THE MONSTROUS FEMININE AND THE STRUCTURE OF TRANSFORMATION:
ART, LANGUAGE, TECHNOLOGY, MAGIC

By

Cecilia Rose Inkol
BA, York University, 2015

A thesis presented to Ryerson University and York University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the program of
Communication and Culture

Toronto, Canada, 2018

© Cecilia Inkol, 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A THESIS

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

.

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

THE MONSTROUS FEMININE AND THE STRUCTURE OF TRANSFORMATION:
ART, LANGUAGE, TECHNOLOGY, MAGIC

Cecilia Rose Inkol

Master of Arts, Communication and Culture, Ryerson University
Toronto, Ontario, 2018

Abstract

The structure of art is an architecture of transformation. This thesis is a meditation on the notion of art or aesthetics as *technological*, arguing that art or aesthetics in its highest aspect can foment revolution or transformation within oneself, or in the material world. The power of art to invoke change, I define as *magic*, a means of *effectuation* that exists outside of the confines of a materialist or scientific imaginary. Such a mode of effectuation is also *linguistic*, and connected with *meaning*. These ideas find their inspiration primarily in the works of Heidegger, Deleuze, Lacan, Kristeva, Schelling, and Slattery. This thesis also acts as a practical, exegetical exercise in aesthetics to render an interpretation of my own artwork, a praxis of art-based research.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
List of Illustrations	v
1. Introduction.....	1
2.What is a Magic Language? Kabbalah, Taoist Sigil, Runes.....	9
3.Heidegger's Medusa.....	18
4. Heidegger and Deleuze: The Technological Form of Unconcealing and Becoming	35
5.Lacan's Sinthome.....	55
6.Kristeva: The Pre-symbolic, Womb and Abjection.....	67
7.Schelling: The Divine Language of Art.....	77
8.Benjamin: The Cryptographic Translation of Art; <i>Sprachmagie</i> and Mimesis.....	90
9.Dianne Slattery and Philip Dick: The Maze.....	101
10.Tentacles and Transformative, Polyvalent Bodies: Deleuze and Harman.....	114
11.The Machinic Mermaid and her Watery, Mercurial Underworld.....	129
12. Conclusion.....	146
References.....	153

List of Illustrations

1. Medusa, Odin.....	32
2. The Empress.....	33
3. Medusa as Technological.....	53
4. The Gaze.....	54
5. The Feminine.....	65
6. Medusa.....	75
7. Tentacles.....	128
8. Mermaid.....	145
9. The Arrow of Becoming.....	146

All illustrations by Cecilia Rose Inkol

1. Introduction

Aesthetics makes reference to the *philosophy of art*; it also makes reference to the *appearance* and the *appearing* of things, the *way* something marks its presence, shows itself. The way something *appears* is closely tied to *interpretation*; a *revelation* solicits an interpretation in its secretion of *meaning*.

Aesthetics in this sense can be understood as a kind of *technology*: whether these *appearances* are bodily manifestations, the intrusions of the unconscious slip or error, artistic productions, or an observation of the world. We can understand art as a *technology* in the sense that the transformation of *form* can induce transformation in the *world* or in *myself*, in my *perception*. Transformation is a *message*, the flitting valence of *meaning* or altered *perception* that can *provoke* a *material* change of state; a change in materiality is a shift in meaning in the language of materiality, art as a *language of material transformation*.

This study acts as a meditation on the notion of *art as technology*: what this conceptualization indicates, intimates and entails. In seeking to understand art as a technology that *generates meaning*, connected with *language*, *ancient notions of technology* become relevant discussion material. Could it be that the ancients were not entirely misguided about their *ritual enactments* attesting to the *ontological efficacy of art and language*— that their primitive practices can impart insight into the capacity of aesthetics to invoke transformation? This is a prominent thread that wefts through this work, a question that this text ponders.

The ancients presupposed a notion of effectuation strongly divergent with the vision espoused by the scientific modern rationalist enterprise; the ancients propounded a *form* of

technology as *aesthetic* in nature: a different kind of technology, propelled by a different *motor force*, and steered by a different *ontological paradigm*.

This text investigates the transformative capacity of art, its ontological effectiveness to invoke transformation and manifestation in materiality and subjectivity, connecting such a capacity with the ancient aesthetic paradigm; this transformative capacity of art will be defined as *magic*.

Part of the argument that will be elucidated is *structural* in its constitution, carving out a *topology* within the *nodes* of *art*, *language*, *technology* and *magic*. These terms are *interwoven* and *interposed* with the other, forming a *matrix*. *Art* and *language* can be understood as comprising the terminal nodes of a *spectrum*. *Art* can be understood as a *text*, containing the possibility to be rendered or *translated* into natural language: encrypted with a secret message. In a likewise fashion, language can be imbued with the flourish of art; *poetry* can be cited as an example of an artistic rendering of language, the creative transmogrification of art as a linguistic form. *Art* can act as a *text*, and *text* as an aesthetic *image*.

