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Women, Representation, and Power

Difference Itself

If I begin this book by writing about difference or announce that I am interested in the question of “difference,” this is hardly a startling statement. If I write that I think difference, as it is understood in contemporary philosophy, is almost always tied to a system of iconic or imagistic representation and discourse about that representation, this too is hardly startling. If I write that the notion of identity (including the identity of the “I” who speaks or writes) is also a key aspect of what I am trying to analyze, no one would be surprised. And if I conclude that all these concepts in some way contribute to a philosophy that is conceptually and practically interested in how representation has contributed to the subordination of women to men, I still have concluded very little. Given the multiplicity of ethnic, economic, social, and sexual minorities around the globe who are calling out for recognition, it is no longer enough, even or especially for a feminist philosopher, to speak about the subordination of women as if only women are subordinate or as if subordination as a structure of social organization and philosophical thought is not found throughout the world. In its deepest and most profound ontological and epistemological conceptualizations, philosophy is at a point where it must once again consider its own participation in and contribution to systems in which the poor have been subordinated to the wealthy, the immigrant has been subordinated to the citizen of generations, workers have been subordinated to capital, sexuality has been subordinated to Oedipal values, and creative force has been subordinated to objectified representation.

This means that it is not enough to provide a social and political analysis of existing conditions or to rely on empirical or contingent explanations. What interests me instead is linking the analysis of existing conditions to the critique of the structure of representation to produce the ruin of representation, the ruin of hierarchically ordered time and space. With this ruin underway—with static structures of time and space, of life and thought, disassembled—a philosophy of change becomes viable. This is a philosophy that is more abstract than the static structures that undergird representation and that produces more than just “women” as oppressed by social structures; it considers oppression and dominance in their ontological determinations and representative functions. Simultaneously, it is a philosophy that is more particular, discussing not identities or even communities, but attempting instead to focus on specific practices, engaging the particular in the sense of “this” woman here and now, this situation of impoverishment, this sexuality, this particular site of creation and/or oppression and this so-called I, the self that each of these situations produces. Still, it is probably difficult to make sense of why such an approach, at once more abstract and more particular, might produce useful analyses, especially because the roles of women and minorities, particularly in western societies, are closely associated with a system of linguistic, social, political, iconic, or imagistic representation. The system of representation, whether in the realm of philosophy, psychology, social and political theory, ethics, or aesthetics, operates by establishing a fixed standard as the norm or model. The very meaning of minority is associated with falling below the standard of that norm, failing to represent that standard in all its perfection and completeness. Feminists in particular have been sensitive to the function of the representational norm, but many attempts to analyze the representation of women have fallen short. This is, I will argue, because these analyses have operated with categorical generalizations: concepts neither abstract enough nor particular enough, which represent women merely in terms of pre-established, even naturalized, standards. It hardly seems fruitful to continue down the path of general statements about objectified looking or about which social contexts women or minorities are or are not allowed to participate in.¹ Such representations do no more than register a complaint against the norms of language, images, and social and political structures.

This conclusion has provoked me to search for concepts and transformational structures characterized by an abstract but fluid ontology that can make sense of difference by accounting for the reality of temporal and spatial change on a pragmatic level while providing appropriate theoretical constructs in whose terms change can be conceived. This sort of approach to the problem of the representation of women and minorities

as deficient in relation to the social and political norm or standard has not been attempted by the majority of theorists concerned with these issues in the contemporary setting. And where it has been attempted, it has not been well understood. Such an ontology, insofar as it delegitimizes the primacy of the model and its exact repetitions or copies by undermining the stability of representational categories, would also serve as a guide to the creative aspects of minority status. Minorities are recognized as minorities because they deviate from representational norms, sometimes to the extent that they seem to make no sense at all. This has proved to be the case with respect to long-established markets like those of art or literature, let alone in politics and philosophy. Additionally, in order to assure that the particular “this” of minority orientation is carefully considered, all analyses, insofar as they are analyses of the social world, must be firmly grounded in that world, in real practices. To the extent that theory does not arise out of and in terms of social practices, it risks irrelevancy and oblivion. But the crucial matter here is: how does this happen?

Although the work of Gilles Deleuze has become central to my inquiry into the power, the authority, and ultimately the ruin of representation, Deleuze was not the first to draw my attention to the ascendancy of representational thinking. My interest came from work in two seemingly separate fields: feminist theory and the visual arts. In the former I found persuasive the epistemological critique of objectified representation coming from contemporary feminist legal theory. Catherine MacKinnon writes so compellingly about the relationship between objectification and representation that I was drawn to study her ideas.² With respect to the visual arts, I have often written about painting and the history of art. In that work what aroused my attention was the relation between objectification and single-point perspective, which I came to define as the paradigmatic norm of visual representation.³ More recently, I have been attentive to the work of one particular artist, Mary Kelly, who challenges the norms of representation in art and the representation of the signifier as promulgated by Jacques Lacan. Although MacKinnon provides an opening for a feminist theoretical approach to practical issues, it is an opening that principally serves the forces of destruction necessary for the approach the rest of this book will develop. Kelly, however, does much more. Her work is no mere “example”; it is a process through which the ruin of representation is effected and carried out. Thus, Kelly’s art is simultaneously practice and concept, socially actual and theoretically real. Kelly’s art will be addressed in chapter 3 and throughout this book. For now, I focus on that aspect of MacKinnon that critiques representational objectification and ties this feminist concern to Deleuze’s indictment of organic representation.

For many contemporary feminists, the work of feminist legal theorist Catharine MacKinnon will be an odd, even unpopular choice of text with which to begin to make my point. MacKinnon is noted, at best, for expressing strong if not rigid ideological bias with regard to social relations between men and women, and at worst, for making alliances with the far right and promoting censorship of sexually explicit materials in a way that many take to be antisex with regard to women.⁴ To a certain extent, these often-discussed features of MacKinnon's work make it practically impossible to seriously consider other aspects of her writing. The standard approach to MacKinnon is to denounce her quickly for her dogmatic or negative vision and to move on to others, although there are also theorists who provide a more comprehensive critique.⁵ Few feminist readers appear to be able to make much use of MacKinnon's most radical work, her critique of liberalism and of the liberal individual whose right to rights is defined by a system of objective representation.

I would like to take up the facet of MacKinnon's work that begins with her critique of liberalism and its accompanying ideology of the individual and ends with her epistemological critique of objectivity.⁶ I choose this course because in this text MacKinnon clearly enumerates the shortcomings, in theory and practice, of objectified representing, shortcomings that derive from "generalizations" defining the individual. She exposes the "individual" as a generalization that excludes anyone who can be defined as a woman or as a member of a minor group, that is, as "different" or unrepresentable. In her critique of liberalism and liberal feminism, MacKinnon argues that for liberalism, the individual is always taken to be the "proper unit of analysis." Therefore, "sexual inequality" turns out to be an arbitrary and irrational division by law and custom that restricts individual human potential. So, she argues, sexism is taken to be just incidental and not a "system of subordination," that is, a system in which some "individuals" are represented as subordinate to other ideal individuals.⁷

In the state of Colorado, for example, an anti-gay/lesbian rights bill, "Amendment 2," was held up in the courts and never put into law while the state and then the federal supreme courts determined whether the amendment merely affected individuals who just happen to be engaged in the practices of a gay/lesbian "lifestyle" or whether it was aimed at those practices themselves and attempted to subordinate them to another sexual practice, one dominant in heterosexist society.⁸ That is, for anti-Amendment 2 forces (gay and lesbian rights activists), this law is a matter of what MacKinnon calls hierarchy, social and political domination, and the systematic and cumulative result of heterosexist male power. Supporters of the amendment (principally members of the religious right) presented its passage as necessary to keep any individual or

individuals from being given rights not available to the rest of the community. There was no admission or recognition from advocates of the amendment that their own hegemony was what they were seeking to maintain. They obscured their general claim of dominance behind the liberal language of individual rights, just as political theorists obscure the hegemony that representation dictates behind theoretical claims for equality.

