

RECONCEIVING UTOPIAN MOVEMENT:
REALIZING THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL
OF LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL
EXCHANGE

by

Jacqueline R. Plante

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'Utopia', and surrounding deviations of the word, has become the academic term for that which is ineffective, naive, impracticable and at worst, certain to fail. Regarded as such, utopia(n)(ism) has been restricted to literary forms that have minimal transformative potential. However, our approach to utopia(n)(ism) is under transformation. Recent feminist scholarship has begun to unravel common assumptions that have unnecessarily, and furthermore, mistakenly, limited its potential uses. Consequently, connecting utopia(n)(ism) to efforts toward perfection of place or a blueprint for the future is no longer a relevant activity.

In support and extension of this discourse, I explore a conceptual landscape of a new utopia which is the birthplace of creativity, active thought, the continual process of conscious transformation, experimentation, and the realignment of existing elements. Moreover, it is in the space of the book, or the written text, that experimental utopia(n)(ism) can be regenerated and appreciated in the forces already at work. However, the propagation of such activity requires a reconceptualization of utopia(n)(ism) and, therefore, a reconsideration of common sense in regards to each concept with which it connects.

As the conceptual fluidity increases, a collaborative transformation of literature through the efforts of both reader and writer becomes crucial. Gilles Deleuze offers an experimental approach to literature in which writer, reader, text and the book itself are taken up in a variable state of *becoming*. Utilizing such Deleuzian concepts as the 'rhizome', 'nomadism' and 'deterritorialization-reterritorialization' to the writing and reading of 'new' utopian literature, serves to extend transgressive potentials in terms of boundary-traversal, language-innovation, and identity-dispersal and also challenge the exclusivity of how utopian literature is commonly distinguished. The academic affirmation of an inventive utopia(n)(ism), which aims to explore rather than designate through both literary and theoretical texts, will unfurl the vigorous possibilities of the psyche beyond the skeptical stagnations of feminism(s).

What is discussed here is a utopic perspective of literary exchange. One in which utopia(n)(ism) must be understood as an active force.

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WARNINGS TO THE READER

:the order of this thing

In contradiction to the very effort of this project, as you shall soon see, I have broken the discussion down into 10 points that I refer to in private as 'points of dissection', a mildly irritated expression of the violent ripping of pieces from their natural flow to be plotted into sections. This, I tell myself, was necessary in order to procure a presentation of each, to some extent, as organized and containable matter. Failing to escape some form of methodical structure in this instance is more humorous than inevitable. So, as a means of lessening the damage of this impending failure, please regard each section (and the entire project) as it is intended to be presented: porous, raw and bleeding, without theoretical beginning or end, and irreducible to its presentation as singular. One begs consideration of all others to have any amalgamated result - one will leak into another; the next will refer back to those prior to it. As it is presented in such a way I ask for your 'willing suspension of disbelief', or better still 'an adoption of belief' until all ends meet up.

: who is I?

There will be none of this sort of questioning here. I will use "I" without much discretion throughout the presentation of this project, but not from a desire to express *myself*, to draw your attention to me, because I represent nothing with any solidarity (an intentionally placed dangling modifier). I represent no one really, I write for no one really. I suppose I *am* writing for myself, but I do not pretend to know who that is exactly; and I suppose I *am* writing for you or anyone I have ever read, but this changes drastically every moment. What I write is the frothy discharge from the mouth of some vast beast enjoying the mixed flavours and textures of varied discourses. I use "I" because I want to claim some responsibility for the product of this activity, and because I wish to engage plainly in a conversation with you, the reader, on an obvious level - because I (whomever that may be at the moment) am here and because you are here. And because we are excited by the problems at hand and I consider a continuous emphasis of this banality to be crucial to the exchange. Admittedly, little excites me more than the paradoxical harmony between the glorious generalities of theory and the particularity of person. It is my preference to have been working on this project with another living human being, so as to have a becoming between the two of us. To be one another's mediator, and then we

could use "we" instead of "I". So, all this being said...I vow to use whatever pronoun occurs—"I", 'we', or whatever else.

: pronoun deliberations

I had considered alternating the masculine and feminine pronoun for each chapter, or simply using one and apologizing about it at the outset; however, I decided to try something a little different. I have used a rather unnatural, not entirely logical intrusion of brackets to separate the letters [r] and [s]...those being the letters which indicate female: [s]he = she/he; however, those letters without brackets are not always grammatically correct for the pronoun requirements of the masculine: he[r] = his/her; he[r]-self = himself/herself. Admittedly some of my reasons for this choice are for personal benefit at the expense of the reader, such as, I was curious as to which pronoun would most immediately stem from my mind and into my typing hands. To my surprise, it was the feminine; however, it was suspiciously forced, as though my consciousness was retaliating by consciously flipping the subject whom I had been reading for so many years as the neutral subject—a dreadful lesson that I'm afraid has me involuntarily reactive. A mere reversal was simply unacceptable. And the idea of putting both was equally unattractive, but not because it is distracting, I rather find that to bring attention to such a transparent word is thought provoking, and an exercise of flexibility. However, I realized that it was the whole idea of the pronoun that bothered me...that I only had the choice between the masculine and the feminine and that, due to the gender awareness of contemporary theory, my use of the masculine would appear either appallingly unaware or bitterly ironic, but my use of the feminine would appear either disgustingly predictable or simply passive-aggressive. So I made a fairly arbitrary decision to confuse the sense chain involved in reading comprehension. The sound is most frequently of the feminine, yet the feminine serves as merely a silent supplement to the written presence of the masculine. Somehow it accomplishes all four of the implications I found undesirable *and* has the visual distraction of placing both at once. During the duration of the writing process I was entertained by the exercise of naturalizing my use of these words; they played a part in keeping my mind alert. Accordingly, I kept them because they are an authentic part, and because pronouns are ridiculous anyway, so we should dress them up in something amusing if we must continue to parade them around.

You can't just tell someone what they're saying is pointless. So you tell them it's wrong. But what someone says is never wrong, the problem isn't that some things are wrong, but that they're stupid or irrelevant. That they've already been said a thousand times. The notions of relevance, necessity, the point of something, are a thousand times more significant than the notion of truth.

- Gilles Deleuze from *Negotiations*¹

STOP 1: INTRODUCING THE ACADEMIC ARENA

pivot :

As a silly young boy, I had thought I could go fishing, in the proper boat, in the right location, with the right bait, catch the concept and gain my rite of passage, my recognition as a man of achievement. But after sitting, boat still, one hand on the silent rod, the other shooing flies, all the while eyeing with worry a can of bait that sat decaying from the brutal heat of the endless day, I realized I had the wrong idea, entirely. I had caught fish, yes. Very early on in the day in fact, but among the festering carcasses in my boat, and the ones still down there swimming about looking to be caught, there seemed to be none which were relevant. Rather, as the outsider looking down upon the still surface of the water, it was the multitude of plankton being released and exchanged by the thousands through a pocket of water controlled by the mysterious system of the sea that caught my attention, stirred my insides. Why, I thought, would I drag an it, a one, or them, or even several identifiable species of fish into my little boat to be measured, photographed and presented upon the outset of my project? I considered swooping my net into the pocket for one, two, and three moments, dumping the vast selection into a bucket, taking a photograph of that, and then framing it with ellipses or something fairly clever. Perhaps I would receive even speedier passage for the uniqueness of my approach. By this time I considered it fact that I could not succeed in either the fish nor the plankton idea. Possibly due to my disenchantment, but more importantly because we, I the writer, and those readers forced to inspect what I presented upon my first return, would miss the marvellous flow, the excitement and permutation of the plankton. And I realized, that what I wanted was not a fish, or anything like it at all, but rather, the entire pocket of water. I accepted failure. Actually, I was glad for it and overcome with the urge to abandon the boat and the heat of the endless day altogether, to jump in and join the process of exchange rather than wasting my energy figuring out how to capture its contents. I made my decision and invited the reader to either join me or to cast me off as a boy lost to the sea due to inexperience. Such things no longer concerned me because I knew I had never been a silly boy, that there had never been a boat, and that the entire metaphor with which I had visualized myself was a complete fabrication.

point :

: what is the concept of utopia?

Producing an academic paper according to the progression of 'natural' logic is a dreary necessity.

The logic of necessity, at the outset of this particular re-conceptualization of the concept 'utopia'—along with its grammatical departures which I have merged into utopia(n)(ism)—pre-designates this space for a *situating* of the term. This *situating* both familiarizes the reader with the term, and displays the writer's knowledge.

However, although it may be necessary, it is unproductive in itself, and furthermore, what may invigorate this simultaneous *situating* and self-validation, that being an acknowledgement of the situation of *situating*, conversely makes the necessity of 'natural' logic, incongruent and unacceptable. The situation of the situated, or the concept of the concept, as it goes, involves not only a history with proper names and clean definitions—still photography, but also the murky stuff in between—motion picture. This is best understood, or most

¹ Ibid, 130.

clearly exemplified, by the writer-in-present, the one situating the situation from within an overwhelmingly complex mulch of ideas of past, present, and perhaps future-projected, and all within the laws of academia. And the one in this writing situation, at this moment, seems to be me. Wishing to convey a concept, in order to communicate to the reader, I am obliged to abide by those rules which the utopia(n)(ism) re-conceptualized has been motivated to neglect, but that my cognitive process is plagued, by nobody's fault but every living thing in the human depiction of the universe. This, all this, has led me to a consideration of the *conceptualization of the concept*, even before *re-conceptualizing one concept* in particular. Because perhaps it is a place to begin, to alter the attitude with which we approach the entrance of this drudgery, that is, to see that we are entering an exit, rather than exiting an opening, the outside.

: the futility of discussing a concept

The concept working behind a term is always complicated and unpredictable because as its history may be long and extremely varied, it is susceptible to an unknowable variety of contexts and uses. As Rita Felski points out, even 'everyday life' is a concept with a long and complicated history (78). Accordingly, the appearance of the word utopia(n)(ism) does not cue everyone to the same designation or stage of its process. Therefore, the discussion surrounding a concept according to its signification is crippled from the outset. For example, although two opposing parties may desire a similar product, as is notable in contemporary feminist discussions of utopia(n)(ism), both anti, and pro, the rotations of discussion are halted by concerns about the signifier rather than what it is they intend to signify. According to contemporary feminist theorist Lucy Sargisson, utopia(n)(ism) intonates transgression, which is the "redeeming aspect" of a theory or work (CFU 98). However, for feminist theorist Sally Kitch, who opposes herself to 'utopians' such as Sargisson, the word denotes all that is corrupt within a text or body of thought. Furthermore, she argues that Sargisson is truly anti-utopian and acting under an unsuited body (*Higher Ground* 76). Kitch prefers the conceptual body of *realism*, or what she calls *Higher Ground*, to designate the meaning. On the contrary, Sargisson argues that the definition of utopia(n)(ism) must be adaptable to the evolution of contemporary feminist work, a demand which she offers the openness and complexity of what she calls *transgressive utopianism*, and *new utopianism*. The words utilized by each theorist are thick with opposition, but if disregarded, would expose a process and affect which are closely paralleled. However, this is merely a simplified discussion between only two, and is, admittedly merely one aspect of what fuels the opposition. But the concept of a concept, the approach to

using a term capitulates a zipper deadlock. Conflict is multifariously involved in the discussions of utopia(n)(ism), even within its own, obviously paralleling terms. There is socialist and critical utopia(n)(ism). There is utopia(n)(ism) as content, as form, as function, as action. Utopia(n)(ism) as plan and as place. Utopia(n)(ism) as disposition. Utopia(n)(ism) as artistic expression and literary genre. There are degrees of utopia(n)(ism), as Ernst Bloch describes it, the "underdeveloped" or "wishful thinking" utopia(n)(ism)s are responsible for tainting the response to authentic utopia(n)(ism)s (106). And within the intense consideration of the project at hand, there is utopia(n)(ism) as representation of failure, modernism, naivety, and impracticability. Utopia(n)(ism), as signifier, is re-created, in a sense, every time it is used, depending on its context and intended meaning. However, as we do with all other concepts, we try to use it with some confidence for the purpose of whatever motivates our particular discussion. Are we then to think that we are capable of having a conversation? Or is the patience and investment required of the reader-writer who approaches a text with he[r] prepared web of assumptions, beliefs, and investments, an unrealistically high expectation? Certainly it is. Perhaps it is even, 'utopian', as 'they' say.

Deleuze and Guattari conclude that there is no point in discussion: "the best one can say about discussions is that they take things no farther, since the participants never talk about the same thing" (*WiP?* 28). To disagree with this statement would be to suffer the irony of proving their point. But we are fortunate because we disagree in a context where the rejection of universal statements is paramount; however, in the same context we are *unfortunate* because, although we know exactly what we are doing, we continue to do so. It is the contradiction of ideology, or more accurately, the ideology of contradiction produced by the *academic arena* as I call it. Subsequently, Deleuze and Guattari are discussing, despite what they know, and here we are, carrying on the discussion. Why? Because in the exchange of what we will call utopia(n)(ism), the foundations of the conversation themselves are changing, along with the questions, the positions, and the concepts of the concepts being discussed. Because we realize that what we were discussing is merely our projection powered by the force that motivates us to speak, to want to speak, to try and listen. It is no longer the term itself—that halting fixation—that carries any importance, or even its meaning, but rather the force behind it that is unexpendable.

Perhaps then, the discussion is not alone in its futility, with its brackish faces and words, but is rather in partnership with our habitual approach. We question what, who, how, why, when, where, whatever is

utopia(n)(ism)?, from a potent propensity of the academic arena, that voice of paranoia which cries out, "spray lethal chemicals on academic weeds or your carefully plotted garden will be overrun!!" While firing questions of attack and hurling answers in defense, the concept at hand—utopia(n)(ism)—failed or no, produced from a desire for difference, for the new, to change the present condition, is blinded by stubborn subject positions and their projections which are translatable only into symbols, representations, meanings, and other designations. But alive there in the variety of the concept's uses, both aged and youthful, is a demonstration of the multiplicity of things, rather than of a grand 'One' or 'True' where our faith hides and halts our efforts in transforming what oppresses us. This variety renders the concept unrenderable, having no one position in space, time, or reason. Suitably, we must abandon our loyalties to the hunting and colonizing of concepts for our activity as creators and cohabitants. And if we are doing our job, each in our own time, space, and ability, neither the concept nor we should ever be laid to rest.¹

: the concept of the concept – the situation of the situated

In their collaborative work on *What is Philosophy?* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari commence the first chapter of their answer with yet another question: "what is a concept?" It is, common sense aside, a crucial entrance because the occupation of philosophy is the creation of concepts. That is what a philosopher does—create concepts—not merely reflect upon the pre-existent ones (NO 122). In other words, Deleuze and Guattari advance concepts as "acts of thought" (21). And as the philosopher is producing, rather than reflecting, the concepts [s]he produces are crafted to be active, rather than relics or bite-sized explanations of the world. As Brian Massumi describes under the Deleuzian influence, "[concepts] do not reflect upon the world but are immersed in a changing state of things" (translator's foreword ATP xii). Therefore, the concept is active in a history of movement and metamorphosis according to the landscapes it encounters. We use and reuse, give and retain names to these porous, plasmatic shells as they rise and fall with the shape of their contents. However, it is a daunting task, easily inhibited by the haunting of previous uses. As Mikhail Bakhtin articulates, a concept or term is saturated, contaminated, impregnated by the hands that have touched it before (Hawthorn 42). The elements both potentially and currently existing in the body of the concept are heterogeneous and volatile. This heavily populated thing must be regarded as full-bodied, with a mess of cells and veins because of the magnitude its revitalization or repositioning has on several planes of thought.

¹ "Of course, the nomad moves, but while seated, and he is only seated while moving" (ATP 381).

One concept overflows into other bodies, flows with and against, engages in *becoming* with the elements of neighboring concepts, altering each, supporting and maintaining a consistent level of indistinguishability: "concepts link up with each other, support one another, coordinate their contours, articulate their respective problems, and belong to the same philosophy, even if they have different histories" (Deleuze and Guattari *WIP?* 18). This is exemplified in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, throughout concepts such as *nomadology*, *rhizomatics*, *deterritorialization*, and *becomings* to name a few. One concept can be considered interchangeable with the other. As this project plays out, the reform of utopia(n)(ism) simultaneously insinuates a tweaking of *desire*, *error*, and *perfection*. From this it follows that the conceptual shift of one term produces a shift in many, a conceptual disaster of the 'natural.'

One must have a peripheral settlement with language, focusing on the activities surrounding and passing through its designations rather than on the c-o-n-c-e-p-t itself, because the center is empty. Words, besides, should only denote actions, rather than meanings or identities, as they pass into alteration with new problems. As Deleuze and Guattari impart, the concept speaks an *event*, not a *thing* (*WIP?* 21). There is no need to take the word designations so literally, so to speak. Because why must a word have only one, two, or even three meanings? Does my name provoke only one description? Every concept is in such close proximity with surrounding concepts that its silhouette cannot be reduced to singularity. Terms do not have limited use, that is, there is no natural relation between the signifier and the signified. The words were never correct in the first place, full with their representation and designations. Deleuze writes, "there are only inexact words to designate something exactly" (*DII* 3), meaning, it is not the term that is of importance, but how it is being used, what it does. It follows that the term need not be considered so seriously, so restrictively; however, it is not out of laziness or disrespect for history that the concept is made porous, increased in its use with a diminished concern regarding its 'proper' use. On the contrary, it is out of a respectful acknowledgement of complexity and the impossibility, as well as the undesirability, of containment. Indeed, the impetus for such re-activations stems from an acute awareness of the 'proper'. And this sensual expansion of the concept leaks into virtually each of the multiple categories of academic involvements, from methodology used to the ontological foundations of thought.

For the convenience of summary, this concept of the concept, influenced by Deleuze and his surrounding populations, reveals five major attitudes from which this revitalization of utopia(n)(ism) carries :

1) The concept can and should be new and volatile as a thought-act; 2) The vitality and complexity of a concept is an unavoidably—gloriously—collaborative endeavor; 3) The concept neither has one use, nor does its use have only one name; 4) With dead concepts, and with a dead concept of the concept, comes death masquerading as creativity.

5) Playtime breeds change, takes flight and the impetus behind this discussion is itself a thing in motion. To stop is to deny the activity of reading, disrespect the activity of writing, and ignore the infinite world of collaboration between the two. And furthermore, nomadic tendencies cannot be denied and everything encountered is subject to the affects of nomadic movement (ATP 382).¹ As Nicholas Royle writes of Jacques Derrida, “great works transform the context of their reception [although] this takes time” (73).

But in the midst of these creative flows are wedged the irony of its navigation within the academic arena, a metropolis of strict infrastructure, rather than the expanses of unexplored landscapes which inspire such flows. And this is but one of the many contradictions of academic exchange and, as we shall consider, the process of utopia(n)(ism).

: validation of approach

As the amorphous concept of the concept has begun to unfurl, this project moves toward intensifying the porousness and movement of the concept utopia(n)(ism). However, contrary to the activation toward which these efforts move, the very attempt to discuss the concept of creation is itself an acknowledgment and acceptance of the need for articulation, which requires a certain degree of stability and pause. Such are the realities of immanence; we must begin somewhere, rest somewhere, lay our mat down, leave our mark, but yet, we must never be found among the remains of inactive thought. Accordingly, the plotter must always have already moved on by the time he[r] marks are found, because that lucid articulation was not he[r] final concern, but rather bait for the emergence of new directional possibilities (Fiumara 162). This is the delicate activity of the academic nomad, the one whom I call the utopian player (although I ask you to refrain from finding the word ‘utopian’ familiar at this time), to move as though across an open landscape, and continue to remodel the arena accordingly. With this comes the knowledge that regardless of the

¹ “The nomads inhabit these places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow, for it has been established that the nomads make the desert no less than they are made by it. They are vectors of deterritorialization” (382).

explosiveness of its entrance, the concept will be gradually positioned in the repetitions of this space; it will be articulated to death. Elizabeth Grosz writes:

You can be sure that the moment a theoretical position becomes popularized, explained, analyzed, and assessed with an intense scrutiny, the bulk of its practitioners begin to respond to it in automatic and routine ways....with their commentaries, dissertations, and endless analyses, then the initial thought becomes routinized, rendering it once again habitual and institutionally assimilable.
(Interview 7)

Grosz describes the inevitable development of academic safety points, those that seal careers and the respect of fellow colleagues. It is a matter of popularity, demand, and utility within the classroom. And there is, indeed, use in such tired translations in regards to issues of accessibility and the propagation of an arena, which although loathed, is required for creative exchange. Thus, being reduced and used for the production and sustenance of other's academic careers is a quintessential sacrifice of participation in a dominant structure. This is but one of the frictions created in the effort to communicate within the systems, languages, and formats of the institution while becoming increasingly estranged and foreign to its inner-workings, while hoping to gain acceptance and alliance, in order to breed change.

Nevertheless there remains a distinction between the parasitic work of the academic and the solitary work of those that will be named utopian; that is, while one writes *about*, the other writes *within*. In the preface of her book, *History after Lacan*, Theresa Brennan notes a growing dependency on "established fixed points" or "recognized reference points" for purposes of "legitimation," "social approval," and "security" (xi). Although she acknowledges the productivity of dispelling ideas and providing a conceptual-spatial location for the reader, she proposes a difference between sources which aim for "communication and acknowledgement" and sources whose secondary modes merely act as proliferations of fixed points (xii). The hegemony of the latter confines the forthcoming player to a fear of speaking outside of the familiar, and to projecting affirmations of the ways which we already are and the directions we have already gone (xii). Contrasted to this secondary mode, is what Brennan calls the "propositional mode", that of the infamous monsters of academic influence, those we incessantly write on—"Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Irigaray", and I might appropriately add, Deleuze—whose unprecedented writing risks the danger of bad scholarship or immodest claims (xiii). The motivation of Brennan's distinction is to provoke an understanding of her attempt to combine the two, in order to "balance confidence and context, the movement of ideas and fixed points" (xiii). It is precisely this fine balance that is of concern to the utopian player, with he[r] one foot in an experimental domain and the other in

the academic arena. I suggest that this balance is notable in Deleuze's artful suturing of those he reads with his own concept creations (Grosz AFO 68).¹ Thus in collaboration with those before him, he forges ahead with new thought while simultaneously revitalizing the reader's approach to an versed texts. In a similar sentiment, Nicholas Royle's conjoins Derrida's texts as simultaneously *constatative*—a descriptive statement of fact—and *performative*—that which is already doing, which "calls for action and response" which simultaneously serves to describe and transform the way in which we think (22).

The delicate balance between the radical and the acceptable is crucial to the revitalization of a concept. The revolution must catch on, and in order to do so, must make a connection with the context from which it departs, that is, with the points of academic cohesion. Thus, a rescue of utopia(n)(ism) from the limitations and pollutants of form, content, and discipline, must begin with a departure from the shade of such canopies as "Gender Studies," "Feminist Literary Theory," "Feminist Philosophy," "Feminist Utopianism," "Feminist Utopian Fiction." This requires a willingness to abandon certain expectations, to begin unlikely relationships. It must be understood, however, that this is not an expression of some hierarchical arrogance regarding who is truly writing or creating. Perhaps more accurately, this departure can be understood as a growing leniency towards those who are committed through a certain intensity of engagement that may not be as detectible or comfortable. However, leniency does not mean tolerance, or passive acceptance, but rather discernment of the multiple. There are still those who are *doing* and those who are merely mimicking, speaking because they like the sound of their voice. This is the point at which sympathies may be neglected, because philosophy and writing stem from a love, a pursuit, an obsession, and do not stop to cower beneath or admire relics.

This ethics, if I may call it that, is an ethics of passionate motivation that warrants the wild use of that which the player can make available and becoming increasingly open to. An academic *violation*, in these terms, is necessary to bring theory, passed theory, and into action. The theories that utopian players create, and contribute to, that distinguish the utopian player as such, extend beyond some ethereal condition of their career, because, at the very least they begin to circulate as an electrical-psychical-current through the player's daily life. In a written conversation with Foucault, Deleuze writes:

¹ "...they are as much a reflection of his "methodology" as they are rigorous and attuned readings of texts marginalized in the history of philosophy."

A theory has to be used, it has to work. And not just for itself. If there is no one to use it, starting with the theorist himself who, as soon as he uses it ceases to be a theorist, then a theory is worthless, or its time has not yet arrived. ("Intellectuals and Power" 208)

But conceivably, its seepage into daily consciousness, within the banal details such as a voluntary motion to what one eats, is imperceptible to a population bonded to fixed designations. Perhaps even more concerning is the denial of the effects of theory by those who have limited their activities, either intentionally or unintentionally, to strictly pragmatic, political grounds—a very tangible conflict which fuels the pitting of one feminism against the other, and poisons the discussion surrounding utopia(n)(ism)s with disdain, as it has become the abused mascot for such contentions.

Nothing positive is done, nothing at all, in the domains of either criticism or history, when we are content to brandish ready-made old concepts like skeletons intended to intimidate any creation, without seeing that the ancient philosophers from whom we borrow them were already doing what we would like to prevent modern philosophers from doing: they were creating their concepts, and they were not happy just to clean and scrape bones like the critic and historian of our time. Even the history of philosophy is completely without interest if it does not undertake to awaken a dormant concept and to play it again on a new stage, even if this comes at the price of turning it against itself.

- Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari from *What is Philosophy?*¹

STOP 2: UTOPIAN IMPOTENCY

pivot :

The academic arena is the virtual space you inhabit consciously—in thought and in actuality. You act in both, think in both. Thought is action. One feeds the other, although they come in conflict or one is neglected for the sake of the other with certain regularity. This is precisely because they have become inseparable since you first saw the wall, that invisible structure that had kept one from rushing into the other. The academic arena is a labyrinth of these walls, they are what has you caught wondering where your ideas can flow. Have them flow until they are stopped, and acknowledge this failure as a discovery. You have found a wall, and knowing that it is there, limits its success at keeping you out. Continue to flow, but before moving on, write on these walls...write on them to make their position visible. In this space, this time, you will play peacekeeper and conduit for new angles to reactivate the concept of

¹ Ibid., 83.

utopia, because it is a concept whose manifestations are motivated by a desire for change, from a dissatisfaction with the affects these psychical walls have had on the workings of the every day. And regardless of the work done in the every day, you have chosen the academic arena, because although the perceptible must be dealt with, the exposure of the imperceptible—wall-identification—will free movement of the populations in between. But there will be competition, there will be those who choose not to see what you have written, although they will make use of your uncovering, and may simply write it over and over again across the wall.
point :

: “it seemed like a good idea...in theory”: the root of utopia(n)(ism)

The word “Utopia” was created by Sir Thomas More in 1518 to entitle a fictional thought exercise envisioning an ideal political, geographical, and socioeconomic template. The word is most frequently broken down as follows:

the adverb *ou*, meaning “not,” the noun *topos*, meaning “place,” which, together are generally taken to mean “no-place”. In addition, More plays with the Greek composite, *eutopia*, meaning “happy,” fortunate,” or “good” place as well as *entopos*, meaning, “a place where all is well”. So, quite literally utopia is translated as—*no place is the good place, or, the good place is no place*—reaching the general consensus that this good place is nowhere to be found (Grosz AFO 135). Notwithstanding its specific translation, and More’s specific politically charged literary manifestation of the term, ‘utopia’ is currently used to designate a smattering of interconnected fictional and/or maniacal musings regarding an ideal commonwealth whose inhabitants exist under perfect conditions, provoking memories of rigidly authoritarian and hierarchical constructions (133), which are disempowering to all but those who constructed it (Sargisson CFU 87). A long chain of ‘utopia’-incarnates and predecessors include Plato’s *Republic* (approx 500 B.C), the heaven of the Christian faith, Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1622), of Karl Marx’s “Classless Society” (mid 19thC), B.F Skinner’s *Walden Two* (1948), and the rush of modernist architectural planning.¹ Albeit, despite its 500-year relationship with a changing rhetoric, literary and philosophical landscape, a limited use persists even now, both academically and colloquially, or worse yet, within the colloquialism of the academic arena. The term has long ago been estranged from its origins and buried with ill connections. It pulls thought from well beyond its boundaries back into its decay in the conceptual pothole of Western civilization. What I refer to as decay, is what contemporary feminist theorist Lucy Sargisson calls ‘the myth of utopianism’, or ‘the colloquial uses of the term’ (CFU 9). Based on her survey of the common approach in *Contemporary Feminist Utopias*, the basic

¹ In *What is Post-Modernism?*, Charles Jencks discusses the “the death of modern architecture” which worked under the “congenital naiveties” that “good form was to lead to good content” and reinvention was possible on rational grounds committed to, holism, transcendental thought and other such aftershocks of the Enlightenment (London: Academy Editions, 1986).

assumptions surrounding this common approach are as follows: 1) all utopias are political (17); 2) all utopias are finite (19); and all utopias are perfect (19). Basically, utopia is reductively assumed to be blueprint for perfection, created for actualization of space and time. No actualizing of utopia in this world, with this people, will be perfect. Perfection is impossible; therefore, efforts toward perfection, utopia(n)(ism), are questionable and irrelevant, if not devastating.

Contemporary feminist discourse provides one of the most severe rejections of utopia(n)(ism). Perhaps one of the most consciously anti-utopian representatives is feminist theorist and self-proclaimed ex-utopian, Sally Kitch. Her book, *Higher Ground*, fingers utopian activity as the primary force of destruction within feminism. Her argument reveals a very accurate and thorough depiction of specifically feminist expectations regarding the assumptions of utopia(n)(ism):

[Utopian thought assumes that:] societies and human nature are perfectible; foundational ideas can be eternal and unambiguous; consistent happiness can be achieved; most problems can be defined and permanently solved; consensus can and must occur. Such a filter not only makes the inevitability—and benefits—of uncertainty and change, it can also inflate feminist expectations and lead to disappointment and disillusionment. (100)

Briefly stated, utopia(n)(ism), regardless of the well-meaning intentions behind it, is a naïve reduction of reality, having little relevance and only negative effect. Indicative of particularly politically-based feminisms, as Greg Johnson addresses, these assumed assumptions of utopia(n)(ism) provoke anxieties surrounding the hazard of "ignoring and disregarding the present situations of women", while we should be "working here and now to eradicate these structures" instead of "being preoccupied with a future that may or may not ever arrive" (22).

However, it is rare in contemporary thought and literature for one to impart such manifest proposals of the ideal, although elements of such activity are notable throughout fiction, and invigorate, in one way or another, every expostulation or movement toward something better. Accordingly, the traces of the word 'utopia', and any variation of its root, has taken an immovable position as the label for visionary thinkers before and after its entrance into signification. 'Utopian' has become a steadfast academic favorite for denoting a thinker, theory, or work that is thought to be idealistic, ineffective, impracticable, naïve, and certain to fail. Accordingly, the 'utopian' thinker is disregarded as one who dreams of an unattainable world, while neglecting the real need of those who require tangible change. Therefore, it is rare that a theorist would deliberately place he[r]-self in the company of such a concept.