On a more general level, art and language are different modes of a similar power of manifesting images of thought. Art and language carve a figure in the mind's eye, conjuring images to thought, enshrining the existence of its contents; such an existence within thought, I argue, can reverberate to the level of materiality or subjectivity.

Similarly, I want to envisage *technology* and *magic* as comprising gradations of a spectrum. As McLuhan imparts, technology is a *medium*: an *interface* that incites *transformation*. The *medium is the message*, McLuhan intimates: what such an aphorism entails is that the true force or “message” of the medium of transformation is the social and psychical

changes it institutes, the change of scale, pace or patterns that it issues into human life (Understanding Media, p.8). A reconfigured perception is coupled with a material effect; technology impresses its force upon me and my relation with the world, potentially altering the world in its course.

Technology is a medium that *works through* other mediums to produce its transformed output (Ibid., p.26). A technology can be *material*, for instance, a motor that generates energy deployed through a circuit, or *immaterial*, a technique, or way of approaching things. The technique or material form that enforces its transformation works through a material or immaterial *medium*.

Magic as the transformative capacity of art can be understood as a *form of technology*; what makes *magic* distinctive as a form of technology is the *medium* it acts through. As a form of technology, magic can evoke transformation elicited through a material or immaterial starting point, a technique or a material work of art; but the way it effectuates its transformation has nothing to do with a causality complicit with a materialist, positivist and scientific paradigm. It works through an *invisible medium* to effectuate its secret transformations: a *formal structure* or *network* of correspondence: this is an insight derived from the study that follows.

The notion of *magic* is premised on the idea that there exists a mode of effectuation predicated on *structural* or *formal* correspondences between things, *form* as inscribed with the capacity to provoke ontological effectuation. The notion of form as an ontological effectuation that overflows the causation ascribed by materialist scientism is particularly relevant to *art* and *language*: the *transformation* induced by art and language, within me or in the world, can be understood or defined as *magic*.

This text asks the questions, how can art be conceived of as an agent of transformation? How is art related to language, magic and technology? The theorists featured in this investigation provide different but related answers to these questions, tracing differing but interconnected *constellations: transformation* situated at the center locus.

This study acts as a *practical application of art-based research*, its content motivated as an *exegesis* of a series of my own paintings, paintings which will be featured throughout this study. The premise behind the possibility of such an endeavor is the notion that art can be read as a *text*, encrypted with theoretical and philosophical significance, notions which will be explicitly elucidated in the pages that follow: this *exegesis* acts as a practical application of the ideas contained wherein. Practical exegesis as theoretical elaboration: the *theoretical elucidation* of its premise comprises the *execution* of a *practical exegesis*.

Some other themes that wind through this work include: the aesthetics of unconscious expression or the aesthetics of the unconscious; art and its relation to vision or perception; art and the feminine; spirituality and the other. There are also some recurrent *characters* or *figurative images of thought: Medusas, monsters, mazes and mermaids*. In this sense, this study can be understood as a *narrative*, a *polyvalent narrative*, in that there are *recurring images* or *characters* that are enfolded in new ways through the voice of different theorists, undergoing *involution* as they enter into various theoretical contexts. These are *transforming motifs* and images, yet they maintain their identity as they move through different lenses of thought: these images act as a constant *thread* that is maintained throughout this study to navigate its maze of thought.

As a final introductory note, it should be mentioned that this study is intended to be preliminary in nature, comprising the groundwork and structure for future study.

The path I have carved through the topographical gradient ahead is guided by the following logic:

The first chapter, “Language-Magic,” explores three historical manifestations of *language as magic*, via the lenses of *Kabbalistic* notions of language, *Taoist* magic diagrams, and *Runic* lore. These formations of language as magic act as conceptual tools, comprising a facet of the architecture or building material that will be later deployed as the text goes on.

The second chapter, “Heidegger’s Medusa,” explores the notion of a feminine, transformative truth that exists at the crux of Heidegger’s philosophy. It offers an elaboration of Heidegger’s *magic*, a term Heidegger explicitly uses to refer to the chiming peal of the church bells in a clock tower. This image enfolds *magic* and *poetry* in a formation that points towards the primordial openness that underlies all life.

The third chapter “Heidegger and Deleuze: The Technological Form of Unconcealing and Becoming” continues the exploration that began in the second chapter through a different lens, focusing on Heidegger’s art as magic. Art is a way of looking at the world that renders the presence of the divine, a way of looking that is and acts as a *magic letter* or *rune*. The *look of art* thusly takes on the form of a kind of *magic language*. Art is also *technological* in the sense that it is fundamentally a mode of understanding. For Deleuze, the *form* of art hooks us up to the technology that leads to a locus of intelligence within the unconscious realm. It’s also elucidated as a kind of *sorcery*, a magical procedure.

