

Cinemasochism

This chapter orients the loss of the 'I' of the spectator through openness to cinesexuality – a risky but nonetheless vitalistic sacrifice toward thinking an ethics of spectatorship. As spectators we come to images. They cannot come to us. There is a want from a speaking position to which the image can neither respond nor alter itself as a response to our demand. All movement must come from the spectator as intra-communicative. When we come to cinema, desire is the coming, but the 'I' is that which comes and the 'I' is the extent to which we are open to cinesexuality. In reference to desire the deconstruction of the gendered and sexed components of the 'I' of the cinesexual event gives way to the sacrifice of the 'I' itself. Eventually, and perhaps contentiously, this book will posit the end to gender and sexuality, but in order to do so the preceding 'I' must be accounted for and negotiated. 'I' is an enunciation which speaks to itself and knows itself. It is also an event made from multiple horizons of possibility and position. The gendered 'I' will always have singular components unique to each individual as the extra-individual components are taken in by the self and the self emits versions of those components to the world. The self is world internalized to self and externalized to world while the world is negotiated as self in world, but not external to self. The world is not observed by a self and the self is not an observable entity within the world. The self is a series of finite, albeit infinitesimally reducible and infinitely able to be arranged, mobile points at various positions within various horizons. The proximity of these points to each other defines the extent to which the self is homogenized as singular 'I' or provoked into dissipative potentiality. If the point of 'gendered I' in the world is very close to 'spectator gendered I' then the self is able to conceive self as relatively stable, the systems are resonant rather than traversed. Self is congruous between horizons, or, as Deleuze and Guattari would put it, the self observes other kingdoms but does not enter into inter-kingdom relations through singularities to form hybrid selves. As hybrids cannot reproduce, so the stable self is only reproduction of the same. This is what Deleuze and Guattari, after Spinoza, call self as *habitus*. 'We are all contemplations and therefore habits. I is a habit.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 105) Contemplation describes a certain distance, which values the entities at each pole rather than the space between these entities and extricates self from world. In cinema the distance creates the spectator as an observer of things, rather than involuting with cinematic planes. The 'thingness' of the images is made clear. If 'I' is 'the habit of saying "I"' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 48) then kicking the habit involves kicking the conception of 'I' as singular, as consistent over all horizons, and thinking elements outside the 'I' as independent objects without acknowledging the 'I' is

a force, or an effectuation with an inherent capacity to affect other 'I's through shared horizons.

The way the 'I' is conceived directly forms the way 'not "I"'s' exist. Just as recognition plays a key role in the perception of images as constant through deferral to already perceived images, memory allows us to recognize our 'I' by deferring it back to what we are and will be via what we were. 'Thought constitutes a simple "possibility" of thinking without yet defining a thinker "capable" of it and able to say "I".' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 54–5) This is the precise moment we hear common responses to images. 'I don't get it' (The I that sees has not seen this before); 'I don't like it' (I wouldn't like it based on what my perception of the I that likes has liked before); 'I'm not like that' (I am indeed like that because I am capable of being anything but if I claim the I that is perceived by others as this I would not be like that then their faith in perception as consistent will blind them to the I which is always inconsistent). The majoritarian does not think itself as open percept but knows itself, as thinker (more correctly, knower). To know requires observation and the sense of 'I have seen it before, I have been taught what it is and thus this is it'. The 'it' has a certain quality, function and nature, itself its own 'I' be it animate or inanimate, organic or inorganic.

An opinion of cinema is vindicated by the ways in which images 'fit' into our tastes. 'I don't like' is more correctly 'I can't or won't like it' based on what 'I have liked'. Spectatorship is configured as memory, not fabrication. This is an important reason as to why I have chosen certain images from the films this book uses to explore cinesexuality. Like desire itself, which occurs within and in excess of a desiring self, many of the images directly affront the spectator to dislike them. They are not 'tasteful', neither are they 'art' in the canonical sense of the word. But I did not choose them because I thought they necessarily will offend or disgust. The art 'thing' includes demands as mechanics of perception and these images often make more difficult or adamant demands. Arguably they may also be more obvious about their demand because they are unapologetically fantastic. Certainly if we were to read even the smallest blurb about many of the films before we came to them many spectators would have very definite ideas as to the films' supposed affects. What I wished here was to show the collapses of the bifurcation of communication where an image emits a particle, form or intensity that the spectator receives and responds to based on a selection of possible responses rather than the unresponsive silence that elucidates the voluminous unspeakable affects of confounding aspects of pleasure and desire. Certainly the residual particles of the spectator as social self which would come to the film as a thing belonging to a genre and presuming certain content, expecting to be disgusted or offended, or transgressive because they are not so, form part of the plane of spectatorial pleasure, but these particles change their qualities as some encounter the pleasurable aspects of the images while others the unpalatable nature of the pleasures so that the nature of disgust itself changes when it exists in the world. In this way cinema communicates with the world and the spectator becomes nothing more than the residue but everything in that as this residue the spectator is also the problem. Here is the key reason why the

content of an image can never be good, bad, ethical, unethical, or anything else. Only the ways in which the spectator as problem communicates itself to itself matter, and is the matter, of cinema. For sexuality, desire and pleasure have too long been understood as good, benevolent or preserving of self. When we open to cinematic pleasure there is a presumption that the pleasure will be nice to us. We trust it. Our passivity comes only from our trusting expectation and not passivity as submission to potentialities. Cinema similarly opens to us in an equivalent manner. Communication begins, not with opinion, but with void. Dialectic trust expects comprehensible images transcribed to and from the world. There is a phantasy of clarity in images. They are transparent to the extent that their signifieds are emphatically clear. Cinesexual openness is different. It understands the indeterminacy and miasmatic depth that exceeds signification and deferral to the world outside of cinema. ‘This is the reason for [the image’s] characteristic passivity; a passivity that makes us submit to it, even when we are summoning it, and causes its fleeting transparency to arise from the obscurity of destiny returned to essence, which is that of a shadow.’ (Blanchot 1981, 80) A double passivity occurs in cinesexual communication, and the destiny of the argument is no destiny at all, only an effectuation of the conditions of the argument and the ways in which to navigate the problems. Problems are not issues which are bad or in need of ablation. They are the in-betweens that encourage exploration and widening. Expectance of an image as indeterminable and incomprehensible but affective shows a great power in passivity and a shift from knowledge to thought. Desire and pleasure team with molecules of affectivity, each of which have relations within the communication from the image to the spectator and create relations with the spectator’s own molecular potentialities. The space between cinema and spectator folds in and unravels the spectator’s singularity to evoke an encounter with the spectator’s unrepresentable and unspeakable (in the sense it cannot be spoken, not it is blasphemous) pleasure and desire. The spectator communicates with self, but not with words and not as oppositional dialectic. The spectator must disagree with themselves.

Beyond the pseudobond

‘The masochist needs to believe he is dreaming, even when he is not.’

(Deleuze 1994a, 72)

Cinemasochism describes the grace of openness to images. Cinemasochism asks not what the image means but what it does. Particularly in images that push the affect of the image to its extreme – from horrifying to abstract images – submission to the image beyond comprehension takes the viewer outside of film’s metonymy, meaning, and time, toward the kind of spatial ecstasy forged within the folding of image with embodied spectatorship. There is a risk in opening ourselves to cinematic affect, in experiencing the pain of loss of reified

meaning in images. All spectators who open up to cinema potentially challenge their relationship to cinema in terms of gender, pleasure, and desire.

‘Masochism’ should not be defined as a narrative of suffering laid down entirely in advance, nor should libidinality be oriented around waiting and the intensity of the moment before the cinematic event. Cinemasochism occludes traditional masochism in the very loose drawing up of a contract between a party desiring to exploit the openness and vulnerability required of the masochist and the facilitator of the masochistic acts and effects. Both masochism and cinemasochism express a desire to lose the self that involves an encounter of the infinite outside within the self; this is a (non-nihilistic) sacrifice of self. Deleuze points out that both sadism and masochism are a binding of thanatos to eros, but while sadism (especially that of early gaze theory) is exothanatographic or expressed outward onto the sacred object, masochism folds thanatos toward the self.

Feminist, structuralist, and psychoanalytic film theory have long been seduced by a sadistic conception of the gaze expressed through the dialectic of the phallic eye and the non-consenting ‘to-be-looked-at’ object. The power distribution within this dialectic of the phallic sadist and objectified masochist is not a clear binary, and its complexities are interrogated by Deleuze in *Coldness and Cruelty* (1994a). Throughout, Deleuze is adamant that the sadist and masochist inevitably reverse their proclivities, not as expiation for personal guilt, but as the culmination of an expiation of the larger (though also internalized) structures of prohibition and punishment associated with sadism and masochism. Beyond his claim that reversal only affirms the supremacy of the primary power, cinemasochism suggests a turn toward a non-dialectical encounter with the outside or an alterity within self – the ecstasy of a-signification and the experience of cinesexuality. Deleuze’s ‘switch-hitter’ sadist and masochist emphasize that one cannot be a single element of a dialectic without the possibility of becoming, or even aspiring, toward the other opposing element: not the sadist-become-masochist, but rather the sadist become object of sadism and masochist become facilitator of masochism. In both turns, the subject (in cinema, the spectator) neither controls the gaze (it is controlled inevitably by camera, form, and affect), nor submits entirely to a passive spectatorship. Deleuze collapses this dialectic in *Cinema 2*. Hearing is not passively understanding the spoken, nor seeing apprehending a thing external to the spectator. ‘Interactions *make themselves seen* in speech acts.’ (1989, 227) Deleuze considers each image as having its own unique singularity, which can refer infinitely to other planes, descriptions, or meanings (1989, 46). Image-event ruptures intensities outward, the self is compelled into

the void where it undoes, its forms intersect to form a discourse appearing with no conclusion and no image, with no truth and no theatre, no proof, no masks, no affirmation, free of any centre...a discourse that constitutes its own space as the outside toward which, and outside of which it speaks...But this discourse as a speech that is always outside what it says, is an incessant advance toward that whose absolutely fine-spun light has never received language (Foucault 1997b, 24–5).

The event of cinema disengages us from the world while making the everydayness of the world seem unbearable. Through openness, the sacrifice of masochism, we become what Rancière calls the emancipated spectator. Sacrifice opens up to freedom not annihilation.

What do masochism and cinematic spectatorship share in their traditional conceptions? Both involve a contract between two entities, ritual, expectation of satisfaction, narrativized desire, and expression submitted to pre-established meanings and functions. When pleasure in a pre-established object of desire or experience encloses the intensity of pleasure as possibility, objects are materially cut from their unique powers as they claim to reflect material objects outside of the image – signifiers *of* something else, but not possible affective energies unto themselves where the familiar image become unfamiliar. Traditional material and philosophical dialectics rely on Deleuze and Guattari's three phantoms that interrupt desire as flow: 'namely internal lack, higher transcendence, and apparent exteriority.' (1987, 156–7) Inserting an image into signification defines it as lacking in itself until it is able to emerge through an established metaphor (an exterior object defined) and metonymic structure (the relations between objects). Meaning is made apparent through the function of making it appear via something else, prior to the image as event, or pleasure as rupture. The compulsion to experience images and pleasures via their emergence through transcendental meaning acknowledges and circumscribes the force of all flows that exceed lack, transcendence, and a relation to established significations. Philosophy is a technique of spectatorship, the true philosopher of cinema is the spectator. Our becomings hinge upon the question of what we risk in opening our selves up to being affectuated.

Masochism is a traditionally 'perverse' form of sexuality. Even the most 'realistic' of representations perverts the world. When cinema exploits overtly impossible situations the perverse possibilities of the world are emphasized. 'Each of the nuances of the seemingly obscene is an incremental break with the repressive codes of prescriptive power.' (Blau 1990, 129) Perversion is foregrounded where the relationship of meaning with its analogous significations in the 'real' world is particularly tentative, emphasizing resonances as in excess of their correspondence to real forms and events. Deleuze and Guattari mock the tenets of subjectification and signification of subjectivity from self and world. Failure to organize oneself as organism is depraved, failure to interpret and be interpreted is deviant (1987, 159). These veer from majoritarian patterns. Through disoriented desire and unbound pleasure perversion changes the territory. At its simplest, perversion alters trajectories of self, pleasure, and relation to world while altering the world's territories of normalcy. Both masochism and spectatorship pay very little attention to the dialectically opposed other as a sentient or actual other. Image and punisher are facilitators, rather than objects of desire and pleasure. Masochism thus involves 'the process of turning around upon the self [which] may be regarded as a *reflexive* stage, as in obsessional neurosis ("I punish myself"), but since masochism implies a passive stage ("I am punished, I am beaten"), we must infer the existence in masochism of a particular mechanism of projection through which an external agent is

made to assume the role of the subject' (Deleuze 1994a, 105–106). Against the sadistic gaze, our relationship with the image is entirely submissive. The other is disinterested and we have no control over the images. Images unfurl without our intervention. We only have the mediated intervention of making meaning from the images.

The extent to which we subjugate images to meaning, or release them as flows able to affect us, is the active making-passive of the spectator as submission to cinema. Masochistic pleasures of horror images are an obvious example of forsaking the power to look for submission to the affects produced by what is seen. Similarly, avant-garde cinema requires a submission to images that disputes their reliance on deference to signification.

Cinema's affect suspends power just as it suspends reality. 'We should note here,' Deleuze writes, 'that the art of suspense always places us on the side of the victim and forces us to identify with him, whereas the gathering momentum of repetition tends to force us onto the side of the torturer and make us identify with the sadistic hero' (1994a, 34). But the image is not a subject, so with which victim do we identify in moments of submission to affect? Like the traditional masochist, the spectator sacrifices self in their willingness to be punished by cinema. This is essentially the willingness to punish the self through an encounter with images. The question is *what powers are we punishing?* Becoming-minoritarian punishes majoritarianism as system not identity. There is no necessary contradiction in situating cinema as actively affective alongside an active spectator only in the extent to which they both make themselves passive. When binary structures are dissolved, so too are polar and segmentarily linked correspondences of terms such as 'active/passive', 'subject/object' and 'punishment/submission'. Involution is a non-narrative consistency. It is not suspended, it *is* suspension. No binary terms means no 'leading to ...' Suspension is desire outside of temporality, a segmentation where the nostalgic past ensures the desired future. It creates a pure space outside. Desire and pleasure are singular flow. As Deleuze and Guattari explain:

It is claimed the masochist, like everybody else, is after pleasure but can only get it through pain and phantasms, humiliations whose function is to allay or ward off deep anxiety. This is inaccurate. The masochist's suffering is the price he must pay, not to achieve pleasure, but to untie the pseudobond between desire and pleasure as an extrinsic measure (1987, 155).

To be *after*, to seek something that comes after, after the wait, after the suspense, necessitates a temporal trajectory of a future imagined, and thus somewhat established in the present. Repetition excavates the past, bringing it into the present to allow it to colonize the future. Here time contracts into what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'pseudobond' between desire (a desire *for* pleasure, attainment, pain, the dissipation of suspense) and pleasure (pleasure *in*, within a moment, or within the thing or effect of what was desired). This recalls and conjoins the antagonism Foucault and Deleuze have for the words desire and pleasure respectively. Desire is measured by the extent to which it fulfils the

expectation of pleasure. Neither term is defined by its 'intrinsic' qualities. Their success is measured by their relation to pre-formed phantasies of satisfaction. Expectation, repetition, and narrativized desire express temporality as a series of dividuated events (equation not consistency). Nonetheless, Deleuze explains, 'we must conclude that the pleasure principle, though it may rule over all, does not have the highest or final authority over all ... there is a residue that is irreducible to it; nothing contradicts the principle, but there remains something which falls outside of it and is not homogenous with it – something in short, *beyond ...*' (1994a, 112).

The cinemasochist's un-making of signification is not a pre-symbolic infantile situation. Kristeva's abject semiotics of infantile return recalls the 'naughtiness' of watching extreme films because it permits Kleinian aggressive infantile sadism. Asemiosis is the beyond. Transgressive gazes or images reiterate the binary of licit and illicit pleasures and images. Guattari sees 'the capitalist eros [as making] itself the accomplice of what is forbidden. This economy of transgression polarizes the desiring production in a game of mirrors that cuts it from all access to the real and catches it in phantasmatic representations' (1996, 152). Like cinema itself, capitalist eros uses forms and desires as deferred objects of worth. Deferring objects to empty signifiers delays their affects, mirroring which reflect endlessly, concealing transgression's possible material subversions through signifying the conditions of their possibility. All signifying systems from law to art play this game of delay – traditional masochism's 'too late!' All exploit their capacity to endlessly refer desires and pleasures to dematerial empty economic structures. Each desire event is bled of singularity, and thus the power to proliferate or differentiate.

Cinema is real, material and forcefully affective. The world of capitalist eros is a world-made cinema, as reflection rather than creation. Even in cinema which adheres to the most traditional significations and patterns there is always a residue of pleasure, a 'cinematic' feel or a risky, excessive, asemiotic moment where the spectator could turn toward or return from the affectivity of spectatorship in the same way that Guattari sees all representation as selecting to be either repetitive or revolutionary. Cinemasochism is therefore a becoming-masochist through becoming pure image intensity. The spectator's becoming passes through the agony of the loss of signification. This is an agony within which the minoritarian culture has had to exist. Women, racial others, and perverts are denied signification beyond their isomorphic inferiority to the majoritarian. Isomorphism creates a myth of 'two' within a binary, refusing the specificity of the second term which is defined only through its failure to fulfill the elements of the dominant, concealing the debt the majoritarian owes to the minoritarian. The presence of a failed majoritarian is the condition of the majoritarian's possibility. The image as invoking force without signifying form or function is the first painful moment of loss toward our voluminously joyful cinesexual becomings – a minoritarian spectatorship. This is an ethically risky project because, neither naming nor being named, it is the active becoming-passive of no longer controlling meaning and self and self as meaningful.

The cinemasochist shows power in passivity and action in grace, a key term toward an ethics of spectatorship and which will underpin the conclusion to *Cinesexuality*. The hybrid fold of image and spectatorial flesh evokes the becoming of cinema and all becomings are hybrid. The image is unraveled into an immanent constellation. If, as Guattari claims, 'enjoyment = possession' (1996, 145) can we allow the image to enjoy us by relinquishing our power over it? Or is giving power to the image a shift away from the power we give to the hierarchy of discursive and capitalist structures where spectators 'can only desire the objects that market production proposes to them; they must not only submit to the hierarchy but, even more, love it as such?' (Guattari 1996, 145) Lacking innate force, here the spectator simply transmits the dominant ideologies through all systems, in a way that leads Lyotard to characterize the reading viewer as both 'victim' and 'client' of art (1989, 179). Alternatively, in becoming-cinemasochist the spectator expresses innate force as transmitted through the energy of the image.

As a first moment toward minoritarian cinema can all cinema become 'woman's' cinema, and can we even speak of women's cinema in terms of representation? As Phelan (1993) among others has suggested, is *not* being represented a form of a 'feminine' representing system, the asemiotic as visual invisibility? What are at stake in cinemasochism, however, are excessive, rather than absent, elements of representation. The pleasures of becoming-female spectator are thus close to cinemasochism. In a first move, becoming-cinemasochist might imagine the sadistic gaze as passing through the masochistic female spectator. Cinemasochism, however, does not insert itself into the cinematic system of gendered character identification. All spectators relinquish their place of power. Perception as apprehension is enjoyment = possession. Associations of masochism with femininity remain unsettlingly binary in their logic. Diverging from this system, Lyotard suggests that 'The central problem is not the representational arrangement and its accompanying question, that of knowing how and what to represent ... the fundamental problem is the exclusion and foreclosure of all that is judged unrepresentable [woman as singularity] because non-recurrent' (1993, 176).

Cinema is real, in its presence, affects and the events it creates. But there is nothing 'real' about cinema in that it is not what it shows. Therefore, how can we express desire for the image within 'real' sexual paradigms? We could just as easily assert that there is nothing 'real' in sexuality that can be subsumed and known through psychoanalytic, neurophysiological, biological, historical or creative discourses on sexuality and desire. Nonetheless these discourses create and are created by a social reality. The notion cinema is alien to everyday life is arbitrary. Because of its impossible worlds, cinema presents a particular risk of offence and pleasure, as well as the threat of losing the actual in the material world of the represented. Cinesexuality may interrogate desire along unfamiliar lines, even if desire is not acknowledged as already and always unfamiliar. In fantasy or extreme gore images, abstract images that experiment with form, line and color, or perhaps even images which only offer space for a more 'feminine' spectator position, spectators must lose themselves to an event that may cause

unpleasure or difficulty, or may simply confound. The viewer suffers under these images. Becoming-cinemasochist is a becoming with the image's own becomings necessitating a shift in discursive patterns beyond the actual content (and consent) of the image. In this manner, we cannot be prescriptive about which films or images would be more or less appropriate for cinemasochistic explorations. Are there images that demand more of our masochism, enforce more pain, alienate us more readily from signification? Should we experience cinemasochism with female authored images, abstract images, gore images, images that disgust rather than seduce us? Or is cinemasochism more powerful with respect to the very images that conserve traditional economies of signification?

Human sacrifice

Cinemasochism creates a space outside of time, but within the world – what Deleuze and Guattari call haecceitic immanence, Blanchot a 'going under' and Foucault an encounter with the outside. Even concepts emergent through the pre-thought – creation as recreation – are plenitudes that exceeds and escapes the limits of thought. The authority to desire the image authors and authorizes its pleasure. To address this or challenge it by desiring the licit or illicit maintains the horizon of signification. The silence of images and languages makes their libidinal intensity flow. For Lyotard, submission to this silence–pleasure is fundamental to desire. Representation and intensities that emerge only through signification dam desire and regiment it in a majoritarian system:

This silence is not blind and does not require that one make certain of what comes about through a language, even one of hands or skin. We love the language of hands or skin but here it would be unsubtle. To resort to it here would be to obey the ideology of sex. To suggest to someone: let's fuck, would truly be to treat oneself as *representing* the sexual liberation movement (1993, 29).

Lyotard does not discuss cinema in *Libidinal Economy*. However, his exploration of libidinality is explicitly visual, and more resonant still with cinema, cuts the world up into minute intensities and inflections born of subtle gestures and movements, as well as close-ups of skin, inorganic objects, and such-like. This form of libidinality seems more cinematic than his work specifically on 'Acinema' (1989, 169–180). This is perhaps an example of sexuality as cinema, rather than a cinema that evokes sexuality.

Sexuality includes all possible intensities and potentialities of desire, a devastatingly simple but enormous concept. Perhaps this is why many continental philosophers see desire as ubiquitously informing thought. We return to form, as sexual dialectics (object choices) require desire for reified and recognized forms which orient and reify the form that desires. In traditional masochism while abstract pain is the object the reification of a surviving self after that pain orients the sexual ritual. The form of desire and ritual of pleasure will follow according to the possibilities laid down by the object orientation. This

outdated and much deconstructed matrix retains one element even in queer theory – the presence of a thing which is usually a human. Two issues are raised here. The first is the idea of the ‘thing’ as an entity, or rather a node of intensity, with which we have entered into a relation. Each film has been traditionally understood as a thing, but less unto itself than a means by which things are presented to the spectator. The second is that the thing will be a human thing. Film is dismembered into a series of images within a frame which teems with humanized forms, be they forms of other humans available for possible desiring dialectics with the spectator or forms as symbols of human concepts. Cinematic images are themselves things. While enclosing multiplicities, an image is nothing but unto itself its own unique phylum. It does not disappear in its referral to the non-cinematic, it does not exist purely to re-present through image, motion and sound, something which is outside of itself. We do not see things we know ‘in’ images. The cinematic image is not humanized, understood through humanistic compulsions to dialectics and arche-narratives of socio-ideological human subjectivity in the world. We and our lover must become inhuman. Taking the image as a thing makes us encounter its inhumanity, or incommensurability with anything other than its self. For this reason when we open ourselves to entering into a cinesexual relationship, it is not the image that should be humanized but we that become inhuman. Lyotard cites Apollinaire: ‘More than anything artists are men [sic] who want to become inhuman.’ (1991, 2)

The cinesexual relation is inter-kingdom relation because art and physiology are traversed and cross breed. Minoritarian spectatorship suggests the cinematic image, or art, is a thing which elicits becomings. According to Lyotard and Apollinaire spectators are artists, actively creating the relation with the art-thing by uncreating their selves. The order of the cinematic dialectic changes. The spectator is ‘occupied’ by the image rather than the image being colonized – read or known – by the spectator. This is not a reversal, but an immanent multiple apprehension. ‘If the other person is identified with a special object, it is now only the other subject as it appears to me; and if we identify it with another subject, it is me who is the other person as I appear to that subject’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 16). Because cinema is strictly not a subject the spectator’s alterity to the other subject folds or pleats back on itself, so the spectator must, in the face of the unresponsive image, take themselves as the other of the other subject. The self appears to self as desiring and as desired but as desired cannot be desired because the image – and all inorganic interkingdom objects of desire – is not able to be affected. The self as desired must remain completely unknown and while being present, presents the unrepresentable in the spectator, robbing the spectator of self present to self and thus de-humanizing, or inhumanizing them. ‘The affect is ... man’s non-human becoming’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 172) because art cannot be affected except to the extent it is encountered inhumanly and thus presents its affects differently.

Communication in silence

Lyotard states: 'How can the mind situate itself, get in touch with something that withdraws from every relationship? ... It is presence as unrepresentable to the mind, always withdrawn from its grasp. It does not offer itself to dialogue and dialectic.' (Lyotard 1991, 142). What cinema does share with other modes of visual transmission is that it is a communicative medium. While it is clear all events are points of communication, even the silent self teems with communicative trajectories, cinema is understood and exists within the same set that includes and comes to exist via technological advance. The communicative success of any medium is now associated with its development, its 'bettering'. The inhuman aspects of art have shifted from sublimating the human to de-corporealizing it through the ablation of the need for a body in modes of communication; why talk when you can call? Why call when you can text? Why have sex with a human when you can have cyber sex? Why have flesh breasts when you can have plastic ones? As technology homogenizes the alterity of bodies into necessary evils required to facilitate technological modes of communication, so too the specificity of these modes is homogenized. Mobile phones take photos, computers make calls, portable music players show cinematic images. I make no judgement here, nor am I lamenting the present for a nostalgic past. These shifts have always occurred, the only difference here being the velocity at which they currently happen. Many studies have been made on the different ways in which images are received through format rather than content. Communication is here understood as the emission of a force from one entity to another that then is responded to. The space between the two is the space of communication. This relation is clearly a chronocentric dialectic, even if it is bi-directional. Tactically communication is a putting forth of a message, an idea, any interjection that it is wished will extend to another, be received and potentially responded to, unless the communication is wished to be passed on. What causes the beginning of a communication? As concepts come from problems, communication is the symptom of the drive toward resolution. Many issues arise here. Communication as opinion is considered a subjective inclination commenting on or attempting to resolve a problem. As rationalization it is 'the way' to resolve the problem, totalizing all the effects the problem has caused and thus those affected. Problems cannot be resolved in that they have no beginning or end. Similarly all issues have the residue which escapes their ability to be conceived, thought or known (these three words are themselves problematic). Problems do not exist. They come from the voids which are in-between ideas. They are the very matter of the residue of issues. The drive to totalizing resolution and empirical truth ignores the space between issues and attempts to suture issues and cover up the spaces. In these systems the problem is compelled, not to be addressed or discussed, but to go away. Like totalizing rationalizations – truths – problems are not taken as new but invoked as the same old problems with continued discussions which do not acknowledge the newness of each problem as the gaps change as territories of ideologies, issues and ideas shift.

‘Communication always comes too early or too late.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 28) Concepts are implanted into cinema. Problems which occur in cinematic narratives are seen as art’s way of addressing and resolving human issues, which is why so many images endlessly repeat the same narratives and moral fables with trite and happy resolutions. The event of cinema is precisely the problem of communication. If we read images expectantly, anticipating how we will read them by what we already know, cinema communicates too early. If we reflect and contemplate communication is too late. Either way, like the traditional masochist, we never come on time, or more correctly, out of time in space. When cinema as event is experienced as immanent there is neither time nor resource for communication. When we desire we communicate to ourselves in a language which has no words and we cannot know and so we are compelled to translate it – enclose it in a person or insert it into our sexuality.

The spectator of course cannot exist in an eternal spatial present at the event of cinema. The spectator is responsive (the after) as well as the ‘I’ that comes to the event (the before). All existence is always and already multi-horizon events, and the importance of any event is a matter of intensification and velocity of certain horizons and trajectories which cut across these horizons to form new horizons. The spectator expresses and responds to itself and to the world. A response can be comparative, evaluation based on former encounters. It can come from the becomings events invoke. To be affected involves becoming through the world – contemplation as becoming not observing. ‘We are not in the world, we become with the world; we become by contemplating it. Everything is vision, becoming ... This is true of all the arts.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 169) The extreme or unpalatable nature of the images explored in later chapters exploits the ‘I’ that would not like or would not enjoy certain kinds of concepts before encountering them. This ‘I’ speaks not in contemplation of its own becomings but of re-habituating the pre-event I by contemplating an image as always ‘outside of me’. The image’s effects are similarly made consistent. The ‘I’ therefore is de-habituated as a new ‘I’. The shift from knowing to thinking is encountered. ‘I think’ is very different to ‘I know’ which is more ‘it is known to me in a way it is known objectively to all other “I”s’.

At best ‘I think’ comes from navigating ignorance with a desire to express affectation without deferral or reification of the affect. It may be nothing more than an expression of a shift from knowing to encountering the unknowable. ‘I think’ allows ‘I do not think’ to exist simultaneously (disagreement). ‘I know’ is concomitant with ‘I do not know’, suggesting there is something to be known, waiting to be revealed, brought to light, but always pre-existing before the encounter. We could even say here it is preferable to stick with the concept of ‘knowing’ but only on the side of ‘ignorance’ which is infinity as it shows the inability to ever know once truth is repudiated. ‘Just as being an “artist” means not knowing there is already an art, not knowing there is already a world, so reading, seeing, and hearing works of art demands more ignorance than knowledge. It demands a knowledge filled with immense ignorance.’ (Blanchot 1981, 92) Foucault suggests a shift from ‘I think’ (which in this instance I would say aligns more with his work on the enunciative function – the social vindication

of saying 'I know' via systems of knowledge) to 'I speak'. Speech is an act. '“I speak” refers to a supporting discourse that provides it with an object.' (1997b, 10) The supporting discourse is what both makes the speaking subject possible and what is not evident in the speech. The subject itself is nothing more than what the discourse speaks of or about, speech disappears, so does the subject, the discourse and the object spoken about, as soon as the subject is silent. Immediately speech is spoken it is freed from the speaker and becomes speech to the speaker as well as to the spoken to. What is said 'in the first person as an “I” has been expressed anew by [the spoken to] as an “other” and as though he had thus been carried into the very unknown of his thought: where his thought, without being altered, became absolute other' (Blanchot 1993, 341).

To watch is a negotiative practice in which the spectator speaks to images by experiencing them through a self that speaks to itself – what do I think, how do I understand these images, how am I desiring? Images speak back by repeating the questions we as spectators asks, but ask only of ourselves. The image cannot speak in dialogue but nonetheless returns our speech to us. The speech here asks only 'how do I see?' When we come to the cinematic image we speak our position as spectator, the image returns our speech to us to the extent it challenges our openness to see and to experience pleasure – and therefore ourselves – differently. Open spectatorship makes us encounter the unknowable within thought, the more-than-us which is always within but never present to us. The spectator's many languages – of spectatorship, of self, of the world, of relevant concepts of gender, sexuality and so forth – must continually speak to each other as each speaks to a work of art. The compulsion to speak comes from inability to know, which technically does not require speech, as knowledge is exterior to the speaker. This internal cacophony of self is simultaneous with the many communications between elements of self and outside world. Language is play event more than transmission of knowledge, creation which must create because each language is different, it can be heard but not understood, pointing to the thinkable which cannot be thought but that provokes thought. This, according to Foucault, is the space of 'listening less to what is articulated in language than to the void circulating between its words, to the murmur that is forever taking it apart'. (1997b, 25) This deconstructs myths of logic, origin, truth and other forms of speech which come as the 'I know', or what Foucault criticizes as speech that 'goes without saying'. (1994, 447) What goes without saying is the speech that conceals its conditions of possibility. When these conditions are excavated, the speech must be said and the speaker becomes subjective and accountable. The speech of cinema and the speech of the spectator is dialectic transmission of knowledge. When we experience images, sounds and all elements of cinema through the excesses, slippages and seepage which take a knowable image apart our own selves are taken apart and we become through the voids within us – voluminous but unthinkable. We are no longer the who we are that 'goes without saying'. The most rudimentary 'I desire' that goes without saying is shattered. Beyond 'I desire this character because I am heterosexual – that goes without saying' to 'I desire this because it is beautiful/clever' and so forth we reach the 'I desire'

which is spoken but which speaks back to the self as illuminating the self's own conditions of possibility and further the infinite possibilities of self – 'I am desire, I exists through desire and desire through me'. If unthinkable voids become the primary elements of spectatorship then reflection is impossible because there is no thing upon which to reflect. Nothing goes without saying. Here is thought as movement to infinity.

If the void cannot be known it cannot be repeated but its compulsion to movement continues. Cinema is always outside what it says through recognisable image and representation but its encounter as a non-reified plane beyond objects, acts and functions within a frame, shows and elicits desire as having never received language. The spectator cannot reflectively describe – desire is the speaking of the void. Cinesexuality is the silence which is nonetheless present and encountered, the ignorance that is knowable but never known. Blanchot points out that language (particularly in literature but I would suggest all art) is strange because it speaks to us disinterestedly, it speaks directly to us when we are enamoured of it but only because it is speaking outside of itself. When we desire this strangeness however it also does not speak to us in a way we can understand or describe. It is present – too present, and invisible – not enough. Strange language is outside itself in that it is only within us that it is heard (for we must listen to it). We listen to the language that cannot be heard, but this doesn't mean it is not there. 'It is the silence that is speaking, that has become this false speech that we do not hear, this secret speech without a secret.' (2003, 219) Blanchot claims a 'writer is one who imposes silence on this speech' (2003, 219). After the death of the author, the writer is the reader and vice versa. The spectator creates images by listening to (which includes looking at) them. The function of speech is not to apprehend and agree or disagree but to encounter the loss that is the ever present voluminous absence in speech. When Blanchot says it is false, he does not oppose the false to the true but only the false to the world where language never needs to negotiate truthfulness. Language is all and always false because it is never present to itself or us. We cannot hear it to translate and comprehend it, and we become frustrated that there is a certain 'thing' to hear, a truth, a message, a meaning. When there is no truth all is false. The creative writer and the creative spectator impose and welcome the silence in all speech. Then the only question to ask is 'what happens?' Even this question without an answer is better configured as 'there is a happening'. Here the relation between language, image and desire emerges. We cannot know when what we encounter is silent, just as we can never know, speak or confess desire. To make language silent resonates with desire's limitless excess as indescribable. Foucault talks of the imperative to speak our desire as a means by which we are socially controlled (including controlling ourselves) but only with the language that limits the conditions of possibility of desire.