MacKinnon targets J. S. Mill and Harriet Taylor's 1869 *The Subjection of Women* as one of the earliest as well as most complete statements of a liberal feminist argument for women's equality.⁹ Mill and Taylor argue that the only real differences between men and women are individual differences; woman is man's equal in nature, so she must become his equal under the law in order to become his equal in society as well.¹⁰ They conclude that sexual inequality is irrational because it is a group quality, not an individual quality. Mill and Taylor's objection to the physical force men may exercise over women is that, regardless of his class, *any* man may exercise power over any woman: "The clodhopper exercises, or is to exercise his share of the power equally with the highest nobleman."¹¹ One may recognize here certain moral and aesthetic concerns such as those Kant addresses in his consideration of men of good taste.¹² The "clodhopper" presumably does not have the good taste or the moral goodness that would make it possible for him to exercise such authority appropriately. According to MacKinnon's account of the liberal theory of equality, "What contemporary feminism terms 'sexism' is in Mill a form of unjust authority that restricts the free development of each woman. Distorting her character to fit her subordination, inequality violates her nature, constrains social efficiency, and obstructs human happiness."¹³

What equality presupposes (and this is the definition of individualism) is that each person is a unique individual who defines him/herself as separate and distinct from all others. Such a presupposition entails others, for in this definition lies the kind of generalization I warned about above: it either makes the term one that excludes women or renders it meaningless. The definition also presupposes naturalism: that "her" nature is fixed and knowable; it is a thing, such that, "[i]n this view, body originates independently of society or mind . . . it undergirds social relations, limiting change."¹⁴ Otherwise stated, the fixity of the natural, material world is the ground of the fixity of the social world. For liberalism, fixed and knowable nature guarantees hierarchical order and grounds representation and truth. This assumption still haunts feminism and will be subject to criticism throughout this book, beginning with the discussion of Aristotle below. Liberal equality also assumes idealism in the sense of a belief in reason's efficacy, such that, "independently of surroundings,

advocacy, or audience,” rational persuasion and argument are assumed to be or guaranteed to be the “engine[s] of change,” even while they act to guarantee uniformity.¹⁵

In addition to this there is moralism, an aspect of the naturalism and idealism that follows from the guarantee of reason to persuade. If nature is fixed and knowable, if “transhistorical logic” or reason provides the method for knowing, then it is clear that nature and reason must also provide some clues for acting. Right and wrong mean, as Taylor and Mill affirm, “conforming to rules that are abstractly right or wrong in themselves” though the place of this “in themselves” remains to be negotiated.¹⁶ Ultimately, MacKinnon concludes, liberalism implies the morality of volunteerism, the idea that “social life is comprised of autonomous, intentional, and self-willed actions.”¹⁷ Naturalism (or materialism), idealism (or rationalism), and moralism; each of these aspects of the system of objectification will be subject to radical critique by the ruin of representation and will be shown to be implicated in the system of subordination that MacKinnon exposes.

As Merle Thornton argues, even though Mill and Taylor make use of this agenda to seek women’s higher development, because they lack any standard other than the male standard (what MacKinnon refers to as objective science), the equal freedom of women can only mean “equal contract in marriage up to the standard of men; property rights like men’s; access to occupations now reserved for men; granting political rights such as men have; equal access to the education men have.”¹⁸ The problem with “similar” standards is that they presuppose that whatever attempts to be “like” the original or to “represent” the original is always degraded with respect to it, for the copy is never a perfect “equal” of the original. Thornton observes that Mill and Taylor do give “equivocal intimations of a possible *different* but equally valuable nature for women,” namely “the capability they have for tying the general to the particular.”¹⁹ However, they simultaneously fail to recognize the extent to which this is not merely a question of “nature,” of a fixed, natural ability that women might will to use: “This serious deficiency stems from the power of abstract individualism in their thinking. Too committed to the idea of members of society as individual contractors and choosers, they are unable to think through the implications of the sexual division of labor for women as a social category.”²⁰ In addition, it is highly problematic to take biology as fixed or unsuited to social influence because at the very least, “some types of biological engineering could prove more feasible than some types of proposed social engineering.”²¹ Contraceptive devices, for example, are the product of biological engineering and biological management. They have resulted in great social change in situations that have been highly resistant to educational campaigns and social engi-

neering alone. Recent experiences, for example, with providing third-world women with small bank loans to establish their own businesses have taught us that biological engineering is much more effective in combination with economic and social empowerment. Nevertheless, presuming the fixity of nature (male or female), the universal efficacy of reason, and the prejudice of morality attached to the correct use of reason (what is called good sense), liberal theory suggests that the individual and only the individual can act on the basis of reason. But such an individual is no one, for “it” is by definition so general as to account for any natural, rational, human being who thinks and acts on an extremely limited basis (good sense), a basis that by definition excludes having a body as well as any accompanying bodily sensation.²²

MacKinnon argues that, as an idealism that believes in the power of the individual to willfully make changes in society in accordance with universal standards of right and wrong as determined in fixed nature, such objectivism seriously underestimates the realities of power and social determination.²³ I would add to this that under the conditions liberalism assumes, it is virtually impossible to make sense of how there can be agency at all. The ideology of individualism takes social issues to be questions of individual taste, value, and interest or, worse, misrecognizes them as questions of fixed and knowable nature. As Thornton expresses it, if there is a possibility of distinctive excellences, potentialities, or natures for the sexes, developed human beings would embrace these distinctions without a structure of similarity. But such a claim is always incompatible with the claim of individual equality irrespective of sex.²⁴

What is crucial for this book is that any theory of women’s liberation beyond equality must certainly abandon the belief that nature is immutable and fixed; otherwise, no liberation is possible. Otherwise, women’s (and some men’s) bodies are taken to be not just the justification and rationalization for their oppression; they are seen as its root, even its cause.²⁵ Social relations, MacKinnon reminds us, are man- (and woman-) made.²⁶ Feminists such as Adrienne Rich argue that the culture’s pervasive “heterosexism” is the social relation that oppresses both men and women.²⁷ Once heterosexism is made the focus of a social critique of power and control, Rich enumerates other kinds of practices that bring women together to create provisional and even formal groupings that decrease their reliance on modern liberal heterosexism. Less visionary, MacKinnon takes the very social structures that women are most likely to value to be the site of their greatest oppression: “Feminist theory sees the family as a unit of male dominance, a locale of male violence and reproductive exploitation, hence a primary locus of the oppression of women. . . . [C]apitalism expresses the same authority structure as does the family, through its organization, distribution of wealth, and resource

control.”²⁸ The link between these sources of oppression—family, capitalism—and others such as race, class, and gender is that they express an “authority structure,” and this authority structure, I maintain, is the structure of representation whose ruin is imminent. This is why women cannot be defined solely in terms of the class status of their “men”: fathers, husbands, sons, or lovers. Feminism, as MacKinnon wishes to define it, finds women oppressed *as a sex*. MacKinnon thinks that feminism has developed a unique epistemological practice that can account for women’s oppression as a sex and that this is what differentiates feminism from all other critical practices. MacKinnon gives this epistemological practice the somewhat dated name *consciousness-raising*.²⁹

Significantly, MacKinnon takes *consciousness-raising* to be principally not a discursive practice but a social practice arising out of the actual activities of women. For her this means that *consciousness-raising* is a mixture of thought and materiality insofar as consciousness, and specifically women’s consciousness, is not a conglomerate of individual/subjective ideas, but is rather constituted as an effect of real social relations.³⁰ MacKinnon does not specify the precise organization or structure of this “mixture” of the mental and material, and this is a serious deficiency in her work, leaving her wide open to the attack that she formulates the world in terms of oppositions. That is, if women’s material reality is so constituted that “mere” discourse leaves no mark upon it and does not participate in the opening up of any heresies or differences, then the world is truly constituted out of a kind of static and hierarchized dead matter and no change is possible. When MacKinnon maintains that women’s subordination is social, not natural and not individual, that it is the effect of a division of power in society, and that while *consciousness-raising* makes women aware of their situation, it does nothing to alter it, I am inclined to agree; yet MacKinnon has not been able to offer any effective account of how change can be produced. If women are to create themselves or anything else, they need to be specific about what kind of materiality they have to work with. Yet MacKinnon’s statement that in society the division of power is maintained by a system of *representation* produced by the scientific stance called objectivity operated as a wake-up call in my search for an ontology of change.

