

A CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS THROUGH  
GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATARRI

by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

A Contemporary Feminist Critique of Psychoanalysis Through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

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It can be seen through the writings of such feminist writers as Juliet Mitchell, Jacqueline Rose and Luce Irigaray; Sigmund Freud's work on psychoanalysis has offered feminists challenges, revolutionized theories, and patriarchal targets. Specifically, the Oedipus complex locates the very psychological reproduction of patriarchy and explains the structure of sexual roles in Western society. Although Freud had no feminist intent in his writings, feminists have managed to find his work useful. The dilemma facing contemporary feminism, which is identified as post-1995 feminism committed to corporeality and sexual difference, is that psychoanalysis proposes explanations for, but fails to offer solutions for how to break away, from the reproduction of patriarchy and its rigid sexual roles. The goal of contemporary feminism is to break away from the circularity of the Oedipus complex and into new ways of thinking. *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari offer different modes of thinking and poignant critiques of psychoanalysis. The feminist uses and interpretations of Deleuze and Guattari by such writers as Elizabeth Grosz, Claire Colebrook and Rosi Braidotti constitute the most useful move beyond the circularity of the Oedipus complex.

This thesis examines Freud's writings, particularly those centered on the Oedipus complex, using an infusion of an earlier generation of feminist critiques, particularly that of Luce Irigaray. The research focuses on how to live with certain aspects of psychoanalysis such as the Oedipus complex that are harmful for women, and it develops new theories that break away from the oedipal triangle. Such critiques and different modalities of thinking can be found in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. The writings of these feminist authors, and the incorporation Luce Irigaray's work on sexual difference, have helped to dismantle the circularity and dominance of the Oedipus complex by introducing a struggle for new ideas related to thinking of difference and becoming as ways of thinking and living.

## **DEDICATION**

In loving memory of my father James Blake.

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To my thesis panel, Ed Cohen, Josephine Diamond and Elizabeth Grosz, I am incredibly fortunate to have such a talented group of people reviewing my work and providing me with insight.

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Many thanks have to be given to my family. To my best friend Akil, for listening, reading, talking and laughing with me through this process. To my husband Ben, who believes work like this is important and helps me believe that the theories that matter to me can inspire and change ways of living. To my mother, who told me this had to get done, as mothers tend to do and who I am enjoying getting to know and love dutifully.

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## INTRODUCTION

Feminist writings on psychoanalysis boomed during the 1970s and 1980s as will be seen in chapter one through the writings of such authors as Jacqueline Rose, Luce Irigaray, and Juliet Mitchell. What is so interesting about Freud's writings on the Oedipus complex is how they explain the splitting of the sexes and their roles in a phallogocentric, patriarchal society. While it is useful to understand the reproduction of this relation, there is still no guidance or answer found to avoiding oedipalization in psychoanalysis.

Deleuze and Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus* in French in 1972, and it was translated in English in 1983, and *A Thousand Plateaus* was published in French in 1980 and available in English in 1987, occurring at the same time feminists were writing about Freud and around a time when Jacques Lacan was still a powerful figure in France. This thesis is specifically addressing Freud's writings on psychoanalysis, but it is important to note the influence that Lacan had not only on psychoanalysis, but on feminism as well, and certain terms that come up in this thesis are specific to Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Taking a contemporary stance and looking back thirty years during a time where psychoanalysis was the dominant framework; however, times have changed. Psychoanalysis may not maintain the same kind of dominance in theory as before, but the problem still remains that the oedipal hold still exists and how do feminists in particular, address this?

Chapter one will explore in detail the pre-oedipal phases and Oedipus complex as understood by Freud, followed by feminist uses and critiques of psychoanalysis. The feminist writings focus primarily on those of Luce Irigaray since her critiques and responses of psychoanalysis will be returned to and used by contemporary feminists. Her

writings are useful for examining not only Freud's theories, but those of Deleuze and Guattari as well. Freud gives a thorough account of the development of the sexes and how they come to differ psychically in a patriarchal society. It is through the Oedipus complex that the sexes split as well as the moment where patriarchy reproduces itself.

The writings of Deleuze and Guattari on psychoanalysis will be addressed in the second chapter since I will argue they offer a new way of thinking beyond the oedipal dynamics. In two of their collaborative books, they develop several creative theories and concepts that help reject binary logic, particularly binaries that are encountered in a phallogocentric society. My aim in chapter two is to demonstrate how Deleuze and Guattari's theories are positive and useful responses to the Oedipus complex and rethinking psychoanalysis.

Deleuze and Guattari will lead into the third chapter, which will address how contemporary feminists have used their collaborative work as well as the works of just Deleuze. The argument that will be made that Deleuze and Guattari's work is a positive and useful alternative to what is offered by the Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis does not offer solutions beyond Oedipus, and Deleuze and Guattari address this shortcoming that feminists have found in using psychoanalytic theory. However, this thesis has a specifically feminist intent and will address what is problematic in their writings for women, and in doing so will focus on the work of Luce Irigaray.

This thesis critiques Freudian psychoanalysis while at the same time addressing whether it is feasible to move beyond its dominance, or if it is necessary to work within its framework with its given theories regarding the two sexes. The works of past



feminists, contemporary feminists as well as Deleuze and Guattari offer ways of theorizing the problem that is confronted by the Oedipus complex: the reproduction of patriarchy. Feminism is a broad term and there are many difference kinds of feminism. The feminism I put forward throughout this thesis is a contemporary feminism that is committed to difference, particularly sexual difference as well as corporeality.

The writings of Deleuze and Guattari do offer something new and different, but are their writings sufficient for difference feminists and do they adequately address sexual difference? These are concerns that have existed since the earlier writings of feminists on psychoanalysis and why it was and still is problematic. Sexual difference still remains a theoretical and political issue for contemporary feminists and will be addressed throughout. Difference feminism, inspired by theorists such as Irigaray is a philosophical and political undertaking that sees sexual difference as irreducible to the singular masculine model. Sexual difference is thus at the heart of difference feminism and finds that any attempts at equality do not challenge phallogentrism, which privileges masculinity. Therefore, the writings of Deleuze and Guattari will be examined in the end, through sexual difference.

## CHAPTER ONE

If we keep on speaking the same language together, we're going to reproduce the same history. Begin the same old stories all over again... The same difficulties, the same impossibility of making connections. The same... Same... Always the same.  
Luce Irigaray in "When Our Lips Speak Together" from *The Sex Which is Not One*

The Oedipus complex is central to Freud's writings with regard to familial relations as well as sexuality and sexual difference. It is through his writings on the Oedipus complex that the differences between boys and girls become clear, and sometimes not so clear. Psychoanalysis elaborates the very social construction of masculinity and femininity as they are analyzed for each sex. There was resistance on the side of feminism to Freud's writings surrounding this topic, particularly during the 1970's when psychoanalysis became a dominant framework and manner of theorizing. When reading Freud, certain terms like penis-envy and the affiliation of femininity with passivity and masculinity with activity, were highly problematic for feminist theorists. Certain feminist authors such as Juliet Mitchell in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* emphasized the importance of reading Freud not as a "prescription" but rather as a "description" of how patriarchal culture is produced. This open-mindedness was crucial in opening up feminism to psychoanalysis in order to generate new ideas and understandings.

For Freud, in the beginning of child development, there are few psychological differences between boys and girls. From the time they are born to around the age of five, there are certain steps or undertakings that lead up to the Oedipus complex. Freud's studies on infantile sexuality showed that children indeed have sexuality, one that is primarily auto-erotic, polymorphous and is primarily incestuous. During the child's

development, there are three erotogenic zones and phases: oral, anal and phallic. The oral stage is first since breast feeding, or bottle feeding creates a very strong bond, typically between mother and child, and a child's world at this stage is consumed by and completely reliant on others to feed and nurture him/her. This is why the mother, or the mother equivalent such as a wet-nurse, is the first love object for boys and girls. Freud demonstrates that sucking on the part of the child goes beyond extracting nutrition and can become erotogenic. He writes,

Our study of thumb-sucking or sensual sucking has already given us the three essential characteristics of an infantile sexual manifestation. At its origin it *attaches* itself to one of the vital somatic functions; it has as yet no sexual object, and is thus *auto-erotic*; and its sexual aim is dominated by an *erotogenic zone*" (Volume 7, 99).

What Freud has made clear in his studies on sensual sucking, which infants often do with pacifiers, thumbs or even the breast when they are no longer hungry, is find comfort in the act of sucking. The baby is no longer seeking nourishment but is finding pleasure in this act. The erotogenic zones are not arbitrary. Freud discovers in his study above that the phases are linked to maturing bodily functions, and particularly eating, defecating and urinating in correspondence with the oral, anal and phallic phases. Although these phases vary and happen at different moments in child development, a child does not have to renounce the former for the present one and there is a sense of fluidity between them. Both the boy and the girl go through these phases and at this moment in their lives, from birth to around the age of five, they do not differ much according to Freud.

The anal phase is the second pre-genital phase in the development of the child and occurs during a time when the child undertakes potty training. During this phase, Freud finds that "the opposition between two currents, which runs through all sexual life, is

already developed: they cannot yet, however, be described as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine,’ but only as ‘active’ and ‘passive’ (Volume 7, 117).<sup>1</sup> The anus is both active and passive: in the act of defecation, it is active; however, in relation to the activity of the stool, the anus is considered passive. There is another interesting aspect of the anal phase, an equation that Freud formulates that is relevant for thinking of the psychological differences between boys and girls. He writes in his chapter “On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism,” “the concepts *faeces* (money, gift), *baby* and *penis* are ill-distinguished from one another and are easily interchangeable” (Volume 17, 296). This equation impacts the development more so for the girl than for the boy, which will become apparent after a “normal” resolution of the girl’s Oedipus complex.<sup>2</sup>

The phallic stage is the final phase before the Oedipus complex and even during this phase, children behave quite similarly in the realm of their sexuality. Phallic in this

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<sup>1</sup> Without reading further into the use and association employed by Freud, there would be something quite controversial for feminists. However, as Mitchell highlights in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Freud’s use of these terminologies together was out of mere convenience rather than a commitment to them (115). Freud himself emphasizes in his chapter “Transformations of Puberty” that masculine and feminine can be affiliated with “*activity/passivity*, sometimes in a *biological* and sometimes, again, in a *sociological* sense” (141). For Freud, all instincts are active, in biology, the sperm is active and the egg is passive in the sense that it waits and it is the sperm that seeks. There are masculine and feminine traits in society, although he denies that there are truly masculine and feminine people. He further equates activity with sadism, and passivity with masochism. In his discussion on sexual aberrations, he describes sadism as being active because of its “aggressive component” and the pleasure found in pain. Masochism is viewed as “sadism turned round upon the subject’s own self” (Vol. 7, 71-72). It is therefore passive because it is the subject’s acceptance of pain. His understanding of masochism is flawed which will be demonstrated in the chapter on Deleuze. However, the concern at hand with affiliating these terminologies is the placement of the feminine as passive. For “normal” femininity to occur, the woman must accept her role as a passive being and will forever more be the passive being in relation to the activity of masculinity. Therefore it is understandable that his use of these words came as an outrage to feminists. However, Mitchell, using Freud’s own writings demonstrates how he found these words to be limiting as well. Activity/passivity is another binary logic that places the category of the “other” in a devalued relation to the dominant subject.

<sup>2</sup> For the child, quite often feces are associated with a gift that they can give to their caretakers, especially since it is something that is produced in their bodies and comes from them. Children at this age have very little understanding or sense of disgust and shame thus facilitating this connection between feces and gifts. Since their exterior reproductive organs are not a focal point at this time in their development, they often understand a baby as being born through the anus, thus making them affiliate their feces with a baby. As will be seen during the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the male baby becomes a penis substitute for the woman who is always lacking and suffering from penis envy. Since she cannot have the phallus, a male baby becomes the substitute, the completing the equation of feces=gift=baby.

sense implies the active/masculine sexuality that both the boy and the girl experience. More so in this phase than during the anal phase does the alignment of activity with masculinity become much more apparent. The boy's phallic sexuality is centered on his penis and will always be his penis after the Oedipus complex. However, for the girl, it is her clitoris that is considered her active/phallic/masculine organ during the phallic phase. The clitoris is the penis equivalent in its activity and this phase is not a focus on genitals in general, but of the phallic organs.<sup>3</sup> Although children understand that there are differences between men and women, boys and girls, they do not yet attribute these differences to genitalia. Freud writes of the male child,

It is natural for him to assume that all other living beings humans and animals, possess a genital like his own; indeed, we know that he looks for an organ analogous to his own in inanimate things as well. (Volume 19, 309)

The same logic can be applied to the girl as well, that she is unaware of genital differences and believes that based on her own body, both men and women have genitals similar to her own. During this phase, as in the preceding phases, the mother remains the love-object for both boys and girls.<sup>4</sup>

Around the age of five, both boys and girls will enter in their Oedipus complex and the lives of both sexes will begin to diverge from a seeming sameness into something quite different. The Oedipus complex is a family complex, involving mother, father and

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<sup>3</sup> Phallic sexuality in children during this phase does not relate to reproduction, which is why it is the clitoris and not the vagina is the central organ at this moment. At this point in time, children become cognizant of their phallic organs the little girl finds pleasure in her clitoris and the boy find pleasure in his penis, both through masturbation.

<sup>4</sup> Through all three stages, there are minimal differences according to Freud. However, this will all change and prompt the Oedipus complex in both boys and girls. Freud is explicit in using the Oedipus complex to apply to both sexes, rather than applying the Electra complex to the girl. In doing so, he eliminates differences between them. For the sake of egalitarian feminism, Freud's argument is useful. It assumes that boys and girls are equal and that certain differences can be equalized onto one field. The differences that exist between boys and girls are actually analogous rather than complementary. This will change during the Oedipus complex.

child and reveals the “horror of incest” (Volume 16, 335).<sup>5</sup> It is also a moment whereupon the child will enter into the rules of society, or the rules of the totem. Freud explains the development of civilization and the functioning of society in “Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics.” A totem in pre-Western and non-Western societies is an animal which serves as an emblem for a social group and is seen and worshipped as the primordial father.<sup>6</sup> There are two rules within totemism: prohibition of parricide and incest. Freud writes,

The first of them, the law protecting the totem animal, is founded wholly on emotional motives: the father had actually been eliminated, and in no real sense could the deed be undone. But the second rule, the prohibition of incest, has a powerful practical basis as well. Sexual desires do not unite men but divide them. . . Each of them [brothers] would have wished, like his father, to have all the women to himself. . . The totemic system was as it were, a covenant with their father, in which he promised them everything that a childish imagination may expect from a father—protection, care, and indulgence—while on the other side they undertook to respect his life, that is to say, not to repeat the deed which had brought destruction of their real father. (Volume 13, 144)

According to Freud’s writings, totemism is the mythical origin of patriarchy and the explanation for its continuation. Totemism marks the moment whereupon the Symbolic father and his law enter into social order.<sup>7</sup> Parricide and incest are the two repressed wishes that are stored in the unconscious after a “normal” resolution of the Oedipus

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<sup>5</sup> Freud bases his Oedipus complex on the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* written by Sophocles. In the story, Oedipus both unknowingly marries his mother and kills his father. Therefore, Freud is discussing the fantasy and not the actuality of incest.

<sup>6</sup> Freud writes “psychoanalysis has revealed that the totem animal is in reality a substitute for the father” (Volume. 13, 141). In his writings, Freud discusses the “totem meal” whereupon a group of brothers who were kicked out of their home by their father, a jealous man who kept all of the women to himself, return and kill their father and eat his body. Freud claims that this is the beginning of civilization and also the reason why the killing of the father and incest are prohibited. Furthermore, Freud writes “in the act of devouring him they [the brothers] accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength” (Volume 13, 142). Therefore, the guilt of killing their father, internalizes the father within these brothers and makes his presence stronger.

<sup>7</sup> The Symbolic father is what Lacan discusses and not Freud. Juliet Mitchell elaborates how the Symbolic father is subsequently replaced by the actual living father. It is this Symbolic father found in totemism that is the dead father that has the most power and hold over his sons out of guilt for their betrayal. In this sense, it solidifies the patriarchal pact that occurs between father and son (394).

complex occurs. Freud has demonstrated through his writings the patriarchal pact that occurs between fathers and sons, which is demonstrated clearly in totemism. The father will protect the son, provided he follows the father's law, and will one day be in the father's position of power. This pact repeats itself every generation and the role of women is transactional. The desire to keep all women is what leads to the death of the original father by his sons, but this wish, even in "civilized" societies remains intact. The guilt of killing the father remains so strong, and the dead father is quite powerful and his presence and authority remain within the sons.

Although both boys and girls endure an Oedipus complex, they do not experience these phases similarly as they each once did in their earlier phases. Some events may parallel, but the end result is entirely different for each sex. The boy's Oedipus complex begins with the threat of castration. During the phallic stage, the penis is the focused erotogenic zone, although oral and anal impulses coexist, thus increasing the likelihood of the boy being caught masturbating. Quite frequently, no heed is taken to these threats since they seem unbelievable. However, once the boy has viewed female genitals, usually a sister's, the threats will resurface and convince the boy that it is possible to lose his penis. Freud writes in "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," "More or less plainly, more or less brutally, a threat is pronounced that this part of him which he values so highly will be taken away from him" (Volume 7, 316). Threats of taking away something valued are quite familiar to the child since the child remembers having to give up the mother's breast as well as stool at one point. In the mind of the male child, it is very possible that he may have to give up his penis (Volume 7, 317). The boy sees that the girl does not have a penis and he believes that she was castrated as a form of punishment and in fact

that all women, including his mother, are castrated beings. He also becomes cognizant that he cannot have his mother as his love object. From this realization, the threat of castration, Freud finds that the boy has three choices, or perhaps outcomes in resolving of his Oedipus complex. For “normal” masculinity to occur, the boy will have to give up his mother and align with his father, understanding that he can have a woman of his own, so long as it is not his mother. This is the patriarchal pact, therefore introducing the boy into a world that privileges the phallus. He retains his penis, and sees women as beings that are lacking in this sense. There are two other responses to the dilemma of castration: homosexuality and fetishism. In homosexuality according to Freud, the boy identifies with his mother and takes his father as love object, therefore accepting castration as his mother once did and he may become a feminine subject. The boy “loses” his penis, thus becoming feminized and may have male love objects as a result of this. There is another side to homosexuality that Freud writes about in “The Sexual Theories of Children.” Rather than choosing castration himself, the boy could find horror in the castration of women, thus rendering them so repulsive that he is unable to love them. He writes,

Real women, when he comes to know them later, remain impossible as sexual objects for him, because they lack the essential sexual attraction; indeed, in connection with another impression of his childhood life, they may even become abhorrent to him” (Volume. 9,194).