The fourth chapter, “Lacan’s Technology of the Unconscious” probes Lacan’s interrelated notions of art, language and technology. For Lacan, the *symptom* is a bodily artistic production and manifestation. Art is a *symptom*: a message from the unconscious, a slipping and sliding message. Its meaning requires deciphering, is elusive, for the unconscious is always inventing new meanings for itself, always *moving*. The unconscious is a constructor of communication technologies, creating new ciphers and forms through which to impart its messages. This creative, technological capacity is also distinctly feminine, the feminine touch of the elusive Woman that does not exist.

The fifth chapter, “Kristeva: The Presymbolic, the Womb and Abjection,” takes its point of departure from Lacan. For Kristeva, tapping into the *presymbolic* is what makes art and poetry revolutionary. The presymbolic allows for the fluid meanings of poetry and art, helping us to escape from the rigid structures of language and in the social fabric. The presymbolic also makes reference to the *maternal body* in her gestation, as she creates new meaning with her body, a new formulation or transformation.

The sixth chapter, “Schelling: Art as Technology, Magic, Divine Language,” pertains to Schelling’s work *The Philosophy of Art*. The artist completes the work of creation as she renders the unconscious forces of nature into conscious production. Art also comprises a language: a divine language, that *renders being into manifestation*, it doesn’t just symbolize. Schelling thinks ‘magic’ is made possible via the underlying unity of the Absolute, which is also Reason, the logic that dictates the way that things hang together.

The seventh chapter, “Benjamin: The Cryptographic Translation of Art; *Sprachmagie* and Mimesis,” explores Benjamin’s Kabbalist-inspired vision of *translation*. For Benjamin, we exist

in a state of brokenness, tasked with recollecting the scattered fragments of the divine word. The pure language that was lost in the Fall of Man can be reconstituted through *translation*, bringing us closer to what was lost. The lost pure language is *encrypted* in language, the material world and in images via the transformation of meaning.

The eighth chapter, “Dianne Slattery and Philip K. Dick: The Maze” follows the work of Slattery and Dick, who each unfold theoretical notions of a *maze*. Slattery is a renegade researcher whose work concerns an *alien language*: a visual, *polyvalent* art-language that manifests in gestalt patterns and “mazes”. Dick is furiously trying to decipher his mysterious experiences, and one of the ways he tries to account for them is via the notion of a transforming maze.

In the ninth chapter, “Tentacles and Transformative, Polyvalent Bodies: Deleuze and Harman,” the valence shifts from the notion of *polyvalence in art, language and mazes* to the notion of *polyvalent bodies* via the philosophies of Deleuze and Harman. They promote visions of polymorphous bodies that are always in the process of re-constituting. The thread of polyvalent bodies is linked with the notion of polyvalent meaning given that the ontology of form is also an ontology of the human body; the form of the human is a work in progress, a reconstructive *process*.

In the tenth chapter, “The Machinic Mermaid and her Watery, Mercurial Underworld,” the themes of the preceding two chapters are coalesced, mazes and polyvalent bodies, via an elaboration of the *mermaid* figure using the conceptual architecture of Jung and Deleuze.

And finally, with the concluding chapter, this study comes to a close, clasping its winding threads in a culminating knot. This concludes my overview of the path that lies ahead. Such a

path begins at the point of departure of the notion of *language* as *magic* in the subsequent pages, investigating three case studies of its historical underpinnings.

2. What is a Magic Language? Kabbalah, Taoist Sigil, Runes

This section takes a trip into the past, delving into the mines of ancient history, exploring three ancient manifestations of *language as magic*.

It was a given in the ancient world, that there existed secret passageways of effectuation; this instinct was repressed in modernity, condemned as superstition. The notion of *magic* invokes the idea of a continuity between things, present in *shape* and *form*, activated in ancient imagination by the aesthetic correspondence of form and ritual; the ontological effectiveness of *form* enshrined art and language as primary vehicles for its ritual promulgation.

There are many types of language-magic: ancient spoken invocations, spells, magic words. I want to focus here on the notion of language as *inherently* magical, imbued with a *secret force* that can provoke material manifestation and appearance.

The account that follows presents three different but related historical conceptions of magical languages, which will prove pertinent to my broader account: Kabbalistic language magic, Taoist magic sigils, and the Runes, ancient proto-Germanic language with magical connotations. This selection is just a sparse collection among countless many languages that are encoded with magic in their genesis and history, but will prove relevant background material for the discussions that follow.

Hebrew

Hebrew is inextricably intertwined with its context in Judaism, and in the Jewish mystical current Kabbalah as a holy language. The letters that comprise its alphabet are said to be encrypted with religious connotation and significance. As related by the Jewish mystical text the

Zohar, this divine language is a manifestation of the holy spirit as it “issues forth and arouses the secrets of the Torah” (Zohar III, 61a) (Patterson, p.2).

The Torah recounts the way that the Israelites constructed the Holy Tabernacle or Mishran as a dwelling place and harbour for the Shekhinah, the indwelling presence of God. One of the builders chosen to oversee the task of this building was Betsalel, chosen because he understood the secret meanings and combinations of the Hebrew words and letters, the same materials God uses in every moment to perform his creative work. Objects are somehow comprised of its Hebrew word, and its comprising letters (Ibid., p.6).

