‘BEYOND’ REPRESENTATION: THE ORIENTALIST IMAGINARY OF *A THOUSAND PLATEAUS* AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AN ONTOLOGY OF ASSEMBLAGE

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Abstract

Many scholars claim that the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1987) has helped effect a turn away from representation as the praxis of critical theory and definitional framework of Western thought. Within and in response to this turn, postcolonial and feminist theorists have debated the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's own representations of various 'others' of the West, with particular attention to the concepts 'nomad' and 'becoming-woman.' This thesis combines feminist and postcolonial critique without relying on a call for better representation, as most critics have, and without invoking either the 'purity' of these Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts or their ontological reality, as have many thinkers who find their work useful. Rather, I close read invocations of the 'Orient' in *A Thousand Plateaus* to argue that Deleuze and Guattari's appeals to mutability, excess and multiplicitousness as defying representation are indebted to an Orientalist imaginary that is structural rather than incidental to their conceptualization of what might be before, beyond and exterior to Western representational thought. Putting this reading in conversation with the work of Jasbir Puar (2007), I argue that it is in part these qualities of an Orientalized 'exterior' in Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy that enable her analysis of contemporary 'homonationalism' to rethink 'queerness' not as an identity but as an ontological assemblage that emerges in the inevitable relationality *between* discursive figurations and the bodily register of affect. Thereby, this thesis augments current endeavors to represent ontological forces such as affect in theory with an argument that implicates anti-representational Deleuzo-Guattarian theory itself in a discursively modulated imaginary, thus opening up future work on how the anti-representational turn can be thought together with its representational legacies.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word counts for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis: 28,516 words
Entire manuscript: 30,721 words

Signed _____Elizabeth Banks Calhoun_____

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Introduction

I open this thesis with a schematic outline of the problem at hand. The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari has been hailed in the past twenty years, by scholars across a range of disciplines, as constituting a radical break from the hegemonic representationalism of Western metaphysics (Colebrook, 2000b). In critical theory, whether for the purposes of a new ontology of material agency, or an affective realm of non-identity, or the political activation of virtual potential, Deleuze and Guattari's work appears to be important because it does something new and different from what was done before. But, if something avowedly constitutes a radical break from what came before it, what are the conditions of possibility for this departure, and what might be ignored or forgotten in order to believe that it *does* initiate a rupture? Deleuzian thinker, translator and influential affect theorist Brian Massumi's introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* tells us that the philosophical plane we are about to enter "does not immure itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority" (1987, p.xii). Far from being in a room of our own, we are outside in the streets, throwing conceptual bricks in order to smash conceptual windows; thought is a riot.[1] But while it may be common knowledge what the windows are, where do we think we got the bricks?

Broadly speaking, what I want to do in this thesis is approach what was initially an intuitive suspicion of this 'radical break' through the much-contested question of representation. Representation is the hook here because Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is described, with exceptions, in both the world of philosophy and the world of critical theory as initiating an anti-representational approach rarely attempted in human thought. Western thought is accustomed to

[1] In Massumi's words, "A concept is a brick. It can be used to build the courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window" (1987, p.xii). The implication is that reading this book should make us more inclined to do the latter.

imagining thought itself as emanating from a self-present subject, meaning one who is unitary and always there already, who then represents an external world that is separate from it. Yet, as thinkers such as Luce Irigaray have shown, this paradigm depends on a masculine morphology of presence that forecloses the possibility of communicating what might be non-unitary and 'feminine' (Irigaray, 1985; Grosz, 1990; Colebrook, 1997). Similarly, postcolonial thinkers in the line of Edward Said have exposed the reliance of this image on a non-Western Other that cannot represent itself (Said, 1978; King, 1999). Following from these entrenched problems of Western representation, an anti-representational philosophy could hold rich potential for feminist and postcolonial inquiry. But alongside this exciting prospect is the fact that *A Thousand Plateaus* draws on oppressive representations of the very bodies we might want this philosophy to benefit, 'woman' and non-Western peoples, in its attempts to signify the 'outside' of Western Man as the provenance of thought via self-present representation. In other words, saying something about what we might regard as *other than* Western, masculinist representation seems to require an aggrandizement of that which has been excluded from the possibility of self-representation through patriarchal and colonialist systems. This is an important question to pursue because many feminist and postcolonial scholars have taken up Deleuze and Guattari's work precisely for its perceived capacity to move critical inquiry beyond the oppressive structures of representation.

Chapter one will first of all introduce the text that is my primary site of investigation into this problem, Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. This book occupies the place it does here for two reasons. First, according to its translator Massumi, it is itself an attempt to create new concepts by putting into practice the variable modes of thought called for in their earlier work, *Anti-Oedipus,* and therefore exposes some of the problems and suppositions of concepts that set themselves up against representation (1987, p.xiii). Secondly, of all their works, *A Thousand*

Plateaus has arguably garnered the most critique and debate from feminist and postcolonial scholars, largely, but not only, for its concepts 'becoming-woman' and 'nomadology.' Critics claim that the abstraction of real people into concepts and the association of those concepts with the very qualities that have been used to exclude and oppress these groups can only reiterate the patriarchal and colonialist paradigms that produced an understanding of women and non-Western peoples as outside the scope of representation. Those who find Deleuze and Guattari's work useful counter this critique with the notion that these concepts are only that: 'pure' concepts bearing nothing more than an incidental reference to real people or the oppressive tropes that delimit their self-representation.

In Chapter Two, I will enter this conversation by close reading several select passages from *A Thousand Plateaus* that invoke the 'Orient' as a site Deleuze and Guattari find useful for explaining their ideas. There are many more references than I have the space here to explore, and thus I will look closely at those that produce the 'nomadic war machine,' called by Deleuzian philosopher Paul Patton (1984) a 'pure concept' of exteriority, as well as those that refer to 'Oriental' sexuality, for it is in these references that the connection is strongly drawn between Orientalism and 'becoming-woman.' I investigate the 'Orient' in part for the simple fact that it appears often in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and with notable descriptive weight, but there has yet to be an in depth analysis of how it functions. Across the compilations *Deleuze and Asia* (Bogue et al., 2014) and *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (Bignall & Patton, 2010), for instance, there are shockingly few reference to Orientalism; in the first, a singular one appears only to assert, without explanation or citation, that Deleuze and Guattari "never fell prey to 'Orientalism' in any sense" (Ueno, 2016, p.213), and in the second, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is mentioned several times in passing as a text that has foregrounded representation as a site of contestation for

postcolonial theory. Additionally, following Said's exposition of the 'Orient' as an imagined fiction of the West, my reading is not drawn into the implicit call for more accurate representation of this entity, as critiques focusing on 'woman' and 'nomads' often are, and therefore I can inquire as to the function of Orientalism in this anti-representational philosophy without necessarily debunking its project by prescribing its antithesis. With this reading, I argue that the 'Orient' helps *A Thousand Plateaus* imagine a realm before and beyond representation through its associated qualities as prior to, more mutable than, in excess of and uncontainable to the West as the Subject of rational thought.

Chapter Three will then put these insights in conversation with the work of Jasbir Puar via the critiques made of Deleuze and Guattari by Gayatri Spivak (1988). Puar's work *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007) is the primary subject of this chapter because it seeks to address the entanglements of race, gender, sexuality and nationalism by appealing to the space Deleuze and Guattari (and subsequently Massumi) theorize as prior to and beyond representation, which I argue in Chapter Two is itself indebted to an Orientalist imaginary.[2] The first section will describe Spivak's critique of the temporality implicit in Deleuze and Guattari's disavowal of representation, in which the theorist, along with ideology, is positioned as secondary to the ontological forces of desire and affect. As I argue that the realm of these forces is itself to a certain extent constructed through Orientalism, Spivak's critique exposes the inability of this thought paradigm to account

[2] I am using imaginary here as a noun, as I will for the remainder of this thesis, to refer to the constellation of images, qualities, associations, conceptual linkages and symbolic uses of the 'Orient' that Western thought has enabled itself, via colonialism, to construct in art and writing (Said, 1978). My intention is to avoid a technical argument about whether or not the term 'Orient' could have a proper referent or is only an imaginary idea and instead to assume that Orientalism refers to an 'imaginary' in a more literary sense, in the way that the 'Wild West' of the United States bespeaks an imaginary of cowboys and 'Indians' (also via colonialism). I am aware that there are much more precise ways to define 'imaginary,' with regards to various lines of argumentation in sociology and the psychoanalytic work of Jacque Lacan; I choose to have it loosely refer to a set of associations, images and even feelings that circulate through the 'Orient' because the final chapter of this thesis will open up the question of whether an 'imaginary' is *only* discursively imagined (as it is in the work of Edward Said).

for its own implication in the representational structures that make it possible. Turning to Puar, I then show that her work similarly effects her own position as secondary, but in appealing to a political imperative against representation that does not depend on a self-representing subject, avoids inaugurating the 'authentic' subject of oppression that Spivak accuses Deleuze and Guattari's work of maintaining. I suggest that it is in part Puar's implicit instrumentalization of the Orientalism facilitating the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework she employs that then enables her work to, as I argue, shift 'queerness' from a representational identity to an ontological assemblage that emerges in the inevitable relationality *between* discursive figurations and the bodily register of affect.

Before moving on to the first chapter, I should say that there are several limitations inherent in this project, but limitations that might, I think, also turn out to be potentialities. First of all, this cannot be more than a local intervention, as it is based on only one of Deleuze and Guattari's texts and I cannot pretend to have read their entire oeuvre. Thus, I am not attempting to attach the label of 'Orientalist' to Deleuzian thought and thinkers, but rather to read the specific function of its rather glaring examples and relate that to a particular thinker, Puar, who undertakes the rather queer project of using an Orientalist-influenced framework to describe specific manifestations of contemporary Orientalism. Particularly on the topic of Deleuze and postcolonialism, the debate can veer into a back and forth about which 'Deleuze' we are talking about and the problems of compressing the complexity of his work into one body that then has a relationship with postcolonialism (as though it could somehow be described as one body) (Bensmaïa, 2017; Bignall & Patton, 2010). However, in talking particularly about *A Thousand Plateaus*, and not the gargantuan name 'Deleuze,' I might avoid such an argument altogether in the service of expanding this conversation outward. Rather than arguing about what Deleuze and Guattari truly intended, I

attend to the language and imagery of *A Thousand Plateaus* in order to investigate the discursive sensibilities through which various of their ideas are rendered possible.[3]

Second, I am not a trained philosopher, and my forays into representational philosophy and its history have been occasioned by sporadic moments of necessity. Therefore, this thesis does not rest comfortably on a comprehensive knowledge of Deleuze and Guattari's historical place in the cannon of Western philosophy, but finds its foundation instead in representation as it has been treated by feminist and postcolonial scholars. I take seriously Sarah Ahmed's generous intimation that "it is a risk to read philosophy as a non-philosopher," but a risk that believes "the failure to return texts to their histories will do something." (Ahmed, 2006, p.22)[4]. By grounding a reading of *A Thousand Plateaus* not in a history of philosophy but in feminist and postcolonial critique, I hope to produce an analysis that both sends philosophy forward, or outward, as in the work of Puar and others, and asks from a different angle how it comes to think that it can do and go where it does.

[3] For the remainder of this thesis, when I refer to 'Deleuze and Guattari's work' or 'Deleuzo-Guattarian' concepts, I am talking specifically about *A Thousand Plateaus*, and I try to specify with the work of other scholars that they too are drawing on this particular text in their assessments of 'Deleuze' or 'Deleuze and Guattati.' The concepts addressed most extensively in the literature review of the first chapter, namely 'becoming-woman' and 'nomadology,' are both detailed at length in *A Thousand Plateaus.* For this reason, and for the focus on representation that this thesis takes, there are many, many texts describing, explaining, adjudicating, and arguing over Deleuze and what he meant that I will not address here.

[4] What I understand Ahmed to mean is that the field of academic philosophy tends to approach and asses texts in relation to the existing philosophical cannon and overarching philosophical questions defined by it, such that philosophers would be inclined to adjudicate the meaning of Deleuze's work in terms of whether or not it is actually a radical challenge to metaphysics and transcendentalism, whereas I am asking *how* it sets itself up as such without bringing my argument to bear on the cannon of Western philosophy. A good example of the philosophical mode Ahmed refers to is Alain Badiou's reading of Deleuze, wherein he argues that Deleuze is not the anti-Platonist he considered himself to be and that he actually advocates a philosophy of Being and Oneness (rather than becoming and multiplicity) (Badiou, 2000).

Chapter One: Context and Postcolonial/Feminist Literatures

1.1 Introducing *A Thousand Plateaus:* Context of production

In May of 1969, Gilles Deleuze wrote Félix Guattari the following: "I also feel that we've become friends before meeting one another. So please forgive me for insisting on the following: it is clear that you invent and use a certain number of very new, complicated and important ideas that have been developed in relationship to the practical research at La Borde. For example, group fantasy, or your notion of transversality, which I think makes it possible to get beyond the old but still powerful duality between personal and collective unconscious." (Deleuze, 1969, letter cited in Dosse, 2007/2010, p.4-5).

This quote contains glimmers of what is necessary to introduce *A Thousand Plateaus*: in the cautious affection of the first line, itself a response to Guattari's note expressing "how deeply I am touched by your attentiveness to the various articles that I've sent you," the feeling of a project written between two people sharing a tendentious intimacy (Guattari, 1969, letter cited in ibid., p.4); and only slightly less sentimentally, the date, one year after the tumultuous events of May 1968, France. Briefly, that famed month saw the outbreak of vast general strikes and student protests against capitalism, American imperialism, the bureaucracy of the university, and the conservative social mores that restricted creative and sexual expression. For many, it represented a kind of European coming-to-consciousness in the wake of violent decolonization processes and ushered in an intellectual movement dedicated to exposing the implication of Enlightenment humanism in projects of domination. Feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti sums up Deleuze's thoughts on this political generation as embodying "a specific sensibility, a creative imaginary and

a desire for change that constitutionally clashes with the guardians of the status quo: the judges and managers of truths and the clarity fetishists" (2006, p.27).[5]

Because the protests were instigated by a series of conflicts between students and authorities at the Paris University at Nanterre, the response, or lack thereof, of professors nationwide called into question the responsibility of the intellectual in the social and political sphere. Massumi divulges in his introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* that this reassessment prompted Deleuze to "disclaim the 'ponderous academic apparatus'" and its associations of disconnected and depoliticized thought (Deleuze, 1977, p.113, cited in Massumi, 1987, p.x). Already an established philosopher and university lecturer, Deleuze was driven in part by this reappraisal to seek out Guattari, who was at the time engaging in wild social experiments as a psychoanalyst at La Borde, an alternative psychiatric clinic (Dosse 2007/2010). Guattari, in seeking to "abolish the hierarchy between doctor and patient," was entangled in an increasingly antagonistic relationship with Lacanian psychoanalysis (Massumi, 1987, p.x). As this school of psychoanalysis had gained momentum, Guattari watched the instatement of the inevitable Oedipal triangle through the power dynamic of analyst and analysand with the fear, shared by Deleuze, that its relationship to leftist parties might create "a powerful new bureaucracy of analytic reason" (ibid., p.xi). Similarly, Deleuze was skeptical of the enthusiastic Marxism that had dominated post-war philosophy departments and produced the French infatuation with Maoism. Rejecting both the "universalistic utopian element of Marxism" and its "nefarious illusion of revolutionary purity," he talked early on in his relationship with Guattari about how to imagine politics differently (Braidotti, 2011, p.74).

[5] The phrase 'clarity fetishists' was originally formulated by Gayatri Spivak.

In short, Deleuze and Guattari met during a time of leftist zeitgeist and found common ground in their discontent with the Left; hence, to return to Deleuze's letter, the need for "very new, complicated and important ideas" that "get beyond the old but still powerful duality." As with poststructuralism in general, the question for Deleuze was how to respond to the shortcomings of structuralism, which posited the world's comprehensibility in terms of the binary differentiation of concepts. In proposing a representational schema as the limit of cognitive perception, structuralism is unable to question the structure itself, or conceive the possibility of communicating something that is outside, before or beyond that system of representation (Colebrook, 2002). Similarly, the Lacanian psychoanalysis that Guattari came in large part to condemn conceived of the psyche as a semiotic system produced, defined and transformed only through chains of various pre-existing signifiers (Grosz, 1990). Deleuze and Guattari worried that this approach could only imagine thought as always already determined to reproduce the structures of representation that, according to Lacan, made thinking possible in the first place. In the simplest terms, they wanted to question the idea that thought is based on an external world that is represented through a pre-existing system by the thinking subject. In their understanding, this insistence on representation as the limit of thought can only manufacture more "state philosophy" to reiterate and shore up the "established order" in which, as Massumi puts it, "each mind [is] an analogously organized mini-State morally unified in the supermind of the State," a system Deleuze and Guattari came to call the "arborescent model" of thought (Massumi, 1987, p.xii).

Critiquing the confluence of psychoanalytic thought and pro-party politics that recapitulate this model is the primary aim of their first co-written text, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), which was an "instant sensation in France" (Shatz, 2010). Previously, Deleuze had published several texts on the history of philosophy and two books of his own ideas, *Difference and Repetition* (1968/1994)

and *The Logic of Sense* (1969/1993). Through this work he had discovered an "orphan line" of philosophers – Hume, Spinoza, Bergson – who condemned both the powers that be and the philosophical imperative to center the interiority of the human subject as the provenance of thought (Massumi, 1987, p.x). But it was *Anti-Oedipus* that established Deleuze and Guattari as a voice of dissent in the French academy (Dosse, 2007/2010). *A Thousand Plateaus*, published seven years later and framed as a sequel, follows from the critiques proffered in its precursor but has, according to Massumi, a notably different function. It is itself an attempt to practice the "affirmative 'nomad' thought" suggested in *Anti-Oedipus* – in other words, to create new concepts beyond the existing models of representational thought (Massumi, 1987, p.xi). It both describes the anti-structural, anti-hierarchical 'rhizome,' a lateral, ever-changing network of lines that connect up with and mutate one another, and claims itself to be written as a 'rhizome.' It introduces the concept of 'assemblage' as perpetual processes of connectivity and interaction that constitute provisionally assembled networks of mutational parts and is itself assembled from fragmentary invocations of a huge range of philosophical, scientific, literary, and anthropological sources. It posits 'deterritorialization' as lines of movement, physical or otherwise, which challenge the authority of the State to both partition space and define the subject; and it promotes the 'Body without Organs' as a limit of intensity toward which to experiment with the dissolution of individual subjectivity and the opening of the body to unpredictable, non-conscious affective connections (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980/1987).

The language of *A Thousand Plateaus*, at times more lyrical than academic, prompted philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard to comment that the book's initially unenthusiastic reception in France might be due to the fact that people, rightly or wrongly, "expect, when reading a work of philosophy, to be gratified with a little sense" (Lyotard, 1984/1993, p.71). Although in many

ways of a piece theoretically with other works produced at the time by thinkers such as Michele Foucault and Lyotard himself, *A Thousand Plateaus* was, in the words of Deleuzian scholar Eugene Holland, particularly "difficult to assimilate to the relatively rigid structures of the French academy" (2013, p.141). In its employment of a wide range of distinct disciplinary research fields, the text and others of its time signaled the emergence of 'theory' as a practice of thought drawing on many fields but unconfined to any one discipline. This dovetailed with the increasingly pressing concern, heralded to a large extent by the development of feminist and postcolonial theory, that existing academic structures and strategies were unable to account for the complex politics of cultural production. According to Holland, "*A Thousand Plateaus* simultaneously exemplified, encouraged and enabled this kind of theoretical practice," and as the interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies began to take shape first and foremost in the English-speaking academic world towards the end of the 1970's, it was the book's entry into this scholarly field that secured its position as a crucial and cutting-edge text (2013, p.147). Again in Holland's words, "Deleuze and Guattari's influence in the English-speaking world has far exceeded their impact in France" (ibid.).