In this case, the boy protects himself from castration by avoiding women sexually and he directs himself to men while preserving his phallus. Lastly, fetishism as described by Freud is found in some men as a way to protect themselves from castration by disavowing what they see when viewing female genitals.<sup>8</sup> He writes in “Fetishism,”

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<sup>8</sup> Disavowal is a manner in which one can accept while simultaneously deny something. In this case, the boy disavows his mother’s castration because he accepts it but protects himself from it by using an object, the fetish, which is the replacement of the mother’s penis.



To put it more plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the women's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and—for some reasons familiar to us—does not want to give up. (Volume 21, 352)

A fetish is usually an inanimate object that is used for sexual purposes and is the replacement of the mother's phallus which protects him from recognizing his mother's castration. Sexual fulfillment can only occur with the use of the fetish thus rendering it vastly different from “normal” sexuality.

The girl's Oedipus complex varies from the boy's and is much more complicated. Upon sight of a boy's genitals, the girl will experience a feeling of envy and inadequacy on her part, since she does not possess a penis. Freud writes that women suffer from “penis-envy.” Only in a society where one sex is valued over the other and the only apparent difference for a child is genitalia, can penis-envy be feasible. More appropriately, in *Sexes and Genealogies*, Luce Irigaray refers to it as phallus envy. It is not the organ itself that is desired, but the power and privilege that comes with having a penis/maleness/masculinity. Freud writes,

When the little girl discovers her own deficiency, from seeing a male genital, it is only with hesitation and reluctance that she accepts the unwelcome knowledge... When she comes to understand the general nature of this characteristic, it follows that femaleness—and with it, of course, her mother—suffers a great depreciation in her eyes. (Volume 7, 380)

The girl will resent her mother for not giving her a penis, for being born a woman. In turn, the little girl will have hostile feelings towards her mother and all women in general, since they will from now on be viewed as “castrated.” The girl, in order to resolve her Oedipus complex must change her love object from her mother to her father, who has the phallus. Although the boy cannot have his mother because of the pact with his father, he does not have to change the sex of his love object. Freud writes that there is no “surprise

that boys retain that object in the Oedipus complex. But how does it happen that girls abandon it and instead take their father as love object?" (Volume 7, 334-5). Feminists, for example Irigaray, have understood that giving up the mother and all female relationships for "normal" femininity to occur makes sense in a patriarchal society, where the position of woman is devalued and man is valued. In most cases, the girl will not obtain her father as her love object, thus returning us to Freud's equation of feces=gift=baby. Having a male child is the equivalent of acquiring the phallus for women. This transition and, in fact, this contempt that must occur amongst women in "normal" femininity supports and enforces the phallogentric law of the patriarchal world. The girl's confrontation with castration is complex, and then subsequently her Oedipus complex differs from the boy who has "something" to lose and the girl has "nothing" to lose. Freud writes in "Anatomical Sex-Distinction," "A little girl behaves differently. She makes her judgment and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it" (Volume 19, 336). The little girl is aware of the differences between boys and girls upon this viewing and interprets her feelings instantly into feelings of envy and inferiority.

The girl also has three possible outcomes in resolving her Oedipus complex. For the girl, Freud writes that there are three potential resolutions: homosexuality, frigidity and "normal" femininity. The girl upon witnessing the penis may not accept her own "lack," but believes that she will one day have one, thus maintaining her disavowal rather than denial. Freud describes women who disavow their own castration as having a

“masculinity complex (320).<sup>9</sup> Frigidity may occur in women who accept their castration but do not make the transition from phallic, clitoral sexuality to vaginal sexuality. In fact, frigid women abandon clitoral and vaginal sexuality all together. In the “Taboo on Virginity” Freud says that women may become frigid upon accepting castration out of disgust and humiliation of their inferiority. Last and more complex than “normal” masculinity for boys is “normal” femininity. For “normal” femininity to occur, the girl accepts her mother’s castration, her own castration and the castration of all women, leaving her to feel contempt for all women. Freud writes of “normal” femininity in his last volume,

The other path leads by way of abandoning the mother she has loved: the daughter, under the influence of her envy for the penis, cannot forgive her mother for having sent her into the world so insufficiently equipped. In her resentment over this she gives up her mother and puts someone else in her place as the object of her love—her father... The little daughter puts herself in her mother’s place... Her new relation to her father may start by having as its content a wish to have his penis at her disposal, but it culminates in another wish—to have a baby from him as a gift. (Volume 23, 193)

For “normal” femininity to occur, the girl must abandon her mother as love object, with a sense of contempt and replace the mother with her father. However, in most cases, she will realize that she cannot have her father, since he is supposed to reject her and in disappointment, the girl will turn away from him. In this moment of “normal” transformation, Freud returns us to the formula feces=penis=baby and it becomes more clear. The girl at this stage wants a baby rather than his penis, which she equates with having power. However, for normal femininity to take effect, the girl realizes that she can never have a phallus but can have a male child which will be the penis equivalent.

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<sup>9</sup> “Masculinity complex” manages to encompass women who undertake masculine roles, which is anything beyond the feminine ideal. Furthermore, women who have this complex identify with men therefore may be more inclined a lesbian sexuality (Vol. 23).

Feminists have found Freud to be not only enraging, but intriguing in assessing whether his claims are accurate descriptions of sex roles and the reproduction of patriarchy. They disagree whether or not Freud is useful for feminist purposes. He does not have feminist interests in mind, and will readily admit to his lack of knowledge and expertise surrounding femininity, referring to femininity as the “dark continent.”<sup>10</sup> He also writes in his last volume after explaining the Oedipus complex and the transformations that occur,

At this point we must give separate accounts of the development of boys and girls (of males and females), for it is now that difference between the sexes finds psychological expression for the first time. We are faced here by the great enigma of the biological fact of the duality of the sexes: it is an ultimate fact for our knowledge; it defies every attempt to trace it back to something else. Psychoanalysis has contributed nothing to clearing up this problem, which clearly falls wholly within the province of biology. (Volume 23, 188)

It is through the resolution of the Oedipus complex that the psychical differences become pronounced between males and females. Freud is also acknowledging that the sexes are not the same as he assumed from birth until now and their Oedipus complex and castration complex create an “opposite” effect for the boy and the girl (190).<sup>11</sup> Freud did not deny physical differences, but saw both the little boy and the little girl as the same beyond their physicality. What is problematic about this quote is that he sees a “duality” of the sexes which assumes an oppositional relationship, rather than differences between the sexes. With regard to the differences between the sexes, Freud readily admits that psychoanalysis cannot “clear up” this division and perhaps biology would be more

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<sup>10</sup> Freud wrote this in “The Question of Lay Analysis” which is a controversial way of describing the unknown as Africa, that both this country and all women are mysterious which no doubt has racist, sexist and colonial undertones and forms of exoticization. It is a way of producing the “other.”

<sup>11</sup> As mentioned earlier, in “Female Sexuality,” Freud denied the existence of the Electra complex. The Electra complex is the female version of the Oedipus complex. The love object for both boy and girl originally is the mother, and not the father for the girl which is implied by the Electra complex.

helpful with these questions. Leaving the duality of the sexes to biology is both beneficial and dangerous. Science is a highly useful field; however, it falls within the realm of patriarchal power and influence. Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality: Volume One* critiques psychoanalysis in the role it played in creating a society that felt the need for confession, as can be seen in psychoanalytic sessions and the “talking cure,” as well as fueling the need to medicalize sexual perversions and validate certain discourses through science. Since science in itself is represented as “truth,” it is dangerous to leave the differences between the sexes to a field that propagates truth when it is indeed patriarchal. Jacqueline Rose, in her introduction *Feminine Sexuality* explains that Freud’s writings were on the psychical differences between boys and girls and the role that the Oedipus complex plays which is why biology is completely separate from his account. Sexual difference is a highly important and political topic and will be the feminist topic discussed throughout this paper.

Furthermore, Freud is acknowledging that there exist differences between the sexes. As seen in the pre-oedipal phases and oedipal phases, psychoanalysis is reductive in any attempt for sexual difference, since in the beginning the sexes are the same, and afterwards, the little girl envies the little boy and wants to be like him, wants to obtain the phallus. Freud does an adequate job of explaining sex role expectations in society, which is why his work is useful for feminist theory, and perhaps he himself criticizes psychoanalysis too harshly in its role in the questions of the sexes. Psychoanalysis may not be able to clarify the duality of the sexes, but the Oedipus complex pinpoints where “normalization” is initiated for both boys and girls under patriarchy. Freud’s “description” of what patriarchy demands and expects from women still leaves the

question of how do women break free from the dominance of the Oedipus complex, which comes with patriarchal power relation? How do women escape the reproduction of patriarchy that is clearly spelled out in psychoanalysis? Even if we as feminists read Freud as a “description,” do his writings prescribe to the interests of patriarchy? Freud’s writings have been thoroughly analyzed, criticized and used against him but that question still looms when thinking of contemporary feminist efforts.

Luce Irigaray, a difference feminist has targeted aspects of Freud’s writings that she finds reductive of female sexuality and femininity in her books *The Sex Which is Not One* and *Speculum of the Other Woman*. For Irigaray, psychoanalysis is problematic because it reduces sexual difference to sexual oneness in a phallogentric society. Psychoanalysis also limits desire for women and destroys the relationships between women, beginning with the mother/daughter relationships. Beginning with the childhood phases, Freud assumes a psychological identity between the sexes based on their ignorance of their own sexual difference. He also writes that during the pre-genital phases, the male and female child are unaware of their own genitals and are therefore unaware of genital differences between them. Freud compares the boy and the girl on a completely male model, which is most apparent during the phallic phases. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray articulates how for Freud, “THE LITTLE GIRL IS THEREFORE A LITTLE MAN....The little girl uses, with the *same* intent [as the little boy] her *still smaller* clitoris...a penis equivalent” (25). Irigaray interlaces her writing with direct quotes from Freud on the topic of the little girl and boy to demonstrate and mock how psychoanalysis reduces the little girl to a little boy, thus erasing any possibility for sexual difference. Freud compares the body of the girl on a male model during this

stage, stating that her clitoris is comparable to a little penis and that in her actions, she is acting as if she were a boy, utilizing a masculine/active sexuality. Irigaray as well as other feminist writers will argue how the dominant model always assumes and imposes masculinity and neutrality does not, and cannot exist. After a “normal” resolution of the Oedipus complex, the little girl must give up her active/clitoral sexuality for the passive sexuality of the vagina, a reproductive sexuality, a “hole-envelope that serves to sheathe and massage the penis in intercourse (23).<sup>12</sup> Even when the little girl was “allowed” to partake in her active/masculine sexuality, her organ is still devalued as a lesser version of the penis. After phallic, active sexuality, women’s desire is limited to a desire for the reproduction of a male child as the penis substitute, and they must give up their active/masculine sexuality in order for this to occur, while the boy does not have to give up his active organ, nor change the sex of his love object in order to be “normal.” Irigaray elaborates the difficult transition that must occur in order for a little girl to become a “normal” woman. She demonstrates how it is a painful path consisting of the sacrifice of an auto-erotic pleasure, as well as the loss of the mother, which must turn into feelings of contempt and hostility on the part of the girl towards all women.

If a female child resolves her Oedipus complex “normally,” she will resent her mother’s castration, and the fact that her mother did not provide her with a penis, and

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<sup>12</sup> Irigaray talks about women having at least “two lips,” and that their vaginal lips and that woman “always touches,” always caresses herself, where the penis requires outside touching (masturbatory/sex) in order to be touched (24). When Irigaray’s work first came out, she was accused of being essentialist, of trying to define woman according to an essence. Most feminists have always been wary of any attempts of defining women since these categories can be limiting, and more than likely, serve patriarchal interests. The essentialist charge against sexual difference has lifted in more contemporary times since sexual difference has garnered more attention and difference feminism has been a positive response to such problems found for example in psychoanalytic theory. Irigaray is not essentialist. Rather, Irigaray is critiquing a phallogocentric world where everything from language to women’s sexuality is defined in relation to masculine ideals. Irigaray remarks that one cannot answer the question, “what is woman?” and to ask this question, can only be asked in a masculine discourse, and answering it would not define woman.

these feelings will be attributed to all females. The “normal” resolution of the Oedipus complex for both the little boy and little girl hinges on viewing the mother as a “castrated” and lesser being. This is supposed to turn the boy and the girl towards the Law of the Father, and into the reproduction of patriarchy generation after generation. It is the mother that is completely denigrated in the resolution of the Oedipus complex.<sup>13</sup>

The mother, who carried and gave birth to these children, and was the first love object for the nurturing she provided, must be abandoned in order for the Law of the Father and the patriarchal pact to be made. Irigaray argues that it is a “debt” to the maternal body, and not to the murdered, symbolic Father that is owed. She feels that sameness reproduces “love” of the same and in the case of men; their debt is expressed to the phallus even though it is the mother’s body that gave them life (86).<sup>14</sup> In this scenario, women feel a sense of competition as well as resentment towards their mother, and all other women.

Therefore Irigaray believes that the mother/daughter relationship needs to remain intact since in “our patriarchal culture the daughter is absolutely unable to control her relation to her mother. Nor can the woman control her relation to maternity, unless she reduces herself to that role alone” (143). Undoing this bond between mother and daughter is part

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<sup>13</sup> The Law of the Father was not developed by Freud but by Jacques Lacan using Freud’s writings on totemism. He writes in *Ecrits: A Selection*, “How, indeed, could Freud fail to recognize such an affinity, when the necessity of his reflexion led him to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as author of Law, with death, even to the murder of the Father—thus showing that if this murder is the fruitful moment of debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies the Law, the dead Father” (221). The primordial father that was murdered is the symbolic father. The guilt that the sons feel for murdering their father will leave them indebted to their father as well as bound to his Law, which consists of the patriarchal pact that prohibits the son from taking his mother as love object and from taking the place of his father. The phallus is the signifier and Lacan connected psychoanalysis with language. Elizabeth Grosz elaborates on this topic in *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*. She discusses how Ferdinand de Saussure found that a sign is made up of both a signified and signifier and how Lacan gives supremacy to the signifier and that the signified is also a ‘below the bar’ signifier (94). Grosz writes, “The phallus is both the signifier of the differences between the sexes and the signifier which effaces lack and thus difference. It is the term with respect to which the two sexes are defined as different, and the turn which functions to bring them together, the term of their union” (117).

<sup>14</sup> *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*



of the condition and continuation of patriarchy. Therefore, the “debt” owed to the mother and not the father, as well as reconnecting the bond of the mother and daughter are of feminist interest and break away from the “love” of the same.

With these critiques of psychoanalysis in mind, Irigaray discusses the need for sexual difference. She writes,

“Sexual difference” is a derivation of the problematics of sameness, it is, now and forever, determined within the project, the projection, the sphere of representation, of the same. The “differentiation” into two sexes derives from the a priori assumption of the same, since the little man that the little girl is, must become a man minus certain attributes whose paradigm is morphological-attributes capable of determining, of assuring, the reproduction—specularization of the same. A man minus the possibility of (re)presenting oneself as a man = a normal woman. In this proliferating desire of the same, death will be the only representative of an outside, of a heterogeneity, of an other... (26-7)<sup>15</sup>

Sexual difference is a response to the relationship between men and women where women are placed in of the following relationship to men: women are less than men, women are equal to men, and women are complementary to men.<sup>16</sup> Sexual difference does not exist since these relationships are equal, oppositional or complementary and are based on male representations. Psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex demonstrate these dynamics during the pre-oedipal phases where girls and boys are the “same,” during the Oedipus complex, women are inferior, castrated versions of men, and finally, a “normal” resolution entails women are the complements to men. Therefore, the relationship between man and woman has been set up in a binary structure, where women are placed in the category of the “other.” Sexual difference does not simplify the sexes by reducing them to one standard which in patriarchy is always reduced to the dominance of maleness, nor does sexual difference see the sexes as equal. Sexual difference is exactly

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<sup>15</sup> *Speculum of the Other Woman*

<sup>16</sup> Grosz, Elizabeth. *Sexual Subversions*

the attempt to break free of this assumption of circularity and sameness that exists in phallogentrism, the privileging of the phallus, and the privilege that comes with masculinity. Women are defined as lacking the phallus, and thus unequal and subsequently devalued. For feminist interests and endeavors, sameness is equivalent to a symbolic death, as Irigaray makes clear in her writings, the death of the feminine and in psychoanalytic thinking, death of the mother. Psychoanalysis, particularly the Oedipus complex thrives on the reproduction of sameness. It reproduces patriarchy and the “lacking” female body every generation. Although there are many types of contemporary feminism, egalitarian feminism is caught within this reproduction of sameness in its struggle for change. The challenge comes with the fact that feminist efforts and movements began as the attempt for men and women to have equal rights, since women were and are blatantly oppressed and subjugated. Although women are accorded certain rights now that they did not have historically speaking, there still remains a need for egalitarian efforts to address such issues as women in the military, equal pay for equal work, human rights, and the right to choose. However, some feminist efforts are still trapped in the mind frame of egalitarian feminism which strives for men and women to be equal, more specifically, for women to be equal with men. Rather than understanding that egalitarian efforts are a temporary fix to a historical condition, the political efforts of egalitarianism are content with equality for all. Although there is no denying an equal footing is necessary, in order for women to be equal in a patriarchal world, means that women are striving to be like and to be equal with men on their playing field. Irigaray writes,

It seems that two possible roles are available to her [woman], roles that are occasionally or frequently contradictory. Women could be *man's equal*. In this

case she would enjoy, in a more or less near future, the same economic, social, political rights as men. She would be a potential man. But on the exchange market—especially, or exemplarily, the market of sexual exchange—woman would also have to preserve and maintain what is called *femininity*.<sup>17</sup> (*The Sex Which is Not One*, 84)

In patriarchy, equality is equality and sameness to men. Irigaray is stating that even if women achieve this equality, they are still expected to enact a femininity that is prescribed by phallogentrism, therefore eliminating any sexual difference. As long as women strive to be equal to men, and men remain in the dominant position, only male representations and institutions that benefit masculinity will exist.