As a scientific stance, objectivity is justified by an epistemology with two primary characteristics: first, sufficient visual distance from what is viewed so that the viewer is no longer limited by “his” position as material being; and second, aperspectivity so that the viewer can observe the world from no particular place or time, but rather from all places and times.³¹ In short, the observer presumes that “he” is no longer part of the process and also assumes that what “he” sees is essential to the object and not merely incidental to it. MacKinnon also argues that this episte-

mological stance produces gender inequality (indicated by the masculine possessive and pronoun in quotation marks). This is because objectivity is assumed to be neutral when in fact it is the point of view of men, men with the power and authority to enforce it. The standpoint taken by men becomes the standard for measuring any other; women and minorities can never meet this standard because it excludes their points of view. In other words, “gender is socially constructed as difference epistemologically.”³²

Such a way of seeing the world both assumes and produces spatial and temporal homogeneity, and in leaving out the impact of the point of view of the observer, it produces knowledge of the world defined neutrally as a copy of reality, as representation. The effect of this epistemology is to constitute the world without a knower and without a point of view.³³ There is an assumption that any situatedness with regard to human life would undercut the truth value of the knowledge produced. MacKinnon’s version of feminist practice implies the possibility of an analysis that locates the actual site from within which one knows, as well as the “standpoint and time frame of that attempting to be known.”³⁴ A methodology that is generated from this kind of analysis may direct us toward the more particular knowledges I discussed at the beginning of this section, especially insofar as analysis of the site of knowledge is neither representation nor misrepresentation, but rather a response to the world from what MacKinnon still refers to as a “consciousness” in the world, and what I would prefer to call a point of view, a particular temporalization and spatialization.

Still, the question here remains something like: Who is the oppressor? If MacKinnon has been successful (as I think she has been) in detaching feminism from liberal theories of the individual, she may well be less successful in keeping feminism from sliding back into ideological absolutism—that is, in MacKinnon’s case, a position according to which women are identified so closely with their oppressed social position that change is impossible. And so it is important to know if she is constructing sexism as a material structure that, in spite of its supposedly social basis, remains impenetrable, or if she is attempting to construct a philosophy that does not insist upon the identity of the male sex as oppressors and the identity of the female sex as oppressed. She writes that white, upper-class (straight) men may argue against “rights” and a rights approach to questions of sexual difference. They may claim that rights are liberal, individualistic, useless, and alienating, but this is because they *have* rights.³⁵ The questions MacKinnon raises here cannot be ignored. Can the notion of “individuals” who have “rights” be maintained apart from liberalism’s objectified representation of the world? What would it mean to reformulate the legal or social system from a minoritarian point of

view—the perspective of “the subordinated, disadvantaged, dispossessed, and silenced”? And finally, what is the relation between such a reformulation and the ruin of representation?

Feminism has tended to look at women as constituting a group that is characterized by a certain shared reality, but it is not enough just to say, as MacKinnon does, that although no female escapes the meaning of being a woman within a society that defines human beings in accordance with their sex, nonetheless all women are not the same.³⁶ Something else is needed here. Not only are all women and especially all minorities not the same, but no points of view can possibly be the same. MacKinnon’s materialist approach does address the question of the generalized representation of women through its comprehensive critique of the notion of objectivity, but it does not and cannot recognize the multiplicity of “particular” perspectives and points of view of those who see in “difference” not just the status of an outsider with regard to the dominant culture, but those who in some manner practice “difference” and who value this practice.

For some feminist theorists (and I include myself in this group), as well as theorists who may not specifically be working from a feminist point of view, the only solution seems to be to pursue what Michele Montrelay has called “the ruin of representation.”³⁷ Even objectivity—that is, distance and aperspectivity—has specific social roots and implications, as MacKinnon reminds us; but I would go further, for MacKinnon ties these implications to history, which is much too general. MacKinnon is not alone among contemporary feminists in looking to contingent (historical) factors to explain social and political inequality; nonetheless, I will remain focused on her position. When the view from inside and within the social order is devalued, when views conflicting with epistemological objectivity are declared unreal or irrational, then historical evaluations are not enough and we must work on a more abstract level. However, when MacKinnon points out that the detached observer is precisely the one science needs to validate its non-point of view, that science creates a reality conforming to its own image, and that men use science to maintain their power, she is heading in the direction of an abstraction that is not simply an historical analysis. When liberal theory makes use of the objective scientific point of view to attribute not just woman’s feelings but her very experience, not to her place in the organization of the socius, but instead to the woman as an individual, the woman “in there,” opposed to the world “out here,” then the question is: Where do we look for forms of expression and forms of content that both document women’s oppression and lack of power, and operate to create new realities?³⁸ Is it by individualizing women’s point of view that liberal society excludes women?

This is where the work of Mary Kelly comes into play, for it is both a critique of objectified representation and the creation of new points of view. Kelly's forms of expression are a new orientation in life for herself as a woman, an orientation she creates in works of art through the organization of images, objects, and words. Kelly's forms of content, the materials she uses in her work, are borrowed from the context of the psychoanalytic schema, from the naturalist's world, from the social world of a woman-theorist-artist, as well as from the stock of art supplies and images available to anyone working in the arts. Kelly transforms these forms of content by resituating them in non-representational series or forms of expression as opposed to fixed social and psychological schemas. Her work, I think, not only ruins the hierarchical order of representations discussed above and below, it acts as a creative memory of something that will not be represented even though it is produced in images. To see in Kelly's art not just the destructive force but also the creative force of difference, it might help to first make sense of the difference between a logic of difference and a logic of representation. To do this, I would like to make use of two analyses, one (by Iris Marion Young) that shows how power and knowledges might be distributed everywhere once the logic of representation is robbed of its authority; and one (by Deleuze) that connects categorical representation to the logic of identity.³⁹ I now turn to these distributions.

The Logic of Difference

Iris Marion Young's political philosophy has taken up the kinds of social, political, racial, gendered, and class exclusions MacKinnon and others are concerned about. In an essay that strikes at the heart of what I take to be the difference issue, Young maintains that there is an enormous diversity of interests in contemporary culture based on privilege, oppression, race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and ability, each with the potential for creating division among people. Any political movement that wants to address the truly disadvantaged has to differentiate between the dissimilar needs and experiences of those who are relatively disadvantaged and persuade the relatively privileged of the justice in recognizing the claims of oppressed peoples as groups.⁴⁰ The question is how to accomplish both tasks. Young recognizes immediately that there is a logical problem, and that a single logic (that derives from one specific ontology) has dominated our thinking about minorities and rights. What she proposes is a change of logic that, I would maintain, entails a change of ontology, more specifically, an ontology of change.

Historically, Young argues, group-based oppression and conflict has been most extreme when it is grounded in a conception of difference as

otherness and exclusion. This, in turn, presupposes a “logic of identity” according to which groups’ natures are defined as essential and/or substantial.⁴¹ For example, men and women have been stereotyped as rational or emotional, public or private, and one group makes use of these essential or substantive differences to subjugate the other group. The obvious problem with the logic of identity is that whatever group tends to dominate, to have the most privilege and power, will represent themselves as active human subjects and represent everyone else as “others,” not up to the level of the original, until and unless they find a way to conform to the definition of the individual or the citizen established by the dominant group. The long, sad history of colonialism and racism attest to this disparity and conformism. The “others,” those who have been colonized or enslaved, have found themselves judged “lacking” in relation to the dominant group: “The privileged and dominating group defines its own positive worth by negatively valuing the Others and projecting onto them as an essence or nature the attributes of evil, filth, bodily matter; these oppositions legitimate the dehumanized use of the despised group as sweat labor and domestic servants, while the dominant group reserves for itself the leisure, refined surroundings, and high culture that mark civilization.”⁴²

Such severe hierarchical relations of privilege and oppression may be the extreme, yet Young concludes that as long as the logic of identity operates to differentiate groups in terms of “otherness,” the heterogeneity of peoples—their experiences, culture, and language—is reduced to merely accidental qualities of their existence as human beings. To the genus “human being” are attributed only so many specific differences. That which does not conform to these categories is placed under the genus “nonhuman.” Even within the genus “human being,” differences have been ordered hierarchically. In western nations, the white bourgeois male is taken to be the norm and model for the female and for all minorities; against this standard all other humans are considered lacking and deficient.⁴³ Additionally, within this schema, mind is given priority over body, reason over emotion, activity over passivity. In each case the valued member of the pair is valued absolutely. Thus, any variation or contextual valuation of differences is denied or repressed. Any attributes of specific groups that do not fit into the schema of genus, species, and differences must be either assimilated to one of the accepted categories (as inferior copies) or denied and suppressed.