Cinema ... my love: avisuality

What is a lover? What is a friend? ‘What does *friend* mean when it becomes a conceptual personae or a condition for the exercise of thought? Or rather, are we not talking of the lover?’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 3–4). When cinema language becomes asignifying, what happens to the mode of apprehension of the image? Asemiotic elements act as art-formed things. The act of watching avisually makes the ability to perceive the spectators gaze as volitional subject force impossible. As asemiotic spectators we lose signification toward minoritarian perception. Can we extend Guattari’s idea to speak of *avisuality*? While the image expresses as asemiotic, we must activate this asemiosis. Spectatorship is asignifying and asignified but because we are here talking about a multi-sensorial medium that is arguably primarily visual, spectatorship can be thought as an avisual practice of self, that which sees but not necessarily to know or apprehend – seeing in the dark or seeing the invisible that is the visual. The act of seeing is an act of thinking, and to see avisually resonates with representing asignificantly. The spectator is a conceptual personae. According to Deleuze and Guattari a conceptual personae is a thinker, but only to the extent that thought is made intensive through the thinker. The thinker does not speak about or of the world, but rather makes territories of thought. Thought as potentiality comes before the conceptual personae so ‘I speak’ is more adequately described as ‘thought speaks through me’. Deleuze and Guattari call this speech stammering, or what Deleuze elsewhere has called ‘stuttering’ (1994b). The conceptual personae does not stammer so much as the stammering of the world comes through the thinker. ‘The role of conceptual personae is to show thought’s territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 69) The concept is not an object but describes a territory. Deleuze and Guattari call this ‘geophilosophy’. This term resonates with Guattari’s ecosophy which will form a crucial part of the concluding chapter on the ethics of spectatorship. The conceptual persona is one point of the territory of geophilosophy that shifts the territory through thought as the concept shifts through the thinker. Cinema spectatorship describes a geophilosophical territory and thought the extent to which cinema as its own stammering entity makes all other territories stammer. This occurs directly through the spectator as thinker and creator. Cinema is its own conceptual personae in that it speaks to – or through – us by creating a condition of thought. Dialectics of reading and recognition take the cinema lover as a transcendental one who knows. Cinesexuality is the territory of the spectator speaking to self and world through the conceptual personae of the image-lover, which speaks but always in a language that is indifferent and ambiguous and which, as we, exceeds itself. What are some of the techniques or tactics for addressing the image-lover to invoke shifts in the territory? First we must *want* before and beyond the images wanted. Cinesexuality are always in constant want of cinema. Not films or images of any particular sort but that *cinema-ness*. The want comes before the object and thus the object cannot be understood as an object, only a conceptual personae. We seek to look before anything can be seen. The want is ‘the irrational impulse by which we try to open

eyes that are already closed, open them to life; this impulse is connected to desire, which is a leap, an infinite leap, just as inspiration is a leap. I want to *read* what has nevertheless not been written.’ (Blanchot 1981, 95) Here Blanchot refers to literature (not as deciphering meaning but simply encountering literature) but this want can potentially be extended, albeit with nuance, to all art.

Cinesexuality as the want before the object of desire involves a condition of expectancy of thought, as much a desire to thought as to images. In Blanchot’s work, to open our eyes is not to ‘see’ but to experience and take pleasure from seeing without recognizing, a kind of blind vision. Where the writer silences language, the spectator makes the visible invisible. If the language of Deleuze and Guattari’s speaking thinker is stammered and stammers all language, then the cinesexual’s vision is always blurred and blurs all images. Blanchot’s use of Orpheus here is interesting as it describes a relationship of desire without an object or knowledge. Orpheus ‘wants to see [Eurydice] not when she is visible, but when she is invisible, and not as the intimacy of a familiar life, but as the strangeness of that which eludes all intimacy’ (1981, 100). Becoming-woman necessitates seeing in the dark. Eurydice is encountered through a forbidden turn to the underworld, to darkness which is nonetheless a vista that is encountered, and she a woman who is apprehended and ‘seen’ but only as unseeable. According to Blanchot this turn encounters death – the death of images as inherently meaningful and self-present, thus present to us. Images are always shades even when they are illuminated. They have ‘veiled presence’ which conceals ‘infinite absence’ and Orpheus’ error is that ‘he wants to exhaust the infinite’ (Blanchot 1981, 100, 101). Seeing as revelation attempts to close off infinity. It wants to exhaust it to change it from thought to knowledge and shade to solid. We can see images but the cinesexual seeks the unseeable but nonetheless visible – the invisible that is the visible. Blanchot describes openness to this a ravishment or an innocent ‘Yes’ (1981, 97).

Foucault’s three problems with discourse, as described by Blanchot, are raised here. Foucault critiqued ‘Interpretation (“the hidden meaning”), originality (the bringing to light of a unique beginning...), and, finally, what he himself called “the sovereignty of the signifier” (the imperialism of the phoneme, of sound, tone and even rhythm)’ (Blanchot 1997, 74). Interpretation reveals an image as a reiteration of a former known image. Originality reveals an image not as unique but as it compares to and differs from pre-formed images. The sovereignty of the signifier attempts to nomenclature all aspects of an image as part of established systems, where the image and all its components are ‘things’. By bringing her to light Orpheus originates Eurydice, literally giving birth to her.

Perhaps optimistically Blanchot’s criticism of Orpheus’ compulsion to know through seeing is an antagonism of the age-old question of ‘what do women want’ which translates as ‘how can I see women’ beyond objects of desire which, in film studies, has asked ‘how do women gaze?’ By seeing Eurydice Orpheus sees his object of desire and thus sees and knows himself. He fears his death through an encounter with the inapprehensible visible. His death is heralded by ‘the day the light goes out, the era without language will arrive not because of silence but because of the recoil of silence, the rending of

the silent density and, through this rending, the approach of a new sound' (Blanchot 2003, 218). The approach of a new sound depends on our approach to it. All images are invisible and dead to themselves. Illumination comes from established conditions of seeing. When the lights go out we must see differently, through a luminescent darkness.

Like the secret, the image in the dark is not one to be revealed but which creates (or makes creative) possibilities of 'sight', the invisible visible, the unthought in thought. What Blanchot fails to mention is that Orpheus' is a turn toward the illumination of a woman. Blanchot does not mention the desire implicit in the Orphean myth. If the phallic gaze seeks to see to know forsaking seeing is forsaking knowledge which in turn forsakes self. Desire for Eurydice needs to be a desire for a less-than-whole or an invisible in order to affirm the visible and whole desiring male. Loose connections could here be made with psychoanalysis and Irigaray's claim that the horror of castration anxiety comes not from ending up as a woman with 'nothing to see' but accepting that woman has more than and less than the phallus to see, and because sight is not privileged, to touch, to smell and so forth (1985b, 47–8). If Orpheus sees in the dark and sees without a desire for illumination he sees as a woman. Eurydice is dead but if Orpheus were to make her invisible rather than dead he would become the writer that again silences language, the spectator that turns the light out. Knowledge of the object is essential to knowledge of the desiring self. Orpheus needs Eurydice as dead in order to himself be alive; 'Be dead evermore in Eurydice so as to be alive in Orpheus.' (Blanchot 2000, 349) While Blanchot is suggesting here that only when language is silenced can it come alive in the writer/reader, I think he fails to address the gender and desire issues implicit in the ethical investments toward silence, invisibility and unthought.

To think creates other selves within the self and the self disappears back into Hades, always receding and never revealed. Eurydice's Hades is the hell where people 'live'. They do not disappear, they cannot be heard or seen in the same way but they remain alive. Hell is not the below but the outside, not the false but the new trajectory. When Eurydice recedes Orpheus encounters a work 'that has suddenly become invisible again because it is no longer there and has never been there. This sudden eclipse is the distant memory of Orpheus' gaze, it is a nostalgic return to the uncertainty of the origin' (Blanchot 1981, 103). For the female or feminized spectator, surely there has never been an origin except as originating from phallic discourse (where silencing writing and darkening images is adamantly discouraged)? Recognizing or even claiming to see images makes them consistently present to themselves and to all spectators, returning them to the myth of origin, both in former representations and in the world. Knowledge attempts to reify an origin, creating in an object a memory that affirms its future. The origin is an epistemological symptom of the crisis of knowledge as never able to exhaust itself, to find the conclusion that matches the origin. Foucault calls this technique of philosophy transcendental reflexion 'which concerns that theme of the origin, that promise of the return, by which we avoid the difference of our present ... to divert attention by pursuing the

pleasant games of genesis and system, synchrony and development, relation and cause, structure and history' (1992a, 204).

Refusing an origin allows apprehension of an image to become subjective, multiple, contingent and mobile. Its affectuations are freed, only if we ourselves refuse our own origin as subjects to confirm and guarantee the extent and ways in which we are different to ourselves, because the spectator is all in the philosophy of cinematic images: 'all humanist ideologies ... above all concern the status of the subject' (Foucault 1992a, 204). Desiring encounters with cinema always involve a certain active forgetting of our own desires and of the phantasy of origin of meaning. We come, cinesexually to images with the negligence Foucault encourages. Foucault points out that 'we go toward the light in negligence of shadow, until it is discovered that the light itself is only negligence, a pure outside equivalent to a darkness that disperses' (1997b, 32). Illumination is a phantasy and darkness a quality of sight which is the same as but of a different kind to lightness. Darkness disperses possibility but it is not necessarily blindness and does not await illumination. We can always see images in cinema but we think to the extent that these images are always in the dark to us. Images are poignantly neglectful of us. They do not respond. They do not speak. They are not present. They are constantly appearing and disappearing simultaneously and this is what Blanchot calls communication (2003, 142). We speak as them and they through us by silencing them and making them invisible. Neither we nor they are present and knowledge turns to thought.

Avisuality invoked by asemiosis is a-ontology. When speech is silent and invisibility visible we encounter the unthought in thought. In image cinema causes a sighted blindness and in language an aural silence. Like darkness, these afflictions – or what Blanchot calls 'ailments' – are not absences but conditions of apprehension and levels of openness to thought. Similarly to neglect is not to ignore or refuse, but to create a seductive dance and make an encounter strange. 'Don't neglect me' demands of the lover a turn toward the 'me' that is offered as an object – an illuminated Eurydice. When the lover is neglectful the self shifts and alters as it navigates attention. Because images are unresponsive encounters occur between our viewing selves and our other selves within. We become, as thinkers, ethical toward ourselves beyond obligation to the other. The cinesexual lover shows negligence of the speech or origin of images, a kind of disinterested desire. Negligence creates unexpected desiring encounters. We do not choose objects of desire, they come to us. Any image may elicit a desiring encounter through moments or connections with other images. An image can never be a lover as a singular hermeneutic entity but only to the extent that it is cinema. Our love is a love 'in passing'.

We seek cinema but the moments we love and elicitation of desire are not pre-formed. Lyotard calls this love of art 'passibility': 'Passibility as the possibility of experiencing.' (1991, 110–11) He claims the art must seize us, not we it. In *Libidinal Economy* Lyotard suggests love is the demand of the lover to *use me*. Of cinema we ask 'use me to think'. Passibility is not the same as passivity. 'Passibility: the opposite of impassibility? Something that is not destined for you, there is no way to feel it. You will only know this afterwards. (And in

thinking you know it, you will be mistaken about this “touch”’ (Lyotard 1991, 118). To be passibly touched challenges the idea of volitional intervention into a work of art which suggests we know what we like or seek before it arrives. The before precludes and confirms the after. In possibility the after is a kind of reeling at the surprise of the unexpected moment and nature of the touch, the event of which we can know, but not the essence or meaning. Passibility implies event/time that has passed. If it requires a certain want (without object or aim) it must include the prelude of the possible. Does it describe that which comes to pass, the contraction of coming and passing? If so, movement is also implied, where impasse stops movement. The simple idea of taking pleasure in what we would not presume is pleasurable is an impasse that is possibility, showing the impasse as a myth we use to cover the constant possibility and passibility art and the lover invoke in us. The extreme nature of many of the films discussed in the book and the pleasures their moments afford may offer examples of passibility as the touch we would actively avoid but which touches us anyway. The touch itself does not have to be pleasurable in a benevolent way. Any touch that moves from knowledge to thought, or from thought to ignorance, is a moment of possibility. Coming to these images with disinterest rather than extreme expectation of unpleasure (to have seen the film before the film is seen, the opposite of Orpheus’ unseeing sight) will correlate with our openness to thought.

For Deleuze and Guattari there is no language for desire. For Blanchot there is no language for language. To hear silence, to see but not know are submissive acts of desire. Desire is force without object or form, a communion which hurts and through the grace of submission transforms desire into love.

Cinecstasy

Through cinemasochism there is *voluntary adherence and inner violence*, emphasizing the indiscernibility between the inside and outside. ‘Where there is force of violence all is clear but when there is voluntary adherence, there is perhaps no more than an effect of inner violence concealed amidst the most unshakeable consent.’ (Blanchot 1997, 90) Indiscernibility suggests that redoubled (rather than dialectical) submission is infinite, because it is not about a better quality or quantity of traditional masochism – it is only about infinite openness. Unlike traditional masochism, but like becoming, the seduction of images in cinemasochism is not turned on and off, nor is it repeatable in narrative and affect. Rather, this seduction reverberates and mystifies the self through the force of desire, which resonates with the ritualistic act of masochism, whether through viewing or torture. Without at least the tactical signification of object and act can we ask what, why, and how we desire? (For example, an abstract image is different, although perhaps no less libidinal, than images which offer forms.) Images can not be wholly free of nor wholly converted to meaning, just as desire itself exceeds its conversion into systems, whether heterosexual, homosexual, or perverse. Foucault’s sense of conversion emphasizes signifying

an image requires an active conversion to an established meaning, an act of power not a mechanical reflex of recognition of the world. Cinemasochism exploits other libidinal activities putting signification at risk. The self is signified within the systems to which images are converted, the self is put at risk in the space of power and catalyzes becomings as minoritarian ethics. 'This kind of symmetrical conversion,' Foucault writes, 'is required of the language of fiction. It must no longer be a power that tirelessly produces images and makes them shine, but rather a power that undoes them, that lessens their overload, that infuses them with an inner transparency that illuminates them little by little until they burst and scatter into the light of the unimaginable' (1997b, 23). The wonder of images folds with the viewer; it makes *us* shine. The image unravels our selves onto a plateau of intensity, bursting and scattering us. But how does the image fold into us? How do our own signified bodies open up to the image? Here masochism goes beyond the act of watching affective images. Our own capacity to affect ourselves, to exceed our own signification, becomes in the act and affect of cinematic viewing.

Bataille writes that 'he who already knows cannot go beyond a known horizon' (1988, 3). The horizon of cinema is not found at the seam where screen buttresses against flesh, but at the threshold of thinking toward the unthought. Knowledge of what the images may signify, what desire may be signified there, and through which systems it is authorized is the horizon. Thought is the beyond. The encounter between screen and spectator is not a horizon describing a limit, and end or an edge, but the inflected emergence of thought that is unthought. The horizon is the point that demands the beyond through which we pass, an edge rather than an end. Here the potentials of alterity proliferate within and between each term, invoking their becomings but now as becoming-imperceptible – cinema as perceived, but perception as unthinkable thought. As signified sexualized selves, we are sacrificed by folding with the outside within us. We are faced up against the image's inability finally to be thought. We sacrifice the phantasy of thinking the self when we open up to cinemasochism, but not in hope of thinking the new or the yet to be thought. There is no tapping into some stream of desire yet to be revealed. Desire through cinemasochism resonates again with traditional masochism in the vertigo of being faced with an unthought that cannot be thought and a desire that cannot know itself – we recede from this desire and this thought the closer we believe ourselves to be.

The presence of viewing teases out the unfathomable to show 'the invisibility of the visible is invisible' (Foucault 1997b, 24). Image as invisible visible event is primarily a spatial experience. The image is not defined through representation of forms connected in causal time. As forms related in time are undone, we cannot know what we see as we nonetheless see. Intersections of images are not narrative and thus without their metonymic relations the forms themselves cannot 'be'. No masks of signification, no performance mirroring actual relations but also no true in the material actual. Foucault's incessant advance moves toward something unseeable within or beneath the seen, eliciting the unseeable that is all we see and because of which we use usually chronocentric

signifying techniques of seeing and knowing. What it inevitably expresses is the unseeable within the desiring self. Rethinking masochism as suffering in the face of the outside within self, rids desire of the narrative of the time to come (seen in most narratives of desire, whether masochistic or not). Or as Bataille puts it, 'At some moment I must abandon myself to chance or keep myself under control...without such free play the present instant is subordinated to preoccupation with the time to come' (2001, 250–51). Actual and impossible, unthought desire folds the self within the infinite outside-within-itself in the face of cinema as the most indifferent of lovers. Cinema has a force that is not responsive. But in the encounter with absolute indifference our flesh is no less enflamed, our desire no less transformative. As desire reveals only the impossibility of its own revelation, the self transforms beyond any project or narrative. This is why we cannot be cinemasochists in the same way that Deleuze defines masochism. The ultimate suffering comes from teetering on the brink of the abyss that is our own desire – a vacuum that is not empty but outside, that does not exist to be thought or known, but is no less abundant for being so. Our masochistic suffering comes from the impossibility of the agony that is our own desire and the pleasure of its impossible revelation. We are open to chance, knowing we are without a chance oriented toward a result. Chance of what? Nothing, simply chance. This occurs no matter what we see, but the will to openness can be figured here as a minoritarian subjectivity.

The gift of spectatorship

Why is cinemasochism sacrificial? Foucault claims the outside is out of time because it shows arrival and memory as impossible in the face of an encounter, which, folding the self with its outside, folds the outside in. If self and desire form a constellation, this encounter implodes with and beyond itself. Drawn inside the image outside, the world involutes us into the inside of self, which is the outside-of-self in the face of the self inside the image and world. This outside-of-self does not refer to that which is outside of self, but rather the outside which is *within* the self. Desire reflects here the inner experience outside of the world – the encounter as ecstasy, so often described by its intensification of pleasure as suffering or pain. But while all erotic encounters encounter the self ex-stasis – outside-of-self, yet irreducibly inside this flesh – the viewing self desires the outside of a sexual matrix that discursively replaces the self back into a temporal narrative of desire. Making the sexual act signify is an attempt to suture the minoritarian qualities of desire, and making the image signify or structuring its relations dialectically ablates the inherent infinite possibility of all spectatorial encounters. (There is always a remainder, however.) Signification cannot reveal the 'unrevealable' that is the outside within ourselves. It reveals, rather, the unrevealability of desire as it (not affects) but embodies us. Masochism, by making the self aware of its own desire to not-be (in a non-nihilistic sense to not be 'as' but to 'become otherwise'), emphasizes that the self is not everything, but also that it is *not everything to the self*.

The unrevealable, like the invisible, is not waiting-to-be-revealed. It is that which can never be revealed, because it goes to the beyond that is thought and hence the possibility of revelation. Possession by a lover or an image is not possession by an entity outside the self, but rather the self's possession of the outside entity as well as the inevitable possession of the self by the outside-of-the-self. Possession is the making apparent of the self one can never possess. I am not possessed, the one that is me is possessed – taken by that which is outside the 'self.' Through ecstatic encounters with the outside-of-self, the cinematic is taken outside. It does not simply pierce us to launch us upon ecstatic trajectories, but also resides within us outside of its signification as a cinematic image in the world. For this reason, the image is also dead to the world, yet very much enlivened within the ecstatic cinesexual plane. It, too, is dead to signification, having become folded within an expressive outside-of-self.

Unique particulars of desire that make us love an image or cinematic sensorium like we love another are proliferated through the extent to which they take us to the outside of self and we take them outside of themselves. As Derrida explains 'how can another see into me, into my most secret self, without me being able to see in there myself and without my being able to see him in me? And if my secret self, that which can be revealed only to the other, to the wholly other... is a secret that I will never reflect on, that I will never know or experience or possess as my own' (1992, 92). Implicit in 'unknowing,' 'unthought,' and 'unrevealable' is the falsity of 'there is something to know/think/reveal.' The self cannot reflect because the self cannot know the question; there is no question and there is no answer beyond the beyond itself. We therefore die to ourselves *as* we are dead to the world and, unable to be disclosed to the other, dead to the object of desire as a desirable corresponding object. Is the moment of desire outside of the world and the inner self the gift to the lover, the gift of the self we cannot know but give nonetheless? The self we give is not the self we know we give. The image similarly gifts itself beyond its seriality or signification. The gift cannot be made as a gift that fills a place, completes an absence, or resolves impossibility. The gift of ecstasy knows not what it gives and gives precisely that which it cannot know. It is the gift that acknowledges that the self has nothing it can willfully give which will causally effect the receiver in any known way. This is why desire is risky. It must first open up to the self as unthinkable. Hart sees Blanchot's concern as a giving up both as giving away and giving ourselves up to, but his insistence on spirituality is too resonant with Bataille's conflagration of spirituality and sacrifice, albeit one is ecstasy, the other sacred. This connection is explored as a contestation by Holland who reads negation as affirmation (2004, 28). I prefer to understand affirmation as materially voluminous, hence Foucault (and Foucault's reading of *Inner Experience* with Blanchot). French (2007) and Kaufman (2001) similarly emphasize the most important shared element which is Bataille's is a sacrifice without theatre, and Blanchot's without symbol. The masochistic self does not die in its sacrificial, Bataillian sense. Rather, it demands of cinema 'use me':

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The passion of passivity which stimulates this offer is not one single force, a resource of force in a battle, but it is force itself, liquidating all stases ... 'Use me' is an order and a supplication, but what she demands is the abolition of the I/you relation (which is, like the master/slave relation, reversible) and also the use relation... not let me die by your hand ... She wants you to die with her, she desires that the exclusive limits be pushed back, sweeping across all tissues, the immense tactility, the tact of whatever closes up on itself without becoming a box [dialectic spectatorship] and whatever ceaselessly extends beyond itself without becoming a conquest [desire = possession] (Lyotard 1993, 63, 65, 66).

Like Deleuze and Guattari's 'woman' of becomings, Lyotard explicitly makes the collapse of the dialectic and the sacrifice of self female, thus characterizing a self which is both libidinally and actually sacrificed in majoritarian culture, or one which is not granted a self to sacrifice – a becoming-Eurydice. In this way, the cinemasochistic ecstasy is a feminine or feminist project, a form of becoming-woman. Sacrifice of self in ecstasy could similarly be seen as a feminist turn, relinquishing signification or even conception of self.

When the outside within dissipates the self into the inside without, an infinity of folded relations are formed and the constellation is redistributed. The solitude of ecstasy includes the other which is self and the self in the outside, or given to the outside – the gift that knows not what it gives, but can only offer the pure openness of the gifted self. Is becoming-woman or becoming-cinemasochist a gift of or toward alterity? Desire is the gift of the outside-of-self to self, without revelation or presence but no less apparent. As Derrida points out, we cannot die for the other, but only offer our own death as a gift, which 'has no need of the *event of a revelation or the revelation of an event*. It needs to think the possibility of such an event but not the event itself' (1992, 49 original emphasis). If we can never know what we give to the other, we can only sacrifice what we know of the self in our gift.

Thus all vitalistic sacrifice is masochism, and masochism is itself a gift that opens outward; it is no longer Deleuze's entirely reflexive masochism. Masochism is the gifting of self to other as the collapse between two elements, and accepting the other of self that may be encountered, but not revealed. Desire gives the other of self, or the outside, to self and gives self to the risk and chance of the outside-of-self. The gift cannot be 'in exchange' for something else. The gift of death in desire is the death of the subject as enclosed, hermeneutic, sexually regulated and signified, the death which is necessarily desire. It does not exchange the 'I' for a new self, it simply gifts the self which is all (as) we encounter (the we) we cannot know. Desire folds outside in on self. The self is folded in on itself and out toward the world, becoming crevice into which the outside slips and offering planes of self slipping outside but invisible to self. The outside-of-self is then gifted to the outside as our thought (but not knowledge) of it is invoked by the outside. If neither the invisibility in the visible, nor the unthought in desire, can be known, then the outside of self expresses the unself or unsubject of self. Cinemasochism embraces the impossibility of self in the face of the force of the image without, acknowledging the impossibility within all representation or signification. There is no other position in opposition to

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self, but the subject no less dissipates into what Guattari calls the degree zero point of implosion. Dissipation is violence in the sacrifice of self, or Blanchot's inner violence in the face of an unshakeable consent that makes us tremble, which Derrida characterizes as the 'I which trembles in secret,' (1992, 92) for which there is no answer. The I is a trembling, desire a redistribution of trembling, masochism the unbearable pain within the pleasure of desire, and cinema a lover we take, a becoming alliance, an image with which we fold and to which we consent, giving the gift of self we cannot give, to die in the ecstasy of the outside-of-self.

Chapter 4

Baroque Cinesexuality

This chapter will posit the cinesexual relation as one of fold. Taking its cue from Deleuze's work on Leibniz in *The Fold* and the work of Serres on Lucretian physics I will elaborate why I have utilized a certain kind of image for the detailed explorations of cinesexual events in the following chapters. I will argue that these images can be described as baroque, not in line with traditional discrete descriptions of baroque as a specific style from a period in fine art history, but in terms of its affective style, or its capacity to create new folds in the soul. The following chapter will extend the baroque nature of the images to the cinesexual encounter as a form of baroque desire. Examples of baroque images and their cinesexual force will follow. I wish to describe why certain elements in images tend – and tend us – toward the baroque. However while I will explicate these ideas through planes of intensity most obvious in the images which are used in the following chapters it must be understood that baroque intensities are to be found in *all* images, as they are contingent on the desire of each spectator, which is neither present nor known to us before, or beyond, the event. For this reason this chapter is the fulcrum of *Cinesexuality*, the point where the book encounters all other points and thus the ideas emerge as aspectival folds.

Thus far I have offered examples as glimpses rather than elaborate analyses. In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 elaborate investigations will emerge. These are neither more thorough nor effective, but of a different kind in thinking cinesexuality. *Cinesexuality's* chirality means the chapters may be read in any order as planes of each other. As Chapters 1 and 8, primarily theoretical, are the boundary points of the möebian band, this chapter is the turn in the band. While Chapter 3 asks of spectatorial self, addressing the spatial immanence of cinemasochism, in this chapter I will begin to negotiate the possibility of film for itself and actualize a less solitary configuration of cinesexuality. The baroque fold is in this chapter the fold of the book and precludes manners of play in examples of image-spectator fold. There is a particularly emphasized turn in that here occurs the intra-fulcrum where the spectator meets the lover. The presence of the image is emphasized, not as visible but as effectuating foldings through the event, adding a temporal character to the spatial cinemasochist's experience. Put simply the cinemasochist is, in this chapter, made more aware of the lover's presence/presents (gifts). Each of Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 8 are able to dissipate into the more analytic chapters and so should be considered both discrete and inextricable. Chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7 may seem somewhat playful and it is encouraged they be read as playing with other chapters and thus the reading of *Cinesexuality* a playful event.

In Chapter 2 I briefly suggested a number of images which are perceived in a variety of ways in reference to their genres, authorship, style and other aspects of their place within (or extricated from) the cinema canon. In the following chapters I will be performing detailed experiments with particular images to extend and play with cinesexuality as it could be actualized more specifically. There are two reasons for which I must apologize and simultaneously should not apologize. First it is immediately evident that I have consistently emphasized that at the very point we begin to describe images and to focus on their content and their significations with their affective qualities of images cinesexuality is jeopardized. This is the moment when images are subsumed by their transcribability to the world outside cinema. My shift here to exploring particular images would seem to contradict this claim. The second is that the images and scenes I have chosen may seem contentious, in that they are ‘extreme’ – they show what would traditionally be described as perverse desire, gore, and other visceral spectacles. Extreme images pose a problem because they are taken potentially as both silly and offensive. Most of the gore and perversions in the images are hyper-performative, unapologetically over the top. They rely on elements such as the supernatural and special effects to evince but not vindicate the events. They show impossible conditions of the body and situations of desire from which come claims they are offensive. Traditionally these images belong to what would be posited as non-viable films for academic analysis. This offence comes more from a response to palatability than ethics. Suffice to say here that the reception of these images seems to occur within a parabolic configuration where the revolting and the silly are both polar opposites and in close proximity to each other, while viable images reside in the axis as ‘art’.

My vindications for these two reasons are intertwined. Invoking extreme films immediately positions them as both lacking and in excess of signification. When intensities are extreme film theory responds that these films are not good enough because they cannot be read, or the reading of them is limited to a superficial level because the images are more interested in affecting the viewer with asigned intensities than ideas and narrative. There is a sense that certain extreme images are considered somewhat infantile – before and incapable of symbolic signification – because they want to shock through elaborate corporeal spectacles and perverse ideas. When asemiosis is invoked it similarly directs itself toward the pre-linguistic which rather, after Guattari, we understand as post-linguistic. Abstract images – ironically understood as hyper-artistic while extreme images lack art – are as easily appropriate for asignifiant analysis as they pay little attention to signified forms and narrative. The emphatic presence of the spectacle of flesh and desire also key to queer theory and corporeal feminism makes me turn to extreme cinema. I have selected certain images because they tend toward asignification and this tendency is precisely what makes them both offensive and maligned as stupid or infantile. However I have not chosen them because they are extreme. Just as they are more than their shock value so I do not seek to shock the reader. Neither do I wish to vindicate these images in order to make them more welcomed and introduce them into the canon of films worthy for analysis. It is not so much ‘any film’ but ‘any

desire'. My reason for selecting these images is perhaps personal. These films have held an important place for me cinexexually.

All lovers of cinema find unique moments of pleasure and invocations of desire in images. As sentences are created from a finite amount of words but infinite combinations, so a finite amount of images exist but their spectator–desire combinations are infinite. It would be impossible for me to offer a taxonomy of forms of cinexexuality. To do so would require a signification of desire, and, as explored in Chapter 2, desire more than images is irreducibly asignifiable. Although I address films I have been random in what scenes, images and moments are invoked so the analyses are not constituted by specific films in their entirety. The vaguely personal nature of my selection negotiates the first problem of analyzing images after critiquing images ever being appropriate for analysis. Asignification encroaches on more than just images. For Guattari, and particularly for Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the Body without Organs, the body itself is slaughtered through signification. Feminism has long decried that women are yet to achieve volitional self-signification at all. Minoritarian bodies are signified via their failures to be majoritarian – not female but not-male, not queer but not-heterosexual and so forth. The extreme images I have selected most frequently resonant around two axes, the ruptured body and perverse desire. Signifying the body signifies gender, and signifying desire creates sexuality as the series of acts which those bodies are capable of performing. When bodies and desire become asignifiable, so too do gender and sexuality. Without wishing to dilute my argument through standpoint politics, as a spectator traditionally understood as belonging to a certain gender and sexuality I have less to lose when I lose myself in asignifications of bodies and desire.

Signifying systems see terms as incommensurable and polarize them. These images present traditionally polarized terms as commensurable – life and death, beauty and gore, pleasure and the unpalatable, desire and disgust, matter and image, and most importantly, appropriate desiring relations, thus any relations and ultimately we who relate – subjectivity itself. Incommensurabilities are the problems which create concepts. Covertly the concepts of these images may create problems within the spectator and the extent to which these problems mobilize the spectator to create new concepts is the ethical turn of spectatorship. Both Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari have pointed out that signification creates taxonomies of perversion and deformity and the turn away from signification, toward what, after Blanchot, I have posited earlier as silence and invisible visibility describes the material encounter with actual images as a spectatorial act toward asignifiable desire and pleasure. Rather than extreme images being unethical because they show gore and perversion, these images can be understood as involving a more ethical mode of spectatorship. (I should emphasize that the following chapters will make explicit why gore is not necessarily related to violence in baroque cinema, and perversion to non-consent. Violent images and images which show desire as forced are of a different order altogether). At this stage I wish simply to posit that within this book, as within

desiring events and extreme images, the body (which includes thought) and desire are the focal intensities of baroque cinema and spectatorship.

Every apprehension of an image can only perceive aspects of the image, not parts of the screen but singular inflections of a cohesive unity. Beneath and within each intensity are other aspects which may be experienced but not apprehensible, or apprehended but not necessarily experienced. Sculpture as three dimensional is the easiest way to understand this apprehension of baroque art. Bernini's St Teresa of Avila offers an effulgent example. The ecstasy of St Teresa is inter-kingdom and inhuman because her body disappears in the fabric and she 'has undergone a transformation that has emancipated it from human form, while it still projects all the impetuous and vibrant shudderings of a body in ecstasy' (Perniola 1989, 253). The folds and pleats of Teresa's robe materially resonate with and as the folds and pleats of her ecstasy. We must walk around the sculpture and can never experience it through a single plane. As we walk around the sculpture (a walk which is limited due to her being ensconced in her alcove in Santa Maria della Vittoria) we see the pleats of her robe. From one point we can see its curvature as convex, from another the same concave. There are curvatures beneath those we can see as well as each always having an underside and point of the turn of the pleat where we can see both its concavity and convexity. There are those we perceive but we can never see and Bernini could not sculpt, but simply because they are not present in stone does not mean we do not perceive them. The pleats that are not present to us at each singular position are present, those that are not present are nonetheless present to us because we presume – that is *believe* they are there.