Thus, it was the growing interest in their work of the English-speaking academy that ushered in the flurry of postcolonial and feminist critiques I will discuss in the following sections.[6] Broadly speaking, these debates around Deleuze and Guattari's work reflect three of the main clusters of tension regarding postructuralism within these fields, as follows: First, a general anxiety over the perceived aestheticization of supposedly subversive politics and political critique,

[6] My intention is not to dismiss the debates Deleuze and Guattari sparked in France, nor the fact that they were influenced by other trends in France at the time, but to set up the context for the following section, in which much of the scholarship I will address was originally written and published in English (despite several of the authors having read the original texts in French, the point is that most of them, with Luce Irigaray as a notable exception, were producing work on Deleuze and Guattari for the English-speaking academy). There is certainly much more to say about the relationship of 'French theory' to the American academy, and I provide the information I do here because it reflects my own experience of reading around Deleuze in English and because it pertains specifically to *A Thousand Plateaus*, rather than Deleuze more broadly. For further reading on this topic, see *French Theory in America* (Lotringer & Cohen, 2001).

exemplified in the enthusiastic imperative to turn away from economic and historical materialist analysis towards the cultural.[7] Second, the suspicion that it is just a little too convenient for those in 'majoritarian'[8] subject positions that subjectivity is going out of vogue in the same historic moment that people in marginalized positions are finally claiming their rights as subjects (Hooks, 1990). And third, the fear that valorizing a fragmented, non-unitary subject slides all too easily, even inevitably, into fetishizing the imposed marginality of certain subjects at the expense of their material and political needs (Spivak, 1999).

In the following two sections, I will address several arguments made in postcolonial and feminist critiques of *A Thousand Plateaus* that focus particularly on the issue of representation. Deleuze and Guattari's text is read critically as perpetuating colonialist and patriarchal figurations of 'woman' and non-Western people and read optimistically as effecting a move beyond representation that either dismantles or makes irrelevant the representationalism of these injurious systems. In general, the critical readings that follow are concerned with the question of whether or not Deleuze and Guattari reiterate epistemic violence, which postcolonial and feminist theory works against, by representing 'woman' and non-Western peoples according to typifications that foreclose the possibility of politically profitable representation.

[7] This form of skepticism about the work poststructuralism might do for feminist and postcolonial inquiry often comes from the more Marxist influenced and economic-materialist corner of these fields. See Arlif Dirlik (1994) and Geraldine Pratt (1993) for examples.

[8] Deleuze and Guattari use the distinction minoritarian/majoritarian not in terms of numbers but rather to refer to the majority as a group that is defined by a standard, self-contained form, such as Man, and minority as groups undefined by this form and thus undergoing continual process of change that do not rely on a fixed norm. They make explicit that 'man' is a majoritarian position but does not necessarily imply biology, as men themselves can, and should, become-minoritarian (1980/1987).

1.2 Postcolonial and feminist critiques: The issue of representation

1.2.1 Postcolonial critiques

Within the postcolonial critiques of Deleuze and Guattari's work, there are two interrelated clusters of argumentation I will address here. The first is primarily delineated in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988),[9] a text which is taken to be both one of the most damning indictments of Deleuze and an enormously influential text in the field of postcolonial studies. The second draws from several postcolonial authors who tend, more so than Spivak, to ground their argument in an appeal to defining questions of anthropology. Although both these thinkers and Spivak consider the issue of representation in Deleuze and Guattari's work, they do so from slightly different angles and produce variant critiques.

The insights of Spivak's piece will be particularly important in the concluding section of this thesis, so I will treat them at some length now. One of her main arguments is that the task of reckoning both with colonial pasts and their contemporary manifestations cannot rely on the false assumption of an 'authentic' subject of oppression that may know herself and her position and, if given the opportunity, be able to clearly enunciate it. It is this subject, perfectly oppressed but also, somehow, perfectly articulate, that she charges Foucault and Deleuze with engendering.

[9] This article has been published in various forms, the most commonly cited of which is the shortened version that appeared in Nelson and Grossberg's *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (1988). Two more extended versions appear as the chapter titled 'History' in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Spivak, 1999) and under the title "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (Morris ed., 2010). The majority of the shorter version is based on an interview between Deleuze and Foucault from 1977, which she justifies in the longer version published in 2010 as a means to "glimpse the track of ideology" that might be more readily observed in a friendly exchange (2010, p.23). It is clear in these longer versions of this essay that Spivak undertook this task after critically reading *A Thousand Plateaus* and finding it to be a disappointing departure from the insights she valued in *Anti-Oedipus.* The 'History' chapter of her book follows her engagement with *Anti-Oedipus* in which she discusses Deleuze and Guattari's important critique of psychoanalysis as it pertains to their insightful re-reading of Marx (1999, pp.102-110). Contra this, she sees in *A Thousand Plateaus* the total disavowal of the economic as a structuring factor, and it is from this reading that she is attuned to the hypocrisy of the privileged Western subject repudiating the productive aspect of economic interests.

Refusing to theorize the production of ideology and the function of interest in the mechanics of oppression, they institute desire as the driving force of political agency and thereby collapse the distinction between *vertreten*, representation in terms of the state, and *darstellen*, representation as per theories of subject formation. Contra an understanding of Marx that turns on the constitutive contradiction of class as a differential and artificial rather than essential category, they assume the political subject and the Subject to be identical, coterminous and self-aware, de facto absolving themselves of any responsibility as 'first-world' intellectuals to inquire further into the construction of particular subject positions beyond their Western purview.

She suggests that their failure to account for their own positions in the privileged space of the Western academy is of a piece with their refusal to view ideology as anything other than a text to be read and analyzed. By implicitly rejecting the possibility that their own ruminations on power and desire might be ideologically inflected, or at the very least produced in an institution with a vested interest in Western knowledge production, they render themselves transparent, receding into the invisible outside of the epistemic structure in the same moment as they diagnose it. Against the conclusion that such a diagnostic position must require at least the pretense of external observation, Spivak concludes that Jacques Derrida's formulation of 'deconstruction' implicates specifically the "benevolent *Western* intellectual" through its dedication to a kind of textual analysis that refuses to imagine a Western intellectual project that does *not* in some way rely on "the Other of history" (Spivak, 1988, pp. 87, 89, original emphasis). But to examine the mechanisms of violence that constitute the Subject of the particularly European episteme is not to understand 'the West' as a self-contained entity. To wit, Foucault and Deleuze's confinement of their treatment of alterity to either specifically domestic 'others' or generalized universal 'others'

bespeaks their refusal to address the colonial histories and imperialist realities of a world shaped and divided by the flow of global capital.

The position of the Western intellectual in relation to what Spivak calls the 'third-world,' as both a constitutive and continuing concern for postcolonial studies, runs through the postcolonial criticisms of *A Thousand Plateaus*. In the field at large, these conversations often revolve around fundamental discrepancies between academic theory and lived postcolonial experience as well as between the lived experience of the academic and the subjects they study (Gandhi, 1998). This invocation of experience calls to account not just the concrete socioeconomic contours of various lives but, more importantly, the intellectual's implication in the particular epistemic regime through which they construct knowledge. Following the exposition in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) of the implication of Western, supposedly rational knowledge production in colonialist projects of oppression and extraction, postcolonial theorists have paid particular attention to both the historic pretense of colonialism to collect information about the colonized Other and the implications this history has for contemporary Western knowledge production.

Following from this, postcolonial critiques of *A Thousand Plateaus* most often take issue with its formulation of 'nomadism' or 'nomadology' in regards to how this concept represents non-Western peoples for the sake of Western theory. In brief, Deleuze and Guattari's invocation of the 'nomad' proposes the possibility of a non-subjectifying mode of being and thought that can continually engage in processes of freeing itself from the imposed fixity of identity through a kind of thinking that does not begin from one position, such as the question of 'human nature,' or take for granted that certain positions and questions preexist and necessarily structure thought. As Deleuzian scholar and feminist philosopher Claire Colebrook succinctly sums it up, "The aim of

nomadology is to free thought from a fixed point of view or position of judgment" (2002, p.xxvii). It is the hope of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'nomadism' that the Subject as signifying regime will lose its ability to suture the individual to the State once its ruling power is supplanted by processes of movement that refute both fixed place and linear past.

Postcolonial critics argue that this conceptual use of 'nomadism' perpetuates epistemic violence against actual nomads by misrepresenting them and/or disallowing their self-representation. Many perceive Deleuze and Guattari's use of the 'nomad' as, at best, ignoring the deleterious effects of colonialism on actual nomadic people and, at worst, reifying a Eurocentric fascination with the primitive 'Other' (Bignall & Patton, 2010, p.2). Julie Wuthnow (2002) argues that 'nomadism' is incompatible with the 'politics of location' she deems crucial for scholarship interested in promoting social justice. As her work is explicitly concerned with indigenous politics and activism, she views Deleuze and Guattari's brief invocations of indigenous groups or practices as perpetuating the silencing and disappearance of the actual experiences and knowledge systems of these groups. Similarly attuned to the abstraction of non-Western particularity into Western theory, Christopher Miller (1993) reads the anthropological sources cited in the footnotes of *A Thousand Plateaus* in order to expose the reliance of 'nomadology' and the 'nomadic war machine' on problematic, colonialist depictions of nomadic peoples and African 'tribes.' From the fact that Deleuze and Guattari "launch a theory of nomadism that covers the entire world form the ancient Hyskos and Mongols to modern-day North Africans" but barely quote from any "African or Asian oral or written nomadic sources themselves," Miller concludes that the political pitfall of 'nomadology' is its tendency to "indulge in anthropology" while pretending that it is non-representational (Miller, 1990, pp.10-11). While the pretense of nomadology "liberates Deleuze and Guattari and their followers from the ethical burden of representing real, actual nomads," it is

nonetheless grounded in colonialist representations of nomads, the politics of which cannot be accounted for within a system that presumes to turn away from representation (ibid., p.11).

The foundational assumption of Miller's argument is that Deleuze and Guattari turn real, non-Western people into metaphoric catalysts for the upheaval of Western thought. Caren Kaplan's critique (1996) works from the same assumption, although her attention is more invested in the association of various metaphorical turns in *A Thousand Plateaus* with the masculinist and colonialist tropes of literary modernism. Referring to Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on territoriality, minoritarian spaces and the rhetoric of 'escape,' she suggests that this "theoretical tourism" ignores the fact that such movements of 'escape' might be impossible for subjects already positioned in these marginal spaces and thus effects the transformation of "the Third World" into a "metaphorical margin for European oppositional strategies" (Kaplan, 1996, p.88). Seth Jacobowitz (2005) advances a similar critique, arguing that Deleuze and Gauttari's cursory references to the cultural practices of non-Western peoples flattens their actual specificity and renders their 'difference' little more than an aide to the universalizing language of theory produced in the Western academy. Not only is their work Eurocentric, its Eurocentrism depends on a certain colonial appropriation of difference.

While these thinkers argue that Deleuze and Guattari falsely represent non-Western peoples according to colonialist tropes, Spivak focuses more on Deleuze's pretense to a political agenda in which the privileged theorist does *not* represent the oppressed subject. Rather than, in the supposed abstinence from representation, producing an image of the 'other' that dovetails with its colonialist construction, the work this does according to Spivak is to project onto the oppressed subject the very subjectivity enjoyed by the theorist: the Western, masculine Subject of Europe, the self-knowing subject, the subject who already has a voice in representational politics

(*vertreten)* because of his subject position as rational representer of the world (*darstellen).* By representing the representer as transparent, they slide the issue of their own position out of the way and wind up representing an imagined oppressed Other as the very Subject they want to challenge, thus rendering incommunicable the real conditions of oppression. What this argument shares with more anthropologically focused critiques is the idea that representations of 'others' invoked by Deleuze and Guattari do nothing towards improving or communicating the actual circumstances of those excluded from the position of the Western, masculine Subject.

1.2.2 Feminist critiques

Feminist criticisms of Deleuze and Guattari's work have also been concerned with what they see as the conceptual instrumentalization of an injurious representation of 'woman.' Feminist and Deleuzian-inspired scholar Elizabeth Grosz nicely sums up the field of feminist objections in an article from 1993.[10] In large part, feminist discourse on the problems of *A Thousand Plateaus* focuses on the concept of 'becoming-woman,' which, briefly, is the idea that subjects, situations and writing itself can move away from the fixity of self-present being that has defined the masculine Subject by moving through a phase of 'becoming-woman,' which is the first step on a chain of becomings that leads finally to 'becoming-imperceptible' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). In the trend Grosz describes, this concept is attacked for its perceived metaphorization of real life women and the depoliticizing implications of this rhetorical move. This operates in three complementary parts: first of all, 'becoming-woman' romanticizes the marginal position of women without contributing in any way to the real political struggles of women for self-definition and determination. Second, it conceptually fixes 'woman' in this

[10] It should be noted here that, after describing the feminist objections to their work, Grosz makes an argument for the usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari's work in feminist thought (1993).

position of marginality through the same tropes that have made her less than Man, and in so doing it cuts off women's ability to explore and speak her actual position and desires. Thirdly, by perpetuating the totalizing figure of 'woman' as a conceptual ground, it maintains the idea that women cannot represent themselves in their diversity and that the only way to speak 'woman' is, again, through a system that uses an idea of her for speculations on implicitly male existence. Grosz puts this as follows: "Woman, once again, becomes the object or the prop of man's speculations, self-reflections and intellectual commitments" (1993, p.168).

These perspectives should be further situated within questions of representation that dominated the field of feminist thought in the 1980's and early 90's. Briefly, within the English-speaking academy these years saw the emergence of various theoretical forms of reckoning with the questions raised by the earlier feminist movement commonly called the 'second-wave.' This earlier movement was comprised, broadly speaking, of political claims for equality with men in the public sector and more culturally inclined celebrations of femininity, often via notions of care and maternity, as an antidote to the masculinism driving the ills of the world. While there was certainly the possibility to pragmatically support both ideas, the conceptual disjuncture between them ushered in what is called in feminist thought the "sameness/difference opposition" (Colebrook, 2000, p.76). This opposition asks whether gender specificities are imposed on previously equal bodies through social, cultural and political representation or whether the sexed specificity of bodies comes before representation and can be properly salvaged and re-signified. In simplistic terms, are women just like men except that they've been signified as inferior through patriarchal terms, or are women essentially different from men and it is this difference that has been made to appear inferior through patriarchal terms? What both sides of this opposition share

is the assumption that gender, as the *signification* of difference, operates on a sexed body that precedes this signification.

Within this theoretical landscape, in which many feminist efforts were focused on transforming injurious gender representation, the concept of 'becoming-woman' might have appeared antithetical to this project. Feminists more inclined to call for public sector equality would likely have dismissed this poststructuralist abstraction entirely, if engage with it at all. Deleuze and Guattari began to be read seriously by English-speaking feminist scholars in the late 80's and 90's because these were the years in which the sameness/difference and sex/gender paradigms were challenged with a new set of questions about representation and the body. According to feminist philosopher Claire Colebrook's reading of the early work of Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz, these emergent concerns asked a) whether the assumed pre-representational body isn't *also* a product of representation (that's Butler); and, contra this idea, b) how we can begin to ask about the materiality of the body in a way that neither assumes its pre-signification neutrality nor chalks it all up to a linguistically determined representational system (that's Grosz) (Colebrook, 2000). The questions Deleuze and Guattari ask about the body, its affects and becomings, became relevant to feminism in large part concomitantly with its own endeavor to think the body in ways other than how it comes to mean what it does politically and socially.

The following criticisms of 'becoming-woman' can then be differentiated roughly along the following lines: 'becoming-woman' considered within a nuanced reading of the implications, fruits and dangers of poststructuralism and (post)modernism for feminism, or 'becoming-woman' considered as a problematic concept within the context of a broader Deleuzo-Guattarian oeuvre that is itself useful for looking beyond representation as the final word on the circumstances of gendered bodies. The former category is exemplified in several works by Sarah Ahmed (1998)

and Alice Jardine (1985). In her book *Differences That Matter*, Ahmed argues that 'becoming-woman' reflects an overly simplistic perspective on relationality, wherein the narrative coupling of man/woman, powerful/less powerful, molar/molecular and majoritarian/minoritarian produces an easy but false symmetry. Positing, along those lines, identity versus its dissolution necessarily ignores the ways in which "identity and the 'failures' of identity are mutually constitutive" (1998, p.76). In other words, each side of the dichotomy is taken as pre-existing rather than dialectically negotiated with both its other side and its own slippages. 'Woman' is then fixed on one side of this dichotomy, and Ahmed's conclusion is that this persists in conceptualizing 'woman,' or "something about the 'nature' of woman," as a phantasy [sic] through which only male voices are heard; woman is again "the means through which masculinity announces its impossibility" (ibid., p.77). Jardine, across several texts examining configurations of 'woman' in modernism and its legacies, raises a similar concern by suggesting that Deleuze and Guattari's call for women themselves to 'become-woman' falsely positions the pre-becoming woman as Man. This not only indicates these philosophers' lack of attention to the reality of power in women's lives; in that women must become-woman *first* as a guide for man to follow by example, women run the risk of vanishing completely, losing all possibility of representability and recognizability while Man, in the form of actual men, continues to enjoy a complete monopoly on representation (Jardine, 1984, 1985).

For those concerned more with the materiality of sexual difference, it is important to further contextualize these critiques in relation to the intellectual work of what is often called 'French feminism.' Writing around the same time as Deleuze and Guattari, Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray had already begun to bring the question of the feminine body into philosophical thought. Arguing that woman has been alienated from the possibility of writing as much as from her own

body and desires, Cixous (1975/1976) called for the development of *écriture feminine*, or feminine writing, through which 'woman' might finally speak herself.[11] Also concerned with the implication of sexual difference in the construction of written ideas, Irigaray (1977/1985) developed a critique of Western representational philosophy that exposes its most basic premises as dependent on the conceptual morphology of the phallus. What is important here is that Irigaray's critique of 'becoming-woman' is founded not on its troubling perpetuation of gendered stereotypes but rather on the work it does to, yet again, posit a philosophical concept that is neutral regarding sexual difference. 'Becoming-woman' is an irrelevant concept for women because the configuration of 'woman' Deleuze and Guattari posit as necessary for undoing the representational system of signification is *already* the position of 'woman' and actual women in relation to this system. If women have never had the relationship of a Subject to "language and sex – to organs," how could women be thought to go through the process of 'becoming-woman' by ridding herself of the restrictions imposed by these interpretive apparatuses? (Irigaray, 1977/1985, p.213). More broadly, Irigaray wonders if the emphasis Deleuze and Guattari place on the productive force of an unspecified desire that is devoid of sexual difference can be anything other than another elision of the communicability of feminine desire. In her 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" (ibid., p.140).