Young acknowledges that capitalism as a sociopolitical system contributes to this in several important ways. The need to have a ready labor force gives way to the demand that there be a group or groups of so-called despised persons ready to be hired when they are needed, and fired when overproduction threatens, and generally available to do the

dirty work privileged groups do not want to do, or at least do not want to do cheaply.⁴⁴ In the United States we tend to turn a blind eye to immigrants who do farm labor or factory labor as long as they do not wish to stay in the country or send their children to American schools. Oddly enough, they are seen as not contributing to the economy, not paying their way. But the United States is not alone. All the major European nations and many booming Middle Eastern and Asian economies have the same “problem” with immigrants.

To challenge the logic of identity and the conception of group identity as essence or substance, Young proposes something very much like what we will find in the work of Gilles Deleuze. That is, she proposes a logic of relation that is less a relational arrangement than a conception of difference that begins with the fact of heterogeneity and the interrelation of groups. I would prefer to call this a logic of difference, since it must be stressed that *relation* in this case does not refer to some notion of relativity, and that Young is not arguing for relativity. Conceiving of groups on the basis of a logic of relations or a logic of difference means that different groups can no longer be evaluated in terms of the categorical definitions demanded by the structure genus, species, and difference, for this leaves the nonprivileged groups with the designation of merely contingent “other,” or even with no designation at all. Rather, Young argues, groups have to be seen as overlapping, constituted in relation to one another, yet as formed out of the experience of particular and often diverse ways of life and forms of association, even within the same society, even within the same group.⁴⁵

Ultimately, Young suggests, “social movements of oppressed or disadvantaged groups need a political vision different from both the assimilationist and separatist ideals . . . a politics that treats difference as variation and specificity, rather than exclusive opposition.”⁴⁶ Practically, she maintains the necessity of a political system in which different groups accept the fact that they must participate in the same society, and that because this is so, all groups must expect that the interactions between groups will often produce conflict, division, privilege, and oppression. The point of political interaction will be to ameliorate these problems. It will thus be one of the responsibilities of governments to find ways for different groups to meet and discuss policies that can be accepted as legitimate by all. But this means that all groups must have roles in government and the points of view of repressed or disadvantaged groups must be respected and legitimized. This will only happen if significant numbers of minorities can participate in political practices to the extent that they have real political influence.⁴⁷

Young provides examples of both failed (in Eastern Europe) and successful (among New Zealand’s Maoris) attempts by minority groups to

exercise real political influence, thereby ascertaining the extent to which such aims are realizable or at least conceivable. I want to add that a change in the basic presuppositions of western political systems such as Young is proposing is no simple thing. That this is a significant change must be clear from the discussion of political liberalism and MacKinnon's critique. Young (to her credit) develops a political logic based on successful practices, whereas MacKinnon does not take her positive analysis beyond the act of consciousness-raising, though she does attempt to make it clear that there are significant epistemological and ontological issues.⁴⁸ A change from a logic of identity to a logic of difference arises in practice but must be formulated with concepts that differentiate differences and that undermine the "representation" of such differences as merely specific differences belonging to a single genus. To do this, I have suggested, calls for a new ontology, an ontology of change as opposed to an ontology of static hierarchies and objectified structures.

To begin with, there must be a critique of representation defined provisionally as the hierarchical ordering of categories that produces an objectified state of affairs. Further, the task will be to create an image of difference that sweeps away the metaphysics of being and identity and their representation, so as to practically and conceptually acknowledge the stuttering practice of an ontology of becoming. To accomplish this reorientation of thought and practice, I am making use of the philosophical thought of Gilles Deleuze. I have been reading Deleuze and using his critiques as well as his creative rethinking of philosophy since my graduate studies. Gradually, I found that my own concerns about philosophy as a regulative practice rather than a creative one could be concretized and theorized with the help of Deleuze's work, not as a fixed philosophy but as an ongoing practice. Deleuze has problematized philosophy with a certain conception of the philosopher and philosophy. From its high days as queen of the sciences, Deleuze pulls philosophy down to the surface. From the depths of materiality and the body, Deleuze brings philosophy up for air. On the surface between material depths and transcendent heights, Deleuze proposes that philosophy is stuttering. Stuttering is what happens in language when the language system is in motion, in "perpetual disequilibrium," so that the entire language system stutters, murmurs, mumbles, and breaks up in a heterogeneity of time and space.⁴⁹ Without a homogeneous system, whose terms and relations are constant, to fall back on, language quickly breaks up; it bifurcates because the elements of its syntax have to respond dynamically to other linguistic elements, creating new linguistic orders. In philosophy, this means that there are no constant terms supplied by a homogeneous system of reference, but rather the radical insistence that philosophical con-

ceptions do and will vary in every one of their terms, depending upon the point of view of the philosophy, depending upon the concrete practices out of which and in terms of which it arises.

So there is a sense in which Deleuze, in problematizing philosophy, is setting it in motion, making no claims about the nature of the world, providing no taxonomies or hierarchies of its inhabitants, no claims about what is or is not true. When philosophy no longer erects a new order of fixed thought in the place of the old, then philosophy has become stuttering. But in order for an ontology of becoming to continue in disequilibrium, another aspect of practice and thought might need to be called upon; this aspect of life and thought might be called “spiritual” or simply creative. To find this aspect will take more than a critique of the metaphysics of being and objectified representation, though that is where it starts. It will take an investigation into the most profound aspects of temporalization, life and death, without which no life and no thought becomes. That it is not easy to characterize this dimension of life and thought goes without saying. It will be a painstaking process to produce this as ongoing, though many thinkers have tried and just as many have fallen into the numerous systematic and representational traps laid out by philosophy. So to become engaged with the creative surface of thought, we will need good guides, guides who cannot lead us anywhere final but who, through their stuttering process, set time and space in motion so that stuttering differences can be created from every point of view.

Difference and Organic Representation

At the beginning of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is primarily interested in discovering a way to think the notion of difference apart from the Aristotelian metaphysical framework in whose terms it was originally conceived, at least among western thinkers.⁵⁰ In doing so, he seems to have recovered the philosophical underpinnings of representation as the dominant mode of seeing and thinking of the world, regardless of which historical conception of time and space obtains at any given moment. The discovery that Deleuze makes is that representation has been constituted, in western philosophy, in terms of the Aristotelian framework. This discovery may be why, following *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze engages in numerous efforts to analyze representation as a particularly restricted form of acting and thinking; thus it may also be the case that this first analysis remains the heart of all his other thinking on the question.⁵¹

For Deleuze, the bias that has constructed representation as the standard and norm for images and thought is not merely part of an historical

moment. It is grounded in something more profound, whose persistence and effects I have alluded to in the feminist critique of representation, but whose cause may well lie in philosophy's answer to the question: What is difference? In asking this question, Deleuze is clearly not interested in empirical differences or in things insofar as they are already distinguished from one another and so remain outside the notion of difference; he wants to ask about difference itself. Deleuze's description of this notion is so evocative and creates such a strong image that it merits quoting at length:

Let us imagine something which is distinguished—and yet *that from which* it is distinguished is not distinguished from it. The flash of lightening for example, is distinguished from the black sky, but must carry the sky along with it. . . . One would say that the bottom rises to the surface, without ceasing to be the bottom. There is, on both sides, something cruel—and even monstrous—in this struggle against an elusive adversary, where the distinguished is opposed to something which cannot be distinguished from it, and which continues to embrace that which is divorced from it.⁵²