The pleats are multiple within themselves and in proximity to each other, and each pleat directly affects the pleat next to it and thus all the pleats. Her robe is the waves of an ocean and the trailing of smoke. This is a sculpture of desire. Her ecstasy is an invocation of folds of desire present to herself but not to us, present to us but not to her (when we are the angel who causes the ecstasy by perceiving it). We perceive her as she cannot and she herself as we cannot, and always there is desire present to neither we nor she but present nonetheless. Aspects escape and are created by both. Sculpture is also an appropriate model for the baroque as it presents an event without a narrative. We walk around a frozen movement. There is neither story nor a composition our eyes are invited to follow. We choose to walk or remain still. We choose the extent to which we want to walk behind her, to those places we can not access. This is a walk in space, not a journey through time because her ecstasy is all the same – forming thought not knowledge. Teresa's ecstasy, in spite of the narrative extract from her diary on the pew in front of her, is a purely spatial moment into which we introduce the durational aspect through our adventure in strolling and apprehension. It does not unfold, we unfold around her. The sculpture is always the same, only our perception differentiates. We experience the event, as the angel, without reflection or comprehension. We create the ecstasy as rupture, not narrative, forgetting the before and not caring for the after. This differentiates it immediately from a painting or a screen. Images within films narrate, though form, movement and frame are not concomitant

with the one before or after. However there are multiple aspects within the frontal. Sculpture offers us a schema which is easier to understand, but the concept of the baroque is found within all planes and all planes include the imperceptible sensorial behind the visible and the perceptible.

Certain images evoke criticisms because they are not seen to reflect or represent realities. Issues such as relevance, our ability to relate and our pleasure at an image's transcendental powers as it perfects our capacity to apprehend an everyday reality impart judgement that it is art. All images are real to the extent they are present and materialize the spectator as we materialize images. The resonance of any image to reality is irrelevant when arguing an image understood through the baroque. The baroque describes the way in which we are folded with the image, neither why nor what, but how. Images offer us the baroque as Teresa, but of a different kind. Images are not made of acting parts, what Guattari in Chapter 2 calls 'bits', but pleats. Images, as what Deleuze after Leibniz calls 'elastic bodies', 'are not separated into parts of parts but are rather divided to infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion' (Deleuze 2001, 6). The baroque is, put simply, existence and reality understood as encounters of position, perspective and the affects and pleats through which they are formed and which they produce. Deleuze emphasizes the baroque is that which is 'not adjusted to structure' (2001, 29) – 'folds seem to be rid of their supports' (2001, 34). Cinesexual encounters are baroque events through which we are emergent in the world and the world emergent in us. Images do not need to mirror that world because the ways images materialize us is through intensities not equivalences. When we encounter perversion, gore and abstract images we do not repudiate them because they are not like the world, imperceptible folds within us perceive them and convey the world to us differently through different possibilities of modes of perception, not different 'things' we have perceived. In this chapter I will use 'sensed' and 'perceived' relatively interchangeably. However when I use the term 'imperceptible' I mean that which can be perceived but not transcribed to a pre-established perception of a 'thing' – be it a form, meaning or thought. Everything's 'thingness' is a conveyance of our perception and a thing's 'thingness' in baroque perception is not found in its form or function but in the pleats with which it folds us and we create with it. If an image has no transcriptive resonance to the world our materialization of it nonetheless constitutes and affects our materialization of the world through ideologies, values and configurations of desire and self.

Deleuze describes the shift from an informative object to a modulated series of angles as the shift from an object to an *objectile* which is perceived by the shift from a subject to a *superject*. Images are not 'form-matter... but temporal modulation that implies as much the beginnings of a continuous variation of matter as a continuous development of form ... The object here is manneristic, not essentializing: It becomes an event' (2001, 19). How can we understand the stone stillness of Teresa as a continuous variation? The simple shift from form as independent of spectator to matter as perceived – point of view – mobilizes all form. Development is folding, unfolding, creating new folds and crevices. The movement of stone comes from the shift from form to matter.

Materiality is created through the event of perception. Form becomes matter when it materializes, and affects the materialization of the spectator. Each discrete form dissipates into molecular activity as the forms inflect into the structural folds within and, most importantly, between the two forms of spectator and image. Forms are already labyrinthine folds and their coalescence as a greater fold makes the encounters between folds unique and the possible combinations of concavities and convexities infinite. Superjecting implies activity, as the objectile affects the spectator so we superject ourselves into it. The 'we' and the 'it' are defined in a relation of position. Subject and object exists only through their relation. If we critique images because they do not represent something to which we can relate or which is true outside the image, we deny the truth of their actual presence – they are only untrue when taken as convertible to reality, all art is true if it is present – and close off our relation to it that makes us true.

Perspectivism is a 'truth of relativity (and not a relativity of what is true)' (Deleuze 2001, 21). Perspectivism is here not the post-modern free-for-all which celebrates reality only as it is perceived by each individual, because all perception is true in that it is actual and has actual affective powers to fold, unfold and refold larger territories beyond a spectator–image event. The manner by which something can be described as baroque is the manner by which the pleats of matter are negotiated, mobilized and perceived. Images which encourage cinesexual pleats that defy and demand an unfolding of folds which have become rigid or atrophied directly pleat larger folds informing gender and sexuality outside of cinema. Images are neither more nor less real than the non-cinematic but of a different kind, coming from a different situated position. What is both constant and lacking is the central singular point. The point of desire, its centre or truth, does not exist as any more than a multi-folded consistency of form perceived and folded with the spectator. Desire is multi-folded in that in this image it invokes these modulations, perceived outside cinema it is these other modulations and as each encounters each other through the spectator new modulations are formed, traditionally understood as both commensurable and incommensurable.

Perspectivism does not describe an act of total objective apprehension by a particular subject that may differ between subjects. Baroque perspectivism constitutes the perceived and the perceiver. Perception is an adamantly material, fleshly and actual event, it is neither a version nor a simulacrum, neither of something nor for something. Perspective is the actualized material reality of an event capable of creating pleats which reform all other pleats of material actuality. 'The space of signals is a physical space itself ... Thus perception is an encounter, a collision or an obstacle, one of many intersections on the way.' (Serres 2000, 49) Images are nothing as objects unto themselves, they exist with us, and we as subjects exist through them, which is what makes the same images to some spectators an encounter of desire, what Serres calls a coital collision, an obstacle in the way of self-materialization. The collision both makes and transforms the nature of each element. The question is what ideas, values and established perceptions of folds the powers of the image invite us to encounter, with what do they collide and toward what folding are they an obstacle?

The baroque event forms a unity unto itself. Post-modern relativism creates multiples which resonate around a unit or unified form, an idea-object-truth. Baroque perspectivism is its own truth where the idea-object-form becomes matter as it can only be true in the manner it materializes itself through folding with the perceiver. The cinesexual fold also importantly materializes the perceiver as perceiver of itself. In physics this describes the understanding of things through angles not forms. 'The soul is a material body, the body is a thing, the subject is just an object, physiology or psychology is just physics.' (Serres 2000, 49) Rosenberg comments on the value of using physics in aesthetics and their unequal relations of supposed truth. 'The borrowing of tropes from physical phenomena by the arts and social philosophy marks their marginalized position, while the borrowing of cultural tropes by the scientists marks their cosmological reach.' (1994, 270) According to Deleuze, the soul is the singular multi-pleated folds within a unity, folded within and unto itself, a spatial singularity before the unfurling and interjection of other folds. It is the pleated entity folded for itself, (but not present to itself) and presented within the world before the event, the fold before its own materialization. For Serres the soul is the inapprehensible infinite most fluid of the fluidity of all matter, 'still more fluid than water, fog, smoke' (2000, 68). It forms the possibility of the construction of baroque (although Serres does not use the term) materializations. He uses the model of the vessel, which contains fluid and occupies or pours into the outside itself, but the fluid soul infiltrates the porous vessel as it pours from it. The soul of the spectator is the inevitable but unable to be encountered interiority which is consistent with all intra- and extra cinematic events, material and absorbed by each materialization of the subject but which is the specificity of that subject. 'Therefore these expressions that are in our soul, whether we conceive them or not, can be called *ideas*, but those which we conceive or form can be called *notions, conceptus*.' (Leibniz 1995, 37) Leibniz calls the soul the monad, and 'every monad must be different from every other. For there are never in nature two beings which are precisely alike, and in which it is not possible to find some difference which is internal, and based on some intrinsic denomination' (Leibniz 1995, 180). While the soul is a unity, it is not consistent or singular within itself, undergoing constant differentiation and integration. This is what makes each spectator unique but what may also make certain materializations of images more or less relevant or different in relation to each spectator, as the soul of subjects contains certain molecules from what could be called the cultural 'soul' of notions of gender, desire and so forth. These however are never matter unto themselves as the soul of a subject is, they only resonate and direct and diffuse as aspects within material souls. They come through the windows to the house of the soul. 'The whole world is only a virtuality that currently exists only in the folds of the soul which convey it.' (Deleuze 2001, 23)

Images which confound us as to their relevance in the non-cinematic world could be argued to more directly access our souls because they require an encounter with the most fluid parts of our souls in their incommensurability or unfamiliarity with the aspects of the world we are more readily able to recognize in our conveyance of the world. To see a monstrous body or perverse desire

means that image must form a baroque configuration with elements which are not from the familiar interpretation of desire or bodies from the virtual world. Desire and bodies are thus refolded as they fold with our soul. The world within our soul and preserved from our perception or that of the world we materialize through our soul are folded but not clearly perceived. Deleuze describes the point of inflection between the world and the soul as ‘what it apprehends from *its* point of view’ (2001, 22, original emphasis). What if we ask the question ‘what is this *it*?’ Can certain images which have unclear messages – able to be sensed but not perceived – be the points which question the *it* which allows us to apprehend?

Let us take the example of a body in a film where something happens to a body to make it unfamiliar to a body outside of cinema. In subsequent chapters I discuss certain gore images which show, for example, bodies that are eviscerated, dead but still alive, suppurating organs and missing corporeal signifiers such as genitals and eyes, but who still see and desire. Their condition is a result not of violence but from supernatural causes or perverse sexual excavations. The inflective point between the images and the spectator is complicated. The images’ conveyance of ‘body’, ‘life’, ‘death’ and so forth are incommensurable with the soul’s conveyance of these terms in actualizing the world, so while the terms seem familiar they are completely estranged from their established inflected materialization from image to world through the soul and thus the soul’s inflection of these terms to itself and its consequent conveyance of self within the world. The terms must be rethought. Because there are no points of recognition, yet the inflection has occurred nonetheless, we have to rethink the terms in the world and encounter thought as unthought which enters the soul. Images which confound the synchronicity of conveyances within spectatorial inflection can thus be described as baroque. Not only do we have to walk around the images but around terms, thoughts and our own soul, but we never arrive at one point.

Decentralization of the object in baroque perspectivism is matched by decentralization of all point in soul and world and the inflection between soul and world. The fold itself becomes manifold. We have a decision to make. Do we emphasize terms which conform the conveyances between soul and world in baroque inflection or do we open up to the sensorial inapprehensible? We always do both, but those we privilege may relate to our subjectivity as it is materialized in the world as privileged or minoritarian, and the liminality of our materialization of desire. The disjuncture between materializations is what Serres describes as the *clinamen*, the differential in all bodies, the infinitesimal turbulence within even that which is perceived as the most stable and indivisible or incapable of deviation.

The *clinamen* refuses any point of rest between bodies, here between ideas and commensurabilities. Wolfe points out entropy parasites energy and the stabilization of objects and relations stabilizes norms and limit potentialities (2007). According to Spinoza, as this limits production it would not be an ethical compulsion. Images which cause the most turbulence, which indulge and celebrate the *clinamen*, address our own relationship with our souls as

resistance to creation of themselves and the world. ‘The theory of knowledge is isomorphic with that of being. But first, let us sacrifice to Venus. The text on perception ends with conception.’ (Serres 2000, 38–39) When the will to perceive as equivalent to knowing ends, renegotiation as creation of (new and limitless) being begins. As Serres points out, it is an act of Venusianism – of desire – while perception of knowledge is that of Mars, of war, of the slaughter of creativity and as Deleuze and Guattari claim, of desire through knowledge via the slaughter of the body by signification. ‘When encounters and connections occur, bodies are characterized according to their resistance.’ (Serres 2000, 5) Serres describes how some bodies are ‘hooked’ while, in what he calls the laminal flow, others move parallel to each other. To hook implies to colonize, slaughter, or to get hooked on something as an addiction to a repetitive and familiarly comfortable high. Images as resonant with the already perceived and known hook us, just as thinking the already has addicted us to the familiar hook, fishing us from the fluidity of the ocean to the dry territory which suffocates us as it wages war and death against the unthought. To flow parallel is not to conform but to encounter a shared fabric between, one that creates a fold rather than keeps apart. The space between, the inflection and foldings of the fabric, like Teresa’s cloak, show certain angles of both elements and conceal others. Neither is on top or beneath but each varies in their inflections, resistance and grace. At one turn one side is intensified, at another the other. Movement is fluid and constant, concealed and present, revealed but not necessarily perceived.

Discussing the painting of Tintoretto, particularly his many last judgements, Deleuze explicates the importance of baroque involving a ‘new regime of light and colour’ (2001, 31). The last judgement seems apt in that as a parable it deals with the final moment where all souls are made eternal, but last judgement art is notoriously corporeal and visceral. Tintoretto’s damned bodies expelled to Hell are hurled into darkness and are themselves dark, while the ascendant bodies are illuminated and luminescent matter. All bodies are both mobile forms, as Tintoretto’s bodies are never posed but always in motion, but more importantly all bodies are constituted by intensities of light, just as Cesare and Orlok in *Caligari* and *Nosferatu* although of a different quality. Their relation to illumination, to shadow and to expression through shade and saturation creates proprioceptivity and volume, not of three dimensional realism but quality of sensorial folding. In cinema this is easily evident but to light and colour we can add timbre, frame and the compelling, infinite but not necessarily meaningful elements of gesture – the sweep of a hand, swirls of smoke, the frozen shocking revelation of an unexpected image, gesture in stillness. Caravaggio, as Bernini, emphasized the gestural nature of voluminous corporeality in an immobile medium, but the body as flesh rather than being adorned with symbolic trappings, as for Tintoretto, remained the focus. Caravaggio’s extraordinary manipulation of perspective is another corporeal gestural element. As suggested in the myth of Orpheus, Tintoretto’s bodies relegated to Hell are of a different quality of perceptibility rather than the same bodies denied illumination. In his short discussion of Tintoretto Deleuze seems to hold onto the illuminative qualities of light as inherently benevolent while those of darkness are malevolent and

to be avoided by both the judged and the spectator. He associates dark with stumbling, suffering matter and light with bodies endowed with life. Interestingly he uses the word 'meander' to describe the motion of the damned bodies, while the saved 'ride' light (2001, 30). He suggests here that light is associated with domination or manipulation, while darkness insinuates being lost, wandering as Orpheus, seeking the light that symbolizes knowledge, shifting from meandering to riding. In many images which seduce us to dwell in the dark and enjoy the loss of clear perception, often simultaneous with what we would consider clear pleasure, the point of illumination, of monsters, of death, of gory spectacles, is the moment of horror.

Discussing Uccello and Donatello Deleuze claims Uccello's figures, hidden by folds of fabric and light and including elements which conceal or partly disclose are more revealing than the sculpted figures, celebrated as revealing truths of the human form, of Donatello (2001, 34). The question becomes *what* is revealed, or what does it mean to reveal? In order to create new concepts, the revelation of spaces in between, of incommensurabilities and images which encounter the perceptible while estranging them is revealed as sensible but imperceptible, demanding new perception through a new folding. The inconsistencies of any claim to reality and truths are revealed while the need for creativity, thought and imagination as crucial components of perception reveals aspects of the soul of the spectator redifferentiated.

Deleuze describes six necessary traits in the baroque. The first is the work or the fold created with the work is continuous and does not tend toward a closure or finality. The second describes the harmony between the enclosed soul and the work which refolds the soul to the extent that the soul expresses the outside world. Harmony comes not from familiarity but creativity. It could be argued that it is easier for a soul that is constituted by certain minoritarian elements to find harmony in images that majoritarian culture repudiates, essentially finding harmony with the clinamen. Harmony for Deleuze is not concordance but a 'certain unity that has to offer distinctive or pertinent traits' (2001, 128). Extreme images are neither good nor bad but more or less pertinent to the soul who perceives them in relation to the creativity the fold evokes. The third trait is the severing of the world with the soul. While always acknowledging the world is expressed by the soul whose condition of possibility is being in the world it expresses, the formation of new relations comes from the expansion of each. The world can expand as it dissipates between souls but the soul dissipates within itself to refold itself and thus express the world differently. Deleuze sees abstraction of forms as accessing the abstract elements of the soul which affectuate shifts, unfoldings and refoldings within the soul but which cannot come from a volitional rethinking of forms. 'Matter that reveals its texture becomes raw material, just as form that reveals its folds becomes force.' (2001, 35) Traditionally apprehended, things are forms made of matter. Baroque matter is perceived asemiotically as qualities of texture, light and its affects are abstracted from the necessary relations to their form, while form is perceived not by what it is but by what it does, from object to objectile. When matter is

understood as raw, it can be rebuilt (or refolded) as the same thing but with different expressions and forces through alternative perceptions.

While extreme images are not abstract they abstract the body and desire from being culturally acceptable, or even possible, and thus abstract these bodies as *our* bodies, as *us*, abstracting singular notions of desire for bodies by bodies. Is a disassembled gory body or a confounding perverse desire a body and desire anymore, or the raw material for something beyond? My selection of images seems particularly out of kilter in that they are often unapologetically abstracted from what makes a good or palatable or enjoyable image – dire scripts, incoherent or absent narratives, guignol theatrics and so forth. They are attentive to their own abstraction from the real world through fantasy and the supernatural or impossible. Decrying them as silly or offensive limits these material forms as newly built raw forces.

Deleuze's fourth trait is the unfold, not undoing but refolding and shifting perception of beings which are represented to perception as an active method. Here the fold's possibilities of extension are emphasized. The fifth trait somewhat limits extension, but necessarily so. The fold is not extension as infiltration but the point of tension between elements of the fold. It relates to Serres' resistance of bodies and to Leibniz's point that bodies are constituted through intensities of action and passivity. Bodies are still bodies but stretched. Desire is still desire but expressed differently as 'occasions for meanders and detours' (Deleuze 2001, 37) like Tintoretto's damned. In becoming a Body without Organs Deleuze and Guattari claim one must retain a sufficient level of the body to sustain existence, although not of the same kind. Here images must retain enough of themselves to be perceptible in order to change the quality of that perception. When the fold is stretched too taut it snaps. The snap, if borne of frustrations which incarnate in phrases such as 'I don't get this' or 'it's just stupid', returns the image to its traditional (maligned) place. If borne of irredeemable confusion beyond the compulsion to perceive, we may not be able to sense it at all, a risk taken particularly by avant-garde images. The final trait urges the fold to reveal the conditions of its possibility, its formal elements, the fabric beyond its perceptibility. Here the politics of power, access and what is invested in images behind the event of their perception is emphasized. Here also is where the ethics of spectatorship becomes important. What we risk through baroque perception in renegotiating our soul will express direct force in our expression of the world. The extent of our risk shows our perception of our soul and its resonances with established paradigms of power. The risks taken by minoritarians may be more compelled by the baroque and allow them to gain more in the dissipation of viable souls within society. The souls of the majoritarian are those who have most to risk. Baroque powers expressed through the fold 'enlarge and distend the world' (Deleuze 2001, 124). Baroque images which elicit cinesexual folds are affective to the extent that they enlarge and distend the elements of souls which express the world in particular ways and the levels of influence or force within their powers of expression. To see in the dark and be blinded by the light, to witness the rupturing of the body that constitutes an 'I' but that lives on nonetheless, to access desire as infinite so that

any concept of gendered sexual identity is impossible is a direct response to the ways in which baroque folds make us raw material. Our form – subjectivity, identity and social position – is emphasized as manneristic matter and force when we encounter the baroque and the folds it creates within our souls and folds of expressions of the world.

When an image causes a perception we must ask how does this cause come about? Perception is an effect of images but images are themselves effects of causes. Cause does not preclude effect nor effect come from a cause however. Leibniz claims that within all causes are former effects and all effects come from former causes. ‘Really nothing can happen to us apart from thoughts and perceptions, and all our future thoughts and perceptions are only consequences (although contingent consequences) of our preceding thoughts and perceptions.’ (Leibniz 1995, 27) This is where we get the idea of all subjects being in their predicates. Deleuze states that cause can be described as clear while effect is obscure but both express the same world at once (2001, 133–4). Cause confesses the conditions of its own possibilities, the values and judgements which underpin it and thus, according to Leibniz, could exploit its contingency. Recall Leibniz’s claim that monads have ideas and their expression of the world creates concepts. Effect makes the conditions of its possibility obscure – the effects of logic, of science, of mathematics do not acknowledge the causes for their truths and thus their truths as contingent concepts from monadic ideas. Effects enact forces from a veiled paradigm. Baroque images cause. The effects come from the conditions of our own possibility of thought and subjectivity which allow us to have things caused to us. After Leibniz I would define subjectivities as ‘nominal definitions’ (1995, 11) as they differentiate spectators who exist beyond cinema in the world from all other things. Similarly we can refine this to genders and sexualities being nominal definitions, not in order to maintain these categories but to acknowledge the history of their conditions of perception and expression of the world and thus the necessity of distending the world which can only occur through a distension of possible perception-expressions. They are causes from minoritarian ideas, not effects of nature. Leibniz emphasizes ‘our perceptions are true... it is our judgements which come from us and deceive us’ (1995, 26). Gender and sexuality are not caused by society, subjectivity, physiology or anatomy but results of effects of the will to certain perception of subjectivity which veil themselves beneath predicates caused by paradigms external to monads and thus their ideas. Folds occur through dissonance between monads, that is, between the ideas of each soul. To mask the effects caused by the ideas of a soul claiming it is external to that soul colonizes one monad by another.

Visual apprehension of gesture makes that which is seen visceral. Spectatorship perceives the visual texture of flat planes and forms as movement and matter, hears sounds as timbre and flow, the diagetic as non-diagetic and vice versa. Intensity of colour and sound can hurt or cause strain or ease. The soul is a monad, it is a unity that is made up of parts but these parts are not extricated from one another and are not discrete in their functions and forms, which means, just like the Body without Organs, we cannot organize sensations

as sensible according to their appropriate organ of sense. The Body without Organs dismantles the unity of an organism whose parts are organized and thus limited to their proper place, meaning and thus limit through the apprehension of a body as a surface signifying form. It is ‘the *field of immanence* of desire [non-consequential desire], the *plane of consistency* specific to desire [not lack but substance, connection and voluminous].’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 154) If the image is taken as a body, a plane populated by perceptible forms within a frame, it has organs to the extent it is organized just as we are organized. Each organ form has a function. Our perception of it limits its capacity to act and be acted upon, both within and beyond the frame, if the image is perceived only as populated by bodies organized within themselves and with each other. The image becomes a Body without Organs when perception disorganizes the image. Does this necessitate the perceiver also be a Body without Organs?

Can we speak of a Perceiver without Organs, not simply the disorganized ‘we’ but the disorganizing? And is this simply a different form of transcriptive mimicry between what is on screen and in the world, resonant with psychoanalysis and signification? The art-image-Body without Organs belongs to a different phylum than the spectatorial Body without Organs and perhaps here is where the notion of mirrored image–spectator is broken. While Deleuze claims ‘the monad requires a body and organs’, he describes the monad not as the organized body the Body without Organs repudiates but a body that consists of a certain sensorial conformity (2001, 135). When the organism is a plane of consistency sense organs are all one. Serres would describe this conformity as one of touch. ‘Sensation is a generalized sense of touch. The world is no longer in the distance, it is nearby, tangible.’ (Serres 2000, 107) To see is to observe if the eyes are organized within the body as organs of sight. The eyes are organ-eyed to the extent the clinamen is turbulent. Minimal turbulence retains organized eyes, volatile clinamen disorganizes the (still seeing) eye. We can speak of sight being a sense of touch, as touch closes off the distance between elements. If two bodies touch there is no distance, they fold. In a Body without Organs all organs have infinite possibilities to perceive differently but all organs can be described as organs of touch in that their position with another body is one of folded relation rather than objectification which reasserts the subjectivity of the observer. The sensorial soul is the soul which expresses the image and the world, rather than witnessing it from a distance. Reality is materially ideational. Thus thought and reality are sensorial. This is what Serres describes beautifully as ‘a voluptuous knowledge’ (2000, 107). Desire is the flesh/thought fold par excellence when we yearn with every particle of our sensorial perception, where our monads within create and express our soul through their own folds. Desire is the very impossibility of the Cartesian split of mind and body.

The corporeal nature of thought, knowledge and sense emphasizes its crucial relationship with being a body, remembering our bodies are mysteries to us, even if we are scientists. The only thing we have is what we are and the thing we are that is extrinsic to our singularity as a body is perception so becoming a Body without Organs orients around perception – not of us but us as perception – just as the organized body is a mode of perception (idea/

cause) not a truth (concept/effect). Our bodies do not belong to us but to the monads which make the monad that is our body (Deleuze 2001, 110). In turn other bodies do belong to us to the extent our monad effectuate their unfoldings and refoldings them in relations of activity and passivity. The idea of equilibrium is invested in the interaction of monads, activity, passivity, resistance and cause/effect. Equilibrium is a phantasy that is an aim rather than a state. Serres's clinamen, which describes the turbulence within each body and between the relations between bodies infinitesimally and infinitely, does not lament lack of equilibrium. Equilibrium heralds death. The equilibrium forced between cause and effect, representation and reality, truth and expressions of the world by certain monads invokes the criticisms found in Serres' war of Mars and Deleuze and Guattari's slaughter of thought. '*Turbare* means a disorder, a confusion, a disruption, or, as we say, a perturbation. Disorder emerges from order.' (Serres 2000, 27) Disorder is the unfold and refold. The resonance of disorder with destruction as malevolent and murderous is incorrect. As we have seen, stabilization is slaughter, order is war. When we organize the body we place a judgement on that order, when we make certain qualities essential and commensurable with forms, and it is through this 'knowledge' we wage war against minoritarians and slaughter the infinite possibilities of desire, where infinity describes loss of centre. Ideas, concepts, truth, judgement and reality are centralized into one point.

Confronted with baroque images we should not ask what they mean or what is their value but what centres they challenge and refuse. Subjects are compelled to resonate around the imagined centre in order to be recognized, that is, in order to exist. Serres points out that to exist always includes the predicate of not existing, but instead he claims existence is opposed to deviation, because existence is being in a state of equilibrium (2001, 21). If an image is taken as truthful, not because it represents a true thing, but because through factors of social values, of logic and of reason the image would be perceived consistently by all subjects, that image is imagined to be in a state of equilibrium and by virtue of this our modes of perception are similarly equal and constant with each other. When images make chaos from order, through our alternate perceptions, we are making a decision to think existence through deviation-folding rather than subject it to equilibrium with majoritarian definitions which express the possibility of being in the world (or more correctly, counting as a being).

Baroque cinema creates disjunctive patterns of the body. It is not decrepit or destroyed but differentially arranged. Serres asks why, in physics, modernity is characterized by sets of invariables and more importantly, whose interest do these invariables service? (2000, 37) Invariables present knowledge which allows mastery and it is this quality, not that of describing reality, that allows a perception of invariability to express a world which can be mastered. To master a 'thing' means creating a 'thing' to be mastered. When we desire what we would not think we can, and when pleasure comes from images we would presume to be disgusting – when we realize these polarities are the same thing but of a different quality – our souls and the world becomes clinamen. Mars's war of mastery gives way to Venusian fluidity and desire dissipates and reformulates

intensities within the soul so the world must necessarily be expressed differently. This is why even though many extreme images are about death their death is not the death outside of their supernatural cinematic worlds but death of another kind. If death in extreme images is not death of people what is it the death of? The very point of this disjuncture creates the fold, as certain centres are killed off in these images. Reified notions of hermeneutic hygienic bodies performing genders and corresponding sexualities are murdered and the living dead are living away from these centres and dead to their expression of the world. These images create voids in the world outside cinema, which that world cannot fill and which the images cannot fill as part of that world. The images cannot be expelled because they can be perceived so what territories are imposed on the chaos they create to challenge the territories which form the world? What are the voids in the world outside cinema that gives rise to these images? The images are confounding because they have no centre and it is because they have no centre that the desires and pleasures they evoke are fluid and infinite, Venusian spectatorship through Venusian physics. This form of baroque desire is explored in the following chapter and posited as potentially feminist in that it works the spectator toward a becoming-woman. 'The ills of the world come from comparison.' (Serres 2000, 53) Foucault calls this the 'inertis of equivalences' (1988, 362). Comparative subjectivity results in hierarchy or isomorphic binaries. Comparisons between image and world as self-evident makes extreme images offensive or silly but also makes the spectator refuse being compared and harmonized with elements incommensurable to itself. Disjuncture between invariables and harmony between incommensurables creates new expressions of the world. To return to my question, what centres must we expose the clinamen within? If 'the only precise dialectic is that of circumstance' (Serres 2000, 61) then Leibniz's contingency of judgement must anchor on those elements most important to current cultural circumstances – for this book sexuality and gender thought as desire, fluid subjectivity, designified bodies and unthought. The clinamen creates and destroys as one turbulence, neither good nor evil but turbulence which effects according to its conditions and positions.

Images function structurally as society even if they reflect impossible worlds. Things within the frame and their possibilities of relation limit and affirm those in the world. When the inorganic becomes organic and vice versa, when male and female bodies explode into visceral living-flesh but dead bodies, when desire is disjoined from sexuality or rationality images can no longer be understood as things which relate to other things in the same way. Traditionally certain things should and should not be joined. 'What is conjoined to a body is that which is destroyed if it is disjoined.' (Serres 2000, 121) When our bodies are disjoined from those rationality comparative to us – in gender those who are also male or female, in sexuality those whose partnership affirms our sexual identity – and conjoined with these baroque bodies onscreen what is destroyed and what is created? The assemblage is inter-kingdom because traditionally the modes of aesthetic and social, real and created, perception are seen to belong to different kingdoms. Fold-conjoining with baroque cinema is not a conjoining

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of alliance or like bodies, but a cinesexual conjoining. I have cited Deleuze, Serres and Leibniz as stating if a thing is perceptible it is real and true. While we are aware these images are fictitious they are true in that they are sensed and our experience with them unfolds and refolds our expression of the world. Cinesexuality is precisely the access, through corporeal spectatorial desire, that, by the very impossibility of transcribing these images to the real world, makes our expression of the real world fluid. Relations of bodies are not between bodies in images or equivalent bodies between screen and spectator but bodies as manneristic intensities and forces creating relations which disorganize and reorganize our desiring bodies into bodies without organs equivalent to those in the world or to what they were before. Our bodies lose their necessary functions and our capabilities for desire become limitless. All perception creates and expresses the world. All perception is sensorial. All sense is desire. All expression of the world comes from desire.

Chapter 5

Baroque Becomings

In the following chapter I am going to introduce some examples of what I describe as baroque images. There are three premises I posit in describing baroque cinema. The first is that baroque cinema is emphatic in folding with us. It draws attention to its own refusal to stand *away* from the spectator, distanced as observable and legible. The spectator event form a baroque sculpture, a desiring event that creates a manifold, shifting structure. Because of the multi-perspectival attributes of the structure baroque cinema encourages our un- and refoldings and invokes awareness of our own affective desiring non-presences without the demand to describe or know them (and therefore ourselves). I will tease out certain folds in images as examples of what could form a germinal or larval libidinality. The second premise is a suggestion that desire within the baroque spectatorial event could be described as a feminine form of desire in that it multiplies and mobilizes desire within and beyond just as the ‘speech’ within baroque images multiply and exceed description, where forms, actions and ideas are amorphic, strange and incommensurable with the possibility of identical real world versions. The third premise is that through baroque images we create an unnatural alliance or demonic pact. Beyond monster and monstrous images, cinema itself is the monster.

Larval libidinality

The image creates with us a territory which is enclosed in a spectatorial event as images puncture and flow within and between the apertures in our soul. The extent to which an image can be experienced as baroque is found in the incommensurable combinations, connections and apertures it creates within our soul and its expression of the world. When punctures are made within folds holes do not lead from the interior to the exterior, from in to out or from the smooth surface to the damaged. Holes create tunnels of relation which allow surfaces to encounter each other and certain flows to traverse many sections in a small space. They are the corridors of the labyrinthine fold. These holes can be made through, not an emptying excavation but a luminous filling intensity. Sometimes these holes are made when signification becomes duplicitous. This occurs more often in non-abstract films. For example, when we see baroque images of ruptured organs on screen which do not destroy but rather reterritorialize a body the organ is no longer its own self. A certain form we find attractive which repels us or repulsive which attracts us, when fear or disgust comes from desire, the relation between our desire and the image’s

own dissimilarity from itself creates apertures in the folds, cutting across more planes than would seem immediately likely. The image of an object which looks as itself is no longer itself thus any idea of what it is reminds us that all images are germinal in that we cannot rely on what we expect or think they are to constitute what they can do or will become. Each desiring event is what Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* calls larval; the ways in which it unfolds and refolds to new folds comes from the extent to which this larval nature is exploited. Larvae are invertebrate and not yet actualized, thus Deleuze exploits their lack of supporting structure and porous potentiality. The decision taken between habit and difference potentiality creates larvality – the moment of a baroque ethics. Deleuze points out that each action we take is only the contemplation of the self who acts, which is always multiple: ‘little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our “self” only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us.’ (1994b, 75) It is important to note that the persistent use of the idea of the multiple is not plural in any incongruous or random sense. Proliferations occur through what Deleuze calls passive synthesis, defined not simply by ‘receptivity – that is, by means of the capacity to experience sensations – but by virtue of the contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes the sensations’ (1994b, 78).