The way to create a safe harbour for the indwelling spirit of God is via *meaning*. As one enters the word, the word as a vessel, we are tasked with restoring the world as holy, mending ourselves with God, his indwelling presence (Ibid., p.6-7).

According to the *Sephir Yetzirah*, the *Book of Creation*, the 32 instances that refer to God in the opening chapter of Genesis are correlated with the *tree of life*, the *geometric structure of all form* in Kabbalistic thought. The form of the tree of life is comprised of ten “sephiroth” or *spheres*; the pathways between its spheres, the 22 letters that comprise the Hebrew alphabet. The Hebrew alphabet has a *structural, geometrical* form. The tree of life is said to be the underlying crystal framework of all life, in its form, shows the way all manifestation arises and transpires. It shows the structure of all form, evinces the genesis of the universe, and the universe in its structural form: a hidden structure extant in all things (Sefer Yetzirah 1:1). The skeleton of all life.

Each letter of the alphabet also corresponds with a secret number: called gematria, it is a mystical mathematics encrypted in language. *Meaning* is encoded with *number* in Kabbalistic thought, a secret correspondence imbued in language (Patterson, p.8).

Traditionally, Hebrew is said to be older than creation: is the *material of creation*. The world *consists of Hebrew letters*, forming words; the material world is a *holy text*. Jewish tradition says that God created the universe from Hebrew letters and their various configurations. In the Jewish current Chasidism, within every letter exists souls, and *worlds*, divine powers that interact, enjoin with one another. And each of the Hebrew letters possessed trifold creative powers: energy, light, or life, functioning as the energetic building-blocks of reality (Ibid., p.9).

The Holy name, the name of God, the Tetragrammaton, contains all tenses of time: past, present future, was, is, will be. As related by the *Sefir Yetzirah*, “All that is formed, all that is spoken, emanates from one Name, ” (Sefer Yetzirah, 2:5). The Name is the vehicle of time. The mystery of the Holy Name is its gift: its bestowal of meaning, opening up time (Patterson., p.13, 14).

In its mystical tradition, the act of creation finds God *contracting* to usher the *finite* into being, to allow the finite to assume the vehicle for the infinite. Meaning is emergent from silence via the first letter of the alphabet, alef, a letter that signifies not only saying but also silence: engendering all other letters, words, and every utterance. From silence, meaning is engendered: silence a *gradation* of meaning (Ibid., p.15).

Kabbalistic thought, by nature of its metaphysics of correspondence and unity as embedded within form, is historically permeated by notions of magic, and language-magic. The sacred and esoteric names of the divine, and the angels were invoked to manipulate not only the

physical but also spiritual world. Such operations were not strictly forbidden, but many kabbalistic writings warn against their use; only the most pious individuals were permitted to engage in such activities, and solely in cases of emergency and public necessity. Spiritual peril purportedly awaited other dabblers with its illicit form of invocation. Judging by the extensive literature of ‘practical kabbalah’ that has endured, such warnings were not adhered. The dividing line between physical magic and the magic of letter combination was not necessarily clear cut (Scholem, p.182).

Practical Kabbalah became an overarching term subsuming a conglomeration of all magical practices that were practiced in Judaism during the Talmudic period until the middle ages.

The bounds of “permissible” magic were often breached and obscured, including “black” magic that was intended to harm, conjure demonic powers, and perform magic for pursuits of personal gain. This type of black magic encompassed a wide spectrum of demonology and forms of sorcery designed to interfere with the natural order, to forge *illicit connections between things*. This type of meddling was considered a hubristic enterprise, challenging the authority of God, an attempting to usurp God’s throne (Ibid., p.183-184).

But in the literature of practical kabbalah, magic that challenged God’s authority was found alongside “white” magical devices of charms and protective amulets inscribed with holy names, alongside invocations of demons, and incantations for personal gain; which magic challenged God’s authority and which magic was permissible was murky territory indeed, its threshold often overstepped (Ibid., p.184).

Taoist Calligraphic Magic

Taoist calligraphy has occupied an important place in China from ancient times as an artistic vehicle for spiritual expression, and a means of *communication with spirits*; yet it remains largely unknown within the Western world, and to a strong extent, ignored by art historians in the East (Legeza, p.7).

Taoist graphical art was *foremost a magical* endeavor, allowing the human to commune with the realm of the spirits, and to cast an influence into the invisible workings of nature. Exerting the influence of magic might be motivated by everyday needs, the changes of the seasons, to bring about conducive weather for planting, cultivating, or building. Alternately, diagrams as well as talismans were employed to remedy illness, bless marriage, for childbirth, household protection from fire, to rid of pestilence or misfortune, stave off calamity. They were employed, ultimately to ease the affairs of daily existence, and circumvent unwanted intrusions of the unknown (Ibid., p.7).