A number of considerations can be discerned in this analysis. Consider the norm for all visual representation, single-point perspective. In his treatise "On Painting," Alberti laid out the rules of representation in painting. The image must appear within the boundaries of a rectangle or framed window that maintains the image at a distance from the viewer who views it as if through a window.⁵³ The canvas itself is divided geometrically so that the illusion of three dimensions can be produced on the canvas by establishing an infinitely receding horizon in the center of the flat surface. This ordering of the canvas constitutes a hierarchy in terms of the proportionate sizes of the objects that appear within the grid. Those objects closest to the viewer appear largest, those furthest removed appear smallest, and objects become smaller as they recede toward the infinite horizon. Within this space, the figures are carefully modeled with light and shadow, furthering the illusion of depth and three dimensions. Drawing is emphasized over color insofar as it meets the demand for planar, symmetrical, and conceptual surfaces conveying more intelligible and less optical images.⁵⁴ Numerous Renaissance scholars attest to the fact that although Renaissance artists battled against the restrictions of the theorists, preferring the living quality of images in *movement* to the mirrored perfection of nature, nonetheless this more static conception prevailed in the end and became the very definition of representation.⁵⁵

We find it, for example, in the work of Nicolas Poussin (1593–1665), who wrote that the highest aim of painted imagery is to represent noble and serious human actions, shown in a logical and orderly way—not as they actually happen, but as they would happen were nature perfect.⁵⁶ In

Poussin's painting, the impressions of nature are ordered according to laws of visibility that create the topographical exactitude required for idealized landscapes. Figures are frozen in the moment of action in landscapes that are hierarchically ordered spaces. But if we follow Deleuze's prescription, we must think about the bottom of such images rising to the surface, that is, the background rising up onto the surface of the image. The result is distortion of the image, a distortion that decomposes the planar and symmetrically arranged bodies and objects. When, as Deleuze says, the bottom rises to the surface, the grid is effaced, modeling is defeated, and form is destroyed. This is the monstrosity, the cruelty of difference in the image. Such cruel or monstrous distortion of the hierarchically composed representational image, the three-dimensional illusion, and the plastic technique of relief produces irregular and sometimes disturbing images.

Goya's *Executions of May 3, 1808* offers a grey wall of soldiers that forms a solid, nearly undifferentiated plane, each soldier a repetition of the next, while the surface of the canvas becomes a site of murder and carnage. In William Blake's primal scenes of awe, terror, or creation, an emblematic figure blazes in the center of a depthless surface. These paintings and drawings manifest no respect for norms of proportion or sense, the key elements of perspectival visual representation. Such distortion is not limited to the nineteenth century, that is, it is not tied to a particular historical era in the West. Giotto's fourteenth-century Arena Chapel interior likewise articulates a highly differentiated kind of pictorial space that sharpens the viewer's awareness of the picture surface. In the scene of hell, in particular, there is a total collapse of hierarchized space: shattered architecture, a completely flat surface, fading and disappearing color and bodies.⁵⁷ In none of these cases does what appears on the surface correspond to any account of progressive or contemporaneous technological or historical ideas about space.

In each case, form is destroyed, relief is renounced, and a determination is made. Far from being the materialization of irrationality and chaos, what emerges in these images is a profound and difficult kind of vision in which, as Deleuze notes, "determination is made by dint of [*à force de*] supporting a precise and unilateral relationship with the indeterminate."⁵⁸ The bottom rises, the form dissolves, yet a determination is made, perhaps the most important determination of all: one that has been routinely and without thought compromised by the categorical orientation of western philosophy since Aristotle, who articulated the demand for coherence and hierarchy in the organic representation and who, according to Deleuze, inscribed all difference in a general concept.

Although the detour through Aristotle is complex, it is absolutely necessary for insight into how hierarchical conceptual representation came

to be established as the single and authoritative source of visible intelligibility and political stabilization. According to Deleuze, it is Aristotle who, to a far greater degree than Plato, refused to recognize difference and who is thus accountable for the establishment of the hegemonic reign of representation and the social and political practices that it rationalizes. For on the level of practice, when the system of organic representation is taken to be the only intelligible regime of thought and visibility, then hegemonic and rigid social and political practices embrace representation to justify their existence.

For Aristotle, Deleuze states, terms differ through the mediation of something else, but there are degrees of mediation, and thus degrees of difference. True difference, in Aristotle, is located only in the greatest of these, but not so distantly that there is no basis for comparison:

That contrariety is the greatest difference is made clear by induction. For things which differ in *genus* have no way to one another, but are too far distant and not comparable; and for things that differ in *species* the extremes from which generation takes place are the contraries, and the distance between extremes—and therefore that between the contraries—is the greatest.⁵⁹

Merely material contraries would of course be accidental; generic differences are too great and cannot even be considered together; individual differences are too small.⁶⁰ Only the genus is divided by specific differences; specific differences modify the subject in its form such that the genus remains the same for itself (identical), yet becomes other in the differences that divide it.⁶¹

Aristotle is completely unwilling to count as differences those differences that are merely other and do not differ in a particular respect, that is, do not begin with something in common. This is why the organic unity of the representation of a genus in a concept is what is at stake for him: “For . . . that which is different is different from some particular thing in some particular respect, so that there must be something *identical* whereby they differ.”⁶² Difference is only allowed to exist in terms of identity with regard to a generic concept. What gets constituted in Aristotle is thus the very ruin of *difference* itself. There is and can be no concept proper to difference, for difference is always inscribed within the genus, the concept in general, and difference is no more than difference within identity. The result is that “one confuses the determination of the concept of difference with the inscription of difference in the identity of an indeterminate concept.”⁶³

While this approach provides coherence and intelligibility through the hierarchy imposed by identical generic concepts and their specific differences, it restricts difference to the status of a predicate of concepts. But

the restriction is not absolute, for precisely at this point something happens that amounts to a “crack” in thought through which another notion of difference will emerge. Genera are, in Aristotle’s account, “ultimate determinable concepts [categories],” so they are not conditioned by a higher-level concept or meta-genus common to them all. Aristotle insists: “But it is not possible that either unity or being should be a single genus of things; *for the differentiae of any genus must each of them both have being and be one.*”⁶⁴ Differences *have being*; differences themselves *are*, they are not merely predicates of concepts. Yet, in the same breath Aristotle also maintains that no genus can be predicated of its differentia. The point to note here is that if differences *are*, if they exist as differences, then the genus should be able to be predicated of or attributable to its differences. But as I will make clear, Aristotle’s overall framework makes this impossible.

In Aristotle, being subsists as an identical or common concept that functions distributively and hierarchically.⁶⁵ This means that being is not a genus whose species would be the categories; such a division would make being *univocal*, which, for Aristotle, it is not. Rather, the unity of being is that of an *analogy*.⁶⁶ Franz Brentano has clarified the first point:

Thus *Metaphysics* V.10 claims that, since being is said in several ways, the same follows for all other concepts which are attributed to it, so that the identical, the different, and the opposite ought to be recognized as something different for each category. . . . Similarly, *Metaphysics* V.28 states peremptorily that whatever belongs to different categories does not have a common genus and that the categories can be reduced neither to one another nor to a single higher entity.⁶⁷

As for the unity of being lying in *analogy*, Aristotle states that unity comes from number, species (those whose definition is one), genus (those with common attributes), or analogy (those that are relative to one another).⁶⁸ Since, as Brentano points out, the unity of being cannot be derived from number, species, or genus, this leaves only analogy. Analogy, Brentano argues, operates specifically in relation to “one definite kind of thing.”⁶⁹ In Aristotle’s examples, all that is healthy is relative to health and all that is medical is relative to the medical art. Aristotle writes: “And that which is medical is relative to the medical art, one thing being called medical because it possesses it, another because it is naturally adapted to it, another because it is a function of the medical art. And we shall find other words used *similarly* to these.”⁷⁰ In the specific case of being, *being* refers primarily to substance, and all other categories only have being in reference to or by analogy to substance.⁷¹ Or, as Deleuze states, being is hierarchically primary and distributively common to all categories, thus insofar as it operates analogically, being is

equivocal in Aristotle and will *never* give us a proper concept of difference.⁷²

Specific difference determines difference only in the identity of the concept in general, while generic difference is no more than analogy. Between these two kinds of differences a bond of complicity is formed in *representation*. Thus, what we are witnessing is the very formation of representation, the *logos* of representation described above, which is composed of two elements. The first consists of the differences (conceived in terms of analogy) between species that are subsumed under the *identity* of a genus, or it consists of the genus that stands in relations of *analogy* with other genera. However, this abstract representation, in order to be a representation, insofar as it subsumes species, must also rely on what constitutes them, a second element, namely *resemblances* that presume the continuity of the sensible intuition in a concrete representation.⁷³ The effect of this dual system of classification is to erase *difference* as a concept and as reality. This occurs, of course, in the process of reflection, the *judgment* according to which these determinations are made and according to which difference is made to submit to representation: “In the concept of reflection, indeed, the mediatory and mediatized difference submits itself fully to the *identity* of the concept, to the *opposition* of predicates, to the *analogy* of judgment, and to the *resemblance* of perception. Here we rediscover the necessarily quadripartite character of representation.”⁷⁴ Deleuze characterizes representation as “organic” insofar as it is constituted in terms of this four-part judgment, in accordance with which difference is excluded from representation. If difference were to show itself at all as a concept and reality, it could do so in this model only as a crack, a catastrophe, a break in resemblance or as the impossibility of claiming identity, opposition, analogy, or resemblance where reflection demands that they should occur.