Cinemasochism is active receptive, a decisive willingness to receive and contemplate sensations differently. The shift from cinesexuality to cinemasochism is the point of the baroque, from extension to inflection. This is why no one image can guarantee an alternation in the synthesis of sensation. The self must begin larval, no image can make it larval but in welcoming unfoldings and refoldings along unfamiliar angles the larval nature of the spectator is particularly open to a baroque mode of receptivity. The image similarly emerges as larval in its potentialities, whether they come through creating disjunctures between the familiar onscreen and offscreen, through confounding the spectator, through elaborate spectacles, intense saturations, compelling gesturing and any number of other elements. Asemiosis encourages larval experience of sensation in that, for example, colour and sound are already in need of another element to describe their ‘thingness’, their form, function and presumed effect. We do not say ‘I desire red’ without ‘red what’ in signifying systems. Larval desire does not need the noun as we refuse to be a noun.

We can see representations of baroque desire through larval partners. Many film monsters are zoologically larval or potentialized by belonging to larval genealogies. The gooey, amorphous blobbiness of many monsters and the insect-actualization of aliens as well as the ubiquitous presence of maggots themselves show the larval as beyond. Larvae comes from the Latin for ‘demon’ making it apt for the demonic pact Deleuze and Guattari state is necessary in all for all inter-kingdom becomings. Grosz (1995) explores queer as from lesbian to animal–(insect-as-machine) sex, a kind of devolve–evolve post-human parabola sexuality. Andrzej Zulawski’s *Possession* (1981) is a film replete with favourite elements of psychoanalysis – uncanny doubles, abject maternity, Oedipal rivalries and Electra complexes. But within the story of a neurotic

mother's sexual repressions and frustrations there is germinal sexuality. While David Cronenberg elaborates visceral larval sexualities in his heroines, they often incarnate as female monstrosities, causing horror and death. *The Brood's* (Cronenberg 1979) Nola (Samantha Egggar) creates murderous children; *Rabid's* (1977) Rose (Marilyn Chambers) grows an armpit phallus which slaughters when aroused. Desire, conflated with maternity, here makes larval female sexuality maleficent. Anna (Isabelle Adjani) in *Possession* undoubtedly resonates with Cronenberg's monstrous women – frustrated, neurotic, and she creates a 'thing' from the fluids of her defunct miscarriage (because it was never a baby but some menstrual, spermal, viscous entity). The 'thing' begins as a seething lump in the darkened corner of a room, altering form rapidly. At its most larval stage (and it looks like a maggot) our perception is constituted as questions as to what is it, what will it become and what can and will it do? Presumably an immediate response would be because this foaming, slimy thing looks as it does it will be dangerous. Its metamorphic and non-anthropomorphic aspects make it literally look baroque. It 'sits' in darkness so our perception is myopic. It is more sensed than perceived, formed of texture, viscosity, temporality, odd squishy sounds. Our thousand little contemplations of our own capacity to perceive directly create how this lover is sensed – sensation as act of creation as it creates ourselves as larval in our relation to this thing. As Anna's larval lover alters it becomes more normal, completing as the uncanny double of her husband Mark (Sam Neill). Along the way to its becoming it is a tentacled, headless thing which, disappointingly, has missionary position traditional heterosexual sex with Anna, but even here can we speak of 'traditional' if the lover has such a strange form? It is crucial to remember though that the most 'normal' lover and act can create a larval sexual encounter.

The question of larval sexuality however must include the possibilities of desiring act within the desire, so the extent to which Anna's heterosexual coitus with her lover is baroque depends on the extent to which the fact it is headless and tentacled unfolds and refolds both she and we. How is its larvality different from than, for example, the fifteen foot lobster who has sex with Lady Divine (Divine) in John Waters' *Multiple Maniacs* (US, 1970)? A lobster is a recognizable form but here its sexual act (and that it is sexual at all) is certainly monstrous, perverse and creates a hybrid desiring fold. Is this inter-kingdom libidinality too obvious, just as Deleuze and Guattari point out that bestiality does not make one become-dog? Is the same critique applicable to other beauty and the beast films from the evocative – Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* (1946) – to the graphic – Walerian Borowczyk's *The Beast* (1975) – and of course all examples of King Kong films. Action comes from potentiality, and this most frequently resonates around contemplation of form – we sense any act by forming a passive synthesis with our own souls to possibilities of perception. Seeing a lobster having sex with a transvestite may be aligned too much on the transgressive for its own sake, or even surreal (is sex with a lobster different to making a phone call with one?) Cocteau's, Borowczyk's and Kong films' beasts are beasts because they are not human, and are always paired with women in heterosexual ways, be they romantic to show the non-beastliness of the beast, or pornographic to

show the virility of the beast. These films all rely on stereotypes of what the form, function and action-potential of a beast is to underpin their narratives and images. I am tempted to argue that a crustacean is more compelling as a larval beast than a generic mammalian devolved beast. The differences between a beast and a daemonic, 'beastly' entity with which we can enter into a becoming will be elaborated below.

Anna's lover is most fascinating before it attains form. One consistent asemiotic timbre-gestural-tactile element between *Possession* and Cronenberg's films, present also in many horror films but not necessarily in itself horrible, is the above mentioned noisy viscosity. Obvious analysis would perceive this sticky residue either as a ubiquitous example of any and all abject corporeal fluid or one which mimics female sexual fluid. Irigaray offers that the breakdown between subject and object, other and same, is desire 'which cannot be equated with that of the masculine world, as a result of the way it lives in mucous' (1993, 109). As corporeal and threshold between self and world, ergo self and other in the world, in excess of and between each, mucous is the trace or the left behind aspects of feminine desire. The point where Anna's desire leaves its becomings toward a dialectic occurs precisely when 'the masculine subject ... erects itself out of the mucous' (Irigaray 1993, 109). Beyond its possible signification this asemiotic veneer, its shininess, texture, viscosity and the sound it makes when touched is found frequently in films which deal with gore, horror, sexuality or those which exploit certain squeamishness. The visceral, not linguistic reaction is a language of mucous, present but 'that is never spoken' (Irigaray 1993, 109). Asemiotic elements of cinematic forms are mucocities, elements which bypass contemplations which could predict the conversion from sensation to perception. The sticky substance is a kind of visible which is never visible – indeed it is usually transparent – or only perceived as touch even while it is an image.

Like the philosopher as adventurer exploring a labyrinth, the fold-event requires a journey of discovery always tinged with fear and risk. At each turn in each corridor the entire territory changes. In his discussion of the labyrinth Lyotard points out that the labyrinth is not a finite territory but an infinite plane – a möebian band – whose own turnings create new invaginations and projections. 'A möebian skin which, rather than being smooth, is on the contrary (is this topographically possible?) covered with roughness, corners, creases, cavities which, when it passes on the "first" turn will be cavities but on the "second", lumps.' (1993, 3) Lyotard's möebian band resonates with the fold in the sense that both are mobile and pliable and the effectuation of any alteration – Deleuze's shift, Lyotard's turn – redistributes the entire structure, thus the structure itself is a single form or plane which always teems with molecular, affective constant differentiations. Like a labyrinth the structure is a unity but one of origami angles and not a map. The entire labyrinth alters depending on our place within it, just as the labyrinth of spectatorship is formed by and forms textures, creases, folds and apertures. This renegotiates the territorializing of possible experiences of sensation and perception through the system which precedes sense. Perception is the journey which creates ideas.

The world is already there, perception is a question of space and place. Our contemplation of ourselves is the decisive point where we make the phantasy of the pre-existent world a labyrinth and in the process shift contemplation from thought as knowledge to unthought. ‘To think something is to have been able to think it, to produce it and reproduce it.’ (Lyotard 1993, 251) Lyotard sees the decision as the turn from what he calls *pulsion* to representation. Sensing as representation requires labour, which always belongs to the laws of capital, state, and morality – map systems of signification. Adventures in the labyrinth take sensation as pulsion and representation comes after, where the image is taken as a representation, not *of* something but as an image, nothing more and nothing less.

Pre-pulsive representation implants us on the map, pulsion takes sensation as larval. Lyotard emphasizes, while pre-pulsive representation is capital labour, pulsion is libidinal. It does not differentiate the organic from inorganic, the terrifying from compelling, the self from its outside. As the self is its own thousand tiny contemplations, all other contemplations are larval – inorganic does not mean inorganic, other does not mean other, terrifying does not mean terrifying. Adventures in the labyrinthine fold involve becoming-woman navigations. Against and beyond the structure of the phallus Irigaray offers feminine sexuality and morphology as a fold through her example of the two lips. The two lips refer to a number of aspects of the feminine fold. The lips of the vulva as a strategic representation of female genitalia reflect also feminine pleasure and desire. These lips touch each other, so there is neither penetrated nor penetrator and their apprehension goes beyond the visibility and visibility of the penis. The lips are more than the singular dividuated phallus in that they are always at least two, but they encroach on the rest of the flesh, the thigh, the perineum, while covering the additional planes of female genitalia beneath, the clitoris and so forth. They are simultaneously less than one if an absence of the phallus is considered castration. The lips are also those which speak. The female voice has been variously silenced, considered poetic, illogical or irrational, collective through politics or hysteria. The genital lips as always related to the mouth’s lips emphasizes the crucial relation between descriptive ontological speech and paradigms of gender and sexuality. The kiss then relates one of our lips with that of the other, so the two lips are two top lips and separately from the singular expression of mouth, two bottom lips between two. The mouth is separated into a connective and collective mouth. The kiss requires a ‘changing face’ (1985a, 210), unfolding the biunivocalised face toward what Deleuze and Guattari call a probing head, one which journeys. Isomorphically the lips are a failure and a challenge. This is why Irigaray describes female morphology as this sex which is not one.

We could argue that feminine sexuality is this sex which is *not* as it does not speak through one voice, nor describe reified patterns of desire. At each point of the lips folding and unfolding, turned inward, splayed outward, the lips silently speak through pleasure beyond language and the phallus.

Our whole body is moved. No surface holds. No figure, point or line remains. No ground subsists. But no abyss, either. Depth, for us, is not a chasm. Without a solid crust, there is no precipice. Our depth is the thickness of our body, our all touching itself. Where top and bottom, inside and outside, in front and behind, above and below are not separated, remote, out of touch. Our all intermingled. Without breaks or gaps (Irigaray 1985a, 213).

Irigaray's sex which is not one resonates with turnings of the libidinal band. Irigaray uses the collective 'we' to speak of one body. Emptiness is voluminous, darkness a different quality of light and when 'our lips speak together' they speak in silence because our language, inextricable from our bodies and desire, is fluid and mobile. Larval desire as feminine thus involves a shift from I to we, singular self, desire and body in space and time to mucosal multiple. The vulva is not demarcated from the rest of the body as the penis is. It is not visible full frontal but different depending on the position of the body. It is made up of multiple parts, both interior and exterior. The baroque fold as female genital morphology is a tempting form. Its tempting aspect is traditionally one of the reasons for its danger and the imminent downfall of the (usually majoritarian) tempted. The female-fold is also a monster, all the more monstrous for simultaneously being so tempting, evoking the fascination of ambivalence. For all the ways the multiple feminine transgresses and traverses dominant phallic paradigms it is both prohibited and revolt-ing (in both senses of the word). Female morphology, as opposed to the obedient vagina, will not be defined by production (family), chastity (church) or an acceptance of subjugation (state). Feminine flesh and desire is a demon – convoked by the sorcerer fascinated with the possible but unknowable futures the feminine fold offers, tempted by the feminine's seduction against the warnings of family, church and state. As a demon, the feminine tempts, making it a seductive term with which to enter into a pact of becoming.

The labyrinth is populated by 'not a Minotaur, stupid beast with his monstrous appetite, but a Centaur, a monster more intelligent than the most intelligent of men, the image of the marvelous dissimulation of signs into one another, supreme wisdom which includes the stupidity of bestiality' (1993, 81). The romantic or profane bestiality beast is the labouring beast, one which requires capital to refuse or fetishize the beastliness of the beast in order to give it value within human territories. These beast lovers are either/or beasts representing a decision as to whether we are beast or human when we come to the images. We do not learn from them, nor make a pact with them, we simply are or are not them and they are or are not us.

The Minotaur is in the centre and thus centralizes the labyrinth, orienting its structure with an aim, and Theseus the Orpheus of the labyrinth overcoming the beast to bring his Eurydice Ariadne out into the navigated world. The iconic woman-animal hybrid beast The Sphinx of Thebes defined man himself. When man finally solved his own existence through answering the riddle she was hurled to her death. Oedipus however paid the price for knowing himself – centring himself to be lost from his centre and giving himself origin only to

be made blind by his sight. When The Sphinx taught man to know himself this knowledge destroyed him. The centaur teaches as a beast, without binarized human selections of what is good or bad, stupid or intelligent, natural or cultural – the dissimulation of signs of judgment. All knowledge is there, apprehended as one with perspective. The teaching comes from the beast perspective emitted to the human to create hybrid perspective. What does remain consistent is the association of animals and inter-kingdom hybridity with other minoritarians. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, the animal, its use, its history, has always been bound up with woman and child and other minoritarians (1987, 235), to which I would add sexually ambiguous desiring selves. The centaur teaches the human, not how to eradicate their own beastliness, but to form a hybrid libidinality – bestiality with the Centaur is larval because both parties come toward desire as hybrid just as signs dissolve into each other and thus no one sign nor one idea can occupy one place within a capital cartography. The centaur is already more than one sign; he does not oscillate from beast to human through labours of signification of form, action and potentiality but offers wisdom to us as pulsion toward representation, thought towards inhuman knowledge, art as unthought. The centaur is the monster with which we make a libidinal pact, neither destroying us nor we him, not to take him as lover but ourselves as becoming libidinally-larval. The shift from beast-monster to demonic monster with which we make a pact occurs here, at the point of de-humanization.

Demons are entities evoked by sorcerers to create experiential pacts. In Deleuze and Guattari's sorcery the pact is not one of labour or a capital economy (exit Faustus) but a libidinal economy of becoming. Evoking demons creates 'a fearsome involution calling us toward unheard-of becomings.' (1987, 240) To hear, as to see, to think and to speak, presumes there is a discourse about something to which we can listen. As women, animals, non-heterosexuals and other minoritarians are not considered viable things but isomorphic failures to be majoritarian any participation with minoritarianism is both unheard of and we can never hear about them. There is nothing to listen to, or, rather, listening to minoritarians is a participation requiring a silent language, just as seeing women requires a different, non-phallic mode of sexual vision. Entering into a demonic pact emphasizes the majoritarianism in us all, minoritarian or not, which compels us to perceive through habitual self or represent as labour not libidinally.

If becoming-animal takes the form of a Temptation, and of monsters aroused in the imagination by the demon, it is because it is accompanied, at its origin as in its undertaking, by a rupture with the central institutions that have established themselves or seek to become established (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 247).

Thus demonic pacts are actions of desire which create larval sexualities, pleasures and selves.

By way of a (potentially somewhat transcriptive) detailed exploration of the labyrinth, temptation and demonic pacts I turn now to two examples of baroque cinema, *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker 1987) and *Hellbound* (Tony Randel

1988). While these analyses are as much about baroque perception as image analysis the images of the demons are interesting examples of what could constitute a baroque body, literally peeled back and segmented not through discrete centralizing organization but perspectival flesh-fabric-folding planes. *Hellraiser* proffers to its protagonists, and the cinesexual, baroque configurations of demonic flesh and temptation away from the signifying paradigms of grand narratives of regulation, most pertinently the Church. It tells the story of a man seeking extremes of experience who evokes (or invokes? These are, in their own words ‘demons to some, angels to others’) a group of four ‘cenobites’ by opening a puzzle box known as the Lament Configuration. Cenobite, traditionally ‘coenobite’ etymologically refers to religious or monastic figures which are collective, from the Greek *koinobios*, ‘to live in a community’. The community these cenobites form, this ‘convent’, is the event of convening. These are figures whose definition is premised on their being multiple, within a group, the multiple molecular lover to they who summons them. As the Devil in the desert, they are legion. Their flesh, their gestures, their location at the thresholds between this and other worlds bring the promise of pleasure and pain indivisible. In the film they occupy borderlands, evince the world itself as folded, not their world and our world but both simultaneously and made up of angles and folds that intercede at various points which shift depending on locations and times of invocation. They come into our world and we into theirs simultaneously – multiple spatial territory palimpsest without strata.

The Cenobites’ bodies are configured through folds which shift as they are pinned back, stretched over, to conceal, reveal and create new planes or surfaces of flesh. It is, in many cases, literally folded. The Cenobites as cinematic sculptures are four examples of Teresa, but here flesh replaces and is integrated with fabric. The lead cenobite Pinhead’s (Doug Bradley) skull is lacerated into a grid, at each juncture of which a nail is driven. His breast flesh is pulled outside of his fetishistic leather cassock and involuted with the fabric. The female Cenobite’s (Grace Kirby) flesh is similarly peeled through her clothing and her throat is held open as a large vulvic wound by an occult geometry of wire. Chatterer (Nicholas Vince) is named for his lipless dentition which continually chatters epileptically. Butterball (Simon Bamford) is an obese creature with eyelids sewn together and a constantly protruding slug tongue. The faces of each cenobite have become masks, or heads which potentialize connections with infinite possibles rather than being limited to rational relations of organizing principles of body, territory, act and pleasure. Pinhead and the Female Cenobite mirror each other, both in their elegant articulations of flesh and language and in their ambiguous genderings. They look similar, both bald, both waists hung with a variety of utensils for unspecified pleasure/torture, and, unlike the other cenobites, both speak, to the extent that their sentences are formed of relay interjections, rather than a single speaker orienting single sentences and thus expressing singular, volitional and dividuated meanings. Against unified monotheism – ‘The Word’ – here, speech, like the gender of these demons and the libidinal intensities they offer and enforce, beyond sado-masochism, ambiguously as suffering and seduction, is both a proliferation

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of the singular and a contraction of the multiple into one force (puissance, not pouvoir). Pinhead and Female cenobite use each other's mouth to speak, literally, they speak in tongues.

'But always' writes Deleuze 'a molecular sexuality bubbles away beneath the surfaces of the integrated sexes.' (1999, 76) What is this 'sex'? It is gendered flesh and desire becoming-fold, intensification and dissipation, unfolding and refolding of two. It is also proliferation of the one, both body and desire. These are not demons who tempt us as Jesus or Saint Anthony or the devolved beast away from one polarity toward another, but demons who fold their flesh outward toward their victims and inward in onanistic expressions of pleasurable suffering. Onanism here does not refer to a directed solitary act but the act of doubling within the self to form multiple folds: Pinhead, tormenter and seducer without aim (threat), ambition or goal, and Female Cenobite, bubbling blood in her throat-vulva while promising pleasure outward in the inflected ecstasy of her own self-enjoyment. Promise, seduction and fear are plateaus of longing compelled by their lack of orientation, the absence of an object, aim or preformed action potentiality of desire (or fear, yet both), and an instability which contracts the memory of pleasure with the trepidation of expectation into a burst of non-satisfaction that nonetheless expels the self into a baroque configuration of and as desire. These are harbingers of the exquisite spectacle of Hell which Orpheus could not resist. Pinhead and Female Cenobite are spectacular; like the speculum, the image of their flesh and particularly their heads, may compel the viewer to seek logic through the phallic gaze. As Orpheus was compelled by Eurydice's beauty only if he could bring it into the light, compulsion to seek origin for these demons could explain their nature and thus the possibility of what they might do. Unlike Anna's lover, the larval pleasures the Cenobites offer are set up as frightening. Like the speculum, however, the gaze fails to show us the pure form of the spatial and temporal multiple, which can never be 'seen' nor known. In its attempt to reveal the female interior, the speculum ignores the vulva, and within its investigative frame sees nothing because it has no pre-signified something to see.

The Cenobite's heads are their most compelling plateaus of intensity. The face as a biunivocalizing mechanism of self also creates alterity, through which power and subjectivity are manufactured. To no longer be able to read a face makes it difficult to see a face. It is signification in shadow, the subject as glimpse and possibility, unstable and destabilizing of self. Each confounded glance creates an unfold and refold. The Cenobite face is a spectacle in darkness; Pinhead's face a black sun whose meaning is emergent and submerging as is his pleasure and pain simultaneously. This Orphean cinesexual event is 'the gaze that at the wavering threshold of death goes in search of the submerged presence and tries to bring its image back to the light of day, but only secures the nothingness in which the poem can subsequently appear' (Foucault 1997b, 44). The former-face, broken and ruptured yet elegantly geometric flesh, offers not narrative but poem, a traditionally female semiotic expression. Female cenobite demands 'look' at her vulva-throat, and there is nothing to see except the gurgling of her own pleasure within this voluminous aperture. Pinhead

seethes with the multiple penetrations of a thousand nails, inverted phalluses lost to their significance through their proliferation and their pointing toward rather than away from their bearer, like the gaze which points to the screen only to have the image deflect within the aperture of the pupil and the sweet suffering baroque images afford. Face-flesh configured through precise peeling, pinning and piercing faces invites us to trace trajectories which pleat, conceal and emerge as an explicitly baroque structure. While Deleuze, in his cinema books, calls the face a landscape, the Cenobite faces exploit the windows and holes which the baroque create in our souls. We cannot contemplate these faces as singular expressions. Folds of flesh become fabric, the inside of the body is the outside of the self.

'The object of the search is no longer God or truth, but the search itself' (Lyotard 1993, 45) Unlike other demonic pacts, opening the Lament configuration is the search without the sought. Those who open the box do not really know what they will get or what will happen. In *Hellbound* we are also introduced to Leviathan, the 'god' of Hell, a titanic reconfiguration of the Lament Configuration suspended over a labyrinth. Traditionally, of course, only the female (Ariadne) and the bestial (the hybrid Minotaur) are able to navigate the folds of labyrinths. The box itself is defined not by what it is, but the unpredictability of what it will do. It is a puzzle box, one which is not 'solved' but opened. Both the box itself and its enormous Leviathan counterpart twist and reorient their folds and with each fold shifts occur in the planes of consistency in the world, the flesh and desire. Solving the puzzle opens a world where nothing can be solved and there are no more questions. Opening the box is an 'opening up' not to a pre-established contract. Although 'the masochist's aim is to escape from the consequences of the transgression of the father' (Deleuze 1994a, 106), like sadism, its direct address to transgression of a Law is a reactive rather than active becoming. Nonetheless it is difficult not to laugh when the subject who seeks to transgress ends up with this Hell and these demons.

Sadism and masochism orient around established narratives in a similar way to dominant sexual narratives – the masochist awaits and the sadist teeters on the brink of action. Demonic pacts are less contracts than expectations of becoming-larval. Faustus's search for gods of satisfaction, money, women and Orpheus's desire for an illuminated Eurydice seek the way out of the labyrinth, raising rather than entering Hell. Pinhead says; 'We'll tear your soul apart'. Tearing the monad apart opens the windows which allow the world's forces in. Tearing apart does not mean annihilating but molecular dissipation and Pinhead's expression it is 'we' not 'he' disputes his perception as a god of pain, reminding us the cenobites, like all pact-pack becomings, are multiple as collective and molecular. Through our pack-pact with these demons we become part of the legion, when they tear our souls apart we become part of their soul, a new monad is formed. Pinhead and Female Cenobite are torturers who are simultaneously tortured by their own flesh. Their pleasure is multiple through involutions not bifurcation, but unique to each. Pinhead and Female's flesh confounds the impossibility of the binarised being copresent without temporal

privilege. They are each, both, and both at once. Pinhead the torturer stands beside and within Pinhead the sufferer.

Pinhead's and Female Cenobite's lack of aggression in their acts of torment adds to their seduction: willful violence without the metonymic logical orientation of aggression, suffering without despair, promise without signified object or event, sexual plethora without satisfaction. 'As we are about to take the final step, we are beside ourselves with desire, impotent, in the clutch of a force that demands our disintegration.' (Bataille 1990, 141) Bataille's beside is the self as fold, within and without, where impotence is not the failure of pleasure but the disintegration of phallic sexuality toward baroque desire. The request of the viewer toward the cenobites in their frightening beauty, 'use me cinesexually' involves an active passivity, the power to powerlessness which necessitates a becoming-larval because 'use me' is not 'for' or 'as' or 'this way or that'. The heady whiff of masochism they elicit in their victims is matched by their affectuation of the spectator but we are victims of the unthinkable in their pure potentiality and their simultaneously baroque visual presence. That their image is compellingly beautiful is undeniable. They are Medusas. Passivity is action through the passive, the overwhelming desire of the taken, rather than the taker, who promises without promising what, we and the characters as victims can only tremble in waiting for desire and pleasure as unthought which will open and fold the self toward infinity. Bataille emphasizes of all eroticism, from the mystical to the sensual, the sacrifice of self that nonetheless does not offer salvation from solitude, because it is the effulgent awareness of the infinity of self as more than one but always painfully less than self (solitude is not the self alone but the self split into the awareness of one's own solitude) – the onanistic aspect of cinemasochism perhaps. 'When all is said and done, that which in eroticism bears us to the pinnacles of intensity also lays the curse of solitude on us at the same time.' (Bataille 2001, 262) Both the poignancy and liberation of the ecstasy of self are reliant on the acknowledgement of the fallacy of integration. These feelings are not unfamiliar to those open to libidinal folding, the undulating intensities of unfolding and refolding the spectator in solitude.

Hellraiser's sequel *Hellbound* is world become baroque, the characters drawn into labyrinthine Hell. When Pinhead is reintroduced to Kirsty (Ashley Laurence), the girl who escaped him in *Hellraiser* he says to her 'feel free, explore, we have eternity to know your flesh.' Her submission is freedom, her search for something eternal exploration and perception annexed to infinity, clearly flagging knowledge (and pleasure) as a refolding that ceaselessly creates new plateaus to 'know' and transform. The return to Hell is a result of neurologist Dr Philip Channard's (Kenneth Cranham) compulsion to find and thus know Hell. What he finds, however, is that the answer is best sacrificed to the infinity of unthought, taking his self outside the world and within the flesh, into the labyrinth. When he finally 'knows' the way to Hell he is faced with a perverse iron maiden into which he is pushed, there punctured, sutured, his body fluids transfused and his mouth penetrated by a nipple /orchid/vulva-like projection, both pointed and splayed. In *Hellraiser* when Pinhead closes the box, he seduces rather than forces it shut. His fingers move in a motion more appropriate to

clitoral stimulation/seduction than phallic force akin to the knife, gun, or even the pointed finger. His is a seduction of fingers, inherently more than one, which use passivity and restraint to act upon and are the primary site of the double touch, they touch and through touch receive tactition, a double folding of the touched and toucher, a key idea in Merleau-Ponty. The tempting finger is the reflexive finger that points toward the self, rather than the phallic finger that penetrates the other. Pinhead's weapons similarly are neither knife nor saw, neither hook nor surgical implement, always functioning as more than we could predict – their action potential not limited because their form is not apprehensible. Potentiality expresses spectacularly when Channard emerges as messiah whose palms break open with stigmata, bringing forth tentacles which open and close to reveal polyphony of infernal ephemera: blades, eyeballs from which pins extrude, fingers and even a flower in a bizarre attempt to seduce the young innocent Tiffany (Imogen Boorman). He expresses a theoretically phallic seduction (a finger emerges from the tentacle) alongside a flower, traditionally symbolic of femininity, confusing his function as seducer thus affirming this desire he offers is no traditional desire. Indeed it is he who is penetrated by a giant penis, the tip of which expresses a neurology drill that revolves within his brain. Each whirl of the drill causes dyslalia, as Channard's neurological words turn to ecstatic pained moans, and language moves from words to flesh, epistemological meaning to libidinal utterance, the animal howl of the demon. The sheath of the penis clutches Channard's skull with tentacles, dissipating rather than affirming its form. Tentacles are a popular theme in baroque arts. Anna's lover in *Possession* has tentacles, as do Borroughs' creatures in *Naked Lunch* as filmed by Cronenberg (Canada, 1991). Most impressively is the work of H.P. Lovecraft, where the tentacles of Cthulhu are intimately associated with non-Euclidean angles. Lovecraft is mentioned briefly in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This enormous penis, which explicitly looks like a penis (there is no deflected or metaphoric representation here) is a penis becoming-vulvic, not the phallus. It offers representation (recognizable image) but not through automatic signification (phallus) or exchanged signification.

Female Cenobite's (in *Hellbound* played by Barbie Wilde) and Pinhead's deaths in *Hellbound* are ambiguously visceral. Channard expels one of his stigmata tentacles into the wound in Female Cenobite's throat, from which blood spurts, making unclear from where this effluence is emitting, her wound or his tentacle. Because the blood spurts outward it insinuates her pained-pleasure, a kind of masochistic ejaculate, yet the dialectic of penetration is resonant with traditional structures and it becomes difficult to navigate this scene beyond the apparent equation of 'traditional' penetration equaling death, where her penetration transforms the Female Cenobite back into a 'normal' woman, replete with make up and blonde hair. This vulvic-wound was formerly the site of a seething, bubbling, amorphous language of suffering desire and it is silenced through penetration, however this reterritorialization is not altogether straightforward due to the reticulated tentacle which itself opens up. Pinhead's death is similarly ambiguous. Channard creates for Pinhead a wound in his throat by slashing his neck. This is all it takes for Pinhead to die. Pinhead is reterritorialized as a

normal man immediately preceding his death, where the feminizing open slash signifier contradicts the newly majoritarian man where it would have refolded the former monster. Pinhead as man cannot fold and so he breaks, however this simple description cannot account for the cinesexual trajectories this scene seduces. For the cinesexual this scene (cut from many prints of the film) offers the fascination of the contradiction of form and trajectory, the majoritarian split open at a highly fetishistic site (as the Female's throat has been seducing us throughout the films). The female's gory abyss spurts out, the head of pointed pins opens up and we are drawn in.

These moments privilege the third dimension of the image projected from and in excess of the limits of the frame, recalling Caravaggio's baroque depth perspective. Pinhead's 'death' is not one of being victim, but of the baroque body, or the majoritarian refolded into another configuration to continue his foldings, while also failing any narrative or redemptive satisfaction for the viewer. The scene which, in being painfully extended, takes signification (a cut throat) into fascination (keep looking, drown in the image). A more traditional compulsion to sympathy or catharsis in the demon's punishment is reterritorialized by the objectile of this gaping throat wound. Pity comes not from the death or the pain but the lamentation that being demon was better as the same wounds affectuated he and we differently, as if their appearance without cause emphasized their larval aspects, while this wound, with a cause and an end, is foreclosed. Thus what does the image of a wound do, on the same body, as different objectile? The scene expresses the aestheticised and materially affective beauty of the majoritarian refolded, ending with Pinhead falling to his submission, open now to Channard's new configuration of pleasure. (To say Pinhead 'dies' ignores his return minutes later in the torture pillar which emerges at the film's final scene). Channard offers the Cenobites a continuation of their folding on a new trajectory, not damming their intensities but redirecting them. Our pleasure at Pinhead's tragic yet compelling submission to them is not an exchange but a redistribution of the ambiguous submissive masochistic relations invoked in the cinesexual relation with this enigmatic figure. Pinhead's death is as fascinating to watch as his baroque configured flesh when he was 'alive'. Pinhead and Female cenobite alter the plane of consistency through an opening out and splitting within, Channard through the formation of multiple trajectories, which, although not entirely different to his fellow cenobites, shows another form of baroque folding.

Demon lovers

Demonic pacts may offer forms of becoming-woman as 'day and night are mingled in our gaze.' (Irigaray 1985a, 217) The fold reflects a larval sexuality – what Lyotard and Irigaray would call *jouissance*, an undifferentiated multiplicity of desire, the structure of the fold, like the vulva, an unfoldings and refoldings. Whether with an intensity or a form, cinemasochism involves a becoming. Becomings are, according to Deleuze and Guattari, necessary

toward masochistic intensity: ‘becoming animal leads to masochism, not the other way around.’ (1987, 2) Becoming is the entering into a participation with specific molecular intensities of another element. Becoming is neither an imitation where we act ‘like’, nor the creation of a new Oedipal or capital family where we belong within a hierarchical structure of a different genealogy. Becoming selects certain specificities and intensities of a thing and dissipates those intensities within our own molecularities to redistribute our selves. We select a term and by opening to affectuations of forces of that term become a hybrid anomaly, a unique mingling. Relations with any entity involve axes of latitude – speed and slowness, and longitude – affect, power and potentiality (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 20). Slowness describes passivity toward synthesis, receptivity to affectivity, speed the velocity which powers compel. The space between the latitude and longitude lines of each term is the stretch point of the fold, what Deleuze in *The Fold* called harmony without melody.

Becoming-woman is the first example Deleuze and Guattari offer, but this is not transvesticism, which can be taken on and off. Woman as minoritarian is defined by lack and failure, so an element of woman – gesture, fluid libidinality – taken in as part of the self will necessarily alter the self. Becoming-girl enhances this germinality because the girl is the larval woman. Becoming-animal involves the exchange of language for the utterance, a different, visceral and corporeal form of expression. Animal intensities all create a body experienced irrevocably differently. Deleuze and Guattari point out the difference between the Oedipal dog – the substitute child forced into a becoming-human by acting like a simple, childish version of mummy and daddy, and the wolf. Starving, barking and walking on all fours do not make us a wolf but it mingles wolf-intensities with our own and alters both until we are anomalous and ambiguous. We now belong to two kingdoms, two families, two modes of flesh and desire but not entirely to either. We reside on and are the borderline. As hybrids we no longer have a family. The term we select is thing as baroque multi-dimensionality, an entity taken as a verb rather than a noun, so we do not become *a* woman or wolf but a womaning or a wolfing depending on the planes with which we fold.