Most profoundly, they indicate towards the crux of Chinese mysticism. The notion that reality is an all-encompassing matrix of eternal change, the ebb and flow of water, clouds drifting in the wind. The ultimate aim of the Taoist mystical sage is to perforate ordinary ‘reality’ into an awareness of the tranquility that lies beyond time or change, reaching the *ultimate*, the *whole, mystery beyond mysteries*, what the Chinese refer to as the *Tao* (Ibid., p.7-8).

These diagrams comprise some of the most intriguing manifestations of abstract art in the Chinese repertoire to arise outside of the mainstream imperial paradigm, what is known today as “Chinese art”. A great many of these diagrams are derived from the 1436 Taoist canon, a bulk of them are ancient, belonging to an occult tradition of art from two thousand years ago, its roots stemming from shamanic practices during the 2nd and 1st millennium B.C.E. (Ibid., p.8)

The shaman is an individual with unusual power, having acquired techniques to contact the realm of spirit, or in a specific sense, to invoke *spirits*. Her power, prestige hinged upon how many spirits she could willfully incarnate within herself, and control. Songs, dance, drums, and narcotics frequently accompanied the shaman in her endeavors (p.8-9).

More commonly, Taoist magic concerned the use of talismans, or charms, which act as repositories of power. As the talismanic calligraphy was drawn by the Taoist priest, usually reproducing a canonical prototype, the priest's spiritual power was infused into the talisman. The individual would then use it as a ritual object for her own contact with spirits (Ibid., p.9).

A strong belief in calligraphy as encoded with spiritual power was likely present even during the formative time of Chinese civilization (first millennium B.C.E) this being a strong factor for the retained Chinese ideographic script, despite multiple attempts to switch over to the alphabetic script. Most of the diagrams that existed have been lost. But not all. These diagrams were the handiwork of a variegated lot: artists, illiterate villagers, hermit-scholars, Taoist exorcist-priests, healers and sorcerers. They are largely anonymous (Ibid., p.9).

The five elements in Taoist cosmology comprise a complex occult system, related to particular directions, colors, seasons and so on. The way that these terms are interconnected in Taoist thought provides a *map* of the world and a means of *guiding* it; the Taoist mage steers the manifestations of the world using "sympathetic" magic, invoking the connections between *corresponding characteristics* to induce desired change (Ibid., p.11).

Chi is the *vital spirit* that inhabits and flows within the Taoist imaginary. The cosmic spirit, vitalizing and infusing all things, lending energy to the human, offering life and growth to nature. The mountains, the site for the dwelling of spirits, are purported to exhale chi as clouds or

mist; the undulating motion of clouds, mist and air a typical mystic representation of the chi force in Taoist art (Ibid., p.13) .

The Taoist calligraphic sigils or artworks are inscribed with written characters. Sometimes they comprise a combination of a word with a somewhat abstract representation of mountains, constellations or elements intended to ward off demons, melding art and language (Ibid., p.19).

Magical diagrams, talismans, or charms necessitated a secret language, a special symbolism that existed outside the conventional graphic vocabulary of Chinese script and painting. Strictly, there was but one way of fashioning a Chinese character properly. In the magic calligraphic context, such rules were oft-disregarded; sometimes the character was modified beyond recognition to create a new, *magical* formation (Ibid., p.20).

In Taoist thought, the invocation of spiritual manifestation requires a *new language*. The calligraphic letter or sigil acts as a structural foundation, bent and folded according to artistic dictates, a point of departure for the creation of form suited to house *spirits*. Language comprised the skeleton of its sigil: *art* the guiding force of formation. A new invocation of form, a meld of art and language, and guided by the principles of the hidden correspondences between things, could beget transformation, a spiritual manifestation.

Runes

The word ‘rune’ intimates not just a writing form, angular formations of the largely abandoned ancient Germanic script, but a realm of mystery, invocations of magic: mysterious symbols etched into tools and weapons, now museum show-case artifacts; warrior’s names, secret spells, songs, inscribed across a spectrum of objects, from silver coins to towering stone

crosses. The word 'rune' imparts the meaning of "mystery", "secret" in old English and related tongues (Elliott, p.1).

Runes were never just a utilitarian script; from the time they were first adopted they performed functions of divination and rite. Communication amongst people was a secondary concern; more commonly, their functional purpose was to invoke the higher powers, and to exert influence. The runes are a forked, twofold language: a formal script and magico-religious sigils, the lore of the ancient Germanic world (Ibid., p.2).

Some linguists dispute the notion that runes are intertwined with magic; but there is a strong argument to favor such an interpretation. Most of the runic inscriptions are clearly not of a secular nature, and the script was never particularly conducive for the purposes of practical communication except on the smallest scale. The name 'rune' itself is a testament to its ritual use (Ibid., p.2).