Rosi Braidotti, sexual difference feminist in the line of Irigaray, reiterates this claim and charges 'becoming-woman' with eliding the possibility for productive, positive difference between the sexes, as opposed to structural difference based on presence/lack and Same/other

[11] Cixous makes clear, however, that *écriture feminine* is a mode of writing that men can undertake as well because it is concerned with challenging the old conventions of writing, masculinist and dependent on the self-knowing subject, in such a way that is not dependent on biological sex.

distinctions. She understands 'becoming-woman' as indicative of a 'post-gender' perspective on sexuality that does not consider the positive potential of sexual difference and instead assumes total symmetry between the sexes. This imagines a world in which man/woman is *only* a structural distinction that restricts multiplicitously sexed subjectivities from entering into processes of becoming (Braidotti, 2011). Because Braidotti finds a political and conceptual advantage in the "assertion of a specifically feminine sexuality," she maintains that 'becoming-woman' cannot address "the experience and potential becoming of real-life women" (ibid., 251).[12]

I want to conclude these two sections on the postcolonial and feminist critiques of various ideas in *A Thousand Plateaus* by suggesting that a common concern between them is the relationship of the 'real-life' subjects in question to their conceptual function in the Deleuzo-Guattarian imaginary. Spivak is an exception here, as she does not make this point explicitly, and her argument will be treated in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis. Broadly speaking, then, both clusters of critique contend that the figural metaphors of the Deleuzo-Guattarian conceptual world are indebted to problematic representations of those 'others' who are *not* the Western, masculine Subject. Both worry that the cultural or political specificity of a group is negated by their transformation into a concept, and both argue that this collapse either perpetuates whatever stereotyped reading of these groups ushered them into the conceptual field or delimits their ability to explore the ways their own, *actual* positions and self-representations might change writing and philosophy. These thinkers contend that the metaphorization of marginal subjects in *A Thousand Plateaus* makes it impossible to challenge or rethink the patriarchal and colonialist

[12] Rosi Braidotti is a staunch supporter of Deleuze and Guattari's work and has found it very useful for her own theory of the posthuman. Over her career, she has developed her own reading of 'becoming-woman' that *does* find it beneficial for real-life women in that it advocates releasing the notion of subjectivity from a normative understanding that is always implicitly masculine; see *Transpositions* (2006) and *The PostHuman* (2013) for this. I am quoting here from the second edition of an earlier work, *Nomadic Subjects* (originally 1994), in which she is still reckoning with 'becoming-woman' as it is posited by Deleuze and Guattari and finds their formulation lacking the necessary attention to sexual difference that she will later weave into this concept in order to put it to use in her own theoretical work.

imaginaries that made these figural representations functional for Deleuze and Guattari's anti-representational philosophy in the first place.

1.3 Feminist and postcolonial proponents: Perspectives on the 'concept'

Those postcolonial and feminist thinkers who argue for the usefulness of the insights in *A Thousand Plateaus* are inclined to frame Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts as opening up certain possibilities for thought that were previously unthinkable in the representation-dominated linguistic turn of critical theory. Such scholars have increased in numbers notably in the past twenty-odd years, due to a few observable academic trends. First of all, there is the consolidation of what is called the 'affective turn' in critical theory. In the simplest of terms, this is a turn away from a critical lens concerned with language as the final say, and it is a turn towards asking how the body and bodies, be they human, animal or non-organic, interact, materialize and affect each other in ways that do not depend on the will or even corporeal integrity of the individual subject (Clough, 2007). In its emphasis on the pre-individual and pre-discursive realm of movement, speeds, durations and relations, *A Thousand Plateaus* joins others of Deleuze's works as well as Brian Massumi's readings and development of these ideas to constitute one school of thought within the umbrella of affect (Hemmings, 2005). This turn is wrapped up with a general feeling evinced in academic work of the late 90's and early 2000's that the world was transforming beyond our ability to understand its various mutations with the tools then available to critical theory. Globalization, climate crisis, the rapid development of biotechnology and virtual media: these trends asked theorists to think beyond grounding in the human subject and to open up new ways of reckoning with an increasingly connected and digitalized global landscape (Bignall & Patton, 2010; Buchanan & Colebrook, 2000; Grusin, 2017).

There exists a huge range of fascinating and innovative work combining Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical insights with postcolonial and feminist inquiry, but within this range are a few discernable themes. Scholars creating critical accounts of social, cultural and political conditions through Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts often focus on their ability to introduce a new framework for approaching ontology. These accounts invoke affect, assemblage and bodily becoming to produce analyses more concerned with processes of materialization than with how the pre-given material world becomes intelligible through signification. In its challenge to the organicism of the individual human body and its emphasis on emergence rather than structural organization, Deleuze and Guattari's work often finds its way into feminist accounts of biotechnology and the imperialism of the globalized 'free market,' realities which challenge the organic wholeness of the human body and exhibit the autopoietic quality of non-centralized power networks (Povinelli, 2017; Griggers, 2000). Deleuze and Guattari's work on the pre-discursive sensations passing between nonorganic and organic bodies has proved useful to postcolonial studies in dealing with the twenty-first century boom of virtual technology connecting remote geographic locales through mediated image, video and text. Thinkers such as Rey Chow (2010) and Timothy Bewes (2010) have found Deleuze's work on the 'capture' of visibilities and the 'machinic' effects of cinema, respectively, useful for thinking through various topics on mediation in the global, postcolonial landscape of bodies and images.

The work of feminist and postcolonial thinker Jasbir Puar (2007) is often cited as proposing a groundbreaking argument for the usefulness of Deleuzo-Guattarian 'assemblage theory' in addressing the shifting valences of race, gender, sexuality and nationalism. Claiming that intersectional feminism's focus on the fine-tuning of particular subjects in terms of identity reiterates the State's taxonomization of surveilled bodies, she suggests that a shift in attention

towards affect and ever-changing assemblages of power will produce a theoretical lens better suited to the temporalities, mediations and movements of the contemporary political world. In that assemblage requires an attunement to change and motion that precludes the fixed subject as a timeless entity and focus of study, the move Puar makes is of a piece with the general trend in critical theory that hails Deleuze and Guattari's work as a means of moving critical inquiry beyond its obsession with the subject and its representation. Because Puar's work explicitly privileges assemblage over the entrenched analytic of representational intersectionality, and because it does so by invoking what I will show in the following chapter is an 'exterior' of representation itself indebted to the Orientalism of Deleuze and Guattari's work, *Terrorist Assemblages* will provide, in the last chapter of this thesis, the grounds from which to work out some of the theoretical implications of this Orientalist imaginary.

Besides this more methodologically driven strain, there is another cluster of scholarship on Deleuze and Guattari that wrangles with what their concepts mean for the history and possibilities of philosophy itself. I do not mean to suggest that these are necessarily separate endeavors, but there is a discernible difference between works that want to 'apply' Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas to various phenomena and those that focus more on the relation of those ideas to the field of philosophical thought. I want to focus in the remainder of this literature review on the insights of two thinkers who both consider Deleuze and Guattari's work in terms of its interaction with representational philosophy and also write from a postcolonial or feminist perspective. I will address specifically the work of Paul Patton (1984) and Claire Colebrook (2014) because these philosophers invoke a reading of 'nomadology' and 'becoming-woman' that differs notably from the feminist and postcolonial thinkers cited in the previous section.[13] Both trained philosophers,

[13] The notable difference in the publication date between these texts reflects the fact that Patton was writing when the concepts offered by Deleuze and Guattari were first being assessed in the academic world and Colebrook, thirty years

they position *A Thousand Plateaus* within the poststructuralist endeavor to approach philosophy in ways that do not ground its conditions of existence in the duality of a represented world and a representing subject. They share the view that 'nomadology' and 'becoming-woman' are strategies through which various possibilities for thought might be opened and explored without returning to the foundation of representation. Following this logic, they contend that 'nomad' and 'woman' are not in themselves representations because they make no pretense to act as reflections of reality. Rather, 'nomad' and 'becoming-woman' are *concepts*, and as such they can do something other than accurately or inaccurately represent an exterior world through the interiority of the subject.[14]

In an article describing the 'nomadic war machine,' a Deleuzo-Guattarian concept that I will treat in depth in the next chapter, Patton, also a scholar of the postcolonial, argues that this concept should be read as a "pure Idea" in "a certain politics of conceptual form" that challenges the "classical image of thought." (Patton, 1984, pp.71, 61).[15] He contends that a focus on

later, is returning to the idea of 'becoming-woman' to review the arguments for its continued relevance after it has largely been dismissed. Thus, in reassessing and arguing for the continued conceptual importance of 'becoming-woman,' Colebrook's more contemporary text returns to some of the same questions about the 'concept' that Patton, and others, first raised in the 80's.

14 There is also a sizeable body of scholarship focusing on what Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of the 'nomad' can do for migration studies and how it can inform analyses of the relationship between the individual and the State. Without intending to dismiss this field, I think that the terms schematically structuring it are largely accounted for in my description of postcolonial concerns. There are those who take Deleuzo-Guattarian 'nomadism' as a concept that is already evidenced in contemporary migration patterns – the stateless, itinerant body – and use it to address these new paradigms of movement in terms of the "modes of nomadic becoming which govern migrants' embodied experiences" rather than as, say, subjects on the inclusion/exclusion spectrum (Papadopoulos & Tsianos, 2007, p.224); and there are those who argue that their concept of 'nomadism,' in flattening not only the experience of movement and statelessness but also cultural and political specificities among nomads into a 'figure' of the 'nomad,' is already an abstraction of "the specificity and difference of particular nomadic peoples" and therefore cannot theoretically address the particularities of embodied migration (Ahmed, 2000, p.84).

[15] Rosi Braidotti has also drawn heavily on Deleuze and Guattari's 'nomad' to create her own theory of political thought known as 'nomadic subjectivity.' However, I mention this only briefly here because she makes a similar argument to Patton, that 'nomadism' is "the subversion of conventions that define the nomadic state, not the literal act of traveling" (2011, p.5), but with less explicit attention to *how* the concept of 'nomadism' can avoid referring to actual nomads. Her work is more interested in continuing the process of definition of this 'concept,' whereas this article from Patton argues for a particular perspective on the 'concept' that allows it to be defined *without* real life nomads as its actual or historical referent.

representation tends to circle back to the question of content, either what is inside the representation itself or within the thing that is represented, without ever rethinking the form or challenging the form/content relationship on which representation relies. In the 'nomadic war machine' of *A Thousand Plateaus,* he sees the potential to practice a kind of thinking that does not, as representation does, rely on the fixed identity of the object of thought or the interiority of the subject who represents it by thinking. Briefly, the 'nomadic war machine' is a configuration of the possibility of movement, action and thought that exists in total exteriority to the fixed representational categories of the State; its primary action, be it within the realm of the physical or of thought, is maintaining mobility and undoing the territorializing and signifying efforts of State taxonomization. However, the 'nomadic war machine' is always in danger of being appropriated by the State. Once the State has captured it, then the imperative of the 'nomadic war machine' to enact movement and mutation against State demarcations of territory is superseded by militarized war as its objective, and in this way the appropriated 'war machine' is itself not 'nomadic' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

Of privileging the 'concept' over representation Patton writes: "It is not a matter of different contents of thought, as it would be for those for whom criticism is governed by some form of opposition between adequate and inadequate representations of an external reality (science and ideology). It is rather a matter of different styles or modes of conceptual functioning." (1984, p.61). Rather than introducing another image of thought that might then be put to use across different contexts, Patton suggests that 'nomad thought' itself is the refusal of a model, and as such it is more of a conceptual process than a static form. This process, he writes, is "characterized above all by its inconstancy, its variability" and has the goal of "making thought a war machine" (ibid., p.62; Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987, p.467, cited in ibid.). Despite Deleuze and Guattari's

use of anthropological material on real nomadic peoples, the connection between the historical conditions of real nomads and Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadism is irrelevant to the *definition* of the concept, which is not based in observations as a representational practice. He writes, "In principle, the war-machine could have been specified in quite abstract, theoretical terms," and thus Deleuze and Guattari's reference to "empirical detail" functions only to "establish links with a reality outside the book" (ibid., p.77).[16]

Just as the 'nomadic war machine' as concept opens the potential for thought to become exterior to the State, feminist philosopher Claire Colebrook makes a complementary argument in which the 'becoming-woman' of philosophy would move thinking beyond Man as the proper subject of representation. 'Becoming woman,' "the concept itself – considered as *concept* created to do work in reconfiguring the philosophical plane," would allow for philosophy to think outside the boundaries of representationalism, which presupposes a self-present subject who represents himself and, thereby, the world to himself (2014, p.155, original emphasis).[17] If Man as representing Subject defines the system of shared meaning, the assumption is that beyond its terms there is only incommunicable chaos; but 'becoming-woman' would reconfigure this entropic space not as an unspeakable fantasy or origin but as a realm of "other durations and pulsations of life" (ibid., p.159). The move 'becoming-woman' could effect beyond representational philosophy would not be an aggrandizement of the feminine, nor a parody of socially constructed femininity, nor the instrumentalization of anything 'real' about the feminine. Rather, it would be a conceptual movement into the world of mutational, infinitesimal difference that has been crudely binarized

[16] Patton's understanding of the 'pure concept' of 'nomadology' is iterated by others arguing for the usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas around the same time, particularly the work of Stephen Muecke (1984). Here, he argues that the 'nomadic war machine' as a strategy for thought has no political legacy and is instead a conceptual figuration that can be mobilized by any group.

[17] Colebrook is influenced by the work of Luce Irigaray (1977/1985) on the masculine nature of representational philosophy, which I will address in further detail in chapters two and three of this thesis.

and negatively defined by a system dependent on the conceptual self-presence and interiority of Man. According to Colebrook, 'becoming-woman' could be necessary for philosophy to think beyond this figure, and as such would actually challenge the configuration of 'woman' as the marker of a fantasy space of otherness beyond philosophical thought.[18]

1.4 Conclusion

What I hope to have shown in this literature review is that the problems of representation within postcolonial and feminist thought may be read together for both their common concerns and nuanced divergences pertaining to *A Thousand Plateaus.* One of the most striking aspects of the feminist conversations about this text is the shared perspective across Deleuze/Guattari and their feminist critics and champions that "*woman* is the privileged figure of otherness in Western discourse" (Braidotti, 2011, p.114, my emphasis). This assertion comes in large part from a philosophically oriented position that takes up the figure of 'woman' for how it has been constructed within the representationalist philosophy of the West. This differs from the bulk of postcolonial criticisms in that they tend to read from a more anthropologically influenced angle with attention to how Deleuze and Guattari (mis)represent actual non-Western peoples. Feminist critiques fail to take into account the fact that the 'other' of Western rationality has not *only* been 'woman,' and in so doing ignore the discourses of colonialism that have also participated in the production of the Western, masculine Subject who then represents his 'others.' Postcolonial thought tends to criticize the fact of metaphorization itself rather than reading these metaphorized non-Western figures through an embedded epistemology within philosophical thought that has in part produced the exteriority of this conceptual 'other.'

[18] Colebrook distinguishes 'becoming-woman' from both the Lacanian idea that 'woman' signals a 'beyond' that it is impossible to access and the Butlerian idea that the only way to challenge gender is by contorting and deforming its existing figures. (2014, p.153).

Towards my own contribution to this conversation, I will close read select passages in *A Thousand Plateaus* that invoke the 'Orient' in order to describe the 'nomadic war machine' and its relationship to the State. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said's exposition of the 'Orient' as the Other of the West demonstrates the implication of colonialist anthropology in legitimizing the West as the seat of rationalist philosophical production. Reading this 'other' in relation to 'woman' in *A Thousand Plateaus* will thus allow me to bridge the theoretical gap between feminist and postcolonial critique. According to Said, the 'Orient' has only ever been an imagined idea within Western discourse, and thus my attention to this figure allows me to look from a postcolonial angle without necessarily soliciting more accurate representation. As I will further detail in the following chapter, the 'Orient' has also been a site in which femininity and the non-West are woven together as the constitutive outside of Western, masculine reason, particularly through appeals to their sensuality and uncontainable sexuality. Towards making an argument that does not depend on women or nomads as real-and-then-metaphorized subjects, I will examine how the 'Orient' functions in Deleuze and Guattari's description of the 'nomadic war machine,' a concept that is variously exposed as a colonialist trope and celebrated for its ability to liberate thought from an anthropologizing perspective, and connect this to becoming-woman through Deleuze and Guattari's descriptions of 'Oriental' sexuality.

Chapter Two: The 'Orient' as a functional imaginary of anteriority, multiplicity, and excess

2.1 Introduction

In his analysis of the anthropological sources used in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Christopher Miller (1993) sets up the terms of the problem of representation that he argues still plagues the non-representational 'nomadic thought' proposed by this text. Noting Brian Massumi's introductory declaration that such thought proceeds by addition rather than negation, he asks what kind of interaction might arise between nomadic thinking and the 'older' representational schemas it is celebrated for replacing; if it is within the nature of this thought that it "cannot simply negate that which is not itself," then he wonders the following: "How, in the logic of nomad thought, is representation replaced?" (1993, p.8). The question is further honed: "How does it work when a revolutionary, 'rhizomorphous' mode of thought encounters a representational, 'arborescent' one? If the latter is enfolded into the former, do its terms and rules (which are fundamentally incompatible with nomad thought) remain intact, or is it converted to nomadism, its own integrity being destroyed? Can a nomad thinker be held responsible for representations that he/she has embraced or produced?" (ibid., pp.8-9).

This chapter will investigate these questions and concerns, as further detailed in the previous chapter, primarily through a close reading of several passages from *A Thousand Plateaus* that use references to the 'Orient' as a descriptive tool. While these appear frequently throughout the book, I have chosen to focus first of all on Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the 'nomadic war machine' because it appears to exist in its pure, 'nomadic' form *only* in the non-West. Because the 'nomadic war machine' is always exterior to and against the State, Deleuze and Guattari's descriptions of its 'Oriental' manifestation provide a rich site for investigation into how they

conceptualize this place and its crucial difference from the Western State. The qualities of the 'Orient' that facilitate the emergence of the 'nomadic war machine' circulate as well through their reference to 'Oriental' sexual practices, and it is through these references that I connect their use of the 'Orient' to 'becoming-woman.'

In the first section of this chapter, I will describe the Western construction of the 'Orient' as proceeding through terms similar to feminization and always as a foil for the rationality and progress of the West. Hence, it is a site of difference for Western thought constructed through processes of both racialization and gendering and, as such, provides an imagined Other to the system of masculinist representation dominating Western knowledge. Indeed, this very imaginary *of* the 'Orient' exists only through the assumption that the 'Orient' needs the West to represent it. My close reading of various passages in *A Thousand Plateaus* will then proceed in three parts. The second section of this chapter will establish that the anteriority of the 'nomadic war machine' derives from its existence in the 'Orient' in a form that *precedes* its inevitable capture in the West, meaning that the 'East' evinces this phenomenon always in the state that comes *before* we are able to encounter it in the West. The following section will demonstrate that this anteriority is intimately connected to an image of the 'Orient' as having more space, exhibiting a kind of spread-out-ness that is impossible under Western governmentality. Because the 'Orient' lacks the cohesion of progress and transformation evidenced in the West, the multiplicity and irreducibility of the 'nomadic war machine' can flourish only in the 'East.' The final section will connect these readings of the war machine to 'becoming-woman' through a reading of Deleuze and Guattari's invocations of 'Oriental sexuality.' Here, I argue that the gendered typifications within *A Thousand Plateaus* are not limited to the figure of 'woman' and that the exoticized corporeality of the 'East' is both a product of feminization and reframes the function of 'becoming-woman' within

the Orientalist imaginary of anteriority, mutability, non-singularity and excess as defining the 'exterior' of Western rationalism. Overall, this reading shifts the schematic terms of the debate laid out in the previous chapter form whether or not Deleuze and Guattari promote Orientalist representations to the question of how their characterization of the 'Orient' functions in an avowedly anti-representational philosophy and what it can, or cannot, theoretically enable.