Difference feminism, stemming from Irigaray's critique of sameness dismantles the inevitable othering, or disappearance of femininity that comes with struggles of equality, since being equal creates oneness and sameness. Even Freud understands egalitarian feminist efforts as being part of the masculinity complex. He writes in "Female Sexuality,"

When she has passed beyond her first attempt at explaining her lack of a penis as being a punishment personal to herself and has realized that that sexual character is a universal one, she begins to share contempt felt by men for a sex which is the lesser in so important a respect, and, at least in holding that opinion, insists on being like a man. (Volume 23, 337)

The masculinity complex can be understood as attempts for equality on the part of women. An injustice is recognized by women, which is vital to overcome. Phallus envy makes perfect sense, and egalitarian feminist efforts fall into line with the desire to have the power that men are automatically accorded. However, the masculinity complex creates feelings of contempt for women and their castration and simply re-enacts

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<sup>17</sup> Irigaray writes a chapter in this book titled "Women on the Market," how women are commodities of exchange for men within a phallogentric society. Women are valuable exchanges for men, as demonstrated in the transition from active sexuality to passive sexuality, where women's primary sexuality revolves around reproduction and provides a "sheath" for the penis.

patriarchy, rather than challenges it. The problem of equality is when women, or any subjugated group, stop at equality. The point of sexual difference is to go beyond sameness and equality and only see difference, and no longer opposition. Therefore difference is not only a mode of theorizing but a political undertaking and is the current tactic of breaking away from sameness, particularly the sameness that is found in the cycle of the Oedipus complex.

Although various critiques and accounts of psychoanalysis exist, and date from the 1970s and 1980s, they range from Irigaray's critical stance to a much sympathetic and understanding view from feminists such as Mitchell. The feminists of this time were interested in how women escape from the domination and repetition of patriarchy? Although Irigaray is critical of psychoanalysis, it still explains quite thoroughly how generation after generation the patriarchal pact continues to be made and phallogentrism remains dominant.

Juliet Mitchell wrote *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, and her reading and understanding of Freud and how feminists should use his work is as a "description" of patriarchy. Mitchell does not believe that Freud is contributing to the problem of patriarchy in his writings on the Oedipus complex and castration complex. Not to say that she would believe Freud to be a feminist, she is simply more sympathetic to Freud since she does not think he is "prescribing" his discoveries onto society. Mitchell finds Freud useful because he does explain the reproduction of patriarchy as well as gendered roles through his writings on the castration complex and Oedipus complex. Mitchell goes on to write, "Psychoanalysis does not describe what a woman is—far less what she should be; it can only try to comprehend how psychological femininity comes about" (338). Part of

what Freud does through his writings explains the expected social roles for each sex. He made observations and was quick to admit when he was wrong and less enlightened on a topic such as femininity. She is not the only feminist to see beyond the flaws of psychoanalysis where femininity is described as the “dark continent” and there is obviously more understanding of masculinity in his writings. Jacqueline Rose writes in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* of this very same topic. The problem of this argument is that if it is descriptive, it leaves no options for women to change the path of patriarchy and if it is prescriptive, it is obviously problematic. Rose finds that judging Freud between these two possibilities is limiting. She feels that Freud cannot be placed only within these two possibilities, of either being prescriptive or descriptive “to the extent that it is locked in this model” (92). Although the intent is to critique psychoanalysis, there is no denying that it has been useful and to agree with Rose, seeing Freud as either prescribing or describing social realities does not do justice to why psychoanalysis mattered in the 1970’s for feminism, and why it is important now for contemporary feminism. The next chapter will explore this question more thoroughly and there is some feminist motivation behind asking, is Freud merely “describing” or does his suggestion place Oedipus and the family drama into consciousness? Does this question even matter, since the Oedipus complex is already rooted in patriarchal cultures? Freud did not create patriarchy or phallogentrism, and he took a myth from a Greek tragedy and used it to explain family dynamics and the transition from being a little girl or boy into a woman or man. In the introduction to *Feminine Sexuality*, Mitchell writes, “To Freud, if psychoanalysis is phallogentric, it is because the human social order that it perceives refracted through the individual human subject is patrocentric” (23). There is no denying

that patriarchy and the privileging of masculinity/phallus existed long before Freud began writing. However, the points that Irigaray makes clear is that psychoanalysis can also be used dangerously with regard to women and the justification of sexual opposition.

Mitchell agrees that the goal of feminism is to overcome the oppression of patriarchy, which is basically the struggle of every feminist effort, manifested in different ways, philosophies and theories. With regard to the question of phallogentrism and the need for sexual difference, psychoanalysis does not offer any solutions to these questions and issues. Even seeing Freud as Mitchell does, as a symptom of phallogentrism and an observer of how things are and have been, psychoanalysis still does not offer solutions to escaping the redundancy and sameness that is found in the Oedipus complex.

What Freud explains in his understanding of psychical development is that the category of the “other” either strives to be the same as the dominant group, which would be the very erasure of this category. Rather than having proliferation and difference, feminists are left with oneness and sameness. The intent of this thesis is to critique psychoanalysis and indicate ways of moving beyond circularity. However, it is important to remember why psychoanalysis became of interest and use to feminists. It is an intriguing thought to ponder the alliance of feminism and psychoanalysis as well as the valid critiques. Psychoanalysis explains the reproduction of patriarchy, and can be used in the interest of feminism, to explain how phallogentrism came to dominate and maintain its power. Therefore psychoanalysis bears much importance on feminist work, particularly the Oedipus complex. Mitchell writes, “Freud realized that the Oedipus complex was with good reason the cornerstone of psychoanalysis—its overcoming was the single most momentous sign of human culture” (73). The overcoming of the Oedipus

complex is the very introduction into patriarchal order because it is the moment when children must turn away from their mothers in disgust or rage and assume the Law of the Father. Although feminists of the 1970's/1980s such as Rose, Mitchell, and Irigaray made additions and critiques of psychoanalysis, the problem today still remains: how do contemporary feminists move beyond the domination of the Oedipus complex in hopes of thinking of a future beyond patriarchy as described/prescribed in psychoanalysis? The Oedipus complex is useful because it offers a concrete target and accurate "descriptions" of what is expected out of men and women in a phallogentric society. In this sense, it is absolutely imperative for feminists to understand the Oedipus complex since it elaborates the process of the patriarchal pact and the Law of the Father. However, it does not offer solutions, which is why feminist theory, in particular sexual difference is necessary since it does not limit the sexes to one. The next chapter will address similar critiques of psychoanalysis that feminists have, in the collaborative works of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Their books will discuss new theories that attempt to move beyond Oedipus and its circularity.

## CHAPTER TWO

As seen in the previous chapter, feminists have critiqued psychoanalysis, thus demonstrating how it is embedded in and propagates patriarchy. Deleuze and Guattari are critical of psychoanalysis in both *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* as well as *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Although their critiques and interests are not imbued within feminism, they have many ideas that are allied with those of feminism along with influences from Nietzsche, Bergson, and Spinoza, to create intriguing concepts such as bodies without organs, desiring machines, and schizoanalysis.<sup>18</sup>

According to Freud, the Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex that renders people oedipalized. Society, desire and sexuality revolve, in psychoanalytic thinking, around the oedipal event and the very two laws prohibited by this complex: parricide and endogamy. The child is herded into a circle of patriarchy and the primacy of the phallus, abandoning all pre-oedipal and polymorphously perverse desire and ending up with the nuclear family as primary and supreme, and with the father's position as authority intact. Therefore, the nuclear family is an appropriate starting point for looking at critiques of

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<sup>18</sup> Brian Massumi, in his forward to *A Thousand Plateaus* writes, along with Deleuze's own words, "He discovered an orphan line of thinkers who were tied by no direct descendents but were united in their opposition to the State philosophy that would nevertheless accord them minor positions in its canon. From Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson there lies a 'secret link constituted by the critique of negativity, the cultivation of joy, the hate of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, the denunciation of power'" (X). These concepts can be seen throughout the two. Deleuze and Guattari often refer to bodies without organs, which is derived from a poem by Antonin Artaud. Rather than placing primacy or rank on organs, as is done with psychoanalytic sexuality particularly the penis, the body without organs is decentered. They write, "The body without organs, the unproductive, the unconsumable serves as a surface for the recording of the entire process of production of desire, so that desiring-machines seem to emanate from it in the apparent objective movement that establishes a relationship between the machines and the body without organs" (11). Deleuze and Guattari open up *Anti-Oedipus* by writing, "It [desiring machine] is at work everywhere... What a mistake to have ever said *id*. Everywhere *it* is machines—real ones, not figurative ones" (1). Rather than having desire and all other wishes in the unconscious, the unknowable area in the mind, Deleuze and Guattari valorize the body over the mind. The body as a machine with all of its sensations and desires.



the Oedipus complex since the relation of mommy and daddy is the backdrop whereupon this myth turned complex primarily acts itself out. Freud's writings demonstrate that we are all living in the oedipal triangle: mommy, daddy, and child. It is in this family dynamic that the Law of the Father passed down generation to generation, where the patriarchal pact is made and where supposedly desire begins.

According to the Oedipus complex and the social codes that come with it, what is desired is what is prohibited or something that is lacking. For the boy, what is prohibited is the mother, so he will seek substitutes for her, while for the girl, what is lacking is the phallus so she seeks those who may "give" her one. Desire in the nuclear family involves the child wanting to replace the father, and therefore taking the mother as a sexual object. Oedipal desire is negative and reactive because of its linkage to prohibition and lack. Desire in this understanding is desire for something because it is prohibited. In this case, the boy wants to have his mother and the girl wants to take her mother's place. It also understands desire negatively because the little girl wants to have a penis because she is "lacking one." Oedipal desire consists in the very relations within the family that are prohibited according to Freud, and finds that the prohibited is most desirable. The Freudian child will retain this "desire" even in adulthood and will seek resemblances between their parents and their current love objects. Furthermore, a woman's penis envy centers on the very fact that she "lacks" a penis, as if it is a deficiency to begin with, and continuing with this logic, an object of desire. As mentioned earlier, phallus envy is a better way of explaining penis envy since what women "want" in this logic, is the symbolic power that comes with the penis. Deleuze and Guattari understand desire

differently than Freud, and see it as that which one makes: desiring production. With regard to desiring production, they write,

We believe in desire as in the irrational of every form of rationality, and not because it is a lack, a thirst, or an aspiration, but because it is the production of desire: desire that produces—real desire, or the real in itself. (379)

Desire is not lack, it is a positive force and nothing that is part of desire lacks. Desire in their understanding is a force or series or acts that connect people and things together, which may not necessarily belong together but produce something new and different. Desiring-production differs from a Freudian understanding of desire because desiring-production is connected to the body and the body's ability to make connections. Desire is not repressed, it is not stored in the "mind" or in fantasies, but it is real. It is not limited to the familial understanding of desire. An example of desiring-production can be found in the act of writing. The person writing is engaged in desiring-production by using the pen to write on the paper. The hand connects the pen to the paper and it is both continuous in its flows as well as breaks.

Producing desire, desire in production, is desire in action and one that is constantly occurring and is not only understood in sexual terms, though it can be sexual as well. Not the desire for incest because it is socially prohibited, nor desire for the phallus since it is the representation of power and privileging of men. Desiring production is a positive and active desire because of its connective abilities. This is a devastating critique of psychoanalysis since the Oedipus complex relies on the family for desire to enact itself. One of the problematic areas of the Oedipus complex is the need for the nuclear family to engage this understanding of desire. There is no understanding of desire in psychoanalysis beyond its origins in the family. Even "perverse" sexualities,

base themselves on attempts to either disavow or deny the role of the mother or father, which in the end affirms the family as tied to desire and sexuality in psychoanalysis.

Deleuze and Guattari state that Freud did not bring Oedipus to us, and that psychoanalysis was oedipalized from the beginning. They write,

We do not deny that there is an oedipal sexuality, an oedipal heterosexuality and homosexuality, an oedipal castration as well as complete objects, global images, and specific egos. We deny that these are productions of the unconscious.<sup>19</sup> (74)

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari compare Freud's unconscious to a tree, as something rooted and centralized in certain ideals such as the phallus and Law of the Father. They write, "[Psychoanalysis] subjects the unconscious to arborescent structures, hierarchical graphs, recapitulatory memories, central organs, the phallus, the phallus-tree—not only in its theory but also in its practice of calculation and treatment" (17). They use the metaphor of a tree since it is rooted and plants itself into one spot in the earth, never shifting its position. The problem of psychoanalysis is the lack of mobility and the sense that things cannot change, that Oedipus will always return along with the family drama. If the unconscious, according to Freud, contains repressed wishes, then actual analysis will see these "repressed" wishes in their analysis. There is a repetition and return of sameness, Oedipus returns generation after generation within the family and patriarchy remains dominant. The unconscious in Freud contains the repressed desires from the pre-oedipal stages which are the desires that are prohibited after the child resolves his or her Oedipus complex. Deleuze and Guattari write,

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<sup>19</sup> Freud understood the unconscious based on his theory of repression. He writes in *The Ego and the Id*, "We recognize that the *Ucs.* does not coincide with the repressed; it is still true that all that is repressed is *Ucs.*, but not all that is *Ucs.* is repressed" (9). For Freud, jokes and other Freudian slips prove that not everything remains repressed, as "normal" resolution of the Oedipus complex should allow. Everything that is in the Unconscious was conscious since it consists of the pre-oedipal, polymorphous desires. If properly repressed, unconscious desires do not surface and remain latent.

Schizoanalysis, on the other hand, treats the unconscious as an acentered system, in other words, as a machinic network...(a rhizome)...The issue is to *produce the unconscious*, and with it new statements, different desires: the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious.<sup>20</sup>(18)

Rather than seeing the unconscious as a place filled with repressed desires, their notion of the unconscious is much more creative. The unconscious for them is rhizomatic rather than arborescent. It can operate more so as a produced network, or field of operations, rather than being a space that is seeped in repressed desires that are created after the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Their understanding of the unconscious enables the possibility for a multiplicity of desires that may be oedipal, non-oedipal and more important, beyond the oedipal. There is no denying that the Oedipus complex is real in the sense that it has had quite an effect on and hold over contemporary Western society. However, to say that is unconscious would render it inescapable and impossible to overcome. The unconscious for Freud consists in the repressed, pre-oedipal desires before the Oedipus complex is resolved, which is the path to “normalcy.” The unconscious is supposed to be unknown to the person, and its existence is known because of Freud’s work in “The Interpretation of Dreams” where he discovers that the unconscious does make itself known through dreams or jokes. A critique that Deleuze and Guattari make is that psychoanalysis proliferates through Oedipus. They write,

And everybody knows what psychoanalysis means by *resolving* Oedipus: internalizing it so as to better rediscover it on the outside, in social authority, where it will be made to proliferate and be passed on to the children. (79)

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<sup>20</sup> Schizoanalysis is their response to psychoanalysis. They incorporate schizophrenia since it is the schizophrenic that cannot be oedipalized. Rather than advocating for literal schizophrenia, schizoanalysis is a way of living rhizomatically without any fixed identities which is found in the Oedipus complex. The unconscious for them is rhizomatic, which fits in with their understanding of desire and schizoanalysis. The rhizome has no center and no origin. It spreads in all directions, as opposed to a “tree” which has roots and a clearly defined origin.

The Oedipus complex, if “properly” resolved, normalizes subjects through self-regulation found in the family and society. It regulates the body of the child, through mommy and daddy, and infuses it with the rules and norms of the culture: the patriarchal pact, the mother’s castration and the passivity of female sexuality. Particularly with regard to sex roles, Freud demonstrates how clearly children learn what is feminine and what is masculine by the end of the pre-oedipal phases, and more specifically, after the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Although not every child will resolve their Oedipus complex in the “normal” manner, the rules are very clear to everyone. The very role of the psychoanalyst is to facilitate a resolution of any symptoms left over from the complex.