The runes are integrated with ancient Germanic mythology and alleged to be derived from a divine source. In the ancient Germanic mythical-poetic tract the *Eddic Havamal*, Odin, god of wisdom, war, and magic, suspends himself upside down on the world tree Yggdrasil, stabbed by his own spear, without any food or drink for nine days. At last, the runes appear to him in the well of wyrd, the wellspring of the proto-Germanic cultural knowledge. The moment he glimpsed the runes, death fell upon him; but the knowledge was of such power, that immediately he was revived. His wisdom grew, and he became renowned as the god of runes and magic, eloquence and poetry (The Poetic Edda, p.53).

"You must find the runes and read them. Strong symbols, powerful symbols stained by the mighty sage, hewn by the potent Powers, all etched by the runemaster," the *Havamal*

recounts (Ibid., p.54), its authorship attributed to Odin. Via Odin, the secrets of the runes lived on in the Germanic popular imagination, and their magical efficacy. The *Havamal* elucidates that the runes can be employed for every occasion: for healing, foiling one's enemies, for the power in battle to halt the flight of enemy arrows, to calm the rage of the sea, even the power to resuscitate the dead (Ibid., p.54-56).

These examples show the way that language in its genesis was mythologically bound up with religious ideas and notions of spiritual invocation or communication. If the right letters were fashioned together, or the creative imagination warping the linguistic character to create a novel aesthetic figuration, the potency of the letters' power of manifestation could be activated, invoking the spirit presence, sparking transformation.

This concludes a preliminary examination of the magical undertones of language as exemplified in Kabbalistic lore, Taoist sigils and the Runic proto-Germanic language. These historical examples of the magic implicit in language will prove relevant for the discussions that follow, weaving through the subsequent chapters. The next chapter delves into Heidegger's poetical and magical conception of language, and its connections with a mysterious *Goddess* figure.

3. Heidegger's Medusa

This section explores the transformation engendered by Heidegger's poetry, the primal openness it intimates, and its interconnections with his transformative principle of truth. Heidegger's principle of truth is a primordial *unconcealing*. This primordial unconcealing has been obfuscated in modernity, truth restricted to a form of ordering called enframing: a cage that the primordial unconcealing cannot be contained within, and she evades its capture, leaving behind landscapes barren of divinity. While the modern institution of vision is blind to her gaze, can no longer perceive her, the process of her obfuscation began in ancient times. Her occlusion correlates with the downfall of the sacred feminine, the *repudiation* of her *primal enchantment*: an enchantment that can be *retraced* by the primordial thinker and the poet. The revelatory quality of poetry retains the lost magic of the primordial unconcealment, its self-showing: poetry *opens a threshold* between this world and the divine world. The openness of poetry is *musical*, forms a *rhythm*, and is connected with *time*: poetry evinces the *openness* that *underlies all life*. This openness is the *look* of *Heidegger's Goddess, Aletheia*; her gaze is the *gaze of Being*.

What is at issue here is that the modern institution of knowledge has been narrowed to a particular form of apprehension, and the mythic reality of the feminine principle as Heidegger's Goddess, has been suppressed. I identify her in one of her guises as *Medusa*, her shunned feminine gaze, and trace an atlas of images that maps her relation with poetry and the genesis of language through ancient myth.

This section traverses the following path: it begins with an account of the historical downfall of the mythic sacred feminine and her relation to the obfuscated vision that characterizes modernity; this follows onto an account of poetry, and its retained magic: this leads

onto a discussion of the relation of poetry to music, rhythm and time. I conclude by tracing an atlas of images that maps Medusa's relation with poetry and magic through ancient myth. The point of departure for such a project is the *sacred feminine*.

The sacred feminine, the *Goddess*: she has many guises and faces. She is polyvalent. Medusa is a particularly striking visage and avatar of the Goddess, as well as an emblem of the formidable, terrifying power of vision for the ancient Greeks. Her dominant iconography in ancient Greek imagination is defined by the motif of an aquatic monster: snake hair, bulging eyes, lolling tongue, and wings. On Aeschylus's account in *Prometheus Bound*, Medusa, along with her Gorgon sisters, has genealogical origins as the progeny of chthonic marine monsters (p.39). Ovid's version of the myth offers a patriarchal explanation behind Medusa's sea monster appearance. On Ovid's mythological account, Medusa was a beautiful priestess of Athena, who was raped by the ocean God Poseidon in Athena's temple. Athena takes it upon herself to punish Medusa, transforming her into a monstrous Gorgon with wings, bestowing on her a 'loathsome' snake-halo and a fearsome gaze that transmogrifies its observers to stone. Medusa is banished. Despite her banishment, the young Greek Hero Perseus (whose name means "the destroyer") finds her; using a mirror to avoid Medusa's *petrifying* gaze, her gaze of petrification, he decapitates her. Her head, he finds use for as a weapon to defeat an enemy army (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.770-803).

This patriarchal version of the myth of Medusa crystallizes the downfall of the sacred feminine: the Goddess is violated, banished, and decapitated. Her power is deployed as a weapon of war. The archetype of Medusa as sacred feminine is a thread that weaves throughout this text, and the facet that follows concerns her downfall; the Goddess is a fallen figure not just in her

origin myth but in the enlightenment paradigm via its philosophy of rationalized domination as encompassing not just the female sex and nature, but also a closing off of the primal revealing.