Becoming is not a project, it cannot be completed because there is no destination, only the formation and proliferation of new trajectories, and as we alter the territories we occupy and traverse also transform. Becoming-music is gesture without gesturing form, pure harmony with no possibility of melody, syntax, signification or preformed pattern – ‘no structural or symbolic correspondence.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 301) Becoming-imperceptible describes not annihilation, invisibility or absence of affectivity but a distributive self which is thought as unthought, visible as invisible and speaks silently – the imperceptible perceived. The less defined a term within majoritarian culture the more larval the becoming and thus the more open to unique and unpredictable folding and unfoldings the becoming. When Deleuze and Guattari ask ‘what is a girl [presumably a larval woman]’ they immediately qualify their statement by asking ‘what is a group of girls?’ (1987, 271)

Like Serres, Irigaray sees all perception as touch because all perception encounters as a threshold between two rather than observation and ontological

apprehension. Male genitalia can be encountered or touched as feminine if it includes all aspects of that genitalia and body, all zones as they shift, fold and refold with the flesh of the other, including our own flesh as other and the flesh of the other as same, the becoming-vulva of the phallus. Orpheus encounters Eurydice in the dark, but like feminine gender and pleasure morphology the problem is not that he cannot see but that he cannot touch through sight. The light between the two illuminates one only through the vision of the other. Orpheus must close the gap between himself and Eurydice to illuminate her in darkness – their gazes, as day and night, mingled. Eurydice recedes into the Underworld because she is a demon. She tempts Orpheus toward baroque perception. He must refold his gaze, listen to her silence and seeing her must see himself differently, which also allows her to see him. Is seeing in the dark the feminine gaze? Seeing in the dark involves a becoming-woman. Becoming-woman also necessitates becoming-collective: ‘there is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities’. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 275) Deleuze and Guattari call this a *microfemininity*, as Irigaray’s two lips, infinitely and indefinitely reduced, refined, expanded and proliferative.

The space where the couple stand is baroque borderland of the Under and Overworld, where world fold, existing simultaneously. Orpheus must occupy the borderland. When we remain minoritarian the becoming-term is a dissonant hallucination within the Overworld. When we stand at the mouth of the Underworld our perception shifts from hallucination – aberrant form in a normal world, to delirium – world as hallucination. To see, Orpheus must make a pact with the Underworld-dwelling Eurydice. He must make a pact with the demon.

Becoming implies:

An initial relation of alliance with a demon... There is an entire politics of becoming-animal, as well as a politics of sorcery, which is elaborated in assemblages that are neither those of the family nor of religion nor of the State. Instead they express minoritarian groups, or groups that are oppressed, prohibited, in revolt or always on the fringe of recognized institutions, groups all the more secret for being extrinsic, in other words, anomic. If becoming-animal takes the form of a Temptation, and of monsters aroused in the imagination by the demon, it is because it is accompanied, at its origin as in its undertaking, by a rupture within the central institutions that have established themselves or seek to become established (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 247).

Like a demon the feminine must also be evoked. It will not come unless it is desired and it cannot materialize unless in the enfleshed soul of the sorcerer. The female sorcerer is, of course, a witch. ‘Witchcraft, then, is found in the non-structure’ (Douglas 1996, 102). *Suspiria* is populated with two kinds of women, witches and little girls, both preliminary becoming terms. The feminine is the temptation, but its evocation is the demon with which the unholy alliance is formed and becoming-woman facilitated. Many demons in a variety of literature and lore are either feminine or female-like. The sorcerer’s becoming

includes four elements: initial relation of alliance, the function of the demon as borderline, the becoming implies second alliance with another human group and the new borderline guides and redistributes the contagion within the pack (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 247).

Like the cenobites many cinematic demonic forms follow the basic tenets of the feminine as somehow gender ambiguous, as assemblage or fold, as both tempting and dangerous. Similarly all demons are animals and as all becomings lead to masochism all becomings ally with alternative trajectories of desire. Demonic monsters are perverts, women are animals and perverts, animals are demons and women and so forth. We can see here that all becomings are always more than one and the demon, animal and woman have long intersected in their minoritarianism. Each term has its own specificities and unique relations of molecular harmony. Deleuze and Guattari begin their exploration of demonic pact-making as simultaneously pack-making – their four initial suggestions for evocation involve (were)wolves, vampires, demons and Lovecraftian Elder-Gods and Ancient-Ones. Beasts return in situations of larval desire, as hybrid not archetypal or symbolic. Werewolves and vampires recruit through contagion, but unlike victims of, for example zombie or plague contagion we sorcerers are the willing, if not demanding, victim of the demon we evoke. Becoming-animal intersect the human as hybrid with wolves, perverse forms of Oedipal dogs because they are often hybrids of family members and members of the wolf family. Animals of vampirism include bats, rats, wolves and pure-molecularity as fog. *Nosferatu's* plague of rats is pack, the burnished red eyes, without pupils, of Dracula (Christopher Lee) reincarnated in *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (Peter Sasdy 1970) are singular rat intensity. Lovecraft's hybrids are of fish, insect, squid, foaming bubbling viscous matter and angles of collective (un)consciousness, resulting in a masochistic reeling of self, an experience of fear Deleuze and Guattari cite of Randolph Carter as 'worse than that of annihilation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 240). For Carter, the protagonist of *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, proliferation and fractal folding multiplication is worse than disappearing but eventually he realizes the zenith of being is in non-being as collective being, more and less than one. 'There were Carters in settings belonging to every known and suspected age...Carters of forms both human and non-human, vertebrate and invertebrate, conscious and mindless, animal and vegetable. And more there were Carters having nothing in common with earthly life...' (Lovecraft 1999, 526) Lovecraft's demons fold us with simultaneously existing outer-space and past-future folds, Carter looking down to see 'that his body was like those of the others – rugose, partly squamous, and curiously articulated in a fashion mainly insect-like, [a favourite becoming form, as Deleuze and Guattari's swarms of bees] yet not without a vaguely caricaturish resemblance to the human outline.' (Lovecraft 1999, 538)

Inter-kingdom becomings sacrifice through grasping the flesh-fur of the werewolf, folding in the wings-cloak-miasmatic-hypnotic of the vampire, occupying the multi-dimensional space-time, mountain-subterranean, land-marine borderland's of Dagon, Cthulhu, Shub-Niggurath and Nyarlathotep. After Spinoza sacrifice leads to hybrid production between two, not annihilation

of either. Pazuzu, the possessing demon of *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin 1973) infects the female child because both already occupy a borderline. Regan's (Linda Blair) becomings multiply her speech to many enunciative voices and make her low as a cow. The demons of *Evil Dead* (Sam Raimi 1983) seduce reflexively. Their desire is not a power to kill but the temptation to 'join us'. Films of Lovecraft's work have been on the whole uninspiring, not as films in themselves but in managing to evoke Lovecraft's world effectively and affectively. *The Exorcist's* demon Pazuzu is a Sumerian demon, and most of Lovecraft's demons are taken from or inspired by the Sumerian pantheon. His apocryphal grimoire *The Necronomicon* lends its name to the book used in *Evil Dead* to both evoke and banish the demons. Roger Corman's *Haunted Palace* (1963), unlike many monster films, never reveals the monster in the tunnel, emphasizing the difficulty in representing Lovecraft's monsters as sensed but never perceived, teratological Eurydices. The self as imperceptible, Carter's great horror revelation, affects the reader of Lovecraft but only through the project of baroque spectatorship can this be felt cinematically. To represent it is an anathema. Stuart Gordon played with Lovecraft's fragment 'stories', inserting narratives in *Re-Animator* (1985), *Dagon* (2001) and *From Beyond* (1986). Lovecraft's story *From Beyond* emerges through neuroanatomy and neuropsychology, touching explicitly on a kind of schizoanalytic perception. Doctors Crawford Tillinghast (Jeffrey Combs) and Edward Pretorius (Ted Sorel) build an electro-magnetic resonator which allows humans to encounter alternate planes of perception, evincing all perception as immanent multiple planes. Proximity to the resonator makes the pineal gland protrude from the forehead, a third eye organ for the sixth (more correctly *n*) sense(s). *From Beyond* focuses on the becoming-molecular of flesh and (and as) desire. The sixth sense here is, rather than a sense which allows more access to this world, creates the perception of the imperceptible and thus the world is palimpsest and perception multiplied within space but not time. The pineal gland is isolated as the organ of perception which leads to a becoming body-without-organs gelatinous non-differentiated consistency which other entities come through rather than stand with or against. The body is a vessel for imperceptible intensities. Doctor Katherine McMichaels (Barbara Crampton) claims there is a correlation between schizophrenia and an enlarged pineal gland, and thus schizophrenics belong to this immanent multiple palimpsest plane of perception. She also posits pineal stimulation as inextricable from sexual stimulation, whereby all organs collapse the body into a seething schizo-desiring mass. It is at this point, when McMichaels announces Tillinghast is not crazy, all characters become schizophrenic. Other examples have tended to focus on the monsters and their inevitable revelation toward the end of the narratives. The most effective moment in the enigmatic short silent film *The Call of Cthulhu* (Andrew Leman 2005) is not the emergence of the god but a moment where Officer Cassidy (Darryl Ball) falls backwards into a forward oriented angle, an accident of impossible physics. Perhaps the difficulty of filming these tales is because Lovecraft's work hurls us eventually toward becoming-non-Euclidian angle, becoming the act of the fold itself.

Examples of vampire, werewolf and occult demon/possession films are innumerable. Certain themes and paradigms underpin the genres. Desire is the most obvious, a seeming contradiction in that monsters are meant to be revolting and defined through their alterity to the human. As art makes us inhuman, so too does love with monsters. The residue of humanity and the particle nature of monstrosity assure this love is not a swap or a shift but a hybrid-creating desire. We do not become-monster after the bite, but micromonstrosity, teeming with monster particles which affect alterations in human particles, which affectuate changes in monster particles. Extending this micro-self hybridity our presence as part of the pack alters the macro-molecularity of the pack as being part of a pack alters us. Vampires and werewolves infect through bites, the non-specific sited masochistic kiss that exudes rather than consumes. Majoritarian mouths are gendered, a-gendered monstrous mouths pack with the vulvic-fold. How do we find these monsters enigmatic? Vampires range from the hideously ugly to the exquisitely beautiful (as these are infinitely subjective terms I will resist offering examples of each). Their seduction – to which we are willing victims – can incarnate through tenderness or threat. The lesbian vampire genre shows that even the specific pre-vampire sexuality of the vampire orients its predation. Always these elements are mingled. Through our infection, as we seek our vampire lovers we simultaneously seek victims so are, like the cenobites, victim and predator, masochist and cruel lover, consumer and consumed. We are the lone hunter and part of the undead community, pack monsters who predate in solitude. As werewolves similarly while our relation with our infector is brief, we are aware that as wolves we are no longer ourselves but part of a pack which haunts us, ‘the Wolf-Man fascinated by several [imperceptible] wolves watching him’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239). Within us teems the microwolfing. We belong both to an infernal collective and also the molecular collectivity within us. Internal hybrid proliferation drives our desire and volition and so the I is the we within that we do not know or understand and cannot control – a thousand tiny wolves or a wolfing. More important than the wolf bite or vampire kiss are the questions which arise after the oral conjugation. The vampire cloak that screens the victim in the arms of the vampire, the out of frame growling and howling we hear at the wolf attack, all raise questions which the off-screen visible invisible encourages – *what* are they doing?

Baroque perception is the invisible within the visible and so taking that which is difficult to visualize off-screen is not what is meant by this. As cinesexuals, when we desire the pact and the pack we desire the unrepresentable. We do not desire that vampire or this wolf, but the vampiring and the wolfing, the potentialities and their unknown effects. Our perception becomes larval; we imagine what happens as intensities through growls, sucks, sighs, fear, a musicality beyond actual ideas of activities occurring behind the cloak or out of shot. As hybrids are not able to reproduce, neither are their desires or pleasures consistent between members of the pack. Deleuze and Guattari claim ‘we know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition of other affects’ (1987, 257). Each hybrid body as a specificity emphasizes this not-knowing,

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which is the unthought in the pleasure of the pact. Just as it is impossible to literally represent desire as flow, representations of potentiality – larval desire – can only come after the fact, unique to each specific hybrid and always as fractal perspectival fold configuration. Thus we neither identify with the on-screen victim's horrors and pleasures nor seek the monster. The intensities of the larval desires the acts on screen encourage, the holes – or bite-marks – in our souls flow through us and create new folds of the unthought which is our desire. In the end all desire with monsters takes us to death beyond annihilation toward a becoming-woman – like Irigaray's two lips morphology, always too much and never enough. Deleuze and Guattari claim that certain bodies destroy others or come together to compose more powerful bodies (1987, 257). All bodies fold into compositions and the ethical turn toward becomings relies on openness to acknowledging and negotiating passive synthesis toward becoming-otherwise. Neither body is destroyed and composition does not necessitate more, just different, power of continued affectuation. Whether we become vampire or (were)wolf we always end up as Randolph Carter.

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Chapter 6

Zombies without Organs

This chapter will explore the cinematic events of corroded, disheveled monstrous bodies, such as zombies and skull-heads. It will focus on the ways in which gory zombie movies reorganize the human body as singular and surface expression of subjectivity toward proliferative plane of expression. These movies are pure spectacles of flesh dislodging through the pleasure of gore. The term 'zombie' guarantees that any dismantling cannot lead to death and must lead to something else post-death. Viewing zombies does not lead to fear of death but its own 'something else'. What are the pleasures of watching zombies with disintegrating flesh disintegrating the flesh of others, challenging basic binaries of inside/outside, pleasure/disgust, alive/dead, libidinal/alimentary and male/female? To take delight in such images suggests there is a desire to configure the internal and clandestine plateaus of the human body as visually available and useful in perverse, but not necessarily offensive or unethical ways. When these bodies become baroque can we speak of them as bodies anymore? If a body is both alive and dead is it human? And if the body is no longer limited to human possibilities of being a living body what desire can it evoke as body-object-spectacle-image-affect?

Zombies are Bodies without Organs divested of their organization. Cinesexual desire for gory zombie films celebrate the perversion of bodies as directly impacting on the perversion of traditional definitions of cinematic pleasure which the zombie film affords. Watching these films can make us sick both physiologically and psychological 'sicks', and when we are sick we feel the absolute alterity of our body to our sense of volition and willful power over subjectivity. When the body and self are merged together as force all we become is self as alterity. We are the same body but suddenly realize that body is never the same as itself. Becoming need not be an interkingdom project, but can be a becoming the foreignness and excesses of the everyday flesh. What interkingdom can we find within our own planes of the body? The pleasure of the internal made external and the specificity of the joy of excess seen in gore are, far from being the threshold of offence, the moment where subjectivity is available beyond the reified positions culture accepts.

Kristeva says of the corpse, 'without make-up or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live' (1982, 3). But for most people the opposite is more likely. How can we thrust aside corpses and viscera to repress reality when most of us will never actually encounter these? Covertly gore films show us what we will not, indeed cannot see but nonetheless accept as ourselves. 'Body tropes thus provided critical clues for how insight might be gained into the interior of any concealed territory.' (Stafford 1991,

17) Our capacity to see them as us is tentative, thus they are the too-visible but unseeable we. ‘These films literalize obscenity. In their insistence on... the dismemberment of the human body, their lurid display of extruded viscera, they deliberately and directly present something to the eye that should not be seen, that *cannot* be seen in actuality.’ (Shaviro 1993, 100) Zombie dismemberment is the dismemberment of the body we have no memory of. We do not know how to see it. Refusal to see these bodies through being offended or too disgusted sees them as Orpheus sees Eurydice. Seeing these bodies as baroque sees them in the dark, as and at the very threshold from whence in the ‘story’ they come. In addition, we see with more than our eye, seeing with our viscera as our eye squints in delicious aversion, becoming spectatorial Bodies without Organs. There is a delirium in the excesses of the flesh these films express, and their popularity, whether as art or trash attests to a reconfigured form of cinematic pleasure. The risks of other forms of cinematic violence – the reaffirmation of misogyny or racial stereotyping – seem irrelevant or absent in these films. Like their re-presentation of the flesh as irreversibly altered, they present a world where the re-presentation of stereotyped gendered power relations seems a distraction or redundant, specifically because any challenge to the legible flesh is essentially a challenge to gender, sexuality, race and so on, because can we really ask what gender a spleen, intestine or corroded skin are?

Two films in particular, both by Lucio Fulci, will form the main axes of this chapter. Fulci’s two ‘Gates of Hell’ films, *City of the Living Dead* (aka ‘Gates of Hell’ 1980) and *The Beyond* (1981) have been widely criticized for narratives maligned from rudimentary to incoherent. Far from describing ‘gothic’ worlds suggested in other discussions of these films, Fulci’s two films are baroque. Schneider (2003) and Grant (2003) both discuss *The Beyond* in reference to its ‘gothic’ expression. However both chapters entirely avoid discussions of bodies, referring to the space and place of the film rather than the flesh which inhabits it. It seems troubling that in order to give these gore films academic value, their ‘lower’ aspects seem to be repressed in favour of placing them within the more respectable horror genealogy. However they are called the ‘real estate’ trilogy and so, like *Suspiria* and *Hellraiser* territory more than populating forms create becomings. Indeed it must be the territory which alters because infection is always non-reproduction. The only commonality is the territory. While gothic refers to alienation found in a space, relevant to Fulci’s films as both are nomenclatured within a relatively tight environment, it entirely ignores the aspect of Fulci’s films which defines them away from generic horror toward the pure gore which has been the very reason for their being cut, banned and described as offensive.

City is a Lovecraftian tale of parish priest Father William Thomas (Fabrizio Jovine), who, by hanging himself, opens a gateway of Hell. After his death he reappears as an apparition and kills various town people in bizarre ways – even his basilisk gaze causes death – upon which they in turn return as zombies with similar profane drives. Interrogating this phenomenon are Mary Woodhouse (Catriona McColl) and Peter Bell (Christopher George), but far from resolving the problem the film ends ambiguously, suggesting truncating this ‘infection’ is

impossible. *The Beyond* is the story of Liza Merrill's (McColl again) inheritance of a hotel where an alchemist has been crucified in the bowels of the building sixty years previously. When his body is discovered one of the gates of Hell is opened and a series of gory corporeal transformations through zombification occur. He is the actual sorcerer of Deleuze and Guattari who launches the becomings of others, our cinesexual selves included. He attempted to make a pact, not with the demon, but with the beyond. Liza seeks reasons to the incomprehensible events from the blind Emily (Cinzia Monreale). Later we discover Emily herself has escaped from Hell and is a zombie who is compelled to return. Her blindness is the sightedness of those who populate the beyond within the hotel. She is blind in context and spatial percept. The investigation of the events by Liza and John McCabe (David Warbeck) leads not to resolution but to the pair left wandering in the landscape of the beyond which is Hell. On the surface the two narratives are both weak and similar. However to subjugate the success of these films to traditional systems of narrative fails to acknowledge that these films, like many gore films, are films which rupture *outward* rather than along a narrative axis. What happens comes from the judgment of relevance to the spectator, what is produced is relevant and unique to all spectators. Essentially a series of dream-like, often lyrical and beautiful, baroquely gory scenarios, these moments are the purpose of the films rather than their apology. In gory films, the flesh which is both us and alien to us becomes a form of splanchnic gestural intensity, saturation and visual sonority.

The body as cinematic form and as all we are unravels from its enclosure of skin and signification to signify ourselves as asignified. It is perhaps an uncomfortable claim that this is the only point where we can 'identify' with on-screen forms, but for two reasons it is markedly different to character identification. These bodies are not really characters because their characterization is rudimentary and unimportant. They are also our bodies we do not know, so we are identifying with them through the alterity of ourselves, an identification that does not know itself, a conjoining with ruptured zombie bodies toward a becoming through our viscera-intensities which are both within and beyond ourselves. If we do not perceive the animal-woman imperceptible within us, then we similarly do not perceive the simplest elements which allow us to be – the various planes within our own bodies. But as they belong to the very institutions asignification seeks to destroy they are ripe sites for negotiation. Against the slaughter of the body Guattari sees performed through epistemic systems of knowledge, the slaughter of these bodies convokes becomings through the most natural of unnatural alliances, that of the bodies which are all we have and all we are.

Having (it in for) organs

What is invested in 'a' body, what does being 'a' body mean and do? Just as reading, meaning, seeing and knowing require pre-formations to negotiate apprehension, so too does the liminal event of the body. The body is liminal

because it is the site where the limits of self rupture into the world as purely signified. It is the great misfortune of the human that 'he' requires a body that functions in order to transcend it through trajectories of perception converted to knowledge. All meaning, reading, seeing and knowing collapse – science, religion, aesthetic epistemologies – when the body collapses. Medicine attempts to know in order to extend or fix the body, religion desperately conceives of life after the body can no longer be extended, capitalism makes the body production-consumption machine. These three systems convert the body from flesh via signification and knowledge systems away from its corporeality toward meaning. The body means humanity – life as subjectivity, borne of God, empirical knowledge and/or usefulness. Without a functioning body the human can not conceive existence, and all signifying systems of knowledge both refuse and run from this most simple, perhaps the only, truth.

The body exists as a strictly organized integration of signifiers. The body signifies beyond 'natural' expression as culturally inscribed through race, gender, age, even class, sanity and sexuality. Various plateaus of the flesh have been invested with an intensification of signification – the head as seat of reason, the face as site of self, the skin as racializing, the genitals as signifier of the primary division of the human into male and female. These signifiers strictly adhere to form which is recognizable and predictable function. Recognition of subjects in culture is oriented primarily around a body's capacity to be read as an integrated surface with clear signifiers. Challenges to this system are important in issues dealing with socio-political ethics in reference to gender, race and other paradigms of corporeal alterity. Deleuze and Guattari's challenge is that we make ourselves a Body without Organs, a body which reorganizes the flesh, refusing its emergence only through pre-ordained signifiers which make it legible. An organ is a thing which has a function, place, meaning and relation to subjectivity. It is organized into a single expression known as 'a' body or, more correctly, 'a' person. Legibility means existence, the body exists via its own language and without being inserted into this language it cannot exist.

The language of bodies occurs through signifiante and subjectification. Signification dismembers the body into meaningful parts and each part is apprehended as an immobile form with a reified function. Arguably the most important part is the skin, and more specifically the face, which will be discussed below. It is through signification we describe who we are and what we can do as a series of indexed elements of alterity from the white male majoritarian – I am this or that hence I can (or more correctly for minoritarians can't) do this or that. Enunciation of who we are shows an acceptance of the finite selection options we have. Each organ in the body is given a function and meaning, so too is each person based on their race, gender, sexuality, ability and so forth. Refusing to announce our gender, sexuality or race is an act of protest, met with suspicion and a tendency toward placing us in the default 'pervert' category – a de(signi)fiante. Each organ is a form with a function sited at an appropriate place in making up the complete body. Describing who we are also anchors where we are and vice versa. We are organs in the social corpus. This is striation. Society is strata and each organism occupies a place within the stratum options. These

strata directly connect signification to power. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that ‘the science of extracting constants and constant relations is always coupled with the political enterprise of imposing them on speakers and transmitting order-words’ (1987, 101). As Artaud emphasizes in the title of his radio play, ‘We must be Done with the Judgment of God’, which is to be done with strata, ‘since strata are judgments of God’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 58).

The textuality of bodies is primarily a visible language. Bodies come into perception and are defined through the way they are visually apprehended. In writing where the visual is absent the name can signify gender and race but it is in the spectacle of visual presence that we find bodies most obviously converted to subjects. The horror of gore films comes from the horror of viewing the illegible ‘human body’ – therefore the Body without Organs is inhuman. Simultaneously, everyday banal horror of corporeality comes from our own body’s incapacity to be controlled, complete and, for those bodies which occupy minority positions (in terms of power more than demographics), to fulfill the basic structure of what being a ‘human body’ means. Horror of the body is borne of a political inability to fulfill ‘the human’ body along majoritarian axes through a failure of skin (to be white) or genitals (to be male) or gesture (to be straight) or smoothness (to be sane, or young, or botoxed and thus wealthy) and other isomorphic indices. For all, the body’s uncontrollability and its possibilities are the force of desire that cannot be contained within such a tightly sewn shell. Desire to become otherwise takes, as its first step, the body itself as simultaneously self and other, acknowledging its irrefutable potential to be more than itself and certainly more than ‘that’ body. Flesh refers to the body which has lost its significations as a hermeneutic entity where markers of gender, race and thus sexuality can be read on the body as a text. If ‘the body’ is text then ‘flesh’ describes the body unfolded and refolded as a plane of immanence. I will, however, retain the word body to refer to the body – before becoming a Body without Organs and also when using the expression Body without Organs as it is the expression used by Deleuze and Guattari. As image spectacle these are simply bodies which *look* different, through visceral rather than biunivocal systems, and this difference is represented purely through the reorganization of the flesh that is invested with race and gender, thus reorganization of flesh necessitates a reorganization of issues of gender, race and other subject aspects. Zombie bodies have one difference; they are opened up, suppurating, gory and living nonetheless.

Subjectification and striation judge through selections from an index of differences. Differences are summarized as different to *us*, zombies are equally different to everyone and part of their own pack. Even when planes are shared – a female zombie and female spectator – it does not matter. That they are zombies is all that matters. The desire found in and for these bodies goes beyond any recognizable sexual structure, but there is an irresistible desire to watch nonetheless, for encountering objects without needing them to fill a lack or create a new object toward plethora; not an addition but a creation of new zones of pleasure. ‘The Body without Organs is ... the *plane of consistency* specific to desire (without desire defined as a process of production without reference

to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it up).’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 154) Zombies are bodies, nothing more and nothing less. They share nothing with each other except that they are dead, and nothing with us except they are emphatically embodied. Strata are gone as life is not present. Gore deterritorializes their entire organism. When the skin is opened the body is disorganized. No race, no gender, no sexuality, just baroque fleshy unique viscera-configuration.

Where many horror films express social anxieties about sexuality and femininity and others challenge this anxiety through strong female protagonists, zombie films frequently disregard gender for viscera, and the sexual for the splanchnic. What gender are zombies? Because the films discussed in this chapter do not refer to the genesis of the living dead in the Caribbean race is not an issue here as it is in many other zombie films. The focus on gore necessarily challenges reading gender through the flesh, because when the flesh is destroyed or reorganized these aspects become arbitrary. Are zombies gendered in the way most horror monsters are gendered? They are neuter, their non-specific undifferentiated desire shifts from the sexual to the alimentary, and in the case of the non-cannibal living dead, to the visceral. Like werewolves and vampires they infect through contagion primarily at the site of the mouth. In *The Beyond* and *City* zombies are not Afro-Caribbean or other racial minorities whose subjugation is defined by their alterity to the powerful, colonizing white. I am acutely aware of the dangers of privileging sexuality and gender over the crucial issue of race in zombie films, however two reasons prevent it. The most obvious is space for discussion but also just as these zombie films are not about misogynistic heterosexual violence they are neither about the fetishization of racial alterity and tradition. Indeed they are not about much at all beyond the flesh. We are less concerned with who these bodies are than with what they do and what happens to them. The why (‘why have the gates of Hell opened?’, ‘why are they doing that?’) is forsaken for the how – how do these images make us Bodies without Organs? Fulci’s zombies differ from the frozen, dammed up consumer zombies of the Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* (1979) who can no longer demarcate the consumption of people and items, loss of demarcation which reflects the capitalization of sexuality and desire in general. Fulci’s zombies have not become robotic consumers but excessive desiring machines. Fulci claimed of *The Beyond* he wanted ‘to make a completely Artaudian film out of an almost inexistent script’ (in Palmerini 1996, 60). We are reminded that,

It is true that Artaud wages a struggle against the organs, but at the same time what he is going after, what he has it in for, is the organism...[the BwO] are opposed to the organism, the organic organization of the organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 158).

The images in *The Beyond* and *City* declare war on organizations and organizing principles, of narrative, of causal movement and result and of the organized body. Death results not in Mars’ slaughter of desire and subjects but the Order of Venus. This is a war on war, against the Order of Mars which is the war

against creativity and thought as productive imagination, thus it belongs to the Venusian Order: ‘In other words [they resist] a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the Body without Organs, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 159) Fulci too has it in for the organization of the organs, (di)splaying flesh in a number of increasingly gruesome ways – spiders chew out eyeballs, crucifixions and acid baths abound, Emily’s throat and ear are ripped out by her guide dog in a more bloody homage to *Suspiria*. In *City* brains extrude from scalp, eyeballs bleed, heads have holes through their apex, intestines are spewed up and bodies are punctuated by clusters of writhing maggots.

The body in *The Beyond* and *City* is only successful in disarray; those bodies that remain organized end up wandering the empty wasteland of the beyond of the title. Fulci’s message is ‘destroy the organized flesh or be relegated to a land of pure nothingness’. Or perhaps nothingness is plethora, and as minoritarian bodies are relegated to nothing in majoritarian culture it may be an attractive option, nothing as everything.

Larval heads

Deleuze and Guattari state that if the head is part of the body, then the face irredeemably removes the head from potential becomings so it is subsumed by signification and subjectification (1987, 172). A face is a singular plane of expression of the most refined form. It speaks more loudly and most softly than all other signifying systems – louder than everything else because even if a life has everything else if it does not have a face it cannot be; softly because it is covert, there whether or not we wish to have and express a face and just as we are inapprehensible without it, thinking a ‘we’ or ‘me’ at all in majoritarian culture can only happen through a face. It is the first and most important point of human materiality which counts. And it involves some serious counting. Each encounter with the face involves selections and single coalescence. When we see a face we see a person. A face creates the possibility of a human; a human does not have a face. And we have been ‘had’ by the face – it has had, literally, to be brutal, fucked us up, and we have been had thinking the face is the site of empathy, humanity, dignity and all other transcendental pieties associated with Man who in turn has again being literal, fucked up the non or minoritarian-faced. Having a face guarantees a human, which usually guarantees inhumane behaviour. We must be able to see facial signifiers and decipher them appropriately. First we select from finite options and their possible failures: white or not-white, male or not-male, and so on. If new subjects are accepted into society, their face will be integrated into possible selection only to exclude more faces. Next they are unified into one face which is then deciphered in order to subjectify and signify the entire body as a person in the world. Deleuze and Guattari call this biunivocalization.

The face organizes the whole bodily organism – we need not see someone’s genitals, we read their gender in their face and thus their organs are assumed as assured. Christ, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the divine signifying principle of the facialization of the entire body and world. Christ’s white male pure face has become the base level zero of all perception ‘not a universal, but *facies totius universi*’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 176). The white wall ‘background’, the blank canvas upon which we can paint the human and things in the world, is punctuated by black holes where perception goes in and meaning comes out into the world. Black holes cannot exist in solitude; their relation to other black holes and their place on the white wall gives them meaning. All vagueness, all amorphous and liquid plateaus are frozen and signified through the facial system. The human and the screen come into being through perception via a facializing machine because they present things on a surface which gives grammar and thus meaning, narrative and causality to any visual plane. If the surface is wrong (not white – the grammar of the plane) or the punctums are unstable and confounding (not recognizable black holes – the nouns) then the face fails and thus being is impossible. Orpheus needs the light to illuminate Eurydice’s white wall and black holes, although because her holes are female they will fail enough to affirm his dominance as the (albeit pre-Christian) Christ face. We find Christ’s face in miracle emergences in pieces of toast, damp patches on walls. We can only see the world through facial systems. They do not occupy the world but enact a total occupation of the world. This is a key system by which cinema is made apprehensible. Form, function, what matters and does not, is found in facial scenery and asemiosis comes frequently from a divergence from facializing systems. Unnatural alliances and becomings are made through connections with non-faces.

We turn our faces from Christ toward the legion demon with which we enter into becomings. Christ facial systems have us, in the biblical sense of the word. Women are had by soft faces, emphasized in the blurred close-up, not quite there, more an idea than a person, changeable, and more horrifying, aging. Children are had by germinal faces which they will grow into. Animals do not have faces. We are more reluctant to eat something whose face is ‘like’ ours – fish are not as facialized as cows. Hybrids cannot have a face because their bodies, multiple in pack and within themselves, cannot be colonized by the totalizing facial machine. Things may have heads, but only the human has a face and only certain humans own the face by owning the systems which coalesce through facialization. Fragments fail to be univocal white walls, gestural, mobile and amorphous folds and tactical forms resist fulfilling or failing binary possibilities and organizing black holes. Movement without form, unnatural connections, multiple perspectives and disanchored elements all confound the facializing system; Demonic moments. However perhaps as personal compulsions or a more ubiquitous inclination we are drawn to faces in film. Deleuze points out certain films are constituted through the spectator ‘interesting oneself more in the “human problems” [via the face] more than the “problems of *mise-en-scène*”’ (1989, 154). In this instance faces are part of a *mise-en-scène* series of planes, rather than the *mise-en-scène* being structured as a facial machine.

Caligari's faces resemble their space more than the space resonating with their faces. When, in cinema, the face emerges through cinema rather than cinema emerging through a facial mechanism the face, as the screen, becomes a Body without Organs. However the face, now more of a head, still retains certain intensities of human to make our interest in them specific. Faces as part of cinematic plane landscape Bodies without Organs seduce enigmatic cinesexual moments. Deleuze goes on to emphasize the close-up face in cinema as gestural more than textual (1989, 192). This is indeed true of the cinesexual ecstasy found in the most simple inflection of part of a lip, the roll of an eye, and other kinetic face-without-organs trajectories, as well as intensities of state and emotion, where the face's condition of expression is what constitutes its becoming Body-without-Organs.

How do we perceive and enter into relations with this seeming anathema of the face without organs? Deleuze and Guattari call the defacialized head as part of a Body without Organs the probe-head. Probe-heads act rather than present, they produce affects. The faces of *Hellraiser's* cenobites and zombie faces are examples of probe-heads. Emily does not wear sunglasses as do many blind. Because they are no longer organized organs, and their blackness is too white, Emily's white eyes invite us 'no longer to look at or into the eyes but to swim through them' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 187). They remain black holes enough to remind us of their organization and function but her face as poem proliferates in the whiteness and protrusion of these compelling orbs, eyes as non-organs. The witch Asa's (Barbara Steele) head, riddled with holes from the spiked mask she has been made to wear in *Black Sunday* (Mario Bava 1960) can be apprehended as a horror story if perceived through a facial machine, or it can be a series of angles and circles of light, waves which enter into us through the truly astounding visage of her previously worm-riddled eyes emerging as suppurating eggs to one of the most effective face shots in cinema, staring directly into the camera with a piercing look of shock and threat. It is her face which pierces intensities into us, holes as demonic pact of multi-eyed-multi-pierced face, rather than the facial machine making signifying black holes of her facial wounds.