In this oedipal triangle and oedipal society, sameness, lack and negativity are perpetuated since everything falls back into the oedipal realm in psychoanalysis. Even when the Oedipus complex is not resolved “normally,” the outcomes are already known, and the possible range of identities is already fixed. It would appear as if there is nothing beyond Oedipus, beyond phallogentrism. The power of Oedipus is that it appears to be everywhere and that everything can be reduced into its terms. Freud did not leave any answers for escaping oedipalization, which perhaps is part of the feminist struggle. Deleuze and Guattari find that Freud related everything to the father (Law of the Father, the guilt of the murder of the primordial father). Although psychoanalysis does not demonstrate a way of doing away with the Oedipus complex, Deleuze and Guattari write,

The possibility of living *beyond* the father’s law, beyond all law, is perhaps the most essential possibility brought forth by Freudian psychoanalysis...We cannot, however, share either this pessimism or this optimism. For there is much optimism in thinking psychoanalysis makes possible a veritable solution to Oedipus...the problem is not resolved until we do away with *both the problem and the solution*. (81)

During the pre-oedipal phases, the little boy and the little girl are unaware of the Law of the Father, entering into this is a result of the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Freud's writings can be used to demonstrate that there is a possibility of resisting a "normal" resolution of the Oedipus complex found in "abnormal" resolutions through certain paths such as homosexuality and frigidity.<sup>21</sup> The point they make is that Oedipus is not the answer, but is the *problem* and should be looked at as such. The only way to "resolve" the problem of the Oedipus complex is to do away with Oedipus. The Oedipus complex is the "tree" that they are critical of. Deleuze and Guattari make a valid point that using Oedipus as a solution would only lead to failure and the return of the same, the return of the Oedipus complex and the binaries, and negative desire that come with it. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the need to think beyond and differently. The reality is that "doing away" with the Oedipus complex is improbable and highly unlikely. What Deleuze and Guattari offer is a way of thinking and theorizing that is anti-Oedipal and sees difference where there is sameness, multiplicity where there is unity or binaries.

Deleuze and Guattari are highly critical of desire as lack and feel that "only microfascism provides an answer to the global question: Why does desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression?" (215). They feel that microfascism interprets desire as lack and explains why desire would repress itself. For them, the quintessential example of this would be priesthood since they actively repress desire, primarily that of the body. Desire of what one cannot have and therefore temptation must be resisted. They also dispel myths regarding pleasure and pain, which is created by the

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<sup>21</sup> Although Freud makes it clear that those who do not resolve their Oedipus complex properly and has specific categories for these groups as mentioned earlier. Even if there is an oedipal understanding of homosexuality and frigidity, this is not the only way to understand sexuality which makes the work of Deleuze and Guattari important and useful.

sado-masochistic entity and demonstrate that there is a different and sometimes positive force at hand.<sup>22</sup> What is desire for Deleuze and Guattari and what is it “better” for, and how is it a more positive and productive way of understanding desire?

In the beginning of *Anti-Oedipus* desiring machines and desiring production are two terms that are introduced beginning the discussion of desire. Deleuze and Guattari write that “everything is machine” and “everything is production” (2-4). When they speak of machines, they make it explicitly clear that they are speaking of literal machines, rather than speaking metaphorically. They are not writing about machines as the configuration of pre-existing parts, nor are they discussing mechanics. The machine is something that connects things that do not necessarily belong together, things that were not specifically designed for each other. For example, the pianist uses hands to connect to the keys of a piano and uses feet on the pedals. What is produced is music and all these factors must cooperate and come together in order for there to be a new creation and connection. The hands interfere with the keys of the piano but do so in order to create a new flow of music, and create a music machine that consists of hands, feet, keys, pedals,

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<sup>22</sup> Deleuze and Guattari discuss the masochist, and Deleuze expands much more on this topic in his own book *Coldness and Cruelty*. They critique the psychoanalytic understanding that merges sadism and masochism as inverses which defines the sadist who receives pleasure from inflicting pain, and the masochist who receive pleasure from the infliction of pain. Pleasure in pain, but active and passive versions of each other. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they argue that it is not the pleasure that the masochist finds in pain, but is more about the delay. They write, “Pleasure is in no way something that can be attained only by a detour through suffering; it is something that must be delayed as long as possible because it interrupts the continuous process of positive desire...In short, the masochist uses suffering as a way of constituting a body without organs and bringing forth a plane of consistency of desire” (155). Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate that pain is only a side effect or a means to an end for the masochist. Pain in masochism is not the reason for pleasure, but delays the experience of pleasure thus prolonging the experience. However, they critique the masochist as being an empty BwO since it is the masochist that seeks repetition and redundancy and is unable to connect outside of this game of please and waiting. More so to do with psychoanalysis, masochism is associated as the passive, feminine version in this entity and sadism is its opposite. Deleuze writes in his own book on masochism that the masochist would never seek out a sadist and vice versa. The masochist is about the contract with the woman, already breaking away from the psychoanalytic understanding that women are more masochistic, that the man makes and a sadist would never agree to this contact since a sadist is primarily looking for the pure infliction of pain, and is not interested in laws or deals.

and the sheet of music that is being read, and thus the eyes and the ears. Desiring-machines do not operate linearly and therefore do not have a specific task or timeline, thus differentiating themselves more so from the pre-oedipal and oedipal stages and are more open to a variety of desires. Desires that do not connect to specific privileged organs as found in the oral, anal and phallic stages. In the example of the baby breastfeeding, Deleuze and Guattari do not see the baby as going through an oral stage, as if the act of breast feeding has a very significant meaning, which in this case is the baby's first erotogenic zone. They understand the baby as being part of desiring-production. Desiring-production operates through breaks and flows in connecting one desiring-machine to the next. The baby's mouth which is a separate object, connects to the mother's breast which flowing with milk. The baby's mouth interrupts the flow of milk while also connecting with this flow in the act of sucking. A desiring-machine operates with desire, this drive to connect thus leaving the possibility to find desire everywhere and in everything (5). Their notion of desiring-production is a positive understanding of desire: a desire that connects objects to other objects (the pianist to the piano, the writer to books and paper and writing tools) and is not limited and can break away from the Oedipus complex and the sameness and redundancy found in the oedipal triangle.<sup>23</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari are critical of a negative view of desire, a desire that is linked to lack through psychoanalysis. They discuss therefore a different conception of desire, one that is positive, that connects. Part of understanding desire requires thinking of a different kind of body and a way of thinking about the body differently. They offer

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<sup>23</sup> Deleuze and Guattari often use one term and will exchange it for another term. With regard to desire, they write about desiring-machine and desiring-production. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they use the term assemblages instead.



several theories, but more so ways of living positively and creatively. The body in psychoanalysis is structured according to various phases (oral, anal, phallic) and is ultimately genital, with the penis being the valued organ. In place of the body as it is known, they develop the “Body without Organs” (BwO) and elaborate on it in their chapter “How do you Make Yourself a Body without Organs?”

The first question to ask is what is a BwO? Anticipating this question, they respond “but you’re already on it, scurrying like a vermin, groping like a blind person, or running like a lunatic: desert traveler and nomad of the steppes” (150). This explanation of a BwO is obscure and leaves the reader still pondering the original question. However, there is already an understanding that it has something to do with movement and it is always moving. The BwO is not literally a body that has no organs. More specifically, the BwO is not a given, pre-existing body, but a body that can be formed and made, and is always being formed and made. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is “a limit” so one does not achieve the BwO, but rather it is a continual process. The BwO is “connection of desires, conjunction of flows, [and] continuum of intensities” (161). The BwO is necessary for their positive desire since it is always moving and makes connections. The BwO is about intensifying and becoming more, which is why it can only be seen as a limit and not as something that has an end result. Furthermore they write,

With regard to the organism You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body—otherwise you’re just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpret and interpreted—otherwise you’re just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement—other wise you’re just a tramp. (158)

Deleuze and Guattari are mocking the body understood as organism, sign or subject since the BwO is opposed to seeing the body as a unified, or identified whole. With regard to

organism, the human body is structured in such a fashion. Everything works together like a machine, as in mechanics and not a desiring-machine. For example, the brain sends signals to prompt the body to raise its hand, lungs perform the function of breathing, and the heart performs the function of pumping and every part of the body works in a functional entity. They are not opposed to organs, nor is dismantling the organism supposed to be a dangerous undertaking. Rather, the organism is the very manner by which the body is organized and structured. The organism is thought to be the body as a complete whole; the organism is the organization of body parts according to structured hierarchies and biology. Therefore, they are opposed to the manner by which organs are organized in the body, in a hierarchical and prioritized manner. The signified/signifier is critiques the body as being defined in language, and particularly with regard to psychoanalysis, defined in relation to the phallus and the Law of the Father. The body as a subject is the body defined by its identity, “who am I?” This relates back in a sense to their criticism of any arborescent schema that roots itself into one position, which often occurs when the body defines itself according to its identity. The BwO differs vastly from these three understanding of the body since they are all rigid and constrained.

The BwO is a more-opened and flowing response, however; there are two versions of the BwO: an empty BwO and a full BwO. A full BwO is what has already been described as that which connects. Deleuze and Guattari warn that death is a possible consequence of the empty BwO. In the example of the drug addict, the addiction creates an empty BwO, a body that is unable to connect itself to other objects since the drug addict is consumed by his/her addiction and his/her bodies want to be filled with their drugs. This in turn leaves their bodies with no way of connecting or becoming more. The

drug addict's BwO empties itself as it is consumed by its addiction until it literally takes over the body leaving nothing left.<sup>24</sup> What Deleuze and Guattari make clear is that there is a fine line between being a full BwO and an empty BwO. An example can be found through the artist Jackson Pollock. Jackson Pollock battled with alcoholism and for quite some time, he was able to produce artwork which in some ways can be seen as being a full BwO since he was able to make connections with his brush and his own technique with the canvas. Yet, in the last year of his life he was unable to produce art and died August 11, 1956 in a car crash while driving drunk. Therefore, a line was crossed where the BwO no longer makes any connections. In this case, Pollock did not create art and death was always a lingering possibility and the ultimate empty BwO. Therefore Deleuze and Guattari caution that the undertaking of a BwO is necessary, but also tricky and they caution that one not "wildly destratify" and that dismantling the organism, signified/signifier and subject require patience in order to avoid becoming an empty BwO (160).<sup>25</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari develop many new concepts such as BwO and assemblages, which challenge the psychoanalytic understanding of the person as oedipalized, and

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<sup>24</sup> Deleuze and Guattari write, "A junky does not want to be warm, he wants to be cool-cooler-COLD. But he wants The Cold like he wants His Junk—NOT OUTSIDE where it does him no good but INSIDE so he can sit around with a spine like a frozen hydraulic jack...his metabolism approaching Absolute Zero." Although the addict is able to achieve a type of BwO, it is at the cost of his life. Addiction attempts to feel the way the first time the drug is used, to achieve that first extreme sensation. Since this never occurs, the addict keeps trying, filling its body with drugs, and eventually killing the body.

<sup>25</sup> There is another type of body that Deleuze and Guattari do not write about: sick bodies versus healthy bodies. Although a sick body can be a full BwO, for example, a person with a terminal illness must learn how to live and maneuver in a world that privileges able and healthy bodies, and create a new way of living and interacting. This body is still able to make connections and to act. Yet, there is the comatose body, which in its sickness, can make no connections and becomes this empty BwO since it cannot act and is only acted upon by machines, nurses, medications, doctors, etc. The reason I bring this topic up is because I think it is relevant in a feminist context, how we understand and treat "sick" bodies since typically, women are left in charge of caring for the sick whether it be in a hospital and/or family setting. In the case of the comatose body, it has been emptied. However, in thinking of terminal illnesses and disabilities, Deleuze and Guattari can be used in a positive light, that these bodies are not lesser than "healthy" and "able" bodies. Rather, they create new ways of living and different ways of making connections.

structured in a specific manner. Their concept of becoming is probably their most insightful concept. Becomings, in a similar fashion to BwO are hard to define since becomings are always in the process of becoming and changing. First and foremost, becomings challenge the binary system, for example, woman as not man and absence as the lack of presence. In a binary system, there is a privileged and dominant “primary” term, and the “secondary” term is defined as oppositional, the “lack and lesser” version of the “primary” term. The first chapter of this thesis demonstrates how binary logic reduces the “secondary” term to being opposite, equal or the complement of the “primary” term. Becomings are opposed to any kind of binary logic. Becomings are not equivalent to being, since being is affiliated with such terms as identity, and is rooted in the “tree.” Being cannot move outside of itself and becomings are rhizomatic and do not follow any type of structured progression, such as the psychoanalytic understanding of childhood development. Becomings are creativity because they create and produce something new and different and are always changing. Becomings are not imitation and this will be demonstrated in their elaboration of three types of becomings: becoming-animal, becoming-child and becoming-woman. All becomings however, are attempts at becoming-molecular. As seen in the section on BwOs, Deleuze and Guattari are opposed to such categories as identity or signifier since they are linked to some kind of order and are contrary to movement. Molar is another term that represents sameness, and is part of the arborescent scheme, which is why all becomings are becoming-molecular. Deleuze and Guattari use the terms molar and molecular, which are traditionally used in chemistry:

In a way, we must start at the end: all becomings are already molecular. That is because becoming is not to imitate or identify with something or

someone...Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfills, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire.<sup>26</sup> (272)

Becoming molecular in place of being and molarity. Molarity describes a unified whole, the organism but does not pertain just to bodies. Deleuze and Guattari feel that identity politics, any effort made on behalf of some sort of homogenized group with common struggles, is conducting a molar politics. Therefore molarity/molar is pre-given identity, a unified subject. Molarity is static. Becoming-molecular is not unified and cannot be identified since it has no identity and is rhizomatic In order to understand more specifically, how becomings are molecular rather than molar necessitates explaining the three becomings.

The first becoming is the becoming-woman since according to Deleuze and Guattari, “Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings” (277). As will be seen in the next chapter, becoming-woman has been the most problematic concept for difference feminist theorists. However, in keeping with their critique of binary structures, the need for all becomings to pass through becoming woman becomes grows more clear. Becoming-woman problematizes the man/woman binary, and the identity/category “man” is the most privileged and most powerful, as psychoanalysis has shown us. For them, the standard,

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<sup>26</sup> Brian Massumi writes that they are not literally speaking of speed and slowness as a way of thinking of how the process of becoming of slow it may be. He writes, “the distinction is a qualitative one between kinds of movement, not a quantitative one between rates of movement. Becoming in itself is ‘absolute speed,’ a jump from the quality of movement or mode of composition of molarity to a radically different one; but it always occurs relative to molar thresholds of perception” (182). Molarity cannot perceive a becoming as connecting and creating since it is the dominant term, which brings a need for the process of becoming since it will make these connections beyond the dominant term.

molar, majoritarian category is “white, male, adult, ‘rational,’ etc., in short the average European” (291). Majoritarian does not indicate quantity, but refers to the standard, the dominant position of power which is represented by man. Man is the majoritarian, in relation not only to women, but children, animals, plants as well. They write, “the majority in the universe assumes as pre-given the right and power of man” (291). Man is the ultimate representation of power as well the molar and majoritarian identity. With this reasoning, there can be no becoming-man since it cannot be a becoming-minoritarian, or a becoming-molecular. Because woman is positioned as directly oppositional to man/phallus/masculine, the absolute representative of the standard and “norm,” all becomings must come through becoming-woman. Deleuze and Guattari argue that becoming-woman is not limited to just men, but that women too, must become-woman. They write,

What we term a molar entity is, for example, the woman as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject... We do not mean to say that a creation of this kind is the prerogative of the man, but on the contrary that the woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman* in order that the man also becomes- or can become-woman. (275-6)

Although women are placed in a subordinate and oppositional position, they too have a molar identity. In this case, which stems from the psychoanalytic understanding of what woman should be: wife, mother, nurturer, secretary, prostitute, or virgin. The molar category of woman consists in what is expected from “normal” femininity and whether women adhere to this or not, all women are made aware of what is expected from them. Becoming-woman is not imitative and therefore one cannot wear a dress, hair and make-up and become-woman, objects that are associated with femininity, nor can one have an operation and become-woman. Becoming-woman is a molecular transformation and is

different for every person. However, it breaks away from the psychoanalytic definition of woman as lack and “normal” femininity. Becomings reject molar identities which are predominant in psychoanalysis.

The movie *Fur: An Imaginary Portrait of Diane Arbus* directed by Steven Shainberg is an example of becomings, particularly, becoming woman. The movie stars Nicole Kidman as Diane Arbus, a well known 20<sup>th</sup> century photographer with a flair for capturing the lives and moments of marginalized people, the so called “outcasts.” The movie begins with Diane’s life with her husband and two children. They are a handsome, nuclear family and Diane is an assistant to her husband, who is a commercial photographer, a very 1950s setting. Yet, Diane struggles with these inner urges that do not conform with her social expectations as a mother and wife. One night, she encounters Lionel, played by Robert Downey Jr., a former “freak” in the circus who has hypertrichosis, leaving his body covered from head to toe in hair. She is fascinated by him and it is her relationship with him that introduces her to the lives and world of other so called “freaks” and she begins to photograph this world. In the end, Lionel commits suicide and Diane leaves her family and commits her life to her art.

Diane’s becoming begins with her interest in Lionel, a world outside the boredom and certain expectations of 1950’s motherhood and marriage, and outside the comfort of her upper class upbringing and lifestyle. Therefore, Diane must become-woman, since the woman that she was before her immersion into her artwork was based on molar identities. Dismantling her fixed identities as wife and mother is her first step into becoming, which I interpret becoming-woman since it problematizes the molar category of woman.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> My claim is not that everyone woman must abandon her role as mother and wife in order to become-woman. I think these molar identities must be dismantled as they are understood in a phallogocentric society,

There is no linearity in the process of becoming since becomings are continuous. For Diane, it is through her art primarily where she becomes, becomes-artist. Diane is transformed from a molar, 1950's woman whose creativity was overshadowed by the priority of her husband's work and his own distaste of her work, to becoming-artist with her own creative impulses being fostered and ever changing and developing. Diane is able to become-other, become-minoritarian as she photographs the "freaks" of society, emitting particles through her photographs, while also becoming through her actual work. In the final scene, Diane has traveled to a nudist colony, where she herself must be in the nude while conducting her art. She is sitting there on the bench, talking with a member of the nudist colony, and Diane asks her, "Why don't you tell me a secret?" Diane is no longer the Diane that she was in the beginning of the movie, helping her husband with his work, and asking permission in order to take her own photographs. Her becoming, particularly her becoming-artist is transparent throughout the film through each photograph she takes. In the end, she is no longer recognizable as a unified whole, as the doting wife and loving mother she once was. Although this is a completely imagined path of Diane's life, her artwork is a demonstration of how one must undergo some kind of transformation in order to produce such captivating photography. Diane is becoming-artist, becoming-imperceptible. Therefore, this "imaginary portrait" of Diane Arbus' life is a demonstration of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming, which begins the dismantling of molar identities (mother/wife) and is a continual transformation, always changing.