Literature is a little different, however. Freely labeled as an author of 'utopian fiction', the writer of fiction is given 'permission' to engage in recognizably utopian gestures, because it is merely an artistic reflection, an artful presentation of fantasy, which offers clever social critique and wishful thinking. This particular acceptance, however, fastens the agency of such literature to little more than a particular form, content and means of psychological escape and/or entertainment. Furthermore, such connections resonate with the negativity of the academic colloquialism of the term. For example, while Sally Kitch, in her focused attack, does not question the insight of utopian novels, saying that they "respond sometimes brilliantly to present conditions—by absorbing them, reflecting them, and critiquing them", she denounces such novels as harmful extensions and stabilizers of 'utopian' thought:

[Utopian novels] also impose the requirements of utopianism itself: categorizing people and ideas, emphasizing practices rather than processes, offering solutions rather than questions, promoting unified themes rather than competing values, exaggerating the effects of social design, and underestimating the lessons of history. (92)

It appears that any novel, philosophical, political work, and thinker that aims beyond what is perceived as possible is, according to the fear and skepticism of Kitch, attached to a history of oppression and error.

Not all disregard for 'utopian' manifestations is so direct or conscious as those specifically pitted against the

supposed genre or inclination, however. As adjective, the term 'outside' in the context of specifically utopian discussions is largely used in passing, a landed word, a descriptor, used perhaps with a knowledge of its meaning, especially, of course in the conditions of its common nuances, but numbed to the complexity of its implication. Suitably, as the adjective has found a common sense position in our rhetoric, the validity or accuracy of its negativity is rarely questioned, and ironically, guilty of many of its own charges. Such is the sneaky and often imperceptible business of presumption. The construction of utopia(n)(ism) as an insult is often created from exaggeration, reductionism, skepticism, fear and a disrespect for the efforts of individuals working for change in domains with less perceptible effects.

The terms within which Kitch is addressing utopia(n)(ism) are no longer appropriate. This kind of unsuitability is precisely the focus of Lucy Sargisson's first book regarding utopianism, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (1996). She begins with the premise that what we call contemporary utopia(n)(ism) in literature and theory does not fit under this angle; this 'old' utopia(n)(ism) is, indeed, in obvious conflict with feminist desire

and is, therefore, rarely present in contemporary feminist texts. Basically, Sargisson would say that Kitch is accusing contemporary efforts with the crimes of *past* constructions. For example, as the common view of utopianism designates utopia as blueprinting for the perfect polity, Sargisson counters this assumption, saying that within contemporary utopian work, perfection is, if not absent, accentuated in its redundancy (2). Quite on the contrary, she writes, "utopia is full not of perfection but rather of irreconcilable tensions" (24). And this is but one example of many unfolded by Sargisson. However, I add, utopian charges are equally inappropriate regarding what would be thought of as traditional utopianism, once considered in context. As Sargisson denotes of contemporary feminist utopianisms, perfection was never considered probable in its traditional manifestations. More himself admits to the error of his fictional depiction, referring to it as a treatise on the *best* available plan for the republic (Sargisson *CFU* 24; Grosz *AFO* 133), the *good* place. Surely, his vision was based on a desire for something better, but who ever said the word perfect? Perhaps more easily indicted are those self-proclaimed as 'ideal'—absolutely perfect—which resonates with the postmodern nightmares of 'utopian' constructions. But perfection, in such contexts, carries different implications than a contemporary understanding of perfection would allow. The perfection of Plato's ideal commonwealth, for example, incorporates the misfortune of fate and the hierarchical structures of teleology, administered by myth, while contemporary visions convey requirements of equality and freedom. Of course, this is a good example of why utopia(n)(ism) is charged with oppression, but it cannot be said that Plato had a naïve dream of achieving a happy-go-lucky city. Ironically, it seems, this term utopia(n)(ism), along with its common meaning, is itself a sort of oppressive phantom—there is no manifestation true to its description yet it places a variety within its one category. In other words, the way that we have used the word utopia(n)(ism) either to cast *sweeping* generalization over vast varieties of philosophical, political, and literary works, each of which have had a mere few elements suitable to such a categorization, or to slight, disregard, disqualify ideas, implements the 'myth of utopia(n)(ism)' as a sort of symbol of our fear, negative desire, and stagnancy.

This discussion, however, is thus far reductive because even though our direct common sense logic may adjust to the possibility that utopia(n)(ism) was never intended for perfection, it remains that presenting ideas so radically other, it is simply too demanding, impossible to implement, and therefore, is only possible in a perfect world. Infeasibility is, perhaps, the most relevant charge to the contemporary categorization of the 'utopian.' To this charge I offer a simple question: who ever said that the utopian blueprint, or its contagion in

more subtle forms, was intended for actualization in conventionally physical *space* and *time*? The *good place* is *no place*. Contemporary theorist Elizabeth Grosz argues that utopian spaces do not exist anywhere but in the imagination (20), which is an issue I will collaborate with in the next STOP, suggesting that it is arguably a space, but of a virtual kind, however not without its manifestations, connections and dependencies on reality. And of *time*, we have fixated on an actualization of the utopian plan, yet the colloquial use of utopia(n)(ism) seems to disregard time past, meaning this: we cannot judge utopianism of the past as though it were written for current problems. Although I am not suggesting that we cannot consider utopian visions of the past in relation to the contemporary problems—especially in terms of learning from their error—these depictions were not written from the context to which we would be applying them. Contemporary manifestations of utopianism are created from contemporary problems because manifestations of utopian activity are created from a real dissatisfaction of the present context; therefore, what was moving in the past, may not, of course, be moving now.

Truly, placing the assumptions of traditional utopia(n)(ism) within the current context where effort towards a transcendent perfection, as was largely employed in the modernist fantasy of objectivity, gives rise to rejection. The template, providing comfort and inspiration, stabilized as the product of conceptual exercise of hope, but as the symbol and representation, as myth and religious faith began to deteriorate with postmodernity, the logic and utility of a utopian vision began to deteriorate also. The utopia(n)(ism)s of the past were working within the same ideologies that we are now working to transform (and, I might add, have been largely advanced *grace a* utopian thinking). However, such thought manifestations should be recognized as revolutionary and necessary at the time of their initial use. Thus, as contemporary feminist theorist Jennifer Burwell reminds us, the socio-historic placement of the writer should be taken into account (209), in order to, at the very least, gain some cultural and historical perspective. We must consider the writer's work as an experiment, a protest, motivated by some potent creative and transformative force whose movements are distinguishable only alongside the everydayness through and by which it was produced, and the effects it has at the time of its creation.

As Ernst Bloch explains, it is this force, this "anticipatory illumination" within the work of the artist, that moves ahead of its time. Those works exuding *anticipatory illumination*, according to Bloch, have prolonged revolutionary effect, but we must consider the social limitations of comprehension and endeavor to

make use of these elements in the current context (116). Bloch requires the same from his reader. To discard his work due to its dependency on Marx and Hegel, the dominant thought structures of his time, or because he has not written specifically under feminist terms, would be to bypass elements which extend outside his position, through an *immanent transcendence*. It is the activity we are looking for, not those things existing under the ideological forces of the author's position. A consideration of the context, in other words, will enable us to see if the writer's creation is favorable only according to his need, or if there exists the excess of which Bloch speaks.

However, following this reprimand of the utopian-accusation, surely we must heed Kitch's warning, but not merely to avoid doing precisely what we slapped her on the hand for, that is, discarding important works too flippantly due to an over-exaggerated focus on their erroneous elements. Although the severity of her charges may be questionable, the dangerous elements of concern she exposes through her extensive reading are very real. She provides us with a different feminist perspective on the same works as feminist utopian supporters, Sargisson and Jennifer Burwell, such as Octavia Butler, Sally Gearhart, Ursula Le Guin, Marge Piercy, Joanna Russ, Monique Wittig, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous. Rather than extract the transgressive elements within contemporary utopianism, Kitch exposes those that remain fastened to tradition. And surely these novels are guilty of error, as is any manifestation of thought. Consider specifically feminisms of the past, which the listed writers are consistently placed in connection to. They administered conceptualization and practices of women's separation, glorification, patriarchy, which have since been conceived of as the mere strengthening of dualisms and reversal of power, but they were revolutionary nonetheless. Thus, in our current experimentation we will learn from this error, but be moved by the transformative force of its predecessors. Utopia(n)(ism), along with feminism, feminism along with utopia(n)(ism), must be continuously renegotiated to maintain their affectivity.

Which brings us back to question of time, and holds feminists such as Sargisson and Burwell, who are working to revitalize our approach to utopianism via outdated feminist expressions, 'momentarily' suspect. As feminists like Rita Felski and Elizabeth Grosz have begun to engage in issues of time and duration, time-perception is a tricky and deceptive conceptual/physical phenomenon (not unlike the concept). That which we may regard, in this Deleuzian inspired reconceptualization of utopia(n)(ism), or in Grosz's work on the fringe of the experimental domain, regard as shrapnel of the past, is revolutionary in another, and, therefore, must be

expected and respected—allowed to work its way. As Rita Felski describes it, “history is not one broad river, but a number of distinct and separated streams, each moving at its own pace and tempo” (3). However, to those on the fringe, Deleuze imparts, that in order to follow in the revolutionary footsteps of the thinkers before us we must “do what they did, that is, create concepts for problems that necessarily change”, rather than repeat their work, which would be dead on arrival (*WIP?* 28). And just as this desire drives feminist revitalization of our approach to utopia(n)(ism), it drives Kitch’s departure from utopianism toward what she calls ‘realism’, or ‘Higher Ground’. Accordingly, Kitch’s critique has equal relevancy in a discussion that concerns itself with the subversion of dominant systems.

Considered differently, that is, apart from fixations on formations such as signifiers and representations, Kitch can be used collaboratively. She creates an estrangement to our understanding of utopia(n)(ism), as well as a conceptual structure of an appropriate movement. And, as I will make a point of elaborating on, an adherence or concern for the designations such as “utopian”, and “feminist”, must be held in question, mainly because something so easily categorized as one, the other, or both, may rightly be a duplication, and/or may lack movement. Supporters of utopia(n)(ism) may still adhere to the academically safe spaces, via designations such as ‘feminist’ and ‘utopian’ and ‘fiction’. And the force that drives us to either revitalize, re-conceptualize or reject traditional uses and/or understandings of utopia(n)(ism), or feminism, for that matter, is in itself a utopian action, that is, utopia(n)(ism) must also come under the transformative force of utopia(n)(ism). But of course this would/could be seen as a threat against the solidarity or existence of feminism. But, no, it will take at least 30 years for it to die out now...and by then, perhaps, we *will* be ready to distance ourselves.

Hence, we have not departed on a journey toward a defense of utopia(n)(ism), because the word is expendable. Rather, we are going to see how it is moving, see how it can move, see where it moves, and most importantly, we are going to make it move. Hence, utopia(n)(ism) is movement itself...it is what moves, whether it comes from disgust or love. It is the revolution of thought itself. So rather than approach utopia(n)(ism) as a lingering intruder from the dominant structures of the past, we could ride with its life stuff and use it to continue dismantling those structures. In other words, *we need not approach utopia(n)(ism) as a system, but rather as a force that works to exit the system.*

A pause for a few questions, strategic and simple: are we even referring to utopia(n)(ism) any more? Why are we utilizing this particular term? If the particular signifier is of little importance, as it is interchangeable with others, and so on, why are we compelled to use a term that appears to be contrary to this discussion? Jennifer Burwell posits the postmodern/poststructuralist approach, with which I am gaining momentum, as antithetical to most utopian logic, traditional or no, indicates; for example, while the utopian logic works on the preservation of harmony and creation of more suitable boundaries, postmodernism seeks to disrupt and poststructuralism seeks to undo these things (166). Perhaps this discussion, although decidedly not using utopian logic according to this quotation, is somewhat divergent from its postmodern context. Although fond of disruption, we are exponentially more concerned with re-creation and extension than with destruction and eradication. Because while destruction and eradication are unnecessary expenditures of energy and can be a stationary, if not backward motion, re-creation and extension move us forward and away from prior structures without disrespect and meaningless violence. Consequentially, we rarely think about the proper term beyond articulatory obligation, or a place of nurtured departure because the designations to which it is attached, albeit existing and absolutely crucial for a reconceptualization, are already known. In other words, there is no point in 'disregarding the statement', so to speak, as there is no point in simply repeating it or coming down on it with a hammer, because we simply cannot clear it all away and begin again: USE IT. As Deleuze and Guattari intonate: "concepts, therefore, extend to infinity and, being created, are never created from nothing" (19). The *point* of this whole process is to concern ourselves more with the stirring of difference and less with slowing down to check our backs. The meaning behind the signifier has *never* adequately represented its meanings. I do not wish to defend either what is being called traditional utopia(n)(ism) nor utopia(n)(ism) as it is being re-conceptualized, but rather I am interested in the freedom of the force behind those that face the accusation or categorization, those that would never proudly call themselves utopian, but may threaten themselves with it over their thought-labor.

Should I not invent a new word for a new definition such as Kitch's departure toward 'Higher Ground'? Possibly—if you don't like it, just use something else—but not quite yet. The concept of utopia(n)(ism) both in structural plan and attitude has been a huge part of feminist movement(s) and has become a pivot point for the unnecessary pitting of one feminism against another as well as useful *outsides*. It is exemplary of

a tendency to talk into centered circles, rather than move outward. Therefore, it is the starting point for a transformation. Following from this, perhaps the most blatant condition of maintaining the use of the term is that *it continues to be used*, not only as an expression of critique valuation, but as a genre of literary focus. Much of the recent feminist discussion around utopianism surrounds mainly fictional, sometimes theory-based, feminist utopian genre. Accordingly, Sargisson works to extend the definition of utopia(n)(ism) in order to accommodate what she feels is in no way adequately represented by the traditional approach. She debates, like Spinoza, with her predecessors and contemporaries through a common term in order to reveal its theoretical inadequacies.¹ In common, Sargisson and Spinoza, while maintaining a term, 'utopianism' and 'God', express that the closed definitions of these 'names' compromise the complexity of what they are believed to represent. Therefore, the goal is to work toward openended definitions. As such, Lucy Sargisson works from a desire for the porousness of utopia(n)(ism), as a shark-like body that relies on the circulation of water through its gills for survival and, therefore, must either keep moving or rest in places that are themselves active currents. Completion is to finish, cease, to stop. Sargisson asserts that completion symbolizes death: the death of movement, progress, process, development, and change (37). Correspondingly, approaching utopia(n)(ism) as an *openended* process can serve to strengthen a feminist discussion which is itself continuously accelerating in its indefinability (CFU 14; 24): "It is hoped that by leaving interpretation open we can perhaps name a feminism which is not universalizing or exclusive, and a utopianism that is not marked by closure and finality of end" (CFU 97).

: opening the definition

Sargisson has given oxygen to a dying discussion, and directs the reader toward a rather significant paradigm shift; one must learn to think in open terms within the rules of the academic arena. This can be accomplished, in part, by defining utopia(n)(ism) in terms of function and process (39; 63), rather than space and time. As previously stated, 'utopia' is not necessarily intended for actual time, place, or format. It exists, as Elizabeth Grosz imparts, only in the imagination (20). And as we touched on earlier, in part, Ernst Bloch presents utopia(n)(ism) as a function through which particular genius works. It travels through history, through our perpetuations and projections of 'anticipatory illumination', which is derived from one's sensitivity to the possible (or what we would now, through the influences of Gilles Deleuze and Elizabeth Grosz, call the

¹ Spinoza's use of traditional terminology for the purposes of debate and departure is discussed by Seymour Feldman in the introduction of *Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (see Works Cited).

virtual), based from a sensitivity to the tendencies of reality (106). However, this awareness cannot be mistaken for the function of prediction about which Darko Suvin, the "father of Science Fiction", writes. According to Suvin, Science Fiction, as the contemporary utopian method, carries a political responsibility of prediction.¹ The utopian function, according to Bloch, is more accurately understood as a manifestation of *immanent transcendence* (a concept which will be unfolded in detail in the following STOP), an engagement with some thing outside of history, the particular that is engaged *through* history, the particular that gives the text a timelessness, a duration, a futurity. The texts, Bloch tells us, with the utopian function have longer flight time (116). Utopia(n)(ism) is, in this sense, a propelling forward, a common thread of sorts (although this understanding is largely influenced by Hegel and Marx), the mould that keeps changing its contents and a function that both selects, produces, and uproots. What remains to be still—and eventually ineffectual—are the ideologies that trap such creative efforts. Therefore, we must not confuse the force of utopia(n)(ism) with the ideologies that utilize it for their purposes. Furthermore, we must not confuse the force of utopia(n)(ism) with all literary and philosophical manifestations of mimicry. Leave them be. As Bloch tells us, they will rise and flourish for a short time, and then decline (52). The process of utopia(n)(ism) will continue.

: glorious contradiction

The openness and movement of utopia(n)(ism) leads to the interception of divergent elements, and thus the friction of contradiction. Reciprocally, the new vibrations heated by an allowance for contradiction, and thus an opportunity for anomalous connections, both acts as a stimulant of porousness and example of openendedness. Jennifer Burwell's work on utopia(n)(ism), specifically, focuses on the potency of its contradictory nature. Writing in close conjunction to Sargisson, Grosz, and Bloch, she forwards 'utopia' as a process, as well as a *relation*, not merely a position (205; 206). And it is a relation indeed, as she denotes the friction between the withstanding elements of the traditional approach, "the utopian impulse to create positive alternatives" and the 'new' "critical impulse to deconstruct" (29). The combination creates what she calls the "utopian impulse", which is based on "the attempt to imagine alternatives or critique existing conditions" as well as on conflict and complexity (208). Burwell exemplifies such useful activation through feminist literature that draws on incompatible subject positions: being female and being human in Russ's *The Female Man* and dealing with both racial and gender oppression in Octavia Butler's *Kindred*.

¹ As depicted in Suvin's "Afterword: With Sober, Estranged Eyes." (see Parrinder in Works Cited, 233-290)

Friction keeps utopia(n)(ism) present and productive. In other words, conflict, although not ideal in the conventional sense, leads to activation rather than stabilization, therefore, deeming it unconventionally ideal.

Such momentous openings explored through contradiction within fiction are further propelled in through expansions in feminist theory. Consider, for example, 'embodied utopia' as evolved in Elizabeth Grosz' discussion of architecture¹, or Greg Johnson's extension of the politics of 'situated utopianism' ("The Situated Self and Utopian Thinking"). Neglecting logic to allow supposedly incompatible ideas to resonate amounts to change. It is such change that Sargisson requires of what she calls *transgressive* utopianism, or new utopianism in literature. However, in transgressive utopian literature, the collisions of ideas imparted through the novel also collide *with* the novel itself. According to Sargisson, transgressive literature not only shifts and slides social codes regarding gender, sex and relationship, but also transfigures the concept of order itself, with a particular focus on modes of expression such as genre and narrative convention (*CFU* 201). Here Sargisson touches on an exciting point, one that exposes the agency of literature and the text in general, but leads the concept utopia(n)(ism), again, against itself. Transgressive 'utopian' writers should work against the conventional modes of genre and order. And as Sargisson herself imparts, we cannot define utopia(n)(ism) in terms of content or form, because it cannot be universally applied (35), but yet they continue to be identified by utopianism as literary genre. How, then, do we conceive of a book as utopian if it has little connection to traditional utopia(n)(ism) and is unrecognizable due to a departure from such conventions as content and form? Unfortunately many remain recognizable, and it seems that the approach to the text has become more radical than the radical text itself (take Sargisson's treatment for example). Unrecognizability, what we are becoming toward, is an 'absent' indication of the radically new. Thus, not only do we wish to extend the definition of utopia(n)(ism) to accommodate the ever changing literature, but we wish to explode the convention of literature, either fictional or philosophical if such a distinction is thought possible.

: a space for experimentation

If utopia(n)(ism) is a porous concept, an act, a process, a function, then the novel—in fact, the book in general—is an open space through which it lives. It is an extension of the academic domain where the experimental writers can play. As Sargisson puts it, "[books] provide for bodies-of-thought spaces in which

¹ This concept is most clearly laid out in "Embodied Utopias: The Time of Architecture", located in *Architecture from the Outside* (131-150).

creativity is possible, they add momentum and resist the petrification to which academic minds are vulnerable" (UB 3). In agreement, I suggest that we approach utopia(n)(ism) as a site of *becoming*, a process of conscious and active revolution, experimentation, and realigning of existing elements drawn from a desire for continuous movement toward unknown possibilities rather than self-contained bodies of academic effort working towards the justification of pre-existing beliefs. We call a space set aside for experimentation 'utopia(n)(ism)' because it is a space for critique and a space for the radically new. But now we begin to understand that the space is not actual, or meant to be actualized, but a conceptual space for the *creation of concepts, acts of thought* (WIP?

21). We are not deprived of agency; we are experimenting with the very foundations of thought.

We cannot accept that the grounded remains the same as it was before, the same as when it was not grounded, when it had not passed the test of grounding. If sufficient reason or the ground has a 'twist', this is because it relates what it grounds to that which is truly groundless. At this point, it must be said, there is no longer recognition. To ground is to metamorphose.

- Gilles Deleuze from *Difference and Repetition*¹

STOP 3 : MOBILIZING UTOPIA(N)(ISM), MOBILIZING THOUGHT

pivot :

How ironic it is, this dystopic behavior, speaking out against a concept of freedom from within havens and safety points. Veer your energy, peel back your fixations, your valuations, on representation, the faces and structures, the genres and disciplinary divides of the utopic, utopia, and what position you must defend. This is what stops you, what causes you to reflect, rather than to move, to create, like all those placed under the weight of such designations. Yes, the designations are necessary, and you should (must) know them, but you have much more invested in what flows beneath, cracking them, forcing them up and outward—lava beneath molten rock. You must learn to unlearn. Learn common sense so well that it no longer makes sense to you, until you have forgotten its relevance. Yes, plunge into it with the obnoxious flare of a full-grown adult in a McDonald's playroom full of colorful plastic balls. Have a fabulous time—with a tragic sense of irony. Because, although you do not support McDonald's, in fact, it sickens you, you understand, to some degree, its appeal, its irreversible seat in necessity to those you love. But no, you are no longer a child, careless in your play, without concerns for how outnumbered the green balls are by the yellow, or how bacteria-laden the place is, or really how banal and ridiculous the whole thing looks from the seating area through the fiberglass window. And indeed you can use a McDonald's analogy with a biting sense of its self-effacement, the whole time laughing.

point :

: thinking is not what you think

We are exploring the activity of a new utopianism, that is as it does, that no longer has constructed barricades between its notion and its realization; it is the between, the crux of both theory and action, having no stable content. It does, indeed, hold contents that vary according to its use, but what works within utopia(n)(ism) is always the new, its shape morphs with these encounters at its outer perimeters. Ostensibly, this image is a sitting duck for the very utopian charges it works to unsettle. Not only is the activation and

¹ Ibid., 154.

extension of the concept utopia(n)(ism) required to release latent potential within text—which, in turn, works toward transforming dominant systems—but activating this utopian activity requires us to approach the literary process with a new image of thought, without common sense. Simply stated, to make moves with a porous process, we think the new. It is a tall order. But let it be said that this is already at work, and it has been throughout history, in different manifestations, in the events of “anticipatory illumination.” This is precisely what has us experimenting, connecting the book with *new* utopia(n)(ism), and with the contemporary feminist discussions of the two. But it is the thought activity of Gilles Deleuze and his surrounding populations from which I find crucial and exciting collaborative potential.

: good sense of the common

In “The Image of Thought” from *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze outlines ‘common sense’ as our representation for the foundations of modern thought, largely in terms of first philosophy, that is, the Cartesian *cogito*—the root of perhaps the single most overused philosophical phrases, ‘*cogito ergo sum*’—‘*I think, therefore I am*’. René Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy* has served as a detailed, written analysis of rational Western thought which exposed such naturalized conceptual tendencies as dualism, subject-centeredness, anthropomorphism, objectification, and transcendentalism. Accordingly, it has been crystallized as a target for postmodern departures (alongside utopian thought, which is guilty of the same charges), such as feminist philosophy and deconstructionism. Deleuze, in particular, uses this ‘first’ premise to deny the idea of origin, unfolding the concept of ‘difference’ and, accordingly, arouses a new ‘image of thought’. To begin, he focuses on an assumption behind the proposed ‘first’ premise, which is that “everybody naturally thinks” which carries that “everybody is supposed to know implicitly what it means to think” (131), and therefore, that which is common sense is that which “everybody knows, no one can deny” (131). In other words, it is common sense that we have a common sense. Deleuze arrests common sense—the image of thought—as the basic form of representation which has become completely naturalized (130). We are driven by a dependency on representation, in order to elucidate, to normalize, to validate.

The success which the naturalization of such dependencies has to thank, in large part, the morality of the weak.¹ Moral values derive common sense from and in connection to an “upright nature and a good

¹ The insight of Friedrich Nietzsche briefly mentioned has event in Gilles Deleuze’s discussion of ‘the image of thought’; however, the entirety of this STOP is influenced, directly, by Nietzsche’s own work, *The Will to Power* (see Works Cited).

will" (131), valuing it as 'good sense.' Together, in other words, the sense and the value provide fodder for the moral doxa. Accordingly, what Descartes calls the *Cogito*, is what Nietzsche has named "The Moral Image of Thought" and/or "The Dogmatic Image of Thought." The significance of this is its hindrance of difference, even by means of demonizing it. 'Good' sense, the unity of the senses and common sense, are how we use the senses to consider the object, let's say, and common sense is how we filter the object encountered into an understanding of the Same: the previously known, the familiar, the obvious and so on (and what you know the 'so on' entails is an example in itself). It is this 'good' sense of the common sense and the image of thought they uphold, which Deleuze, Nietzsche...we, are working against, because this image of thought does *not* represent thought.

Common sense, 'good' sense, recognition, representation, the same the same the same, does not constitute thought. Motivated by this crisis of thoughtlessness Deleuze scrupulously dissects, expounds, and viciously reiterates that to think is to engage with the unknown, to create: "To think is to create – there is no other creation – but to create is first of all to engender 'thinking' in thought" (148). The term 'thought' here denotes both what is not thinking—to return to common sense—and to describe what always moves, and exceeds, what alters the common sense, the outside¹—"thought": "thinking in thought." Each exists simultaneously, that is, there is not the one and then the other. We rely on the recognizable. Recognition is what allows us to act successfully in our everyday lives, to know whether or not to check male or female on a questionnaire, that the bus is a mode of transportation, or how to greet a customer. Yes, we are familiar with this common sense. We can 'know' what 'everybody' 'knows', that is, of course we are within the common sense, we know, recognize, the world, the thing, what we encounter in terms of that which has been established. For example, as we re-conceptualize the use of utopia(n)(ism), we still know what Brian Massumi is implying when he says "big utopian picture." And we are still aware of the 'fact' that we are thinking (135). What Deleuze abhors, is the absurd submittal to passivity of thought, to the mere banalities of recognition. Again, this is not thought. Thought is rather, in the words of Elizabeth Grosz, "a wrenching of concepts away from their usual configurations, outside the systems in which they have a home, and outside the structures of recognition that constrain thought to the already known" (AFO 61). It is an active force, positive desire that makes a difference (62).

¹ Hopefully the resemblance of this talk of the 'outside' with 'transcendent truth' may invoke a mild anxiety. This will be the focus of "transcendental empiricism."

Existing within the envelopes of recognition is to pre(re)suppose the Same interior. In other words, a complacent reliance on recognition will only breed the recognizable, "The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognizable and the recognized; form will never inspire anything but conformities" (*D&R* 134). The dogmatic image of thought stunts the event of the radically new, confining creation to mimicry. Deleuze describes this adherence to recognition as "the celebration of monstrous nuptials" in which thought 'rediscovers' the 'State' the 'Church' and—might we add—"the literary genre' the 'gender role' the 'sex act' (136). What is most at stake, what is being assailed, is difference, and difference is that which forces sensibility to sense, forces the imagination to imagine, and thought to think (143). Difference, however, is locked in by the logic of recognition—the preoccupation with clarity and distinctness (146)—by defining difference by way of the 'natural' state from which it differs: "...difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude" (138). This is the crisis. And thus, the utopian player comes to the rescue of difference, of thought. In syndication of Deleuze for the purposes of making architecture *think*, Grosz describes Deleuze's project:

...to free thought from that which captures or captivates it, to free thought from the image, indeed to free thought from representation, from the "transcendental illusions of representation," to give it back its capacity to effect transformation or metamorphosis, to make thinking itself a little bomb or scattergun. (*AFO* 63)

This is precisely the project of re-conceptualizing utopia(n)(ism), to free the symbol of failed hope, and activate it, instead, as one of the many participants in the revolution of thought. Because, it is not enough to explore the implications of dead thought from which we wish to depart, but to use it in the effort toward a new thought, and the suggested alternative is a requirement of utopia(n)(ism). The suggested alternative is utopia(n)(ism), which can most appropriately be described as life.

: immanent transcendence

We want to experience pure thought, feel the vibration of life, connect with the outside, yet the fantasy of essence or a realm existing apart from the banalities of corporeal existence, no longer charm us. This disenchantment is, in large part, the intelligence behind anti-utopian sentiment. How can such a contradiction be reconciled? A philosophy that can escape the trap of recognition, encounter the radically new, while still being applicable to the particular is unimaginable. However, according to Deleuze, this is

precisely the point, because the implication of the phrase, 'a philosophy that has no presupposition', is itself teeming with difference (D&R 132). We are to imagine a philosophy with no anchor, no presupposition, a philosophy immersed in thought – in its pure form. Accordingly, we are to become toward the philosopher (the writer, the reader) who thinks apart from the traditional image of thought, as someone who "neither allows himself to be represented nor wishes to represent anything" (130). Yes, *of course*, this is ridiculous—according to the rationale that has us use 'of course!' against 'ridiculous!'. This is precisely why natural thought—the "universally recognized", naturalized truth born of transcendent thought—has room neither for the *thinker* nor the singularities of revolution (131).

The philosopher, the writer, concerns he[r]-self with creating concepts out of what is impossible to define—that which cannot (as well as may not) be sutured to the familiar—sensing what escapes the senses as far as they are trained to sense. Deleuze appeals to this potential of our faculties, indicating that that they really have no proper limit because they have been repressed by the confines of common sense, without which new faculties may arise (144). However, for new faculties, or uses of faculties to arise, they must reach the limits of their proper use (144). That is, they must encounter what exceeds the reaches of their proper use, the imperceptible, the outside, or, in Deleuzian terms, *difference*.