It is clear to Deleuze that in most political, social, artistic, ethnic, economic, scientific, linguistic, and philosophical practices, the Aristotelian model of organic representation—organized around identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance—dominates. This development is motivated by the intelligibility and simplicity of organic representation as revealed in political and visual practices. As Poussin discovered, organic representation perfects vision and idealizes the real; and as the Italian Renaissance attests, organic representation offers visible intelligibility and coherence. These effects are magnified by Aristotle’s conception of time, for as he works through the problematic of temporality, nuanced as his reading is, it nevertheless contributes to the substantive and static nature of representation.⁷⁵ In the *Physics*, Book IV, Aristotle begins by claiming that movement and time are experienced together, whether it is by movement in the mind or movement through the body.⁷⁶ Time must

in some way belong to movement, since it is clearly not the same as movement. This would seem to augur a fluid conception of time, except that movement, Aristotle immediately decides, also goes with magnitude, so it is necessary first to decide what operates to unite them.

When something moves, it moves from something to something through a continuity that is magnitude. The continuity of magnitude makes the movement continuous. The continuity of movement makes for the continuity of time as well. The principle of resemblance in experience is at work guaranteeing continuity at each step, or perhaps it is analogy in thought.⁷⁷ The distinctions “before” and “after” are derived in the same manner. First, they are qualifications of magnitude, then we apply them to movement, then we apply them to time, since time and movement always correspond.⁷⁸ Unlike magnitude, however, time does not exist, for in order to claim that something exists we must be able to say that it “is” and that it is “now.”⁷⁹ But time does not appear to be such a “now.” Keeping in mind that only the experience of motion actually gives us time, it is necessary to ask: What is this motion that is “together” with time? For it is likely that if time is connected with motion, is given only with motion, and is not given in a static representation, there will be a crack in Aristotle’s theory of time that will provide an opening through which a non-representational account of time may emerge.⁸⁰

That time is given “together” with movement explains why, when we perceive time, we perceive that one part of time “has been” and so “is not,” while another part of time is “going to be” and so also “is not.”⁸¹ Thus, time consists of what “is not” in relation to which the “now” serves as a boundary, a boundary to the past or future; the “now” is the intermediary between “before” and “after” when we perceive “before” and “after” in motion. But what does this mean? Time as what “is not” is nothingness and can only be thought of on the basis of the past and future modes of time. However, if the “now” is a unit of measure that distinguishes “before” and “after” and allows movement to be determined only on the basis of the “now,” then the “now” as actual (as being *in act*) is opposed to movement. For Aristotle, being and movement are opposites. This indicates that in Aristotle’s conception of time, the “now” is nontime, it is being *in act*, and “before” and “after” are qualified as time but only insofar as they are diminishing affectations of the “now.” But when being is actual and “before” and “after,” no-longer and not-yet, are nothing, what sense does it make to speak of time? Or how do we come to speak of time, to make sense of time, to say that something takes a certain amount of time to go from one place to another?

Time, ultimately, can only be made sense of as what is counted. But since “before” and “after” are nothing, what we count is the “now.” So we should not be surprised to read that the “now” is a subject that accepts

different attributes. Aristotle tells us that we count the “now” in succession, and each “now” is different but “its substratum is an identity.”⁸² So it is a genus with species, each “now” of succession is a species of the “now” as substratum. This makes of “before” and “after” nothing more than specific differences, which, as differences of a subject, are only accidental (they are not-being) and not difference in itself. Rather than characterizing actual being or motion in an immanent sense, time ends up being an external measure. For the “now” corresponds to a body that is carried along, as time corresponds to motion, so that as a body is carried along we become aware of “before” and “after” by means of the motion. And if we “regard these as countable we get the ‘now.’” Hence in these also the “‘now’ as substratum remains the same (for it is what is before and after in movement), but what is predicated of it is different; for it is insofar as the ‘before and after’ is numerable that we get the ‘now.’”⁸³ Ultimately, whereas that which is carried is a real thing, Aristotle affirms that the motion is not real.⁸⁴ Although Aristotle concedes that without time there would be no “now” either, nonetheless insofar as he represents the now as a substrate, as a subject, and time as a magnitude, a multiplicity of now-points, the limit of the representation of time is that a line of “nows” is a multiplicity of immobilities, a multiplicity of successive arrests that do not give us motion or change and so do not give us a conception of difference (in this case, motion) as real. So Aristotle’s conception of time fully complements his conception of organic representation.

Two key questions emerge out of the Aristotelian problematic: First, under what, if any, conditions is difference a concept and real? Second, what accounts for the domination of the occurrence according to which difference is made to submit to organic representation? Is it a choice made in favor of certain historical constructions, or is representation part of some other more determined and less contingent structure? Beginning with the first question, to conceptualize real difference the model of judgments must be abandoned, for it is by means of judgment or “good sense” that difference is lost. Foucault has remarked on this specifically: “But *what* recognizes these similarities, the exactly alike and the least similar—the greatest and the smallest, the brightest and the darkest—if not good sense? . . . And it is good sense that reigns in the philosophy of representation.”⁸⁵ Deleuze suggests that an appropriate though *contingent* replacement for judgment is the proposition. This is not to insist that the conceptualization of difference as real can only emerge in linguistics. Difference is not principally linguistic either in scope or origin, for as I shall make clear below, the linguistic formalization is only one expression of the science of multiplicities.⁸⁶ However, the propositional model explains multiplicities in a rather simple manner, which can serve as an introduction to other kinds of social multiplicities that, themselves, im-

plicate language. Deleuze offers the well-known example of “evening star—morning star.” He writes: “The distinction between these meanings is certainly a real distinction, but there is nothing numerical about it, and much less anything ontological: it is rather a formal, qualitative, or semiological distinction. . . . The important thing is that we are able to conceive of several formally distinct meanings, which nonetheless are related to being as to a single, ontologically one referent.”⁸⁷ Not only is being the ontologically one referent, but it is in no sense equivocal; this means that it cannot be determined on the basis of identity with regard to a generic concept, what differences have in common. Nor is being distributed by analogy as in Aristotle’s example of the medical: one thing being called medical because it possesses the medical art, another because it is naturally adapted to the medical art, another because it is a function of the medical art. Each of these exists only by analogy to the substance “medical.” Whereas when being is expressed in *one and the same sense* in each of its (numerically) distinct expressors, we can begin to conceive of differences as real, as existing, and not only as referring to being by analogy. In this case, being is (ontologically) one and the meaning of *being* is ontologically one.

In this crucial shift of expression, being is not said in several ways; being is expressed in one and the same sense of each of its (numerically) distinct designates (*les designés*), yet each difference has its own essence—they do not have the same meaning.⁸⁸ If being speaks with a single voice in the proposition, and being is “said” of difference itself, then being is not equivocal; it is univocal and being is said of differences, none of which have the same meaning. The effect of this is to conceptualize difference as real, to conceptualize it differentially, and, as Foucault adds, not to submit it to representation, which always searches out the common elements underlying difference. Of course, mere univocity with respect to being does not guarantee that individual differences are not somehow the same or equal, that they do not have the same meaning. Everything depends on how the distribution is governed. In Aristotle, entities have different degrees of being, as if there were only so much being available for distribution. This occurs because “[t]here is a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their degree of proximity or distance in relation to a principle.”⁸⁹ That is, this manner of measuring and distributing being amounts to a certain kind of law or regulation of being while the being of difference is another.