What makes becoming-woman even more controversial as well as important is that Deleuze and Guattari are very clear that there is no becoming-man. There can be no

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but that does not mean that all women must abandon their children and partners in order to enter in a becoming.



becoming-man because man is majoritarian and all becomings are becoming-minoritarian. In phallogentrism, this is an absolutely true claim and what makes this less problematic is their emphasis that the molar man is much more specific with regard to his race and class (white and wealthy). They are not ignoring the existence of differences between men, which go beyond race and class as well; however, “the majority in the universe assumes as pre-given the right and power of man” (291). The privileging of masculinity is pervasive and that is why they are so adamant that all becomings come through becoming-woman since her position is most directly impacted and effected by the privileging of man. The feminist response to this will be elaborated in the next chapter, but it is not only the feminist theorists that find this to be a problematic claim.

Brian Massumi writes in his book *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*,

Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the concept 'becoming-woman' is indeed sexist. The burden of change is placed on women, since it is their cliché that is singled out. They do not dwell on the possibility of a similarly revolutionary becoming-man that would push the masculine stereotype beyond *its* threshold of recuperation (following, for example, strategies of the kind employed by some segments of the gay and lesbian S/M communities who theatricalize 'masculinity' in order to take it to a deconstructive extreme). It would be impossible for a straight man to become-man in this way, since in doing so he would not be becoming other than he already is but rather staying the same, only more so. (89)

As mentioned earlier, Deleuze and Guattari are not denying that Man as the molar category consists of people and groups that are marginalized despite the privilege of “masculinity.” Not all men are created equal under the generic term “man.” Deleuze and Guattari would consider the mockery of masculinity by taking it to its limits and extremes an imitation. It is still affirming the dominance and majoritarian status that man has. Massumi is arguing for the possibility of becoming-man, to push man beyond his limits. He argues his point using the example of homosexual men in S/M communities, and how

they can be seen as becoming-man by subverting molar identity in their mockery of masculinity. This mockery, although in a different context could be seen as transgressive, is not a becoming since it revolves around the very molar identity of man and in some ways, it reaffirms the dominance of masculinity. On a different level, Deleuze and Guattari argue that transvestites, dressing up as women by using make up and wigs are imitating as well because it reverts back to molar identities and pre-given notions of what is expected from each sex. Therefore, masculinity does not need to become any more masculine, any more of man. On the contrary, it needs to become-minoritarian, become-molecular and dismantle the standards and norms that come with the pre-given privileging of man. Furthermore, becoming-man seems in itself problematic according to Massumi's account. The heterosexual man cannot become-man, since he, more so than the homosexual man, needs to undertake a becoming, and his molar identities of masculinity and heterosexuality give him more privilege. If he cannot undergo a certain becoming because his heterosexuality excludes him, all becomings would be lost to him. Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate that even the minoritarian (woman, child, animal) has a molar identity that necessitates a becoming.

Next, Deleuze and Guattari write about becoming-child which complicates the binary of adult/child. Unlike psychoanalysis, which privileges the little boy, Deleuze and Guattari privilege the little girl. They write,

The question is fundamentally that of the body—the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms. This body is stolen first from the girl: Stop behaving like that, you're not a little girl anymore; you're not a tomboy, etc. The girl's becoming is stolen first, in order to impose a history, or a prehistory, upon her. The boy's turn comes next, but is it by using the girl as an example, by pointing to the girl as the object of his desire, that an opposed organism, a dominant history is fabricated for him too. The girl is the first victim, but she must also serve as an example and a trap. (276)

What psychoanalysis makes clear is that the “nothing” to see with regard to the girl’s genitals is what is needed in order for the boy to turn away from his mother, spark feelings of superiority, feel fear that he too can be castrated, and enter into the Law of the Father. Their Oedipus complex is initiated by a castration anxiety, that they too can lose their penis. Therefore, the castration complex initiates the very molar identities that Deleuze and Guattari are critiquing, it is the beginning of the process of creating molar men and women. The little girl had an open potential to be something different, however; a history was already fixed and ready to be written on her body, the Law of the Father and the “normal” resolution of the Oedipus complex. The little girl must be taught and normalized in order for the “proper woman” to exist, and for the boy to turn away from his mother as his love object. The boy must see her as “castrated” or he in turn will not undergo his Oedipus complex. She is not only the example for “femininity” as Freud understood or misunderstood it, but the example of what the boy should not be.<sup>28</sup> Her role is to create both “proper” men and women. Identity (man and woman) is defined as what she is not (a boy), and what she does not have (penis), which is why she is the first victim, the sacrifice. Freud’s theory on the castration complex, which moves into the Oedipus complex, hinges on the body of the girl being seen by the little boy and the little girl as castrated. This can only function in a society that is already phallogocentric. The little girl’s body is “stolen” and the Oedipus complex imposes these pre-given identities which set the sexes up as oppositional.

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<sup>28</sup> Freud wrote in “The Question of Lay Analysis,” “We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a ‘dark continent’ for psychology” (212). This parallel demonstrates how the feminine has been positioned as the “other,” mysterious and unknown.

In becoming-animal, human is the privileged term since it is human that can reason and has sophistication and culture unlike the animal.<sup>29</sup> In differentiating becoming from mere imitation, they use the example that person barking does not mean they are becoming-dog, becoming-animal. However, they illustrate becoming-dog through an example found in a text by Vladimir Slepian. In this text, Slepian becomes-dog first by putting shoes on his hands. Already, his hands are transformed into paws and can no longer be used with the functionality of human hands. As he loses the functionality of the human hand since he now has paws, he cannot complete the tying of the shoes. Therefore, he uses his mouth to complete the task, his mouth therefore becoming the muzzle of a dog (285). What Deleuze and Guattari show through this example is the transformation that is undertaken, where one organ (hand and mouth) take on elements of another organ (paws and muzzle). What is fascinating about becoming-animal for Deleuze and Guattari is its link to multiplicities and packs. The following categorization elaborates three “kinds of animals” found in Deleuze and Guattari: the family pet, mythic animal, and the pack (240). Part of becoming is a critique of psychoanalysis since there is no creative reproduction and the repetition of the same. When they speak of the family, they are specifically critiquing the “oedipalized” dog which they write “draw us into a narcissistic contemplation, and they are the only kind of animal psychoanalysis understands...” (240). The family pet is no longer part of its wild pack but is oedipalized in the home and serves as a way of making the people around it feel good and loved, surviving as the family substitute for the child. Second, they critique

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<sup>29</sup> Deleuze and Guattari are highly critical of binary terms since they do not allow for difference. Therefore, his becomings are a challenge to certain, dominant binary pairs (human/animal, adult/child, man/woman). Although in these instances, human, adult and man are the dominant molar categories, however, animal, child and woman are molar categories as well. This will be elaborated in detail at the end of this section and why Deleuze and Guattari chose these specific becomings.

the mythic animal which was seen in Freud's writings on totemic society, or any animal that is used as representation. The school's sport team mascot or the use of the bald eagle and the symbol for the United States and everything it represents are examples of the mythic animal. Lastly, and what they are much more interested in because it is linked to becoming-animal are packs since they involve multiplicities. They write,

What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack... It is at this point that the human being encounters the animal. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. (240)

The family pet has been oedipalized and the mythic animal stands as a representation, an emblem of something, therefore they have been removed from their pack, their multiplicity. Becoming-animal has nothing to do with familial relations, and they describe becomings as having no filiations. The family pet and mythical animals are connected to the family and/or ancestor. It is the pack that breaks away from these familial and filiative qualities in its multiplicities. For Deleuze and Guattari, multiplicities proliferate through difference and are non-linear. Therefore, part of becoming-animal is fascination with the pack animal that does not render itself to sameness and redundancy, that is not oedipalized nor emblematic.

They use the example from Freud of Little Hans and his anxiety about horses. According to Deleuze and Guattari, Freud understands this fear as the following, "The horse's blinders are the father's eyeglasses, the black around its mouth is his mustache, his kicks are the parents' 'lovemaking'" (259). Mia Campioni and Liz Gross in their article demonstrate how Freud understood Little Hans's phobia to be two parts: Little Hans was afraid of horses falling down and horse play that occurred with his father.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Campioni and Gross write in "Language, Sexuality and Subversion", "The central experience, probably the catalyst but not the cause of the neurosis, occurs when Hans sees a heavily-loaded horse pulling a van

Therefore, using a psychoanalytic lens, Little Hans is anxious about his mother's pregnancy and is fearful of his father, both of which he associates to the horses he sees in the street therefore explaining his anxiety. Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate how Freud misunderstood Little Hans and his relation to horses. They understand Little Hans as wanting to become-animal, become-horse. Little Hans is stuck at home and he sees the horses in the street, a place that is barred to him as a child and he wants to become-horse in order to escape. Like Slepian, his preoccupation with the horse's muzzle does not represent the father's mustache as Freud would understand it, but is part of the becoming process, part by part. Freud in his analysis sees the Oedipus complex everywhere and thus everything is oedipalized. Deleuze and Guattari show that there was something creative going on with Little Hans and his "phobia" of horses, that he was not afraid at all, but fascinated. Becoming-animal complicates the molar identity of human and tries to open it up into becoming-molecular and for Little Hans, becoming-animal is his way of challenging molarity (family, Oedipus, mother, father).

Becomings are continuous and what they are moving towards is a political task: becoming-invisible, becoming-imperceptible. Becoming-invisible, becoming-imperceptible does not mean to literally disappear. Rather, becoming-imperceptible is to be unidentifiable, to dismantle the molar categories, to rid the body of identity. This is a daunting task since everything is categorized and named, particularly by molar identities. They write of becoming-imperceptible that "[to] go unnoticed is by no means easy. To be a stranger, even to one's doorman or neighbors. If it is so difficult to be 'like' everybody

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*falling down ('nederkommen')*"(111). This German word bears semblance to pregnancy which then creates anxiety in Little Hans over his mother and her pregnancy. This develops into a deeper fear and anxiety over horses representing his wish to replace his father whom he also fears, castration anxiety, defying his mother as well as wanting to remain the only child.

else, it is because it is an affair of becoming” (279). Becoming-imperceptible means removing all identity from the subject. Identity invades politics, theory and even fashion which makes it even more difficult to conceive of being unrecognizable. A bumper sticker on a person’s car informs you of their political affiliation or the causes they support, a certain brand of clothes can denote someone’s salary range or what class they belong to. Social networking websites are fueled by identity and labeling one’s sex, food preferences, race, age, gender, and many other affiliations. Identity is absolutely pervasive and creates this compulsion to continually define, or let it be known who one is. What Deleuze and Guattari are saying is that the body must be rid of identity, and even politics must be rid of identity in order for a becoming to take place since all becomings are an attempt at imperceptibility. Identity politics and becoming-invisible are a fitting note to end this chapter and move into feminist critiques and uses of Deleuze and Guattari since the feminist movements and efforts are encompassed in this critique of identity politics. Becoming-imperceptible is challenging because it states that action and existence need to forsake any identity and claims of ownership, to be completely unknown to everyone and everything.

Deleuze and Guattari are utterly opposed to binary logic and find that psychoanalysis is rooted within this logic. They use the writings of Freud and demonstrate that psychoanalysis sees Oedipus everywhere and in everything. It is psychoanalysis that perpetuates the understanding of desire as lack, the body as structured around pre-genital and genital phases, and proliferates through identity and sameness. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari are, like the title of their first book, “anti-Oedipus.” They want to do away with Oedipus and propose their own analysis,

schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis inspired by schizophrenia since it is the schizophrenic who resists analysis and cannot be oedipalized. They are talking about schizophrenia as a process of avoiding oedipalization, rather than advocating for schizophrenia as a mental illness. They write, “Schizoanalysis...has no other meaning: Make a rhizome” (251). Schizoanalysis rejects identity, Oedipus, castration, lack. Schizoanalysis is rhizomatic and proliferates, makes connections, and sees desire as an active and positive force that makes these connections between objects and people possible. Schizoanalysis is not rooted in Oedipus like psychoanalysis, but in its rhizomatic fashion, seeks multiplicities. Therefore, their work is fascinating since they not only offer critiques of psychoanalysis, but they also propose new theories and concepts that can be translated into a different way of living, and a new politics.



### CHAPTER THREE

Feminist theorists, particularly difference feminists, share common political and philosophical allies and enemies with Deleuze and Guattari. For example, both Deleuze and Guattari and difference feminists oppose binary oppositions, which they feel privilege such terms as man over woman, reason over unreason and the human over animal. Therefore, in some ways they are working towards the same efforts, but as the previous chapter detailed, Deleuze and Guattari create new ways of thinking as well as new terminologies. Becoming-woman, as would be expected through the use of woman by a male philosopher, has been the most problematic for difference feminists. Their writings on becomings came out in French in 1980 and in English during 1987. When their writings first came out, Irigaray and Braidotti for example were highly critical of their work, specifically their notion of becoming-woman. From a contemporary feminist stance, some feminists have become less critical, or all together Deleuzian.<sup>31</sup> However, it is Irigaray who maintains her initial critique of Deleuze and Guattari and it is Irigaray in her earlier writings as seen in the first chapter who is at the heart of the question of how to engage sexual difference and live beyond the dominance of the Oedipus complex.

The first chapter demonstrated how earlier feminists found psychoanalysis useful for feminist philosophy.<sup>32</sup> This thesis is intended to examine and critique psychoanalysis from a contemporary, feminist stance. Much has been written about Freud and how some aspects of psychoanalysis can be useful for feminist efforts while others are harmful or at least problematic. From a contemporary stance that focuses on sexual difference and

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<sup>31</sup> Contemporary in the context I am using denotes the mid 1990s until present time. My discussion of feminism refers specifically to the difference feminists and corporeal feminists.

<sup>32</sup> The writings of Jacques Lacan have not been used because the intent is to specifically scrutinize Freudian psychoanalysis, since it is his writings that specifically explained the split between the sexes

corporeality, feminists are in an interesting position since it has been decades since the first feminist writings on Freud, and relatively little time has passed since the writings of Deleuze and Guattari have been used by feminists. Since they not only critiqued psychoanalysis, but created new thoughts and concepts, feminists have at hand the task of evaluating the writings of Deleuze and Guattari along with psychoanalysis.

Much of contemporary postmodern feminism stems from a critique of the mind/body split, particularly when “woman” is placed in the category of body, and excluded from the privileges associated with the mind such as rationality and masculinity. Therefore, the body is of feminist political concern since it has been marginalized and deemed “feminine.” Freud’s writings discussed the psychical meaning of the anatomical differences between the sexes. Freud explains in detail the manner by which the sexes emerge and how they come to differ, although he does use the masculine model for the basis of his comparison, placing women’s genitals on a masculine measuring system, always to be in a lesser category than the male genitals. The Oedipus complex shows the break that occurs between the sexes which is an undertaking relevant to the interest of bodies, particularly women’s bodies. Elizabeth Grosz writes in *Volatile Bodies*,

What psychoanalytic theory makes clear is that the body is literally written on, inscribed, by desire and signification, at the anatomical, physiological, and neurological levels. The body is in no sense naturally or innately psychical, sexual or sexed. (60)

Psychoanalysis demonstrates the open-endedness of the body since according to Freud, male and female children have little differentiation at birth. It is the Oedipus complex that separates them into their socially respective roles, with the position of the girl/woman below that of the boy/man. While it is not the mission of difference feminism to advocate

for the return of symmetry to the sexes as alluded to by Freud, the body is no longer a natural entity as dominantly assumed. The Oedipus complex demonstrates the psychological differences between the sexes and even Freud did not affiliate his theories with biology. In this sense, Freud opened up the body and shows how phallogentrism fixes and writes upon bodies. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink and reconfigure the oedipalized body since this body is fixed in patriarchy. This was one of the critiques not only feminists have posited, but that of Deleuze and Guattari. The BwO is a response to the pre-oedipal and oedipalized body. For the purposes of egalitarian feminism, the pre-oedipal stages proved that the sexes could be equal since both boy and girl went through the oral, anal and phallic stages alike. The difference feminist critique demonstrates that Freud reduces the girl to a little boy, thus eliminating any sexual difference. The Oedipus complex, in its normalcy, demands that the little girl give up her phallic sexuality for a passive/vaginal sexuality. The body is hierarchized and sexuality is regulated to specific erogenous zones with the end purpose of reproduction, recreating the nuclear family and oedipal dynamics. The BwO breaks down any prioritized sexuality and body parts and enables a more positive desire since it is a body capable of connecting. In a response to the body of psychoanalysis, this BwO does provide an alternative to viewing a new desire. What are the implications for women with regard to the BwO?