In her book, *Architecture from the Outside*, Grosz appeals to the concept of 'the outside', what she also calls 'the Thing'.¹ This concept pervades Deleuze's work, thus her own—taking on various forms of words and uses—and is immensely influential to this project. However, despite its assumed positioning within the cliché of postmodern thought, the use of this concept is a conscious resistance to the hegemonic "catch phrase" of postmodernism: 'there is no outside' (65). However, the outside, as used by Deleuze and Grosz, is more porous, maneuverable and freeing really, than the popular conception allows. The outside, Grosz explains, is not a limit, because the boundary, which distinguishes the outside from the inside, becomes a boundary only once it is seen, and if it is seen, it is already being crossed, and thus has moved into an encounter with the outside—a 'thought-event' has occurred—the shape of the inside has changed. Furthermore in regards to a seeming re-capitulation of binary thinking—inside/outside—rather than abandoning such thought, the categories are "played off each other" (65). Grosz offers a crucial description:

¹ Although this section is in specific reference to 'the outside' from the essay, "Architecture from the Outside," Grosz's resonating essay "The Thing" is also relevant. Both of these essays are in *Architecture from the Outside* (see Works Cited).

Binarized categories are played off each other, are rendered molecular, global, and are analyzed in their molar particularities, so that the possibilities of their reconnections, their realignment in different "systems," are established. So it is not as if the outside or the exterior must remain eternally counterposed to an interiority that it contains: rather, the outside is the transmutability of inside...the outside is a virtual condition of the inside, as equally real. (65-6)

The outside is the force behind the senses, what causes the senses to sense...it is that which can be sensed, alluded to, but is simultaneously imperceptible (D&R 143).² It directs, motivates, and permeates the motion of utopia(n)(ism).

Shifting into specifically Deleuzian terms, 'the outside' is 'difference' and 'difference' is both *empirical* and *transcendent*, because although it is encountered it is never encountered comprehensively. Difference is accessed necessarily empirically, but is that which forces the senses to be active in a realm outside of the sensibly accessible. For the convenience of simplicity, a description of the proceedings: difference forces the senses into an encounter with a foreign object, let's say, an 'idea.' It is grasped by the senses and already 'mediated' by what triggered the encounter, however it is uncontainable, foreign. The inability of the senses to recognize and categorize it, can either result in either the adaptation of difference into the same or activation of a transcendent sense—the imagination—despite the fact that it is empirically unimaginable (D&R 144). Thus there is an engaging of a 'transcendental operation' of the faculties, an 'elevation' of the imagination to transcendent activity, because it does not yet exist in our regular empirical pattern. This is the activity of thought. This is where the new displaces the neatly ordered stuff of our interior. It is the activity of *transcendental empiricism*, Deleuze's paradoxical philosophical approach to the forces at play in the new image of thought. The concept itself is, furthermore, an example of its own work. In *Difference and Repetition*, it is offered by Deleuze as "the only way to avoid tracing the transcendental from the outlines of the empirical" (144). In other words, it is the only way to give ample breathing room for the Idea, difference, pure thought from complete suffocation with the laws of common sense, representation, recognition, the Same.

: joyful nihilism

² Deleuze poses the question "What forces sensibility to sense? What is it that can only be sensed, yet is imperceptible at the same time?"...to which the answer, if one can be so simple, is the eternal repetition of radical difference.

This new image of thought, is not so new, but rather the increasing temperature of postmodern activity in terms of rejecting the fixities of traditional thought; however, conceiving of thought as the activity of the eternally-recurring radically new, rather than spiraling into an infinite deferral¹, is an authentic life force, or as Grosz calls Deleuze's thought activity, "an affirmation of life," in the midst of a increasingly nihilistic arena (AFO 62). The rejection of utopia(n)(ism) is itself a first stage of nihilism. And take note, that the progression of nihilism indicates a 'positive' process, in part. Nihilism, according to Nietzsche, is a realization that concepts of "aim", "unity", "truth", "value", and an existence with a "goal and end" are psychological constructs of utility, for purposes of domination, and I might add, sanity (and brilliant ones at that, as they still persist) (*The Will to Power* 12-13). These are the values by which we have tried to predict the world, understand its essence and values by which we posit the human subject—particularly the man—as the meaning and measure of all things (14). The contemporary mistrust toward utopian thought exemplifies a developing nihilistic awareness of idealism, with its attempts toward truth, or more often, its seductive weaving of lies (15). The affects of such consciousness are seismic, because our psychological understanding of the process of life, or what we continue to call *becoming*, loses its direction, it no longer has a goal toward some grand unity, "aims at nothing and achieves nothing" (13), but yet, purposes, directions, and goals (beginnings, middles, and ends) are the skeletal structure of the order in which our world functions. Inadequate dealings with this conflict are what have purported nihilism as a despairing state of mind.

Nietzsche submits descriptions of different forms and intensities of nihilism, which may be affective based on the activity of the nihilist, although each is at risk of being posited negatively by those still 'fortunate' enough to fool themselves (not that the nihilist cares!). The greater the intensity of disbelief, the greater the "freedom of the spirit" or "increase in power," power being not that which oppresses the other, but merely moves the one, and therefore, the many (14). The prominent difference, for the purposes of this discussion, can be summed up by what Nietzsche calls "active" nihilism and "passive" nihilism (17). The *active* nihilist is the one that, after entering into nihilism, increases in the "power of the spirit", acting freely—freedom being the "facility of self-direction" (364)—producing without the confines of cause, unity, completion and so on; conversely the *passive* nihilist has embarked on a decline and recession, and has grown weary. The *passive* turn against one another in the face of nothing, to do whatever "refreshes, heals, calms, numbs,

¹ In reference to Jacques Derrida's *différance*, that is, thinking in terms of deferral and detour, the inherent possibility of presence, and the inherent failure of arrival. Elizabeth Grosz provides a discussion which places Derrida and Deleuze in tandem (AFO 62).

[or] emerges into the foreground in various disguises" (18). They live in a sort of *incomplete* nihilism, a denial of nihilism. And so while disbelieving truth, the struggle for the solidarity of identity continues, and while dethroning the human from the center of the universe, everything continues to be taken personally. While abhorring myth and order, the passive nihilists limit experimentation to defeat and the sickness of hypocrisy, because although there is no point, their focus is still on what it is.

There must be a will to live and create for nothing but life. Nihilism must be admitted to, not to redeem or defend it, but rather to continue past it. If we do not, we would be better off forgetting it entirely and recede into the comforts of modernity (for example), but only to realize that those particular fabrications were what led us to nihilism in the first place. Deleuze has us dive right into our nihilism, joyfully, with energy, with life, and a willingness to experiment in our extreme immanence. And that immanent reality will continue to change because it is always moving toward a confrontation with the outside, which is always new, always in excess – it is life, what moves, amorphous and unpredictable. Rather than a construction of infinite truth or essence, it cannot be anticipated. Therefore, as manifestations of utopia(n)(ism) are contingent on the belief system (or lack thereof) from which it was born, utopian thought born of certain degrees of nihilism, as revealed in contemporary feminist fiction and recent feminist debate, can no longer be accurately designated by beliefs or modernist idealism. Thus, situation considered, has the utopian ideal become a sort of active nihilism? A belief in nothing?

: embracing fear, loving nothing

Fantasies about the future are always, at least in part, projections, images, hopes, and horrors extrapolated from the present, though not simply from the present situation but from its cultural imaginary, its self-representation, its own latencies or virtualities. Whether self-fulfilling and thus prophetic, or wildly fictionalized, these fantasies represent neuralgic points of present investment and anxiety, loci of intense vulnerability, anxiety, or optimism. In this sense, they are more revealing of the status and permeability of the present than they are indices of transformation or guarantees of a present-to-be.

We no longer believe, having exposed our failing psychological fabrications, yet we still cling to the comfort which they were created to provide. We have grown accustomed to fearing uncertainty, to snub aimlessness; we have an addiction to a sense of control. These lingering demands continue to stop us, even as we desire a world where certainty and control are no longer desirable. This is the state of passivity, of incompleteness which Nietzsche warns. Either we refrain from projecting negative valuations onto those things we must face, which in turn *actualizes* the problem, or we revert to a system, which is able to outsmart us successfully into pleasant submission. But we choose the former knowing that the latter will eventually lead back to this state of limbo.

The explorations surrounding the Deleuzian image of thought, as it is derived from the influence of Nietzsche, Bergson, Foucault, and as it is currently being played out in Deleuzian feminisms through thinkers such as Elizabeth Grosz and Claire Colebrook, continues to normalize, and posit as positive that which 'the morality of thought' deters us from embracing. When we accept the risk of active thought, *hope* and *desire* are not as they were. We no longer blindly desire in terms of some 'thing' we believe to have lost, a compulsory drive behind contemporary Western Civilization, as Deleuze and Guattari expose in their work on psychoanalysis. ² Rather than lack and demand, desire is connected to joy (*DI* 100). We simply desire that which we are doing. Because no truth awaits us, we must create it as we go (52). We can conceive of desire, as Ian Buchanan in reference to Deleuzian thought, as a total system, "complete at every moment" (*Deleuzism* 52). The implication is freedom from fabricated causes—beginnings, and the unnecessary extermination of process—endings. We act without a destination, not *because* we lack one, but rather because, in the words of Nietzsche, "a definite goal is not necessary at all" (17). But, furthermore, and perhaps, the most difficult to accept, is that without a goal, the future "cannot possibly be anticipated" (17).

Within rational boundaries, this is a terrifying foundation for agency, or lack thereof. Moreover, it is the fear of such uncertainty that had us predicting, and constructing in the first place. And it is this fear that has us maintaining the tradition in order to predict, in order to construct from a stable space. In her emphasis on time, the virtual and futurity, Elizabeth Grosz addresses anxiety arising from the risks of entering into

¹ Ibid., 49.

² This work is mainly concentrated in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (see works cited), but persists throughout both Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari's oeuvre. Some of the major points will be further developed as the project accelerates.

unforeseeable, uncontainable change. She attributes this discomfort to an inability to accept instability and a lack of control, as well as the difficulty in accepting that the struggle will never end ("Thinking of the New"). The fear of never-ending movement is symptomatic of a severe dissatisfaction with the present. That is, looks toward an end because one despises the middle, and has a tendency to blame the beginning for the bad state of the middle. Just as the logic of recognition, or the common sense image of thought, projecting fantasies into the future merely limits the future to the Same, and as the hatred of the middle indicates, the Same is not where we would like to stay. Therefore, it is precisely in the middle that we move, and refrain from limiting *potential* to what we deem *possible*. Grosz writes, "we cannot know what the new will bring, what the promise of the future is for us; to know the future is to deny it as future, to place it as a given, as past" (*Becomings* 6).

The future remains to be a significant aspect to utopia(n)(ism), but is left untouched by our projections. This acceptance forfeits dreams of destination for the sake of process, opening *further* possibilities for change. However, an experimental player's exodus begs a willingness and expectation for error and failure (Grosz "Deleuze's Bergson" 229). But as Brian Massumi imparts, there is freedom in the chance, in the random, there is room:

This uncertainty can actually be empowering once you realize that it gives you a margin of maneuverability and you focus on that, rather than on projecting success or failure. It gives you the feeling that there is always an opening to experiment, to try and see. This brings a sense of potential to the situation. (212)

And, this uncertainty, as Massumi suggests, produces a *new* understanding of hope. Hope, in this active nihilism, is not destroyed but rather altered; as *failure* has been released from its compulsory position in negativity, hope has been released from its compulsory origins in silly optimism.

Australian writer and philosopher, Mary Zoumazi, compiled a book of interviews with major contemporary thinkers, on the connection between hope and revolutionary politics born from postmodern melancholy: *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Brian Massumi, who is perhaps best known for his work on and translation of Deleuze, was one of those interviewed. Rather than connecting hope to the value positions of optimism and pessimism, "from a wishful projection of success or even some kind of a rational calculation of outcomes", he places it in the present (211). In this way, to hope is not to believe in a better future, per say, but is more accurately "being right where you are, more intensely" (212). Our freedom, therefore, is measured on "how intensely we are living and moving" (214). The judgment of success or failure is not based on wrong

or right, as a system of ethics, but rather, we make the distinction between 'good' and bad' within terms of *becoming*¹, the 'good' being that which brings *becoming* to its maximum potential (218). Hope, in this sense is the intensity of living and as Alphonso Lingis says in another Zoumaz interview, "it is necessary to hope for nothing in order to undertake any action" (215).

Nevertheless, this is not merely a silly attempt to think in terms of nothing happening while motivated by a will for change. There will be outcomes, they will be many, will propel others, will have event in a variety of times and spaces, and their events will not end. However, obsessing over when, or thinking in terms of infinity, inhibits the revolution. Neither arrival nor infinity are containable concepts; therefore, they are irrelevant and only serve to discourage or stop movement altogether. As Deleuze and Parnet discussion in *Dialogues*, questions regarding outcome, regarding the future of revolution, impede the revolutionary-becoming of people (147). Furthermore, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari impart that thinking of process in terms of either finality or infinity is "tantamount to ending it abruptly and prematurely" (5). Thus, in the use of hope, desire, revolution, and, of course, utopia(n)(ism), the energy placed into over-coding should be redirected to enhancing the freedom of flow.

: academic utopia / experimental domain – the elitism of the estranged

Who are these active nihilists, these new utopians, so freely living in the moment, thriving on the thrill of the unknown, thinking the unthinkable? Are we to imagine a rare species of arrogant academics, writers, and thinkers, who forge ahead brilliantly, while the lay persons, fall behind, distracted by the steaks thrown at them like simple-minded guard dogs of truth constructions? Well yes, this is how it translates if approached in the terms of the personal, of the argument. Increments of subject glorification can only be fabricated because measurement is impossible in the midst of difference, in the midst of the space of utopia(n)(ism), just in the midst. There is no stopping to reflect, no working toward, no degree of failure, success or general proximity to achieving an ideal academic exchange: an academic utopia of sorts. One simply reads, engages, writes and teaches; one does, or does not, in different increments, consistencies, according to one's own intensity, as a small part of a vast process.

¹ The concept of 'becoming' will be brought to the foreground of the discussion during STOP 4: "identity into multiplicity" (see page 35).

This project is intended to express agents of change as being spread across vast, horizontal networks of planes in pieces differing in size, speed, and intensity. These events cross paths, feed one another, working in very different ways, but are always relevant to the others. One agent may not have seen another for decades, but they are bound to meet again. What they do have in common is that they are agents of change. One agent builds on the plane; another tries to work the laws of the plane as livable as possible for the populations there, while another is working on the temperature, and another on the cognitive process that leads to the law. However, it is difficult to see that one agent cannot move without affecting the other, indeed, one may be an outside that frees the other from behind an unrecognized boundary. Awakening awareness regarding the movement of players in other realms is crucial for successful collaboration and affectivity on multiple planes.

The utopian player in the academic arena chooses to transverse the boundaries into an experimental domain. The space of utopia(n)(ism). The player's entrance requires a departure from safety, but an acknowledgment of conformity when conformity is due, as long there is a continuous push to the boundaries. It requires a willingness to be misunderstood, disregarded, or even disliked because the vibrations of the experimental domain are difficult to detect from the interior and practically imperceptible from arenas other than the academic. Therefore, the utopian, if considered within the terms of elitism, would likely be positioned low on the hierarchy scale. Neither does the utopian think of he[r]-self in terms of intellectual superiority, [s]he has given up on such terms, being no better, no worse, than the grass, or an electrical current. Yet [s]he speaks in an arena which is unlikely to support her, but rather flares, even constructs, the frail mental health of he[r] creativity. He[r] ideas are considered "harmful and forbidden", and thus, [s]he is subject to the "suppression of those passions" (*The Will to Power* 465). The utopian is, in this sense, estranged.

: a community of the estranged

One cannot work alone as a closed subject. Community, collaboration, alliance—support—is crucial to the process of academic utopia(n)(ism). Those whom I would consider actively utopian—Deleuze, Guattari, Nietzsche—express a necessity for *collaborative* revolution in thought. Deleuze writes:

We're looking for allies. We need allies. And we think these allies are already out there, that they've gone ahead without us, that there are lots of people who've had enough and are thinking, feeling, and working in similar directions: it's not a question of fashion but of a deeper "spirit of the age" informing converging projects in a wide range of fields. (NO 22)

Although the alliance shares in common a revolutionary-desire, utopia(n)(ism) requires and encourages variety, in order to create new alignments, in order to experiment, and in order to become toward one another. In other words, a sort of common goal that defies the idea of the common goal, that being, movement, difference, which supercedes the boundaries between disciplines, political interest, and other such unnecessary territorial distinctions. Therefore, each is less pitted against one another because they leak into one another (literary, philosophical, political). So perhaps we can visualize this utopian community with an image Deleuze and Guattari expound of a pack of wolves in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Each wolf is independently active, solitary, but they travel together (33). There is no leader and no follower. One stands beside the other, all with their backs "naked and exposed to the wilderness" (34).

This community is open, but demands of its members that they trust, act, and contribute rather than stop the movements of other players. Everyone is playing offense. This involves supporting one another, but not by means of roles such as dependant and provider, because in the conceptually experimental domain flows act in synergy. Then, for example, the delicate health of the writer would no longer be so. As Deleuze writes, "madness would no longer exist as madness...because it would receive the support of all other flows" (AO 321). The community is growing, with increased overlap and thus the growing hegemony of the experimental movement is apparent. We have already been made aware of the delicate health of the writer, we have already made the rejection of truth, of the meta, of the neutral, into a cliché. Has this lack of structure, the multi-faceted movements that the institution has tagged with the postmodern label taken the place as our new psychological construct? Absolutely. This is the facticity of the conceptual space one second behind and the error some time ahead of each player. But while conscious of the necessity to stop, to normalize, and the perpetuation of more practical domains, the utopian players are always engaging with the new. It is a proclamation which ironically lingers in ideals.

: replacement ideals

Utopia(n)(ism) re-conceptualized has ideals, but ideals that reject ideas of perfection and completion. The very necessity of articulating these 'ideals' already disengages the fantasy of perfection. The effort

toward the ideals of utopia(n)(ism) is to play at escaping terms of idealism: the ideal book is a structure that is structure-less; an ideal writer is unidentifiable, socially unacceptable, a destroyer; the ideal reader thrives off of the failure of the first two ideal formless-forms. And as concepts overlap, create one another, each of the ideals feed into one another, such as the writer, the reader, and other such elements of literary exchange. It is the utopia of the excluded, meaning it is inclusive and its members are respectful of absolutely everything, but perhaps they show their admiration, affection in different ways – by means of violent transformation, manipulation and dethroning. Academic, philosophical, literary utopia is a black hole and a growth of weeds on an infinite, well-nourished plane. We are trying to bring our work, how we read, and write, in this particular discussion, to better manifest the Thing, Difference, the Flux, in our creative processes. As a result, these ideals are not stable, they will change, that is the foundation of their idealism. And it is possible to produce without the confines of cohesion, or agreement, especially if those are increasingly exposed in their irrelevance. Much more is produced outside such concerns. Is this then a privileging of quantity over quality? In a way, but quality is a *value* construction, based on a pre-nihilistic morality. It seems quantity may have been strategically devalued, precisely because quality shut down its numbers, encouraged the one over the many.

Rather than maintain the scrutiny of quality by judging new combinations of experiment in the terms of success or failure, the utopian makes use of failure due to an acknowledgement of complexity, that renovation is continuous, and that change is often gradual and imperceptible. Even to those creating it. In the colloquial of the everyday, thought returns to its designated area, but each time players engage, stepping further into utopia(n)(ism), separately and/or collectively in active thinking, the colloquial takes longer to find those places upon their return. Articulations and moments of clarity, produce new and perhaps even more complex problems: "The 'price' of philosophical activity is revealed whenever a lucid and cogent articulation attracts the insurgence of problems even more irresistibly than they were previously elicited" (92). And we will always have problems, for which we will work for solutions, which will, in turn, elicit more problems.

An intermediary species arises: the artist, restrained from crime by weakness of will and social timidity, and not yet rope for the madhouse, but reaching out inquisitively toward both spheres with his antennae: this specific culture plant, the modern artist, painter, musician, above all the novelist...

- Friedrich Nietzsche from *The Will to Power*¹

STOP 4: THE WRITER

pivot :

The whole model has been violently shifted sideways... all of its contents jostled out of position. Little plastic cows and trees have tumbled to the side, knocking the toothpick fences out of their poked cardboard holes, and the silver silo has de-glued at the foundations on one side, threatening the life of the little plastic overall-clad farmer fallen at its leaning side. If the concept of utopia(n)(ism) is jostled, the utopian writer is, of course, jostled as well. Exercising the conceptual move away from traditional utopia(n)(ism) requires a utopian writer whose approach exercises the process. Many of those accused of being conventionally utopian were motivated by this process, context considered, the desire moving them not death by stopping. But this does not mean that a writer producing replications of those before help]. The writer lives by desire, and works to keep it alive. If you must, call the writers who are circling deep within the puddles left behind by the fury of a now retired flood, 'dreamers', 'idealists', 'naïve', 'unrealistic', if you have the energy to waste (and the arrogance to deny that you know they are there simply because you have paid long visits to similar whimsies). But acknowledge those that free contained water into streams, cracks, crevasses—the water must be kept moving. And either hate or love those writers producing with utopian force, because they are violently moving things, causing mudslides and avalanches. They cause discomfort and the complication of paradox. But regardless of your valuation, the writer populations have already begun creating multiple passages beneath the ground—horizontal, imbedded and imperceptible, making their populations increasingly difficult to recognize, to define, to harness, and therefore, to punish.

point :

: what/ who is the new utopian writer? identity into multiplicity

What difference does it make who is speaking?"

- Michel Foucault from "What is the author?"²

Defining a writer engaged in the experimental domain within terms of 'who' or 'what' is unacceptable because this writer writes away from such exact thinking (not to be confused with clear thinking).

Consequently, this STOP will base a description of the writer more on help] virtual activity as a utopian player, rather than the details of help] job description, for example. The writer, here, is not merely someone who writes, even if [s]he is a master of literary and philosophical rhetoric. The writer should be considered as a concept that can be moved by anyone, so long as [s]he is no one, but rather a translation into motion, into writing. As Deleuze and Parnet describe the difference between writing as person (or author) and writing as moving the concept:

writing is very simple, either it is a way of reterritorializing oneself, conforming to a code of dominant utterances, to a territory of established states and things... Or else, on the other hand, it is becoming, becoming something other than a writer, since what one is becoming at the same time becomes something other than writing. (DI/ 74)

¹ Ibid. 460

² Ibid. 332

The writer writes because [s]he is moving, and being moved. Writing about what [s]he does not know and what may not be beneficial to he[r]-self, [s]he is a pivot point of the multi-directional forces that vibrate he[r], that [s]he has no choice to sound, that maintain he[r] nomadic position in the in-between. In other words, the writer is an 'event,' an 'infinite' of being (DII 66).

It is insufficient to designate a name, or a list of names, to the concept of the utopian writer—without, at least, some resistance. They have names, of course, because there are people, faces, behind the writer, but once in the domain of the writer—a faceless, monstrous domain—such obvious reductions without a careful respect for the larger picture, propels a distraction and denial of the effects of the project at hand. The project at hand is a movement away from thought that settles into the conditions of subject, authorship, identity, and into the amorphous and multiplicitous. The multiplicity of the writer accurately implies that he[r] work is never simply he[r] own, rather it overlaps with the voices of those before it and its midst. Respectively, the person in the work, the singular being with a proper name, is only “temporary, transitory, an evanescent point of subjectivation”, as Deleuze describes of himself, Guattari, and Parnet in their collaborative work (DII ix). Notions of authorship, and writer identity, cohere to the image of thought from which utopia(n)(ism) departs, again halting a movement in the effort to gather and reflect rather than act and create. Deleuze and Foucault acknowledge the connection between multiplicity and action:

For us, the intellectual and theorist have ceased to be a subject, a consciousness, that represents or is representative. And those involved in political struggle have ceased to be represented, whether by a party or a union that would in turn claim for itself the right to be their conscience. Who speaks and who acts? It's always a multiplicity, even in the person that speaks or acts. We are all groupuscles. There is no more representation. There is only action, the action of theory, the action of praxis, in the relations of relays and networks. (“Intellectuals and Power” 207)

Contradictorily, the struggle of the theorist or political activist may be, in fact, for identity (think, for example, of the feminist preoccupation with identity politics), which in contradiction serves to create the outcast, the dejected, depressed, detained—the dead—stopping the events and flows of those who seem to leak into the in-betweens. *Identity always presupposes conformity.*

So shall the one be abandoned for the other? That is, the struggle for subject stability, or as Deleuze and Guattari call it the ‘molar’ for a complete explosion of self into the ‘molecular’?¹ Not in such definitive

¹ *Molar* and *molecular* are terms utilized by Deleuze and Guattari to describe the intensity of subject stabilization, molar being the most contained (an the primary example being man), and molecular being the least contained. See for example, chapter 3 & 10 of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

terms and not without "injections of caution," involving a careful inclusion and knowledge of the One, the grasp of identity, as owned by the dominant structures (ATP 150). However, identity must not have a central place, because when occupied, the center becomes a wall between thought and action.

In the essay "Intellectuals and Power," Deleuze and Foucault speak of the gap between theory and action as though it were already emptied, as though identity has already exploded into multiplicity. However, they are neither speaking of a future ideal nor are they creating the radically new. Rather, they are acknowledging the potential that already exists, is already being created, is already moving, but requires a radically new acknowledgement and nourishment in order to drastically alter things. A deliberate movement away from identity will transform the force, motivation, product and effects of theory and literature. Imagine the writer no longer speaking to reflect he[r]-self, to protect or create some identity, [s]he will not bind he[r]-self, and thus anyone or anything encountered, to he[r] own troubles and evils—he[r] own neuroses—therefore, what is produced will not be limited to the needs of the group [s]he identifies with, to he[r] personalized need. Any one can write from one's own neuroses, project one-self—that is, the position we hold with braced arms and limbs—into books that are no more than those projections, various little predications of fixed author-personalities (which are further stabilized by such projections). The writer does not write from he[r] neuroses because it offers nothing new, nothing but the privilege of he[r] perspective. The activity of writing, thus, as the activity of the writer who is always becoming, always in between, outside of he[r]-self occupies the same strides. As Deleuze describes it, "writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience" ("Literature and Life" 1). So rather than assuming that the writer is abandoning responsibility to a political cause or struggle, the writer virtually sacrifices the self to engage in something larger, things that [s]he will provide with the satisfaction that is mistakenly assumed to *originate in completion*.

The 'sacrifice' of the writer, however, cannot be confused with slavery to a guilt-driven self-denial, because life is not regarded through terms of deprivation, loss and lack.¹ The writer is fully engaged in what Deleuze and Parnet call an 'involution'² toward 'imperceptibility'³, decreasing dependency on the gratuitous

¹ See also STOP 3: "embracing fear, loving nothing" (page 26).

² The process of *involution* is the term used to express the process of becoming toward imperceptibility. It is intentionally more accurate than *evolution* because evolution insinuates an increase in complexity, a higher step on the hierarchical ladder (DII 29).

voice of consumption that says *'feed your-self, stuff your-self with food and acknowledgement. Want this because you deserve it, because you are accomplished.'* The writer, instead, thriving on pure intensity, positive desire, and forces of creativity (ATP 163-5), does not require these things, and therefore, is deprived of nothing.

A positive destruction of self is surely difficult for conventional reason to comprehend, just as it has been difficult to comprehend the destruction of morality. Indeed, the notion sounds like good material for a conventionally dystopian novel. Recognize, however, that this activity requires a conscious decision, a conscious entity engaging in conscious movements which transform the conception and, therefore, construction of reality that exceeds the writer's own reality or conventional job description. Thus, writing is an ethically embedded action, which calls for care and a seriousness of responsibility. Brian Massumi defines ethics in terms of becoming, and that becoming must be recognized as having consequences, because it participates in processes larger than ourselves (214; 218). In other words, this living openness is not about the writer, the individual, it is about movement and connectedness that is directly connected to reality. Proportionately, the writer must know that he[r] becoming is relevant, or at the very least, must be aware that what motivates he[r] is not limited to a concern for validation or position. Deleuze explains it better:

It is possible that writing has an intrinsic relationship with lines of flight. To write is to trace lines of flight which are not imaginary, and which one is indeed forced to follow, because in reality writing involves us there, draws us in there. To write is to become, but has nothing to do with becoming a writer. (DII 43)

The process of becoming is a deliberate engagement of the subject into a drastic movement away from his or her solidified, fixed, "molar" identity. It is a freeing of fixities by allowing the invasion of the substances (conceptual, spiritual, material, whatever) of other subjectivities, animals, and things. It is a crucial concept to the activity of the utopian player.

'Becoming' intonates exactly what it seems to, to be 'becoming'...not to be-'being'...not to be-'something'...to always be-'becoming' something else, something different; one does not 'become' something else, one 'becomes'-*toward* something else, mixing with its active attributes as it is simultaneously altered, thus the attributes of 'becoming' belong to neither but rather to the becoming-between the two. In other words, one steps outside of itself, not into the other, but in a space in between, the other does the same. Deleuze and Parnet describe this space as "a narrow gorge like a border or a frontier which will turn the set

³ Imperceptibility must be understood as a process in the opposite direction...it is an increase in simplicity, requiring less luxury, less self-indulgences in order to survive. It is inspired by the natural elements that know nothing of the collected person: the wind (ATP chapter 10).

into a multiplicity" (132). It is a process of renovation, reusing, recycling that makes the writer uncontainable, in constant flux: "we are deserts, but populated by tribes, flora and fauna. We pass out time in ordering these tribes, arranging them in other ways, getting rid of some and encouraging others to prosper" (*DII* 11). It is a continuous process, a passing from one form to another toward imperceptibility. Deleuze and Guattari describe this sequence of becoming toward imperceptibility:

A kind of order or apparent progression can be established for the segments of becoming in which we find ourselves; becoming-woman, becoming-child; becoming-animal, -vegetable, or -mineral; becomings-molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles. (*ATP* 272)

This process of becoming is a simultaneous creation of, and plunging into, what Deleuze and Guattari call 'the Body without Organs' (BwO), the conceptual structure (in partnership with the concept of the rhizome which will be covered in STOP 6) which is a description of space of utopia(n)(ism), or the experimental domain.

The BwO is a "field of immanence" or, "plane of consistency" (*ATP* 154) where the hierarchical, ego-driven and phallus-centered, psychoanalytic significations, both corporeal and psychical, are disorganized. It is the space which the de-subjectifying subject clears and a space where the subject can self-destruct in a conscious process of de-organization, through a sort of simultaneous break-down and break-through, opening the deconstructing self, the body, the plane, everything, to other BwOs (158). As Deleuze and Guattari explain, creating BwOs is crucial: "It's a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out" (151). It is the remaining space for creation, transformation, experimentation—utopia(n)(ism), and it is the event of the writer he[r]-self. Writing is an activity through which we both work in and create BwOs.¹

: three textures of the utopian writer

After freeing the writer from the negative desire for identity and reduction to the terms of 'what's and 'who's, there are three qualities which enhance an openness to becoming and are, therefore, particularly existent in the person involved in writing: 1. Well-read; 2. Estranged; 3. Of a delicate health. While the first will be a silent actor until "STOP 9: The Reader", the second and third will wait no longer.