Having found the crack in thought in Aristotle’s notion of being, Deleuze proposes to articulate this crack, and he lays out a different kind of law and measure for the “being which is said of difference.” The articulation of this kind of “monstrosity” (monstrous in relation to the fixed

hierarchies of organic representation) is yet another thought and practice (in addition to the proposition above) of difference, one that is more easily related to social and political practices. It would be more comfortable to imply that there is nothing out of the ordinary in what Deleuze is suggesting here; however, insofar as this is not the case, I do not want to domesticate this concept. While Deleuze's logic and semiotics are enormously sophisticated, still there is an element of danger in what he is suggesting. The monstrous nature of difference in the face of the stability and hierarchy of representation is undeniable. Consequently, it is not a safe way to act or to think, because in the judgments of what Deleuze calls "state power," difference is heretical and must be scapegoated. In the eyes of state power difference *is* monstrous, and the empowerment of minorities, which Iris Marion Young, for example, is proposing, is highly disruptive to the hierarchical rule of liberal governments. Thus, I want to make use of this word that Deleuze introduces in *Difference and Repetition* because it reflects what is at stake in Deleuze's work and in the ontology of change.

The sort of measure Deleuze proposes to account for monstrous difference is the "*nomadic nomos*, without property, enclosure or measure. . . . an allocation of those who distribute *themselves*. . . . in a *space without precise limits*."⁹⁰ Such a "wandering distribution" is not the Aristotelian space (adopted by Renaissance perspectivism) that is divided, shared, and hierarchized in accordance with the principle of proximity to being and degree of being. It is easy to see that the "fixed and proportional determinations" of Aristotelian hierarchies correlate very well with the fixed and proportional determinations of objectified and perspectival representations, whether those of the Italian Renaissance or those of state power. And what emerges from this analysis is the realization that difference, what is, when it is thought and practiced differentially, is not subject to historical interpretation, even though the absence of difference is certainly a reflection of the prevailing forms of social and political life.

I have noted above that the great Renaissance artists opposed the demand for planar, symmetrical, and conceptual images, and that they did so, perhaps surprisingly, for the sake of movement: "As has been said, illusion was partly realized in the simple creation of virtual three-dimensional forms [*rilievo*], in convincing relationship (perspective). But surpassing these . . . was the representation of movement."⁹¹ Yet in Aristotle, organic representation, as discussed above, is distributed hierarchically around "one center, a sole and elusive perspective," analogous to Aristotle's distribution of being. Thus representation "mediates everything, but mobilizes and moves nothing."⁹² Movement, however, accords with the nomadic *nomos* insofar as it involves a plurality of centers (of

differences, each of which *is*), superimposing and mixing perspectives and points of view and effecting the distortion of representation in the social field. Such an effect is not the product of the multiplication of representations: “The infinite representation includes precisely an infinity of representations, whether it ensures the convergence of all points of view on an identical object or an identical world, or whether it creates the properties of an identical Self from different moments. But, in this way, it keeps a single center which gathers and represents all the others as a unity of a series that orders, that organizes, once and for all, the terms and their relations.”⁹³ In the system of hierarchical distribution, regardless of the number of representations, the conceptual form of the identical, the concept in general, subordinates all differences. In order for there to be movement and mobility, the nomadic *nomos*, distortion must destabilize representation, representation must be torn from its center and from the identity of the concept, as well as from the perfect hierarchy of distribution that Aristotle establishes.⁹⁴

For Deleuze, Aristotle’s conceptualization does not simply create hierarchies of thought; rather it serves to legitimate or justify certain visual, linguistic, social, and political practices that developed around the demand for intelligibility, rigidity, and hegemony. Therefore, merely reconceptualizing difference is not enough to restore difference as difference; rather, the ruin of representation can be accomplished only on the level of actual practices. This is why Deleuze claims that the modern work of art, more than anything, “tends to realize these conditions,” the conditions effecting representation’s demise. Painting and sculpture distort visual representation so that we have to combine the view from above with the view from below, or we have to go up and come down in space.⁹⁵ And as I have tried to show, these distorting tendencies (distorting in relation to the rigid hierarchies of representation) have always been present in selected works of art and, to some extent, even in the work of representational artists, as the crack or the catastrophe that emerges in the midst of representation.

Along these same lines, art historian Svetlana Alpers points out that under the influence of Aristotelian cosmology, Italian artists were normally unwilling or unable to sacrifice either the authority that single-point perspective attributes to the viewer or the unity that it provides to the image. Italian artists, she continues, turned away from individuation for the sake of general human traits and truths, and resemblance to ideals of appearance and action. Alpers contrasts this with the work of Dutch artists such as Samuel von Hooqstraten who urged young artists to be humble and to paint the diversity of things in the world, where each face is created different.⁹⁶ She cites an illustration of Jean Perlerin’s (called Viator) geometry: “One plate, ‘Perspective’ shows a multiplication of distance-points

leading the eye to a variety of views up and down, in and out of an empty room, *adding* on views of the moving eye."⁹⁷

Perlerin's illustration makes possible the construction of a mobile image. Deleuze and Guattari offer their own mobile image. In the visual work of art, difference refers to other differences that never identify but only differentiate it, such that each difference stands in relation to other differences, all of which are without a center and without convergence, both in relation to themselves and in relation to one another. In this way each work of art is "a true *theater*, made of metamorphoses and permutations. . . . The work of art leaves the domain of representation in order to become 'experience,' transcendental empiricism, or the science of the sensible."⁹⁸

The second question that I posed above remains to be addressed. Why has representation succeeded in dominating difference? The question is difficult to answer directly without falling into a trap that once again submits difference to identity by positing the answer (which has two faces) in terms of contrariety, as Aristotle does. One approach might be to concentrate on the nomadic *nomos* as an anarchic organization of elements.⁹⁹ Another approach, one I find preferable and closer in spirit to Deleuze's own writing, might be to explore the nomadic *nomos* as ethical and aesthetic variations without a theme.¹⁰⁰ In later chapters, I will argue that Bergson's radical analysis of time as duration functions in precisely this way. But here, given Deleuze's claim that practice is what realizes movement, a practical formulation may serve as the best guide to envisioning the nomadic *nomos* in Deleuze's work and explaining why there is a tendency for representation to dominate both the practical and the conceptual fields.

Deleuze and Guattari recognize the existence of a double articulation that takes into account both Aristotle's hierarchical distribution of being and their own preference for difference. This double articulation will appear again when the whole question of movement is addressed. These two articulations, alone and in combination, produce an unlimited number and kinds of organization of elements. *Representations* are produced by a certain organization of elements in the assemblage—any collection of molecular or quasi-molecular elements (see below). The production of representation is a second-level articulation that establishes functional, compact, and stable forms (objects) that simultaneously actualize in molar compounds or substances.¹⁰¹ The resultant stable, functional structure is the type that represents differences as different only in relation to identity. Thus objectification, as discussed above, also refers to the second level of articulation. It is both a matter of reification and making or taking something to be an object, that is, static, inherently necessary, the product of a judgment. The nomadic *nomos*, on the other hand,

is constituted in the *first* articulation, *on which* the second, that of representation, is based. It begins with substances that are molecular or quasi-molecular elements—assemblages—and imposes upon them a form that consists only of connections and successions.¹⁰² “Assemblage” (*agencement*) sounds chaotic, though clearly this is not the case. In an assemblage, there are two divergent orientations: “[T]here are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or on the contrary acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such it is unattributable. It is a multiplicity.”¹⁰³

An assemblage is a multiplicity. If it is “territorialized” and “stratified,” it is organized according to the principles of categorical reflection. Such an assemblage is slow and viscous—that is, stable—and makes possible “a kind of organism, in the sense of an organic whole, a signifying totality, or a determination attributable to a subject.”¹⁰⁴ As such, it is representational. Turned toward lines of flight that are *movements* of “deterritorialization” and “destratification,” that is, of destabilization, the assemblage is dismantled as an organism. This means that it is not an organic representation attributable to a subject; it is the monstrosity.