The first chapter of this thesis focused primarily on Irigaray's writings regarding psychoanalysis and her critiques and her emphasis for sexual difference. Irigaray is also critical of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming-woman and BwO. In her earlier and contemporary work, she maintains her criticism. Irigaray writes in *The Sex Which is Not One*:

For them isn't the organless body a historical condition? And don't we run the risk once more of taking back from woman those as yet unterritorialized spaces where her desire might come into being? Since women have long been assigned the task of preserving "body-matter" and the "organless," doesn't the "organless" come to occupy the place of their own schism? Of the evacuation of women's desire in woman's body? Of what remains endlessly "virginal" in woman's desire? To turn the "organless body" into a "cause" of sexual pleasure, isn't it necessary to have had a relation to language and to sex—to the organ—that women never had? (141)

Without addressing them by name, her critique comes after the fairly recent publication of Deleuze and Guattari. However, it still has much bearing in contemporary times. If sexual difference is to have any impact, philosophically and politically, what does it mean to become a BwO? The question is more challenging since Deleuze and Guattari align themselves with feminist struggles in the sense that their writings are useful and they consider the plight of women. The BwO is pivotal since it is the body necessary to enact becomings. Irigaray's critique is striking and brings the BwO into the conversation of sexual difference. Freud in his writings, although he acknowledges his lack of knowledge on the subject of women, does position the woman's genitals as invisible, but highly significant since it is the boy who, seeing nothing at the sight of the girl's genitals develops his castration complex. The point that Irigaray is making is that women have already been deemed as "organless" therefore becoming a BwO, is similar to the "castration" that takes place in psychoanalysis. Irigaray is accusing the BwO of being a patriarchal endeavor which does not account for woman as a separate entity and that women cannot become "organless" since their bodies and their organs have been devalued. Women have not had access to their own desire, since it is always defined in relation to and for the sake of male sexuality and part of the struggle is that woman's desire is still a work in progress. However, the BwO does not literally become an

organless body, but is opposed to the body as an organism, opposed to the body inscribed by molar identities. In this regard it is less problematic even in light of Irigaray's critique since it can complicate the very patriarchal inscriptions made on women's bodies.

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari discuss how the little girl is the body that is sacrificed in order for the little boy to know who he is and what he is to become in a patriarchal world. There is no denying that the little girl's "humiliation" at having "nothing" to see with regard to her genitals is what begins that boy's change in love objects. Another body to take into account is that of the mother. The category of mother is part of the molar identities, along with any other stereotypical "feminine" position as created and propagated in a patriarchal culture such as nurse, teacher, secretary, etc. The role of the mother is incredibly important in the oedipal triangle since her body must no longer be the love object for both the boy and girl to "normally" resolve their complex, and her body is seen as the castrated body. Irigaray discusses the mother/daughter relationship. She writes,

There is no possibility whatsoever, within the current logic of sociocultural operations, for a daughter to situate herself with respect to her mother: because, strictly speaking, they make neither one nor two, neither has a name, meaning, sex of her own, neither can be "identified" with respect to the other. (143)

Not only are the bodies of both the daughter and the mother devalued in a patriarchal society, but their relationship is shattered in order for their own "normal" femininity to occur. Irigaray makes very clear how both the mother and daughter, as "feminine" subjects are always defined in relation to man, by either being his complement or by being "not" man, the "other." Women do not have their own identity that is not a molar, phallogocentric identity. While it is important to problematize molar identities because they are affiliated with dominant power structures, the role of the mother should be carefully

examined. The mother has an important role in the Oedipus complex since she is the original love object. The molar identity of mother as understood psychoanalytically needs to be challenged. However, Irigaray's understanding of the "debt" that is owed to the mother as well as recuperating this relationship is an important and necessary task for contemporary feminists.

In the psychoanalytic model, value is placed on certain organs, such as the penis, although it is not the literal penis, but the phallus, its representation of power. Furthermore, reproduction plays an important role in the oedipal relations since patriarchy necessitates woman to accept her passive/vaginal sexuality in order to undertake her role as a mother/wife, having the cycle repeat itself over and over again. How can the process of becoming a BwO continue when much is at stake for patriarchy, and women and girls have not had access to their bodies? The process of becoming a BwO would necessitate moving away from phallogentric values and understanding of the body, and challenging the dominance and power that automatically comes with masculinity.

Deleuze and Guattari have come under attack for their theories and concepts by feminists. Yet, becoming-woman is probably the most controversial, as perhaps any use of the word "woman" by male philosophers would be. Contemporary, post-1995 feminist theory is at an interesting junction. Irigaray makes striking critiques of psychoanalysis and how it is not as benign as it appears or has been interpreted, and can even be harmful for feminism. Deleuze and Guattari share similar critiques of psychoanalysis with Irigaray. However, some of Irigaray's critiques of psychoanalysis can be linked to her critiques of Deleuze and Guattari. Therefore, in order to understand where Irigaray

problematizes Deleuze and Guattari, it is imperative to understand her politics of sexual difference and her critiques of psychoanalysis. As previously mentioned, the diminished relationship of the mother/daughter, which in turn, impacts all female relationships into something that is produced through the unfolding of the Oedipus complex, and assures patriarchy will thrive.

Irigaray's critique of the psychoanalytic concept of desire is similar to that of Deleuze and Guattari. Desire is supposedly a lack that needs to be filled and particularly for women, they are forever "lacking" the phallus. Accordingly, women as castrated, lacking beings will strive to "possess" the phallus through the birth of a baby boy, which is its equivalent. Women have much more at stake with a negative understanding of desire since they are in the position of the object of masculine desire. Women, in a patriarchal society are subjected to a patriarchal desire and are not accorded their own desire. Women's desire is for the phallus, therefore psychoanalysis does not offer an account that thinks of desire for women outside of phallogentrism. Her critique of desire goes hand in hand with her critique of the primacy of the phallus and the commodification of woman. Only in a patriarchal society can the penis, represented as the phallus retain power and be an object of envy for those who do not "have" it. In addition, Irigaray argues that within this patriarchal society, women have become commodities of exchange between men (father and husband). Women are consistently relegated to an inferior position in society.

At the heart of her very critique and her response is sexual difference. Freud, although seemingly harmless in his analysis of children at birth by claiming a neutrality, always places the girl in definition and relation to the boy. This becomes more apparent

as the children age and how Freud always compares the body of the little girl to the little boy. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the little girl's body is sacrificed in order to create the oedipal little boy. In psychoanalysis, sexual difference is nonexistent since at first, difference is inconsequential, as time passes the "little girl is a little boy" and after the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the sexes are opposites, active and passive counterparts not in themselves, but in patriarchal terms.

Much of feminist history in all three waves has been a political attempt at gaining equality for women on the domestic front as well as in the work place. These feminist efforts have been fruitful, although not completely successful. Equality does not give women their own space, but rather, equates them with men. Since we live in a patriarchy, and white, wealthy, heterosexual, able-bodied men are the most powerful, women would be striving to be equal to them. What Irigaray is proposing is something more than and beyond equality. It is the crux of every feminist effort and question, the ability to have two sexes living together, to do more than co-exist, but also to share a love and have a better understanding of one another that does not involve dominance and subordination. How can men and women be together, without turning their differences into a power play and into something beyond patriarchy? Sexual difference is Irigaray's politics and although conceived of during the 1970's, bears much relevance and use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Irigaray's work is necessary in collaboration with the work of Deleuze and Guattari for thinking of difference as positivity and not as lack. Irigaray, along with other feminists such as Alice Jardine during the 1980's, had very strong negative reactions towards Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-woman. Irigaray writes in *The Sex Which is Not One*,



But isn't a multiplicity that does not entail a rearticulation of the difference between the sexes bound to block or take away something of woman's pleasure? In other words, is the feminine capable, at present, of attaining this desire, which is *neutral* precisely from the viewpoint of sexual difference? Except by miming masculine desire once again. And doesn't the "desiring machine" still partly take the place of woman or the feminine? ... This is, to a pleasure different from an abstract—neuter?—pleasure of sexualized matter. That pleasure which perhaps constitutes a discovery from men, a supplement to enjoyment, in a fantasmatic 'becoming-woman,' but which has long been familiar to women (141).

Irigaray is highly critical of not only becoming-woman, but of desiring-machines as well. Her criticisms bear relevance now and force the question: how can woman think of a new desire, such as found in the assemblages/desiring-machine, when woman has not had access to a desire that is not defined by the dominance of masculinity? Irigaray would not argue that a new way of thinking and enacting desire is absolutely necessary, but it is hard to think of desire in a Deleuzian sense when women have been excluded from the production of desire as it has been known and understood. She rejects a neutral desire that does not incorporate sexual difference since neutrality, in patriarchy, would benefit masculinity. She accuses the work of Deleuze and Guattari of attempting to eliminate sexual difference with their concepts such as desiring machines. Irigaray finds that desiring machines are another way of consuming the female body. With regard to becoming-woman, Irigaray has similar critiques and does not see how this takes sexual difference into account to bring women out of a phallogocentric world. She finds that becomings are neutral since both man and woman must undergo becoming-woman. For Irigaray, desiring machines and becoming-woman simply neutralize women, thus rendering them ever more defined by masculine terms, even worse, in the guise of being less harmful to women than other theories. Irigaray does provide a cautionary tale when

reading Deleuze and Guattari. Although they can be considered allies since psychoanalysis is the common enemy and they are aware of the impact that Freud has had on women, but allies only up to a certain point. She warns against the pitfalls of falling into a masculine discourse, whether it is overtly masculine or disguises itself in neutrality, the potential for equality. Women run the risk of rendering themselves neutral, invisible, if sexual difference is ignored and even worse, eliminated. Her harsh criticism of becoming-woman is a way of staying away from phallogocentric discourse that could possibly advocate for the moving beyond sexual difference.

Rosi Braidotti published three books, *Patterns of Dissonance* and *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, just over a decade after the publication of Deleuze and Guattari's work, and *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* in 2002. Her works on Deleuze and Guattari show the shift that occurred from pre and post-1995 period for some difference feminists regarding their work on becomings and other concepts. For the most part, the initial reaction, particularly to becoming-woman, as can be seen clearly in Irigaray's work, was hostile and critical. Braidotti too, in her earlier works is highly critical of Deleuze, however, she feels that for contemporary politics and philosophy, his writings are the "least harmful to women" (124).<sup>33</sup> It is becoming-woman that has received the most scathing criticism. Braidotti views becoming-woman as a move towards sexual neutrality, beyond sex and sexual differentiation, sentiment shared with Irigaray. She finds that the task of becoming-minoritarian, which is part of all becomings strives to overcome sexual differences and into a more neutral realm of becomings. Difference feminists have shown that phallogocentric societies have always aligned women in relation to men as being less

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<sup>33</sup> *Patterns of Dissonance*

than, equal to (in a more liberal-egalitarian sense) or complementary with masculinity and sexual difference is the attempt to see difference in place of opposition, equality, and complementarity. Deleuze and Guattari are the least harmful for Braidotti because they critique binary logic and do not advocate for a reversal in these power relations but are trying to uproot molar identities for a rhizomatic becoming-minoritarian. Rather than find becoming woman a very useful tool for difference feminists, Braidotti finds that it is still a “misogynist mode of thought” (123). Braidotti finds that becoming-woman does not enact difference nor does it separate woman from the dominating category of man and phallogentrism. On the contrary, she sees becoming-woman as diminishing sexual difference and enacting “misogyny” by male philosophers who have merely reappropriated the term woman and subsequently, erase it. Braidotti’s fear is that the timing of becoming-woman coincides with a moment when women are reclaiming their bodies and their voices, as an effort to dominate women in the guise of an ally. Men becoming women, speaking and writing as women, Braidotti cautions that “feminist women have learnt at their own expense that men’s knowledge is neither pure nor revolutionary, especially when it concerns them” (125). Braidotti warns that becoming-woman is an attempt to neutralize the sexes and move beyond the focus of sex and the differences between them, which will only be beneficial for masculinity and patriarchy since it will leave the place of women in the same reductive relation to men.

Braidotti’s works as they move along time are enmeshed in the current politics and issues. In *Nomadic Subjects* Braidotti expands her critiques of Deleuze and Guattari of not only becoming-woman, but the notion of a BwO and what the implications of a BwO are. She dedicates a chapter “Organs without Bodies” to address these critiques.

For Braidotti, the Organs without Bodies (OwB) address the advancements of science that occurred during the 1990's such as in vitro fertilization and its political implications. In vitro fertilization introduced a way of reproducing without sex, and without a body per se, the introduction of the test tube baby. Women can also choose to engage in sex with the option of birth control in order to avoid reproduction. From a liberal feminist point of view, these "advancements" can be seen as liberating, yet Braidotti makes the argument that there is a phallogentric and indeed racist agenda behind biotechnology. Braidotti finds that the body is beginning to disappear which undercuts her feminist goals of materiality, and of rethinking the body outside of binaries.

Braidotti also exposes the dark side of biotechnology and discusses how it cuts geographical boundaries now that organs can be harvested and are retrieved from developing countries. She writes, "[OwB] marks a planetary transaction of living matter carefully invested to keep the species alive and healthy and white" (52). With the advancement of science and the possibility of having "organs without bodies" there is hope for healthier bodies and longer lasting life spans, but for a select population. The move outside of the body, to be able to create organs, to create babies is not something that is available to everyone even as the world becomes more technologically advanced. As Braidotti makes clear, biotechnology is being used to escape the body, to have life that is outside and unconnected to the body. The body and materiality are important parts of difference feminism since it is the body which is associated with woman in binary logic. She also brings about the question of sexual difference when we live in an era where sexual androgyny, or the blurring of sexual differences occurs. More recently in 2008, Thomas Beattie was the first "man" to have a baby. Thomas Beattie is a female-to-

male transgender who opted to keep his female reproductive organs intact, conceived and recently gave birth to a child. Braidotti writes that popular culture pushes “gender-benders” and androgyny, which during the writing of this book can be seen in the Calvin Klein models or the example she uses, of Boy George. Braidotti feels that at the time when women have gained back control over their bodies and sexuality, there is now a push for “beyond sex,” a beyond male and female differences, thus eliminating any political move towards sexual difference (54).

Braidotti continues her critiques of becoming-woman and demonstrates how Deleuze and Guattari’s writings are contradictory to the political efforts of sexual difference. In reviewing their work, she finds that the concept of becoming-woman is in itself unclear and demonstrates this by using the following quote from Deleuze and Guattari,

It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity: ‘we as women...’ makes its appearance as a subject of enunciation” (276)

Braidotti feels that Deleuze and Guattari are being elusive and attempting to hide to the problematics of becoming-woman by inserting a disclaimer. They are advocating becoming-minoritarian, but at the same time stress the need for women’s molar politics. Braidotti pinpoints this as “inconsistent” since becoming-molecular is the goal of all becomings, which is contradictory to a molar politics (117). My interpretation of this quote is that Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge in their writings the impact binary logic has had on women and by acknowledging the need for a women’s molar politics, they are cognizant that women have more political struggles men and are therefore much more aware and understanding of the task at hand for women. Women’s situation is that much

more difficult since Irigaray and Braidotti have argued, she has not been entitled even to her own molar category. Her molar category came out of a masculine discourse. Deleuze and Guattari do not position women and men as symmetrical, or starting on the same ground for their becoming, a critique Braidotti makes. Both sexes must undergo a becoming-woman, but their concept of becoming does not have a beginning or end. Becoming-woman is different not just between the sexes, but on an individual level. Women and men are not symmetrical and therefore it seems logical that their becomings would not be symmetrical. For Deleuze and Guattari, a molar woman's politics is necessary, since women have had their history and voices taken away in phallogentrism. Rather than seeing this as an inconsistency in their writings, it is the acknowledgement that certain women's politics such as equal work for equal pay and funding for rape crisis centers is necessary, important and needs to be conducted. They caution against stagnation in molar politics and insist on a new molecular politics. Therefore, they do not want women to remain in their molar politics, which can be seen in egalitarian feminist efforts. Braidotti's critique is that Deleuze and Guattari assume a symmetry between men and women since both men and women must undergo a becoming-woman. After their discussion of women's molar politics, Deleuze and Guattari write that both men and women must undergo becomings with no variation or explanation on how or if this differs for each sex.

The pre-1995 feminists were wary of Deleuze and Guattari, as seen particularly in the works of Irigaray. Although some caution remains, post-1995 feminism is much more open and amenable regarding the usefulness of the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. *Metamorphoses*, written by Braidotti is allied with Deleuze and Guattari and much more

open to their concepts. As seen in her earlier writings, she shared many of the concerns that feminists had with regard to BwO, becoming-woman and desiring-machines. This book does not abandon all of her earlier critiques, but is much more positive and hopeful about the use of Deleuze and Guattari within feminist philosophy.

Braidotti remains overtly political in her work, and she writes during a time when the medicalization of women's bodies was booming, particularly in the field of fertility. Even more so during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, bodies are subject to the scrutiny of biology since DNA is a central and expanding topic and the Human Genome Project is dedicated to discovering the nuanced and individual genetic differences between people. As difference feminists have demonstrated, this is problematic since differences have been used to fuel oppositional thinking and logic. Although this is a new century and decades have passed since the earlier writings of Irigaray, difference is still the topic at hand for feminist thinking since the question as posed by Braidotti remains: "how can difference be cleansed of this negative charge?" (4). The political task of difference feminism is to unalign the affiliation of difference with opposition primarily, but of equality and complementarity as well. Much time has transpired since Freud's writings on desire and the Oedipus complex, and even some decades have passed since feminists have critiqued Freud, yet a negative understanding of both desire and difference remains intact today. Binary logic sets up difference as oppositional, which is not difference at all. Oppositional thinking is dangerous for contemporary feminist and anti-racist efforts since efforts such as those found in the Human Genome Project are moving beyond the visible and into microscopic/invisible levels to validate ways of maintaining opposition and dominant forms of power through the discourse of science. Difference has been used

incorrectly and understood as oppositional in oppressive settings to justify the subjugation of marginalized groups of people on the basis that difference is a lack and an indicator of a deficiency. Therefore, Braidotti advocates for thinking difference positively, thinking of difference as it is, and not how it has incorrectly and unjustly been used. These efforts can be seen in both the writings of Deleuze and Guattari as well as Irigaray.