¹ Accusation: this is a shameless glorification or crowning of the writer and the activity of writing. But we are no longer looking at this writing in terms of being on person, in terms of perfection and an understanding of mistake and failure as being synonymous. It is not really about the writer at all, but what those who engage in utopian writing encounter and how it transforms their reality and what the product of the writing makes active. Our thought is still in violent contradiction to the language which must be used in the attempt to express it. And it is such collisions of contradiction that simultaneously expose limitation while introducing the first stages of that limitation's evolutionary adaptation.

Estrangement is a condition of 'being' that seems to remain consistent among 'great writers', regardless of the radical difference between their particular contexts. It is also a recognized strategy behind conventional utopian and SF theory and literature.¹ However, estrangement is not limited to speaking from the bitterness of one's disjunction from the dominant structure. Although this disjunction is not comfortable, it is not the focus of literature or philosophy, but rather what invigorates an approach to the dominant structure from an irregular angle. In this way, think of the writer as a sort of foreigner to the environment, for whatever reason, whose 'outside' perspective, if used productively, naturally alters what is encountered as what is encountered will conversely alter the foreigner.

Throughout the essays "He Stuttered" and "Literature and Life" and the book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze writes inspired by writers forced to write outside of their mother tongue and thus into inventive approaches to the dominant language. It is a sort of becoming of language from the major language, the language of the 'majoritans' to the minor 'language'...again dispersal into multiplicity. But multiplicity extends beyond large distinctions such as one major language system and another. Rather, what is considered as one, as we have discovered in our discussion of the concept of the concept, is rather multifarious. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze and Parnet write, "the point is not 'bilingual', 'multilingual'; the point is that every language is itself so bilingual, itself so multilingual, that one can stutter in one's own language, be a foreigner in one's own language, that is, push ever further the points of deterritorialization of assemblages" (DII 116). Consequently, Deleuze challenges the writer, who writes in he[r] first language, to make "language stutter" by approaching it as though [s]he were a "foreigner" or "stranger," to unfamiliarize he[r]-self to its convention in order to undermine its structure ("He Stuttered" 24).

The sentence of the sentence:

I have nothing to write...except that it pisses me off that my computer changes all words at the beginning of the sentence to a capital lettered word...some word that is more important than all the others in the chain. Or perhaps we require an additional indication of a new sentence 'on top of the preceding period. But, the period also reminds us that the sentence has come to an end. Can it not indicate both? And then language would breach a static beginning and end...not entirely though, not really at all. But it's a start....yes. No? Perhaps. This is a beginning capitalized word followed so expectantly by the ending period...a perfect and revealing sample of the English language. Perhaps. Yet, it is nothing more than neither a postponed no or a

¹ Estrangement as a literary device is discussed in more depth within STOP 7 "ONE – changing spaces" of this project (see pages 76-7).

hesitant yes. It is nothing without either one of two other utterances. Yes. No. And I am convinced that a woman, instigating sub-law through her manipulative submission, created the comma. An untimely pause in the middle of structure, used for thoughtful delay, for pragmatic communication of the fluid kind. A slight alteration, rubato music to the dead lay of black markings.

Being a foreigner, a stranger, feeling excluded from one's own language is a 'familiar' estrangement to women and one that has taken up a large degree of energy in feminist theory and literature (which is, by this time, too well known). Feminist theorists and writers such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig, and Joan Copjec (just to name a few), have argued that the 'feminine' exists outside of the symbolic order—her body, her language, her-self—and therefore, leaves an entirely open space toward creating a new language: *écriture féminine*, written both from the real (the body) and the unconscious. Basically, the patriarchal language, which translates as the system of order that, according to the hegemonic representation of psychoanalytic theory, must be adhered to for the sake of sanity, constructed around the privileging of the male subject; therefore, language systems both subordinate the female subject and suppress the emergence of her according to her being. Virginia Woolf writes within her experience of such struggles with the oppression of patriarchal language:

But it is still true that before a woman can write exactly as she wishes to write, she has many difficulties to face. To begin with, there is a technical difficulty – so simple, apparently; in reality, so baffling – that the very form of a sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use. (145)

A woman must, accordingly, 'alter and adapt' until she can write in a way that "takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it" (145). According to Cixous, for example, a woman's political act of resistance is to learn to speak her own language (Burwell 180). However, the language of patriarchy is all she knows, and therefore, she must create a new language.¹

But as those working in their mother language work to approach that language as a foreigner, men—the accused—as well as women, must work to approach language as a non-neutral subject, as woman. The male subject, too, struggles beneath the bonds of dominant structures and must be freed from the false responsibility to take ownership and action over and above everything which is in opposition to him, which now seems to be everything including the woman spinning joyfully in her wide-open field of fallow. As Luce Irigaray informs us, because women are already strangers to language, they are key to loosening the

¹ The concept of *écriture féminine* will be discussed in greater depth during STOP 5: "making language move" (page 82).

strongholds of its structure, not only for themselves, but for those trapped as the masculine 'other' (*An Ethics of Sexual Difference* 136). And this woman, this writer, can approach language as a stranger in order to invoke the transformative power of estrangement for the reader as well. This is also why, in Deleuze and Guattari's chain of becoming², becoming-woman, a concept that resonates with Irigaray's vision of the female, is the first step: "It is the key to all other becomings" (ATP 277). The concept of becoming-woman, however, has suffered severe consequence in the feminist reception of Deleuze and Guattari's. Bringing this discussion to a near halt.

A question then: Are feminisms compatible with this project of identity break down, this movement away from the personal? This discussion is endeavoring in a heavy utilization of Deleuzian thought to move the use of and perspective on feminist (if you will) utopia(n)(ism), what are regarded within this context as very positive directions; however, there are three particularly predominant feminist arguments against the rhetoric saturating this project that should, at the very least, be acknowledged. Firstly, Deleuze is accused of exploiting and romanticizing an actual history of women's oppression (as well as the 'anorexic', 'schizophrenic', and the 'girl') for the purposes of man's progression (Shukin 149). This is uncannily familiar in a conversation about departing from utopic blueprints that benefit one at other's expense. Secondly, it places women in a troublesome position on the chain, regardless of which direction one considers its movement, that is, she is both one down from man, or the least among his becomings (154). Thirdly, Deleuzian thought is accused of 'conveniently' disregarding the identity of woman just when she has begun to place her subjectivity within the order of things. These three contentions considered, exploring Deleuze's theoretical framework from a feminist standpoint requires a suspension of belief, but once considered in assemblage with the process of utopia(n)(ism), can feed the revolutionary potential of feminist theory.² That being said, it is, admittedly a catch 22 situation because thinking the process of utopia(n)(ism) (away from identity, as active nihilist etc) is required for such a suspension of disbelief. Thus one re-enters the paradox of discussion.

So, as a means of clarification, I offer a quick summary of *what Deleuzian thought does* (why it is useful to feminist theory): It clears space to roam between metaphysical oppositions, performed by the 'method of AND' where one concept, body or entity can be addressed alongside any other, creating new

² Refer to quote on page 36.

² The useful elements are also laid out in Grosz' *Volatile Bodies* 164-166.

combinations (DII 34); It conceives of difference beyond the illusions of identity, opposition, analogy, resemblance and representation; The body is reduced neither to a locus for consciousness nor an organically determined entity: Which includes an emptying of the hierarchical delineation of its organs; And, finally, but by no means exhaustively, it provides an escape from our sad resignation to castration and lack (AO 59). Desire is, instead, expressed as a positive force, a space for creative action and the affirmation of difference and becomings (Olkowski "Nietzsche's Dice Throw" 121). Deleuze causes the subject and object to collide at the very root of our grammar, scattering them in a multiplicity of combinations, which challenges us with the question: who has us believe that by losing these co-ordinates we lack something? (DII 90). The complication of the subject and object breaches new cites down to our very language.

: problem #3 - convenient disregard for the budding female subject

'We need to have a second sex before we can have a 3rd, 4th, 5th...'

Feminism as a politics of identity is deeply ingrained into its history because it began as, and still moves within the needs, efforts, and lives of a particular group of people—women. But what is *that*? What is 'woman'? It is indeed a saturated question. Derived from the psychoanalytic realization that 'she' is actually nothing but a reflection of the male desire, and as Joan Copjec describes that 'she' is so inscribed within the symbolic that 'she' is "absolutely undecidable within it" (227), 'we' have been trying to answer that question ever since. In *The Sex Which is Not One*, Irigaray writes that "the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by the male subject. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one" (86). Accordingly, she has endeavored toward creating an ethics of difference, working to symbolize the feminine and make woman one in herself, apart from her oblivious provision of what man believes he lacks (Lorraine 194; 136). It is a need that has been met with an onslaught of writing 'her' into history, to create 'her' own language, to write 'her' story, create 'her' identity. Hence from this the crisis continued (as one solution always beautifully leads to another problem) from the postcolonial realization that 'woman', from the mouths of the white, middle-class academics, was an exclusive term. Theoretical answers have been silenced by the impossibility of an all-inclusive identity politics. The problem extends: how can 'we' take solid, political action—how can 'we' make a difference when 'we' are separated in the fragments and chaotic tornado of postmodern theory? Suggestions and satirical critiques have materialized as what have been considered as 'utopian' forms, in the conventional sense, such as variations of feminist separatism and systems involving a

reversal of power. In other words, binary thinking in oppositions like the oppressed/ the oppressor. Such manifestations are targets for anti-utopian arguments, and have come to define feminist utopian fiction. For example, consider this definition constructed by Sally Miller Gearhart that Lucy Sargis uses as a representation of the conventional, and thus, restrictive approach to feminist utopian literature:

A feminist utopian novel is one which a. contrasts the present with an envisioned idealized society (separated from the present by time or space), b. offers a comprehensive critique of present values/conditions, c. sees men or male institutions as a major cause of present social ills, and d. presents women not only as at least the equals of men but also as the sole arbiters of their reproductive functions. (qtd in *CFU* 30)

But clearly, feminism, even in its attempt to recreate the female subject, is undergoing continuous renovation in order to escape such reductions. But a disregard of the subject altogether would be like tearing the whole house down just when the foundations seem as though they had begun to stabilize.

In "Is Sexual Difference a Problem?" Claire Colebrook intimates that Deleuze lacks the foundation of sexual difference that drives Irigaray's work, and therefore much of what is moving in feminism (124). However, Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the importance of woman taking control of her subjectivity: "It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own subjectivity" (*ATP* 276). This "conducting" of "molar" (that is, unified) politics is a necessary collection of herself in order to maintain functionality in the world: "you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality" (160). They add, however, that these stages must be understood as passing moments. A respect and care for that which aids one's success in the world need not, as Deleuze and Guattari word it, "confine one...to such a subject, which does not function without drying up a spring or stopping a flow" (276). Irigaray contends, to this delicate contradiction, that the imperfectly ideal woman she constructs is not containable or representable although she is still woman (Lorraine 40). Her maintenance of the female subject is, as best described by Tamsin Lorraine, "a notion of difference and embodied specificity that would ultimately undermine the very notion of sexual difference with which she starts" (41). And although fixed or molar forms are necessary to adhere to, one need not follow them blindly, but, instead, treat them as strategic mechanisms for success and survival (like common sense: STOP 3). The awareness of adherence, in itself, transforms a passive resignation into a deliberate activity. Irigaray makes the woman active in her mimicry of 'femininity': "one must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to

thwart it" (*The Sex Which is not One* 76). Deleuze and Guattari advance Irigaray's sentiments, saying that one must "keep small supplies of signifiante and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force[s one] to" (ATP 160). Here they support the notion that despite theoretical movements, we still live in the banalities of everyday compromise (largely based on the category of our genitalia), but an overcompensation, or elevation of these conditions, is not equivalent to using these systems against themselves, but rather a hyper-exaggeration of sorts.

: counter-problem #3a - preoccupied with the feminist self

Charge: feminism's predominant involvement with issues of subjectivity, identity and otherness has nurtured a stagnant preoccupation with 'ourselves'.¹ This charge does not insinuate that women are no longer in need of liberating or that the locus of recent theoretical discourse has lost its significance, and does not deny the crucial work of those who are active in these areas. It does, however, beg an extension. Speaking into the silence, our absence, has occupied a vital struggle for recognition and relevance fought by projecting 'ourselves'—'our' personal experiences—in forceful waves—into every space. And becoming acquainted with such feminist interactions is crucial to extending past the present condition; however, this struggle has been settled as the discursively 'safe' motion of feminism as it is reflected through thought, the arts, and political activism. Although this 'safety' serves as both a necessary and substantial shelter, an adherence to the same questions within the same structures has reduced 'Women's Studies' and feminism to 'women', both as signifier and as signified, and has jammed the developing discipline of "Gender" into the same pockets of conceptual exploration.²

What if this tensing skin were punctured to release the matter of importance, freeing those on the outer edges that are prepared to exit, making space for those who have been pressed motionless in the center to make their outward passage toward eventual release? The addition of the female voice is no longer accurately about noticing her absence, identifying her there, and then stabilizing that identity; it is about the influential spread of her contagion, and her movements toward becoming, which extend past the major into the details of the minor, from the molar to the molecular, from the personal, to the impersonal. There are

¹ Elizabeth Grosz reveals her exasperation with feminism's obsession with the self, the personal, that she suggests merely feed into reactivism and stagnancy (see 'interview' in Works Cited).

² Refer to STOP 2: "why utopia(n)(ism)?" (see page 15).

those who have already been familiarized and re-familiarized with theories regarding the absence of sexual difference in the history of thought, a world riddled with metaphysical dualisms and a symbolic order dominated by the phallus. These innovative voices, exploring outside of the spaces into the impersonal, passing between the fluxes of theoretical structures and into the uncertainties of the future, have been regarded as somewhat unreliable and ineffectual to the feminist cause. But such work, aptly considered, may dislodge feminisms from their fixities and dislodge the subject of their discussion from "woman" because it is an undesirable term. To do this, players traversing boundaries must interact with the term and thus change it. This is not to suggest that we forsake one branch of feminism to exalt the other, but rather to acknowledge that while one facet of feminism—political or academic—may move in one place or individual's capacity, it inhibits movement in another, therefore, inhibiting the potential of affirmative feminist desire. Imagine the surface has cracked, its contents leak into domains whose nomadic players have awakened latent potentials and strategically forgotten their roots to redirect their energy to the new and unfamiliar.

This openedness along with the other concepts addressed are visible in the state of Feminism. It is already 'open-ended', enmeshed in a multiplicity of ways with other disciplines—with itself. Rosi Braidotti describes the feminist theorist as being in transit, moving on, passing through, creating connections between things that were previously disconnected or seemingly unrelated (177). The voices of feminism are already working in multiplicity and uncontainability.¹

But is it possible that "we" can act without first defining who this "we" is, even if it is described as multiplicitous, without perpetually stopping to look back at ourselves? Is it possible that 'we' can eventually stop asking this question? Can 'we' intensify our understanding of feminism as an active force, or as Verna Conley describes, "no longer a movement 'owned' by identities, but a movement of desires, bodies, flows and style"? (14). This would require an escape from the lure of making ourselves known, placing everything in recognition with ourselves. It would require an endless series of deterritorializing and reterritorializing...rather than a reliance on or elevation of consensus (Rajchman 54). Elizabeth Grosz speaks about a 'politics of imperceptibility,' which resists the "trap of recognition" and situates agency "below the level of the subject," thinking rather of that which causes the subject (Interview 4-5). Thinking *below* the level

¹ Refer to STOP 2 "opening the definition" Sargisson's argument (see page 17).

of the subject, is thinking toward molecularization, to think within becoming-woman, or to think away from traditional modes, away from 'man', which is the movement of feminism, is it not?

: problems #2 & 1 – becoming-woman

From within the 'trap of recognition' woman hears her name in the chain of becomings and reacts, but this concept cannot be approached in the terms of conventional hierarchy, unless perhaps it were considered in terms of a drastic reversal. As all other concepts in such moving populations as the work of Deleuze and Guattari, attaching a common sense schema to the concept will serve only to obscure what is being done with it. The 'woman,' in 'becoming-woman', is not the captured woman of the psychoanalytic sense, which actually resides within the man's position, as a reflection of the 'finest' structure of majoritarian, and the first in the chain of becoming. This 'woman' assists in the stabilization of his molar position. On the contrary, the 'becoming-woman' designation in the chain of becomings suggests a movement away from molar man and his self-gratifying construction and is propelled by both the woman's and man's departure from their unhappy molar positions. Deleuze and Guattari use the concept of the 'girl' (yet another point of serious contention) to further explain the movement of becoming-woman. "Girl" is used to describe an entity that moves along abstract lines, resisting fixation on any one point, sex, or age: "The girl is the becoming-woman of each sex, just as the child is the becoming-young of every age" (ATP 277). She, "as fugitive being," who perpetuates becoming-woman, or divine femininity in Irigaray terms, is a theoretical depiction of that which cannot be perceived, but is also the first to be harnessed by society (281). Thereafter, it is she who is used as bait to harness the boy (277). The 'girl', therefore, is key to dismantling the confines of psychoanalytic framework, thus the symbolic order, the sad state of the sexes and so on (276). Woman, as well as man, must work toward becoming-woman, becoming-girl, before maiming and baiting. The envisioned 'woman', in this sense, has the potential to uproot fixity because "her desire is immanent in present-becomings" (Irigaray *The Ethics of Sexual Difference* 142). She can begin to veer the allure of separation and control with her sensual encounter with the world premised on her immersion and participation, a present-becoming (Lorraine 48). Thus it is a new woman, based on the potential existing in the void that dominant organizations have left of her. Thus, as Deleuze and Guattari impart, "women as well as men must becoming toward woman" (ATP 291).

Reading and using Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman, apart from meaning or symbolization, is to see a movement of escape from what, at the very least, the French feminisms have been working away from: the discursive machinery of molar man, its dominant structures, coming out of the phallogocentric tongue, description, narration, collections, and organizations—to become untied (Irigaray *This Sex which is Not One* 29; *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* 138). Unreservedly, Deleuze and Guattari write inspired by the potential of 'woman' in light of 'her' revolution.

The characteristics of the utopian writer considered, the launch into woman was not an indication that the utopian writer is a woman specifically, but the woman has served as a condition for estrangement. No sexed individual is attached to the subject position of 'woman' in the sense of savior, the becoming-woman. Woman, as the sexed subject cannot be seen as savior in herself; however, her subject position or lack thereof, the opportunity there, the space, is a virtual savior which the utopian writer works through, toward, regardless of the sexed face behind the work. The utopian writer indeed has a sex, an everyday subjectivity, knows it quite well, and is perhaps plagued by it, but in the activity of writing such distinctions have no relevance. The utopian writer, therefore, struggles within all of this contradiction. Which brings us to the third characteristic of the writer: *of delicate health*.

: texture 3 – of delicate health

The traditional approach to utopia(n)(ism) has the utopian writer pegged as one who is of a privileged class, race and intellect, or if not privileged, belonging to a class, race, religion, or intellect, and therefore inevitably works toward transformation that is beneficial to that group. The utopian writer as experimental player, however, may have a class or identity group, but it is not one with which the writer writes from or identifies with. The utopian writer writes to transform even the group to which [s]he supposedly belongs, because regardless of its possible status as abject or minority, if it is identifiable, it is in need of transformation.

The utopian must be willing, as I have said, to perish, to overcome the self. It is only the loss of self, the removal of coding, through which she attains the 'individuality' and space for her creative power to work (Lorraine 163), as well as the ability to write things, and see things that are too big for he[r] (Deleuze "Literature and Life" 3). But this ability, this willingness—a madness—as such, is a privilege: "a privilege beyond its capacities" (AO 321), a privilege that pays the price of "mental alienation" (320). It is this condition

of mental exercise which draws Deleuze and Guattari to relate the writer to the schizophrenic. The schizophrenic, according to Jacques Lacan, is considered ill, cut off from reality because he or she lacks Oedipus or has not been absorbed into the symbolic order (91). This is precisely why Deleuze and Guattari are inspired by the concept.

The concept of schizophrenia intonates an overcoming of the holds of subject systems (NO 26), therefore the schizophrenic resides somewhere on the periphery, "with no fixed identity...defined by the states through which it passes" (AO 20), but "holding on by a hand or a foot" (ATP 34). The individual on a schizophrenic journey, so to speak, is experiencing a pure, intense, plane of positive desire (DII 80). In this pure state, the schizophrenic operates with/on the BwO (AO 281). It is because of this schizophrenic openness to "suffocating things whose passage exhausts [the writer]" that the he[r] health is delicate (3).

Yet, the schizophrenic (as concept), like the utopian writer, is acutely aware of the dominant systems from which [s]he is estranged and it is precisely what [s]he discovers in this awareness that leads he[r] to this estrangement, this 'insanity'. As Ian Buchanan writes:

Instead of being lost in the funhouse, the postmodern schizo is for the first time in history aware that his or her environment is in fact a funhouse, a dead zone of images, false trails, bad deceptions. If they are happy there it is because they have finally learned to laugh at the madness that surrounds them on all sides, not because they have lost contact with reality. (*Deleuzism* 166)

It is delicate situation. The writer, the schizophrenic, is both the patient and the physician, "a physician of [her]self and the world" (Deleuze "Literature and Life" 3). [S]he writes to cure the ills of the world...like a Christ-figure, or, as Deleuze calls he[r], "a vessel" (3). Thus, the writer acts as the savior we mentioned earlier as the becoming-woman, because [s]he writes to heal the world, and must unravel in the process. Becoming agent of and to the multiplicities. Deleuze and Parnet say of the writer: "you are no longer an author, you are a production studio, you have never been more populated" (DII 9).

Writing is one way of mapping the schizophrenic process, the utopian process, to support the flows. It is an activity for becoming, as well as an outlet to persist becoming with caution. Writing acts as both impetus and outlet for a delicate health, but it is crucial that the 'subject matter' is not *limited* to that of the writer's own, personal neurosis. The utopian writer writes because [s]he is moving, and in moving, is not stopped by such self-absorbed illness. [S]he writes about what [s]he does not know, making what moves in the book, what moves between the two. Writing is an activity through which one becomes. To quote Deleuze:

"writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience" ("Literature and Life" 1). The process of utopia(n)(ism) is to transverse boundaries, and it is through literature (although not only) that boundaries can be crossed. Thus literature provides a space for the transformative activity of writing. As Elizabeth Grosz manifests, writing is not a "pure reflection of thought" but an "active labor of words—writing, arguing, criticizing. They are not just mental or conceptual skills but techniques of production" (AFO 5). One of the products of this labor is the book.

Fiction forms what streams in us.

- Anne Carson from *Autobiography of Red*¹

STOP 5: THE BOOK

pivot :

You want to believe in a book that moves, but have been suffocated by a multitude of books whose pages, bindings, chapters, words, sentences, plots and every technique in between have been lodged into your throat, forced into your nostrils and eyes. Lose your memory of what a book is, forget recounted histories, introductions to those eloquent fictional happenings, and disarm the lust for ego-satisfaction at the book's end. Forget what it is to write. Take interest, instead, in the living world, where mystery meets what you see and feel. See how the points move so quickly that they transform into lines that vibrate so intensely that they blur. Acknowledge that whatever you write will be a mere conceptual snap shot of one square foot, at one mere moment. That is, unless you let the beast have most of the control. Look into the mouth of that thing, into the anus, into the eyes, ears, pores. Jump into its entrances, the places that invite you to be consumed. You will learn that they are also exits that push you out along with their juicy little products. And dissect this frothy stuff, the tangible product, while you are in it, a part of it. It is the book. Your book? The beast's book?

point :

: utopian is as utopian does

The theoretical movements of experimental players can be encouraged by promoting a domain where accusations such as naivety and impracticality have no significance. The noshing grounds of their affects—which are undetectable to the glazed faces of conceptual comfort points—are being extended into the air moving around and passing through their monuments. The revolutions taking place within the inconspicuous, revolutions that are revolutionary precisely because they are inconspicuous, are being affirmed. It is necessary, it seems, to be more specific about where this conceptual transformation can occur. Where can this space be entered? Where are these players playing? The particulars, or at least one piece of a

¹ Ibid., 75

particular is, of course, literature. Although it is most certainly not the one and only but it is the 'only' within the means of the particular project. Burwell writes that the novel is a utopian space because it "allows a domain in which new language can be experimented with and developed" (172). If there is going to be an argument about the agency of utopian literature, whether this be through specific genres like 'feminist utopian' or 'science fiction', or through the utopian exercises of the feminist philosophical text, its creators and users must be mindful of the *multiple* aspects which engender transformative potential. So regardless of whether the subject is 'utopia' or perceived as expressing 'utopian' sentiments (in any sense)...ask the question, is the book itself utopian?

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari write, "there is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made" (4). More often than not, however, there *is* a gap, but there *ought* not to be. Or, there *ought* to be an effort to close this gap. Simply stated, for the process to be effective, the ingredients of the book must render a startling influence from the force of its production. It must be difficult to distinguish between the two. It is a game of authenticity, a play at folding theory over practice, melding everything that exists between them onto one horizontal plane.

With sensitivity to that fear of failure and disappointment that provokes rebuttal, it must be acknowledged that there is no perfectly utopian book comprised of purely revolutionary elements. Perfection is not the goal.¹ The construction of the concept 'perfection' is to blame for the shaming of utopia(n)(ism) and to continue to have its contagion revived by its powerful host—the assumption that perfection is the silent obsession of the writer's project—is to fasten the book, yet again, to some fairy carrot for those reactive and resentful community members to scoff at. The book, both in itself and the way it is written, *is* a reflection of the way we think, the way we *think* we think, the way we speak, and the way we find ourselves through our networks of representation, sign, symbol, order and whatever else you want to call it. It *is* a product of our laws. *But* it is *also* the place where our creativity and those laws come to negotiate. The strategy is, if you are indeed a utopian writer, to arrive with an excess of creativity, as a viciously joyful army comprised of 'the subversive,' 'the insane,' 'the estranged,' 'the volatile,' 'the bored,' 'the dissatisfied,' 'the converts,' and 'the traitors.' So that after the law sets up its standard court dimensions to begin, there will not be room for everyone. It is the law that will be displaced under the pressure and movement of this teeming tribe, because

¹ Refer to STOP 2 : "Utopian Impotency" (see pages 12-13 in particular).

although the tribe is on the outskirts of the academic arena, it is the law that is on the outskirts of the experimental domain. The law has mass and number. And the books that are utopian are those that have shed the most, are the most lacking. They lack one or more of the following: genre, structure, plot, authorship, direction, identity, memory, and conformity. Because of this they clear space for new realities. Not reality as it has been honed into our common sense...but the *real*, the life force of our world: pure difference, the stuff in-between. The shape of order will be forced to change to accommodate its new guest. Order is our necessary host. We use it to map our active thought. We call this map a book.

: the rhizome - the structure resistant structure

Following *Anti-Oedipus* (1983), a beast of a book which plays at a simultaneous tribute to and assassination of the modernist and psychoanalytic capture-net, Deleuze and Guattari combine their efforts in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) to present an alternative, that being multiple alternatives expressed through the interchangeable terms—nomadism, deterritorialization, becoming, molecularization, etc—each of which promote a replacement of unity with multiplicity, stability with movement, and identity with schizophrenia. The first event of their momentum is their creation of a new thought image of the book: *the rhizome*.

The concept of the rhizome, in the hands of Deleuze and Guattari, is a paradoxical description of the book's structure, one that denies structure and form. The image challenges the player to imagine a book free from a 'logical' cohesion to linearity, unity, a singular reflection of the order of the Same, and imitation, like that of the strongly existing traditional or classical book, or what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'root-book' or 'world-tree' (ATP 5). The rhizome's escape of the same is assisted by a denial and complicating of binaries that had once provided a false sense of clarity because, contra an opposition, a unified position is possible. However, in rhizomatics—activities based on the image of the rhizome—contracts are lifted, all gates are opened, and if one is willing and relevant, one will become part of the festivities. Deleuze and Guattari write, "[the rhizome] ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" having "no ideal speaker-listener" (7). It is in constant and complex motion, always in the midst, growing outward, offered to the task of intermingling, enabling indefinite connections and extensions to and with outside surroundings. *Rhizomes* are open to

connections with foreign surroundings, increasing the event of new combinations. Avoiding the egotistical limitations of one voice, it is an assemblage of many. It is the experimental domain through which the experimental utopian players can play: *an academic utopia*. Deleuze and Guattari's provision of this thought image is utopian in itself because it opens a new way to conceive of the book, not only in regards to contents, objectives, and techniques outside of the conventional requirements, but also in the language with which to discuss the book (through organics). Most importantly the image's relevance extends beyond the book, it inspires the writer, the philosopher, the artist, to think beyond the containment of 'cover to cover.' But, of course, Deleuze and Guattari are not alone in this extension, Derrida writes:

A 'text' is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content closed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) – all the limits, everything that was to be set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference – to body or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth). ("Living On" 84)

Hence, perhaps Derrida can be used to close a paragraph that opened with Deleuze and Guattari.

: explosive text

For rhizomatics to begin processing in thought and writing, the player must perceive the text as more than a blank surface waiting to be graced with he[r] artful mastery of language.¹ The text has a force of its own, a capacity for activity that the player, if [s]he is lucky, will be the conduit. In an effort to extend the perception of architecture as merely solid matter, Elizabeth Grosz describes text as active "little bombs" drawing things from around them and then scattering and scrambling them into new directions and new alignments:

A text, whether book, paper, film, painting, or building, can be thought of as a kind of thief in the night. Furtive, clandestine, and always complex, it steals its ideas from all around, from its own milieu and history, and better still from its outside, and disseminates them elsewhere. It is not only a conduit for the circulation of ideas, as knowledges or truths, but a passage or point of transition from one (social) stratum or space to another. A text is not the repository of knowledge or truths, the site for the storage of information...so much as it is a process of scattering thought; scrambling terms, concepts, and practices; forging linkages; becoming a form of action. A text is not simply a tool or an instrument...rather it is explosive, dangerous, volatile. (AFO 58)

¹ This has much to do with our abandonment of authorship discussed in *STOP 4: The Writer*.

The force of a text may be considered as a natural disaster, as inspired by Jacques Derrida's 'preoccupation' with the figure of the earthquake (Royle 154), elevating its potential to a level of natural, unstoppable agency. The player will create with it, from it, and through it as both supplement and creator, but also as a victim of its unpredictability. This is in accordance to immanent transcendence²...we must be "thinking in things, among things" because this, according to Deleuze and Parnet, "is producing a rhizome and not a root, producing the line and not the point" (*DII* 26). The hope is that with a respect for the activity of the text, its movement will work with the writer, since it has been largely out of he[r] hands anyway. [S]he is merely a writer, and merely a book, but the text is beyond such particulars. This concept of the book displaces the writer from a glorified ego space, the confines of a genre, a funneled disciplinary discussion, and a particular consumer market. But for the text to be so volatile, it must be kept alive. It must, as Grosz describes it, "shake things up, produce realignments" (*AFO* 59). Which translates into Deleuzian terms as being "nomadological" or "rhizomatic." As such, not all text, not all books, are active in this way. They are created and re-created this way. Their revolution is the responsibility of the players.