2.2 The 'Orient' as a link between feminist and postcolonial critique

Miller's denunciation of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1993) argues that the 'pure idea' of nomads meant to describe 'nomadic thought' and absolve it of representing actual nomadic peoples is foiled by its dependence on problematic anthropological texts, whose portrayals bear little resemblance to any actuality of nomadic life beyond the Western intellectual's problematic interpretation. In his words, "The descriptive aspects of the project continually lead them [Deleuze and Guattari] back into the realm of the actual, where the purity is quickly lost" (1993, p.25). Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic "ethic of flow," dependent as Miller argues it is on seeing nomads as "people of the flow," is revealed to resonate strongly with the dubious portrait of Tunisian nomads proffered by Pierre Hubac's 1948 text *Les Nomades* (ibid., pp.29, 26).

However, the juxtaposition of flow against fixity has historically been rendered not only in terms of 'East' and West. As feminist thinkers such as Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous have so compellingly illustrated, the figure of 'woman' and the construction of femininity in Western discourse has itself been an abstract site of flow, flux, mutability, instability, and non-singularity. Because women have been, in Irigaray's words, "assigned to the task of preserving "body-matter,"" the figure of 'woman' signifies a realm that has been rendered 'before' culture and civilization through representational mechanisms not unlike the temporality of primitivism in the anthropological texts cited by Miller (Irigaray, 1977, p.141). Irigaray's reading of the concepts

proffered in *A Thousand Plateaus* exposes the striking resemblance between their qualities and the attributes of 'woman' used to position her as a placeholder for what is beyond representation. Alice Jardine sums this up as follows: "Luce Irigaray has insisted on how both the 'desiring machine' and the 'body without organs' approach, above all, beyond their obvious conceptual links to the fragmented body of the *infans* or psychotic, *the female body as imagined by men*" (Irigaray, 1977, cited in Jardine, 1984, p.50, my emphasis). Putting Irigaray's assertion in conversation with Miller's queries on the interaction of an 'old' representational system with 'new' nomadic thought, it would appear that the 'desiring machine' and 'body without organs' depend on the (old) phallogocentric association of 'woman' with what is in excess of its representational system because it is 'becoming-woman' that constitutes the gateway into these de-subjectified realms.

However, Miller's argument that the "ethic of flow" is founded on a colonialist interpretation of nomadic people concludes that it is the reinvention of primitivism that undergirds Deleuze and Guattari's unsuccessfully non-representational theory. He briefly mentions Jardine's critique, but only to conclude that 'becoming-woman' is symptomatic of the *primitivist* rendering of 'becoming-animal' via Deleuze and Guattari's references to anthropological texts on Africa.[19] Similarly, the Man of Jardine's argument is, for the purposes of her critique, defined solely against 'woman,' rather than colonized bodies. Thus both of these critiques, and others besides, resolve themselves into an analysis that again privileges a singular subject, a singular figure of (mis)representation. Against these subject-oriented reductions, what struck me in reading *A Thousand Plateaus* in the context of these critiques was the significant *resonances* between the qualities and functions this text invests in 'woman' and non-Western locales, with the 'Orient' as

[19] In *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'becoming-animal' is the next step after 'becoming-woman' on the way to 'becoming-imperceptible' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

a particularly conspicuous instance. Following Edward Said's (1978) influential exposé of the discursive mechanisms by which the 'Eastern' Other is constructed as a foil against which the West can represent itself as rational, progressive and civilized, feminist scholars have interjected that this schematic bears a strong resemblance to the processes of 'othering' that take place along gendered lines.

As Meyda Yeğenoğlu has argued, "in the case of Orientalism, the discourses of cultural and sexual difference are powerfully mapped onto each other" (Yeğenoğlu, 1998, p.11). Rather than taking 'gender' as an added variable to Orientalist representation, she suggests that the "structural homology between representations of the Orient, veil and feminine" demonstrates that the 'Orient' is rendered "feminine, always veiled, seductive and dangerous" through patriarchal as well as colonialist constructions of otherness (ibid.). Jasbir Puar (2007) also exposes the imbrication of gendered and colonialist structures of difference with particular attention to post-9/11 American media's construction of a perverse and perversely racialized 'terrorist sexuality.' Implicating the sexual exceptionalism of gay rights rhetoric in the United States' imperialist relationship to the Middle East, Puar locates in this discourse both the "the colloquial deployment of Islamic sexual repression that plagues human rights, liberal queer, and feminist discourses, and the Orientalist wet dreams of lascivious excesses of pedophilia, sodomy, and perverse sexuality" (2007, p.14). Her reading suggests that the persistently sexual component of Orientalism is always constituted through rhetoric that positions it as beyond, outside of or more than the 'normal' sexual practices of the normative Western subject (be they gay or straight).

This figuration of perversion as an excess of the norm resonates, again, with the language used by those in the lineage of French feminists to describe the sexuality of 'woman' as a space beyond the singularity of man: "she doesn't conform to the logic of singular identity, sexuality and

desire: the sex which is more (*encore*) than one, in excess of the one (organ) demanded from women's bodies to render them definable in men's terms" (Grosz, 1990, p.146). Although Puar describes this sense of excess as constructed through an imperialist imaginary and Irigaray, as described by Grosz, appears to consider it as the actual condition of female desire, the point is that the pillar of the norm is posited against its outside through images of uncontainable overflow. What is different from the Western (male) Subject is also more than him and irreducible to the singularity of his figure.

This is not meant to imply that *as subjects* woman and people of the geographic region referred to variously as the 'Orient' have anything particular in common or should be collapsed into each other as categories. Rather, I want to consider Orientalism, or 'orientalizing,' as the process by which the prior, the excessive, the mutable and the non-singular are signified as unrepresentable within the representational system of Western thought that locates self-same singularity in the Western male Subject. On the descriptive level, the 'Orient' invites a host of apparently contradictory characterizations. Said describes "the special paradoxes it [the Orient] engenders" in the celebrations of its "pantheism, its spirituality, its stability, its longevity, its primitivity" that coexist with denunciations of its "under-humanized, antidemocratic, backward and barbaric" nature (1978, p.150). The position of the Western intellectual as the only agent able to represent this 'Orient' implies that it does not cohere into a state of representability from which it may claim to know itself. Not only is the 'Orient' multiplicitous in its features; this multiplicity also forecloses the possibility of self-representation and necessitates the Western scholar as an authoritative voice that can invest the 'Orient' with the coherence it inherently lacks. Said puts it as follows: "What gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the

Orient was identified by the West" (ibid., 40). The Western scholar must render the 'Orient' as non-transparent and unintelligible to itself in order to legitimize his own task, that of representing what cannot represent itself.

Here, Said uses the term 'representation' to refer to the constellation of traits and qualities assigned to the 'Orient' by the Western scholar through textual and imagistic depiction. What these representations created was a world that lacked the internal cohesiveness to represent itself; it may have been chaos, darkness and ignorance on the inside (and to the 'Oriental'), but the dark, ignorant and chaotic nature of this place could be configured into a cultural system through the external perspective of the rational Western subject. The privileged status of the Western intellectual derives not merely from his self-proclaimed ability to represent the Other; rather, the ability of Man to represent others follows from his own unitary self-cohesion as subject that allows him to represent himself. Along philosophical lines, representation, whether political or epistemological, relies on "a real that is *then* represented and a subject who *then* represents" (Colebrook, 2000, p.60, original emphasis).

While the temporality of this poses a hugely complex problem for philosophy, what is important here is the historic assumption (false or not) made by Western philosophy that representation depends on a presence that is represented and a presence that does the representing (Colebrook, 2000); as numerous feminist and postcolonial scholars have shown, the latter is inevitably the Subject as white, Western Man. In this logic, a definitive, cohesive and singular subject is required for the knowledge of self that facilitates the ability to represent others who are imagined as lacking the ability to know and represent themselves. The implication here is that the mutable, excessive multiplicitousness of 'woman' and 'Orient' is endowed with the possibility of intelligibility only through this Subject's ability to represent it *as though* it were coherent; hence

the fact that these 'others' are defined only negatively, as that which this Subject is *not*. What this means is that everything other than this Subject is *essentially* an unintelligible mess, unable to know and represent itself, but rendered intelligible through man's system by the Subject that can properly know and represent itself. Representation, then, is correlated to 'the ability to self-represent,' and what marks the space of the unrepresentable is loosely 'that which is unable to represent itself.'

It is through their association with the unrepresentable, excessive outside of this Subject that 'woman' and the 'Orient' are most conspicuously imbricated. In order to demonstrate that prior-ness, excess and mutability are not conceptually confined to the figure of 'woman,' in the following section I will take up the 'nomadic war machine' as a site that is also rendered through these terms as a challenge to Western systems. Miller spends considerable time with the 'nomadic war machine' explaining its indebtedness to Hubac's anthropological work and deploring Deleuze and Guattari's tendency to romanticize nomadism into the ultimate form of political protest. Strangely, however, he ends up to a certain extent celebrating Hubac's representation for marching head on into the murderous violence of this nomadic war machine, whereas Deleuze and Guattari have "sanitized" it in order to theorize a war machine that can keep the peace (Miller, 1990, p.26). Despite criticizing Deleuze and Guattari's reliance on outdated colonialist texts, in order to demonstrate that the war machine is a dangerous abstraction of violence, he must admit that the representations proffered by such texts 'at least' do not shy away from the unpleasant fact that war machines actually kill people. What he fails to take into account is that the war machine that enacts war is in fact only one kind, and that, importantly, the differentiation between this war machine and the 'nomadic war machine' emerges through an Orientalist image of the despotic 'Eastern' State versus the rational Western one. Rather than adjudicating between various representations

of nomads, as Miller ultimately does, in the next section I will show that Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of the 'nomadic war machine' depends on its manifestation in the 'Orient.'

2.3 The Anteriority of the pre-capture 'nomadic war machine'

It is necessary, first of all, to make very clear that there are two different types, or rather states, of war machine. There is the 'nomadic war machine,' which arises exterior to the State and desires only the possibility of movement and mutation, and there is the war machine that is appropriated by the State, which has war as its objective. This difference, rather than a continuum of various states of appropriation, appears to characterize two properly distinct and oppositional categories that nonetheless depend on a particular temporality. The 'nomadic war machine' always exists *before* State appropriation; the appropriated war machine, naturally, exists only after the moment of its capture. The former is the imperative to perpetuate unrestricted mobility as it exists before and against the delimitation of the State, while the latter is the channeling of this power into institutions such as the police, prisons and the military; indeed, it is the corruption of this pure will to movement. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the possibility of the war machine arising in its pure, 'nomadic' form *before* its appropriation depends on a particular kind of State. They suggest that the war machine in its 'nomadic' condition prior to State capture emerges much more readily in the 'Oriental' State than in the Western one. This distinction appears to follow from their understanding of the 'Oriental' State as more disjointed and disparate than the Western one, an 'Orient' of uncontainable gaps and spaces that preclude the cohesion of the West. As I will show, the qualities of anteriority and excess are inseparably intertwined in Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the 'nomadic war machine' and its emergence in the 'East.' In what follows in this section, I will establish the perpetual anteriority of the 'nomadic war machine.'

Stressing that the 'nomadic war machine' does not have war as its proper object, Deleuze and Guattari explain that war arises only when nomadic mobility is curtailed by the State. If, as they suggest, the State operates largely through the conscription of land into signified territory and the restriction of movement within these territories, nomadic resistance to this process is primarily concerned with realizing the possibility of movement and a relationship to land that is not mediated through property ownership. The imperative of the 'nomadic war machine' is first and foremost the maintenance of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'smooth space,' which refers variably to actual topological phenomena such as deserts and steppes and to spaces of land that resist signification as State territory. War results from this endeavor only when the forces of the State challenge or oppose it, and thus the 'war' of the '*nomadic* war machine' is incidental to its desire for 'smooth space.' In this condition, the as-yet-un-appropriated war machine seeks to "annihilate the forces of the State, destroy the State-form" (ibid., p.417).

It is for this reason that, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, "The Oriental State is in direct confrontation with a nomad war machine" (ibid., p.385). The "directness" of this "confrontation" between the 'nomadic war machine' and the 'Oriental State' owes itself to the oppositional conflict between the State and the nomadic force that arises exterior to it; it is a *direct* opposition because the war machine can arise in the 'Orient' in its 'nomadic' and pre-capture form. The war that ensues in this instance is *still* a result of the nomadic impetus to movement, rather than the wholly appropriated military objective. In the West, however, the State is much more adept at capturing the war machine to its own purposes, and it appears to be impossible to observe its 'nomadic' iteration in this arena. As Deleuze and Guattari write, "Western States…confront the nomads only indirectly, through the intermediary of the migrations the nomads trigger or adopt as their stance" (ibid.). The directness of a confrontation between the State and its pure exterior is impossible in

the West, and thus we see the war machine there only *after* appropriation. They describe the process of State appropriation as follows:

> When the State appropriates the war machine, the latter obviously changes in nature and function, since it is afterward directed against the nomad and all State destroyers, or else expresses relations between States, to the extent that a State undertakes exclusively to destroy another State or impose its aims upon it. It is precisely *after* the war machine has been appropriated by the State in this way that it tends to take war for its direct and primary object, for its "analytic"…In short, it is at one and the same time that the State apparatus appropriates a war machine that the war machine takes war as its object, and that war becomes subordinated to the aims of the State (ibid., p.418, my emphasis).

Deleuze and Guattari define the Western State as commonly taking the form of the "juridical State containing a military institution" whereas the 'Eastern' state is closer to the "magical-despot State" (ibid., p.353). If the war machine only becomes military after its appropriation, this process of appropriation that creates the militarized State implies that a war machine is, at least in part, always already appropriated by the Western State. The West has foreclosed the possibility of a purely exterior 'nomadic war machine' by fusing the war machine so tightly into the fabric of the State as a military institution such that war, as seen in the quote above, is completely 'subordinated to the aims of the State.'

This means that, although there may be perpetual movements and tensions between new war machines and the State in both 'East' and West, we cannot observe the purely exterior 'nomadic war machine' attacking the State in the West *without* any prior influence by the State; thus, the confrontations between the Western State and its nomads are always 'indirect' and mediated already by some form of State capture. It is not that the war machine is appropriated by the State in some final or static form, but rather that the network of institutions and systems of signification in the West create a much tighter net in which to capture the war machine as it arises and to delimit its conditions of emergence. Deleuze and Guattari write that the modern State will "always have fringes or minorities that reconstitute equivalents of the war machine," but these

groups are nonetheless already defined in relation to the State, as peripheral rather than exterior to it, and therefore the war machines they constitute might approximate the 'nomadic war machine' but will never actually enact this pure form (ibid., p.366).

Thus, reconstitutions of the war machine in the West tend to create a "confused situation," even "a comic opera where you never know what is going to happen next (even the cry 'The police are with us!' is sometimes heard)" (ibid., p.367). Deleuze and Guattari's invocation of a rallying cry of allegiance with the police demonstrates how the war machine – that "short revolutionary instant, an experimental surge" – is not only constituted already by groups relative to the Western State but also filtered through the apparatus of that State's institutions (ibid.). The 'confusion' and the 'comedy' here result from the irrevocable entanglement of the war machine and the State, wherein, for example, what might appear to be or begin from an impetus of anti-State resistance is then expressed through the language of the State. Although we might "never know what is going to happen next," we can be sure that we are not witnessing the revival of the 'nomadic war machine' in its pure form because the war machine in the West is observable only in the manifestations of its capture. Thus, we must look to the 'Orient' in order to see the working of the war machine *before* its conscription such that it is still in 'direct' confrontation with the State.

This is not, however, the same kind of linear temporality with which Miller questions Deleuze and Guattari's association of nomads with the pre-signifying regime of signs. After noting their explicit disavowal of evolutionist and historical narrative, he writes, "Yet the authors, by their words, explicitly situate this regime on a timeline, *prior* to signifying. How can they do this without suggesting evolution, historical hierarchy, and temporality? They cannot and do not" (Miller, 1993, p.18). Miller's reading depends on the assumption that the pre- of pre-signifying connotes a linear temporality in which one regime is left behind for the subsequent, less primitive

and more civilized one. However, the dynamic between the war machine in its 'nomadic,' pre-capture state and the captured war machine is not one of linear supersession. The war machine can arise anywhere at any moment in time, but when it arises in the West, it is only in a 'short revolutionary instant' that then expresses itself through the language of the State. The fact of the war machine being already appropriated in the West has less to do with a definitive moment in which the West is seen to move temporally past the 'East' than with a structural system in the West that effects this capture much more quickly and effectively. Whereas a developed system in the West means we see the war machine only *after* capture, no such system exists in the 'East,' and thus we can see the purely exterior, 'nomadic war machine' there, in its raw, prior state.

This is more than simply an image of the 'East' as backward or behind the West, and while this image does depend on an Orientalist understanding of the 'East' as expressing a mode of being that preexists the systems of the West, it does not envision the 'Orient' as stuck in a statically timeless state. As I will show in the following section, the war machine prior to capture exists in the 'Orient' because there is more space there, more gaps between the network of governance in which it may present itself in its purely 'nomadic' form. The 'before' of the 'nomadic war machine' is intimately connected to the fundamental lack of coherence that characterizes the 'Orient.' It is only because things are multiple, excessive, looser in the 'Orient' that the war machine can be seen before capture *there*; the West presents a tighter weave in which the war machine is perpetually caught.

2.4 The disjointed 'Orient' in which the 'nomadic war machine' arises

Towards explaining why the 'nomadic war machine' manifests in its direct and pre-capture form in the 'Orient,' Deleuze and Guattari review a brief global history in which, drawing on the work of V. Gordon Childe, they suggest that the conditions for State formation, such as the advent

of agricultural methods that made possible the stockpiling of food, were first met in "Afro-Asia and the Orient" (1980/1987, p.450). Although the existence of surplus food allowed for the creation of a merchant and artisan class, the preliminary contact between the 'Orient' and the West laid the groundwork for a persistent and fundamental difference between the Eastern and Western State. The Greeks, not producing enough to have their own surplus but tempted by that of the 'East,' set up trade routes that allowed them to take advantage of this surplus stockpile without having to constitute their own. This produced a kind of pre-figuration of a middle class in that artisans and merchants of developing Western areas were able to operate somewhat freely in a diversified economy without totally relying on a local surplus controlled by the State. Various factors, including rhizomatic rather than arborescent crop production, nomadic animal raising and lack of contact between rural and urban spaces, meant that the 'Orient' could not manage to develop a flexible and unified economic flow like that which developed thanks to the emergent middle class of the West.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the fact that these various components of the 'Eastern State' did not cohere into the maintenance of an emergent middle class produced the need for a despotic leader to keep activities such as agricultural production and animal raising connected to the urban centers. They conclude from this that, while despotism may appear to have a tighter hold on its population, this form in fact allows for the 'nomadic war machine' to constantly attack the State from without because these components of exteriority have not been effectively integrated into an all-encompassing State model like that of the "so-called modern or rational State" (1980/1987, p.376). Not only does the figure of the capricious, antidemocratic despot recur throughout Western depictions of the 'East' cited by Said (1978), according to Deleuze and Guattari this form of governance arises in the 'Orient' because there is a fundamental lack of

coherence that necessitates some grand, totalizing form to hold together the disparate elements that are not integrated into the kind of State network that exists in the West. It is this characteristic of the 'Orient,' the persistent dispersal of its parts, that maintains the gaps and open spaces giving rise to the 'nomadic war machine' in the 'East.' They put it as follows:

> In the Orient, the components are much more disconnected, disjointed, necessitating a great immutable Form to hold them together: "despotic formations," Asian or African, are rocked by incessant revolts, by secessions and dynastic changes, which nevertheless do not affect the immutability of the form. In the West, on the other hand, the interconnectedness of the components makes possible transformations of the State-form through revolution. It is true that the idea of revolution itself is ambiguous; it is Western insofar as it relates to a transformation of the State, but Eastern insofar as it envisions the destruction, the abolition of the State. The great empires of the Orient, Africa, and America[20] run up against wide-open smooth spaces that penetrate them and maintain gaps between their components…Western States are much more sheltered in their striated space and consequently have much more latitude in holding their components together (1980/1987, p.385).[21]

What is immediately apparent in this quote is a reading of the 'East' versus the West in which the former lacks the cohesion of the latter. The Western State limits the possibility of revolution to the transformation rather than the destruction of the State by creating a system that is both totalizing and flexible in its coherence, the "interconnectedness of the components." State abolitionist revolution is impossible in the West because the Western State holds things too closely together, unifying its parts into a higher form that can be transformed but never eradicated. In the 'Orient,' however, the different components do not cohere into a unity of the higher order of the

[20] Throughout *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari exhibit a particular fascination with the United States, focusing mostly on its literature and doubtlessly influenced by the aesthetics of the 1960's counterculture movement (Jardine 1984). For my purposes here, this odd reference to 'America' is part of another phenomenon in this text that must, unfortunately, remain a future topic to tackle, and this is the only place they characterize 'America' as similar to the 'Orient.' Elsewhere, America *has* an 'Orient,' its own wild West of cowboys and "Indians without ancestry," but this is the only moment in which they are compared as such (1980/1987, p.19).