Deleuze and Guattari write philosophy in such unsuspecting terms, because they undermine both the privileging of reason as well as the valorization of canonical philosophical texts. They are writing philosophy in a non-traditional manner and are not committed by any means to the “canon.” They do not valorize the mind over the body, as being superior and rational. They are interested in what bodies can do, what they can connect to, as well as demonstrate a commitment to the effects that texts have and what they can do. Their writings are “nomadic” in the sense that they break away from the traditions of the canon and reshape themselves, and are in themselves, rhizomatic. This is a concept that Braidotti uses in her own works. Part of nomadism is what captures Braidotti in thinking of an alliance between feminist philosophy and Deleuze and Guattari. She writes,

Feminist philosophical nomadism is a relevant and significant attempt to come to terms with both embodiment and sexual difference as processes of transformation, while foregrounds issues of power, empowerment and accountability.” (63)

Braidotti’s interest in nomadism involves a Deleuzian way of thinking and enacting theory. Rather than seeing theory, even feminist theory, as competing to become canonical and therefore deemed as “true” and therefore legitimized. Nomadism does not partake in this process, but strives to undo the binaries of reason/unreason, mind/body



and is interested in philosophy that is rhizomatic. Braidotti feels that Deleuze and Guattari invoke “anti-Oedipus or anti-oedipal” ideas in their writings since they have a “loving disrespect” towards the founders of Western philosophy (67). Part of her interest in Deleuze and Guattari is their acknowledgement of the body, and what a body can do and bringing materialism and corporeality into theorizing. This is a major break with the tradition of valued philosophy where the mind/body split is apparent, the mind being identified with reason and the body being identified with unreason. In the interest of feminist critique and investment, it is the mind that is associated with man/activity and the body with woman/passivity. Deleuze and Guattari are useful for political efforts since they are proposing a new and different way of existing and living in a world that is sexist, racist, classist, ethnocentric, etc. This is why the concept of becoming is central to Braidotti. Becomings are a continual process, never to become, are always changing and transforming, moving towards imperceptibly and away from identity and being definable.

In *Metamorphoses*, Braidotti is much more receptive and open to the concept of becoming-woman than in her previous books. Rather than seeing it as she did previously as a reappropriation of women by men, she now feels that “‘becoming woman’ of philosophy marks a new kind of masculine style of philosophy: it is a philosophical sensibility which has learned to undo the straight-jacket of phallogentrism and to take a few risks” (69). Braidotti no longer finds their work to be misogynist, but rather useful for moving beyond the dominance of phallogentrism since their work, along with the work of difference feminists, is interested in undoing binary, and oppositional thinking. Her original criticism of becoming-woman was that it failed to address sexual difference and moved into a neutral ground and into androgyny. Becomings are always transforming

therefore she feels that becomings can possibly open up the topic of sexual difference and can also explore “what kinds of distribution and recomposition of masculinities and femininities are possible here and now?” (90). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari provide some new ways of thinking about the sexes beyond the binary system that is prolific in psychoanalysis. They write,

For two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes. (213)

Deleuze and Guattari are perfectly aware of sexual difference. They do not put sexual difference at the heart of their philosophy, but are committed to proliferating difference and multiplicities. Deleuze and Guattari conceive of a new way of thinking about the sexes, which cannot be reduced to one/same. They problematize the binary of man/woman and show that a duality of the sexes is limiting since there is a possibility for thousands of sexes. In relation to their becomings, they are certainly opposed to neutrality and sameness since becomings, becoming-woman, child, animal, molecular are the process by which molar identities are complicated. They see a proliferation of multiplicities and differentiations in their understanding of becoming.

In conjunction with Irigaray’s critiques of phallocentrism and theories of sexual difference, feminists have found strong allies and possibilities of challenging the identities formed after the resolution of the Oedipus complex which create an oppositional relationship between the sexes. Braidotti feels it is necessary to think sexual difference with Deleuze and Guattari’s theories and concepts, particularly becoming. Her feminist philosophical nomadism is an attempt to “zigzag the relationship” between Deleuze and Guattari and sexual difference (111). She finds that commitments to sexual

difference as found in Irigaray can be used in conjunction with Deleuze and Guattari. There are many political implications and possibilities in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. For Braidotti and other Deleuzian feminists, Deleuze and Guattari discuss an affirmative way of living, one that is not always in reaction to phallocentrism or defined oedipally. They write, "*Becoming is antimemory*" (294). Therefore becomings break desire away from repression, away from the unconscious and oedipal desires. Becomings are new transformations that are always occurring and never stop.

Although feminism is a response to the dominance of men and subjugation of women, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate how these very power models can be reproduced by those resisting them. Irigaray makes similar points when she critiques sameness and that sexual difference is exactly the move beyond sameness, complementarity and opposition. The goal of any feminist effort should not strive for equality, or even a role reversal where woman are dominant since nothing new and different will be produced. Deleuze and Guattari value becomings since they are always changing and assemblages as a way of connecting in order to avoid the redundancy of the same and the old. Their philosophy continues its focus on thinking difference beyond lack and negation which is also reflected in Irigaray's work. Sexual difference is necessary to consider when thinking of any philosophy of difference for a feminist undertaking and Braidotti demonstrates through her recent work on Deleuze and Guattari that combined with the work of Irigaray, there is something powerful for feminist thinking.

Anorexia has been a topic that garnered much attention from feminists since it primarily affected women, a statistic that holds true today.<sup>34</sup> The common understanding of anorexia is that it is a disorder where the subject has an intensely skewed body perception, refusal of food and fear of gaining weight which is achieved through starvation. The fashion industries and mostly the media receive much of the blame for anorexia, which provoked some designers to require minimum body weight for runway models, as well as other fashion outlets such as magazines, movies, television where thinness is privileged. Anorexia is a charged topic that interested Freud and feminists, as well as Deleuze. There are various accounts and interpretations (psychoanalytic and feminist) of anorexia yet a Deleuzian perspective offers new ways of thinking and theorizing feminist issues revolving the body, particularly the anorexic body.

Freud's writings on hysteria and its relation to femininity spawned feminist reactions and protests. Hysteria, which is primarily a feminine occurrence, is a somatic symptom responding, to a psychological disturbance or problem. In this understanding, anorexia falls under the psychoanalytic understanding of hysteria. Freud finds that hysteria comes out of anxiety of the "loss of love" (Volume 20, 143). Therefore, hysteria manifests itself through the body as a response to the anxiety surrounding the "loss of love," particularly the loss of the mother who is the first love object. Irigaray has demonstrated how the loss of the mother as love object demands much from the little girl as compared to the little boy. It is apparent that Freud was aware of the impact this had on female children as they developed since he equated the loss of the mother for girls with the castration complex in boys.

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<sup>34</sup> The National Organization for Women (NOW) has statistics that demonstrate 85% of people who suffer from anorexia are females. ([http://www.nowfoundation.org/issues/health/whp/whp\\_fact2.html](http://www.nowfoundation.org/issues/health/whp/whp_fact2.html))

Freud, while working with Josef Breuer, discovered that what appeared as physical ailments were indeed manifestations of the mind. In May 1889, Freud began his work with Frau Emmy, a hysteric. He writes,

When I asked her why she ate so little she answered that she was not in the habit of eating more and that it would be bad for her if she did. . . . When I enquired what she drank she told me she could only tolerate thick fluids, such as milk, coffee or cocoa; if she drank water or minerals it ruined her digestion. This bore all the signs of a neurotic choice. (Volume 2, 81)

Freud used hypnosis with Frau Emmy in order to understand her anorexia. At one point, Freud convinced Frau Emmy to drink water as well as eat bigger portions. Freud uncovered through hypnosis, the underlying cause of her anorexia and other phobias from which she suffered and deduced that Frau Emmy suffered from anorexia since she was forced to eat meals when she was a child that “disgusted” her, and being unable to express this disgust lead to her condition. Understanding the root of her condition enabled Frau Emmy to overcome her anorexia and her negative relationship with food.

The contemporary understanding and explanation of anorexia is that it is a form or representation of hyper-femininity. The common misconception of anorexics is that they starve themselves in order to achieve the ideal of the feminine body, which is why hospitals confiscate fashion and gossip magazines from hospitalized anorexics, fearing that this will be counter-productive to their recovery. There have been many feminist responses to the portrayal of anorexia. Elizabeth Grosz writes in *Volatile Bodies*,

Anorexia can, like the phantom limb, be a kind of mourning for a pre-Oedipal (i.e., precastated) body and a corporeal connection to the mother that women in patriarchy are required to abandon. Anorexia is a form of protest at the social meaning of the female body. (40)

This vastly contrasts with the current understanding of attaining the ideal of femininity through self-starvation. What Grosz is saying, is similar to Danielle Celermajer’s

feminist, psychoanalytic account of anorexia.<sup>35</sup> Rather than seeing anorexia as the attainment for the ideal, feminine body that is valorized in the “media,” feminists such as Grosz and Celermajer understand anorexia as a protest to a patriarchal femininity. Anorexic women usually develop amenorrhea, which stops their menstrual flow and thus their reproductive capabilities. This is a refusal to accept the prescribed, patriarchal femininity that defines woman as mother, woman as seeking the phallus through the birth of the male child. Anorexia is also about controlling what goes in and what comes out of the body to the extreme, which is a revolt against phallographic norms and privileges.

Furthermore, in comparison with Freud’s writings on Frau Emmy, Celermajer offers different view of understanding her “hysterical” symptoms. Frau Emmy’s disinterest in food began when she witnessed her healthy husband pass away right in front of her. Freud asks that Frau Emmy enter into the nursing home away from her two children, and he says that “this she agreed to without raising the slightest objection” (50). After working with Frau Emmy, it becomes clear that she spent her life caring for others (her mother had a stroke and lived four years afterwards and her brother was terribly ill). Taking into account a feminist re-reading of anorexia, it is possible that Frau Emmy was protesting her position as a feminine subject. The anorexic uses food because it is linked to the pre-oedipal, oral stage when the child was nourished by the mother’s breast or its equivalent. Freud described that Frau Emmy was “disgusted” with food which he later finds out is linked to the force feeding imposed by her mother. Celermajer elaborates on this connection by writing, “[Food] affords her satisfaction and it is also what has been inappropriately thrust upon her, a projection or imposition of the other’s desire” (65). The baby is dependent on the mother to be fed. While eating is enjoyable and necessary, there

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<sup>35</sup> “Submission and Rebellion: Anorexia and a Feminism of the Body”

is a disconnect between the child needing to eat and not being able to vocalize this hunger through words, and the mother's own understanding of what the child needs at a given moment. Celermajer understands that the anorexic is both "obsessed" with food and has a relation of both "desire and disgust" which coincide with the two opposing forces at play during the oral stage (65). It also connects Frau Emmy's disgust with food when she is an older child and her mother enacted this same process of force feeding. This occurs for Frau Emmy during a time when she should have had more abilities in rejecting her mother's demands. Therefore, Frau Emmy's anorexia can be understood in these terms of rebellion.

Frau Emmy does not hesitate when asked to enter into the hospital, leaving her two children in the care of their nurse, which could be understood as a relief from her motherly duties. Furthermore, the onset of her anorexia occurred right after her husband's death, leaving her as the only authority and care provider in her home. Frau Emmy spent her life as the proper feminine subject by being the dutiful daughter/sister/wife and her time in the nursing home allowed her to remove herself from the position of caretaker, and her anorexia was a way of "demolishing the body as her 'prison'" (64). Frau Emmy's protest to the demands of her position as a feminine subject manifested themselves in a refusal to eat. She no longer wanted to care for everyone around her, therefore she stopped nourishment to herself which begins her slow resistance, and quite possibly her death.

Celermajer and Grosz's account of anorexia demonstrate how anorexia is really a form of rebellion against, rather than complacency to patriarchal norms and in the case of Frau Emmy, it is possible to see her as unconsciously resisting her feminine position.

Susie Orbach demonstrates in *Hunger Strike*, that cases of anorexia have increased tremendously in the United States and have succumbed to the medical field, where women are hospitalized, force fed by tubes with a shocking amount of caloric intake, partake in therapy and are treated like children, with no rights or privileges. She writes about anorexia,

[The psychological symptoms of anorexia] express both the rebellion and the accommodation that women come to make in the context of a social role lived within circumscribed boundaries. The starvation amidst plenty, the denial set against desire, the striving for invisibility versus the wish to be seen. (24)

Orbach feels that anorexia represents ambivalence in its resistance and complacency, and that women are both trying to fit in as well as rebel, thus they find anorexia as an outlet to undertake their challenging position in society. Anorexia represents solid rebellion and complete bodily control, with no room for uncertainty. Anorexia in contemporary times marks women's rebellion against prescribed, patriarchal femininity and as a way of gaining back control of their own bodies since they decide how much goes in a very calculated manner.

Deleuze wrote little directly on anorexia, though feminists have used Deleuze's writings (BwO, assemblages, becomings) as a way of understanding anorexia differently. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze gives his "homage to Fanny," who was his wife and an anorexic by writing,

The anorexic consists of a body without organs with voids and fullnesses...It is not a matter of a refusal of the body, it is a matter of a refusal of the organism, of a refusal of that the organism makes the body undergo. The anorexic void has nothing to do with a lack, it is on the contrary a way of escaping the organic constraint of lack and hunger at the mechanical mealtime...Anorexia is a political system, a micro-politics: to escape from the norms of consumption in order not to be an object of consumption oneself. (110)



Deleuze understands anorexia as a creative undertaking. The anorexic is not refusing their own body, but the body that is only mother/daughter/wife/caretaker, the molar body that is infused with patriarchal ideals. Anorexia is a BwO that is a political statement, an act of protest against femininity since it is a body that wants to be more than what it “should” be. The anorexic is protesting lack and castration in her refusal to eat. In order to avoid being consumed by phallogentrism, she literally refuses food. Interpretations of anorexia are completely misinformed today since it is the very resistance against any kind of prescribed femininity, especially a hyper-femininity that strives to attain the perfect (molar) body of what woman is “supposed” to be. Deleuze poses the most important question in thinking of anorexia as a BwO: “why does the anorexic assemblage come so close to going off the rails, to becoming lethal?” (111). Psychoanalysis provides the tools, the molar categories by which the feminists and Deleuze understand the anorexic’s resistance. She does not want to be a “normal,” castrated, lacking woman. She wants to rid herself of molar identities. However, psychoanalysis also contributes to certain dualisms such as the mind/body split and therefore does not have a sufficient account of the body of the anorexic, but focuses on the psychical end of it. The task at hand is how to be a full anorexic BwO without emptying out completely into death. How do we keep anorexia as a positive undertaking without becoming an empty BwO?

Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook tackle the issue of anorexia from a Deleuzian, feminist perspective in their article.<sup>36</sup> Both Bray and Colebrook attempt to understand anorexia as a positivity since anorexia is seen as a response to patriarchy in its rebellion, or as a way of demonstrating hyper-femininity. They write,

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<sup>36</sup> “The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and the Politics of (Dis)Embodiment.” *Signs*, Vol. 23.1, 1998, pages 35-67.

As long as specific problems of corporeality, such as eating disorders, are interpreted as diseases of representation, feminist criticism will only be able to offer a reactive response to its perceived malaise. (55)

Their critique is of representation, and the manner by which anorexia is given a meaning. Anorexia represented as conformity or as rebellion of femininity still gives it some kind of meaning. Therefore, feminist criticism can benefit from using a BwO as a way of understanding the anorexic as actions, and not as meaning or representation. The anorexic is enacting a “micro” politics, rebelling against molarity. It is a way to think of a body, that acts, connects and produces, rather than a starving body on the verge of death and in the need of hospitalization. They describe anorexia, not as bodies of anorexics, but a “series of practices” that include weighing, measuring that are part of the intensifying of the body, and a continual process of becoming and transformation. The anorexic’s day is not filled simply with starvation, but with a detailed and rigorous routine: how much goes in, how much comes out, how much is used, how much is not used. Orbach in her book is concerned over the literal bodily transformations that occur with anorexics. Bray and Colebrook are trying to interpret anorexia as becoming a BwO which enables them to see the anorexic filling her day with various acts and practices that revolve around her body. As Deleuze warns, there is a lethal line where anorexia can lead to death and end of assemblages and becomings. Therefore, anorexia can benefit from a feminist understanding that is corporeal as well as one that incorporates sexual difference into its understanding of becomings and assemblages. Anorexia can be understood as becoming a BwO, but the real issue which both Celermajer, Grosz and Deleuze point out is that death is a very real possibility in anorexia and it is primarily a feminine occurrence. The anorexic comes too close to emptying out and whether or not she is understood as

enacting a “series of practices” does not matter provided that anorexia has a very close and dangerous relationship to death. Deleuze offers a new way of thinking of anorexia which is positive because it does not see the anorexic as powerless and passive. Deleuze sees the anorexic as making connections and breaking down molarities. Because anorexia is primarily a female concern, the works that feminists such as Grosz and Celermajer are important to incorporate into a Deleuzian way of thinking. What Grosz, Celermajer and Deleuze have in common is their understanding of the anorexic as actively resisting patriarchy. The problem still remains though, that this resistance, or this becoming a BwO comes at the expense of women’s bodies.

Recent feminists have been much more open and receptive to the works of Deleuze and Guattari, since their writings have been useful for feminist theorizing about the body as well as difference.<sup>37</sup> Their writings are read much more prolifically and are easily accessible, which in part has assisted in the expansion of the usefulness in their work. Rosi Braidotti, Claire Colebrook, Elizabeth Grosz, Tamsin Lorraine, and Dorothea Olkowski represent a handful of Deleuzian feminist theorists that demonstrate Deleuze and Guattari’s work on becomings, difference, BwOs, assemblages as useful to feminist philosophy, rather than antithetical.

Claire Colebrook in her book *Gilles Deleuze* demonstrates how Deleuze and Guattari have created theories that transformed not only philosophy and feminist theory, but the study of cinema and literature as well. Her book describes how their work is a critique of the binary being/identity and how to think of becomings and difference without referring back to this dualism. Difference feminists, particularly Irigaray and

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<sup>37</sup> There has not been any feminist work on Guattari, however; feminists have used the collaborative works of Deleuze and Guattari that are mentioned in this thesis.