: increments, measurements, where'd the genre go?

Distinguishing what I refer to as the 'utopian text' from the mucus of our cultural ills is crucial to its affectivity in art, language, and theory—to life really—but is also politically crucial with regards to its reception and use by those players whom have been irreparably scarred by the fruitlessness of traditional utopian manifestations in contemporary conditions. In regards to specifically feminist utopian literature, Sally Kitch is concerned that feminism has placed too much time and faith in its agency. She argues that these utopian 'expressions' are merely artistic reflections of theory, as opposed to sites of invention that feed the process of theory (80). That is, they merely reflect ideas that are already established among feminist thinkers, and which are already, themselves, regarded as harmfully 'utopian' (82).¹ This argument considered, not only is literature merely a reflection, but what it reflects is contrary to its desire.

Consequently, not only should the reader and writer be thinking away from the thought of traditional utopia(n)(ism), but must also be active in the breakdown of the dualistic situation of theory or art, and action. If not, the book has already died. Such concerned reactions as Kitch's travel somewhere between validity and

² Refer to STOP 3 "immanent transcendence" (see page 23-24).

¹ Refer back to Sally Kitch's argument in STOP 2 "the root of utopia(n)(ism)" (particularly on pages 10-13).

stubborn closedness within a pending storm cloud of unintentional hypocrisy, but successfully startles the players from he[r] solitary process. Yes, these concerns hold the player accountable in he[r] intellectual nomadism. Admittedly, however, such reductions have become slightly less concerning at this point of the project after already experiencing the intermingling of things. Yet the reality is, that books are being produced and treated in precisely the argument prescribed. It seems, despite our efforts, we are all helplessly guilty of this charge.

But the irony is this, who—honestly now—is the utopian player trying to convince, and what is the point of such a defense? (Is it necessary to recite Foucault's complexity of power?) Kitch is but one, and even then not without plenty of overlapped desire. And 'they,' the rest, certainly do not see 'themselves,' or the size of the experimental army, not that 'they' have *one*...because neither exist in such molar distinctions. The book or the essay—the text—is a battle ground that comes equipped with its own oppressors that the writer fights to remind he[r]-self of what [s]he is *doing*...that [s]he *is*, in fact, doing. Here is the prompt: practice within the rhizomatic assumption that theory, literature, and life cannot be reduced to separation. But again, do not want to write (or read) with a blind dependency on 'hot' methodology, twirling in a virtual ballroom, while actually sitting too long, chewing processed food, stretching texts over the same template in a variety of disguises. Do not intentionally support a methodology that recompresses the text, brings it backward to 'this MEANS this.' Stop playing the detectives of mysterious cases that happened the day before.² Become, instead, the mystery maker...asking instead 'what can it do?' What can happen now? And now? And now again...but this time with this? The text in the utopian player's hands ought always to be active, allowed to do what is in its potential.

Considering literature in terms of its expression of theory relays it as a tool of sorts. But that does what? Gérard Klein suggests that science fiction should be respected for conveying contemporary issues involving difficult science to a larger population in a "down-to-earth and familiar context" (23-24). In a very similar tone, Lucy Sargisson suggests that the fictional literary form provides a digestible presentation of serious issues: "It sweetens the pill of a serious 'message' whilst playfully letting us in on the joke" (CFU 42).

² Ernst Bloch makes the distinction between the detective novel and the 'novel of the artist', privileging the latter over the former. The detective novel begins with the crime, and then merely retraces the steps, backward, like the psychoanalyst. Bloch contends that it is a comfortable writing strategy which only masquerades as being clever, and begs the question: how can it be suspense when the death occurred at the outset? The 'novel of the artist', however, forces the writer and the reader to think forward rather than effort back to the beginning, to perceive life without any particular evidence or crime (see Works Cited).

Regardless of the validity of this approach—doses for the masses—albeit accurate at the moment, does not do justice to the potential agency of the literary process. It is not the activity of utopia(n)(ism), of the space a foot out from the cliff's edge. Rather it resounds with uncomfortable similarity to the author-audience, the subject-object, and speaker-listener mentality that plagues us from the roots of our grammar.

The rhizome, which collaborates with Sargisson's sentiments, is difficult to access – but not in the terms that one may think. Some of the most powerful texts, as we know, are some of the worst received. Even Deleuze describes *A Thousand Plateaus* as he and Guattari's "most ambitious, most immoderate and worst-received work" (DII ix). It seems that, perhaps, what can be clearly categorized as 'utopian fiction', 'feminist fiction,' and 'science fiction' and, with a stretch, 'metaphorical philosophy,' are the only spaces where utopia(n)(ism) is 'assured' some appreciation due to their blatant utopian manifestations. However, within the confines of these genres, the book is fixed to certain criteria—worth resisting. Although the writer has space to critique current social conditions while offering dramatic insights on possibilities of the future, transformative potentials in the subtleties of the text suffer neglect.

Creating and responding to literature on such moribund points as genre surely play a part in what Deleuze refers to as the "crisis in contemporary literature" (NO 128). It is the crisis of the best-seller epidemic, where the production agents of literature (publishers, editors, *writers*) become a complex copy machine of active texts or worse yet, the copy machine of the books that sell but have never been active. The production agents of literature know what sells, and how to sell, whose only activity can be easily monitored by the exchange of capital. Some pride themselves on knowing how to reproduce the formula, and they do it well. One cannot deny the brilliant movement of this industry, but such engagements do nothing to breath life, to transform, regardless of the utopian worlds that they fabricate. It is worse, even, than both the abstract wishful thinking and over-zealous empiricism that Ernst Bloch holds responsible for tainting our cultural consciousness with the blind belief in the ineffectivity of the utopian impulse (106). It is the stuff of pointless chatter, the multitude of flaccid replicas that the reader consumes as a means of passive escape.

This is the third extreme of the branching spectrum, and it seems hardly relevant, a waste of energy, and perhaps mildly fascist to squelch the capitalistic and psychological benefits being had there. Furthermore, the objective here is not the belligerent criticism of products from players impelled in memorandum or kitsch. We have found ways to mock everything with a snide review because we are

accustomed to disappointment and have become rather passive-aggressive as a result. Thus, the maintenance or creation of a meter with which to measure the transformative *level* of a book must be avoided, although we may flourish in the intensities that work where they do, and elevate them accordingly in the spaces amidst its particular field. The stronger the intensity, the more altars of intensity, and the more distinguishable the book becomes from which its feet pushes.

A renegotiation of the function of literature alongside the re-definition—'the undefining'—of utopia(n)(ism) will open new avenues of social change and possibilities that extend beyond content and form. Not only will the genres expand, and become increasingly irrelevant, but also 'feminist,' 'utopian,' 'theoretical' aspects of the book become simply aspects, as opposed to all defining categories. Royle describes Derrida as repeatedly expressing a profound respect for writing that allows philosophy and literature to contaminate one another (88). Stretch the genre further in each direction, experiment with new connections not only through imaginative content, but also through the elements of the book's production. This, of course, is already under way. Lucy Sargisson's readings of literature, to which the term 'feminist utopian fiction' still applies, speak of the action of this literature as not only shifting social codes regarding gender, sex and relationship, but also transfiguring the concept of order itself, with a particular focus on modes of expression such as genre and narrative convention (CFU 201). Writing in terms of "hey consider this scenario," is written from a dissatisfaction with the present, *does* hold the current situation in question, *does* push the reader's belief structure, but writing in terms of "this book is a scenario," launches the reader into the particular condition of *how* she thinks. In these terms there is an *actual* change in the abstract; the 'impossible' and 'the way it is' meet in a powerful collision to create a worldwide climate change. But can such influence of the book be proven?

Earl Shorris, inspired by the impact of Leo Strauss, describes the enigmatic life of the book:

The long life of the book...is bound up with a history in a process of indirection. The ideas in books somehow manage to wiggle through the morass of individuals and information in large modern societies and become effective. The way is not clear, but the fact of it often gives surcease to the pains of laboring in obscurity. (67)

In the process of preparing a secondary source on Jacques Derrida, Nicholas Royle writes:

Whether in philosophy or literature or elsewhere, the appearance of great works invariably provokes some degree of incomprehension, bafflement, mind-bogglement. Great works transform the context of their reception and this takes time. (73)

In both cases, the thinkers, whom Shorris and Royle are writing about, also carry the understanding of the unfolding effects of the book and take responsibility for being an active part of its process through their reading of it. The chain of exchange presented here is evidence in itself of the book's ripple effect. But you cannot convince a person of its potential for impact unless they have felt it themselves, have encountered a book that moves, or understand to some extent, the strange process of dissemination.

The intention is not to create a hierarchical glorification regarding the validity or strength of book in terms of utopia(n)(ism). Such valuations are already at high-concentration in discussions surrounding SF at present (many thanks to Darko Suvin), due to anxieties surrounding whether or not certain 'popular' SF literature is valid within academic discussion. The force behind the desire for validation is paramount but, as Lucy Sargisson exemplifies, a dying breed can be revitalized by helping others see what it does, rather than by showing what others fail to do. If we were to stack another hierarchy, those who continue to traumatize themselves by dragging traditional utopianism into the present context, could just as easily reverse it. I am suggesting that we write and read literature with an eye and mind for its utopian elements, not unlike the subtle and affirmative work of Ernst Bloch, Jennifer Burwell, Lucy Sargisson, and Elizabeth Grosz, who, even while in some form of disagreement, consistently extract the intensity of a text. One could accuse these academics of falsely glorifying aspects of feminist literature due to their investments there. But these contemporary 'feminists' are not trying to maintain feminist qualities, in literature or otherwise; they are trying to show how it is moving away from those terms, how the terms themselves are changing, but also how, while we need to pick up and move on, there is no need to disqualify what moved in the past.

The point is not to defend or protect, but rather to empty it, with respect, because whatever causes a book to be labeled 'feminist' is precisely what the utopian player is experimenting toward avoiding. It is not the sole responsibility of the writer, however, that he[r] work is categorized. We have an uncanny 'secondarily natural' talent for filing things into old filing systems. We know what to look for. Hence, it is the categorical triggers that must be avoided. Accordingly, many of the books and writers that have fed this project and will be exemplified are difficult to place in a conventional discussion of either 'feminist' or 'utopian' literature or philosophy. Each have in common a sort of enigmatic form, content, and technique, and have creators who are, most appropriately, difficult to place due to their own multiplicity. In other words, these writers and the books they inhabit, *do* what these genres *ought*. The utopian text need not be a philosophy or fiction

presenting a possible template for political structure, something radically other, (although I refuse to discredit that utopia(n)(ism) may still move there). Text that moves, that is active and refreshing, is itself an example of an effort toward something that is not perfect... but alive, pure difference, the force that moves things, the thing that has had us for centuries experimenting with the idea of perfection.

: *'and then I happened upon this branch': an example of the rhizome*

This sounds lovely...truly it does. But how does it work? How is an active utopian book distinguishable in this truncated mess? Where and how are its intensities perpetuated? How is it created? How may such a material and conceptual fixity (commodity) become rhizomatic? As Deleuze and Guattari challenge the book to serve as an example of what it speaks, it seems fitting to commence exemplification of the rhizome with the very book that gave life to this particular conceptual image of difference: *A Thousand Plateaus*. This is not meant to be a measurement of their success, but rather a quick look at what they have succeeded in doing while serving to further this expedition on the event of the rhizome.

The one concept, that makes the concept of 'one' impossible, is multiplicity. And once the one, the singular, the unified, is shattered, everything opens into anything in its turn. This book, then, ought not to have its origin from one origin, an author, mastermind, or proper name behind its project. Deleuze and Guattari demote the significance of 'Deleuze and Guattari' to avoid the resounding voice of authorship.¹ Concordantly, they write that "a book has neither subject nor object" (3), and they indeed dissolve their identities throughout the work. The reader does not know who has written what, and what his focus is, and furthermore, scarcely for whom or what such a book could possibly be written. Because the book is their origin rather than the other way around, it does not end with its reader, they present themselves as merely a part of an assemblage of voices. They write, "we have been aided, inspired, multiplied" (3). This is but one of many exemplary phrases of such sentiments that occur not only in this book but the entirety of Deleuze's work. He forms an assemblage again with Clair Parnet in *Dialogues II*, and also to a great extent within his readings of thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche making it difficult to distinguish where the 'original' thought ends and Deleuze's reading begins.

As the book does not start from one, or even two origins, it does not travel on one or even two linear lines. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari open *A Thousand Plateaus* to the inclusion of any disciplinary or

¹ Refer to the discussion regarding the unraveling of identity in STOP 4 "Identity into multiplicity" (see pages 32).

historical context. They write "here we have made use of everything that came within range..." (ATP 3), and the contents are indeed far reaching. While one chapter connects the wolf to the schizophrenic (chapter 2), another develops the concept of the war machine and nomadism (chapter 12), while yet another sneaks up on the reader with a new concept of the Body without Organs (chapter 6). Furthermore, each chapter carries with it several lines of thought at once and with a plethora of voices: from Vladimir Slepian on the dog, to Charlotte Brontë on the wind (chapter 10), activating the interchangeability of terms, making irrelevant the terms of right and wrong—valuations based on oppositional thinking—and thinking, instead, in precisely those terms of relevance and irrelevance. Moreover, these wide ranging connections and concept images are not contained to their supposed chapter; they leak, jump and rustle from out of each section, speaking to one another. It is truly a book "made of variously formed matters" (3).

Each passage has its own milieu: "It's like a set of split rings. You can fit any one of them into any other. Each ring, or each plateau, ought to have its own climate, its own tone or timber" (NO 25). And with no care for linear direction toward a final destination, the book quickens "very different dates and speeds" (3). Each chapter is dated, but surges from 1914 to 10,000 B.C, back to November 20th, 1923. In their language there are no "points" or "positions," only "lines" (8), that is, only ongoing movement, nomadic thought and writing, moving from place to place and time to time according to the conditions of fluidity. Each part of the rhizome is itself rhizomatic.

But perhaps cause for concern, is that these little rhizomes are still pieces of the one rhizome, the one being read and held in the reader's hands. This appears to be a subscription, again, to a unit. But it is—paradoxically—a unity with no unity, that is, they 'fit into' a unity which is itself anti-unitarian.

:order is in order: failure?

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari make the observation that although there must be individual notes to create a song, Glenn Gould plays them so smoothly and quickly that they are blurred into a continuous sound (8). The formation of the rhizomatic book is like a Glenn Gould playing a song. In other words, the book deterritorializes, as it sounds out into the world, "it forms a rhizome with the world" and "assures the deterritorialization of the world," that is, as a text, it takes from all around it, plots it, and scatters it back out again. Extending from this, however, is the world's "reterritorialization of the book..." (11). In this particular case, I am the world in the act of reterritorializing. I have just reterritorialized the book by planting a

series of points extracted from it. But I have instigated this halt and regroup with the hopes that 'all the little soldiers will run off again, replenished, just as Deleuze and Guattari intend for the reterritorialized book to "deterritorialize itself in the world (if it is capable, if it can)" (11). However, it cannot do this without the help of the reader-writer continuation: 'Step on the stone, pick it up, throw it two feet ahead, step on the stone, pick it up....' But inclusion or awareness of reterritorialized thought within the book makes the reader's description of it, he[r] use of it—he[r] extension of its effects—somewhat possible.

Although Deleuze and Guattari make it rather impossible to reduce their text adequately, they provide opportunities for the reader, any reader, to leave with something that can be replanted elsewhere. In basic terms, they provide points of clarity and structure to help the reader continue the process motivating the book. The utility of order is exploited to salvage the reader from what may be perceived as an extremely 'chaotic' ride.¹ For example, the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* bears a thorough explanation of Deleuze and Guattari's intentions, of the experiment at hand, that being the rhizome. The conclusion, for another example, provides the reader with a condensed glossary of terms indicating chapters in which they are active.

Designated spaces in the book, like the introduction, preface, epilogue or whatever seems to exist on the boundaries of the 'official' site of the book, are crucial to the maintenance of its authenticity, especially in terms of what is being suggested as the newly utopian book. And as Deleuze and Guattari allow themselves somewhat of a schizophrenic process of presentation, one can only imagine the oddity and therefore difficulty of facing order throughout the stages of its construction. Thus, these strangely banal boundary-spaces inform the reader of the materiality, the 'everyday' of the book, including, perhaps, the correspondence between editor and author. The writer exposes he[r]-self, speaking directly to the reader about he[r] intentions, trials, disappointments, and basically, admitting to certain shortcomings in the work being presented. Resultantly, regardless of what key words are printed in bold at the bottom of the back cover—*Philosophy • Utopian Literature • Women's Studies*—the reader can acknowledge the writer's strides and intentions, even as they exist within the confines of packaging, and laugh at distinctions that presume that a book written by a woman (especially one with philosophical activity), or a primarily female perspective, must

¹ This re-conceptualized utopia may be chaotic, but much like every other concept in this project, it does not carry with it a gap of negativity carved out by its traditional use. In other words, I am not suggesting we replace traditional utopianism with sentiments of anarchy. This would be equally useless....silencing really.

have feminist leanings. Such distinctions are an embarrassment really, but are very real in terms of response and circulation in the institution. *Everything implanted in the institution eventually finds itself crystallized.*¹

This marks a contradiction from within this argument for a strategic plotting of points in defense of being plotted. Although these plots are necessary, and can be used wisely, they presuppose a failure, a reality that dethrones the writer, Deleuze and Guattari included. But as it has been mentioned, and will continue to be again and again...failure is a requisite for the creative process as well as the dethroning of the creator. Failure is altered, turned around so to speak. What Deleuze and Guattari find themselves accused of, over-quoting for example, they regard as impetus to production: "...when one writes, the only question is which other machine the literary machine must be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (ATP 4). This offense is, within the hands of Deleuze and Guattari, a propagation of the assemblage of voices, a crucial aspect to rhizomatic writing. It follows that a sense of misadventure felt by Deleuze and Guattari comes from that which their critics would consider as success. In reference to their work in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze writes: "we're well aware that the first volume of *Anti-Oedipus* is still full of compromises, too full of things that are still scholarly and rather like concepts. So we'll change, we already have..." (NO 9).

Relevant failure, that which pushes the writer into continuous renovation, emerges from incongruities within the text like the irony of plotting points that lead away from point plotting. That is, when the book does not do what it says. In the midst of a condemnation of subjectivity, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari confess to the habit and comfort of using proper names: "because it's nice to talk like everybody else" (3). Although certain responses such as this one bear the unmistakable tone of arrogance, they remain playful even while taking note of their shortcomings and making efforts toward improvement. But aside from Deleuze and Guattari as academics themselves, the gap between the book-ideal they propose and what they produce leaves an opening, an incompleteness for the reader to continue from.

There is no 'ideal' rhizomatic-book, as there is no 'ideal writer.' Such a partnership does not exist and will not exist. It is irrelevant. Therefore, although the following discussion will address a smattering of potentially transformative aspects of literature, it is meant only to instigate a sort of inspiration, or exploration of possibility rather than define a goal. Demanding or expecting the writer to simultaneously engage in each of the mentioned activities (with any productivity) would be needlessly erroneous and limiting. Firstly, if the

¹ Refer back to the STOP 1 "validation of approach" (see page 6).

writer even attempted to assume responsibility for all possibilities it would inhibit collaboration—limiting the academic arena again, closing in on us like the fantasy of previous constructions. Secondly, in order for the writer to experiment with some intensity or relevance, [s]he must choose he[r] battles.

The importance of validating the aforementioned 'firstly' and 'secondly' is crucial on two additional accounts: 1) I have claimed that the activity of utopia(n)(ism) requires a porousness, an outward rhizomatic growth; 2) Those who have been polluted by traditional ideas of utopianism, the agency of utopian literature and philosophy, such as Sally Kitch, have made this an argument contra this species of writer in her book *Higher Ground*. She gathers the theoretical work of feminism into three basic categories: gender difference, difference among women (identity politics), and linguistic construction, accentuating each of their strongly 'utopian' activities. Feminist utopian literature, accordingly, is the artistic reflection of these three basic categories. She writes: "we must begin to understand utopianism as supportive of only certain kinds of feminist views" (85), suggesting that what she separates into bodies neglect an extension to the complexity of feminism. In response to this belief, she valorizes "realistic feminist theorizing", which "supplies caveats, questions and challenges to the others" (187), through "connection and coalition" (205). The activity of 'realistic' feminist thought is "denaturalizing inherited truths and truisms, including feminist truisms" which "criticizes its own foundations along with those of its antagonists and detractors" (229). To this I respond, bravo! It presents feminism in its rhizomatic complexity, encourages becomings between its branches, and instigates a complex system of accountability. There is no argument in regards to these conditions. However, in an appeal for collaboration and accountability, why place pressure on those that have chosen a particular branch to extend? Because the chosen branch is not political realism? Must we abandon the domain of literary transformation to work in the more visibly practical realms? The conditions of a limited accomplishment indicate neither failure, a closing off, nor the neglect of other crucial issues. There are others, following the sentiments of assemblage, that serve as allies, collaborators, extenders. Each will do what [s]he can, and leave an open space for others to inhabit and refashion he[r] design. But, that writer must be acknowledged and appreciated in those efforts.

This acknowledgement and branching is the same on a smaller scale, herein the idiosyncrasies of the book:

'Ideally', the material structure of the book would be cast aside in order to maintain thought in terms of a plane of consistency. For Deleuze and Guattari, the ideal book would be one strewn across a single surface, "on a single page, the same sheet" (ATP 9). Like a fold out map? Precisely!! No vertical stacking, stopping and starting, first, second or thirdly. But even then there would be a center. Even the ideal falls short of the ideal.

I have visualized a scroll in the form of Elizabeth Grosz's treasured concept of the Möbius strip – "the inverted three-dimensional figure eight," a concept which she borrows from Jacques Lacan and adapts both her understanding of the monistic relationship between mind and body, and the conceptual organization of her book, *Volatile Bodies* (xii). However, my vision takes on a much more banal and physical image, that it would be better to attach the pages of my project together, from supposed beginning to end, to somehow bypass the force required to fit matters of fluidity into a strict linearity. I could engineer a Möbius strip out of the book...but this would belong nowhere but a gallery...and how inaccessible and ridiculous it would be! 'Realistically', in the sense of the physical organization of a book, especially one that is *about* the innovation of literature, how does one materialize the schizophrenic process, rhizomatics, the utopian process, academic utopia?

It seems that the physical properties of a book reek unavoidable havoc on the creative process. Faint, scrolling thoughts of the mind are harnessed into text and placed—dropped sporadically really—within the virtual space of a computer, into notes scribbled on sheets of paper that scatter the floor; it is a deterritorializing of the mind, a scattering of seeds. Given space and time to grow, expanding unpredictably, it will all (hopefully) merge together, evolving with the contact of different elements to create a seamless flow. And although it may not be possible, or more precisely, practical, at this time to have it physically correspond as such, we have the visual (conceptual) understanding of this motivation. A continuous movement away from common sense, derived from an awareness of its boundaries, is a continuous opening of potentials to construct outside of it. But perhaps first, we can color in the lines of this outside, by accentuating the rules of the inside.

In "The Apartment," from *Species of Spaces and Other Places*, George Perec questions the designated ordering of our living space: "Apartments are built by architects who have very precise ideas of what an

entrance-hall, a sitting-room, a parents' bedroom, a child's room, a maid's room, a box-room, a kitchen, and a bathroom ought to be like" (28). Of course, the architect of a standard apartment designs within the limits of functionality, that is, based on the needs of the average citizen in that community. The condition is quite simply known, but as Perec brings it into the attention of language—has the reader *think* it—it becomes strange, frustratingly proper, and indicative of our (arbitrary?) commonalities. Is the standard apartment really indicative of average behavior, and therefore, the necessary design? How can it be changed? How much can it change? *Why* would it be changed? How much would people have to change if it changed? And so on. The reader becomes irritated by the predictability of human behavior but even more stupefied by the potency and breadth of conformity – the use of space, and how daily behavior revolves around this use, although one does not clearly come before the other. Perec writes, "this model...I would stress, is both fictional and problematic, though I'm convinced of its elementary rightness (no one lives exactly like that, of course, but it is nevertheless like that, and not otherwise...)" (31). Thinking about the very structure itself, and therefore placing it in question, is itself a denaturalization of the reader's understanding of the 'natural' design. An emphasis on the conceptual fixities of a concept or the concept of a book, will inevitably tweak the shape of its conception.

A Thousand Plateaus is an example of tweaking the conceptual approach to the book. After drawing attention to the common approach—exposing 'the book'—Deleuze and Guattari use the book to actualize a re-conceptualization its concept. Consequently, *A Thousand Plateaus* is first in a new genre of literature, or more appropriately, does not belong to a genre. But how does Deleuze respond to more restrictive calls for publication?

: the interview

For *Dialogues II*, Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet were commissioned to create 'one of those' conventional interview books which lays out the key ideas of a major thinker in his or her condensed and present explanations. But in their encounter with the assignment, rather than commence with an interview question, Deleuze and Parnet begin by placing the interview, itself, in question. Congruent to how Deleuze and Guattari had begun their book, *What is Philosophy?* with another question—"What is the Concept" (chapter 1)—that digs up the roots of the first, Deleuze and Parnet head their first chapter with, "A Conversation: What is it? What is it for?" In the opening pages, Deleuze describes the difficulty of answering questions, replying

to objections, being confined to a structure. The question locks one into a corner; He must respond within a structure, and therefore (if his activities are worth while asking about), a framework of expectations and signs which fail his present-becomings by fabricating them reductively (falsely really) in terms of the past or the future of dominant concepts in order to get the answer over and done with. (Like trying to explain the history of "women," the future of "women," while in the present the term is completely empty). As Deleuze explains it, one must make the motions of "performed" answers, which are led by "performed" questions, which are themselves based upon the dominant roles and meanings, which are in turn based on the only options the questioned has to construct he[r] answer (20). He questions the benefits of positing a questioner and a questioned, which only serves to "nourish dualisms":

For example, in a literary interview, there is first of all the interviewer/interviewee dualism, and then, beyond, the man/writer, life/work dualisms in the interviewee himself, and again, the dualism in the interviewee himself, and again, the dualism between the work and the intention or the meaning of the work. (19)

Thus a book commissioned to be an interview that lays out the key terms of the 'glorious' Gilles Deleuze proceeds to disarm the interview structure because its format is contrary to the movements of its unwilling subject. Deleuze and Parnet launch, instead, into an arrangement of rhizomatic sections whose particular author is unclear (although the reader has a 50/50 chance of guessing right!). Yet despite their rebellion, or more accurately, as a result of their rebellion, the book serves the purpose that the conventional structure aims toward with increased adequacy: they produce a highly condensed, and therefore, intensified movement of Deleuze's thought, without the restrictive format previously proposed.

: the introductory text

Perhaps one of the foremost necessarily restrictive structures of the book is the introductory text. How can the academic make utopian moves, transform common sense through the text, within such a tight regime? Nicholas Royle was asked to face the task of compiling an introductory text on Jacques Derrida for the *Routledge Critical Thinkers* series. Meaning, he was to condense the thought of a thinker whose project is regarding infinite deferral, and whose concepts either explode or eat themselves before they are put into words. Approaching the challenge, Royle commences the book with an explanation of how the two basic foundations of such a project are impossible and in contradiction to the 'subject' matter. He reveals these

limitations in an effort to remain authentic to the Derrida's work while also attempting to adhere to them and meets with an ironic fulfillment.

Firstly, in response to the expected structure of the series—an opening chapter entitled: “Why Derrida?”—in accordance to the work of Derrida, Royle places in question the proper name, ownership of the name, identity, distinctions between things, the meaning and purpose of description, and the purpose of placing something within quotation marks, the meaning of the punctuation itself (1-4). Secondly, Royle highlights the paradox of trying to maim Derridian concepts, into “Key Ideas” (14-19), by using some of Derrida’s ‘key ideas’ to deconstruct the whole idea of the ‘key idea.’ He writes that to list a key idea would require finding “central ideas”...but “if we were looking for a single ‘central idea’ for Derrida’s work it might be that of *decentring*” (15). Furthermore, Royle announces his refusal to use the Routledge “gray box” technique, wherein definitions of ‘key terms’ or “brief accounts of intellectual movements...” are highlighted and contained, via the one gray box of the book. The one box contains a short blurb highlighting the arbitrary reduction involved in using such a thing (14). He informs the reader throughout the text, how such inevitably reductive medium as the introductory text has succeeded only in propelling a misunderstanding of Derrida, for example, labeling him a deconstructionist, capitulating deconstruction as a “literary tool” and regarding the statement “there is nothing outside the text” without its paradox (62). Through a clarification of misconceptions, Royle *does* provide the key points of Derrida, because such an educational tool is needed, but he does so with strict attention to how the matter does not fit into the frame, and that only through a complete and frequent exposure of that frame, can it be exceeded by any degree.

: disciplinary cross-breeding

Thus far, I have given examples of relaying information through a conventional means of production that places itself in question, which is the present-becoming activity of that means of production. Such forms of academic expression and exchange are unraveling. They are no longer suitable for the thought they are required to present. This is precisely the condition of Sargisson’s argument that contemporary feminist utopian literature has outgrown the traditional approach to utopia. One of the guilty nourishments of this growth epidemic is its leap into interdisciplinary collaboration. The connection between two bodies which have been needlessly separated, explode into a surprisingly refreshing new direction, as though they had been waiting for the moment they could feast on one another at long last.

Elizabeth Grosz's *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on the Virtual and Real Space* is an example of what happens when one discipline, architectural theory, invites a stranger to offer a perspective, an injection from the unfamiliar outside, with unfamiliar perspectives, language, to its inner-workings. In the foreword, Grosz describes the benefits of this exchange:

A productive interchange between philosophy and architecture can work for the mutual enrichment, and opening out, of both historically distinct disciplines, and that philosophy needs to think more carefully about architecture as much as architecture is capable of augmentation by philosophy. (vii)

Rethinking modern architecture through her previous work on embodiment and current exploration of Gilles Deleuze, Henry Bergson, and Charles Darwin, and her consistent awareness of gender issues, Grosz challenges architectural theory with concepts of time and duration as well as what she asserts as the simultaneous impossibility and necessity of the utopic. Her collision with architecture has been transformative as it moves the concept of *embodied utopia*, a thought that is unthinkable within previous thought systemization. Furthermore, the collision indicates that placing 'Women's Studies,' for example, on its own, is service to stagnancy because it belongs everywhere; it moves everything to which it is applied and is moved, as well, through reciprocal influence. The very motivation of feminist movement is to plunge holes in such distinctions...in its very own 'discipline.'

Grosz has loosened her grip on the 'feminist' voice in her recent work, tiring of the corporeal overkill, and presents her current work on time and futurity into areas which she expresses in an interview as being neglected. Moreover, she has loosened her grip on the overall cohesion of the book, the meticulous unity of her introduction to Jacques Lacan¹ as well as *Volatile bodies* comes undone in a series of essays, most of which serve to open questions, questions that "cannot and should not be answered but...continually posed, rigorously raised in such a way as to defy answers..."(AFO 59).