Descartes, one of the seminal influences of the enlightenment-scientific paradigm had a dream in which an angel informed him that he would master nature scientifically. “The conquest of nature is to be achieved through number and measure,” the angel imparted. Despite a commitment to rationalism, Descartes privileged the eye as the highest of the senses, the most noble of the senses, as the means by which nature could be best be calculated, and predictions formulated towards rendering the phenomena of nature into mathematical models. “Cartesian perspectivism” is a phrase that evinces the hegemony of the scopic regime of the enlightenment era (Martin, p.69).

The following presents an account of Heidegger’s critique of the modern ocular paradigm as helmed by the Cartesian subject. Heidegger traces the beginnings of the formation of this ocular subjectivity to ancient Greek metaphysics, but says that the modern-scientific manifestation is particularly nefarious for the way it reduces phenomena to mere representation. In Heidegger’s prognosis, truth has been degraded to the certainty of representation in the modern age: this is one of its primary ailments. This conception of truth legitimizes the modern form of science whereby its essential activity, *research*, is characterized by the calculation of a thing’s future course or a calculation to verify a past event. Heidegger understands that in this mode of science, nature and history become *objects: representations imbued with explanation*; only that which conforms as object in this way is deemed to possess being or exist. Science as research exists whereby the Being of a thing is sought via such objectification: it is the objectification of everything, Being relegated to representation (Age of the World Picture, p.127). Heidegger goes on to say that the metaphysics of Descartes ushered in the dawning of

this epoch, its subjectivity, such that the human is spurred to need to achieve certainty of its being in the vein of the cogito. The Cartesian modern ideology invokes a new form of subjectivity, objectivity and subjective-objective interplay. The observing subject becomes the sole referent for being and its ultimate source (Ibid., p.128).

Heidegger perceives that via the modern ideology, the world is flattened to a *picture*, the world conceived of and understood as a picture: world becomes *world-picture* (Ibid, p.129). The term 'picture' is deployed to invoke what it means to say, we get the picture about something: it denotes what we *understand* and *perceive*. Picture delineates not just image but the world, as a *system*, as something *objective*. In this new age, whatever comes into being, comes in and through representation. This representedness is the *essence of the modern age* (Ibid, p.130). Modern representation means to bring what exists before or against oneself, to relate it to oneself (Ibid, p.131). The primary ambition of the modern age is the domination of the world as picture. Picture here is understood as the structured image, fabricated by the human, that represents (Ibid, p.134). This modern pictographic metaphysics has at its foundation a quest for certainty, a certainty supplied for by the Cartesian subject, *the cogito ergo sum*; Descartes' thinking as evidence for existence is *thinking as representing*, as setting-before, creating a representing relation to what is represented (Ibid, p.149). Infected by the modern institution of vision, everything that presences now appears in compliance to the demands of representation (Ibid, p.152).

The modern ocular sight is learned, regimented, and fixed, vision forced to conform to the standard of correctness of apprehension as representation. This is a mode of seeing as *occlusion*, a *trained blindness*, no longer able to perceive the coming-to-presence of Being, cutting off its possibility of self-showing. Only appearance, a copy or degradation, illusion

remains visible, instituted in the place of the primal revealing (Introduction to Metaphysics, p.154-55).

In his later thinking, he termed this representative domination 'enframing', as a mode of imposing a paradigm of mastery and control over nature. Heidegger's account in the *Question Concerning Technology* says that what the technological project of enframing challenges nature to constantly have energy in supply that can be extracted and stored (Question Concerning Technology, p.14), and to have it always on standby, in standing reserve (bestand) (Ibid, p.17). Enframing is the mode of apprehension that imposes a setting or way of approaching nature (Ibid, p.18) that gathers it such that the human is challenged to receive and apprehend nature and truth in the mode of ordering as objects, standing reserve (Ibid, p.20).

The essence of modern technology, Heidegger says, is ultimately this enframing, of truth and nature received as standing reserve. Via enframing, humanity is restricted to an ordering that silences all other means of showing, constricting and closing off the openness of unconcealing (Ibid, p.25).

Enframing challenges forth into ordering or a way of revealing, setting the world on a course whereby its particular understanding that holds total sway (Ibid, p.27). Under the spell of enframing, Being turns away from Being, retreating from itself (The Turning, p.41) endangering itself in the truth of its arrival into presence, remaining disguised and under a veil. Being as disguised to itself, in self-denial: this concealment is the most acute danger (Ibid, p.37). But where danger grows, the saving power exists in the same vicinity.