As noted above, complete and total destratification or pure becoming, pure differentiation without limit, is not the goal of destratification. This is the life of submolecular unformed matter, chaos, void, and destruction, and as has been the case with so many revolutionary movements in politics and even in the arts, insofar as they are wildly destabilized, they are able to be reclaimed even more easily by organic representation.¹⁰⁵ Thus, while the assemblage cannot be identified as either a subject or an object (only representation does this), neither is it the indeterminate chaos of unformed matters. Rather, it is a configuration of speeds (thus movements), intensities (qualitative variations), and varying distributions of its elements. Such an image of thought is necessary to the articulation of difference thought differentially and to the realization of mobility.

So while the first articulation of the assemblage does order elements, it does not do so in the same way as the second articulation; for in the first, the elements remain “supple,” while the latter centers, unifies, integrates, hierarchizes, and finalizes its elements.¹⁰⁶ Substances and forms constitute both articulations, so clearly they form no opposition to one another. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, substances are always already *formed matters* and forms always indicate that some coding, some organization of the field, is taking place. Any assemblage (whether it be a work of art, a painting, a book, a subject) is subject to double articulation. This means that organic representation is more than a historical

phenomenon; it is an effect of the double articulation that operates everywhere. This is not to say that the choice that double articulation opens up to us is not historical. The choice of perfection over movement, stability over nomadism, and viscosity over flows does seem to be historically—that is, politically—motivated. Functionally, there is a choice between the stability and immobility of identity in the concept in representation with its hierarchic distribution and something that is not its opposite but simply the first level of articulation, the level of multiplicity. The level of the first articulation is what I have referred to in this chapter as monstrosity, making the determination that is difference: the mobility and therefore distortion of the perfected representation.

On the political level, Deleuze and Guattari connect the second articulation that produces representation to the hierarchical distribution of power that characterizes the state apparatus. By this they do not mean to imply that all state governments are somehow corrupted and anarchy should reign. *State apparatus* is merely the name they give to the most static and stratified organization of power, an organization that makes use of representation's intelligibility and rigidity to rationalize its existence: "Undoubtedly, the great collective bodies of a State are differentiated and hierarchical organisms that on the one hand enjoy a monopoly over a power or function and on the other hand send out local representatives."¹⁰⁷ Functioning according to a vision that imposes the order of representation, the state is an *organism* that appropriates a military war machine to serve its political needs; regulates bands or clans as conquerors imposing law on the conquered; reduces the investigation of problems and accidents that condition and resolve them to a model based on the distinction of genus and species or essence and properties; defines thought as either the *imperium*—that is, the "whole" as final ground of being—or as the "republic"—that is, a system in which the "sovereign" subject figures as legislative and juridical ground. The hierarchical and static articulation of representation is, according to this analysis, a function of a state apparatus and state power. State power, as Deleuze and Guattari define it, is made visible in the game of chess: "Chess is a game of State, or of the court: the emperor of China played it. Chess pieces are coded; they have an internal nature and intrinsic properties from which their moments, situations, and confrontations derive. They have qualities; a knight remains a knight, a pawn a pawn, a bishop a bishop."¹⁰⁸ Chess pieces act only biunivocally with one another so that the war they enact is institutionalized, regulated, and coded. It takes place in an arranged, closed space; the hierarchized space of the Aristotelian cosmos and organic representation.

Deleuze and Guattari compare this representational game of centralized and rigidly hierarchized states to the game of Go. The game pieces

in Go are anonymous and collective “its”: “It could be a man, a woman, a louse, an elephant.”¹⁰⁹ Their properties are subject to continuous change depending on what sort of configurations appear on the board. Go is a game of pure strategy, since by itself a single Go piece can synchronically destroy a whole constellation. Alphonso Lingis has beautifully characterized the difference between these two types of organization in his essay “The Society of Dismembered Body Parts.”¹¹⁰ In this essay he describes the practices of the Quechua people, who live in the Andes, and discovers the simultaneous existence of a nomadic *nomos* and a representational power structure: “You can wander the high Andes and, by night, hear the murmurs of the people around the fire, hear their Quechua tongue without understanding it, hear the light, subtle, supple tripping of their sounds, hear their intonations and their murmurs, hear it as the very resonance of their substance, their gentle, unassertive, vibrant, sensitive way of vocalizing together.”¹¹¹ Here Lingis focuses on the first articulation, the nomadic *nomos* where the voices of the tribesmen distribute themselves in time and space: voices speak and are heard by others who respond, but unevenly, with murmurs, pauses, silences. But when the second articulation asserts itself, the voices can be represented:

But if you were to drink some magic potion, some cocktail of coca tea and whisky, and suddenly understood their language, and abruptly understood that they are speaking about “transporting cocaine into the hands of the Colombian agents,” then abruptly you have subjected yourself to the codings of imperial society; you have suddenly related their sounds not to their own throats and substance but to the international code established by the reigning barbarian empire in Washington and Bonn and Tokyo, where cocaine means the same thing—crime.¹¹²

Represented under the category of “crime,” the murmurs of the Quechua become subject to the international code; they are criminals, identified as outlaws in accordance with the laws of the hierarchic institutions of capitalist nations.

Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, what is at stake *politically* is historical. There are always particular historical persons acting according to the contingent circumstances of their era. Yet, in the case of the smuggler, a particular assemblage—that of the state apparatus—judges that any element it cannot organize according to its hierarchized demands must be guilty of heresy or treason. From the standpoint of the state apparatus, the nomad is always deterritorialized, always a heretic or a criminal. The nomad, who only ever moves, whose very home is mobile, is distributed in a space without borders or enclosure, and so creates what Deleuze and Guattari call a “war machine,” not an army or a guerrilla force, but a

mode of organization that is exterior to any “state apparatus,” outside what I have been referring to as hierarchized representations.¹¹³

However, double articulation does not limit the types of political or social regimes to two. In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari, double articulation in the organization of assemblages effects a multiplicity of different regimes which, following a semiotic model, they refer to as regimes of signs. Although I do not want to discuss this in depth here, I do want to make clear that these “semiotics” or organizations of assemblages are *mixtures*, mixtures of presignifying, countersignifying, postsignifying, and signifying elements: “Assemblages determine a given people, period, or language, and even a given style, fashion, pathology, or minuscule event in a limited situation can assure the predominance of one semiotic or another,” and there is no limit to the number of these social and political assemblages.¹¹⁴ The mixed quality of the social assemblage may explain why even while the New Zealand Maoris employ traditional methods in the dispute over land, they continue to engage in other forms of patriarchal state power.

My point here is to show how social and political practices are organized on the basis of mixtures of signifying regimes. That this is a more abstract level of thinking than the historical is, I hope, clear. Exactly how social and political life is constituted cannot be entirely arbitrary, simply a matter of contingent historical choice; but neither is it limited by a single dominant *logos*. Rather, the double articulation that operates in all strata makes it necessary for us to reformulate not only our notions regarding the construction of representation but also our ways of thinking about all social and political life. Regimes of signs are not merely chance events, but assemblages organized in accordance with certain practices specific to a culture or way of life. They have neither the status of historical contingency—which may be explicable after the fact but remain contingent—nor that of an unalterable *telos* in nature. They are fluid structures with efficient causes. As Deleuze and Guattari conclude, “we are not, of course, doing history: we are not saying that a people invents this regime of signs, only that at a given moment a people effectuates the assemblage that assures the relative dominance of that regime under certain historical conditions.”¹¹⁵

I have noted above that, for Deleuze, only designifying practices effect the ruin of representation. The political representation of the law is just another aspect of the organic representation that dominates life. So to break with this representation, to find ways to bring about the “ruin of representation,” is intrinsic to the practice of artists and nomads. Ultimately, double articulation is a function of the practical and ethical level: it is a question of life itself and the value of life. The point is that there is a political and social impetus organizing our modes of thinking and mak-

ing, living and constructing. And because, for Deleuze and Guattari, this impetus is neither teleologically preordained nor radically contingent history, but part of a grab for power based on irrefutable conceptual claims for intelligibility, coherence, and hierarchic distribution, it is Deleuze and Guattari's project to realize other ways to see, to open up our thinking and practices to the nomadic *nomos* that creates wandering distributions of assemblages, distributions whose plurality of centers mix perspectives and points of view and open up power to create new social and political institutions not yet envisioned by our current democratic practices.