: announcing exposure

'Rumor has it' that such 'postmodern,' self-referential movements are as unbearably irritating as they are self-indulgent.¹ This rather intolerant response to efforts that this project privileges actually raises a crucial preponderance: one can suppose change has actually occurred when it no longer requires 'excessive'

¹ Jacques Lacan: *A Feminist Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

¹ My 'sense' of this comes from my personal observation of professors and colleges, as well as the extremely apologetic side-mentions of academics dealing with this material.

reference and explanation; however, if some thing is no longer in need of 'excessive' reference and explanation, if a structure need not be used against itself in order to promote its revision, then we are not in the midst of change. The thing has already been naturalized, has already become too invisible or irrelevant to attack besides being regarded as mildly peculiar in the dreary ordinance of the institution. Thus, does it follow that an overexerted effort to explain a 'new move' is a symptom of transformation? If this is the case then what of *fictional literature*? As opposed to theory, or the writing about, fiction directly *does*. However, although it may not address theory directly, it breathes it, it learns from it as it, in turn, teaches. It is a sneaky kind of beast whose force can hide behind its many faces and events. Here lies the beauty in the sneaky utopian business of cross-contaminating philosophy and fiction. Literature is a space to *do* what can only be *done* conceptually. The following is an exploration of how a book, leaning to the fictional side of the literary exchange, can also use its structure against itself, how the writer can be freed from the conventional confines of the fictional structure.

: unraveling the narrative (part 1)

It seems 'fitting' to begin this exploration with the conceptual skeleton of the fictional book: the *narrative, or plot structure*. The term 'plot' is used to represent the causal chain stringing the book together, as well as what holds the reader's attention (Hodgins 125). Plot, additionally, is the muscleman of blueprint utopianism and a highly trained pacifier of the reader; the muscleman's non-fiction equivalent is a sort of linear or logical ordering—thought strung out into <<premise-point-proof>>—and the structure of thinking against which feminism works.

Admittedly, this depiction is highly simplified, firstly because the fictional plot develops along with the sophisticated development of its characters, and secondly because contemporary fiction carries the fragmentation of postmodern philosophy. Nevertheless, the former—the plot—is well equipped with a hero (the human) who does what is expected of he[r], reacting and moving in the swells of dominant reality (NO 123), even and especially if that reality is opposed to a regime representing the "dominant reality" within the novel. And in terms of the latter—fragmentation—Deleuze and Guattari appeal to a book which they call a 'fascicular root' (the second type of book), which may be complicated and fragmented, but only as a means of sophisticated unification, much like the root book. The author of such a book has taken a position of some 'higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination'...some removed understanding of the ultimate unity, or

complex reflection of the fragmented world (ATP 6). In both the heroic character driven and fragmented plot, the One remains, although it may have been artfully injected with fast-moving particles.

Suppose the utopian player can *create the multiple* from *taking away* from the One, thereby writing rhizomatically. What would this mean for the plot-character partnership? The book must continue to move, events must occur, characters must do, thinkers think...if anything, life must be abundant. What if the character is never well developed, lacks an identity, desires nothing? What if the character is no longer lead by logical motivation? What if the character's conflict is indefinable? What if the character's memory is inaccessible in terms of linearity, or accuracy? In other words, what if the character is a little less 'human' and a little more 'real.' Even the construction of the book, which should be authentic to its contents, lacks a linear creation, precisely because its central person does: think of the process of the writer. [S]he has an idea, writes it down, develops the thought, erases half, adds an entirely new first half...deletes everything and restarts with the end and through the middle, discovers a new path for the beginning. Now imagine a book whose narrative structure, in alliance with its 'subject,' is based on unpredictability, multi-directionality, and the simultaneous movement of multiple times and spaces. This may conjure the notion of a book where nothing 'happens' beyond a molecular scale, where time and proximity are no longer certain. Even as thought exercise, the breakdown of linearity brings the imagination to the point boundary of the familiar.¹ The narrative structure, the lace let's say, has become so frayed that it will no longer fit through the lace-hole, or it has been lost altogether. Either way, both the writer, and the reader to follow, are forced to go barefoot, to learn what the land—with its pebbles, grass and spit—feels like to the skin. They are imbedded in a kind of timelessness. The point is this: *although the book must move, the terms of past, present and future; beginning, middle and end; or conflict, climax and resolution need not limit its movement.* An effort toward rhizomatics prompts experimentation with concepts of the past, present and future...unsettling them as much as they unsettle us. It is in our primary nature to do so. No memory is clear. No motivation is clear. No action is solid.

The utopian character may very well be a sort of destroyer of conventional movements due to semi-arbitrary, random actions such as falling in love with a lemon one day like 'Wendell' in Lawrence Krauser's *Lemon*, or rejecting direction entirely like the unnamed 25-year-old man in Georges Perec's *A Man Asleep*: "You

¹ Refer to STOP 3 "transcendental empiricism" (see page 23).

reject nothing, you refuse nothing. You have ceased going forward, but that is because you weren't going forward anyway, you're not setting off again, you have arrived..." (143). Inquire into the affects of characters who not only wander from the path, but abandon the idea of the path altogether, opening the book to detail with, as in the case of the lemon-lover, no real concept of relational normalcy, and in the case of the 'sleeping man,' no real concept of time. The characters that enable the utopian movement of the rhizome seize the reality of aimlessness, failure, and the gaps and fissures of memory. Their 'imperfections,' their failure to succeed in convention, hold the potential to liberate the book from its narrative strongholds. Fittingly, the flow of this discussion will be temporarily interrupted by the character, which requires a stop of its own.

STOP 6: THE CHARACTER

pivot :

Take in your surroundings, watch, listen, but most importantly breath in the invisible. The invisible is impossible to describe and when you try they are pure abstractions, but you can see its effect and this motivates you to increase them. The shapes the invisible takes in your mind are infinite if you combine your senses and experiences—think—and allow your thought to manifest itself into form. It may begin to speak and move, like you...it is you...an extension of you. But, yet it is not restricted by your everydayness. It is embedded with you but traveling across multiple passages that you cannot follow. It resides both on the points you must settle on, and the spaces in between. Your thought and your extension take off...and you are merely an extension, one atom from which an entire person has grown. You have formed the explosive literary trilogy...and all three of you have already changed.

point :

: unraveling the character

Previously, the book was referred to as a space of renegotiation between creativity and the law. The writer imbeds he[r]-self in thought and negotiates with words that form themselves and manifest thoughts into sentence structures. One alters the other...it is a codependency. In a similar way, the character manifests the compromise between creativity and the law...thought and reality. It is not a controlled creation any more than the writer is a containable subject.

In *A Passion for Narrative*, Jack Hodgins offsets and italicizes a quote by Laurence Perrine meant to inspire the reader (who is assumed to be an aspiring writer) to create effective characters: "To be convincing...the characters must be CONSISTENT in their behaviour...Second, the characters must be clearly MOTIVATED in whatever they do...Third, the characters must be PLAUSIBLE or life-like". Following the quotation, Hodgins adds, "If we are to care about our characters we must believe in them" (105). To believe in a character, according to such sentiments, must a character be logical: acting with good reason? recognizable: a reflection of ourselves? human: or anthropomorphized animal? an expression of our ideal form: made in the image of God? speak with purpose: grammatical speech-acts comprised of subject-object-

predicate? or undergo meaningful change: a definable development? But what is *good* and *what good* is reason? 'Who are we(?)' to be reflected? And why would we purposely continue to reinforce the same laws over and over? What kind of constructions are these to believe in? Perhaps the new-utopian has lost faith in what the world finds faith in. In his essay, "Bartleby; or, the formula," Deleuze opens a poignant question:

Why should the novelist believe he is obligated to explain the behavior of his characters, and to supply them with reasons, whereas life for its part never explains anything and leaves in its creatures so many indeterminate, obscure, indiscernible zones that defy any attempt at clarification? (81)

The character of the root book bears the weight of the world's faith in reason, intrinsic goodness, identity and the comforts of solidarity and order. But as the utopian player is hopeful, instead, in discomfort and uncertainty, [s]he means to scoop out the cooked-meat of the 'character,' much in the same way as [s]he has already begun to empty he[r]-self. However, this includes neither a resignation of character-creation to static tension or complete chaos, nor a resignation to laziness or despotic abandon. Rather, more or 'LESS' is expected of the character and its literary movements because opening these creative entities to the embodiment of utopian concepts and processes entails their conditioning as clean receptacles for change. Simply stated, utopian characters ought to play a role in promoting the becoming-imperceptible of the writer, but ought also invigorate the moving concept of utopianism....as to avoid being either reflections of 'reality' or pure abstractions.

The utopian writer creates literary creatures not unlike those Herman Melville names "The Originals" ("Bartleby; or, The Formula" 83). The Originals are of a "primary nature," that is, they are decidedly more imbedded, present, and aware than those of "secondary nature," who are blind to the laws of societal structure, those properly called 'human.' Deleuze writes that the Originals "reveal [the world's] emptiness, the imperfection of its laws, the mediocrity of particular creatures....the world as masquerade" (83). As nomads of thought, revolutionaries of time, the Originals unsettle the world. It is a creation which combines what Deleuze and Guattari distinguish as the "conceptual persona": the life form of the philosopher's concepts (As Socrates is to Plato and Zarathustra is to Nietzsche), and the "aesthetic figure": life form based on the affects and percepts of art (as David is to Michelangelo) (65), created by writers whom they refer to as "half philosophers" or "hybrid geniuses" (*WIP?* 67). The "conceptual persona," which sometimes but not necessarily has a proper name (Charles), and a well-known psychosocial role (Judge), assists in the development and movement of the writer's thoughts and experiments (63). These utopian creatures reward thought and the

writer with an extension into largely insurmountable manifestations of life that know the restraints of the writer's world, but are unrestrained by it. Characters overlooked as merely artistic expressions of the imagination can be justified on intensely empirical, socio-political, and pragmatic planes (although justification ought to be unnecessary). Thus, perhaps the utopian writer should reconsider he[r] relationship with these entities of the fictional world.

: a becoming between the actual and the virtual

The literary trilogy—thought, the writer, and the character—once entangled in an intense swarming of becomings, creates an explosion of which the product is a character that evades both the tangible and the abstract: “these are no longer empirical, psychological, and social determinations, still less abstractions, but intercessors, crystals, or seeds of thought” (*WIP?* 69). The persona lives not only through thought but also through the detail of the everyday. Furthermore, under fictional conditions, the manifestation of thought—the character—can live apart from the confines of the everyday that the writer writes from within. The conceptual persona assists in the very creation of the writer's thoughts, thinking *in* the writer, and is thus the product of the convergence of thought and thinker (63).

Does this notion mean to suggest that the character, which can be understood in basic terms to be derived from the imagination of the writer, becomes somewhat of an autonomous form? According to Deleuze and Guattari, the conceptual persona becomes the ‘primary nature’:

The philosopher is only the envelope of his principal conceptual persona and of all the other personae who are the intercessors, the real subjects of his philosophy. Conceptual personae are the philosopher's ‘heteronyms,’ and the philosopher's name is the simple pseudonym of his personae. (64)

The writer breathes into he[r] conceptual persona what is outside of he[r] capacity to live, schizophrenic and prolific, beyond he[r] time. Utopian thought, in this way, steps out before he[r] into the dangers of unknown territory, traversing time, space, and context through the flux of duration, repetition and difference, long after the writer has been extinguished. Within classically utopian or science fiction genre-based novels, the immediate appeal to the fictional character is that he or she can be experimented with in future predicaments very unlike those of the current situation, but although the re-conceptualized approach to utopian movement is indeed interested in futurity, it does not require its characters to be projected into a constructed future. The character is already in a foreign world—virtual space—in the stuff of potential that is always just beyond us.¹

: character without identity

The character of the experimental book is not merely an artistic representation of the writer's desire to create a symbol of identity. The writer denies he[r] second nature of negative desire toward an expression of identity and becomes more of a point in a line through which life passes into a conceptual persona. The persona can escape the weight of function and the need to construct an identity around itself. But the advantage here is not merely the character's evasion of identity, this would be to escape or avoid rather than transform. The character can be used to magnify the issue of identity. For example, consider the nameless character (which is 'you' [or *tu*]) in George Perec's *A Man Asleep*. He considers the life prescribed for him according to cultural expectation: "you are only twenty-five, but your path is already mapped out for you. The roles are prepared, and the labels: from the potty of your infancy to the bath-chair of your old age, all the seats are ready and waiting in their turn" (155). Finding this tired predictability unacceptable, he launches himself on an intense becoming toward imperceptibility. Part of his process involves stripping actions of their value and performativity:

Let there be nothing else to say except: you read, you are clothed, you eat, you sleep, you walk, let these be actions or gestures, but not proofs, not some kind of symbolic currency: your dress, your food, your reading matter will not speak in your stead, you have had enough of trying to outsmart them. Never again will you entrust to them the exhausting, impossible, mortal burden of representing you. (170)

¹ Discussed further in STOP 5 "ONE – changing spaces" (see page 77).

Through this particular character's intense rejection of subjectivity, Georges Perec has his reader look in the mirror so long that he[r] face becomes strange...[s]he gets the closest possible sensation to looking at herself for the first time without actually being a stranger.

Such estrangement from 'self' capitulated by the persona is not, however, limited to the persona and the reader, but extends also to the molecularization of the writer. Creation of the character is itself indicative of the writer's extension. The writer deterritorializes through thought which then reterritorializes into conceptual personae, which is then deterritorialized into the world to be reterritorialized by the reader and on and on it goes. It is a vital process because its affectivity extends beyond the writer beyond he[r] situation, into the minds of many different times and spaces. Moreover, the character does what the writer could do, but dares not. That is, they live, think, say and do what the writer cannot without joining those who have fallen into the dark holes of our institutional systems: the homeless, locked-away, abject, dead, or insane. As unproductive subject positions—creative-deaths—these useless products of inadequate support for creativity, must be circumvented. As Tamsin Lorraine explains, conceptual personae provide the pivot point for experimental movement without destroying the writer's ability to function in the dominant reality, allowing the writer to "approach chaos without succumbing to it" (208). This is especially important considering the delicate health of the writer. The persona embodying the writer's delicate health, even through a diseased state, is a healer whom upholds the writer's position as "the bearer of a collective enunciation" ("Bartleby; or, The Formula" 90).

But must our character be so sad and deranged...so dystopic? A fair, yet irritating question...one which has the excruciating exercise toward imperceptibility of George Perec's *A Man Asleep* reduced to a deep depression (this according to the translator David Bellos), or has such characters lassoed into common life stages like adolescent angst, mid-life crisis, or menopause. The persona is crucial to thought-transcendence of such positings, but must have no business with perfection. It is their 'job' to reveal both the beautiful and the hideous. Accordingly, some are "sympathetic personae," living the positive movements of attractive concepts, while others are "antipathetic," indicating dangerous perceptions and negative movements (WIP? 63-4). And, at their 'best' or most useful, the persona traverses between the two, being human rather than static, and thus being relevant to experimentation regarding the human condition; because, as the persona makes possible the becoming of the writer, it must do so through its own drastic undergoing of the process.

Whether or not what the character experiences is classifiably indicative of mental illness, or whether the experiment has met with success or failure, are matters of little importance. Thinking in these terms merely subjects the persona to the same repressive structures that compelled the writer to become through that persona in the first place. Furthermore, as Deleuze and Guattari indicate with "flows-schizzes" and "breaks-flows," breakdown must occur for breakthrough (AO 315-318). The character must be allowed to undergo the raw and destructive processes of violently departing from the comforts of common sense.

Consider, again, the man in *A Man Asleep*. One day, rather arbitrarily, he breaks down, forgets how to live in the world, forgets the psychological comforts he had previously depended on:

It is on a day like this one, a little later, a little earlier, that you discover, without surprise, that something is wrong that, without mincing words, you don't know how to live, that you will never know... Something was going to break, something has broken. You no longer feel – how to put it? – held up: it is as if some thing which, it seemed to you, it seems to you, fortified you until then, gave warmth to your heart, something like the feeling of your existence, of your importance almost, the impression of belonging to or of being in the world, is starting to slip away from you. (140)

Consider, as well, the protagonist in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*. In a simultaneous rejection of and estrangement to her existence as a human, she releases herself into the natural environment:

The animals have no need for speech, why talk when you/are a word/lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning/I break out again into the bright sun and crumple, head/against the ground/I am not an animal or a tree, I am the thing in which the/trees and animals move and grow, I am a place. (181)

These two excerpts, exemplify the gravity of pushing the character to the boundary of sense. Furthermore, they are indicative of a preference in regards to this re-conceptualization of utopic behavior, that preference being for the anti-heroic fictional creature.

The anti-heroic fictional creature is the anti-capitalist, the anti-gluttonist, and the minimalist. [S]he empties the 'gap' erroneously wedged between want and desire by discarding as many of the shoddy substitutes as her writer-extension is aware. [S]he lives, instead, with nothing in-between, and thus enters the empty space there and instead of desiring, is desire. Take for example, Deleuze's "anorexic." One must first disregard the image of a female who starves herself to resemble an ideal. This is idolatry of everything new utopia(n)(ism) disowns. One must also reinstate the image of a person who deprives herself of food, as someone who is not (as) interrupted, or deprived of process by the manacles of habitual behavior. Deleuze and Parnet write, "the anorexic void has nothing to do with a lack, it is on the contrary a way of escaping the organic constraint of lack and hunger at the mechanical mealtime" (DI 110). The anorexic-becoming exposes

the empty habits of humanity and accentuates that its efforts to fill this void have done little more than increase this hunger.

As utopia(n)(ism) moves toward restraint and minimalization¹, the persona becomes increasingly "deserted," increasingly open for moving populations (*DII* 29). A character affective in a utopian involution works toward a lack of strength in terms of identity or conventional success, that is, through a reduction of consumption, normalcy, convention, functionality, purpose, and obedience via the raw edges of skepticism, disregard, insanity, nihilism, and abjection. Resultantly the utopian creature is manifested as the insignificant, despised, ignored or misunderstood. The anti-hero of the conventional world becomes the hero of the unconventional book. Consider, for example, the conventionally insignificant character upon which Anne Carson places her focus in *Autobiography of Red*. Her protagonist is based on a red dragon—"Geryon"—that Hercules had slain during a rather insignificant side-project. He is little more than a means to an end in a hero's narrative. In addition, Carson develops Geryon as half-man half-dragon (wings included), a homosexual with uncertainty regarding gender identity and the son of a single-mother. This savior and physician is what the hero would, if not see as a monstrosity, feel sympathy for, which is symptomatic of seeing him as a monstrosity. The concept of monstrosity is a product of the attempt to translate difference into the terms of common sense.¹ Thus, the projection of this description onto a character is a good indication that [s]he is productively engaged in becomings that challenge dominant perceptions regarding subject position. Accordingly, Geryon is exemplary of such becoming. For one, he traverses time, space, and context, originating as a mythical monster written about in antiquity (lost to time in fragments of paper) and regenerating as a little Canadian boy—not without his red monster wings—an alienated self in the world. For another, he traverses containment within a particular category by carrying excesses belonging to animal, man, woman, ancient, modern and mortal. One specific example is Geryon's traversal of the female gender. He imagines himself as a woman while he lays alone in the darkness of an unfamiliar room: "what is it like to be a woman/listening in the dark?"; until he sees himself as a woman in the third person: "She listens to the blank space" (48). On another occasion, Geryon's identity shifts when he encounters female objects strewn around the bedroom of his lover's Grandmother: "Who am I? He had been there before, dangling/inside the word she

¹ Refer to STOP 3 "the elitism of the estranged" (see page 29).

¹ Refer to STOP 3 "immanent transcendence" (see page 23).

like at a belt" (57). Such decentering of his 'natural' subjectivity maintains Geryon's movement at the parameters of category. Carson herself describes him as "one that went and saw and came back" (128).

Not only is the persona of utopia(n)(ism) characterized by what the dominant order deems as insignificant or grotesque, but also as a traitor. Deleuze and Parnet maintain that "the traitor is the essential character of the novel, the hero. A traitor to the world of dominant significations, and to the established order" (DII 41). By traitor, it is meant that the character betrays the order of the majority. An example of one such traitor-hero is 'René G' in Solvej Balle's *According to the Law*. With no real goals or desires, in terms of societal achievements, in terms of personal gain, René simply does what he enjoys, that being the study of mathematics alongside the deliberate effort to subtract himself: "he wished to be no one" (59); "because – time and again in mathematics – he had caught a whiff of that unique state of being with which he had become acquainted so early on - a sort of suspension, disappearance" (60). He wants to become zero, to become "a pane of glass, a passing breeze" (68). But René is not attempting to escape the responsibility of being a human, and his 'regression' is not the result of some hatred or depression. Quite on the contrary, René endeavors to accept the responsibility of his humanness with pure, positive desire rather than greedy attempts to fulfill a sense of dissatisfaction: "he wanted to take up the absolute minimum of space that it was possible for any one human being to occupy on the map of humanity" (61). René dramatically alters the conventional conflict of the novel with a complete reversal of the goals and conflicts that would normally drive the fictional being: "He had a clear sense of nearing a point where he needed nothing, missed nothing and desired nothing" (65). René wants to live just for the sake of living, and thus betrays the order of standard motivation. Writing a character devoid of a standard motivation results in a narrative structure which is also devoid of standard motivation.

RETURN TO STOP 5: THE BOOK

the point continued...

"...there can be no definitive closure to rhizomatic fiction, because there is no definitive closure for the character. An effort toward rhizomatics prompts to play with the past, present and future...unsettling them as much as they unsettle us. But it is in our primary nature to do so. No memory is clear. No motivation is clear. No action is solid" (continued from page 65).

: unraveling the narrative (part 2) - flaws in Retention

One of my frustrations as a young reader can be best described through Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Specifically, the display of impeccable memory in the journals of Jonathan Harker and Dr. Seward. I

was baffled by the implications that these characters could retain the details of the day with such extreme accuracy, including every word said by every other character encountered that day...or that week. Of course, I realize that this was merely the technical artistry of the author, the structure with which to build the story. The fact that this book was written by a man of the 19th century has also been taken into account. But even now, I am disturbed by the fabulous storytellers of the fictional world as depicted, for example, by feminist theorist and writer Angela Carter. In *Nights at the Circus*, a miraculous bird woman named 'Fevvers' is created as a magnificent and detailed storyteller. It is through her eloquent words and impeccable memory that the narrative exists. But what are the implications of fastening the movement of the book, fattening what constitutes its present, with the past? The narrator with the perfect memory is, indeed, a storyteller, a weaver of myths...a liar. How is the reader to approach this fiction within fiction? More importantly, perhaps, is this an intended activity? How can the persona engage in the activities we have discussed when she is recounting the past, as only an animated relic is able? Handling memory with authenticity and awareness is of extreme importance to the movement of the text.

In *W: Or the Memory of Childhood* (*W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, 1975), Georges Perec entangles a reconstruction of childhood fantasy with a fragmented autobiography resulting in what he describes as "a tale lacking in exploits and memories, made up of scattered oddments, gaps, lapses, doubts, guesses and meager anecdotes."¹ The instability of truth and fiction, through both the reconstruction of his true memories and memories of his fantastical creations, place the writer and character in simultaneously 'fictional' and 'real' positions. That is, Perec (or his persona) remembers the narrative structure of his imagined world more clearly than the events of the actual. He lacks the clarity of memory in regards to when what happened and with what detail. Yet, the book continues on, its narrative based as closely as possible to those imperfections:

What marks this period especially is the absence of landmarks: these memories are scraps of life snatched from the void. No mooring. Nothing to anchor them or hold them down. Almost no way of ratifying them. No sequence in time, except as I have reconstructed it arbitrarily over the years; time went by. There were seasons. There was skiing and haymaking. No beginning, no end. There was no past, and for very many years there was no future either; things simply went on. You were there...the only thing you do know is that it went on for years and then one day it stopped. (68-9)

This example speaks to the utopian unraveling of the narrative because it admits to the impossibility of the writer's accurate depiction of linearity, and therefore, the inauthenticity of the cleanly structured book. It also

¹ This quote is found in the text before pagination begins.

highjacks the habitual narrative, not to head toward a different location, but rather to simply take it off course.

In addition, his unraveling of the narrative provokes a torrent of openended questions: Why must a narrative structure have a course? To avoid confusing the reader? Who is to say that an anti-linear narrative will result in confusion? Who is to say that confusion is a response to avoid provoking? And who is to say that confusion leads to chaos?

Elizabeth Grosz provides a response: "It is an unhinging—perhaps deranging—of expectation, order, organization, to replace them not with disorder or disorganization but with reordering" (AFO 70).

But is this writing of the fragmented narrative because it is closer to reality not simply a perpetuation of the book that merely reflects the world? Another representation? Possibly...if the world were to stop changing, or the writer were to stop noticing how it has changed. And if the writer were to stop noticing, the world's revolutions would, according to the dominant systems of cognition, in response, slow down. A continual effort to denaturalize the plot structure, in whatever terms are deemed natural at that time and in that space, serves to replenish our organizations of thought. However, the strongest intensity of our effort is to recreate the narrative structure with the unthought, with a seeping in of the unknown, not merely a clever rearranging of familiar strategies. Just as we are using binaries in play together as opposed to thinking we can simply abandon them, or replace them with something else (Grosz AFO 65), we are using what exceeds the conventional narrative structure, the outside, to reform the contents. It is an exercise of present-becomings. But even if this requires reactivation of the past, as it does in the case of Perec, it does not operate on a desire to remember narrative clearly, as if it were something lost to which we wish to return. Present-becoming that either creates new memories or recreates those remaining, does not take the past and stretch it over the present events, as is, as though it remains separate and unaltered by the present. If change is denied of its affects/effects, we are denying ourselves the right to forget, to free ourselves from our slavery to our own constructed master—memory—and thus to move into the new because the mind full of memory has little room for the present or future.

: freeing the book from its content

The process of utopia(n)(ism), according to this project, is matter of emptying things (the concept, the memory, the book...) exercising the Deleuzian concept of the Body without Organs, after which a replenishment is 'in order'; however, in an effort to move away from what inhibits action, the writer's challenge

is to replenish the book with contents that are increasing in imperceptibility, less based on the representation of identity, characteristic of a particular genre, etc. Correspondingly, what can this move toward imperceptibility do with contemporary feminist utopian fiction?

Sargisson exposes what she calls "form-based" and "content-based" approaches to feminist utopian fiction, which neglect literature that falls outside of 'eutopia' (such as dystopia and utopian satire), and propel a "clumsy" continuation of binarized analysis (the them-against-us attitude that seems to have missed out on the subtleties of French feminism) (31-2). Such an approach has likely played a part in the movement, and fits, to an extent, within a number of feminist utopian texts, but if continued to be dragged along the cusp, is little more than a tired reflection, a reminiscence of old battle-cries, based on simplified dualisms of women verses men, of knee-jerk reactions, and an addiction to playing the role of the victimized. This is one of the most irritating aspects of proper genres: a lack of subtlety, predictability of content, a tendency to give anyone with even a remote likeness a bad name—a *name*. But these are not the conditions of those who are imperceptibly utopian, imperceptibly feminist and are, as a result, the high intensity players. Are they hiding their political attire of choice? No. They are living rather than naming themselves and recounting what they have done. Utopia does not know itself, because it is too busy living to check and see how it lives.

Correspondingly, Sargisson's major project emphasis is on how contemporary feminist utopian fiction, and even the traditional utopianism of the past, has already transgressed their respective ingredients; and that, furthermore, "the relevant factor is not so much what the book in question is about as how and why the material is used" (30). However, she acknowledges that it is the content of a feminist utopian text that differentiates it as feminist, suggesting that even in an exercise of deconstructive recognitions and movement toward porousness, we are still working within a notably feminist milieu. How fixed are 'we' to being identified as 'feminist'? Must feminist movements be perceptible in fiction? What are the distinguishing factors of a book labeled as such? It tells a story about the empowerment of women, it experiments with ideas of reproductive roles or technologies, subverts the ordering of gender and sexuality, or is written by a woman? This is all rather obvious. But fiction provides a special opportunity for subtlety. While theory and philosophy must inevitably make reference to themselves by communicating through the terms of 'gender,' or 'feminism' (even in its critique of such terms), fiction can produce the effects of which terminology merely represents. However, more often than not, what is called 'feminist' literature loses itself in a strong intensity of

representation, in a removed position caught up in the symbolic world rather than entering into life. It loses, again, the grace of subtlety and raises its hand for selection onto a particular team (genre, theoretical/political camp). The point is this: a book need not be perceptibly feminist or utopian in order to be transformative. The book is better situated for uninterrupted action when its movement is uncharted.

: infected with psychoanalysis

Any activity surrounding psychoanalytic theory—cultural inscriptions of sex and gender, gender identity, sexual identity, familial relations—has become, through the hard theoretical work of the 80s and 90s, an academic monopoly in both feminist theory and literature, whether typically utopian or no. Psychoanalysis acted as the theoretical fodder for reconnecting the conceptually severed mind and body, as Grosz describes it, by theorizing the “correlation between the forms of the body and the forms of mind or psyche” (*Volatile Bodies* 27). These explorations have indeed played a significant role in shattering feminism into vast multiplicities. The brilliant work of feminists like Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Julie Kristeva, Judith Butler, Joan Copjec, Teresa Brennan, Monique Wittig, Angela Carter, and the early work of Elizabeth Grosz, have extended the psychoanalytic framework, in every possible direction, in favor of the feminine position. But what moved there, has now become still, a sort of sad procedure of applying the template to literature, historical research, cultural studies, etc. Hence the experimental player refuses to drag this 100 year old animal, stuffed and indoctrinated by the master-trainer—Freud—around with he[r], dead as dead can be. But neither is [s]he going to buy a new one to replace the old, that is equally disgusting. But [s]he may try to hang the thing at the cross-roads as a warning to others in he[r] generation...see *where it has been, how it was real and alive, now, see how it is done and decayed*.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari, both express a great respect for the work of Sigmund Freud and his extension via Jacques Lacan, while accusing it of a ‘monumentally’ dogmatic stopping of the flows of productivity in the contemporary world. The “Oedipal code” as they call it, shifts the whole of sexuality, the whole of exchange of desire, of law, and of life, into the Oedipal framework (73). What is meant to be a template to describe the goings on of the psyche, the myth of Oedipus, is really, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a “product of psychic repression” (115). It is a system based on punishment, debt, negativity and loss that is entirely reliant on representation. Everything is predetermined; the issue of the patient always

stretched over the past and with the same Oedipal template...allowed no difference, no new occasion of change. In response, Deleuze and Guattari present an alternative. They create the concept of schizoanalysis in order to "cure us of the cure" (68). Schizoanalysis "sets out to undo the expressive Oedipal unconscious" (98). The concept of schizoanalysis is, therefore, in resonance with the sentiments of this project, relevant to the alternatives created by utopian players; however, discussion surrounding feminist utopian fiction remains largely in the realm of psychoanalysis, because books which are highly concentrated with such musings are among the classics of the genre.