Certain films offer what I would call larval heads. Deleuze and Guattari elaborate the primitive face, through use of masks. 'Primitive' suggests yet to incarnate, not a return or a fetishization of non-Western cultures, although they relate it to totemic animal becomings and ritual. Masks conceal the face making the head part of the body. But masks should not be understood as covering a truth beneath. Masks are only useful if they are perceived *as* the head rather than over the face. Certain films belonging to the pseudo-genre I call skull-head films offer these larval heads. These faces are both primitive and probe. In *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* (Robert Feust 1971), *The Virgin of Nuremberg* (Antonio Margheriti 1963) and *Baron Blood* (Mario Bava 1972) actors 'wear' their real faces as masks. After a car accident Dr Phibes's (Vincent Price) face has been burned into a boney skull head. Robert Hunter, aka 'The Punisher' of *Virgin* (Mirko Valentin) has his face surgically removed after turning traitor to Nazis, revealing what Eric (Christopher Lee) calls 'the living skull'. The Baron

Blood, Baron Von Kleist (Joseph Cotton), after years of rotting is invoked in an occult ceremony where he wears a human mask (that is, Joseph Cotton's face) over his decomposed head. Accidentally both Von Kleist and Hunter, like the cenobites, haunt their own torture chambers, but while Kleist is sadistic, Hunter uses surgical fetishism and torture to create more perverse desiring possibilities rather than aggressive murder. Theirs are larval heads and larval pleasures.

Both Phibes, whose revenge comes from the tender love for his dead wife, and Hunter, whose intimate love for Eric is poignant, have heads which immediately jar with their refined seductive perversions. Kleist however uses his mask for evil rather than to 'pass'. The ophidian concept of the unmasked actor playing the masked character who wears elaborate make-up to appear unmasked is fascinating. Hunter is literally defacialized, Phibes and Kleist perceived dead, the perception of their living skull-heads present, like zombies, an ambivalent definition of 'life' and particularly because the facialized upright head is the grand symbol of 'the human' theirs are inhuman heads. While all three characters are male, they appear simultaneously anatomically generic, gender neutral, their heads both raw defleshed wounds and primitive canvasses upon which new faces are worn as masks. More importantly, when these head-intensity moments are experienced cinesexually, what their characters do and mean are not important. Their heads move from film-part to image-singularity. Hunter's unmasking exhibits the atrophied skull-head as capable of extraordinary, affective gesture and expression, through the entire body as part of the head and vice versa, even though the face itself cannot move (although the eyes can express without lid, a feature common in many films and devastating in its simplicity, showing the eyes without movement as their own Body without Organs). Hunter's shock at his own unmasking, which he cannot see, reminds us of Steele's shock-visage.

What is this face that is not mechanized? Berger points to the question of the gaze which gazes at its own non-faciality outward rather than in reflection, where through the breakdown of dialectic looking 'all has gone except the sense of the question of existence, of existence as a question' (1972, 11). The face-to-face is atom-to-atom, where 'the residual hardness of the atom is below the threshold of perception' (Serres 2000, 112). The residual hardness between our faces and theirs creates an interfolding of shared intensity connectivity which, because below perception, is experienced as no more than a rhythmic vibration. Both they and we have heads. Simultaneously the resistance of the skull-heads as still faces is below their capacity to retain their nature as human faces enough for us to not know what they will become next – the everything in nothing – the 'probe head'. Larval faces are questions. The demand for answers slaughters the head by making it a face. 'In pressing me with questions this way/until the absence/and nothingness/of the question/they pressed me/until the idea of body/and the idea of being a body/was suffocated in me.' (Artaud 1988, 567) These skull heads are the Dogon egg face, absolute zero of biunivocalization, neither one selection, nor failure, and their next folding requires a face-to-face perception outside of binary machines. The inflection of the sphere head resonates with the sphere eye so exploited in many horror images, experienced as volume rather than hole-meaning. The face is deterritorialized to become a

new territory of sticky orb mountains and suppurating valleys of shadow and light. The molar face becomes molecular head, and we are unsure if these larval faces are decomposing toward no-face or recomposing to probe-head (always both). The face-becoming-zombie corrodes, leaks and bleeds, cinesexually experienced through viscosity and texture rather than black-hole–white-wall machine text. As in baroque perception, these heads exist in that they are experienced through the image, but the nature of their existence confounds. Are they human – they have no face? Are they legible – they have no text? Are they causally structured, both in identity and physiology – they shouldn't live and the future of their face, thus their selves, is uncertain, able to dissipate into multiple directions producing unnatural participations. So the alliance with the larval head, the hardness of our heads encountering theirs, becomes unnatural because they are both head and not head. If the cenobite heads are baroque in their elaborate foldings and origami construction, these heads are pure potentialities. They are neither only bone or only flesh, but both and neither. And they wear as a mask the very plane which is conceived as the base level zero requirement of being a human life.

Primitive heads, Christ become art and Probe-heads are the three futures Deleuze and Guattari see as becomings of the face. The artists who found points of saturation and luminosity, movement, inflection and proliferation of intensities in painting Christ abstracted his face from system to rhizome of joy, desire, an asemiotic expressive plane. Beksinski does this to the face as human, creating revelations of human presence through concealment by fabric, ocean, wood, face as dynamic matter without back and foreground, without punctum, waves of movement, bands and folds which share intensities of texture, unnatural alliances of interkingdom territories, not mimicry of ubiquitous perceptive systems. Probe-heads explore and journey, operative devices (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 190–191) defined through the relations and alliances made, not by narrative quests but by bumping into things.

Zombies with too many organs

Fulci's zombies are as interesting in what they do as how they look. Using the spectacle of the opened flesh makes simultaneous the challenge to our ability to read the film and the flesh as a meaningful text. Zombie bodies and the images themselves are plateaus: 'regions of intensity constituted in such a way that they do not allow themselves to be interrupted by any external termination [dialectic relation, subjectification, signification], any more than they allow themselves to build toward a climax [film narrative, narratives of desire].' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 158) Baroque-ing the body questions the ability to conceive of 'a body' at all without attending to the constant differentiation and flux of the flesh. The body is a thousand plateaus, as is the event of cinesexuality.

The body without organs has replaced the organism and experimentation has replaced all interpretation, for which it no longer has any use. Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibres, their continuums and conjunctions of affect, the wind, fine

segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 162).

Zombies are Bodies without Organs through their desire and their visual incarnation. The gender of the victims is usually equally distributed. The films of Argento particularly have been maligned as misogynistic, even though they also have equally distributed victims and the majority of the killers are women. This elucidates a compulsion to conflate violence in general with women as victims and corporeal slaughter as belonging to the realm of the feminine.

The bodies in *City* and *The Beyond* are not born monstrous, a frequent device in order to vindicate gory deaths in monster movies. The zombies in *City* and *The Beyond* are formed of all subject types, male, female, old, young, but the only important element is that they are all physically ruptured, where the inside of flesh turns outward, where brains protrude, eyes become white egg-like orbs, faces melt and skin rots – continually transforming fibrous fluidity. Similarly these zombies don't eat people, they are driven by a desire to rupture the bodies of others which leads not to death but to transformation where the victim's flesh similarly refolds and reconfigures. Their desire is as experimental as their bodies. Each body, its interaction with other bodies and the transformation of those affected bodies are larval.

The acts of the zombies do not mirror sexual acts or transfer the sexual to the alimentary which is vaguely suggested in *Cannibal Apocalypse* (Antonio Margheriti 1980) where Charles (Giovanni Lombardo Radice) bites the breast of a girl whose boyfriend is sucking her nipple. These films all show interesting configurations of perversion renegotiating the way bodies and pleasure become disorganized and challenge traditional corporeal and sexual paradigms. Much of their interest occurs as a result of the proximity of the perverse sexuality in reference to or annexed around these norms, though, which means they still rely to an extent on reading the acts, albeit often in delirious and different ways. Acts of violence/desire in *City* and *The Beyond* are aimed at no one in particular and are perpetrated by zombies, who have no moral, sexual or pathological agenda, except perhaps the living are alive and the zombies are dead. Their zombie state ablates gender which thus ablates definable sexuality through object choice and act. These zombies clearly do want the bodies of others, so are not beyond desire, but what they want and what they do is unique to each zombie's becoming. Form does not drain them of organs but destratifies anatomical possibility and traditional organ function – instead of digestive function.

In *City* Father Thomas 'seduces' teenager Rose Kelvin's (Daniela Doria) to weep blood and vomit up her entrails simply by staring at her. He tears the back out of Tommy Fisher's (Italian horror director Michele Soavi) skull, squelching the brains between his fingers. Town idiot Bob (Giovanni Lombardo Radice in yet another masochistic role) has phantasms of a writhing, maggot infested baby corpse, and in spite of his death being at the hands of patriarch Mr. Ross (Venantino Venantini) rather than Father Thomas, by pneumatic drill through the head, he returns as a zombie nonetheless. The zombies' torment of their victims incarnate in similarly strange acts. *The Beyond's* deaths are more colourful

– crucifixion, melting by acid, a face is eaten by spiders, another wrenched off, a throat torn out and handyman Arthur (Ginapalo Saccarola) has his eyes squelched out and kills his wife in an equally gruesome way in a marital parody, showing interest in corporeal reconfiguration (the body, literally ‘beyond’) has replaced sexual patterns. It should be noted here that the violence in these films is entirely devoid of aggression, with the exception of Mr. Ross’s murder of Bob which is an act of this world enacted by people rather than of the beyond occurring between zombies.

Death creates self through larval flesh. Zombies desire bodies without organs and as their libidinal acts are ones of infection rather than copulation they create other bodies without organs, open up and fold back. The zombies do not resemble each other and their desiring acts – rather than acts born of (a) desire – are phyla, unique to each zombie and each act just as each act transforms the flesh of both bodies. The incoherent nature of the gory acts which they inflict on the living emphasizes that they do not consume so much as transform.

Act and affect of cinesexual experience are simultaneous in these films. Rose vomits her organs in a perverse libation to Father Thomas as we respond to the asignifying aspects of the act, the sound, the viscosity, the gagging; Thomas uses Tommy’s brains for digital pleasure; Arthur’s eyes are for pushing in, not looking out, yet this blinding does not stop Arthur ‘seeing’ his wife in order to elicit her zombification; skin is for melting not for integrating the hermeneutic body; similarly Emily’s white eyes, although signifying pathology through blindness, are a beautiful engaging and uncanny part of her aesthetic appeal. She sees without her eyes, not as Teiresias but as seeing the beyond within and simultaneous to the visible world. Her throat being torn out does not kill her but rather launches her on her journey back to the world beyond. More saliently these acts launch us toward the beyond. Tony’s brain is taken out of his head, disrupting his corporeal strata, and this brain becomes our organ, not of cerebral physiology but of affect as we are affiliated with its squelch, its vulgarity, its beauty, the pleasure of disgust, shock and confusion. We receive a brain as a fine segment between us and the image, and its reference to Tony is arbitrary as to what it means but affective for what it does to us. These acts of violence are acts of corporeal experimentation, not destruction. Deleuze and Guattari cite Burroughs: ‘Instead of a mouth and an anus to get out of order why not have one all purpose hole to eat *and* eliminate.’ (1987, 150) The zombie bodies are not replacement bodies but flesh unbound, an unfolding–refolding not destroying lives. Beyond the threat of death as absence of any form of life or self, the living dead in the films point to the living flesh which is dead to the laws and rules of corporeal signification – the life in death of the organized body, the unthought and the invisible always present in the flesh of all real life living bodies. Like Bernini’s Teresa they are dead to the world but alive within the new plateaus of flesh, desire and territories of the beyond-within. Teresa’s robes are body-flesh folded in and opened out, as the world of the beyond folds within and beyond the world the characters occupy. *The Beyond’s* final statement, inscribed on the screen, reads ‘and you will face the

sea of darkness, and all therein that may be explored'. Baroque waves in a dark sea replace finite territories of organized signified corporeal and social space and chronological causal time. Rather than Orpheus' gaze for navigation or colonization through illumination, darkness invites the dark eddies and flows, emergences and recessions of Eurydice's gaze toward exploration.

Pleasures of viewing these reorganized bodies are the limits of what can be stomached and ourselves as limit invoking fascinating to watch. How are we be seduced by these no-longer-working-body bodies? We cannot be them; we cannot recognize or organize them, but cinesexually we want to watch them. To desire we must negotiate strange baroque lovers, just as becomings demand an unnatural desire. But whereas in becomings the other element is recognizably other-kingdom, these are bodies, *our* bodies, configured in extraordinary ways. Ordinarity of the form of the internal planes of a human body is the basic paradigm around which resonate the transgressive qualities of these zombies to create their 'horror'. They are not wolves or women (because they are no longer striated and signified within a human taxonomy) but they are human to the extent that they belong to the same form-structure, albeit increasingly tentative depending on their state of dishevelment. If their bodies are our bodies, and we desire them while they are impossible non-cinematically, disgusting in their resemblance, then it is our bodies which must resemble theirs. They are beyond, beyond science – living dead, beyond religion – dead but not relegated to Heaven, Hell or even indeed the ground, and beyond capitalism – they are useless.

In *Dawn of the Dead* we are told 'when there's no more room in Hell the dead shall walk the earth'. Loraux points out 'the whole earth is a burial place for famous men' (1991, 1). As those who matter are memorialized, in Heaven, Hell or the cemetery, the left-over minoritarians make a beyond of this world. We must challenge those paradigms in order to become baroque zombies because we can never be them but can conceive ourselves of them. In the face of the inability of our body to mirror theirs, the question becomes how do we enter into intensities with bodies that are ours but impossibly so? We make a Body without Organs. 'At any rate, you make one, you can't desire without making one... it is not at all a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices.' (1987, 149–150) We desire zombie spectacles not to be them but to enter into a series of practices with them. The only questions we need to ask is, as with becomings, with which intensities of zombies can we enter into unnatural alliances? We can think our bodies through what we see of theirs and thus unravel and refold the paradigms of medicine, religion and state they challenge. That the gates of Hell are opened by Father Thomas hanging himself is an immediate indication of what system is first murdered in the film; the most important point is that *he does not die*. So what does die? Similarly the family structure is seen to be killed off in a vague way. Often zombification produces a perversion of the Oedipal or familial, swapping incest for alimentary desire, seen explicitly in Andrea Bianchi's *Burial Ground*, (1980) where the child Michael (Peter Bark) bites off his mother's breast instead of suckling. This is also hinted at in *City* when Emily (Antonella Interlenchi) pays night visits to her little brother John-John (Luca Paisner), apparently ripe for paedophilic pickings as earlier his

disappearance is blamed on Bob, whose history includes doing an unnamed ‘thing’ to a schoolgirl. It is impossible to reduce Fulci’s situations to Oedipal-gone-awry acts because the knowledge of precisely what these zombies will do is never available to us. Filiation is now both heredity and contagion, another baroque folding, here of family and pack, desire as both and beyond incest and infection (Teresa’s invasion by God was a libidinal experience by her Holy father but was not reducible to incest.) Emily does not abuse her brother, she infects him.

Power is act-contagion through participation not hierarchical force. This shows that filiation is always already a form of ideological contagion and not ‘natural’. If all relations come from ideological infection then it is not what we should but can enter into an alliance with. Hybrid becomings involve concept-forms – dog, woman – which are adamantly not of our kind. Zombie-gore cinesexuality involves desire for that which is immediately recognizable as us and not us, so the way we can conceive body as form is opened up as a series of asigned planes – visual but not able to be seen as known, organs but not useful or meaningful, but they are connected to all life. Their purpose is nothing beyond their revelation as the interior which is displayed as affective. We are left with a devastating question: why do we want to experience them visually? Using Lyotard’s call to asking not ‘why’ but ‘how’ the spectacle of usually invisible organs asks how do these organs resist being organs? Three elements (at least) are involved. The organs are not useful in their physiological maintenance of life; they are not concealed and their revelation no longer belongs to science; they are neither beautiful nor revolting but both. We all know what a heart or spleen is and what it looks like but seeing one emerge from a thorax is another matter. We know maggots writhe around in corpses but watching it happen proves that knowledge is vague and replaces rather than informs about an event. We know what intestines are for, and we know vomiting indicates ill-health, (not that we really want to ‘know’ either) but vomiting intestines is an ophidian reconfiguration of backward and forward, in and out, as if the alimentary system has gone full circle, the entrails behaving through the baroque physics of a spiral. But more than this convoluted analysis of the confounding significations of these images is that they are just beyond. The colours, viscosity, suppurating squelchiness, the gestures which reveal the planes of flesh and the inevitable residue of their ‘yuk’ factor makes them asemiotic, or show that they have become invisible signifieds. We see them in the dark because their affects are neither describable nor inscribable. Where many of the acts in the films could be construed as violent, if not aggressive, these are simply confounding.

More than becoming something else these images cause an undetermined process – the becoming-larval of the human body and thus the category of human. Unlike other unnatural alliances we do not enter into a becoming-animal or woman as subject position. Becoming through occupying zones of zombieism or other disheveled body configurations is the becoming-flesh of our own bodies, where ‘flesh’ is the larvality of ‘the body’. We need not know (indeed we should not even ask) *what* we are becoming. We look at the gore of *The Beyond* and *City* and the thought of our flesh makes our stomach rumble

and our throat gallish, while our brain becomes pure viscera from the affect of the raw saturation of the red of blood, the sound of the vomiting of viscous organs, the sizzle of the flesh melting under acid, the hollow rattles that emit from the zombies which replaces language. As mucosal fluid exceeds the body's outer limits, the acid-corroded bodies of Fulci's films recede formalized bodies through the creation of a within – both are the beyond of the body.

'We want to see frigid, imprisoned, mortified bodies explode to bits, even if capitalism continues to demand that they be kept in check at the expense of our living bodies.' (Guattari 1996, 31) We want to be nothing more than a visual encounter with all that we are – bodies. Larval bodies' force of rupture is a feminist force because it compels the constant and renewing creation of bodies of difference – not one or two but endless differences within and between bodies. These are both bodies year-zero, all born of a Dogon egg of singularity, and proliferative in their infection-contagion. The blown-apart body on screen is not the viewer's potential to be dead but instigator of the viewer's propulsion through the affect of the image. In gore the image is not what it says but what it does. We certainly do not want pleasure defined in its traditional sense, and if we are now moving beyond dialectics we do not want shock purely for catharsis, or violence borne of aggression. We do not know our wants and that we do not want gives us pleasure. We want to feel otherwise where all former definitions of pleasure, power, violence and desire are troubled in the face of the spectator's cerebral-corporeal submission to these images which challenge, disgust, delight, confound and horrify. The confounding nature of Fulci's non-racialized, degendered and perversely acting zombies which offer irrefutable pleasure beyond identification show up bodies on film as human as fictive, thus potentially emphasizing the fictive compulsion to reiterate the bodies' capabilities and behaviours in reference to sexuality, identity and desire for other bodies. Rigid subject positions within this system must also be fictive. This is not to say it is a fiction against the 'truth' of affect, rather it is one spectatorial fiction amongst all as fictions which could possibly be available.

By multiplying the ways in which spectators can variously take pleasure in the cinematic act, the definitions of the meanings and desires of those bodies that watch may simultaneously be multiplied and investment in any position as opposed to the fictive disappears. It is no longer a question of which are fictive and which realistic, but which are more resonant with established dominant fictions. Bernini's quickening of baroque architecture to the sculptural architecture of the affective body which affects its viewer – St Teresa in ecstasy, St Jerome's contemplation, Proserpine's rape – seems a more appropriate genealogy than gothic for this fellow Roman director and disciple of flesh transformed through affect. While Bernini's religious figures achieve baroque rapture through God, their God is one of infection, contagion and corporeal invasion, not Law or regulation. Similarly Fulci's images affect via invasion 'for the affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of the power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 240). Effectuation as pack seems appropriate in reference to Fulci's zombies as they rarely appear as individuals

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and reproduce through infection which creates a unique zombie with unique desires. Zombies do not have but *are* plagues, in these films transformation by contagion, not biological nosology but through perversion of the desire to act otherwise, undifferentiated sickness. The zombies in *The Beyond* and *City* use action upon flesh as their mode of contagion. The force of the zombies incarnates as their unfolding flesh refolding the flesh of other bodies and of the spectator, deforming matter/flesh. Unlike biological contagion by which other zombies propagate, these zombies infect through a shared intensity of desire toward and toward becoming bodies without organs. In most films something happens to infect the zombies – plague, poison, contamination. In *The Beyond* and *City* the simple opening up of the world is the cause. The gates of Hell are threshold and make threshold of the here, which is simultaneously the beyond. They invoke our own flesh as infecting our bodies. These zombies are ‘form that reveals its folds [which] becomes force’ (Deleuze 2001, 35). More importantly their desires are unique to each act and each zombie – no act is repeated. If each zombie acts differently at every turn then we cannot speak of ‘that’ zombie defined by their acts. The act of pack with these zombies both multiplies forms but also multiplies forces so that minor transformations which continually occur within bodies also ripple transformation through the pack. Zombies as pack contagion exploit contagion’s transformation within as well as between bodies Each zombie expresses their symptom differently, and also draws exterior, non-corporeal elements toward facilitating their becoming-zombie Propagation comes through unnatural participation of our own flesh with our own bodies, creating a fold within what has hitherto been considered the same as itself – body and flesh.

Deleuze and Guattari claim that the face is a politics (1987, 188). So too is the Body without Organs. Such a body is macro-molecular, the dissipative, mobile and perverse zombie collective where different activists form unnatural alliances in an attempt a unified dismantling rather than unifying because their faces and ideas and gods reflect each other. It is micro-molecular, as the strange vibrations between perhaps ridiculously over-the-top gory zombie bodies and our experience of their desires and flesh can mobilize our own becoming-bodies-without-organs precisely because we must make strange connections if we are not to repudiate these films based on their transcribability or reflection of the already known. Bodies without Organs dismantle judgments of God as religious, state, science, capitalism. When Artaud points out secular science has made the microbe the new god, we are reminded this is the same system with a different god, believing man is God. A very particular kind of man incarnated in a very organized body is this new god, Christ in a different guise but the same form. Deleuze and Guattari consistently enforce the importance of art, in all their works together, as inherent to dismantling resistances. ‘But art is never an end in itself: it is only a tool for blazing life lines.’(1987, 187) We do not flee toward and take refuge in art, nor do we reterritorialize art with world. Becomings through an opening to art and it through us ‘sweep [art] away with [our becomings] toward the realms of the asignifying, asubjective and faceless’ (1987, 187). With these impossible bodies which are us we enter into

becomings through shared rhythm. They are as human and non-human as we, but with differing refrains of (in)human-ness. 'Not only does art not wait for human beings to begin, but we may ask if art ever appears among human beings except under artificial and belated conditions.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 320) These bodies are, to be unsympathetic, ridiculously artificial. Our becomings with them may be belated because we need to negotiate their rhythms with us as both residually human and not. If the 'human' describes the organized body – of subjectivity or politics – then perhaps the inhumanity in these humans is where we find salvation rather than silliness. The terms 'humanity' and 'humane' are confounding in that the greatest destructive forces and lack of ethics in the world emerges through human ideology and activity. Nothing is less ethical than that which is most humane. It is our responsibility, not the film-makers', to make these films and our becomings blaze. Yes these films are about death, corroding, rotting and disheveled flesh, about breakdown and dysfunctions of narrative, body, society and reality. That's the very point. What does it mean to live the organized body, society and cinematic image as part of coherent narrative film? These images show the *death of what?* Life after death here is life after the death of what? It is still life of sorts, but neither reflective nor responsive to our understanding of life, death, bodies, desire and disgust. It may seem transcriptive to show actual disorganized bodies in order to encourage the cinesexual's becoming Body without Organs. The expressive heads, saturated colour, visceral re-organizations, the shift from speech to a corporeal musicality and negotiation of pleasure as difficult and strange suggests to me these bodies are plateaus of asignifying art, Bodies without Organs occupying Territories without Organs. Through the way we react to this art, reaction as creation, our cinesexual bodies become part of those territories, for 'when you have made him a Body without Organs,/then you will have delivered him [sic] from all his automatic reactions/and restored him to his true freedom' (Artaud 1988, 571).

Chapter 7

Necrosexuality

In September 2004 Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger created California's first law forbidding necrophilia as a criminal act. The felony is punishable by up to 8 years incarceration. In March 2005 the media went into frenzy over the 2001 study in which natural science documented the first observation of necrophilia in Mallard ducks – homosexual necrophilia at that. (Moeliker 2001) In 1973 Baron Frankenstein announced 'to know death, you have to fuck life in the gall bladder'.

Transgressive sexuality has frequently been defined through the dominant paradigms which it transgresses. This means transgressive sexuality is often seen as either affirming these paradigms by being oriented in dialectic opposition to them, or politically challenging in reference to them. Perversion is, however, the multiplicity at the very heart of desire that dissipates and redistributes the body's intensities. 'Normal' sexuality is one reiteration of these corporeal libidinal cartographies – reiterative because reliability in repetition is a key feature of normal sexuality's nature and power. Deleuze and Guattari's claim that all desire affords a becoming means that transgression is already within all forms of desire. There is a project of queering desire, rather than reifying any one form of sexuality as queer. This chapter will explore the queerness of one seemingly heterosexual desire – male/female sexual situations – as it is incarnated in necrophilia. Deleuze and Guattari, together and separately, as well as Foucault, all critique the term 'transgression'. Transgression is unable to exist independently as a haecceity. It can only be measured against and in reference to, while reading through desire is an interrogation of the different parameters, paradigms and plateaus within rather than against systems, an alteration of trajectories and velocities. Perhaps a more correct term would be 'lines of flight'; however I use the term transgression here because necrophilic trajectories have been truncated and reified through a variety of institutions and thus have a particular relationship with these institutions. The use of the term is, however, brief and tactical, and is only relevant while necrophilia's relationship with these institutes is being discussed and reactive rather than active affect is maintained in the analyses.

Non-aggressive examples of necrophilia in three films, *Beyond the Darkness* (Aristede Massaccesi 1979), *Macabre* (Lamberto Bava 1981) and *Flesh for Frankenstein* (Antonio Margheriti 1973), which include both male and female corpses, emphasize the ways in which necrophilic desire requires a destratification of the body into a Body without Organs. Accidentally but nonetheless relevant, these three films have all been banned (and are, once again, all Italian), thus conflating the transgressive nature of their content and the act of viewing them

– another point at which the residue of the problematic notion of transgression arises. Forensics describes the ruptured body in death as ‘dishevelled’. Organs become genital, surgery sexual and the striation of the gendered body is dishevelled through the planes of pleasure offered by the corpse. Necrophilia is configured into dialectic and onanistic practice, confusing subject and object, desire and disgust. These corpses are physically bodies with organs, but entirely reorganized, as is the desire of the necrophiles. When Deleuze and Guattari ask us to sing with our sinuses, here we see those who have sex with their entrails, launching on becoming-viscera. Reading the body through gender signifiers of genitals is no longer relevant in these ‘heterosexual’ relationships. The larger structure of necrophilia in society will not form a major part of the chapter, however recent changes to the laws in the US punish necrophilia as ‘immoral’ while vindicating institutionalized homophobia and misogyny seen in laws such as the homosexual panic law, and the low incidence of prosecution for rape. ‘Perverse’ sexualities, from homosexuality and necrophilia to celibacy and lust-murder are morally maligned as equivalent based on the ways all challenge ‘proper’ object choice. But non-violent heterosexual perverse sexualities, just as non-violent gore in baroque images, pose challenges to issues of corporeal volition and desire beyond traditional oppositional and hierarchical libidinal configurations.

Perhaps it is difficult to define necrophilia as a dividual sexual act at all. Primarily one must select the paradigm by which the corpse is defined. Item of respect? Fetish item? Forensic text? Victim of aggression in order to procure a corpse for a sex act? Object of nostalgia? Past tense person, present tense property? Meat? Flesh? What can one do with a corpse? Is traditional sex with a corpse queer? If, according to Monique Wittig (1992), sexuality creates gender through opposition, is necrophilia still either heterosexual or homosexual? Is a corpse gendered if it is no longer a person? Is visceral necrophilia, using the entrails rather than the genitals for pleasure, different to ‘straight’ necrophilia sex acts? Is this kind of necrophilia a form of surgical fetishism? What gender is a gall bladder? Guattari sees the repressive regime of signification as perpetrating a massacre of desire and the body. Can massacring the body – opening it out, cutting it up post mortem and achieving pleasure from it – end the massacre of the body? He states:

We can no longer sit idly by as others steal our mouths, our anuses, our genitals, our nerves, our guts, our arteries, in order to fashion parts and works in an ignoble mechanism of production which links capital, exploitation and the family. We can no longer allow others to turn our mucous membranes, our skin, all our sensitive areas into occupied territory – territory controlled and regimented by others, to which we are forbidden access... We can no longer allow others to repress our fucking, control our shit, our saliva, our energies, all in conformity with the prescriptions of the law and its carefully defined little transgressions. We want to see frigid, imprisoned, mortified bodies exploded to bits, even if capitalism continues to demand that they be kept in check at the expense of our living bodies (Guattari 1996, 31–2).

The reason I have selected necrophilia in particular is not because it offers a privileged version of queer but because in death the body can be actually, physically reorganized – massacre not as murder but physical eruption, without the element of the supernatural present in zombie films. The first part of this chapter will contextualize the ways in which necrophilia is a form of sexuality emergent through legal and medical discourse rather than volitional desire. The second part offers an exploration, through the three films which exemplify necrophilia in different ways as reorganizing the flesh and desire. The torn apart corpse as object of desire and the relation between two en fleshed entities are open systems of connexion rather than dialectic between two organized bodies. The fleshes open out toward each other, one actually, the other in libidinal planes which disorganize the body Guattari points out is massacred in a different way through systems of signifying the body and desire relations.

Necrophilia and discursive massacres

Before I elaborate my arguments lauding the pleasures and perversions of necrophilia I want to dispel any association of the forms of necrophilia upon which I will focus with traditional associations of necrophilia with (often violent) criminality. This section is, tediously but I think necessarily, about what this chapter is *not* and how the aforementioned examples of necrosexuality are not baroque and do not present Bodies without Organs. At the very least, what the need for the following shows is that the ‘sexuality’ of necrophilia is, like all sexualities, not a singular, predictable or repeatable form of sexuality.

The case which resulted in Schwarzenegger outlawing necrophilia was initially charged as a break and enter into the morgue, because the law did not know how to prosecute necrophilia and had to charge the perpetrator with something (the moral outrage toward the act was intensified by what was perceived to be paedophilic necrophilia – the ‘victim’ was four years old). Corpse defilement is frequently charged as wilful destruction of property. This conforms to a Kantian perspective, which would position the corpse as property and thus the violation of which is an ethical consideration between a person and the property rather than the subjectivity of another. Does this new law invest the cadaver with volition, thus in necrophilia the corpse is a victim of rape against its ‘will’? If so the perverse (but not necessarily aggressive) sexuality of necrophilia and violent crime become mutually exclusive. Many films and clinical texts associate necrophilia with a precluding violent act perpetrated in order to procure the corpse. The criminal and the pervert are closely aligned, both share a relationship with clinical epistemology – the criminologist, the psychologist and in the case of the corpse itself the forensic pathologist. The modern serial killer is often made more interesting by focussing on their necrophiliac tendencies – Ed Gein, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer and Dennis Nielsen. The role of psychiatrist and criminologist coalesce in the seminal 1906 work of Krafft-Ebing, the *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Lustmurder sits side by side with necrophilia. Case 24: Ardisson, is not simply

a necrophiliac, in spite of being classified under this heading. He also drinks urine, eats rats and cats, as well as his own sperm, is paedophilic and apparently olfactorily retarded – the fact he finds the stench of putrefaction inoffensive seems galling to Ebing. Happily Ebing tells us Ardisson was ‘pleased with prison life’ (1997, 40).

Ebing’s other case of necrophilia, Case 23: Sergeant Bertrand, despite being of ‘delicate physical constitution’ (1997, 37), killed animals to procure entrails. His necrophilia did not focus on sex with corpses but onanistic activity with entrails, thus he was named a monomaniac. While all monomania is based on the demarcation of a single-minded, obsessive and dividuated libidinal practice, and thus necrophilia itself is technically a monomania, Bertrand’s focus on viscera, which is not a single object nor subjectivized, rather than a past-tense person-corpse, seems to change the inflection of the monomania beyond a perverse dialectic of subject/object. In spite of bestiality necrophilia, Bertrand’s perversion with human bodies was entirely heterosexual as sex with male corpses ‘was always attended with a feeling of disgust’ (1997, 38). It is not mentioned whether the animals were male or female. Unlike Ardisson he was sentenced to one year court-marshal. Ebing ends this case with the observation:

The actual motive for exhuming the bodies however, was then, as before, to cut them up; and the enjoyment in doing so was greater than in using the bodies sexually. The latter act had always been nothing more than an episode of the principal one, and had never quieted his desires; for which reason he had later on always mutilated the body (1997, 39).

This last comment could as easily describe a forensic pathologist as a viscera-focused necrophiliac and the mention of animals is vivisection incarnate. The relationship is contingent with the use-function of the corpse in relation to ‘pleasure’. The sexual psychopath ‘uses’ the corpse differently to the scientist. The former is a necrophiliac, the latter perhaps an epistophiliac.

The corpse is territorialized by forensic medicine and religious ideology. Capitalism allows the corpse to be ‘used’ by forensic pathology, making the ultimate object of uselessness work, while making invisible the scientist who uses it. Pfohl and Gordon’s description of criminology makes an interesting connection with the forensic pathologist. They describe the sexuate clinical formation of the criminal subject: ‘Erect before the bar he sees her as grave matter to be ordered knowledgeable. His deadly nature and her law he rights, he writes, he rites – three rights and nothing left: the right of man, the writings of a science and the ritual construction of an empirical order ... the pleasure of criminology is to displace the other’s unfixed pleasure’ (1987, 230). Various incarnations of psychology exert a similar power in their creation of the pathological pervert. But both perform a textual practice equivalent to the making-textual the matter of the corpse. Pfohl and Gordon’s cadaverous euphemisms are apt. The criminologist is deadly to pleasure by righting and

writing it, seeing unbound pleasure as grave and placing it in its grave by classifying it within existing taxonomies of perversion. Pfohl and Gordon continue their forensic euphemisms in describing the practices of the taxonomist of pathologies:

The second pleasure of criminology involves his gaze. To keep an eye on her, to classify, count and cut her up; to make her visible as a certain thing; to dissect that visibility into rates and measure her incidents; to map her determined figure and to analyze her probable path; to uncover everything about her and to lay her bare; to arrest her so that he may operate upon her and see what happens (1987, 230).