[21] Here, the phrase "despotic formations" refers to Karl Marx's observations of governance in Asia, which somehow manage to be confirmed, according to Deleuze and Guattari in the footnote for this passage, by the "African analyses of Max Gluckman" in his book *Custom and Conflict in Africa* (1980/1987, p.558).

despot, and the despot imposes what will only ever be provisional order on elements that remain disparate and disordered.

The 'holding together' of components in the West conveys a particularly suffocating image, of things tightly packed together with no space between them for movement. The 'Orient,' on the other hand, is more spread out, and what has been conscripted into the unified system of the West remains multiplicitous in the 'East.' The link between the Western State's 'sheltered' nature and its ability to unify its components implies that there is something about this aspect of the 'Orient' that is unsheltered, wilder. This resonates with the association between 'destruction' and 'abolition' in the 'Orient,' and, on the other hand, 'transformation' with the West. The multiplicity of the 'Orient,' evidenced in the gaps between its components and its lack of 'sheltering' unification, also marks the territory of a threat. The idea of doing away with the State entirely, this 'Eastern' revolution, arises only through the juxtaposition of disjunction and unification, 'Oriental' disconnectedness versus Western connectedness, itself a marker of progress against "despotic formations." Thus, Deleuze and Guattari theorize the 'nomadic war machine' as the possibility of abolitionist revolution in the 'East' through a perspective that persists in reading the 'Orient' as lacking the level of coherence that characterizes the West's ability to self-represent.

The imagery of penetration in the passage quoted above requires further attention here, as it is intimately related to both the femininity of the 'Orient' and Deleuze and Guattari's depiction of the 'spaces' and 'gaps' of the non-West. On one level, the image they provide follows an obviously Orientalist ascription of penetrability; the "great empires of the Orient, Africa" are more susceptible to penetration by "wide-open smooth spaces" than Western (European) States, which have effectively closed up the gaps between their components that might be penetrated. But this depiction does not follow the structure of a mighty and powerful representative of the State

phallically entering and filling a feminized territory. Rather, it is the 'smooth spaces' themselves, as the object and condition of the 'nomadic war machine,' that are said to penetrate the State, and in so doing they "maintain gaps between their components." In this configuration, space appears to work towards making more space, and penetration becomes less about inserting into and filling gaps than about facilitating the gaps in which the war machine might then arise. The penetration of the State by 'smooth space' can be read as a movement not of entering existing space but of pushing things apart to create more space, perpetuating a lack of cohesion, even breaking things apart.

While this reading does not necessarily undermine the phallic imagery of penetration, it points to another important feature of Orientalism through which Deleuze and Guattari construct the 'nomadic war machine,' specifically the notion of excess that attends the lack of cohesion ascribed to this Other. When the spaces created and maintained by the 'nomadic war machine' penetrate the 'Eastern' State, they do not *fit in* to a niche that exists already in the State and is ready to accommodate them. Rather, as I have shown above, they create more space; the process proceeds additively, and thus they do not transform the existing, unified State into a different *form* of unified State but rather produce more of what *exceeds* the unity of the State. What I want to suggest here is that their depiction of the 'nomadic war machine' able to arise in the 'East' in a form that is purely *exterior* to the State depends on an understanding of exteriority that tends more towards the notion of excess than that of totally separate externality. In other words, what is 'outside' of the State may not be far away from it, somewhere over there, but instead 'outside' by way of being beyond containment, unable to be confined to it and thus outside of its form.

These connotations of overflow are evinced in the frequent association of exteriority with 'irreducibility.' As much as the war machine arises 'exterior' to the State, it is also impossible to

reduce it to the State, whether as something ruled over or produced by it. In one of the many instances of this connection, Deleuze and Guattari write, "As for the war machine in itself, it seems to be irreducible to the State apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere" (1980/1987, p.352). The 'elsewhere' invoked in this line follows directly from the construction of the war machine as too complex or too big to be reduced to the structure of the State; as beyond the rule of the State; and as preexisting the State's law. Wherever this 'elsewhere' may be, it is clearly described in terms of its relationship to the State. This is not to suggest, however, that the reduction of the war machine to the State is in fact enacted in this line; rather, irreducibility is shown to exist relationally, such that what is outside sovereignty might be imagined as what is *uncontainable* by sovereignty rather than totally separate from it. Rather than a sense of exteriority that implies distance and total detachment, the importance of irreducibility suggests that the war machine is *in excess* of the interior. It is outside because it is *more than* the definitional interiority of the State and thus unable to be reduced to its terms.

While the war machine may be ontologically irreducible, Deleuze and Guattari do concede that it is very difficult for us (the West) to conceptualize a war machine that is wholly uncontainable within the apparatus of the State because we are so accustomed to considering State opposition in terms of a subject that is a member of a state and therefore has the capacity to oppose it. For them, the same mode of thought that conceives of the human individual as a self-knowing being in control of its own, measured decision-making also envisions the State as a kind of macrocosmic mirror of this rational decision-making process, and what we consider to be the interiority of the individual subject is inseparable from the idea of the State as a group of self-governing individuals. As the "so-called modern or rational State" identifies itself with reason, the reasonable, rational individual becomes a microcosm of the State itself, meaning that what the

individual subject might perceive as its own agency, autonomy or even interior life are in fact a reflection of the State's need to conceptualize itself as a collective of individual, self-governing subjects (1980/1987, p.376).

This analogous modeling between reason and the State mean that the Western mind also has the unfortunate tendency to reduce the war machine to the apparatus of its capture, that is, the State. Reduction, however, is not identical to appropriation by the State and refers instead to the tendency in the West to *interpret* this capture as total or final, to render the war machine containable and interior. Towards explaining this, Deleuze and Guattari write,

> Is the war machine already overtaken, condemned, appropriated as part of the same process whereby it takes on new forms, undergoes a metamorphosis, affirms its irreducibility and exteriority, and deploys that milieu of pure exteriority that the occidental man of the State, or the occidental thinker, continually reduces to something other than itself? (1980/1987, p.356).

This quote demonstrates, again, the excessive nature of the war machine. Even in the moment of its overtaking, it changes form in order to escape the form imposed on it by the State, and its metamorphosis overflows the bounds of its capture; but this mutation, or the possibility to perceive this mutation, is foreclosed by the fact that Western thought is unable to imagine an exterior to State representation and thus reduces the war machine to figures of governmentality.

If the war machine is *not* containable, but Western thought reduces it to appear containable, what this means is that Deleuze and Guattari require a site through which to signify what is before and in excess of this reduction; in other words, their ability to see that the 'nomadic war machine' exists somewhere in pre-capture and un-reduced form depends on something being able to mark the space of what is beyond Western representation, and, as I have argued, this is frequently the function of the 'Orient.' The 'Orient,' as mutability, excess, and non-singularity, stands in once more for what is unrepresentable in the West, that is, what is beyond the requirement of cohesion

and self-presence that undergird the West's system of representation. In this section and the one preceding it, I have demonstrated that the associative meanings defining the pure exteriority of the 'nomadic war machine' are indebted to a representational schema that renders impossible the 'pure' conceptuality of Deleuzo-Guattarian ideas proposed by Patton (1984). My reading also demonstrates that Stephen Muecke's understanding of the 'pure exteriority' of the war machine fails to take into account that the construction of this exterior is nonetheless relational to the interior, as that which is prior, in excess of and uncontainable to the State and its system of representation (Muecke, 1984).

In the next section, I will show that the same qualities that situate the 'nomadic war machine' in the 'Orient' also circulate through the rhizome's association with 'Oriental' sexuality and 'becoming-woman' as sites of possible *release* from Western structure. The idea of release will be important here because it tends to structure invocations of the Deleuzo-Guattarian imaginary as an ontology, appealing to forces, particles and affects that may be set free from the 'capture' of representation.

2.5 'Oriental' sexuality, 'becoming-woman' and the possibility of release

The tendency of the 'occidental thinker' or 'occidental man of State' to reduce what is multiple into a singular, unified concept refers to the image of thought Deleuze and Guattari call the 'tree.' Reduction is a quality of the arborescent structure that has dominated Western thought and imposed the idea that *being* is a quality that relies on the self-same, fixed identity of what is. Against this, they posit the 'rhizome.' Whereas the tree *is*, the rhizome mutates, moves, following the same additive logic that attends the war machine. In Deleuze and Guattari's words, "The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and. . . and.. . and. . ." (1980/1987, p.25). The conjunctive nature of the rhizome demonstrates that it not only operates

differently from the tree, which proceeds by reduction into being, but that this difference is in excess of the tree. The 'and' not only attaches but adds, and in the same way that the 'and' sits between the things it connects, the rhizome operates by way of the middle, an invocation of connecting lines between points rather than points themselves. The rhizome "has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle *(milieu)* from which it grows and which it overspills" (ibid., p.21).

This image of the 'middle' as an exceeding (over-spilling) of boundaries defines as well the 'plateau' of the book's title, a term taken directly from anthropological observations of Balinese sexuality. Referencing anthropologist Gregory Bateson, they use his work to introduce an example of the plateau as the possibility of sustained sexual release that does not resolve itself into the finality of (male) orgasm:

> A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word "plateau" to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. Bateson cites Balinese culture as an example (ibid., p.22).

And following this, they quote Bateson, "'Some sort of continuing plateau of intensity is substituted for [sexual] climax'" (Bateson, 1972, p.113, cited in ibid., p.22). Where we might find it strange to argue that orgasm actually curtails the possibility of release and instead imagine the ultimate form of release precisely *as* (male) orgasm, a culminating effusion, Deleuze and Guattari want to suggest that we have that association only through our Western fixation on transcendent ends. In fact, they say, *more* intensity is released when a sexual act does not seek resolution-cum-orgasmic-detumescence. In certain 'Balinese games,' the release of intensity overflows the structure of (male) orgasm as the culmination of sex, and thus a plateau can in fact release more

because it creates a plateau of intensities that can connect with other parts of a rhizome, rather than directing itself towards the concluding zenith provided by the Tree.

Seth Jacobowitz interprets this citation of Balinese culture as indicating the persistence of "the binary opposition between the West and non-West (a.k.a. "the Rest"), one deeply marked by a distinction between what is presumed to be a universally applicable theoretical vocabulary on the one hand, and the particularity of native, indigenous, or local experience on the other" (2005, p.2). The problem here for him is one of translation. The possibility of knowing what these rituals mean in Balinese culture is completely foreclosed, translated to the West by Bateson, and then situated again by Deleuze and Guattari as a specific instance that speaks to the "'universal' theoretical vocabulary of the West" (ibid.). This vocabulary is the implied backdrop for the reader's understanding of the Balinese example; in other words, it appears in all its exotic glory only in relief against the West, and thus is made to signify a critique of Western thought only when seen through a particularly Eurocentric lens. While Jacobowitz does concede that Deleuze and Guattari's work is admittedly an "internal critique" of the West and does not intend to present "alienness understood on its own terms," he concludes that such a translation of cultural difference for whatever ends, even for a critique of the system that produced the impetus of such translation, reiterates a colonialist perspective that relies on the binary opposition of a universal 'West' enfolding the particulars of the 'Rest.'

The fact that Bateson's observations of Balinese sexuality provide the perfect definition of 'plateau' also raises Miller's worry over the abstraction of 'actual' information into what are supposed to be 'pure' ideas. Patton, however, seeks to overcome this problem by arguing, with specific reference to 'nomadology' and the 'war machine,' that 'pure ideas' find corroboration in 'actual' information only after their definitional genesis. He puts it as follows:

> In principle, the war-machine could have been specified in quite abstract, theoretical terms. However, the authors chose a different path, combining subtle conceptual elaboration with a mass of empirical detail in relation to such things as the conditions of nomadic life, the history of armaments, and the sources of metal – all in spite of the fact that there is no necessary relation between war-machine as such and the historical reality of nomadism. (1984, p.77)

The suggestion that Deleuze and Guattari's 'nomadology' bears no necessary relationship to actual nomads or the ways in which they have been represented in Western anthropology opens up a crucial link to the discussion of 'woman' and 'becoming-woman' in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In her critique of this concept, Jardine cites the authors' insistence that 'becoming-woman' does not have "anything to do with women *per se*" and should not be "'confused with women, their past or future'" (Jardine, 1984, p.53, Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.8, cited in Jardine). She then poses the simple question: "Why then do D + G privilege the word woman?" (ibid., p.53); and equally one might ask Patton, why nomads? His response, as articulated in the article cited above, suggests that they just happen to resemble the idea Deleuze and Guattari had of the 'nomad' as a purely conceptual figure. Jardine, however, follows up her question with an invocation of the "unanalyzed stereotypes" and "obligatory connotations" deployed by Deleuze and Guattari in the service of 'becoming-woman,' insinuating that it is only through associations such as, in their words, "'sexuality itself'" with the figure of 'woman' that the concept holds meaning (Deleuze & Guattati. 1980/1987, p.341, quoted in ibid.).

Both her critique and those offered by Miller and Jacobowitz reduce the problem to a singular mechanism of 'othering,' wherein gendered typification of 'woman' signals sexuality and primitivism signals what is pre-State. I want to argue, instead, that Deleuze and Guattari's rendering of 'Oriental' sexuality demonstrates that the function of 'woman' in their text is inseparable from an Orientalist imaginary of the 'East,' which is itself signified through a gendered matrix of associations, and that it is the qualities that circulate through exotically gendered and

racialized sites that constitute the possibility of 'release' from representation in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Towards describing the plane of intensity, or plateau, Deleuze and Guattari refer to a sexual practice evidenced in a "great Japanese compilation of the Chinese Taoist treatises" from A.D. 982-984 in which, again, the man eschews climax in favor of sustained release (1980/1987, p.157). The treatises supposedly describe the "formation of a circuit of intensities between female and male energy" and explain that "the condition for this circulation and multiplication is that the man not ejaculate." (ibid.). For Deleuze and Guattari, these practices are a way to reach the "body without organs, Tao, a field of immanence in which desire lacks nothing and therefore cannot be linked to any external or transcendent criterion" (ibid.). What is ascribed to these 'Oriental' sites – the possibility of release *in excess* of the Tree of Western transcendental thought – exposes an important connection between these references to an exoticized 'East' and the figure of 'woman.' To wit, their rendering of sexual practices in which the man must refrain from ejaculation in order to sustain and extend release bears a strong similarity to the concept of female *jouissance* posited by Lacan (Grosz 1990), suggesting that an imaginary of what is possible for 'Eastern' male bodies is inflected with assumptions about the female body.

Jouissance, as female ecstasy in excess of the structuring narrative of tumescence, release, detumescence contained in the phallus, is completely alien to the transcendental exchange that allows man to substitute love and sex for his relationship to the Other, which for Lacan is some irrevocably lost originary plenitude that constitutes the divided and desiring subject (and is often (falsely) imagined as God) (Grosz 1990). In Grosz's words, "Woman experiences a *jouissance beyond the phallus*," in that her sexual release is not motivated by desire for transcendence nor does it exhaust itself in a singular culminating point (ibid., p.139, original emphasis). However, according to Lacan's formulation of the system of signification through which we represent our

world, the fact that female *jouissance* is beyond the phallus also means that it is beyond this system of representation. Grosz writes, "This *jouissance* is, by that fact, strictly outside of articulation and is thus *unknowable*," a bodily experience that is "beyond discourse and knowledge, ineffable" (ibid.).

If the excessive, sustained release of *jouissance* is unrepresentable in a system that depends on transcendental climax, it is this same system, dependent on the higher organizing principle of the Western Tree, that is challenged and exceeded in the sexual acts of extended release, rather than climactic culmination, cited by Deleuze and Guattari as evidenced in contemporary Balinese and ancient Chinese cultures. The rhizome as the counter-idea to the transcendental Tree also derives in part from this imaginary of 'Oriental' sexuality: "Neither is the music the same [in the 'Orient'], the music of the earth is different, as is sexuality: seed plants, even those with two sexes in the same plant, subjugate sexuality to the reproductive model; the rhizome, on the other hand, is *liberation of sexuality* not only from reproduction but also from genitality" (1980/1987, p.18, my emphasis). Assuming that this 'liberation of sexuality' is the freeing of sexual release from the Western obsession with transcendent (phallic) climax, a process akin to female *jouissance*, what this means is that the imagined possibility of releasing sexuality form Western strictures is envisioned in an 'Orient' that is itself signified as a place of sustained release *through* gendered associations. The fantasy of men having sex like women is located in the 'East,' bespeaking tropes of feminized masculinity that have defined Orientalism for centuries (Said, 1978; King, 1999).

Importantly, this also points to the implication of 'becoming-woman' in the Orientalist imaginary at work here, in that the function of 'becoming-woman' is in some sense to allow the West to act like the 'Orient.' The potential for release from the Tree, whose morphology is not incidentally akin to the phallus, is located in 'becoming-woman' as follows: "Sexuality is the

production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings. *Sexuality proceeds by way of the becoming-woman of the man and the becoming-animal of the human*: an emission of particles." (ibid., pp.278-279, original emphasis). If this proliferation of sexuality can be assumed to precede via its liberation from "reproduction" and "genitality," then 'becoming-woman' appears to provide a gateway into the "liberation of sexuality" imagined in the "Orient of rhizomes and immanence" (ibid., p.19). The proliferation of sexuality as a destabilization of binary genders proceeds *through* 'becoming-woman,' such that the man who refrains from ejaculation as per the Taoist treatises facilitates the "circulation and multiplication" of intensities passing between man and woman in order to destabilize the "innate" location of "male and female energy" (1980/1987, p.157); in other words, the 'becoming-woman' of (hetero)sex is also the ability of have 'Oriental' sex, and what 'becoming-woman' is supposed to *do* is bound up in an imaginary of exotic practices beyond simply the typification of female sexuality.