Grosz demonstrate how binary systems function in the same manner of phallogocentrism (male/female, subject/object, active/passive) which always places the category of the “subject” as the dominant category by which every other category is negatively defined. Merely reversing these categories employs the same power structure. Sexual difference critiques egalitarian feminism for striving to be equal to man since woman in this dualistic reasoning is “not man” and equality is the erasure of sexual difference while still operating in a phallogocentric manner. Therefore, difference feminist theorizing is dedicated to undoing the Freudian model of “woman” as either the same or opposite to men, depending on their stage of the oedipal process.

Colebrook discusses in this book how and why their work is useful in responding to dualisms and finds that Deleuze and Guattari offer new ways of thinking, particularly with becomings and desire. Although the last stage of becoming is imperceptibility, it is not about disappearance or invisibility, as earlier feminists such as Jardine and Irigaray claimed, stating that Deleuze and Guattari fed into patriarchy by rendering women invisible. Rather, becomings expand the body to allow for transformations. Colebrook writes about becoming-imperceptible, “We become free *from the human*, open to the event of becoming” (129). Life is ordered primarily in binary structures: man/woman, mind/body, reason/unreason, and moral/immoral. Rather than viewing life as structured according to judgments, becomings open up the body to life and to breaking down the human. The human is problematized in every becoming (animal, child, woman, molecular) since “human” is a molar category as well.

Men and women know what their roles are, and what they are supposed to be (men- politician, father, breadwinner and woman- nurturer, mother, wife). Children

become aware of this at a very young age as well. Although every child will not resolve their Oedipus complex “normally,” Freud anticipates these “abnormal” resolutions which include homosexuality, fetishism, frigidity, etc. ahead of time for both men and women and therefore fixes their identity in denial or disavowal. Becomings are always minoritarian and are the opening up of difference and not opposition. Becomings are rhizomatic, they spread, they become more. Colebrook writes,

A majoritarian mode, for example, presents the opposition as already given and based on a privileged term. . . . A minoritarian mode of difference does not ground the distinction on a privileged term, and does not see the distinction as an already-given order. (104)

Using this model, all becomings are always moving away from binaries that create oppositions, one term as the dominant term. This is exactly the problem in the oedipal triangle since woman is a “lacking man” and the roles of the man, woman and child are pre-determined. Becoming enables the possibility of a new way of living that is not dominated by the Oedipus complex because it does not begin, nor end with the law of the father or the privileging of the phallus. There is no “one” term in becomings because they are all moving towards becoming-molecular. Each becoming problematizes molar/majoritarian identities and becomes more and more differentiated and complex, rather than simplified to a “privileged” term.

Furthermore, Colebrook finds the Deleuzean understanding of desire more effective for feminist theory, in comparison to the dominant understanding of desire as lack that is waiting to be filled. She views Deleuze’s understanding of desire as positive and productive since he argues that desire “begins from connection; life strives to preserve and enhance itself and does so by connecting with other desires” (91). In psychoanalysis, desire is ultimately linked to a genital sexuality that has active aims for

men and passive aims for women. Women are lacking the phallus and will seek it through marriage, and ultimately the birth of a son. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of desire is preferable because desire seeks desire and not its own repression. Desire is connective and can be found anywhere, in a person reading a book or playing an instrument for example. Desire is not organized according to the psychoanalytic model of the pre-oedipal and oedipal phases, which reduces desire to enacting itself on a familial model. There is no organization to desire, just its ability to connect objects and things together.

Although Colebrook demonstrates how feminists can use Deleuze and Guattari as a way of thinking and living beyond the oedipal process, Irigaray maintains her reservations. In *Conversations* she writes,

As far as I am concerned, 'becoming woman' or 'becoming a woman' correspond to cultivating my own identity, the identity which is mine by birth. For Deleuze, it amounts to becoming what he is not by birth. If I appeal to a return to nature, to the body - that is, to values that our Western culture has scorned - Deleuze acts in the opposite way: according to him it would be possible and suitable to become someone or something which is without relation to my original and material belonging. How could this be possible above all from the part of a man with respect to becoming woman? Putting on the stereotypes concerning femininity? Deleuze would want to become the woman who Simone de Beauvoir did not want to become? (79).

Irigaray is still critical of becoming-woman, even decades after her initial response. She accuses Deleuze and Guattari of wanting to become something they are not, and perhaps men in general should stay away from becoming-woman. Irigaray takes offense at becoming-woman and criticizes Deleuze and Guattari for trying to escape their own bodies and by reenacting the “stereotypes” of femininity, they can try and become-woman. Rather than seeing becoming-woman as a productive process, Irigaray interprets it as a mockery of women, and the assumption of “women-like” behaviors. Deleuze and

Guattari are adamant that becoming-woman is not a reenactment of molar femininity which endows women with certain stereotypes such as being inclined to nurturing. This would simply be “being” a molar woman (in a phallographic and molar society) or imitating woman. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari are not trying to escape their actual bodies, only their molar identities. Deleuze and Guattari, as demonstrated in Braidotti’s later work are useful for thinking of the body and its materiality. Unlike the history of male philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari do not valorize the mind over the body.

Becoming-woman is a move beyond molar politics and towards difference. Part of Irigaray’s earlier critique is the lack of becoming-man, which resonates today. Becoming-woman is by no means a reappropriation of women, or a sexist undertaking as Massumi critiques in the second chapter of this thesis. Man is a majoritarian category and the dominant term by which subordinate terms are defined. Irigaray would not disagree with this and takes it further in her earlier writings, demonstrating that men need women, the dominant term needs the subordinate term in order to have any sense of self, in order to make the oppositional distinction. Deleuze and Guattari critique binary logic and want to dismantle molar identities associated with not only man, but woman as well. Because men are in the majoritarian category, they must undergo a becoming-minoritarian which is found in women, children and animals. Therefore, Irigaray’s critiques of becoming-woman are too harsh and inaccurate. Her critiques of becoming-woman miss the creative and political potentials since becoming-woman for man can possibly undo their own molar category which is linked to the Law of the Father. This applies to women as well since becoming-woman for women can unravel and complicate their relation to men and

to the phallus. Becomings unravel the oppositional relationships of man and woman, and continually transforming into becoming-molecular.

Feminists over time have found how useful Deleuze and Guattari are for theorizing the body, difference, desire and politics, through their new ways of thinking and terminologies. This does not necessarily resolve the issue of sexual difference.

Although Deleuze and Guattari proliferate difference and adequately demonstrate that becoming-woman is not an attempt towards neutralization and eradicating woman all together, they do not emphasize the importance of sexual difference in becomings.

Tamsin Lorraine in her book *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy* discusses the parallels between the work of Deleuze and Irigaray. She writes,

Without some relationship with oneself, without a relationship to the horizon of one's gender, without someone to which to refer to one's own becomings, one is liable to be drawn into the becomings of another. (220)

Although it is imperative for men to undergo a molecular transformation, Lorraine does bring up a legitimate concern with regard to sexual difference and becomings. Women must ensure that in the process of becoming, they do not relinquish sexual difference. Sexual difference is necessary, an opinion voiced by Olkowski as well as in her own writings on Irigaray and Deleuze, and cannot be forgotten or dismissed.<sup>38</sup> Both Lorraine and Olkowski are advocating for a feminist theory that incorporates sexual difference into becomings, difference and BwO found in Deleuzian theory. Sexual difference in becomings can complicate the various becomings for each sex, and ensure that the becoming-woman of woman is not the same as the becoming-woman of man. Although I think Deleuze and Guattari do not see sameness as part of becomings, the fact still

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<sup>38</sup> "Body, Knowledge and Becoming-Woman: Morphologic in Deleuze and Irigaray," *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*.



remains that women need to ensure that through these becomings woman is not lost or subsumed to another becoming. Although the theories becoming-woman and sexual difference do not align perfectly, as can be seen in Irigaray's critiques, feminists should not give up the rich and positive material found in Deleuze and Guattari. Irigaray for moving beyond the dominance of Oedipus, and into positive, creative and different ways of living and thinking.

Deleuze, Guattari and Irigaray are critical of the dominance masculinity has had, and the binaries created from its privileged position in phallogentrism. "Oneness and sameness" according to Irigaray, are products of the masculine occupying this dominant position which necessitates thinking and living sexual difference. Deleuze and Guattari critique all "molar" categories, which include not only men, but women as well. They do not critique the concept of woman, which would make their work highly problematic for difference. What they do is critique certain molar identities of woman such as mother, wife, nurturer that are seen clearly in psychoanalysis. Deleuze and Guattari do not weigh in on sexual difference to the extent that could align their work with sexual difference. Despite their sympathies for feminist efforts, Irigaray is critical of "molar" categories for men and women, a label she does not use. All becomings are moving towards becoming-molecular for both men and women. The need for a molar women's politics does not go unmentioned by Deleuze and Guattari, and as a feminist, I am in agreement with this. Although egalitarian efforts are reactive because they work towards gaining equality with the dominant form of power that is responsible for their marginalization and they enforce an oppositional view of the sexes rather than seeing the sexes as different. On a theoretical level I disagree with egalitarian efforts if no movement beyond equality is

ever taken. Politically speaking, molar, egalitarian efforts have a place in the real world. Feminists fought hard for equal pay for equal work, funding for non-profits that house domestic violence victims and their child as well as rape counseling centers that offer free services to victims of trauma. As long as women live in a phallogentric society, egalitarian struggles will continue to exist. Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the social and political disparities women have suffered, which require certain molar politics such as efforts at equality as well as other identity politics. The point is to never stop at being equal and to become-more.

Still the concern of sexual difference and becomings remains an issue. Although every becoming begins with becoming-woman, which women undertake as well, there is no discussion about how this would in turn be different for women and for men considering their oppositional positions. Deleuze and Guattari are by no means advocating sameness for the two sexes in the becomings, since they themselves are interested in difference, nor are they advocating for the disappearance or invisibility of man and woman. However, the problem, or rather, the need for thinking of sexual difference still remains and is not emphasized in their work. Deleuze and Guattari break from the dominant discourse of sameness, which is found in psychoanalysis, but the need to go further in the interest of difference feminism. Becomings can be a possibility for breaking away from prescribed and limiting molar gender roles such as nurse, mother, and teacher. These roles assume a type of femininity rather than see sexual difference.

Both Irigaray and Deleuze criticize the prevailing understanding of desire which is oedipalized and reduced to lack. For Irigaray, this understanding of desire diminishes women's organs and reduces women's sexuality to passivity and reproduction.

Psychoanalytic discourse views woman's desire as the desire for a penis, or its equivalent, a baby son. Women's desire is limited in this phallocratic framework, their organs are looked upon as lack in themselves, and the vagina offers nothing to be seen. What Irigaray makes clear in her critiques is that women's desire is unknown in a phallocentric society since women have been subsumed to "sameness" in the interest of the phallus. Irigaray has a creative response to the phallocratic assumption of woman's bodies and desires. Irigaray writes that woman has "two lips," an image she plays on woman's genital lips and that these lips are always touching, engaging with one another. Therefore, women's sexuality cannot be reduced to one or to nothing but rather their sexuality is multiple. Furthermore, their desires "would not be expected to speak the same language as man's; woman's desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greeks<sup>1</sup>" (25). Women's desires and sexuality have been commodified by phallocentrism and reduced to phallus-envy.

Deleuze and Guattari advocate for a positive and active desire that is not solely linked to reproduction and is seen as lacking nothing. Desire is an ability to connect and is not limited to sexual activity. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari are useful for reconceptualizing desire since it has been dominated by the understanding of a lack that desires to be filled by something. However, the same concern that was raised before is the need to address sexual difference with desire. After the pre-oedipal phases, women must give up their active sexuality and woman's desire is no longer addressed as anything more than desire for the phallus in psychoanalysis. Therefore, thinking of desire requires the need to acknowledge what the differences between men and women and means in terms of desire and how women's desire needs to be understood as different from men's

desire. This project is two-fold and extensive since the male-dominated understanding of desire needs to be rethought for men and women. Once this occurs, a desire that incorporates sexual difference and is not solely reduced to genitality is necessary.

Deleuze and Guattari and Irigaray share similar critiques and alliances, particularly with regard to the dominance of psychoanalysis and the reoccurrence of the Oedipus complex that positions man and woman as oppositional. Yet at the same time, they have different philosophies. However, for a feminist undertaking of moving beyond the dominance of the Oedipus complex through the work of Deleuze and Guattari, the incorporation of sexual difference into these ways of thinking and living is of the utmost importance. Deleuze and Guattari discuss becomings which truly challenge majoritarian, molar identities. I think it is important for both men and women to undergo this transformation and challenge identities and subjectivity. However, sexual difference has yet to exist in a phallogentric society, therefore becomings must incorporate the differences between the sexes and women should become-woman, become-molecular provided that it proliferates differences.

## CONCLUSION

The title states that this thesis is a contemporary feminist critique of psychoanalysis, and is done so through the collaborative works of Deleuze and Guattari. What Deleuze and Guattari make clear in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* is the need to go beyond the Oedipus complex since it is reductive and places desire in the realm of the family dynamics (mommy, daddy, child) where the Law of the Father is dominant. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari do offer a more positive, active theory to living since they propose a way out of oedipalization. Freud did not create the Oedipus complex, but he does explain how it comes to be, and how it comes to reproduce itself generation after generation. In this regard, Freud's work on the Oedipus complex is necessary since it explains the reproduction of patriarchy, but is limited because it shows no way out of the oedipal bind. Therefore, although it would be ideal, as Deleuze and Guattari write, to be rid of Oedipus altogether, this cannot occur. The Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis articulates how the sexes have been positioned as binaries and why and how patriarchy manages to reproduce itself. Psychoanalysis is problematic and complicated because it outlines the Oedipus complex, which places femininity in a devalued role, and does not offer solutions beyond oedipalization.

Deleuze and Guattari's alternatives of assemblages, BwO, becomings are more positive in comparison to the repetition of the oedipal drama because their understanding of desire is about making connections and is not limited only to genitality. Their theories and concepts offer a way of living outside of oedipalization which make them of interest to difference feminists. Desire in the psychoanalytic understanding becomes highly limited after the resolution of the Oedipus complex and is reduced to genitality and

reproduction. Deleuze and Guattari are proposing a desire that is not limited but expands itself and can be found in everything that can connect and is open to connections. The BwO removes lack, prioritization, and castration from the oedipalized body and sees the body as full (although not in all cases) and the BwO is the body by which these connections and desires are made. Deleuze and Guattari offer an alternative to lack in their critique of psychoanalysis. Their work is useful for feminist purposes since many of the problematics with the oedipal drama impact women negatively with regard to desire, sexuality and ability to act in a phallogentric society. Deleuze and Guattari are useful for feminist efforts but more is needed and that is found in sexual difference. Therefore the combination of Deleuze and Guattari with Irigaray's writings on sexual difference is a possibility for living differently and for a new politics. The contemporary feminism I am addressing here is a feminism that is committed to corporeality and difference. Feminism is a broad term and has gone through waves and various shifts and changes. I do not deny a need for egalitarian feminism since inequalities based on sex still exist even in our more progressive times. However, difference feminism advocates the need to move beyond equality since equality always aligns itself with the dominant term, thus it is reductive for women. Women should strive for more than equality, more than sameness with men. In this sense, certain egalitarian feminisms have their role, and are absolutely necessary and should not be diminished. There is a need to move beyond sameness into a world that is sexually differentiated and no longer dominated by phallogentrism where women are merely "catching up" with men. This is where the work of sexual difference and Deleuze and Guattari will be useful, to live in a world that can be seen as positive, creative and different.

Although some feminists such as Mitchell advocate the need to read Freud as a “description and not a prescription,” there remain areas in Freud’s writings on boys and girls and men and women that are problematic and cannot be left as mere description but need to be critiqued and analyzed. However, this does not mean that his work should be discredited and left unread by any feminist. Understanding the reproduction of patriarchy and the splitting of the sexes should be addressed and understood by every feminist, therefore I am advocating that Freud be read, and psychoanalysis be taken into consideration when studying and teaching feminist theory. He cannot merely be dismissed as being part of the problem of patriarchy since he elaborates its function, and what is at stake in patriarchy. That being said, Freud should be read provided that he continues to be useful in the explanation of the reproduction of patriarchy through the Oedipus complex. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities... (4)

Although the Oedipus complex is problematic for feminism in its resolution, it does provide a complete description of the “othering” of women and their “subordinate” role in society. Therefore, it is useful for understanding and theorizing should be continued to be addressed provided it remains useful. Furthermore, the work of Deleuze and Guattari and Irigaray comes into play because something new is needed, yet their work would not exist without Freud and psychoanalysis as their object of criticism. All these writings are assemblages making new connections and forming new theories. Psychoanalysis

continues to be useful for feminist theory even in its discussion of the Oedipus complex which is one aspect in a very broad field, and should be looked at by feminist theorists in conjunction with other philosophies and philosophers as long as it continues to be productive and useful. However, the Oedipus complex is the return of the same. Deleuze and Guattari create new concepts that can be used by feminists in challenging psychoanalysis and a way of complicating the production of the man/woman binary. They too are committed to living beyond the dominance of Oedipus and its rigid roles and negative understanding of desire. Their theories and concepts are complicated but offer potential to overcoming the Oedipus complex. They create a philosophy that discusses the body, desire, difference, politics, becomings and a harsh critique of a multitude of binaries. All these topics are of interest and relevance to difference and corporeal feminists, but the work of Deleuze and Guattari should be looked at with the incorporation of sexual difference. Sexual difference has been ignored, and viewed as oppositional, invisible or the same in phallocentrism. Therefore, any feminist effort needs to incorporate sexual difference as a positivity and way of living in a world where at least two sexes exist and their interests, desire, thought, etc, are expressed, rather than repressed. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari's writings are useful because they too see a proliferation of sexes and the irreducibility of difference to unity. Therefore, psychoanalysis is needed as a theoretical mode that explains the reduction of difference to sameness and desire to negativity. It is through the feminist works on Deleuze with the incorporation of Irigaray's sexual difference where a new philosophy, a corporeal and different philosophy can be created.



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