Massacring the self by expressing desire with a massacred body leads to a concept prevalent in psychological and medical theories of perversion, which is the supposed intrinsic inclusion of aggression and hatred towards the perverse object choice. Stoller posits the argument that all perversion is borne of hatred towards the object choice, or what the object choice represents. By taking it as a sexual 'partner' the object which is hated is mastered in order to surpass a moment of trauma from the past. The perverse act is given an origin and thus a reason. He states

In order to begin to judge these ideas, draw on your own experience. Think of perversions with which you are familiar ... In each is found – in gross form or hidden but essential in fantasy – hostility, revenge, triumph, and a dehumanized object. Before even scratching the surface we can see that someone harming someone else is a main feature in most of these conditions (Stoller 1975, 9).

Before annihilation of a human, dehumanization must ask the question 'What is human?' and inevitably deconstruct the relationship between what is human and the subject. What is human is not opposed to what is not human but what is not a being at all, what is not an integrated object is placed in opposition to the human or a subject. Wholeness is implicit in what is human, and the crisis of transforming, shattering or changing subjectivity is adamantly indicative of something not whole and not one. For this reason dehumanization should not be taken in a derogatory context. Only when the aim of dehumanization is to affirm and reify the perpetrator's own humanity does the act of dehumanization raise issues of hierarchy and power. Through perversion the condition of being human, with the limits and boundaries of perception of self and object this entails, is negotiated so that the self can no longer look at itself and its partner and say 'I am human'. Rather, at a loss for language, the self shifts towards a depth beneath the (or one) surface, with a different 'feeling of self' and hence, 'feeling of object'. Such a feeling of post-humanism has ethical implications for those who were never given the luxury of being considered as true human, the marginal and the minoritarian, including women. This is dealt with in J Butler's *Undoing Gender* (2004) and the work of Haraway, particularly *Primate Visions* (1989) and Simians, *Cyborgs and Women* (1991).

Stoller quotes 1930s perversion ‘expert’ E. Straus, “‘the delight in perversions is caused by ... the destruction, humiliation, desecration, the deformation of the perverse individual himself and of his partner’”(Straus’s italics)’ (In Stoller 1975, 8). These ambiguities are further problematized when the object is itself a frontier between humanity (is a corpse human?), temporality (it was, what is it now?), ideologies of respect and disgust. Stoller chooses this quote despite the tacking on at its end of ‘and of his partner’. Beyond the question as to whether a corpse counts as a partner, as a ‘someone’, the destruction of the self rather than the partner is more pertinent to my discussion though less so for Stoller. Stoller says nothing of the italicizing by Straus of ‘deformation’. ‘Desecration’ (so frequently suffixed by ‘of the grave’) and ‘destruction’ are words that evoke the massacre of body and self. But destroy and deform are ideal words to describe becoming otherwise; here, to elucidate the ‘something different’ the necrosexually changing desiring body is becoming, the massacred, destroyed, deformed body(ies) and intensities of proximity and connexion with an actually massacred body.

To stay tactically with the subject–object dialectic for a moment, the necrophiliac is positioned toward a deeply confounding ‘object’. Devoid of will, what is a corpse? Is it symbolic of a purely abstract memory, or an actual memorial object? What if the corpse is that of a dead lover? Does this mean that the necrophiliac is expressing a form of fidelity beyond the call of duty? When the sealed corpse becomes dishevelled flesh through opening up, is it a different kind of object of desire? Does Bertrand’s adamant heterosexuality show that the corpse always remains gendered? If so how are the entrails gendered? I evoke these questions not to answer them, and certainly neither to vindicate nor derogate necrophilia, but to offer the corpse as a materialized version of a conceptual as well as actually massacred body. I am however adamantly not going to analyse cinematic representation of necrophilia when it is associated with crime because I wish to focus on necrophilia as part of a non-aggressive, non-violent massacre of the body just as ‘death’ and ‘murder’ in baroque films such as zombie films are not the same as actual murder. Criminal aggressive necrophilia reiterates traditional power paradigms of perpetrator/victim, often in murder incarnated as male/female. The compulsion to read necrophilia within this dynamic occurs before the instance of necrophilia. The corpse is, etymologically the most immediate definition of the expression ‘a body’. But what it is in relation to humanity and materiality is volatile and dynamic before the necrophiliac is positioned in relation to it. I have used the expressions ‘conceptually’ and ‘materially’ neither as opposed nor as extricable. Guattari and Deleuze and Guattari’s *Bodies without Organs* and *becomings* show the materiality of thought and the structuration of desire and flesh as epistemic. The materiality of the corpse is emphasized here because the corpse is *so* material – stinkingly, rottingly, traumatically and viscerally so, actualizing new layers of the flesh when thorax is opened and fluid extravasated. The corpse is subjectivity as only matter and the ultimate symbol of humanity as nothing more than flesh, but flesh which is unknowable, whose pleasures evoke infinite possibility not available in a living body. The body represents both the most

mundane and most frightening point of ideals and anxieties of the indivisibility of subjectivity, flesh, discourse, desire and pleasure.

In connecting epistemic with aesthetic systems (or symptoms), the following section will introduce a selected range of studies of necrophilia in academia, popular culture and film to introduce established structures of necrophilia which I will *not* deal with. These are selective simply to offer a range of examples, as this chapter is not a study of representations of necrophilia, but uses specific texts to explore necrophilia differently. Primarily, and at this stage rudimentarily, three ubiquitous aspects of these examples of necrophilia are challenged and alternatives offered. These are: the retention of a dialectic structure between object and subject, associated with fetishism, and particularly psychoanalysis; the maintenance of subjectivity within the corpse through the striated body, where the organs (particularly the genitals) retain their biological and metaphoric signification; the necessary association of necrophilia with criminality and explicitly (usually misogynistic) violence and aggression. Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body* (1992) deals with the objectification of the dead woman in art, poetry and literature. By affirming the gender of the corpse the title suggests the non-consent aspect of necrophilia. Downing's *Desiring the Dead*, (2003) a psychoanalytic study of French literature, critiques studies which 'focus somewhat erroneously on what the necrophile does, and are obsessed with the acts that appear most obvious – sexual intercourse' (2003, 3). Against this, Downing emphasizes 'the choice of the corpse as subject matter' (2003, 30). Downing and Bronfen both retain the sexual dialectic as positioning subject and object, and sexuality as predetermined act. For me, the materially de-subjectified corpse emphasizes the affective space between the two, offering a heterosexual human hybridity. 'Between the two there is threshold.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 250) Folds of real flesh and folds of desire constitute one divided singularity, two different elements, the one traditionally (too) material, the other ethereal are a singular continuum of consistency. The physics of their materialization makes their matter both the same as each other and unique from all else.

Aggressive violence, necrophilia as violation and frequently misogynistic act is perhaps the most prevalent representation of the desire. Contradictorily however, while gory necrophilia is met with outrage (including gory lyrics in music) violent but clean deaths seem to conform to stereotypes of necrophilia and are responded to with less verve. Films such as *NekRomantik* (Jorg Buttgerit 1987), *The Necro-Files* (Matt Jaissle 1997), *August Underground* (Fred Vogel 2001) and *Lucker the Necrophagous* (Johan Vandewoestijne 1986) offer cinematic representations of clinical associations between criminality, murder and necrophilia, with greater or lesser degrees of complexity. In death metal, Slayer's *213* emphasizes the control the necrophiliac can exert over the most docile subject-object: *Complete control of a prize possession*, and the relationship between memory and necrophilia: *Memories keep love alive/Memories will never die*. Less nuanced, explicitly aggressive lyrics can be seen in Cannibal Corpse's *Necropedophile*, where paedophilia, necrophilia and naughty swear words emphasize the act extravasated from desire at all, simply offered as something to shock by hitting sanctified lines of social values. Like *The Necro-Files* the songs of

Cannibal Corpse are more infantile and affirm the paradigms they cross rather than exemplify new forms of subjectivity, pleasure and desire. Without the maintenance of the subjectivity of the corpse and society's systems of morality the pleasure and point of these acts cease to exist. They seem to respond to the predicted reaction, so that the act itself seem at best purely symbolic and at its extreme completely circumnavigated. As Foucault and Lotringer lament about defunct perverts, what is important is not what is done, but what is seen (or heard) to be done. (This should not be taken as symptomatic of metal music or culture in general.)

Nacho Cerda's *Aftermath* (1994) and *I'll Bury You Tomorrow* (Alan Rowe-Kelly 2002) continue traditional urban apocrypha of the sexual habits of morgue workers, which, strangely, never seem to be associated with forensic pathologists, only their discursive (and presumably economic) inferiors. *Kissed* (Lynne Stopkewich 1996) is a more mainstream example of necrophilia in film. *Kissed* needed to be branded 'art' in order to vindicate the practice of the female necrophile, affirming two stereotypes – that women's sexuality is more delicate and less violent, and that only when necrophilia is filmed in an arty way can it offer anything more than offensive aggression to planes of desire. Even in popular understandings of cultural 'phenomena', such as AIDS, necrophilia is evoked. Tim Dean's *Beyond Sexuality* associates necrophilia with the death drive but also, fascinatingly, as a safe sex option. Where there is no longer a risk of AIDS (zombie contagion) from a (living dead) person – traditionally minoritarians such as homosexual men and drug addicts but increasingly third world populations – the corpse as 'waste' threatens disease from its unsanitary condition and its seduction of the mentally invaded psychopath. Dean states: 'Think of the symbolic order as a net settling over the corporeal form ... the process does not happen in a uniform way because there is no single symbolic order that we all inhabit' (2000, 197). Through a variety of epistemic structures necrophilia is foxed at every turn, a virus of psychiatry or nosology or even addiction as 213 expresses: *Physical pleasures an addictive thrill/ An object of perverted reality.*

In the folds of the flesh

By way of connection, all of the following films I will discuss have been banned by various Film and Literature Classification Boards around the world, in spite of not being aggressively violent. The viewer is then positioned as part of the taxonomy of criminals, a pervert for procuring illegal films, for enjoying these films and in the most simplistic argument, repeating what they watch in the real world. I wish to suggest that in order for the necrophile (this term is now used tactically, not to refer to a pathologized pervert 'type') to enter into a desiring intensity with the corpse, the subject/object–flesh/desire opposition must shift. The corpse neither fails to nor fulfils entering into the spaces between subject and object. The corpse isn't a symbol of the abject because the corpse – not spoken of, but immanently encountered – is the *event* which cannot be

deferred to a second order signification. The corpse opens out self, flesh, desire and pleasure as it is opened out. Does misusing the corpse offer a way out of subjectivity, a petite mort not through orgasm but de-subjectification? Necrophilia's visceral pleasures takes not subject and object in opposition, but pleasure in folding with the planes of flesh of the object – beyond metaphors of flesh and fold necrophilia signifies every part of the flesh, every nerve (no longer nerve because no longer perceptive), every tissue mass, every artery, every organ, the unfolded skin as libidinally provocative – the cinemasochist, zombie-infected and interkingdom demonic participant all at once. In the event of necrophilia skin may be peeled, entrails fondled, parts removed or moved around, corporeal minutia explored and every plane of the body reorganized into a new configuration with new function and meaning or Lyotard's great ephemeral skin.

The films I will discuss offer three forms of corporeal massacre. In *Macabre* the female necrophile has only a head lover, in *Beyond the Darkness* the dead lover is enjoyed through tender acts of taxidermy, and the entrails are used as libidinal objects, sorrowful reminders and ecstasy inducing aspects of the lover. The exploitation of entrails only available in necrophilia reaches its zenith in *Flesh for Frankenstein* where the viscera are the primary site of sexual obsession. The corpse is at once all sexual and signifying of nothing in particular. Because its rearrangement is limitless the corpse asks its lover not why, but what can it do and what can be done with it. What the corpse can 'do' refers to affect rather than action. This means the possibilities of affect fold the corpse as active entity with the necrophile in her/his open-ness to being affected and create new affect possibilities within the corpse through experimentation with the limitlessness of the corpse. The necrophiliac must be passive, as they forsake activity based on significations of sexual narratives and signified flesh. No longer 'I am, it is, hence I will desire it in accordance with the sexuality appropriate to object and subject' but 'how can I desire, how is this matter before me desirable, what can I do with it, what does it do to me, what connexions do we enter into?' The corpse is all at once past-tense person, infinitely experimental matter, flesh which both resonates with living flesh and is a fleshy something else altogether unique to the corpse. The protagonists of the following films are not driven by aggressive impulses and the points of intensification in the films occur not in procuring death, with which many horror films are concerned, but with what affects can be elicited post-mortem. Each film is different in terms of its necrophilia, in conformance with my point above that the only constant of necrophilia is the presence of a corpse – sexuality, the use of the body and the relations of phantasy and memory with it are not guaranteed.

While some horror films dealing with necrophilia are described as gothic – films of Edgar Allen Poe stories for example – because they deal with memory and the uncanny resonances between the corpse and a lover, the films are baroque because fleshy, not long gone but too much there. Reiterating the consistency of baroque territorializations – more as a curio than source of origin – like the zombie films these films are all made by Roman directors. They come from a genealogy to which Bernini also belongs rather than the British history

of the gothic novel or the uncanny nostalgia of Poe, but not Poe's territorial neighbour Lovecraft, who explicitly writes about inter-kingdom becomings and who is mentioned in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Fulci uses Lovecraft's apocryphal *Book of Eibon* in *The Beyond* and *City of the Living Dead* has been described by the director as inspired by Lovecraft's *The Dunwich Horror*. Thus geographically, historically and visually like baroque sculpture Roman directors continue artistic and philosophical expressions based on the flesh, unfolded and refolded, a visceral example of Deleuze's pleats of matter. While ghosts and memories haunt the suggested necrophilia of British gothic, baroque necrophilia does not mourn the dead subject. It exploits the present materialization of the lover, indulging in the new possibilities the flesh offers. The new flesh is explored rather than the old flesh memorialized. Action comes because the subject is gone, exchanging mourning for ecstasy.

The necrophiliac exploits the actually unravelled and limitlessly unravel-able flesh, but requires the macroperceptive self to open up, to become passive in the presence of an object of desire that demands imagination, possibility and a relinquishment of the macroperception of 'lover' as an organized distinct entity which acts upon the self. The affective qualities of the corpse come not from its will or soul but through folding with the necrophiliac. Desire, viscosity, possibility of act and dissipation of pleasures are pleats which configure the fold of subject and object differently at every turn. Self is fuelled by obscured desire in front of an obscure-able object. Through each act and wave of intensity another fold of self is pleated into 'unheard of becomings' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 240). The unheard recalls Blanchot's silence and unthought as actualized incarnation but unthinkable nonetheless, and, as hybrids have no origin nor future because they have never been produced before and will not again, each hybrid-becoming also invokes the imperceptible – how do we perceive what we have never perceived and which does not belong to any genealogy or kingdom? In this idea silence, unthought and imperceptibility coalesce in the bedroom, the morgue, the lab and the cinema, all one many-windowed floor through which affects mobilize our soul.

The decision to act is not borne of the act being pre-signified. Signification in medico-legal discourse comes from a resistance to discursive passivity, where we synthesize into being our acts as a series of linguistic habitus which 'constitutes our habit of living, [which ensures us as an] "it" will continue...thereby assuring the perpetuation of our *case*' (Deleuze 1994b, 74). Pre-signification massacres libidinal expression through inducing the necrophiliac into a defined form of sexuality – before the act – rather than a deduction, after the act(s), ablating each aspect or element of each example of necrophilia as a unique folding of living with dead flesh. Necrosexuality is a form of sexuality not 'as a process of filiation transmitting the original sin. But... as a power of alliance inspiring illicit unions or abdominal lovers. This differs significantly from the first in that it tends to prevent procreation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 346). Epistemology is transmitted; we come into being as a transmission, procreated through discourse. Folds of necrophilic perceptions with the abominable lover include but are in no way reducible to: The tactility of entrails; memory of

lost love; confrontation with limitless possibilities of the flesh unavailable (without harm) in a living body; a body devoid of former signification but significantly desirable; and as I will discuss below, the massacre of gender and sexual narratives borne of sexuality as a pre-ordained induction. Opening new folds in the body creating new folds of perception ‘opens a rhizomatic realm of possibility effecting the potentialization of the possible, as opposed to arborescent possibility, which marks a closure, an impotence’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 190). Being respected, thus ‘saved’ from defilement, makes the flesh of the corpse impotent. Potentializing the possible comes from a certain passivity by the necrophile to different folds, which effectuate new aspects of each face of the fold, just as each peeling away of a part of the corpse reorganizes it into different planes of possible sexual ‘fun’. Necro-folding and unfolding, any proliferates pleats of Deleuze’s contemplation: ‘We speak of our “self” only in virtue of those thousand little witnesses which contemplate within us; it is always a third party who says “me”.’ (Deleuze 1994b, 75) Each aspect of self is a contemplation, its own independent element, connected to every other element in contraction, dilation, force, non-corresponding receptive and perceptive elements.

Contemplation is a turning in of self as not what it does but through its active and passive synthesis with its own elemental aspects and those of all others, resonant with Lyotard’s möebian libidinal band. Self is neither made up of ‘bits’ as incarnations, organs or corporeal actions, nor of post-acting contemplation of self as object of study. Contemplation is immanent, self as before and within its own relational affects, ‘contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes the sensation’ (Deleuze 1994b, 79). Contemplation is therefore neither perception through deferral nor repetition as sameness, but act as always different within itself through the specificity of the changes in expectation and contraction at each repetition which necessarily changes the elements. Necrosexual acts (actually and contemplatively) de-part bodies and sexual acts iterated through perception as reification. The corpse and the acts of the necrophile are intensified examples of passive syntheses because their acts are not laid out as traditional sexual acts are, the body has already been made particles and relations destabilized. But then how can we speak of the necrosexual at all? Does this example suggest a deferral once again to causality, both saying there is difference in even the most asinine sexual acts, and that using necrosexuality as exemplary re-fetishizes and reifies it as ‘different’? Necrosexuality represents a social and cultural limit forms an assemblage, a fold, a passive synthesis (all different but all ways of the necrophile’s contemplation) as an abstract line of flight, belonging to the realm of the imperceptible. Necrosexuality, the bodies involuted and undone, create a larval sexuality – immature and transformed at every synthesis, which acts not toward a thing but toward its metamorphosis, toward perceiving itself which cannot be perceived, toward the imperceptibility within repetition where all elements within syntheses are dissipated, disoriented and reoriented with each turn, each folding and each alteration in the aspects of involution, and desire makes us exclaim ‘I was disoriented’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 283)

not because of a disorienting object but aim, act and pleasure. Here we turn around as there *is* an object of desire but we don't know *how* to desire it.

Preliminary dishevelment – getting (probe) head

Lamberto Bava's *Macabre* is the story of Jane Baker (Bernice Stegers) who, as a result of a car accident in which her lover is decapitated, keeps his head in the freezer (it is never made clear if the keeping of the head only is due to the pragmatics of having a small freezer). The revelation of Jane's cranio-necrophilia comes at the end of the film, after ninety minutes of hearing Jane talking to the head, screaming in passion during their sexual encounters and generally acting as if she is living with her (rather silent) lover. This is all perceived through her blind lodger Robert (Stanko Molnar), and like he, we remain blind to the actual relationship until the film's final scenes. Jane's necrophilia is an interesting starting point in my discussion as it offers an example of the female necrophile with a male corpse (or part thereof). Stereotypically the corpse is usually female and the necrophiliac male, be he scientist, poet or artist. Jane's necrophilia does conform to a certain type of necrophilia, that of nostalgia for a lost love. What is emphasized is that this love is not a substitute for the hope of an imminent new lover, nor a tragic memorial fetish. Jane seems authentically happy with her head lover. We do not know what she does with it, but, extricated from genitals, its gender becomes rather confounding. What is the relationship between a head and gender? Is Jane still hetero, even if we read the possible sexual acts she can perform traditionally – cunnilingus, kissing? How is her body signified without genital alterity? As the face is the primary site of signification of subjectivity it precludes the need to see the body in its entire form. '*It is precisely because the face depends on an abstract machine that it is not content to cover the head*', but touches all other parts of the body... The question then becomes what circumstances trigger the machine that produces the face and facialization' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 170 original emphasis).

Through being territorialized by the face, the whole body becomes face. The flesh conforms to the face and the gender of the face will establish patterns of possible sexual paradigms for the body – female face equals female genitals. Against another female face the female face is lesbian, against a male face heterosexual. Gender is found in the face and assures the genitals, which in these paradigms are taken as the primary and 'appropriate' site of sex. When it comes to established sexuality, getting head is getting face. Non-intercourse sex relies on the affirmation of the presumed genitals of the lover even if they are not naked. All non-genital sex is risky because it shows the body as divested of gender. (I do not include the anus as a genital here because it is not necessarily gendered unless its especially privileged proximity to the genitals is seen or felt.) A mouth is a mouth, but a straight person probably won't want a same-sex mouth near their body. Genitals are territorialized and territorializing of the body when emergent through a binary machine.

When the head is extricated from the torso does the face maintain its territorialization of the entire body – ‘the head is included in the body but the face is not’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 170). The de-facialized head alone cannot signify genitals – is a genital free body still a gendered body? If so in the same way? The abstraction of signifi-ance as pre-formed rather than formed at the encounter of each body as unique event is both arbitrary and redundant when a head is all there is. Jane’s head-lover can be taken as an example of Deleuze and Guattari’s body-head system, liberated from the facializing machine and the body. Jane’s head lover is not a partial body object however. When the head is extricated from the facial territorialization of the body, any single part no longer defers meaning to the whole. Each part can maintain its signification only to a certain extent. While a disembodied genital may still signify gender and thus sexuality, an arm or heart has only limited potential to do so. They may signify something else, but libidinally their meaning is unclear. Each part has a unique relationship to its former full body organism signification, but remains signified nonetheless. So how can a part deterritorialize subjectification and thus sexual paradigms, including gender, act and desire? ‘The question of the body is not one of partial objects but differential speeds.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 172) Whether or not Jane thinks she is heterosexual, the fact remains she *can’t* be heterosexual in any way familiar to her former sexuality. This isn’t ‘me and my head’, because the proximity between Jane and her head is what causes others to eventually ship her off to the asylum. For each relation and connection between her lover and herself there must be a compensation or exploration to negotiate the new structure. Even if her sexuality is memorial heterosexual, sexual acts with her head-lover are rhizomatic – ‘short term memory or anti-memory. The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots ... a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable and has multiple entryways and exists and its own lines of flight.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21) The memory of heterosexual intercourse cannot help Jane as it is no longer an option. That she does not seem particularly perturbed by the failure of this memory suggests hers is a happy rhizomatic sexuality(ies).

Beyond the Darkness, into the body of light

‘At each stage of the problem what needs to be done is not to compare two organs but to place elements or materials in a relation that uproots the organ from its specificity, making it become “with” the other organ.’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 259) Francesco (Kieran Canter) is a taxidermist. His girlfriend Anna (Cinzia Monreale) dies after Francesco’s housekeeper Iris (Franca Stoppi) places a curse upon her. Francesco is not particularly saddened by his loss, he does not cry, instead he disinters Anna, preserves her and places her at his side in his bed. Massaccesi’s film has been particularly maligned as excessively and offensively gory for the scene of Francesco preserving Anna. The scene plays in loving close up unflinchingly and includes extraction of entrails and eyes, and body fluid extravasation and preservation. While I find the scene (after

Blanchot's use of the term) fascinating rather than offensive or shocking, I will presume that upon first viewing there is an element of surprise and perhaps squeamishness evoked in the viewer. When Francesco removes Anna's heart, he bites into it ecstatically. Clearly the traditional signification of the heart as site of love is evident here. Does eating the heart of a corpse maintain this signification? When we take a metaphor as an actual, does the metaphoric signification stand, or is it colonized by the actual? If the metaphoric without the actual were present, there would be no disgust at the scene. This scene offers an interesting involution of the organisation of the organs of the organism. Francesco clearly indulges his appetite for the love of his girlfriend by eating her heart (if I were to stretch the act into a transcribable sex act I would say cunnilingually). He is also eating a heart in a situation of love. The scene is extreme and gory because the heart fails to remain a metaphor only. As zombie becomings emerge through the visual reorganization of internal organs, necrophilia in its use of internal organs for pleasure creates ambivalent desire by their very being as organ. By using an actual organ a desiring connexion 'with' other organs is created.

Zombies are supernatural 'too-much-organ', necrophilia shows desire and pleasure in the sexual use of everyday organ-bodies. The inside of the body, the internal organs, lose their metaphoric signification when the thorax is opened, in autopsy or medical imaging, because they become the property of medicine not desire. Is the organ the same organ when it is a physiological, anatomical organ, not a metaphoric organ? The organized body is organized differently depending on which system of signification it emerges through. This is emphasized when entrails are presented, as they belong predominantly if not exclusively to medical rather than sexual systems. The signification of genitals resonates with their metaphoric signification – the 'passive' egg, the 'active' sperm, the 'empty' vulva, the 'rigid, forceful' penis are also adjectives relatively appropriate for metaphoric ways of feminizing or masculinizing other attributes, qualities or objects. This is why Deleuze and Guattari resist the tail in becoming-dog because it is phallic. (Although if becoming-dog is a Body without Organs the tail would be disorganized in its resemblance to a penis.) Entrails fail to translate their conceptual into their physiological attributes so readily. The same organ – the heart – is two different organs, in two incarnations, with two functions in the two systems of medicine and poetic metaphor. Incommensurable double signification leads to the massacre of this heart. The heart is therefore not 'the' heart but 'this' heart, a heart that confounds and conflates the visceral with the metaphoric. The heart which Francesco bites into may represent Anna's heart to him, but it does not to the viewer or there would be no sense of baroque intensity or 'ickiness'. Is a heart 'feminine'? Perhaps, but he shows no interest in her breasts or genitals, he doesn't even have sex with her later in the film, so what precisely this heart evokes libidinally in Francesco is volatile. His mouth is site of ingestion and outward projected expression through kissing. To 'kiss' a heart would be more acceptable, albeit relatively gruesome. Like a zombie he bites but does not eat, thus experiences orally without consumption. His mouth is a site of touch only, recalling Serres' idea that all sense is touch and Irigaray's that a kiss inherently invokes morphological alterity. The relation Francesco

makes between mouth and no-longer-metaphoric organ creates the new line of desire, the line of viewer and the line of flight.

In death as in life, the interiors of the body seem more ‘organ’ than external organs such as the genitals, the nose or the skin. Francesco’s mouth-to-heart act forms Deleuze and Guattari’s unnatural participation. Against traditional metaphors of organs of love, Francesco removes Anna’s eyes because eyes rot. Eyes are often associated with love, with a connection to the soul, with an interface between mind and world. We gaze into our lover’s eyes; they express emotions associated with love – joy, sadness, and in pupil dilation sexual excitement. In death the soul supposedly leaves the body. So presumably the eyes can leave the body also. Yet there is something especially harrowing about eye extraction. Taking Anna’s eyes seems to be the last frontier in acknowledging that her ‘self’ is no longer present in this flesh. Because of the associations between eyes and love(rs) this scene seems incommensurable with Francesco’s interest in the heart as purely symbolic of love. Like cinema itself, corpses have no soul and are not monads but retain relational apertures and are thus concepts as worlds occupied by souls. If it were such, surely the eyes would also be privileged for their equivalent metaphoric status?

Like *Macabre*’s Jane, Francesco is not delusional in that he is not unaware of the necessary practicalities of having such a lover, prone as they are to decomposition. In spite of their functional purpose, the use of surgical tools in the scene, and tools of embalming, adds a surgical fetishism to the connection between Anna and Francesco. While I do not have room here to go into the particulars of surgical fetishism it is another form of ‘perverse’ sexuality which would be interesting to analyse in a Deleuzio-Guattarian context. Surgical ‘fetishism’ is somewhat of a misnomer, as it does not deal with psychoanalytic fetishism but with forming new and different connections between bodies, organs and tools. Surgical fetishism is more like Deleuze and Guattari’s masochism in that it is understood psychoanalytically and clinically in a different way to reading it as a becoming Body without Organs. Its viscerality also sets *Beyond the Darkness* apart from the film it is a (sort of) remake of *Third Eye* (Mino Guerrini 1966). The problem of many other surgical-sexual films, particularly *Dead Ringers* (Cronenberg 1988) is that power leads to desire rather than the reverse or both as immanent.

The uncanny doubling and particularly the use of investigative and explicitly gender specific surgical tools in the film to interrogate the female interior prevents the film from really challenging psychoanalytic relations of desire. The Mantle twins are compelled to reveal an (albeit deformed) plane in the body of women rather than create new folds. L. R. Williams celebrates Cronenberg because he unfolds the flesh to reveal. She speaks of Cronenbergian narratives and even ‘Cronenbergian identity’ (1984, 33). These terms replace ‘normal’ narratives and subjects with ‘weird’ ones, but singular and structured ones nonetheless. More interesting examples of surgical fetishism are seen in *Hellbound* and *The Virgin of Nuremberg*. Deformed servant Eric, former acolyte of ‘The Punisher’, polishes daily the surgical tool set belonging to his General. Like the cenobites’ tools the uses of The Punisher’s tools are not specified. The relationship between

Eric and The Punisher is similarly not structured but is adamantly libidinal. The Punisher asks ‘you *are* interested in surgery, aren’t you?’ The conflation of sex and surgery as practical in *Beyond the Darkness* becomes purely libidinal in *Flesh for Frankenstein*.

Splanchnic love

Flesh for Frankenstein is a particularly baroque take on the Frankenstein tale. Baron Frankenstein (Udo Kier) creates a master race of ‘zombies’ so he can repopulate the world with his perfect and obedient children. Megalomaniacal undeniably, but the real interest in the film lies with the incidental propensity of the Baron’s extracurricular activities. The Baron is repulsed by copulative sex, but relishes the opportunities he is afforded as an anatomist. He fondles the entrails of his female zombie (Dalila Delazzaro) until achieving climax, and literally, in his own words, fucks her gall bladder, espousing to his Igor-esque servant Otto (Arno Juerging), ‘to know death ... you have to fuck life ... in the gall bladder’. The Baron’s adept performance raises questions regarding the pleasure science affords as an episteme, especially due to its more intimate-than-intimate relationship with the various dishevelled plateaus of the flesh. The act of groping organs in particular can be nomenclatured as perverse – masturbatory and necrophilic – or it can express a reconfiguration of flesh and sexual dialectics. While the female zombie is opened up, the Baron opens up as well, exposing his perversion and, exploiting cinematic technique, his climaxing face in extreme close-up. The zombie opens her eyes during the act, awakened perhaps by the extraordinary experience, confounding the stereotypical aestheticized dead female that populates many horror films. Most emphatically, the viewer is opened up, presented sensorially with the force of the body unwound like a great visceral ribbon and intelligibly with desire that exceeds hetero, homo or pathological.

The Baron breathlessly coos ‘spleen, liver, kidneys, gall bladder ...’ It may be argued that this is a version of the phallogogic desire to name and know the female body in order to control it. But entrails are not gendered. This scene is as far from predictable praise in sexual scenes for ‘breasts, legs, ass, mouth’ – organs that have gendered resonance – as it is from a heterosexual act. The Baron exclaims ‘beautiful!’ when he first approaches the body, but suffixes this with ‘the incision is superb’, so his concept of corporeal beauty is immediately deterritorializing, aesthetic perfection found in a non-contusive suture. There is, however, a tension here between the Baron’s naming of the organs and the act’s revolutionary potential. Naming risks structuring the pleasure, ‘since instead of being passages of abundant intensity, these metamorphoses become metaphors of an impossible coupling’ (Lyotard 1993, 23). Entrails are not metaphors. The Baron presents an impossible coupling as *possible*, and indeed as immanent.

Why is this apparently confounding and strange scene pleasurable to view? If we cannot describe the on-screen pleasure within established sexual systems, how can we describe our pleasure at viewing it? Watching the act and the

pleasure experienced from viewing adamantly continues to resist being reified as a repeatable dialectic of pleasure. Thought traditionally, where on-screen flesh and pleasure sets up a demand for a similar or simulated version in the viewing flesh, in what ways does our pleasure reflect these on-screen bodies and pleasures? As the pleasures of the necrophile involve becoming passive to designification, so our pleasure as viewers requires an opening up to the images and their intermingled repulsive pleasures and extraordinary bodies. Lyotard's elaboration of Deleuze and Guattari's *Body without Organs* in *Libidinal Economy* emphasizes the unravelling of signified flesh with the unravelling evoked in desire. To take Lyotard's definition of the flesh literally, the 'body is undone and its pieces are projected across libidinal space, mingling with other pieces in an inextricable patchwork' (Lyotard 1993, 60).

Our viewing bodies must be thought differently, stratified in a different pattern, undone and re-patched so that we are no longer dependent on genitals and gazing eyes as gendering and desiring organs. Viscera and confusion, even repulsion, enter into our pleased viewing bodies. Thus definitions of pleasurable scenarios, bodies and what is desirable at all become re-configured. It could be argued, of course, that this reconfiguration occurs at every libidinal situation. This scene's unusual representations of desire and flesh perhaps make thinking the reconfigurations all desiring bodies go through more immediately accessible, even compulsory. In this instance our relation to cinema is an example of Lyotard's libidinal band, where we 'open the so-called body and spread out all its surfaces' (1993, 1) which, he continues, is made up of the 'not only...' where nothing, organic, inorganic, minutely refined and dishevelled, grossly banalistic, forms desire as pleated, twisting membrane, one great ephemeral skin, the cinesexual membrane of screen and viewer. Embracing the cinemasochism horror images encourage, the viewer, like the cadaver on the table, is eviscerated into splanchnic proliferations.