What the 'nomadic war machine,' 'Oriental' sex and 'becoming-woman' all have in common is the ability to release 'flows' or 'particles' that are captured and trapped by Western structure. "Becoming-woman," write Deleuze and Guattari, "is not imitating this entity or even transforming oneself into it…not imitating or assuming the female form, but *emitting particles* that enter the relation of movement and rest" (ibid., p.275, my emphasis). To enter into a process of *becoming* is to undertake a scrambling of parts and their functions such that there is no supposedly natural alliance between them that would cohere into a fixed state of being, similar to the destabilization of 'innate' female and male energies in Taoist sex. This scrambling enacts the release of intensities at what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'molecular' level; particles that are trapped in the 'molar' aggregates of supposedly fixed being are set free as the subject progressively moves away from its own molar representation. This process moves towards the final goal of

'becoming-imperceptible,' a state in which the (former) subject is unreadable through the system of representation dominated by the Tree that insists on fixed being.

The function of release connoted in the 'particle emission' or 'intensity multiplication' of 'becoming-woman' is articulated through the 'nomadic war machine' in terms of 'deterritorialization': "Mutations spring from this [nomadic war] machine, *which in no way has war as its object,* but rather the emission of quanta of deterritorialization, the passage of mutant flows" (ibid., p.230, original emphasis). The war machine *before* appropriation, impossible under the contemporary Western State, enacts the release of land from its signification as territory and the facilitation of flows that are trapped and curtailed by the State; 'becoming-woman' enacts the release of sexuality from its signification as binary genders and sets free the molecular particles once trapped in the molar representations of this binary; and both are not only more readily observed in the 'Orient' but defined through the associations the 'Orient' provides as a site of non-singularity, anteriority, mutability and excess. The concomitant image of the West as having structured, developed or repressed what remains free or able to be liberated in the 'Orient' resonates strongly with Said's reading of a deeply entrenched Western fantasy: "the Orient is a form of release, a place of opportunity" (1978, p.167).

2.6 Conclusion

My argument here, that Deleuze and Guattari depict the potential for release from Western representation through an Orientalist imaginary, provides an important insight in regards to other scholarship that is inclined to approach their work as an ontology. As I have shown with both 'becoming-woman' and the 'nomadic war machine,' the release of particles, flows, affects, and movements from their containment in the structures of Western thought and governmentality is a principal function of these concepts. Deleuze and Guattari want to communicate that there exists

an entire other realm, one that is always there, felt by and affecting our bodies but only able to be *thought* as already codified in the available forms that dominate Western representation. This is what activates the double meaning of capture, as both the act of entrapment in structure and the recording or making visible of something in a representational register.

If the war machine is intelligible to "the occidental thinker" only through capture (of both kinds), once it has already lost the traits that constitute it as exterior, then in its pure, 'nomadic' form it occupies a space that is beyond the current limits of Western representation; in Patton's words, "the war-machine *stands for* that which is outside, the Other, of the State" (1984, p.69). The 'Orient,' in turn, stands for the qualities of alterity granted this 'Other.' 'Woman,' 'Orient,' 'nomadic war machine' signal what is irreducible to this system of thought, and the space before and beyond representation is then made thinkable, presentable in thought, only as an already feminized, Orientalized exterior. The insights of this chapter, then, both shift the debate on Deleuze and Guattari's Eurocentrism away from questions of anthropological representation and delegitimize an appeal to the 'purity' of their concepts. To the first, an oppositional stalemate – where Miller maintains that "Deleuze and Guattari do not, for that matter, cite a significant number of non-Western, non-European sources of any kind" (1993, p.10), Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey praise their work for its "reference to a staggering range of non-European authors, peoples and traditions" (2010, p.33) – is supplemented by an attention to how the Western assumptions implicit in those references, be they a lot or a little, contribute to a challenge of Western thought that again and again invokes an 'exterior.'

To the second, Robinson and Tormey contend that Deleuze and Guattari's use of non-Western sources heralds the "general thesis that the existence of an outside of Eurocentrism has subsisted and could form the basis for a different form of being in the world." (ibid., p.34). What

this irresponsibly optimistic reading forgets is that at the same time as there has always been an ontological outside of Eurocentrism there has *also* always been an ideologically invested epistemological outside *within* Eurocentrism that has explicitly or implicitly supported its claims. Any appeal to the 'purity' of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts necessarily forgets the crucial revelation of Said's *Orientalism* that I have put to use here, namely that ideas also have a discursive and material history. In Patton's understanding, the 'Orient' would be only tangentially found as a place where the 'nomadic war machine' manifests *after* 'nomadic war machine' is already defined as a concept. This doesn't necessarily relieve the accusation of Orientalism, but it would mean that a concept such as the 'nomadic war machine' could not itself be indebted to Orientalist representation. This is what I have disproven here, arguing instead that this imaginary of the 'Orient' provides the grounds from which to conceptualize what Patton refers to as this 'Other' of the (Western) State and the possibility of release from its representational strictures (1984, p.68).

Following this insight, the question arises as to what it might mean to take a philosophy that is itself indebted to a certain representational schema as the blueprint for a new ontology of the forces before and in excess of representation. If an ontology interested in release – by which I mean, one that makes the assumption that there *are* communicable forces that precede and exceed representational epistemology – relies in part on a Western, colonialist imaginary of where, how and through which bodies release happens, then we have to ask what this might mean for scholarly work taking this ontology as a framework for analysis. The following chapter will explore this question via the critiques of Deleuze and Guattari's work made by Gyatri Spivak and the groundbreaking insights of Jasbir Puar. I suggest that Puar's work introduces the possibility to read the Orientalism of Deleuze and Guattari's theory neither from a moralistic position that

dismisses their work entirely as collusion with imperialism – which it is – nor from a utopian one that disavows its imperialist influence.

Chapter Three: Reading the Orientalist imaginary as enabling a discursively embedded ontology in Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages*

3.1 Introduction

As I have shown, many of the thinkers who take up concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus* do so for their ability to illuminate the dynamic, mutational movement that Deleuze and Guattari theorize as before and beyond representational thought. They often cite the capacity of new, Deleuzo-Guattarian paradigms to frame thought in terms of the 'molecular' rather than the 'molar' and, analogously, in terms of 'affect' rather than 'identity.' Whereas the molar is the realm of representation and identity, the molecular refers to sensation and movement that come before and always escape the molar identification of entities. Rather than a proliferation of intelligible difference inscribed in timelessly individuated bodies, the difference of the molecular realm proceeds by way of perpetual mutation, movement, rhythm, duration. The pulse of this particulate world is unintelligible to the realm of molar positions. Arun Saldanha describes this by saying, "the molecular is not simply more intersections of molar difference, but altogether unrepresentable" (2010, p.9).

In his disavowal of additive intersections as a framework for interpreting difference, Saldanha refers to the critical lens known as 'intersectionality,' another contested site of articulation for how and who can, or even whether to, represent marginalized subjects. First coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, this term was a response to the patriarchal and misogynist qualities of antiracist movements in the U.S., the whiteness and race-ignorant qualities of Western feminism, and the resultant fact that people with "multiple grounds of identity" were not accounted for through either of these critical lenses nor advocated for by these movements (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1245). Originally intended by Crenshaw to address structural violence such as legislation,

intersectionality has sparked a range of debates as to who has the right to represent whom, whether or not all identities are intersectional, whether intersectionality can or should account for the formation of subjectivities beyond the purely structural, and, of most importance here, how to deal with the de facto tendency of intersectionality to privilege the normative category of the 'subject' and its representation as the necessary grounds for critical and political intervention (Davis, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Weston, 2011; Puar, 2012; Taylor, 2011).[22]

In her groundbreaking work *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007), Jasbir Puar argues that this final problem might be addressed, and indeed intersectionality itself re-conceptualized, by putting its representation-oriented rubric in conversation with the anti-representational, Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of assemblage.[23] Bringing the concept of assemblage to bear on the entanglements of race, gender, sexuality, and nationalism in the post 9/11 U.S. imaginary, she makes a case for the efficacy and, indeed, necessity of the attention to affect, sense and time that Deleuzo-Guattarian assemblage theory lends her analysis of the relationship between American LGBTQ rights discourse and U.S. imperialism. She suggests that the predominance of intersectionality as *the* analytic with which to address race, gender and other categories of difference reiterates the codification of identity as always implicitly referent to a center or norm from which its particulars deviate. This both colludes with State and late capitalist taxonomization of bodies into populations and consumer groups and also leaves unquestioned the normative 'subject' as a taken-for-granted entity in which to ground interpretation.

[22] These questions revolving around intersectionality form a rich and multifaceted conversation that I mention only briefly for my purposes here because most perspectives appear to take for granted the necessity of representation and the self-evident presence of the subject, as either a citizen of the State or the bearer of subjectivity. Puar both challenges this assumption and attempts to bring the kind of political responsibility signaled by intersectionality in concert with Deleuzo-Guattarian thought, which postcolonial and feminist thinkers alike have argued lacks "political 'applicability.'" (Puar, 2012, p.50).

[23] Puar further fleshes out this argument in her article "'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess': Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory" (2012) in response to critiques of *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007).

In its sensitivity to contingency, multiplicity, mutable connections and the instability of any apparently fixed relationship of parts, assemblage theory can discuss the modulations of affect and the shifting meaning of provisionally assembled, as opposed to organic or presupposed, bodies. Rather than installing 'queer' as a normalized identity, as nationalist LGBT rights politics have done, or appealing to it as an anti-identity, as academic queer theory has tended to do, Puar seeks to locate 'queerness' in the sensorial motion of affects among bodies that happens ontologically before the coalescence of visually recognizable identity and exceeds the ability of an identity framework to retroactively describe it. In her desire to account for "that which is prior to, beyond, or past the grid [of representation and identity]," Puar turns to the same space *A Thousand Plateaus* depicts as before and in excess of Western representational thought that I have shown to be conceptually indebted to an Orientalist imaginary of difference and the possibility of release (Puar, 2012, p.50)

This chapter will investigate the implications of this approach in light of the reading proffered in the previous chapter. The first section will further detail the theoretical and political problem of temporality that Spivak diagnoses in Deleuze and Guattari's work as the schematic reformulation of an ontological zone of forces that always pre-exist the workings of ideology and the intervention of the theorist. According to Spivak, the disavowal of representation that this conceptualization supports both situates the theorist as secondary, thus allowing Deleuze and Guattari to invisibilize their own position via the aggrandizement of a presupposed and self-representing oppressed subject, and, in my argument's extrapolation of her reading, forecloses the possibility to account for the representational framework that has to a certain extent facilitated an understanding of pre-discursive ontology as such. The second section will argue that Puar's work (2007) similarly renders the relationship between the theorist and her material as one in which her

position comes secondary, thus evading a certain theoretical responsibility implicit in representation as an avowed and agential epistemological practice. However, because Puar argues that the refusal of subject-oriented representation has its own political imperative in challenging State taxonomization and the normative subject, I suggest that this approach does not initiate the 'authentic,' speaking subject of oppression that Spivak reads in Deleuze and Guattari's work. While this positioning absolves her from self-reflexively critiquing the Orientalism of the framework she uses, I will suggest in the final section that there is a certain instrumentalization of this Orientalism implicit in Puar's theoretical endeavor. The Orientalized 'exteriority' of Deleuze and Guattari's anti-representationalism enables Puar to shift the terms of queerness away from the identitarian, which employs queerness as both a redemptive and pathologized representational mechanism, and into the ontological realm of assemblage as modulated both discursively and affectively.

3.2. The Problem of temporality

To briefly recap, the argumentation I engage on the topic of 'others' and their representation in *A Thousand Plateaus* falls roughly along the following lines. On one side, those who criticize Deleuze and Guattari's representations for reiterating sexist, colonialist tropes then implicitly or explicitly pose the possibility of more just and accurate representation, whether by those 'others' themselves or not. On the other side, those who champion such Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts as 'nomadism,' the 'war machine' and 'becoming-woman' emphasize that these should be taken more as *ideas* meant to challenge and expand the possibilities of thought than as attempted reflections of a representable reality. Thinkers of this latter category praise these Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts for their ability to uproot thought from its normative return to perception of the world as of and by the self-present subject. In their *concept*-ness, these ideas are meant to

short-circuit the impasse at the juncture of philosophy and political thought at which the problem of representation is met with the imperative to do it better (Colebrook, 2000). Whereas the palliative of better representation can only defer the vexation of the presupposed subject as grounds for thought, the meandering, mutational lines of 'nomadology' and the "pulverization of 'the' subject" effected in 'becoming-woman' "as a *concept*" will release thought from its exasperating tendency to "ground *what is* on the basis of a predetermined being" (Colebrook, 2014, pp.152, 155; Colebrook, 1997, p.85).[24] Because this 'predetermined being' has always possessed the representative consciousness deemed necessary to make '*what is'* communicable, there is a particular relationship implied here between the 'concept' and ontology. If thinking and talking about how *what is* could no longer depend on how it is being represented, then the 'pure concept' that releases thought from its subject-bound representationality also suggests a more direct communicability of the ontological world, one that might not be mediated by the presupposed representational forms of individual consciousness

The hope of concepts such as becoming-woman and the nomadic war machine is that we can attack the edifice of thought that relies on self-presence with that which is exterior to it, what is *not* this 'predetermined being' of representation. This is both a conceptual exteriority – the 'nomadic war machine' as a "pure Idea" of "that which is outside, the Other, of the State" (Patton, 1984, p.69) – and an ontological one, in that the realm proposed by the war machine's exteriority as before and beyond representation is also the "regime of affects" Deleuze and Guattari explicitly state that the war machine implies (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987, p.400). There is an intimate connection, which I cannot fully hash out here but I hope is nonetheless evident enough, between the anti-representational 'pure concept' and the possibility of an ontology that resists the existing

[24] This final quotation refers to Colebrook's reading of Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics (Colebrook, 1997).

normative structures of representation.[25] The essential critique made by feminist and postcolonial thinkers has circled around the unresolved ambivalence in Deleuze and Guattari's work as to whether the 'exteriority' described in their work, as frequently characterized by figures of 'otherness' in Western thought, should be considered that which *has been relegated* to an outside by representational thinking – in other words, seen as indebted in its exteriority to social, political and discursive processes – or that which exists *essentially* in an exterior, unrepresentable zone. If it can be said that the 'concept' facilitates an ontology by circumventing the representing subject, essentially an epistemological figure, then how did the 'pure concept' come to mean what it does without some foothold in an epistemology of representation?

When one reads the 'others' of *A Thousand Plateaus* beyond a singular identity (such as 'woman' or 'nomad'), it becomes clear that the activation of a space 'outside' representation does not *incidentally* manifest in anthropologies of marginalized people, as Patton suggests (1984). Rather, it *relies* on an associative cluster defining the figural nexus that has constituted the spectral underside of Western thought, that is, those which have been rendered unable to represent themselves through a system that relies on their exclusion in order to claim the self-presence of Western, masculine being as representational consciousness. The sites that are meant to suggest the 'beyond' of representation in *A Thousand Plateaus* are consistently rendered anterior, mutable,

[25] There is an extensive debate between scholars focusing mostly on the relationship between philosophy and political thought as to whether or not Deleuze's work can be read as an ontology in light of its emphasis on philosophy as a practice of 'pure thought.' French philosopher and translator François Zourabichvili claims that "there is no 'ontology of Deleuze'" because the 'concept' is necessarily interested in *shaping* the conditions of possibility for thought rather than referencing the empirical experience of thought as a lived, embodied and made possible by the ontological world (Zourabichvili, 1994/2012, p.36). On the other side, Manuel DeLanda writes extensively on the Deleuzian concept of 'assemblage' as an ontology of 'realism' that emerges, as an idea, only from the concrete, experiential world: the concept as emerging *through* ontology rather than determining it (DeLanda, 2016). Puar's work (2007; 2012) evinces an affinity to the latter camp in both its references to DeLanda and the following, succinct statement: "Concepts do not prescribe relations, nor do they exist prior to them; rather, relations of force, connection, resonance, and patterning give rise to concepts." (2012, p.57). The concept as an ontologically emergent phenomenon, rather than a prior product of the imagination, is important for understanding 'assemblage' as ontological.

excessive, and non-singular, terms embodied by the feminine for Irigaray but shown, through argumentation of the previous chapter, to circulate as well through the imagined spaces and peoples of the 'East.' The 'pure exteriority' and 'pure anteriority' of the 'nomadic war machine' as it arises only in the 'Orient' are apparently indebted to an Orientalist reading of 'the East'; indeed, it is the historico-political tropes of irrational despotism, a violent population, tendencies towards excess and capriciousness, and a society lacking the coherence of progress that appear to support the emergence of the 'nomadic war machine' particularly *there*. As I have argued thus far, this demonstrates that its exteriority is intelligible only through an existing, representational imaginary of what is Other to the West.

It is certainly no revelation to arrive at the conclusion that everything, both concept and ontology, is discursively constructed. What is important, however, is how this revelation informs a reading of arguments that position representation as secondary both to the 'pure concept,' which supposedly connects to the observations of anthropological texts only *after* definition, and to the ontological world, which is captured, signified and stultified by representational structure always *after* its perpetually prior movement (Massumi, 1995). The conceptualization of representation as secondary rather than productive is what allows Deleuze and Guattari to introduce a political agenda of *not* representing, and it is this agenda that induces Spivak (1988) to read this work as reinstating both the transparency of the theorist and the 'authentic' subject of oppression in the image of the theorist's own privileged subjectivity. Diagnosing in Deleuze and Guattari's reconceptualization of desire its fundamental inability to account for a theory of ideology or 'interests,' which she deems crucial for any real political intervention, she argues that this

formulation of a force (desire) ontologically prior and exterior to representational mechanisms enacts a reversal of not only 'desire' and the 'subject' but also of the world and the theorist.[26]

She argues that an understanding of interests and ideology as always coming second to and acting upon the 'real' force of desire equates these terms with "being deceived" (Spivak, 1988, p.69). By positing desire as "unilaterally opposed to 'being deceived,'" Deleuze and Guattari introduce "a dichotomy of deception and undeceived desire" in which the subject of oppression is able to act, indeed always *does* act, in accordance with this undeceived force (ibid.). Following from this assumption, there would be no cause for the theorist to step in with the goal of understanding the ideological production of motive, the mechanisms of delimiting and producing various subject positions that enable desire, the textured overlaps and disjunctures of representation and the potential for political action. What comes *first*, and all that we can assume, is an ontological force inducing action, and the theorist, far from having a hand in creating the conditions of possibility for speech or action, must simply make way for this cacophony. The answer to the ills of representation, say Deleuze and Guattari, is to not represent. But, as Spivak argues, their claim to not represent can only be made through the representation of any oppressed subject as perfectly capable of knowing, speaking and representing herself, in other words, as the very self-present and self-knowing Subject they write against.

Her intervention into their work depends on the implied notion that the theorist is always in part responsible for making the world she makes pretense to observe. Imagining that the

[26] When she writes of Deleuze's 'desire' she is referencing this concept as it is first suggested in *Anti-Oedipus* and further elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In footnote twenty-five of the version of 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' published in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, she comments that, while *Anti-Oedipus* did not totally disregard the economic, the move made by *A Thousand Plateaus* to enact certain of Deleuze and Guattari's thought propositions has removed 'desire' completely from the economic field of interests (Spivak, 1988, p.106, in Nelson & Grossberg).

privileged intellectual may simply step aside and allow the masses to represent themselves in action depends on their proposition that some force, here desire, is ontologically prior to any representation or interpretation they may undertake. For Spivak, it is this insistence on the secondary-ness of both the theorist and the ideological interests producing his own speaking position that turns him once again into a transparent medium able to simultaneously represent and deny a position of representation. Miller, through a different route of argumentation, arrives at a similar, overarching critique. He ends his reading of the sources cited in *A Thousand Plateaus* with a call to continue the project of thinking beyond identity and representation while still managing "to face up to the consequences of the representational authority it [the theory] assumes, not pretending to have no authority at all." (1993, p.33). In pretending no authority over the representations their work is indebted to, Deleuze and Guattari seek to absolve themselves of their own epistemological implication as anything other than secondary to, a kind of conduit for, the ontological world of desire as manifested in the active, struggling subject.