One such example is Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), an apocalyptic fiction which brings to life a full ring circus of psychoanalytic theory. The main character, a man named 'Evelyn,' is transformed, by an army of women belonging to a technologically advanced sect symbolized by the broken phallus, into a perky breasted, young woman—"new Eve"—shortly after being forced to impregnate the "Holy Mother", a grotesque, self-made symbol made concrete fact. Evelyn, made 'new Eve,' falls in love with "Tristessa," a living symbol of the ideal female, *who* ends up actually being a man, who reciprocates 'her' love, but is killed by the shameless harem of women under the command of their violently testosterone-driven master "Zero." *The Passion of New Eve* is an example of a fictional world purely constructed on hyper-psychoanalytic expression, focusing on sexual organization, the connection between body and gender, and gender as performance. It is not utopian in the traditional sense because it makes no suggestion in regards to any improvement. Rather its intention seems to have once been to shake the ground, an important task; however, in the current context its service can be more accurately understood to be something like that of a cultural artifact. In other words, literature utilizing the symbolisms of psychoanalysis, although once very poignant, no longer provokes thought.

: ONE - changing spaces

Setting: one of the primary delineating factors of what is properly or improperly considered as 'contemporary feminist utopian fiction' is its setting in a futuristic time and space, the radically other. It is a strategy which relies on a hearty imagination to predict and/or critique on-the-brink technology, current cultural conditions, or systems of organization. It is also one of the main strategies provoking criticism

regarding the irrelevance of the genre to the present. Thus, in response to the charge of irrelevancy, supporters of utopian and science fiction work to exemplify how an expression of a radically other space is useful in the present.

In defense of the creation of a radically other setting, specifically as it is utilized by Monique Wittig, Jennifer Burwell argues that a removal from the current context is necessary to create outside of its organizations:

For Wittig, then, the process of creating new meanings in language can only take place by imagining a social space that already operates outside the logic of conventional social relations. In her utopian novels, Wittig attempts to enact this "parallel work" on the social level by depicting a utopian space where biologically female subjects are neither marked in language by gender nor marked in society by sex. Through the creation of imaginary spaces in which material conditions are radically different from those of contemporary society, Wittig attempts to create a new context from which she can attach new meanings to conventional symbols. (187)

The writer displaces he[r]-self and the reader into a space which is drastically other, free from the boundaries of the present in order to engage with new thought. Setting, primarily, is a matter of estrangement. Estrangement, as a concept is key to the affectivity of both utopian and SF literary discussions as well as to what we are now calling utopia(n)(ism). It is a technique that follows under the notion that one must be removed from he[r] familiar environment, and submerged in another, in order to return with a new, refreshed perspective...in order to see the present with some degree of clarity (Freedman "Science Fiction and Utopia" 79). Accordingly, Sargisson issues estrangement, as it utilized in literature for these purposes of enhancing awareness and offering alternative (alien) perspectives (*CFU* 179), as justification for the "creation of new conceptual spaces" (101). These creations are, according to her, written from within the present. She writes that, "utopian thought cannot exist independently from the real—it depends on and results from dissatisfaction with the present" (49). Bloch, as well, clarifies the utopian function as being based on one's awareness of the present, rather than a mere abstraction, embellishment, or ideal (112; 214). It is a critique of the present, from within the present, the present being that which Bloch calls the most difficult thing to see, which, as it follows, may requires estrangement, at times, to see. But regardless of the specific estranging technique—the creation of a radically new environment—the crucial factor of estrangement, its purpose in utopian writing, is to accentuate one's position in reality, that is, to make visible existing boundaries. Why then, would we be compelled to stuff a symbolic representation between thought and reality as though they

were not adequately estranged from each other already? Must the reader be removed from the systems of reality in order to experience estrangement?

What constitutes a different space? Think of where we are now, a foreign space with an always-unfamiliar form, full of writers that fit nowhere, who use language as though they did not know it before. What if the book, regardless of its conceptual position in time, is acknowledged as a fictional and unclaimed territory, regardless of its apparent similarity to our everyday reality? For example, what would the conceptual landscape of a book shape into without the psychoanalyst? What if we failed to mention the year, time or space altogether? In affirmation of our flow without the genre-raft, what futurity, innovation, refreshment can be created without the typical fictional geographies, or political structures? Is it necessary to create a radically 'other' time and space to *think*...to really think? What if banal reality were acknowledged as adequately strange enough to perform the induction of estrangement? Rather than remove the reader from the current context, why not force he[r] to stare it in the 'face' so long that it becomes unrecognizable. Why not have the character look so closely at he[r] world, and all the things in it, including he[r]-self, so long that they take new meaning? Perec steps up to the challenge, and has the reader look:

[look] until the scene becomes improbable/until you have the impression, for the briefest of moments, that you are in a strange town, better still, until you can no longer understand what is happening or is not happening, until the whole place becomes strange, and you no longer even know that this is what is called a town, a street, buildings, pavements... (*Species* 53)

Even the space of a page becomes an inhabitable, strange land used to expose the systems of structure to which the writer's creative process passively adheres. George Perec makes reference to the space of the page such as the regulations of the international size and emphasizing all of the actions that happen, that manifest themselves on the page: "I write: I inhabit my sheet of paper, I invest it, I travel across it. I incite blanks, spaces (jumps in the meaning: discontinuities, transitions, changes of key) (*Species* 11). Forced to look at the regulations, reveals how we carry on thorough the organization of space, even though it restricts our thought. We do not produce that way. Rather we write in stops and starts, jumping between half formations of structures, from one topic to another. Randomly aligned and numbered...¹ At once numbered and then simply separated by space. Perec is published this way...the naturally occurring organization of his

¹ This is especially true of writing by hand. Perhaps complacency to the affects of the computer are somewhat detrimental to the creative process, although, it must be said that the computer provides all sorts of new openings...but only if these potentials are consciously considered and experimented with.

thought being presented to us...connecting us closer to HIS structure of thought rather than his thought structured through the dominant forms. Thus, Perec has produced three significant motions: 1) He has exposed the page as a conceptually and physically charged world; 2) He has exposed the strangeness of it under the conditions of dominant understanding; 3) He has, in the midst of its exposure, experimented with new manifestations of the space.

I am led to this suggestion: It is through a radical awareness of the existing world that we are able to imagine and create anything otherwise. This presupposes the writer's 'ability' to create the world with which [s]he estranges the reader. Why not then, invite the reader into he[r] radical awareness as it moves, before it is constructed into a distant image?

: TWO - "THINGS. things. things, things, thingsthings...things. things? is that a word?"

Things. One of our expectations from feminist utopian or Science fiction is new gadgets, new "things"...the future technology of SF that allows us to *do new things*. But what if we took a *new* approach to the objects of our everyday? Could our mindless use of things, our day-to-day interactions, be shaken up? Could we actually see what presently surrounds us before forging ahead? We are already surrounded by technological gadgetry along with its surrounding activities of whose implications we are unaware, i.e. the internet, DNA splicing. We are currently living in science fiction, according to Darko Suvin and Marleen Barr, among other SF academics. We are surrounded, as it is, by the effects of time, cars overgrown with weeds, molding buildings, the disposal of outdated computer hardware. Bizarre, is it not, that we still have the book, with its pages and its binding, much the same as it has always been. This uncanny condition was corporeally brought to my attention when I encountered an original copy of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. I found some irony involved in learning about the survival of the fittest via one of the earliest modes of mass communication; What I was holding was an antique, an artifact. Bizarre isn't it...that the book remains to be a fairly lucrative industry...alongside a mass addiction to hot, creamy, caffeinated beverages. Its presence is so strange, and yet we cannot see it, and this is why we are looking at it. I want to know the book so well that it becomes unfamiliar, so I can use it in new ways.

Georges Perec does exactly this with a vast array of *things*. His interaction with the current state of things that we are in such close proximity with that we cannot see, that we have always *known* but never paid

attention to—really thought about—(including the text in hand), refreshes the reader's interaction which changes the object, the character, and the reader.

In terms of the wall: "I have put the picture on the wall so as to forget there was a wall, but in forgetting the wall, I forget the picture, too"; "So we need continually to be changing, either the wall or the picture, to be forever putting other pictures up on the walls" (39).

In terms of the door (barricade): "It's hard obviously to imagine a house which doesn't have a door" (37); "The problem isn't whether or not there are keys: if there wasn't a door, there wouldn't be a key" (37).

In terms of staircases: "We don't think enough about staircases"; "We should learn to live more on staircases. But how?" (38).

And suddenly the humor, the sickness, and the random lottery of arbitrary things—just the state of them—becomes surprising. These details, the lists of banalities such as beds and the sections of a newspaper, are indicative of our culture, our blind obedience to street lights and parking meters, objects that have been placed as play things of larger systems of order: These things, these 'comforts', these 'attachments' affect our mobility, increase the difficulty of moving, being nomadic (64). We allow them to define us, to play a significant part of our own identity construction, and we obsess:

Decipher a bit of the town, deduce the obvious facts: the obsessio with ownership, for example. Describe the number of operations the driver of a vehicle is subjected to when he parks merely in order to go and buy a hundred grams of jelly:

- parks by means of a certain amount of toing and froing
- switches off the engine
- withdraws the key, setting off a first anti-theft device
- extricates himself from the vehicle
- winds up the left-hand front window
- locks it
- checks that the left-hand rear door is locked... (*Species* 51)

Perec designates the entire short novel, *Things: A Story of the Sixties*, to a couple's struggle for identity via their possessions, hence economic status.

The complexity of our relationship to things is infinite: Under-wire bras, condoms, the mind-boggling fetishization of dollared bills: Capitalism, consumerism, inflation, empiricism, materiality, life and death. We could never run out of ways to experiment with what we have including, of course, the book: *And we think of that book sitting on our shelf. The one we cannot even read and wonder about the significance of the*

book's appearance. But, surely all these things thus far will have their effects on the book. I mean...perhaps we cannot have it all on one page and carry it around with us (and we DO wish to be mobile). We begin to look at the elements of the book that we know all too well...so closely that we look at them differently.

The utopian activity is to keep these *things*, unfamiliar, uncomfortable, superfluous additions to an already satisfied nothing. I want to mention them...write an entire paragraph about a newly bought journal and its affect. I want to write about things, not as a game of what if this was part of life for you, then what? Instead, what if you realized this was part of life, then what? The first question does, indeed, still provoke thought, my purpose is not to argue its uselessness; however, I am looking for transformation in my present-becoming, through material that hits very closely, for a cognitive escape from the closing in of common sense – the way things are. Saying – this is the way things are – that's ridiculous, pleasing, or detestable. Perhaps I can't change it entirely...but I can think of it differently, and hence its unknown power over me will be decreased through its unmasking. Perec moves things around, figures out ways to use the unusable, writes about objects that no longer perform their function: The alarm clock that does not ring, the book that just sits in the lap (*A Man Asleep* 144).

:THREE & FOUR - private parts and sex acts

Let's concentrate on what has become invisible to allow what we have become fixated on to reposition itself on the same plane as ever thing else. Body parts are things, but things that I am suggesting have taken a sort of hegemonic hold on our attention along the theoretical and literary spread. The Freud-o-Lacanian 'seed' which impregnated feminisms with complicated psycho-biological connections involving the phallus and woman's lack thereof, and received its nutrients from the postmodern amniotic fluid rich with a rejection of dualisms—mind/body = culture/nature = male/female = privileged/subordinated— gave birth to a big BODY of work: corporeality. This process, the writing of the female sex which had, until then represented a lack, a freaky mess, whose only joy and purpose was to masquerade as a silly male-desire fulfilling machine, in order to propagate the male species, ego included, has been ridiculously exciting. It is one of the more distinguishable characteristics of feminist fiction, and/or theory. There has been the creation of new alignments, new paths of exploration, revolution: the feminine mystique, the cycles and rhythms (Kristeva "Women's Time" 191), the multiplicity of sex (Irigaray *The Sex Which is not One*). This has lead to the sexual revolution of women, whose recently active voice has altered the very conditions of sexuality and gender

performance. An acknowledgement and experimentation with the language of corporeality and the corporeality of language have been crucial to this revolution. Elizabeth Grosz writes that in order to understand the complexities of our bodies we must recognize that language, patterns, our very habits are all "constitutive ingredients of corporeality" (AFO 50). And how is an appreciation of the body fairing now, in its body language, in our feminist emphasis? Does a respect for its complexity drive us to continue on about the penis, to deface it—the vagina, to glorify it, to go on about their movements, preferences, and representations? Have we not talked enough about sex, violence, penetration, lesbianism, or the revolutionary movement to denaturalize heterosexuality? Have we not become bored of dying their flags of surrender with our menstrual blood? Have we become saturated with visions of mutilation, transformation, blummings, bendings? Have we begun to feel haunted by hideously obvious recountings of these previous efforts?

Just unplug this machine for a moment. Exist for a moment between one use, one formula, and the next.

Perhaps by placing too much emphasis on our bodies, we continue to separate from living, with an overcompensation right back into representation, performativity, and a new order of hierarchy. I suggest that we make use of the Body without Organs¹ as a temporary concept to break this fixity and aid our moves into an embedded becoming that is imperceptible rather than the shrill announcement of our embeddedness. A female writes from a body, through the body, with the body, for the body, but it is not necessary for her to always write *about* that body.

No, we are not finished with our theoretical and literary manifestations of the body and will not pretend the genius of psychoanalysis never existed. In this arena, the inseparability of the body from the process of the text has been established, so it is of paramount importance to unfasten it again. But we are going to come at it from different angles, in an attempt to avoid gluttony and promote action, angles that don't fatten themselves on meaning, but, instead, exercise their parts. It may be that this is more pleasing to those who argue that such theoretical musings do not apply to everyday substantiality. Somebody tell these people

¹ The conceptual image being created here primarily provokes an idea of the body, as we know it to be organized—as an organism. And then we imagine the unravelling of its organizations, and what remains when you begin to flush away "phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole" (ATP 151). Basically, we disorganize the body hierarchy—penis, vagina—that is so deeply ingrained in the Oedipalized western world. The body without organs begins its process towards disorganizing itself the moment one tires of its organs, it is an exercise, an experiment that awaits us, and either we undertake it, or live ignorantly in organization (ATP 149).

that the book, the text of choice for this project, has its own substantiality, along with the letters printed in black which form words of varying length and sound, sentences which the reader reads from left to right, and paragraphs up to down, pages top to bottom. These words, these visible signs, scripts of sound act even further, they produce meaning that is translated from the reader's eye and retranslated through the cognitive process. Language produces a flurry of extremely complex interactions between physical systems of organization and cognitive systems of organization.

: making language move

Sargisson designates Feminist utopian literature as a site where "new and inventive language can best be imagined and employed...as can different social, sexual and symbolic relations" (41). And language innovation has been an ongoing effort in the feminisms. Think of Hélène Cixous' *écriture féminine* and Lucy Irigaray's *language of sexual difference*.¹ And now that we have spoken of the absence of the language of the feminine, and have been excited over the potentials there, and have seen the seedlings of its growth, of its excess and multiplicity, through Cixous and Irigaray, let's not forget what had begun, but let's not simply remember and repeat either.

The motivation of this particular convolution is a revolution in narrowing the gaps between body and word, word and action...which is what happens when, as opposed to merely thinking about thought, one thinks, and in the same way, makes language think—move, as opposed to describing, representing movement. If one writes within the transformation, rather than explicitly about the transformation (as I have mentioned at great length) the writer begins to live right in it...move right in it...it becomes he[r] arms and legs in a sense. Fiction allows a space for the writer to experience such a close encounter with thought.

: a) the metaphor, representation, symbol and hence, the subject.

In defense of particular activities of feminist utopian fiction, such as the "deployment of the utopian elsewhere" (165), Jennifer Burwell utilizes the fiction of Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères* (1969), a book which is also highly concentrated in extreme utopianism, lesbian separatism, and corporeality. It is a sitting duck for slander, but unjustly so; Within its context very early on in the feminist movement, it ruptures the series of well nourished masculine symbolisms and patriarchal representations that had been deeply rooted along the foundations of understanding, not excluding the understanding of the female body. She uses the fictional space to perform what Burwell calls "the utopian act of forgetting" (188), in order to experiment with new

symbols, such as "The ring, the O, the zero, the sphere" (61), to serve as different foundations for the female sect's understanding of the world. Furthermore, as opposed to simply replacing the representations of patriarchy, the sect is actively self-critical, realizing the undesirability and impossibility of representing the body. The effects of this work of fiction are clearly noted throughout discussions surrounding the agency of feminist utopian literature. And Burwell's patient, active reading exposes a crucial activity of the text which holds potential for extension into new productions. Burwell implores that *Les Guérillères* efforts¹ to "describes the body literally, without the mediation of metaphorical comparisons", that is, by "using language in a purely referential way, without the interference of conventional ideology between the sign and the object" (190).

This is precisely the Deleuzian activity of deterritorialization, and sentiment of utopia(n)(ism): No more writing under the bonds of representation, of metaphor. However, is not Deleuze—with his new descriptions, new images of the body, as populated, as field of tribes, new ways of visualizing love, the meeting of these tribes—guilty of writing within the metaphorical system? Not *exactly*. The conditions of language have changed with the concepts. What is conventionally understood as a metaphor, within Deleuzian terms is an actual becoming of the 'subject' to that which it is being compared (whom is collaboratively open to the unraveling of that subjectivity). What was once understood as metaphor is now a combining, a collision between two different worlds, not merely a parallel placement:

when a word assumes a different meaning, or even enters into a different syntax, we can be sure that it has crossed another flux or that it has been introduced to a different regime of signs...It is never a matter of metaphor; there are no metaphors, only combinations. (*DII* 117)

This is important to the transformative potential of language, and the writer he[r]-self. If we are thinking in terms of the metaphor and its surrounding implications on our cognitive process, the writer runs a high risk of limiting he[r]-self to merely engaging in mimicry. That is, the word is at risk of being displaced, borrowed, rather than active in new meanings, disruptive and unsettling in each new position. This understanding of language within literature follows from the use of the concept, where we began. Concepts shift with contemporary problems.¹

Thus, the writer must gain a peripheral settlement with language, that is, *an acceptance and use of its interchangeability*: "you can always replace one word with another, put another in its place" (*DII* 3). There is no

¹ This personification of the text is intentional.

¹ Refer to STOP 1 "the concept of the concept" (see page 4).

natural relation between the signifier and the signified. Simply stated, the words were never correct in the first place, full with their representation and symbolism, and as such, new relations can be made. As Deleuze tells us, "there are only inexact words to designate something exactly" (*DII* 3), accordingly we actively place language in a "state of perpetual disequilibrium" (*ATP* 27) in order to work with the designations at hand, which in turn morph into new designations. In an interview, Anne Carson describes it well:

I mostly think of my work as...using words so that you create a surface that leaves an impression in the mind no matter what the words mean. It's not about the meaning of each individual word...it's about the way they interact with each other...you stand back and see a story emerge from the way that things are placed next to each other. (McNeilly 22)

The words themselves do not matter, it is their movement that does. Hence a debilitating concern with their 'improper' use (which really just translates as unconventional) is unnecessary. The point is that we discuss, we use language, and in turn see what others are doing with language: "If each one of us makes this effort, everyone can understand, one another and there is scarcely any reason to ask questions or to raise objections" (*DII* 3). Freeing language from its *proper designations* opens potentials to use it in new ways. Again, just like 'things,' we do not have to create words that are entirely new, entirely other, to shift the thought produced by their accentuation or combination. New language refreshes the old. Yes, a sort of recycling, that challenges us to use what exists to change how we blindly understand their existence to denote.

The point is that the writer will never be able to explain the unexplainable, but [s]he refuses to give in to tired clichés. In his essay, "Realism and Utopia in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*," Fredric Jameson discusses the near impossibility of expressing an 'ontological alternative' through narrative literature...the use of language to depict the unknown (225). According to Jameson, it is the stuff of the indescribable, the unknowns that is Utopia (224). It is in the moments when the words, their originality, jump out at us from the page because their use, their combination is unfamiliar, but strangely, allows us to understand the thing they work to conjure, to have a moment of clearly sensing 'that force', or in the case of Robinson, to conceive of something we have never seen before.

Anne Carson is highly active in the reconfiguration of language, and is successful on several planes. Drawing from her interaction with and translation of ancient texts, Carson continually reintroduces herself to English by passage of becoming in that free space between the original text and its translated

version. It is a space between systems of organization, a space where creation occurs, and hence a space where the risk of failure is paramount. Carson acknowledges that this risky becoming is beneficial to her writing:

I like the space between language because it's a place of error or mistakenness...and that's useful I think for writing because it's always good to put yourself off balance, to be dislodged from the complacency in which you normally go at the world. (McNeilly 14)

Inspired by her reading and translation of the unconventional ancient Greek poet, Stesichoros, Carson finds one particularly refreshing passageway via the adjective. In her novel, *Autobiography of Red*, she describes adjectives as "small imported mechanisms" which are "in charge of attaching everything in the world to its place in particularity. They are latches of being," latches which are somehow within the strict literary conditions of the Homeric epic, where "being is stable and particularity is set fast in tradition" (4), Stesichoros unlatches:

So into the still surface of this code Stesichoros was born. And Stesichoros was studying the surface restlessly. It leaned away from him. He went closer. It stopped. "Passion for substances" seems a good description of that moment. For no reason that anyone can name, Stesichoros began to undo the latches. Stesichoros released being. All the substances in the world went floating up. Suddenly there was nothing to interfere with horses being *hollow hooved*. Or a river being *root silver*. (*Autobiography of Red* 5)

Her descriptions are enriched by the influence: air becomes "dark pink" (36), the days become "red intervals"(26), pain becomes the "stale black taste of leather" (107), anger pounds like a "piece of weed against a hard black beach" (75), a Saturday morning is "soiled white" (120). Associating words with unlikely meanings, or importance, she destabilizes the predictability of language, allowing words, as much as possible, to realize new form, placing them as strangers in action together in an effort to refresh the reader's sense of understanding.

Unexpected reversals provoke reversals of common sense cognition, such as a reversal of the conventional metaphorical expression of social hierarchy. For example, she depicts the encounter of two exceptional characters through imagery of the bottom feeder: "They were two superior eels/at the bottom of the tank and they recognized each other like italics" (39). She resuscitates words that have been trampled by excessive use: "The word *each* blew towards him and came apart on the wind. Geryon had always/had this trouble: a word like *each*/when he stared at it, would disassemble itself into separate letters and go" (26). Carson frequently unsettles common language use through the thought of her characters. In *The Beauty of a*

Husband, the wife (who remains unnamed) considers the italicized word while reading in bed: "printing a passage in italics is a primitive way of soliciting attention/warns Fowler's *English Usage*/appending as an example of this miserable mode of emphasis/"To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the* woman."/But emphasis is too general a word/for the dip and slant/of mindfulness/that occurs in cognition just/there: *singe it*" (75). She begins a section of prose regarding the wife receiving an unexpected letter from her 3-year-separated partner with: "HE SHE WE THEY YOU YOU YOU I HER SO PRONOUNS BEGIN TO DANCE" (19). Again, the woman considers the connection between language, myth and truth:

And from the true lies of poetry/trickled out a question/What really connects words and things?/Not much, decided my husband/and proceeded to use language/in the way that Homer says the gods do/All human words are known to the gods but have for them entirely other meanings/alongside our meanings/They flip and switch at will. (33)

Carson unleashes the effects of language, its transgressions, unlatches its tradition, both through her own subtle use and through the more forward thoughts of her characters, making its innovation both unmistakable and unavoidable.

: and of grammar and punctuation?

But what could be more challenging than 'forgetting' the building blocks of grammar, with their punctuation mortar. The writer has no choice but to be cognizant of their foundation.

Grammar and punctuation stand holding hands, it's a game of Red Rover, and who would try to break through the strongest link? Perhaps the writer, but not necessarily; the writer, instead, sees this whole field and asks, 'who cares about winning them to our team?' The writer wonders, 'Am I on a team? Are you on a team? Why? I would rather allow you to stand there, holding hands, so friendly and familiar, while I have a go at all this space, I will use you when necessary.' Eventually, as all the other writers start playing here and there, together, with opposing members, the strongest link has to find new ways to constitute their fierce position. It is their job, and they do it well...it's nothing personal. And they are not poor sports, really they made the whole thing possible.

Of course, this is almost unthinkable, but worth a try, and the very effort to think outside of the terms of 'Red Rover' alters the entire process, if only imperceptibly at first. Punctuation is easier to imagine...perhaps because it is more tactile, compact, rhythmic. It is easy enough to move the mechanics of punctuation around, to eliminate the marks, in order to change the flow, the speeds and spaces, the directions in which the writer chooses to have it move. Punctuation marks are the orange pylons, the inviting floor pillows, the street signs that are malleable if they are only used. It would be an absolute shame to overlook the importance and fun in the manipulation of these signals.

As for grammar, the rule bending has already begun with the demotion of the subject. For example, Luce Irigaray, based on the belief that language is sexed, has conducted studies in hopes of creating ethical uses of language which resists the subject-object reduction, allowing for the addition of the feminine. One example, the title of *I Love to You*, as described by Irigaray in an interview, "warns against saying 'I love you,' which always runs the risk of reducing the other to the object of my love" (*Why Different?* 105). She removes what would be the direct or indirect object from its revolution around the other. In her essay, "A Grammar of Becoming: Strategy, Subjectivism and Style," Claire Colebrook describes the subject's movement of grammar, its capability of predication, as "a strategy of reactivism, recognition, and being (rather than becoming)" (118). The subject, according to Colebrook, is merely a slavish reaction to a predetermined identity position: "I do this because of what I am" (199). Working with Deleuze and Guattari, Colebrook unfolds the effects of their philosophy of immanence on reactive grammar. Firstly, the use of the infinitive—"to write"—that is, a reference to the event itself, rather than the act: "there is the event itself and not some prior transcendence of which the event would be an act" (130). Secondly, the indirect speech act, that is neither the transcendent informative position, nor the direct communication between one subject and another (130). This, as we have previously discussed, is accomplished through Deleuze's and Guattari's, and Deleuze's and Parnet's, game of hide and seek, subject dispersal in the text.

But how does active grammar move in fiction? Perhaps it can move particularly well in fiction that concerns itself with a movement away from the subject, such as in Pynchon's *A Man Asleep*, where the identity—*tu*—is unknown, which simplifies the activities to the activities themselves. But there is no dialogue, no speaking subject, yet the character must speak at times, what then? Take into consideration the "tangos" between the husband and wife in Carson's *The Beauty of a Husband*. Their words come in lists of prose no different than the way thought is presented—without the markers 'she said,' 'he said'—to make a line of utterances from dancing mouths to which who its belongs is of less importance than the rhythm of the stream: "I have faith/In what/In us/There is no us/Deep pure faith/But why/Ray you know I wished I lived in another century/You used to say the body is the beginning of everything/I don't believe that anymore" (117). Furthermore, an example of escape, as opposed to a mere shrouding of grammatical positions, is drawn from Deleuze's essay on Herman Melville: "Bartleby: or, The Formula." His reading presents Melville's character, 'Bartleby,' as speaking agrammatically through the repetitive use of the phrase: "I would prefer not to."

Deleuze writes: "I prefer not to, is neither an affirmation nor a negation. Bartleby does not refuse, but neither does he accept, he advances and then withdraws into this advance, barely exposing himself in a nimble retreat from speech" (70). He succeeds in being neither present nor absent, neither active nor passive. It is the creation of a delicate imperceptibility. But ponder the immanence of this...what does such artful sidestepping of spoken responsibility *do*?

: with conclusion but always thinking about 'open' - exercising the reader

The book does not quite escape completion, a certain degree of solidification...taking on its final form...it must reterritorialize. The meager must eventually let it go, have it published, or in my case, submit it to a committee. But neither the book nor writer, as concepts, are closed when acknowledged from the rhizomatic conditions of literary processes of multiple exchange. The writer writes a book that will be read, hopefully, by a particular audience. But this particular audience is not to be regarded in terms of status, identity, power, discipline, expertise, or even intelligence (unlike a Straussian elitism). But we will be regarded, rather, as those who catch the flying shrapnel, respond to the questions, who are teachable...who flow with the lines rather than fasten themselves to the points. The reader, the writer—the ally and fellow-creator—will want to work, would be bored and mildly insulted by a hand-fed escape.

The reader will be discussed at some length in the following STOP, but must be referred to at present because the writer must acknowledge the reader in he[r] writing, [s]he must not underestimate the necessity of the reader in the utopian process. It seems that that which the writer leaves open for the reader—a potential addition to the assemblage—the gaps, the conceptual spaces, anything indefinable, foreshadowing of an unpredictable continuation in further work, a provocation as yet still unexplored. These are the pivot points where the potential for the continuation, for transformation is the most intense. And the borders of this utopia, which is always under renovation, must remain open to difference. Accordingly, the writer leaves an invitation to participate.

George Perec interacts in direct dialogue with the reader, suggesting various conceptual exercises: "Things we ought to do systematically, from time to time" (*Species* 44). As was mentioned in several places, his exercises mean to estrange the reader from everyday things, systems themselves, and the places they dwell. But his experimentation with 'point of view' unmistakably has the reader in mind, for a few examples, by asking the reader to become the main character (as in *A Man Asleep*), to analyze, from an intimate

proximity, the condition of the characters (as in *Things: A Story of the Sixties*), to engage in thought experimentation with the writer (as in *Species of Spaces and Other Places*). My first example—becoming the main character—in *A Man Asleep*, is achieved by the use of 'you' or more authentically—'tu.' The French pronoun—*tu*—is used in familiar and/or rather direct, aggressive terms, which is meant toward the reader, a one on one conversation, like a visualization script. Have we not all lain in bed at least one morning wondering what would really happen if we just didn't get up...if we just didn't go? *Do I really NEED to go to that meeting?* Well this character just doesn't. He doesn't go to his exam one morning and it all starts, or more accurately, *stops*, right there. He *lives* a thought experiment. So not only, as we have already discussed with specific interest in the conceptual persona, has Perec experimented beyond his ability, but he has also made a character that is the reader's persona as well.