What is the Baron's desire? Why do we watch it with such an intermingling of disgust, confusion and pleasure? Traditional desire, her body and our intelligible viewing flesh that attempts to make meaning of the image are all undone, coming together in a constellation of pleasure, perversion and openness, breaking down many material and discursive fissures. Remaining in a simple binary of ordinary/extraordinary or normal pleasure/perversion positions relies most often on the subjugated terms – extraordinary, perversion – being defined not by what they are, but by the ways in which they fail the regimental and specific criteria of the dominant terms as observed by the dominant. For example, the opposite of heterosexual is not only homosexual, but also any failure at heterosexuality, from bisexuality and heterosexuality that includes effeminate masculinity, to small fetishes and grand panic narratives such as paedophilia. But between the cracks and fissures of these epistemological pathologies are found an infinite amount of minor and major transgressions of the rigid parameters of normalcy.

The more confounding the perversion, the greater its resistance to being reduced into a conceptual list of symptoms, causal pathologies and even post-modern trendy transgressive sexualities. Our pleasure at the Baron's perversion is difficult to fix into an established perversion that includes the perversions on-

screen and our pleasure at watching them, as well as our horror at our pleasure, and at what the Baron is doing and an endless list of further intensities difficult to demarcate and name. That we cannot comprehend the Baron's perversion is essential to the scene's powers of differentiating the spectator from a traditional viewing dialectic. Rancière points out that

the response to the false question "Do you understand?" implies the constitution of a specific speech scene in which it is a matter of constructing another relationship by making the position of the enunciator explicit. The utterance thereby completed then finds itself extracted from the speech situation in which it functioned naturally (1995, 45).

To contend that we do not understand without answering that claim resists interrupting the visceral pleasure of the scene for a simulacrum of that scene which replaces the material and transformative with the discursive and repeatable, where pleasure reflects the already-thought instead of relishing the unknowable.

Attempting to explain why we take pleasure in the scene inserts us into a taxonomy of perversion. The parameters of the perversion then induct our pleasure instead of deducing the pleasure of the images, exchanging pleasure for external reasons for enjoying the images. The risks and needs to reduce confounding perversions to a series of symptoms and reasons preclude knowledge of them. The Baron's pleasure at the perverse – his taste also ranges over consensual incest, anatomic-epistophilia and autoeroticism (as he enjoys both the masturbatory pleasure the female zombie affords him, but also his ecstasy at dying with a barge pole through his gall bladder) – contrasts with an investigative purpose of the audience setting up of specific questions that must be answered, closing off rather than splaying the pleasures in the film.

Necrophilic lines of flight

In this chapter I have attempted, using a rather contentious form of sexuality, to explore the relationship between bodies and signification based on the taking of an object of desire which problematizes the relationship between the body and being living human. The immobile corpse can mobilize desire through forging new connexions which exploit the ways in which the flesh can be excavated in death. I have purposefully shifted my argument from the epistemology of social necrophilia to necrophilia in films because films, like bodies, offer uses and activities with the flesh unavailable in the 'real' world with 'real' bodies. However two other trajectories resonate with extra-cinematic shared becoming intensities. First, contentiously, necrophilia as seen and as done are viable transcribed perverse sexualities, where the sexual act rather than gendered object can be mirrored in image and world. Second, the acts may encourage use of organs in living lovers beyond monomania – joy in the entrails (albeit stimulated and stimulating through rather than beneath the skin) of self and/or lover. Nonetheless these films are explicitly able to affect the

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viewer into thinking – or unthinking – the simultaneous normal everyday banal and horrifying dead body differently and the reorientations or challenges in reference to gender and sexual act afforded in necrophilia. They both exploit the body's capacity for creating perverse consistencies within hetero paradigms, and remind us of the unfortunate reality of the cadaver as the everyday dead. As the relationship between the necrophiliac and the corpse creates a line of flight, so these often harrowing, fascinating and baroque images fold with the viewer to affect them and form new trajectories of pleasure, both in viewing images and experiencing the body. The representations show us a different sexuality not with which we can replace ours, but which affects us and our understanding of the purposes and functions of bodies as they relate to and are regulated by the massacre signification perpetrates upon flesh and desire.

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Chapter 8

The Ecosophy of Spectatorship

What is the importance of theorizing spectatorship when we so urgently need to rethink 'the world'? By way of an open conclusion I wish to explore what use cinema has as a territory of desire that is inherent in the ecosophy of thought which Guattari urges as a mode of thinking future ethics. This conclusion contextualizes cinesexuality as part of a molecular chaotic universe, which, through its artistic remapping of chaos is catalyst toward revolutions in desire. 'Art makes itself witness to the "it happens" which always occurs before its nature... witness to the fact that there is something unrepresentable at the heart of thought that wishes to give itself material form.' (Rancière 2007, 132) Many questions will be posed which are inherently impossible to answer but are hopefully the very questions which make this book viable. Because I offer only suggestions and not prescriptions in intensifying cinesexual events, each cinesexual and each event of cinesexuality can negotiate as a material response these questions I pose.

Deleuze and Guattari, independently and together, Lyotard, Foucault, Rancière and many other philosophers have written on film, seeing it as belonging to zones of art, global media society, exertion of powers, a specific singularity of perception and most importantly a desiring event. This elucidates the quiet importance of thinking such concepts as cinesexuality. Cinesexuality is one example of

An unexpected process [which] brings out different universes of reference; one sees things differently; not only does subjectivity change, but also all the space of the possible, all the life projects. Desire is always like that: somebody falls in love in a universe that seemed closed and which all of a sudden reveals other possibilities. Love and sexuality are only semiotizations of these mutations of desire. Desire is the fact that in a closed world, a process arises that secretes other systems of reference, which authorize, although nothing is ever guaranteed, the opening of a new degree of freedom (Guattari 1996, 273).

Cinesexual universes are not limited to but include the overwhelming elements of cinema that make singularities of the most ordinary aspects of an image, the strange landscapes and events implausible or impossible in the real world. More than these two obvious interpretations, cinesexuality is found in the simplicity of the seduction of that one idea – 'cinematic image'. Nothing more or less. This describes desire itself – desire is always a mutation because it is the constant which ruptures and placates depending on its qualities and intensities at any moment. We could argue the active continual conversion of desire to signification employs more effort than passivity to the opening of new

universes. More effort is required but less risk, describing the ethical decision for a struggle to a return over possible becomings. Is cinesexuality the want for cinema or the want for the opening of new universes the cinesexual finds through cinematic images?

Becoming-inhuman is becoming-artist-philosopher just as the cinesexual is both artist and philosopher. The question of accountability arises. 'To be a philosopher is to know how to regulate this liberty as it is to be able to liberate oneself from regulations.' (Serres 1995, 104) Serres emphasizes that desiring relations are less relations but contracts. As potentialities, like Blanchot's book to come, cinesexuals await openly intensities from sources we cannot predict. When the cinematic event occurs cinesexuals cannot perceive, nor see, but experience nonetheless. The impossibility of perception comes from the very terrain shifts which occur at each cinesexual event. The subject is different so the possibility of a deferred apprehension of images to preformed signifiers, forms, objects and pleasures is not possible. I have suggested that asemiotic images encourage these territory shifts. In the conclusion I will posit that in order to think an ethics of spectatorship it is the cinesexual subject's responsibility and accountability to become asigned and asemiotic that is at the heart of cinesexuality's power to activate shifts beyond the image-spectator fold. Responsibility does not answer a specific question toward a demarcated entity or issue, or aim for a result. It is the necessary abstract, the responsible not-'I'. 'The responsibility with which I am charged is not mine, and because of it I am no longer myself.' (Blanchot 1995, 13) This book focuses on the spectator, and my use of examples is tactical, experimental, perhaps even arbitrary and personal, but in conclusion we find that there is no inherent value in any image as asignifying and asemiotic. These mobilizations are relevant only in reference to the spectator, and come primarily from the nature of the cinesexual's desire. I will suggest that an ethics of spectatorship is the encounter between Venusian desire and submissive grace – love.

Desire

Cinesexual events occur in what Guattari calls a molecular domain. Guattari's theory of revolutionary ethics – *ecosophy* – deploys three ecological registers. These are the environment, social relations and human subjectivity (2000, 28). For Guattari the most important of these is revolutionizing human subjectivity. Without shifting the self as territory no other territorial relations can alter. Guattari emphasizes the urgent need to negotiate the definition (as practice not object) of 'human' subjectivity in order to address global environmental issues – environment as all territories of human existence and experience. Many have argued we have never been human because, as Agamben emphasizes, the category has no meaning beyond extricating ourselves from the world. As in Deleuze and Guattari's becomings these begin with the first 'non-human', woman, and moves through non-white, animal and natural environment as a real affective connective tissue that globalization attempts to repress or ignore

through the reduction of all things to empty signifiers owned, controlled and as addenda to the human subject, the original victims of asignification to which the majoritarian is parasite. The parasite always takes but never gives, and the minoritarian cannot benefit at all as the majoritarian ‘gets power less because he occupies the centre than because he fills the environment’ (Serres 2007, 95). Lyotard asks ‘use me’, a demand toward the becoming term. How can we use the becoming term, albeit graciously, without being parasites, fetishizing the term’s oppression? How can we avoid falling into using without repeating the ways capitalism, state and other institutions use us? Guattari sees as absolutely key in these practices of human subjectivity the role the media has played in virtualizing the world.

Cinema is both a refined desiring terrain and a global node. Cinema raises the issue of the ablation of all specific singularities through the conflation of media – capital, pleasure, politics, religion, consumption, desire and so forth. The major problems within the increasingly uneven but perceived by the first world as homogenized global nation are not found through addressing individual issues separately. Issues are never separate if the structures which afford discussion of them remain the same. The success of protests is measured by the majoritarian not by revolution but resolution, which requires molecular minoritarian activisms be populated by identical molar subjects. Disagreement, rather than making new concepts from incommensurabilities, is seen by majoritarianism as a failure, thus the creation of minoritarian spaces is validated only if those minoritarians are homogenized as the same. This immediately strikes a chord with the old arguments between so called equality feminists and difference feminists, or homosexual rights and queer theory. The point is that sameness is majoritarianism. Neither is a revolutionary address to alterity found in the creation of a thousand different identities, where the intersectioning of minoritarian elements creates hybrids more akin to standpoint politics based on reified (and thus atrophied) different-froms. Ethical speech is not plagued by the difficulties but creativities of disagreement.

As Deleuze and Guattari have emphasized, concepts come from incommensurable problems and so thought can only exist from disagreement. The ‘speaking as’ compulsion bases politics on resonance and resemblance, requiring an ‘I’ that chooses and knows its responsibility, often caring only for the validation of that ‘I’. Problems occur – those who cannot be heard in the language of the majoritarian do not exist and those who are heard through speaking the majoritarian language are forced to conform with each other even though they are never the same. The most important problem is that elements which do not speak cannot exist. These elements are found not emitting from speaking subjects but from the space between those subjects, be they speaking within themselves or between subjects which may not agree, understand or care, from animals to the ecological system itself. The three ecologies share one crucial quality – that of the in-between. Rancière writes:

In this way the bringing into relationship of two unconnected things becomes the measure of what is incommensurable between two orders: between the order of the

inegalitarian distribution of social bodies in a partition of the perceptible and the order of the equal capacity of speaking beings in general. It is indeed a question of incommensurables. But these incommensurables are well gauged in regard to each other, and this gauge reconfigures the relationships of parts and parties, of objects likely to give rise to dispute, of subjects able to articulate it. It produces both new inscriptions of equality within liberty and a fresh sphere of visibility for further demonstrations. Politics is not made up of power relationships; it is made up of relationships between worlds (1995, 42).

Worlds resonate with Deleuze and Guattari's kingdoms and at each traversal new kingdoms are created. For each kingdom there is a space between, the occupation of which both includes and excludes elements of each world – the space of becomings. Rancière offers a new idea of equality as the point of the becomings of occupants of each world, what Serres would call the point of equilibrium, and new turbulent incommensurabilities arise as clinamen. If clinamen result in the becomings of new worlds the Order of Venus reigns. If one subsumes or ablates the other the Order of Mars arises – love or death. Guattari calls Serres' Order of Venus the 'eros principle' (2000, 59–60). What is consistent in Serres and Guattari is the invocation of eros and desire in navigating ethics.

Revolution is impossible to find in equality as sameness and agreement or Guattari's 'plane of equivalence' (2000, 29). Desire must come from other worlds, irreconcilable, the molecular otherworlds within us and within society. Love never comes from recognition, only imperception. Pleasure in reading and recognizing an image must either take that recognition as a new unique singularity with residual molecules of the 'before' or it turns away and kills the image while maintaining the subject. This turn is the moment of grace. Three elements of the system which maintains majoritarian subjectivity, thereby relegating desire to the Order of Mars, are serial, structure and sign.

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari's critique of serial and structure in their call to becoming, the grammar of desire, subjectivity, perception and affect involves each term to both be a discrete signifier and capable of limited relations with other appropriate signs. Seriality, the analogy of proportion, relates signs to each other, always in a power relation – man and/not woman, man and/not animal and so forth. Seriality affirms what each term, particularly the dominant term, is not. Structure, the analogy of proportionality, makes proportion relations mirror each other, so each example of a proportional relation resonate with other established relations – man is to woman as white is to black as human is to animal. Seriality is the narrative, structure the repetition of narratives from one instance to the next, and signs the reified occupants of these narratives. It is clear these three techniques of perceiving the world directly oppose the desire in becoming to break down proportion, *from* man to woman, or create hybrid proportionalities, hungry man is to man as hungry (were)wolf is to wolf, so the signs change and proportionality is found in shared intensity not equivalent signification of form. If a subject experiences an intensity incommensurable with itself, becomings change the self rather than cure the intensity. Ethics exploits incommensurable intensities. Form multiplies as fold and each aspect

can make unique relations with diverse other form/folds. Narrative becomes segmentary, a kind of mobile or kinetic folding. Proportionality disappears when events of relation are apprehended as singularities. 'Every seduction' writes Lyotard, 'is disjunction.' (Lyotard 1984, 89) The 'victim' of all of these shifts is the subject precisely because the subject must enter into a relation, no longer be ourselves but become *n*: The seduction of the cinesexual. The breakdown of proportionality is particularly important. Traditionally object on screen is to spectator as desiring subject is to desired object. Object and subject therefore must be regulated signs, and their differences from each other emphasized.

The pleasures of asignifying images could be understood through an analogy of proportion, the key difference being the relation is between the asignifying image and therefore the sign it relates to is also asignified, the sign which is us that we cannot signify and therefore do not know but which desires nonetheless. Consistent in all of these relations and the very point which occupies and makes possible the concept of relation at all, be it majoritarian or becoming, is desire. All relation is desire. And all desire is power. As a majoritarian practice power is translated as *pouvoir* and as a becoming as *puissance*. *Puissance* roughly means 'force' as an affective productive intensity while *pouvoir* suggests 'to be able to enforce' or to have one's actions causally effect another. While *puissance* is more akin to a multi-directional relation between two or many and the force is defined by its quality and potential reaction from outside entities, *pouvoir* is power–action toward or upon another entity understood in a causal manner – force as production of a third that is both greater than the primary two elements and elucidates their essential being (and its associated *pouvoir*) as a myth. Segmentary politics makes fractal linear causality found in the grammatization of desire from subject to object, both of which are perceived as self evident signifiers. Recognition continues the 'pseudo-narrative' (Guattari 2000, 38) of desiring subjectivity *needing* an object, a narrative which includes and constitutes dialectic spectatorship and sexuality reduced to established social systems. Guattari maligns linearity as the great destroyer of desire and the point where the oppressive power of capitalist desire emerges (1996, 16).

The homogenization of desires and pleasures in capitalism sees consuming subjects in pseudo-narratives with cinema, with other subjects, with purchases, with ideas, and all are signifiers of nothing except fetish objects which surround and constitute the subject. Objects of desire are linear narratives. The specificity of anything is killed off and ironically recognition is of an empty symbol of 'having' an object of desire which requires others to recognize it. Only the recognition between subjects matter, the qualitative aspect of items as symbols is more or less irrelevant. This becomes a problem when global political issues are reduced to items for consumption – today I am green, tomorrow I give to starving children and I make sure to tell my other 'equals' how I give to the unequal. Visuals circulated through global media are responsible for many fetish issues being transmitted from the oppressed to the oppressor but as long as the oppressor retains their humanity as subject desiring object the actuality of any situation and opportunities for change are prevented. Reiterating my earlier argument, cinesexual spectatorship could be seen as no more or less affective in

revolutionizing politics of alterity. The question is not how real an image is in encouraging us to address difference, but to what extent it makes us different subjects within a shifted ecology as an environment not of subjects populating a space but a system of differential relations. Films within themselves and as sequels before they are made are obvious examples. Technology, outdated before it arrives, seduces a drooling 'what next' by making it seem like a 'what's new'. If we are lost to fashion our 'I' is lost. If our communication is not new enough, pseudo-narratives of communication via electronics is seen to be impossible, we are not 'in the know'. 'Application is not only a return of information onto the observable from which it comes. It is the changing of things by the very presence and activity of knowledge. The great theoreticians like to withdraw their responsibility for virtual or actual catastrophes that come from their inventions or technologies.' (Serres 2007, 213)

Cinematic images are almost impossible to fit into these linear narratives. We can send someone a film which can be watched on a phone, computer or screen but we can never reduce to a bit and send that delirious moment where a gesture or frame folds with us. Where technology makes us disappear, cinesexuality makes our visceral corporeal capacity to be affected and lost to desire all too apparent. Because it is asignifying, thus so are we, the 'thing' cannot be transmitted but there is also no longer a 'we' to transmit it. Guattari sees value in art as invigorating a mental ecosophy which will 'reinvent the relation of the subject to the body, to phantasm... it will lead us to antidotes to mass-media and telematic standardisation... its ways of operating will be more like those of an artist' (2000, 35). Cinesexuality occurs as an experimental territory. Images are the art but *the spectator is the artist*. I am not here returning to Barthes's death of the author and reader as creator of meaning. After Blanchot and Foucault the spectator authors without authorizing. We cannot reflect on our artistry but must be aware of and responsible for the ways our creation through openness to art affects our creation of the world. Being a subject we create new territories rather than regulating ourselves as molar subjects within those established. Our artistic creativity makes interkingdoms within us. If politics is found in relations between worlds, then the formulation of those worlds through creative desire and reception is as much part of the space between which invokes our becomings.

Ecology as an environmental issue, whatever environment we are speaking of, is the space which subjects occupy that structures those subjects as belonging or not that environment, able to speak and be heard but also the silences which are that environment such as an environment populated by both unresponsive and affective/affected. Animals, the natural environment but also the unresponsive image constitute territories where the relations between humans can alter based in the human relations with the inhuman. The great flaw with the work on animals of those such as Haraway (particularly 2003) and the majority of essays in the anthologies edited by Steeves (2001), Rothfels (2002) and Wolfe (2003) is that they retain the image-ideational-relation. Even Singer is notorious for evaluating ethics based on similarity. While ecosophy isn't reducible or limited to animal rights the becomings which are animal always find their being in

comparison and *use* toward human knowledge, human evaluation of the rights of the other (rather than the rights of the human to use the other, whether this use is ontological, ideational or actual enslavement, torture and slaughter) even if that use is toward a post-human, post-modern departure. The fashion for rethinking species in relation to post-human 'life' can be critiqued resonant with critiques of the fetishization of woman in becoming woman although as I have argued, the human is a more compelling and majoritarian oppressive category and the lack of speech which comes from all a-human discourse makes discourse itself the issue. Here is why speech, incommensurability, unthought and silence are so vital in rethinking ecosophical relations with those we can never commensurate or communicate with ourselves. When women became present (arguably to a lesser or greater degree) the environment of exchange of women in marriage thus included an acknowledgement by men of their environment as constitutive of their relation with each other. The third relation of women was introduced, breaking the dialectic into at least three perspectival trajectories. When we desire cinesexually we must think what extra-cinesexual social relations and intensities the break away from dialectic communication will affect. As the fold of image and spectator demands a rethinking of human subjectivity so too does this third trajectory affect social relations. We can see these three ecologies are both specific singularities and inherently affective of each other. The three ecologies together constitute one ecology, just as each includes minor or molecular ecologies based on singular events within them. What then is the element that is most important for revolution? According to Guattari the first and easiest minor revolution comes from the human subject and specifically the desiring subject because without a reconfiguration of this ecology relation and environmental contextualisation cannot be thought. Without the subject as occupant of an environment reconfigured, the environment remains external and observed *by* the subject.

While the grand issues of global politics and ecology seem to reduce cinema to an unimportant recreation Guattari is adamant 'the revolution must not be exclusively concerned with visible relations of force on a grand scale, but will also take into account molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire' (2000, 28). Cinema is a molecular terrain which approaches global media while remaining within the world of Deleuze and Guattari's definition of art. It is a transversal domain. Environment describes all connective events between subjects and other elements. Practices of watching are practices of subjectivity, and are not discrete from any other practices of being privileged category of human, but are always social relations. Berardi urges of the need to assemble to create new territories rather than new majoritarian groups, 'this process of overturning is linked to a repeated long-term (perhaps extremely long term) dislocation of the modes, the procedures and the instruments of the production of knowledge (a passage from the power structure to an autonomous social arrangement)' (1980, 168). Any territory where knowledge is produced – that is, where an environment of representation demands compulsory consistent recognition – makes it a territory necessary to overthrow. The territory is the environment and the mode of transmission, which occurs through the subject,

is the ethical technique. The social relation is the space between representation and apprehension but also between cinema and world.

Cinesexual events which desire and take pleasure in the unseeable which is seen, emphasize intelligence over knowledge if we define Guattari's 'intelligence' through an ethical notion of desire elicited in the shift from perceptibility as knowledge to sensibility as materially encountered unthought. The becomings of images are found in the freedom we give them to create unnatural participations with our perceptions. Their becomings traverse spectator as constellation and cinesexuals in society as a spectatorial singularity. Guattari sees traversal as a necessary choice which explodes the myth of transference where all worlds are commensurable and keeping each discrete keeps the powers of production of meaning safe. Traversal mobilizes the becomings of worlds by creating participations between different systems of thought. Traversal refuses equivalences or transference, rather demanding the crossing of borders and creating new worlds from bringing incommensurable borders together, resulting in hybrid territories which both acknowledge the affects each world has on all others and the need to destabilize hermeneutic structures. To claim spectatorship does not matter or count outside of viewing is ridiculous. It does not however affect outside worlds in a transferable way. Hybrid territories also avoid (to a certain extent) the risks in taking a 'thing' as object of becoming – woman as territory is less fetishistic than woman as object.

Spectator subjects are not extricable from social subjects, biological subjects, legal subjects or sexual subjects. Certain particle affects will dissipate more or less into the world, a cinematic dialectic structure in its entirety, however, will not. Our becomings transform our perceptions to sensations and knowledge to thought. In spite of being inorganic they are as capable of becomings as we. Cinesexual desire is precisely desire for what we do not know, what we do not want which we do not await knowing, which we will never know. If we do not know what we want, or cannot know what we see but see nonetheless we do not know ourselves. Ergo if we like what we do not know or perceive is part of our likes, the image does not like or agree with us. Time collapses, no longer guaranteeing a past which will reflect in and as the future. This occurs not in the apprehension and pleasure of the image but of *us*. Through apprehending and desiring differently we are different simultaneous with the image – our respective becomings and the becomings of images. Deleuze and Guattari's final point of becoming, becoming imperceptible, is neither invisible nor insensible but asignified and asubjective. It involves, as all becomings, an emphasis on a 'pre-personal understanding of time, of the body, of sexuality' (Guattari 2000, 68). Pre-personal is not infantile although it does resonate with a becoming-child, describing self as always before and beyond self, an immanence which, understood through traditional time, is gone before it arrives and which never arrives just like an experience of the image. We desire and are taken by pleasure nonetheless, because sexual pleasure as love is 'an open ended strategic game' (Foucault 1997a, 298).

Grace

Desire and friendship describe in different but resonant ways the relation a subject has with elements or things outside itself. 'The friend who appears in philosophy no longer stands for an extrinsic persona, an example or empirical circumstance, but rather for a presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 3) The benevolent nature of desire and friendship suggests this kind of relation is one where the subject seeks to be a good friend. Through becoming the subject does not form friendships only with those which will affirm their own signification. The more unpalatable the friend, the more urgently needed the friendship. Each becoming element suggested by Deleuze and Guattari is more unpalatable than the last for a majoritarian subject to create relations with. The forsaking of self required in ethics is even more unpalatable in that the friend is not known at all but simply any element which may need to create a relation with the folds within ourselves of which we are unaware. We as friend and our friend form real and affective becomings but here both signs are imperceptible. The offer of friendship is not given, it is a chance encounter which can only happen to the extent that we gift the offering of opening up, we submit to refolding and that we are aware (without knowing) the irreversible new self we are through our refoldings and becomings. Just as we are always desiring and desire without object or aim, so we are desired by and facilitate desirings from perceptible or imperceptible elements. Grace, according to Lyotard, is 'the freeing of the mind from all diachrony, from all tasks of synthesis' (1991, 163). Synthesis resolves entities with signified possibilities of being, converting entities as event to signs. Diachrony requires knowledge of present and possible future relations of signs. Grace demands loss of both, yet the entities and the relation are still there. There emerges a seemingly impossible situation.

The question of the ethics of relations is the most difficult of this book. If folds and fractal becoming selves are to be redeemed from the post-modern death of subjectivity which sees existence as an anything goes vacuous relativity then their existential realities must be addressed. The current obsession with the post-human must become inhuman. Becomings are always negotiative. Like folds they need (at least one) other element, although this element is no longer dialectically dividuated. Grace may be the moment where the self gifts itself to powers of the participatory entity as imperceptible, to make demands, or remain silent, or speak in a way which is sensed but not perceived, in another language, within another territory and world. It is the most crucial of creative points because it is the moment we may most be tempted to say 'too hard' and give up. Giving up is when the fold threatens to snap, where degree zero implodes, the smallest sliver when two incommensurables actually cross their becoming thresholds. It is the point where the masochist either commits suicide or launches a new trajectory, where the spectator turns off the screen or turns on to dissipative affects. It is only experienced as limit because there is no pay off or new signpost, one must be created and so with grace comes the new line of flight, direction without aim, another task which may be unbearably difficult.

This is the ecosophical contract we make with the world through forsaking the power and safety of the category of human as majoritarian, a contract 'at once natural and human. Together these laws [of love] ask each of us to pass from the local to the global, a difficult and badly marked trail but one that we must blaze. Never forget the place from which you depart, but leave it behind and join the universal' (Serres 2003, 50). Contentiously I could argue it is also the point of desire being as fulfilling or as quickened into the most intense node as it can ever be, without reverting to a Lacanian system.

Cinemasochism gifts the self we cannot know. Acknowledging that we are in a continual state of becomings which affect other nodes of intensity without necessarily choosing to be so is the gift of ethics without choice but with the best accountability we are capable of. Desire and friendship have no friends or objects of desire. Because we are always within multiple relations, ourselves elements of an ecology of desiring relations, perceived and imperceptible, forceful and unconscious, the only offer of love we can make is the offer itself – thought as possibility, desire as risk, pleasure as creative. Desire and thought must attach themselves to finite realities while being pure potentiality. In what ways can unthought attach to cinema and thus cinesexual intensities attach to other worlds to mobilize ethical becomings? How can asemiotic events actualize real ethical relations when each element is neither stable nor signified? Which intensities can we enter into participation with to launch becomings that seem most productive in altering territories? Accountable ethical spectatorship and subjectivity is not found in what we are, and desired others are not found in what they are, but *that* we are and *that* they are, the beings which are but cannot be known. The human is an essential practice of unification and maintenance of relations of proportion and proportionality. Art makes us inhuman because it proliferates the beings within us and it is freer to play with and offer asignifying systems. The human is the very category Guattari sees as the subject because it traverses social subjectivity, science, politics and other signifying systems by separating the sign from 'everything else'. The human is always majoritarian. Because art makes tactical new territories from chaos as the pure potentialities of molecular intensities it is inherently inhuman. Through it 'we become universe. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming-zero' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 169). Zero is not nothing but voluminous everything, the Dogon Egg, without binaries (1 or 2), serialization (1 then 2) or causality ($1+1 = 2$). Chaos is thus defined as everything as potentiality and possibility through negotiation with signifying systems. All signifying systems are is human – created, maintained and enforced by humans. When becoming larval we both acknowledge and repudiate our human selves as parasites.

History hides the fact that man is the universal parasite, that everything and everyone around him is a hospitable space. Plants and animals are always his hosts; man is always necessarily their guest. Always taking, never giving. He bends the logic of exchange and of giving in his favour when he is dealing with nature as a whole (Serres 2007, 24).

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Humans create all without giving, just as the majoritarian owes a debt to the minoritarian he is parasite of in his creation of others. We must remember the larval is always a parasite because it must come from the deconstruction of the already and is always within relations. It does not exist in a vacuum.

How can we be ethical parasites? The logic of exchange implodes the logic of comparison, where the Order of Mars is the war on the other the army has itself created. The enemy/victim's only transgression is not being the same. Signification is the ultimate parasitic act. In reading images we become parasites of the asignifying elements of images, they our hosts rather than forming an ecosophical terrain which produces and creates new ideas from the incommensurabilities of which the parasite is so afraid. Powers of humanity are not volitional or conspiratorial of course; they are enforced by totalizing machines of state, army, church and government and are internalized and self-regulated in individuals through family structures and capitalism. These systems rely on their very emergence through parasiting the transgressive, the anathaema, the hybrid-orphan and the unfurling elements of becomings – woman, animal, imperceptible. Inhuman humans are counted as mad, creative but not functional, animalistic, feminine and other terms which manage to safely subsume the radical elements without acknowledging them but nonetheless parasite of them. Becomings, like art and minoritarians, are always inhuman and this is why art makes us inhuman. Thus desire and ethics are inhuman and grace an inhuman act, interrogating the myth of 'humane' acts. Technically the more human an act the more oppressive and parasitic.

The question is not whether images are important or unimportant, because they are entertainment or even because they are pleasurable as 'art' rather than not political because they are not 'real'. The disagreement of these systems as discrete makes their relation more urgent because new concepts come from where systems are incommensurable. The question is how does cinesexuality make us inhuman? Accountable cinesexuality simultaneously refuses the proportionality of spectatorship with sexuality and accepts that no matter how unimportant or unreal an encounter is, it will always refold our selves. Maintaining the self, pleasures and desires of cinesexuality belong only to the spectatorial event ignore the affective forces we have which we cannot know and the selves we cannot perceive. They make the self unaccountable because they divide the self up into situated molar entities which populate environments and the environments, like the selves, are perceived as discrete – subjective signs in signifying spaces. Ecosophy explodes this myth. Guattari writes:

At the heart of all ecological praxes there is an a-signifying rupture, in which the catalysts of existential change are close at hand, but lack expressive support from the assemblage of enunciation; they therefore remain passive and are in danger of losing their consistency – here are to be found the roots of anxiety, guilt and more generally psychopathological repetitions (2000, 45).

Guilt and anxiety are the atrophic responses of an atrophied subject, asking not 'what can I do' but 'I cannot do anything because a relation cannot be made

with the rupturing event'. Bleeding heart guilt, anxiety as 'I'll do nothing' and even transgression which does the opposite are reiterative not creative. I do not wish here to suggest we thinkers are heroes not plagued by these feelings. Quite the opposite is so. Ruptures present an almost impossible scenario and certainly one for which no prescription or plan of action can be made. Not only must we be able to sense a rupture but also accept it through the grace of altering ourselves without aim and consequently use it in an ethical way. Ruptures force grammatical alterations. Because there is no speech with which to enunciate the rupture when it occurs, thereby use it, within existent signifying systems, how or whether we can be affected by it and become part of the new territory of enunciation is the question. We are compelled to ask 'what's this, what's happening, what's next' without the 'what' or the responses being available in current territories of language and knowledge. An active but attentive passivity is required and a deep inevitable dissatisfaction that this new relation or friend asks of us without giving us suggestions or solutions. From this also comes the risk of desire giving way to melancholy and the deep sadness which is inevitable (but not all) in doing without knowing, in never being able to be the friend one wishes to be. Resisting this trap itself, which comes after sensing the imperceptible rupture, shows that the selection of active passivity over ignorance is far from an either/or turn. Revolution is difficult for these reasons. It is easier to plan a new finite territory to overlay this one than to exploit the ruptures within this to alter the ecology as a whole; molecular, viral and infective revolutions rather than molar replacements.

Deleuze and Guattari define art as a composition of chaos and patterns of art which repeat signified territories are malevolent not because they are evil but because they are clichés (1994, 204). While this may have the vague smell of a bourgeois comment, clichés, be they persons or artworks, are comfortable. Not 'getting' something and refusing it is an unethical act which refuses the scary responsibility that comes from vertiginous thought. Serres states 'to say disorder is to say one is both unwilling and unable to conceive it' (Serres 1995, 109). Serres' use of the word 'conceive' is vital, because it emphasizes the active nature of addressing chaos. Conceiving disorder either conceives potential (creativity, Venus, love) or death (signification, Mars, war). Both decisions demand an address however, so when exploring grace willingness is more important than capacity. Rather than chaos being a kind of base level beneath our regulating or ordering of it, all orders are various configurations of chaos. The one with which we are most familiar is where we communicate with language, signifying systems and knowledge rather than incommensurable speech, asignification and asemiosis, unthought and imperceptible sensing. As ethical spectators we must remember without historicizing, see without recognizing, speak in silence, act and affect upon the unthinkable and encounter without knowing. We must create incommensurable and illogical alliances while acknowledging all alliances are essential based not on their commensurability but urgency, and the greater the alterity of the terms of becoming, the more is at risk and the more ruthlessly the myth of human subjectivity is interrogated. Art as philosophy is one element in an ecology of becomings which creates new territories through an encounter

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with chaos as forming unnatural (or unfamiliar) connections between the particles of chaos. The event of spectatorship is an act of love. Irigaray defines love as ‘a departure which does not go counter to anything save the perception that nothing counters... the immensity discovered in the first instances of love’ (1992, 214). Serres urges love is ‘the spot between knowledge and ignorance’ (2007, 246). Desire is the undifferentiated flow connecting bodies, power, society and ecosophical territories, within the folds and between all relations. Grace is the impossible ethical turn, the creative and crucial sacrifice of the human when, encountered with desire, compels us toward infinite inhuman becomings – opening up toward the becomings of others and the becomings to come. Love is the encounter between grace and desire.

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