Miller's argument seeks to both debunk the notion of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts as 'pure,' through exposing the irreconcilable fact of their reliance on particular anthropologies, and expose the foreclosure of addressing this fundamental inconsistency that enables their theory (a theory enabled by both the foreclosure of addressing inconsistency and the inconsistency itself). Noting that "Deleuze and Guattari are of course aware of the many ironies and impasses in their work," he suggests that their refusal to work through the contradiction of a methodological reliance on anthropological representation that supports their non-representational theory ultimately renders their philosophy a "utilitarian logic of the means justifying the ends" (ibid., pp.31-32). His reading concludes with a round rejection of their work and a word to the not-so-wise who might falsely hope that nomad thought will free them from the problems of representation.

Without believing that Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts have no epistemological ancestry, as Patton suggests, but also without concluding from their implication in representation that their work necessarily undermines itself, as Miller does, what I want to ask is how the work of theorists who *do* find Deleuze and Guattari's ideas necessary might, implicitly, expose that usefulness as itself indebted to the representational background of *A Thousand Plateaus.* Is it possible, following from this *impurity* of their concepts, that this particular implication in Orientalism might actually facilitate an analysis that seeks to shift the terms of ontology *without* disavowing the productive influence of discourse? In the final two sections of this thesis, I will present a reading of Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007) that, first, situates her position in the problems of temporality described in this section and, second, suggests that her move to rearticulate queerness as an ontological assemblage is, in part, enabled by the implicit qualities of Orientalism in the framework she takes up.

3.3 The Position of the theorist in *Terrorist Assemblages*

To turn now to Puar, I want to argue in this section that, by appealing to a primary, ontological world in illustrating her methodology, she effects the disappearance of her own position as theorist by rendering her analytic as necessarily secondary. However, I suggest that this does not imply the corollary universalization of a Western, masculine Subject that Spivak reads in Deleuze. If, in Spivak's reading, 'undeceived desire' and the 'undeceived subject' are problematically entangled and interdependent, Puar manages to appeal to forces ontologically prior to the ideologically inflected grid of representation without locating their manifestation in a reified, self-present subject. This move bespeaks a crucial tension that defines her work and, I argue, opens the possibility to approach her invocation of a realm before and beyond representation to account for contemporary Orientalism *without* disavowing the fact that the qualities of this realm

are themselves enabled through an Orientalist imaginary. The two, somewhat contradictory points held together throughout Puar's work are as follows: the idea that assemblage necessarily follows from the movement of a world that itself, in its ontological irreducibility, increasingly defies the categorization effected by representation, and the idea that assemblage is somehow less violent than representation, or at least doesn't enact *that kind* of violence.

The former notion is what induces me to read Puar's position as secondary. Broadly, she depicts the urgent necessity of affect and assemblage theory as following from the movement of the world itself towards a fragmented, mutational non-organic reality-scape. Puar suggests that the manipulation of affect and the biopolitical fragmentation of both the organic body and (some) bodies' claim on subjectivity have already moved the world itself beyond the efficacy of subjective representationalism, and thus our analytic framework must *follow* this movement. The most extreme manifestation of this ethos comes in a parenthesis towards the end of *Terrorist Assemblages*: "On a more cynical note, the recent work of Eyal Weizman on the use of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Guy Debord by the Israeli Defense Forces demonstrates that we *cannot afford to ignore* concepts such as war machines and machinic assemblages, as they are already heavily cultivated as instructive tactics in military strategy" (2007, p.216, my emphasis). Here, we the theorist are not only irrelevant but imperiled by a refusal to see that the mechanisms of violence in this world are themselves no longer containable to the question of subjects and their representation (or lack thereof); simply put, empirical war machines necessitate theoretical ones.

The same idea is conveyed with less graphic force in Puar's invocations of contemporary biopolitics. She writes that analyses focusing on the position of the subject must be supplemented with thinking "on population formation that recognizes those who are living not only through their

relation to subjecthood, but are coming under control as part of one or many populations, not individuals, but 'dividuals'" (ibid., 205). The 'those' in question are the bodies and body parts that circulate through a biopolitical regime of racist population management, 'those' without recourse to a subject status that might reassign them to the category of the living. If control does not control subjects but populations, then according to Puar the de-subjectifying logic of biopolitcs must be followed by an analytic that does not impose a representational subject position, which has no meaning itself within this regime.

In a more specific example, Puar cites the shift in questions used by the New York City Police Department to determine a potential terrorist threat from the visual register of "suspicious traits" to, at least in part, an affective register of how a body's presence feels in relation to its environment (ibid., p.197). Because this moves the identification of a potential terrorist into a realm of suspicion in which the terrorist "could look like anyone and *do* just like everyone else, but might *seem* something else," she argues that an analysis of policing and the informational data that constitutes policed bodies must *also* take up questions of how, ontologically rather than representationally, bodies *seem* in relation to their surroundings (ibid., original emphasis). Importantly, this is not a question of how 'terrorist' and 'terrorist look-alike' bodies *are represented* as suspicious, but rather how their corporealities effect suspicion as "*contagions*, its energetic transmissions" (ibid., p.199). This means that the aptness of an analytic framework attuned to the mutation and transfer of affect, rather than the wrongly represented subject, follows from both an empirical shift towards affective policing practices and the ontological, 'energetic' movement that makes this practice of policing possible. In other words, it is the ontological existence of affect that enables this mode of policing, and the theorist must follow that shift in policing with an analytic of affect.

Arguably, the attention to representation in feminist and postcolonial scholarship of the last quarter of the 20th century has been politically motivated to excavate the ills of representation in order to propose a less imperialist, less misogynist way to represent. For Puar, however, instead of representing the oppressed subject as worthy of human rights in the face of an imperialist and dehumanizing biopolitical regime, the methodological suggestion is to take up a de-subjectifying framework to account for the workings of a dehumanizing regime. Here, the way we talk about the world is mandated by the control of biopower, and rather than developing an epistemology that might act as a corrective to the ethos of biopolitical fragmentation and de-subjectification, the theorist must take up a similar language; a framework either necessarily capitulates or becomes obsolete, implicitly removing the responsibility of the theorist to rethink (re-present) or intervene in the process of rendering individuals as 'dividuals.' In the same move that Spivak critiques, the disavowal of representation positions Puar's analytical framework as necessarily following from, always secondary to, the world, and thus the possibility for representational intervention appears to be foreclosed. A certain intentionality in representation that is, indeed, beholden to a humanist image of the subject is superseded by the theorist as a kind of transparent medium, rather than mediator, for the ontological world.

Sensitivity to this shift is likely what motivates critics of *Terrorist Assemblages* to name "WOC [woman of color] feminists invested in multiple genealogies as "race traitors."' (personal communication cited in Puar, 2012, p.53). How dare Puar, as a woman of color, advocate for an interpretative framework that disavows her own subject position as the very position whose invocation has made intersectionality so effective? Invisibility or disappearance, here, is worrisome not because it supports the white, Western, masculine Subject as the unmarked position of one-who-represents, but rather because the subject position Puar refuses *is* marked, as WOC,

and thereby *already* politicized via intersectionality. Implicitly demanding that Puar never make a critical analysis except *as* or *from* the position of a woman of color as it has been signified through intersectionality, this critique reiterates the idea that thought can only come from and through a self-contained and self-knowing subject and that responsible critical analysis necessarily extends that subjectivity to others.

Because the disenfranchisement of this theoretically hegemonic figure is exactly what Puar seeks in taking up a Deleuzo-Guattarian framework, her own disappearance as theorist-subject happens *through* an attention to material that is not a 'subject,' and thus the corollary problem Spivak notes of aggrandizing the 'authentic' oppressed subject is itself resolved. For Spivak, the problem lies in the assumption that dissolving the subject position of the theorist ("the subject is not seen as representative consciousness") will open the possibility for the oppressed to speak their own conditions (because, after the dissolution of representative consciousness, "the theoretician does not 'speak for' the oppressed group") (1988, p.70); here, the political agenda of the 'oppressed' is fully conflated with the subjective realm of the theorist. Puar, however, makes no pretense to making way for *subjects* themselves to act or struggle. In the relegation of the theorist to a secondary position of mediumship for the ontological (as it manifests in the empirical), there is also the nullification of a political subject of representation that might itself be given voice via Puar's work. Discussing the surveilled turban-wearer as a "shifting assemblage of turbaned, de-turbaned, and re-turbaned bodies," rather than as a religious/gendered/racialized subject wronged by surveillance, thus shifts the topic of inquiry from the representable subject to the affective movements that happen as the parts of the assembled body de-, re- and alter-compose in various moments (Puar, 2007, p.199). Thus the materialization of the body itself, rather than the meaning ascribed to the body, relies on "an assemblage of *subindividual* capacities" which themselves make

up the ontological world to which Puar positions herself as secondary (ibid., p.200, my emphasis). It is not the desiring actions of the oppressed subject for whom representation steps aside, but rather the 'molecular' movement of pre-subjective forces that are themselves uncontainable to the figure of the represented subject.

This move speaks to the second point held in tension throughout Puar's text, namely that her use of a framework that does not focus on representing the subject is also a political move that seeks to circumvent the violence inherent in representation. At the same time as affect and assemblage are necessary responses to the world's transformations, they also have the potential to avoid the reduction and categorization perpetuated by representation. To illustrate this point, the language Puar uses to describe what differs between assemblage theory and intersectionality relies, roughly, on the distinction between movement and stasis. The original violence of representation and identity is apparently the restriction of movement, an imperative of the State that is then reiterated in analyses taking identity or subject position as their starting point. In her words, "identity is unearthed by Massumi as the complexity of processes sacrificed for the 'surety' of product. In the stillness of position, bodies actually lose their capacity for movement, for flow, for (social) change." (Massumi, 2002, cited in Puar, 2012, p.213). Assemblage theory allows for a project of interpretation to address the 'molecular' ontological zone of affects and flows, themselves neutral in terms of race and gender and thereby able to avoid the problem of identity. The 'particles' of affect are not Black particles, nor Muslim particles, nor female particles, nor gay particles; they take on these labels only after their entrapment in the 'grid' of recognition that produces identity. According to Puar, intersectionality imagines this grid of race and gender as fixed and pre-existing the bodies that can then be properly located within it, a kind of taxonomization that reflects the categorization of bodies enacted by the State. In its pretense to

work in perceived 'specifics,' intersectionality actually elide the shifting mutations of difference that always comes before their accumulation and calcification into identity.

This reliance on particular, fixed axes of specificity produces, according to Puar, the de facto tendency of intersectionality to produce the "Woman of Color" as the 'other' to an unmarked and implicitly white feminist canon that continues to mediate sexuality and gender 'in general' (Puar, 2012, p.52). Beyond this particular constitution of a proper 'other subject' is the broader inclination of intersectional analysis to produce again and again the humanist structure of what she calls "Subject X" (Chow, 2006, cited in ibid., p.55). This humanist subject has a set of race/class/sexuality/gender particularities and, due to these, may have previously been made invisible. Intersectionality brings to light the interplay and meaning of these particularities always by bringing to light the subject in which they converge. Methodologically, she reads this as a kind of tautology: We write about Subject X in order to write about Subject X, and we always find the subject we set out looking for. Politically, this project of identitarian subject visibilization necessarily "colludes with the disciplinary apparatus of the state – census, demography, racial profiling, surveillance" (Puar, 2007, p.212). The assumption is that the 'capacity for movement,' once released from entrapment in identity, will invigorate some hitherto unthought political possibility. Through this logic, Puar foregrounds the potential for affect and assemblage theory to avoid the violently stultifying effects of representation.

The productive aporia, here, lies in her invocation of assemblage as both a less imperialist framework and one that is necessitated by a differently imperialist world. Without intending to resolve these points, what I think their friction indicates is that her call for assemblage theory is both no less imperialist than representation *and* opens up the possibility to think about the relationship between discursive construction and ontology such that the imperialism of an analytic

might be made to *do* something, rather than either being de facto ignored, as per Patton (1984), or used to repudiate the entire framework, as per Miller (1993). In the following section, I will suggest that this tension between the ontological imperative and the political imperative might point to the Orientalist qualities of the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework as an enablement to what I argue is Puar's ontologization of queerness, itself a challenge to the notion of 'queer' as either a regulatory identity or a pathologized representation. Within the nexus of ontology, epistemology and 'pure concept,' it is the epistemological impurity (Orientalism)[27] of the ontological concept (affect and assemblage) that facilitate the theoretical movement of 'queerness' from the representational and identitarian into the affective and ontological.

3.4 Reading Orientalized 'exteriority' as an enablement to ontological queerness

I'll begin this final section by explaining what I mean by the ontologization of queerness in *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007) through focusing on its most explicit site, Puar's extensive treatment of the turban. Broadly, she argues that there are already two, entangled valences of queerness circulating through the post-9/11 imaginary of the terrorist: one, the kind of queerness that seeks to rehabilitate the gay South Asian immigrant subject via approximation of model gay citizenship and two, the queerness of perverse sexuality that is concomitantly bestowed on presumed terrorist bodies in the form of failed masculinity and backward homosociality. Indeed, representations of respectable queerness as politically salvational (through model citizenship) or perverse queerness as a means of imposing injurious representation (delineating the terrorist) are two sides of the same problem. The turban is a particularly salient node in this exchange as it both signals the impossibility of proper gayness, in its reference to traditional, religious culture, and is

[27] I am using the term 'impurity' against Patton's argument (1984) that the 'purity' of a concept lies in its freedom from pre-existing epistemic frames, such that, in his argument, the colonialist anthropologies of *A Thousand Plateaus* do not effect the definition of the 'nomad' but rather relate to this concept only after its definition.

used as a visual register on which to stake claims of masculinist Sikh respectability, in other words, to refute the injurious queer pathologization implicit in (mis)identifying the terrorist body.

Puar states in her chapter on the turban that her goal is to "offer an interpretation of affect" reflective of her assertion that she is "not interested in reading the turbaned body as a queer body or queering the turbaned body." (2007, p.174). Her first step towards doing this exposes the problems of Sikh respectability movements beyond their reliance on hetero-masculinity as the grounds of proper citizenship. She writes, "Flooding the media and Internet with 'positive images' of Sikhs uses a representational fix for an *ontological dilemma*, where what one 'knows' about 'the turban' is still trapped in an epistemological ocular economy" (ibid., p.188, my emphasis). The inability of these representational endeavors to address the turban as an ontological problem induces her to move on to consider affect, first through the work of Sarah Ahmed (2010), as an experience between bodies that does not assume their individual and timeless integrity. However, despite its useful formulation of the contagion between bodies known as 'stickiness,' Puar finds Ahmed's work overly insistent on it being *signs* that stick to bodies, leaving an analysis of affect in the realm of signification. Further establishing her interest in what happens pre-signification, Puar asks, "Is stickiness only a product of signification of epistemic formation rather than ontological properties?" (ibid.). The implication here is that if we are really going to get at the turban as an ontological issue, we must investigate what happens before signification, in the realm of Deleuzian affect.

Finally, through a Deleuze- and Massumi-inspired analysis of the difference-in-repetition temporality of wearing the turban and the various ways turbans have been dealt with by airport security, she arrives at her own conclusion:

> The fusion of hair, oil, dirt, sweat, cloth, skin, the organic melding into the nonorganic, renders a turban, not as part of a queer body nor as a queer part of the body, but as an

> otherwise foreign object acculturated into a body's intimacies between organic and nonorganic matter, blurring the distinction between them, blurring insides and outsides, speaking to the *fields of force – nonorganic entities having force –* in relation to and melded into the organic (ibid., p.195, my emphasis).

The fusion and confusion of the body and the turban, this 'melding,' bespeaks a process of corporeal assimilation that itself attests to the ontological force of the 'nonorganic,' that is, its capacity to affect. This monstrous melding does not signal an organic body with something queer about it but rather the 'queer figuration' as an assemblage. Puar writes, "It is this assemblage of visuality, affect, feminized position, and bodily disruption of organic-nonorganic divides, the not-fully-organic and not-fully-nonorganic body, which accounts for the *queer figuration* of the turban in the calculation of a hate crime." (ibid., p.196, my emphasis).

The turban, then, is an element of this queer figuration, but what is queer about this phenomenon is not any one part in isolation (not an object read as queer or a body queered by an object); rather, it is the momentary totality of its parts as an ontological assemblage that is itself queer. In this analysis, the "fusion of hair, oil, dirt, sweat, cloth, skin" does not constitute the turban-wearer as a discrete entity but rather enlivens a field of affective forces that are prior to and in excess of the representational framework that should, but doesn't, locate and fix that subject as respectable-Sikh-not-terrorist. The queerness, Puar argues, lies in the affective ontological force of this assemblage, which cannot be 'corrected' by representational 'fixes' but also is not without the influence of representation, which I will discuss in further detail shortly. Arguing that all of the currently available discourses on the (mis)naming of the 'terrorist' rely on a framework that "privileges an epistemological knowing over an ontological becoming," Puar suggests that shifting queerness to the realm of the ontological might refute both respectable queer identity as a foundation for racism and pathologized, racialized queerness as necessitating respectable hetero-masculinity (ibid.).

In that it is primarily Puar's attention to affect (the Deleuze/Guattari/Massumi line) that allows her to "propose queerness not as an identity nor an anti-identity, but *an assemblage*" (ibid., p.204, my emphasis), this move is facilitated by an appeal to the before and beyond of representation that is itself signified through the Orientalist imaginary of *A Thousand Plateaus.* There, Deleuze and Guattari provide two different examples of varying forms of assemblage, the State-form and the 'nomadic war machine.' The point in differentiating them is not to say that these are the only possible kinds of assemblage, and these forms do interact in various ways in the actualization of an assemblage. However, as concepts they signal the differential realms of representation and affect. Representation is the province of the State-form, converting the world into a relationship of content to form, whereas the "regime of the war machine is on the contrary that *of affects,* which relate only to the moving body in itself" (Deleuze & Guattari 1980/1987, p.400). The 'nomadic war machine' signals the space that is prior to and escapes State and representational capture, a space that is palpable but unrepresentable and the force of which is referred to, variably, with the term affect. As I argue in the previous section, the qualities of the 'nomadic war machine' that signal its defiance of representation – mutability, anteriority, non-singularity, excessiveness – signify this concept through the association of these qualities with an Orientalist imaginary of the 'East' as itself evincing them in relief against the progressive and rational West.

This means that the analytic framework Puar uses to shift queerness away from respectable/pathological identity is facilitated by an Orientalist paradigm similar to the representations of excessive and 'perverse' queerness that she discusses. Towards describing the Orientalism at work in delineating the perverse sexuality of the racialized 'terrorist' body, Puar

quotes a passage from Foucault that refers to his understanding of '*ars erotica*' as the art of sex practiced in the non-West. She writes:

> Sexuality in ars erotica is both *prediscursive and beyond discourse*, what Afary and Anderson describe as Foucault's 'Romantic Orientalism' and 'what he regarded as the open homoeroticism of the Arab Mediterranean.' The Orient, as interpreted from the Occident, is the space of illicit sexuality, unbridled excess, and generalized perversion, 'dangerous sex and freedom of intercourse,' and afflicted with nonnormative corporeal practices." (Afary & Anderson, 2005**,** pp.141-142; Said, 1978, p.167, both cited in Puar, 2007, p. 75, my emphasis).