We are brought into Perec's own unresolved thought exercises, again, through problems that connect the everyday with the highly abstract. For example, he tries to imagine a room with no purpose at all:

I have several times tried to think of an apartment in which there would be a useless room...For all my efforts, I found it impossible to follow this idea through to an end. Language itself, seemingly, proved unsuited to describing this nothing, this void, as if we could only speak of what is full, useful and functional. (*Species* 35)

In the margin alongside this musing, I wrote: "What if the architect included one room that had no identifiable, or predetermined (presumed) purpose?" I thought, the job description of the architect may be to design with presumptions of conventional use in mind, as to best suit the possible habitants, yet, [s]he can leave something open; as a token of respect for the needs and creative ability of its future habitant. I wrote: "Can the writer do this with the book?" This can be as simple as Lawrence Krauser's novel, *Lemon*, which wears a seductively blank paper cover left for the reader to design, or as complex as Grosz's spread of questions that are meant to be pursued but in such a way as maintaining their unanswerability. In this same way, although the writer writes with he[r] design in mind, [s]he leaves a space, knowing that it will be used and changed in unpredictable ways. And the writer writes the book, but with something to be contended with, something that risks, or nearly guarantees misunderstanding, an excess (an access), that which would traditionally be thought of as lack. And truly everything about the utopian writer, he[r] writing, the book, is conducive to this extension, via the concept itself, the format, use of character, and innovation of language, content and disciplinary/genre collisions.

I am reminded that beauty is in that which is still unimaginable, and it is the small cracks and departures from the system that creates and provides us with a sense of difference, of the Thing, of life. There will be an adherence to templates before us, the language we know. We must always hang on to this ordered system, systems and devices with at least our pinky finger. And we learn that what moves is utopia(n)(ism) and the rhizomatic book, through a simultaneous respect and departure from their traditional manifestations and uses. But what we are doing does not have a past position and a now...it has always been different...the nature of it is always evolutionary...always rhizomatic. As the root-book split off into its tip, destroyed, it began to manifest multiplicity into the radical-system, the fascicular root, but not yet without the root's unity. The rhizome, learning from the root and the fascicular root, begins to abort entirely, and who knows what has yet to happen (ATP 5). Who knows what will happen the more we work in tandem with nature...not 'Nature' as we see it with its molar organism organizations, but nature as it may be. If we can imagine a different structure of the book, we can work outside of our previous fixities...it is the impossible that alters the possible. Even as we work toward overlooking our common sense, we are inspired to write and read the book apart from terms of imitation, reflection, or resemblance. We will work toward an alteration of what we already know the book to be.

I am listening to you not on the basis of what I know, I feel, I already am, nor in terms of what the world and language already are...I am listening to you rather as the revelation of a truth that has yet to manifest itself—yours and that of the world revealed through and by you.

- Luce Irigaray from *I Love to You*

STOP 7: THE READER

pivot :

The writing process is an act, an in-between stopping points, or a deterritorialization, but some form of end is both necessary and inevitable. The book must be published and distributed, placed out in the world...it must reterritorialize. The writer can only hope that the life of the book will never be left to rest, and therefore, be long and varied in its uses. [S]he knows the concepts will crystallize over time for the purposes of the institution, this is to be expected from the institution and its everyday necessities—locked doors, office hours, syllabi, and security guards. However, 'the institution' as a molar unit, is not the primary audience, although the writer knows he[r] work will end up in its hands. Rather, it is the people-particles, so assorted and jaded, which enter and exit that space are the potential utopian readers. They are the lovers and seed-sowers. The reader, as part of the person who becomes through writing, as a virtual existence in the utopian domain, has little interest in the concept-bonbons the institution makes of books. Although [s]he may know them and even hand them out from time to time, to he[r] it is to look upon dead bodies displayed in exquisite coffins. Perhaps some of these bodies have never been animated, but the reader sorts through for those that were once alive or those that have not yet died and experiments with their resuscitation or life-extension. And the reader will extend the life of such works with he[r] youthful hunger for new perspectives (Bloch 116). The reader holds the responsibility, and the desire, to disseminate the work of those before he[r], surrounding he[r], and speaking into the future. [S]he will re-introduce it to the instability and transformation it met during its writing process—

re-activating it within the new problems its temporary solution(s) created. Hence, the reader, in this way, is crucial to the sustenance of the utopian process.

point :

: learning to read

In her book, *The Other Side of Language: A Philosophy of Listening*, Gemma Fiumara contends that we inhabit a culture that knows how to speak but not how to listen; what we believe to be genuine dialogue is actually a series of colliding monologues. She offers a concept of authentic listening that she calls a "maïetics of thought," or "philosophical midwifery," by which she challenges the reader to adequately receive what is being put forth, allowing for the affect of what is been offered. Feeding into the context at hand, it is crucial that the reader of newly utopian texts understands the forces of the utopian-machine, the forces that the writer was driven by, regardless of what terminology, message, or medium 'the reader' may encounter. In this utopian network, where the writer(s) write(s) rhizomatically, the reader(s) read(s) as though [s]he is reading a rhizome rather than a root, or as though [s]he is reading to create a new rhizome or add it to one already on the move. But how can the reader be a better 'listener,' hear the rhizomatic vibration, become part of the rhizome he[r]-self?

: the literary machine

We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed.

- Deleuze & Guattari from *A Thousand Plateaus*¹

The book is not a toy box full of toy-signifiers, to be extracted by annotation, interpretation, and questioning and then placed in another toy box proudly called 'the essay'. Rather, the book, as described by Deleuze, is a "little non-signifying machine." The reader does not conceive of the passage apart from he[r] primary understanding of the word, and will waste no time performing an exegesis of its passages. In the literary process, such analysis is death, and of interest only to the dead men with which Zarathustra² vowed, "never again!", to waste his words. Deleuze challenges us to read as though the book were plugged into a large electric circuit, that is, placed in direct contact with its outside, "as a flow meeting other flows, one

¹ Ibid., 4

² In reference to 'the madman' of Nietzsche's, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (see Works Cited).

¹ Refer to STOP 5 "order is in order: failure" (see page 56-58).

machine among others" (9). From this approach the reader is looking for use and efficacy (AO 206) and, therefore, finds little relevance in questions surrounding "what does it mean," asking instead, "does it work, and how does it work?" (NO 8). And crucial to this inquiry into the potential movement of the book, is asking *with what does it work?* The book must be placed in connection with the outside, allowed to work with new things. This rhizomatic, Deleuzian, approach to the book is what Tom Conley calls the "method of AND," of "this and then that." Reading with the method of 'AND' encourages literary exchange to extend the relevance of one text to inform and explore another; the voice of one becomes an irreducible collective utterance (264). It is an approach with, quite honestly, unlimited benefits.

For one, the separation of theory and literature becomes extremely vulnerable. Deleuze, although a philosopher, consistently illuminates the collisions between the philosopher and the writer by coupling his discussion of philosophy with that of literature. The names of philosophers (Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger) appear alongside names of literary figures (Melville, Whitman, Becket, and Carole) (Smith xii). He so integrates and places in alliance the authors and philosophers he reads with each other and his own that there is a sort of *becoming* between suppliers (ATP 47). The "method of AND" mobilizes the community of utopian players.

Another benefit to reading the book as a literary machine is, as Ernst Bloch, Gilles Deleuze, Jennifer Burwell, and Lucy Sargisson exemplify, the ensuing extraction of its political impetus, the force behind its production. Thus, it can be reapplied to new phases of the same problem. And furthermore, in this approach the reader shows respect for the writer, *becomes* toward the writer, because rather than be the self-condemned judge of right and wrong, the reader prefers to rescue the survivors, leaving the casualties behind. We are inspired and learned by the work before us, even in its error. As Fiumara explains, although we do not require its support, it can assist us in our escape from the narrow path of the dominant system, and is evidence of the complexity of surrounding interactions and concerns (72).

Furthermore, I suggest that the reader consider error as an opportunity, or invitation to extend the text.¹ The concept of the rhizome, as a departure from the root and radical, is created from what it is departing, which is, in other words, a revision of an earlier form. Deleuze and Guattari were both disgusted and inspired by the radical and provoked into a creation of the rhizome. Accordingly, the movement of the

radical would not have begun without the root. We need not read with vendettas of old or the personal on our shoulders. Does feminism wish to continue speaking about guises of neutrality as though they had been intentionally hidden? I suggest that the reader approach the text as incomplete, in wait for reactivation, left for the reader to make use of it in a way that the writer was unable, to be divided and nurtured into new greenery, to be plucked away and transplanted elsewhere. It is a treatment that should also transpire between feminists.

The challenge to respond to the work of the writer with the largest possible degree of openness has been present throughout the entire project thus far. It is required to respect the utopia(n)(ism) of the past, the utopia(n)(ism) as it currently works, to be teachable, and to allow everyone to breathe. The more the reader reads with openness, the more [s]he will write openly, the broader her relevancy and care. Deleuze, for example, in his cross-contaminations of Nietzsche (and Spinoza) has revitalized and dispelled the concept of active and passive desire across a wide-ranging population who has, in turn, injected it into new areas. I have mentioned, from place to place, this action versus reaction, especially in the form of harsh charges against certain bruises on the arms and legs of feminism, although I am not the first to do so. These charges have been laid with care and subtlety by thinkers such as Elizabeth Grosz and Claire Colebrook and must be spoken of again here because this distinction is crucial to be freed from fixations on both the defense and rejection of utopias (including the specificities of utopian thought). These fixations are irrelevant, and, sadly, energy is squandered there when it is the energy, itself, that is the real matter of importance. Such an oversight is a neglect and suppression of the passion driving the work. The reader must ask of he[r]-self, am I that weak? Moving away from criticism, reductionism, [s]he reads hopefully, with the senses open, willing, accessing it only through wonder and curiosity—a suspension of disbelief. As Fiumara learns from Nietzsche, one finds the courage “to detach oneself from one’s own conviction” (80). [S]he prolongs resistance to the shackles of disagreement, defensiveness and self-reflection, by accepting he[r] expected response based on he[r] everyday particularities and then forgetting it. The reader is no longer interested in such mindless bickering, but lacks the arrogant confidence that [s]he has remained dissolved enough to avoid raking whatever [s]he encounters over the template or theory [s]he most enjoys. However, [s]he is beginning to work from a template that is only cruel to that which stops the flow, and in doing so, begs not its ‘application to’ but its susceptibility and induction of susceptibility, reciprocated by what it encounters.

The reader must allow a becoming toward and with the writer, thinking, reading, toward and with the life of utopia(n)(ism). The reader becomes susceptible to the conditions of the writer, becomes the writer, to the writer's history, context, in order to challenge he[r] thought which can only occur at the unstable outskirts. As Fiumara intonates, it is our position at the outskirts of a "healthy intellect" that has us within earshot of what lays beyond that limit, beyond what surrounds our rational life (94). The reader is compelled to take on the passion, the madness of the writer, the characteristics of the writer: estranged, of delicate health and, of course, well read. And humble in he[r] reverence for the history with which her work is possible. Which means that she must position he[r]-self as somewhat untouchable.

: silence and discretion

Although the reader is extremely accommodating, she does not lack discretion. Even in tolerance and prolonged silence the reader is acutely aware, active, learning from that with which [s]he does not agree. Saving the energy that would have been wasted in reaction, the reader 'listens' with full attention. The reader, as listener, is an in-between, like the act of writing that occurs before a sort of stopping, or solidification of either submission or revolt. The reader is active in what Fiumara calls a "pre-ethical" situation (149).¹ That is, listening (reading) is understood as a sort of conduit rather than yet another position (77). The reader's silence does not mean passivity, especially not in the desired terms of subtlety and imperceptibility. Fiumara draws a distinction between active and passive listening. The torrent of messages that are "not listened to correctly," or which we are not capable or willing to listen to, still reach us, pacifying us into torpidity, stagnation, "benumbment," as we passively absorb and, hence, accept what we encounter (83). The preferable alternative, as we have discussed, however, is not to be reactive, but to be an active listener with silence as conduit. Silence does not connote passivity; in fact, we live in a culture that forces us to speak...often without thinking. Deleuze writes:

Radio and television have spread this spirit everywhere, and we're riddled with pointless talk, insane quantities of words and images. Stupidity's never blind or mute. So it's not a problem of getting people to express themselves but of providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don't stop people expressing themselves but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, and ever rarer, thing that might be worth saying. (NO 129)

¹ "Listening itself creates such a pre-ethical situation; it is a way of being which is not yet a way of doing, and because of this it escapes from the alternative of submission or revolt" (149).

I am under the belief that although it is the responsibility of the reader to use what [s]he reads, one who responds too freely, too quickly, too eagerly, cannot be trusted - because a sufficient response is an arduous task. Time is required to process the material. The reader should be disgruntled by the idea of having to discuss it...to hear he[r] voice butcher out a response...to answer directly questions about the text, to add to the irrelevant excess of chatter.

In this sense, silence is a sort of Body without Organs, a utopian space in itself. Fiumara understands it as transformation of one's self into a conduit, rather than another opportunity for the propagation of the self (77).

She writes:

One must be able to keep a part of oneself alert to play the role of imperturbable spectator: He who keeps silent, not he who is silenced because he can no longer speak; he who remains silent because he chooses to surrender his own instruments of reasoning in order to freely opt for a more radical and implacable listening. (182)

According to Fiumara, it is important to listen, because we cannot fall victim to what we have heard, and can therefore expose (83). But, there is always a surplus, voices to which we remain *ignorant*, because they were drowned out by the ones to which we had selected to listen.

: ignorance

The reader, who spreads so thin, welcoming complexity and variation much too large to organize, must accept the discomfort of unfamiliarity, bewilderment, unscholarliness, and *ignorance*. As a reader, ignorance is a force to be reckoned with (which includes a dependency on translation). It is a horrifying realization that one has read practically nothing, that there is an insurmountable quantity that remains to be read! The effects of this reach into the reader's comprehension of those [s]he does encounter. I am too familiar with this breakdown having read Ernst Bloch and Gilles Deleuze, cookie monsters of the fine arts, who incessantly drop names of which I have scarcely read directly, have engaged via a few mildly effective secondary sources, or, at worst, have never even heard of. It is a reality indicative of the literary machine: one book, one name, one theory, links to a multitude of writhing lines to other books, names, theories. There is no longer a comfort, a calm available in recognizing a grand succession, sliding along a silken thread. As Fiumara writes: "...everything has already become no longer recountable and no longer follows a thread but has spread itself out across an endless surface" (75). I had landed in the middle of a writhing mass of serpents, each of

different color, whispering different seductions, in all the energies of smooth passage, closeness, amongst all the gleaming, scaly skin, passing over and under one another. This shall not provoke defeat or cause a ceasing. It provokes a commencing of a continuous project, an infinite project.

Deleuze himself writes about his intimidations at jumping into the history of philosophy, pressures that he concluded as being unnecessary restrictions on the academic's conceived validity of their pursuit:

The history of philosophy has always been the agent of power in philosophy, and even in thought. It has played the repressor's role: 'how can you think without having read Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger, and so-and-so's book about them?' A formidable school of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought – but which also makes those who stay outside conform all the more to specialism which they despise. (DII 13)

Hopefully, the youthful reader will begin reading to learn, rather than to find he[r]-self trapped, especially by the idiosyncratic anxieties of using a term incorrectly, or been thrown a question (which is a form of attack to begin with) regarding a thinker who is an obvious stranger to he[r] work thus far. The reader learns to accept ignorance because it is a true condition of her work and it nourishes desire, not because it is grasping at what knowledge lacks, but because it has an infinite supply of ignorance, encounters with the unknown, and the new at its disposal. The reader is a shark in this way, whose survival depends on the water gushing in and out of gills propelled by its perpetual movement. [S]he would die without new combinations to ingest and dispel. And this survival is assisted by those whom the reader reads, who have pulled in their world and funneled it directly to the reader; because the act of reading is not only for the writer, but the reader as well.

: reading to learn

If we are authentically striving for the growth of rhizomatics in literary exchange, or plugging into the utopian forces, there is a call for the reader's heightened, expanded awareness, ability to listen. The reader spreads her particles over vast expanses of various texture and temperature, [s]he is a vacuum sucking in the surroundings, filtering them into the words on each page and sending them out again.

You may read in a wide variety of locations, an abandoned display booth in a high-traffic area at a large university you are a foreigner to, or the armchair in a coffee shop you frequent every Wednesday, each with its own particular sensory influences on the way you engage with the text. Some days you become a child, or a shaman, fascinated at (the) difference created each day on each page.

All things must be considered, the reader should not ignore the extent to which [s]he mixes with the words, sentences, and traces of the author. What is he[r] commitment to what [s]he reads? Is it entertainment, a

compelling force, a source to funnel into an assigned project? Not to judge the intentions behind the reader in terms of creating a scale of the most to the least valuable, noble or valid engagements, but to question the forces that are acting upon he[r] as [s]he reads. And to question what immediate activities are being engaged. Is [s]he writing in the margins, underlining or circling words and phrases and so altering the visual status of the original product? How is [s]he positioned? Is [s]he distracted by he[r] surroundings? By he[r]-self? He[r] worries? He[r] white socks showing at the ankles? Is [s]he eating? Drinking coffee? Mixing experiences? Thinking about hunger? With what speed, urgency, or patience out of a desire to prolong the experience is [s]he reading? Is [s]he excited by the work? Struggling to catch on to the style of the writer? Experiencing pangs of inadequacy? What is stopping he[r], or aiding he[r] in becoming-toward the writer?

: reading against defensiveness

Gilles Deleuze continues to be positively explored by Feminist Theorists such as Elizabeth Grosz, Dorothea Olkowski, and Claire Colebrook along with a growing community of academic players. However, as discussed in STOP 4, Deleuze has met with severe disapproval and defensiveness within feminist discourse because of his simultaneous disregard for and superseding of the core of feminist discourse—identity politics—that is, subjectivity, identity and the personal. But what is under threat? The ‘safe’ boundaries of legitimate, politically-correct feminist considerations? The continual work on familiar battles, the stuffing fuller of the same spaces? Much of how Deleuze and the surrounding discourse are discussing, is already in line with feminist desire, but furthermore have the potential to make irrelevant the structural strongholds that keep us from working that desire, the point here being, it is always in the interest of the reader to make use of what [s]he can. Text that provokes a reader response, whether that be goading a reactive reflex, or inspiring a joyful collaboration, is rich with useable resources. To this my reader might reply, ‘is this not selective reading?’ To that I would answer, ‘absolutely, but only if you, the one reading selectively, understand that academic utopia operates on a complex network of respect and openendedness.’ To be more specific, the reader does not read as a means of self-affirmation, or with critical intentions. [S]he reads in an effort to avoid reduction, and with hopes of extending the text, and thus affirming the labor of the writer. The utopian reader will be drawn, however, to particularly experimental texts, and thus, is likely to be interacting with a writer who would encourage such use of the text, in a way permitting the reader to take with he[r] what [s]he will. In

reference to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze encourages his reader to "happily pass over what they don't understand" (NO 7). It is a sort trusteeship operating on the academic golden rule. Fiumara writes:

The attitude toward listening implies a basic trust – almost a hope. The assumption that we can approach the optimal use of even the most rudimentary communications and that there is a desire to represent and express oneself is deeply interwoven with this trust. A trust that our interlocutor may convey what is yet unknown, unexpected or even what may actually be necessary for our own constant renovation. (162)

And it follows, that as the reader transforms the affectivity of the text, [s]he must be expect to be changed also (165).

Because it's not enough simply to say concepts possess movement;
you also have to construct intellectually mobile concepts.
Just as it's not enough to make moving shadows on the wall,
you have to construct images that can move by themselves.

-Gilles Deleuze from *Negotiations*¹

STOP 8: CONCLUSION

point :

You have submerged yourself in an amorphous mess of utopian thought-activities, connecting fragments, writing, creating extensions, ingesting information and distributing it as something like thought into various piles of collections. You know that eventually, this labyrinth must be filed into definable little pockets, placed in a particular order, compromised for the purpose of adequate explication. This is not only a compromise, but also a glaring contradiction that, despite clever self-effacing reference, and elaboration on the productivity of failure, gives rise to doubt and frustration. The foremost manifestation of this struggle is the conclusion. Regardless of what words you put there, whatever appears on the last page will be by cultural law, the end by fact of simple physical constitution. But this contradiction has been with you the entire time; it is precisely what gave you the sense that something was, in fact, happening. The shameful contradiction would be if you reduced it all, after all you have learned and deterritorialized, to a matter your own success or failure, in terms of your level of achievement. The conclusion is just a space, a gift you impart to the reader before your intersecting lines continue on their way.

The battle between potential and actualization is ongoing and deceptively imperceptible.

pivot :

: eddy or whirlpool of thought

In a tribute to love, life, creativity, production, innovation, growth and movement, I have discussed, from various angles and intensities, a few of the physical, conceptual, psychological, political, linguistic, and academic confines beyond which the utopian writer must struggle to extend he[r] thought-activity. And not unlike Nicholas Royle's struggle to escape the compromise of writing an 'introductory text' on Jacques Derrida, or Deleuze and Parnet's rejection of the 'the interview,' I have faced the task of writing a thesis on a

¹ Ibid., 122

subject quite opposed to its 'traditional' structure. In other words, while imparting examples of writers, who through their clever aggravation of dominant systems, have given movement to the templates and techniques of literary and philosophical thought-expression, I have floundered in precisely the convention and convenience that I so brazenly reproach. I have made efforts to bypass my crime, by means of an interdisciplinary approach, a respect for my thought-beneficiaries, with the intention of extending, inspiring, and invigorating a combination of dying arguments, and all with a conscious attempt to accept failure and a profound trust in the reader; however, the manifestation is largely description *about*, that is, along the lines of the parasitic and secondary, academic work (as according to Teresa Brennan and Derrida's 'constitutive writing'),¹ as opposed to writing *actively with*, or as an *example of*. However, it must be said that there is the potential for movement and influence in the informative approach, and as I will discuss in a moment, that although the supposed limitations of a thesis structure are largely self-imposed, these imagined boundaries are part, as we have discussed, of a very real and complex imbedding of academic normalcy and the blinders of general common sense.

The point of this conclusion is that 'the conclusion,' to my understanding, is the most painful part of this project. I have reached what I call 'the crisis of the conclusion,' a pure exposure of how far my ideas have exceeded my ability. Resultantly, I have been struck with the fear and shame of academic safety and acceptance. Thus, I admit that the conclusion is a persisting organ to which I must exaggerate attention. Not, however, through a slightly removed discussion of how other writers and philosophers have responded to the problem, but in a direct interaction between you and I in hopes that a humble self-exposure and reference to the evils of the problem at hand will—despite an impending failure to escape or produce at an adequate level—will at the very least have the problem *vented* by myself, the writer, and *exposed* to you, the reader.

'The conclusion,' when adhering to the precise conceptualizations and manifestations of its academic history, forms an eddy or whirlpool of thought. It is a demon of romanticized circle-running that leads to exhaustion and certain stagnation; It lies in wait the whole time, even at the 'close' of a project (this project) which writes toward and about becoming-away from the seduction of such habits. 'The conclusion,' by colloquial designation, signifies a result or outcome of an act or process, a closing, end, or finish. It elicits a final judgment, decision, settlement or deduction. In its most lawful form, the conclusion is *derived* from the

¹ See Page 7.

structures of logic: the conclusion presents a proposition that must follow from the major and minor premises in a syllogism. However, present context considered, a conclusion is as undesirable as it is impossible, as well as a fabrication in an effort for the assumed peace of arrival. However, the same as the conventional utopian blueprint, a logical conclusion merely leads to the unnecessary and disappointing stunting of an otherwise invigoratingly unknown and potential-full future.

But although we may recognize, hopefully at this point, that a conclusion is neither required to make change nor a sign that change has occurred, there is an urgency competing with this recognition. It is the contradiction between being conditioned to crave closure, completion, satisfaction (climax and resolution), or at the very least, to feel unsatisfied in the absence of these pieces of the formula, and becoming-toward the utopian who, acting in positive desire rather than longing with negative desire, has begun to understand completion as the crashing of the wave [s]he has been riding up on the barren beach. However, this tug-of-war in which the conclusion plays the flag, until this point, has merely rolled with the momentum of the project, perhaps because being in the midst, the reader and the writer have sustained a mild sensation of pending fulfillment, while I, the writer, have had no intention of following through. The answers were easily deferred because there was time for fulfillment. However, as this conclusion has us rolling to a stop, it now becomes clear to you, the reader, that fulfillment will not be achieved. I refuse.

A deliberate reduction would be belittling to myself, the work of those from which this project has been inspired and would be to underestimate the complexity of the reader. Thus, I am not going to tell you what to leave with...how to sum it up. I do not hope to provide a condensed version of what has been relayed here just so that someone can read only this and catch the 'key ideas' of this project. I have already done this in the abstract, before it all began. But that was dessert before supper, rather than a 'doggy bag' at the end of the meal. I will not send you home with a cute little cardboard carton to stink up your car, rot in your refrigerator and encourage a late night television-watching binge of cold leftovers that have settled in room-temperature fats and oils. But for what kind of reader would this be desirable? I say the critic. I feel obligated to provide some form of conclusion to appease the anticipated critic... the ethereal 'person' whose severe gaze I try to care little for—the analytical modernist, a combination of all the worst traits of each professor, writer and thinker I have encountered thus far. I assume this critic to attribute my refusal to conclude to a laziness or the lack of discipline required to condense my ideas, because it is the critic who glorifies an

expenditure of energy on summary and deduction. And thus, why do I concern myself the critic? Or perhaps, more perplexing is, why would the critic would both reading this project? Clearly a reader who desires a traditional conclusion would have despised the project all along; therefore, a couple of clever pages in closing is unlikely to redeem the other 100. So, as this conclusion is clearly not for that reader, I do not apologize for my apologetic chatter, even if it is to that reader I am speaking. Hopefully, you had the impatience to read this first, and thus save yourself from the torment of the rest.

Despite the fact that my entire project urges such a reader to ease up, to not take things so seriously, it opens its arms to embrace each of its probable enemies, because even someone on he[r] deathbed looks for an opening, as the cliché goes: [s]he's at death's door. Meaning this: this conclusion, regarded in conventional terms, regardless of the reader's position which may have been derived in the terms of convention, 'fails' in the same way as utopia(n)(ism) depending on the approach to which the reader is taking. An academic project is constructed with a beginning, middle, and promised an end, an arrival, or closure suggesting a goal toward unity. It is a blueprint of thought meant to offer answers or alternative. We hate it, but unfortunately it is what has been employed by those before us and has consequently been established in our common sense. Therefore, within a context of resistance to such tradition, the content of the paper has presupposed the conclusion to resist closure, to propel the reader into the future, to open itself up to new connections. And this marks an obvious potential of the conclusion. The conclusion is not limited to summary. Rather, it also provides an opportunity to plug the working ideas into the wider world, sending the reader off with a freshly opened can of worms. It is thus, a concentrated locale of intensity, bubbling with possibility; Using the conclusion—the 'ultimate' anti-thesis of this thesis—to examine its own 'nature,' brings the severity of the problem to a condensed tip; thus conveying in a sense, the failure of this project, a necessary revelation for the productivity-extension of the reader.

However, we are placing far too much importance on the conclusion, one section, while it ought not to be any more relevant than any other part. Because, although a physical flushing of significance-levels is improbable at this time, we must at least attempt to lay it flat conceptually. Each section is meant to sustain itself, propel forward, to be complete at every moment. By means of blatant explanation, this is not a tube: *"take the cap off and start squeezing on that end, you know, sort of push the contents along really patient like to the open end, and the stuff will come out over there"*. Rather, this is a sponge: *"take it in hand, squeeze it like crazy, with*

your fist, underfoot, whatever, just apply pressure and the stuff will come out from absolutely everywhere". Thus, for this reason alone, the paranoid, heightened response to something that is altogether insignificant in light of its surrounding activity makes the conclusion a dangerous and hearty waste of energy.

Why, then, include a conclusion at all?

The question harkens back to a concept brought to my consciousness in an undergraduate social psychology course: although first impressions hold significance...it is the last (or more recent) encounter with a person which we are most influenced. In a similar way, the closing of a book, an essay—its inevitable end—at the very least physically, which is in close proximity conceptually, according to the experience of the reader, has an inevitably strong impact. That is, despite a conceptual refusal on the part of the writer, whatever text is placed in the final pages of the book or essay act as the end. Hence, although I may refuse to tell you with what to leave, how it all fits together, to what it could connect, and to either recount or condense what has previously transpired, whatever I position at the end, will substitute as the answers I refused to fabricate. I can only hope the reader will not read with such strict linearity or climactic expectation.

My repugnance, my failed anti-conclusion, has been predictable since the beginning, to the point of being humorous. Accordingly, this conclusion is so thick with the empty calories of wasted words, littered with talk *about*, talk *about* the terrible conclusion, as though exposing the inadequacy of such a concept has freed me of my academic responsibility. So, then am I projecting the responsibility of the conclusion onto the reader? Absolutely, "go satisfy yourself!" But perhaps the provision of a terrible conclusion is an adequate example, because all the while defeated, I glow with the joys of contradiction: I have indeed reached a conclusion that there ought not be a conclusion. Furthermore, I know it does not end here, because I have already moved on...I have long since plunged into fiction, and it has grown like an independent limb from the skin of this creature. Therefore, although my tracks may be here, I cannot be found.

But I refuse to have the last word. And as silence or refusal can be an act, so can I act in my refusal. Thus, Bartleby will speak for me, saying, "I would prefer not to."

OUTTAKES

1. *Utopia(n)(ism)* is a sort of icon of the fissure between modern and postmodern thought. It is a precision point from which modernism expands into the wide end of a triangle. Postmodernism, on the bottom, thriving on the horizon, wishes to remove the tip and spread it open, grasp the peaking lines and flatten them out, sending all the faces and concepts that had resided on the top to the bottom. And what have they done with *utopia(n)(ism)* after it fell? They have petrified it, as a word, as a shape, a dense stone—that carries the weight of an entire network of structural systems—and have used it as a weapon, swinging it wildly, careless on the end of a rope, smacking the heads of those around them. It's funny, it's pleasurable to use the tool of the oppressor against the oppressors. But nobody knows, in this mess of people, who the supposed enemies are.... who has fallen from the top, who plots to reconstruct the pyramid. It's a sad game...a sad situation. Hold your weapons. What was the point of ripping open the triangle if you are going to waste your time sifting or your energy fighting among the remains? Look away from the mess, walk toward the outside, take your weapon with you but don't let its weight weigh you down. Make it what you want it, make better use of it, after all, it is only a concept. Mine is a big red water balloon. Guess what I'm going to do with it.

2. *The book itself is made inaccessible just by means of physical property manipulation. The binding is stiff and heavy, as though the pages are resistant to leave on another if only for 5-10 minutes. And the cover image bears a simple degree of embarrassing cliché that would have your turn around if anyone fashionably unfashionable were watching. But they're not right now...because you have become effectively, defensibly transparent – to the point of invisibility. You open it, surprised, slightly put-off. Superiorly enticed, sensibly aroused, by its slight friction against your grain...an opportunity for a sanding of the soul.*

Abbreviated Titles:

AO = Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.

ATP = A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.

D&R = Difference and Repetition.

NO = Negotiations.

WIP? = What is Philosophy?

: see Gilles Deleuze, or Deleuze and Guattari in Works Cited

DII = Dialogues II

: see Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet in Works Cited.

AFO = Architecture from the Outside.

: see Elizabeth Grosz in Works Cited.

CFU = Contemporary Feminist Utopianism.

UB = Utopian Bodies and the Politics of Transgression.

: see Lucy Sargisson in Works Sited

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