I emphasize the description of the 'prediscursive and beyond discourse' nature of this sexuality because it is precisely this quality of the 'Orient' – its pre- and beyond-ness – that makes it salient for Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of the 'outside.' The Western image of the 'Orient' Puar draws from Foucault, as a space in which to observe what is prior to and more than the restrictive discourse of the West, strongly resembles the 'Orient' that holds the space of conceptual exteriority in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy.

What I think this indicates is that it might be the *impurity* (Orientalism) of the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework that in part enables Puar to ontologize queerness. If, as Puar suggests, queerness is always already installed in the naming of the terrorist body, what she wants get at in her analysis of the turban is not the representational and discursive problem of naming this body, which is indexed to the visual encounter, but the pre-naming process by which this body is *felt* to be queer, off, not right, strange, threatening and *then* named terrorist. Perhaps queerness can become an ontological phenomenon only through an analytic that possesses similar discursive qualities in appealing to the 'Oriental,' which is importantly also a valence of 'otherness' that animates the queerness in question and is, in her reading, never *only* discursive. Puar's description of the queer turban assemblage reveals that the affective dimension of this phenomenon is inseparable from a sensorial register of Orientalism that is itself indebted to, but not limited to,

histories of signification: the oil, the fragrance, the cloth of the turban, themselves longstanding elements featured in representations of the 'Orient,' transmit an affective charge in concert with the hair and its reference to the 'feminized position' of a failed masculinity. Thus the affective dimension of the turban registers ontologically, but it does so to a certain extent through a legacy of epistemological associations.

To return to the quote of several paragraphs before, it is important that the ontological melding of "hair, oil, dirt, sweat, cloth, skin…*renders*" the turban a queer figuration. The fact that the term 'to render' means both to bring into being and to represent or depict suggests that the 'queer figuration' encompassing the turban is itself somewhere between representation and affect, epistemology and ontology. This 'queer figuration' is, in the moment of its assemblage, both rendered as in made to exist and rendered as in made to appear. It both *is* the assemblage of melding and *is portrayed* by this melding, which is itself signified in specifically ocular terms as a process of "blurring" distinctions. As the presupposed line between organic and nonorganic, inside and outside, is made less sharp, less visible, the affective feeling of the body changes as well, as the blurring itself is what is then "speaking to the fields of force" activated in the queerness of this assemblage.

In order for queerness to define the "ontological dilemma" of the turban without either showing how the dilemma *has been made* queer or *re-presenting* the dilemma *as* queer, the dilemma itself must in some sense already be queer, ontologically. However, I suggest that Puar's move to make queerness an assemblage implicates its ontological status in a representational history, and, importantly, vice versa. The Orientalist 'feeling' of the turban is thus not *only* a product of discursive representations of the 'Orient,' but discursive representations are themselves not *only* the product of an affective transmission of some 'Orientalizing' sensation. The oil and

cloth of the turban 'does' something to the (presumably white and male) body poised to strike in a hate crime *before* the conscious register of prejudice, but the capacity of this material, non-living substance to affect this body as such is itself to a certain extent the product of discursive and representational imaginaries of the 'Orient.'

In light of my analysis of Orientalism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, it may be the case that Puar's work somehow puts to use this discursive influence on the ontological realm imagined by Deleuze and Guattari. Because, as I have shown, the discursive associations of Orientalism enable affect and assemblage theory as anti-representational analytics, they also enable this *particular* 'exteriority' of representation, imagined as anteriority, mutability, excess and non-singularity, to make queerness *retain* those qualities as a mutational assemblage rather than being compressed into an analysis of the subject. My point is that Puar's work evinces an implicit instrumentalization of imperialism's own language of the exterior as what is prior, excessive, mutable and non-singular towards producing a critique that does not enfold this exterior into deviation from the Same, in other words, that leaves queerness in the realm of affect rather than identity. The basic argument here is that part of what enables Puar's work in the concepts she uses from *A Thousand Plateaus* is their indebtedness to an associative imaginary of the 'Orient' that then allows her to think queer, excluded bodies as parts of affectively and discursively modulated assemblages, ontological in their queerness, rather than as subjects poised for identitarian incorporation into the national fold.

This presents a significantly different picture from Patton's perspective (1984) on the 'pure concept' as preceding discursive figuration because my reading takes into account the epistemological histories participating in the construction of a conceptual 'outside' of Western thought. However, my understanding of Puar's work also does not imply Colebrook's perspective on the 'pure concept,' which assumes that the concept can act as a gateway for thought into a fully

real ontology. Focusing on 'becoming-woman,' she writes that it suggests "an orientation to those traits that had been posed as man's other, but once this orientation opened up positive and divergent becomings we would need to move beyond genders and dehumanize the predicates through which genders and sexual difference had been contained" (Colebrook, 2014, p.165). The myriad becomings that 'becoming-woman' would enable us to perceive once difference is released from its containment in representational, taxonomical predication are, for Colebrook, the ontological reality of the material world. In her words, "what something *is* is its rhythm of becoming." (ibid.). Thus, 'woman' as a representational figure is nothing more than a conceptual placeholder pointing us towards the experiential reality of qualities such as mutability, non-fixity and non-singularity that had previously been "posed as man's other."

This differs from my argument about Puar's instrumentalization of an Orientalist conceptual 'exterior' in that the anti-representational imaginary through which Puar renders queerness an ontological phenomenon does not then imply that queerness itself is the true ontological state of the world. While she does suggest that assemblage points to the fact that "all bodies are to some extent machined," this does not necessarily mean that all machined bodies are affectively queer (2007, p.202). The ontological queerness she invokes arises at particular and specific moments, as an ontological manifestation that is itself a confluence of discursive and affective currents, rather than a totalizing definition of an ontological world that has been occluded by discourse. The transmission of affect, rather than defining a totally separate ontological realm always *before* representation – the molecular world Saldanha calls "altogether unrepresentable" (2010, p.9) – is shown to be, in part, already the product of a representational imaginary, both in terms of what it *does* in the cases Puar analyzes and in the qualities it evinces as an *exterior* to the Western paradigm of representation.

To return to Puar's reference to Foucault's '*ars erotica*,' she writes that his image of this non-Western mode of sexuality "functions as a prediscursive space of sexual acts" that is "outside of science, outside of the domestication of sex" imposed in the West (Puar, 2007, p.74). 'Eastern' sexuality is an entrenched point of reference for what is prior to, exterior to and beyond discourse in Western thought; and as I have demonstrated in this thesis, this Orientalist imaginary informs the concepts Deleuze and Guattari posit as anti-representational by providing the associated qualities of mutability, multiplicity, and excess that have historically been used to render what is *not* Western Man as unable to cohere into a self-representing subject. On the one hand, then, it is patently ridiculous for Robinson and Tormey to argue that *A Thousand Plateaus*, peppered as it is with colonialist anthropology, speaks to the "existence of an outside of Eurocentrism" (2010, p.34). But we might move beyond the circularity of this claim and its counter-claim of moralistic disavowal by asking, instead, how this indictment can inform the contested terrain between affect, representation and an ontology of assemblages.

In response to Grosz's reading of assemblage, in which "ideas, things – human, animate, and inanimate – all have the same ontological status" (1994, p.167), I suggest that my readings of the Orientalist imaginary of *A Thousand Plateaus* and of Puar's use of this Deleuzo-Guattarian framework push us to think assemblage beyond this kind of ontological equivalency. For Grosz, the "provisional linkages of elements" that constitute assemblages still suppose the 'elements' to be discrete and distinct, meaning that what assemblage does is place what could be considered of 'another order,' as epistemological or transcendental – ideas, namely, and the human subject – on the same ontological plane as 'things' (ibid.). What my reading of Puar's work does is render the ontological reality – actual, embodied, affective forces – of certain 'things' as effected *relationally* with representation, bespeaking variant temporalities such that representation and affect, even in

their ontological equivalence, might not all arrive separately and not all at the same time to the provisional moment of assemblage. The fact that the "blurring" of distinctions between organic and non-organic gives the turban a certain unsettling feeling among various bodies depends on an historically entrenched image of organic and discrete corporeal wholeness, what Puar calls "a liberal fantasy of bodily integrity" (2007, p.198). Affect happens somewhere between the (culturally and politically specific) embeddedness of this image and a conscious register of its disruption that is then channeled into a racist attack. In other words, blurring the line is only ontologically affective in relation to the representational fantasy *of* this line; and, similarly, Deleuzian affect theory might enjoy its current hold over critical theory by virtue of some embedded fantasies of its own.

If the realm in which Puar imagines the possibility of an ontological queerness is itself signified through an Orientalist imaginary, then we can begin to ask how this ontology as an framework that *is* discursively indebted, rather than one that necessarily disavows the discursive, can enable thought. Indeed, it might be *because* the qualities of mutability, non-singularity, anteriority and excess that Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to the unrepresentable are derived in part through Orientalist representation that this particular realm of 'exteriority' provides Puar with the necessary conditions to think the entanglement of queerness and Orientalism as also an entanglement of discursive figures and affective forces. Because Puar wants to avoid appealing to the idea of the subject which "is itself already normative" (2012, p.63), and thus to analyze conditions of exclusion without posing representation as the gateway to inclusion, her endeavor appeals to an anti-representational framework that is itself signified through figures historically excluded from normative subjectivity as Western and masculine. In that the ontologically 'queer figuration,' queerness as assemblage, is a phenomenon that is ontologically queer in part *because*

of its implication in existing discursive figurations, representation returns as a shifting piece of the queer assemblage, both enabling this 'figuration' in theoretical terms and inducing particular transferences of affect.

In her concluding speculations, Puar asks: "Or is it the case that there is something queer about affect, that affect is queer unto itself, always already a defiance of identity registers, amenable to queer critique?" (2007, p.207). If it is affect that enables queerness to become non-identitarian in part through the Orientalist associations of Deleuze and Guattari's 'exterior' of Western thought, then the queerness of affect might lie not, or not only, in its ability to defy identity, which sounds suspiciously like the notion of queerness as anti-identity that Puar wants to move away from, but rather in its constitutive ambivalence as an ontological phenomenon that is both indebted to a representational framework and only ever legible as represented. Puar turns her attention to the potential queerness of affect right after conceding that "all we can really enact is a representational schema of affect" and thus the project in need of development is really "an epistemology of ontology and affect" (ibid.). However, despite her work to demonstrate the discursive figures contributing to a queer ontological assemblage, this undertaking does not necessarily engage with the fact that epistemological representation has also in part signified the qualities of the ontology at hand. I have argued here that attention to the representational associations already installed in and enabling this ontology can elucidate how it is able to facilitate certain theoretical shifts, and that perhaps the relationship between Orientalism, affect and queerness is much more intimate than even Puar has imagined.

Conclusion

I want to begin concluding with a brief discussion of the inevitable risks of the previous chapter's analysis. If, as I have suggested, Puar's work might implicitly find something useful in the Orientalism of Deleuze and Guattari's anti-representational philosophy, there is a decidedly slippery slope attendant to this suggestion. Because Orientalism is once again "a regenerative discourse" undergirding the call to enliven critical theory, we have to wonder how far we think the critical manipulation of colonialist and patriarchal discourse ought to go (Puar, 2007, p.75). Where is the line between the instrumentalization of a discourse for critical inquiry and the, perhaps accidental or implicit, injurious reiteration, even promotion, of that discourse? And can we anticipate this line, or only make it out in hindsight?

According to feminist critics, one of the most pressing dangers of the 'becoming-woman' concept is that it risks naturalizing in women the qualities ascribed to 'woman' through masculinist philosophical discourse. In other words, we are mistaken in thinking that patriarchal discourse can do anything other than reiterate itself. But Colebrook counters this with the notion that the world itself *actually is* closer to the way the figure of 'woman' has been rendered. She writes, "Becoming woman acknowledges the reality of traits, intensities and quantities that need to be released from the dull and insufficiently nuanced systems of gender…what has fallen under the concept of woman has *more reality*" (2014, p.177). Even though "what has fallen under the concept of woman" has fallen there through an oppressive, patriarchal paradigm, the figure of Man can be undermined as a "the basic social unit of life" by recognizing that the world ontologically *is* the complex movement and mutation that has been abstracted into the figure of 'woman' as a lure for

the unknowable chaos beyond Man's system (ibid., p.176).[28] 'Becoming-woman,' for Colebrook, recognizes the constitutive exterior of Man not as a phantasmic foil but as the ontological reality that is occluded by its entrapment in masculinist representation.

Should it follow from my analysis of the 'Orient' as, entangled with 'woman,' holding the space beyond representation that the world itself *is* ontologically closer to the possibilities observed there? That the more space, more movement, more mutation, more intensity, more release evidenced in the 'Orient' has in fact been reduced by the "specifically European disease" of the Tree, which has "dominated Western reality and all of Western thought"? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.18). But, if so, how could we possibly pull the ontological reality of these qualities (and their more-ness in the 'Orient') apart from the colonialist, Western imagination that has located them there, indeed, rendered them observable only through this image? Deleuze and Guattari ask early on in *A Thousand Plateaus*, "Does not the East, Oceana in particular, offer something like a rhizomatic model opposed in every respect to the Western model of the tree?" (ibid.). Regardless of whether or not it 'really' does, and regardless of the imperialist legacy of this sentiment, I think it is at least fair to say that the huge popularity of Deleuzian affect theory might suggest at this moment in history that we desperately want *something* to.[29]

This desire shapes the foundational opposition undergirding the debates on Deleuze and Guattari's work described in the first chapter of this thesis. On the one hand, those who champion

[28] This is a reference to Lacan's idea that 'woman' is nothing more than a placeholder for the beyond we can never know and the originary plenitude we can never regain (Colebrook, 2014, p.153).

[29] This intuition is to some extent corroborated, in slightly different language, by Clare Hemmings in her article "Invoking Affect" (2005). Here, she works through the implications of the language used to privilege affect over 'older' representational frameworks and concludes that much of the appeal of affect is related to a desire for freedom from the oppressive responsibilities of social constructivism. In her words, "They [affect theorists] emphasize the unexpected, the singular, or indeed the quirky, over the generally applicable, where the latter becomes associated with the pessimism of social determinist perspectives, and the former with the hope of freedom from social constraint" (p.550). My less nuanced observation is that thinkers obviously want *something new* because we've put in enough work proving how broken the old stuff is.

the purity of the 'concept' espouse its power to present a new and different way of thinking, an "opposed in every respect" escape from our old representational structures, whereas those who critique their work explain that there is no such thing as an escape route that does not itself rely on the structures that made it possible (thereby making 'pure escape' impossible). Either we are always in some way or another having to account for our perpetual entrapment as subjects-who-write, or we are not. Either concepts are socially, politically and discursively constructed, or they are 'pure.' Either thought is always entangled in a productive cycle with the ideological forces shaping its directions and possibilities, or thought is a pure, anterior force of creativity that can be liberated from its ideological imprisonment. Following Spivak (1988), the latter notion depends on a specific temporality in which the ontological forces of the world such as desire and affect always come before the influence of interested power and ideology. This, problematically, also positions the theorist as always secondary and is thus an absolution from responsibility to consider one's own position as theorist in relation to the (inevitable) problem of representation.

The second chapter of this thesis contributed to this conversation by close reading various passages invoking the 'Orient' in *A Thousand Plateaus*. I showed that Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of the 'nomadic war machine,' in its pure form arising wholly exterior to and un-appropriated by the State, depends on a depiction of the 'Orient' as fundamentally different from the West. Because the Western State has always already captured and the Western mind has always already reduced any emergent war machine, the ability of this concept to defy representation relies on an Orientalized image of the 'East' in which its despotism, its disjointedness, its multiplicity, and its lack of coherence allow for the observation of the 'nomadic war machine' there *before* its inevitable capture in the West. Reading Deleuze and Guattari's invocations of 'Oriental' sexuality, I suggested that the challenge these sexual practices supposedly

pose to the transcendental system of the Tree depends on a certain feminization of (hetero)sex that happens as well through 'becoming-woman,' thus showing that the figure of 'woman' in this text functions beyond the gender binary in characterizing Man's Other. The qualities that have historically justified the Western project of representing the 'Orient' (because 'Orientals' cannot represent themselves) – mutability, excess, non-singularity, anteriority – signal the tantalizing potential to release the affects, molecules, and particles of the ontological world from representational structure. Thus, the invocation of a concept's 'purity' must rely on the radical forgetting of its colonialist ancestry and imperialist associations.

However, this thesis is an attempt to read the Orientalism of *A Thousand Plateaus* without being railroaded into repudiation. After examining the function of the 'Orient' in this text, I asked not what should be done about it but rather what has and can be done with its implications. The third chapter investigated Jasbir Puar's use of Deleuzo-Guattarian theory in relation to Spivak's critique. Here, I suggested that Puar enacts a positioning similar to the one Spivak reads in Deleuze in which the theorist becomes a kind of secondary medium for the ontological forces of the world. However, this does not entail the glorification of an 'authentic' oppressed subject that Spivak sees in Deleuze's political agenda, as the material Puar takes up never coheres finally into a self-representing subject. I showed that Puar is motivated to take up assemblage as a framework that both avoids the violence of representation and follows from the empirical shift in the world towards desubjectifying regimes of bio-politics and affect modulation. Following from the tension of these points, I suggested that the Deleuzo-Guattarian anti-representational framework Puar employs is no less imperialist than representation, but that its imperialist understanding of the 'exterior' of Western thought is implicitly instrumentalized in the service of critiquing queerness as a representational register of identity or pathologization and shifting its meaning into the ontological

realm of assemblage. This means that the discursive associations of an Orientalized realm exterior to representation allow Puar to invoke ontology without assuming its freedom from discursive currents, and thus to position her work somewhere in between the dialectically reduced questions cited in the first chapter of this thesis. The Orientalized prior and beyond of Deleuze and Guattari's 'exteriority' both enables a critique that refuses the implicit call for inclusion of what is excluded and makes exteriority, as the 'outside' of representation that might be called affect, accountable to discursive processes of exclusion.

Far from resolving the tension between the 'concept,' ontology and representation, I hope to have demonstrated that this tension is both ineradicable and, via Puar's work, productive. Might the 'queerness' of affect also be entangled with an orientalizing impulse in the desire to imagine a 'beyond' of representation? Might part of what is 'queer' about affect be its ambivalent complicity with the imaginary that has constructed its apparatuses of 'capture'? This thesis has laid the groundwork for further engagement with the implicit underpinnings of thought and how they might enable or delimit what a framework can do. The idea of what affect *is*, for instance, comes with its own assumptions about what affect is not, and thus what is representable and what is not – a decidedly gendered and racialized epistemological history. If, as Puar suggests, there might be "something specific about our contemporary political moment that makes the turn to affect that much more urgent" (2007, pp.207-208), it is crucial to investigate not only the possibilities for representing affect in theory but also the implication of affect theory itself in a discursively modulated imaginary. Because the anti-representational turn seems to always be faced at some point with the problem of representation, the insights of this thesis enable important future work on how the two might continue to be made politically accountable to each other and how the

inevitable impurities of either line of thought can provide productive avenues for reckoning with their complex entanglement.

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