Despite its enframed manifestation in modernity, technology is *really* a way of revealing, how things reveal themselves: technology partakes in the realm of truth, (Ibid, p.12,13) opening

a channel for revealing to occupy. Heidegger traces the word *technology* to its Greek origin, *technikon*, which means: belonging to *techne* (Question Concerning Technology, p.12). *Techne*, he says, encompasses beyond craftspeople and their work/skills, but refers fundamentally to the arts, to the *bringing forth of presence* called *poesis*, (Ibid, p.13) a term that makes reference to *poetry*. Heidegger's *poetical bringing-forth* refers to something that is issued to its manifestation and presence, the *disclosure* of what did not previously inhabit presence. "Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment into unconcealment," (Ibid., p.11) as Heidegger puts it. This is a long-held historical *secret*, Heidegger says: technology or *techne* as the means of invoking presence has been veiled since the times of the ancient (Building Dwelling Thinking, p.152). The highest expression of *poesis* as the manifestation of presence is *physis*: *physis* is a bursting open that brings-forth, the arising of something from itself in the way that nature blossoms and effloresces (Question Concerning Technology, p.10).

Poetry in its essential sense is the revelation and manifestation of truth, ushering the *true* into its purest shining-forth. The poetical invocation dwells in every art, in the way art *reveals* the entering-into-presence, evincing the *beautiful*; such a power within art contains the possibility save the human, can return the human to the height of the dignity of her essence to watch over unconcealment. For *The Question Concerning Technology*, the means of traversing and overcoming enframing is *art*; and the nature of art is *poetical bringing-forth* (Ibid, p.32-35).

For Heidegger, poetry contains the kernels of the *magic* of bringing-forth that has been lost in modernity's enframing. The poetic revelation ushers beings to their manifestation and *openness*, into their *unveiling* for the first time, instigating the formation of a *clearing* for being to *shine and ring out*; being is a *reverberation* that shines and rings its resounding echo in the open chamber of the clearing (The Origin of the Work of Art, p.71). The clearing is the region

of presencing and vanishing, shining and fading(On the Way to Language, p.410), where revelation is unfurled, and yet simultaneously, something is withheld. This withholding is what allows its manifestation to be (Origin of Art, p.178). Poetic manifestation reaches into the realm of the *Open* to grant the gift of its formation; the Open is “the great whole” of all that does not *set bounds to itself*, the boundlessness of possibility (What Are Poets For?, p.104). Poetry is an interface to reach that Open space, a *portal* to unfurl the renewal of possibility, the openness of possibility which has been foreclosed by enframing (Ibid., p.113).

The poet is a figure of redemption who can mend the human’s relation with the Open: her poetry acts as a *healing*, healing the human’s unholy condition (Ibid., p.137). As she reaches into the Open, the poet can retrace the tracks of the fugitive gods, *retrieving* the divine presence, her poem a *summoning invocation* (Ibid., p.139). In the way the poet invokes the possibility for the returned presence of the divine, she renders the invisible to its manifestation: the poet is endowed with an augmented *perception*. The poet *reveals and perceives the invisible*, sees the invisible *everywhere*. The poet sees the alien in the familiar, *sees the unknown in everything*, sees in the familiar the way the alien *reveals and disguises* itself, a *cloaking revelation*:

“The poet calls, in the sights of the sky, that which in its very self-disclosure *causes the appearance of that which conceals itself*, and indeed as that which conceals itself. In the familiar appearances, the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is—unknown,” (Poetically Man Dwells, p.223).

For Heidegger, the *invisible* occupies a *higher order of reality* than the material realm, and the invisible exists within in the *heart* of the poet. The poetic perception involves a transmutation of the visible of representation into the invisible of the heart; the poet is the one

can perceive the invisible in the visible through the discerning perception of the heart (What Are Poets For? p.131).

The greatest poets venture into the essence of language more deeply; their poem is mellifluous, forms a *song* (Ibid., p.137) The song of the poet binds the trace of the *holy* (Ibid., p.139).

Song is *existence* itself: to sing it is to belong to the ground of beings, Being: “To sing the song means to be present in what is present itself. It means: *Dasein*, existence,” (What Are Poets For? p.135).

At its zenith, poetry is *musical*. And music is related to *magic*, Heidegger intimates, deploying the term ‘magic’ to make reference to the *rhythmic chiming* of the church bells (quoted in Barash, p.64). The image of the peal of the churchbells, the resounding bell in the clocktower entwines a series of motifs in a knot: *time, rhythm, reverberation, sonority, and divinity*, intimating the interconnected nature of these motifs. As previously iterated, the bringing-to-presence of the divine is a shining and *ringing*, a reverberating echo, rippling peal. The showing of Being is *sonorous*, a twinkling chime. Its intervals of chime, the rhythm of the divine that renders order to daily life, makes reference to the ebb and flow of time, the *music that underlies life*, its divine symphonic composition. As Heidegger espouses in *Time and Being*, time is the bequeathed *gift* of an “*It*” that “*gives*” (Time and Being, p.5), *giving* as the *sending* and *extending* that *makes Being possible*. “*True time*” is the “*It*” that “*gives Being*”, its opening and extending gesture (Ibid., p.17). This “*It*”, true time, is *Appropriation*, its *event* an enfolding that opens and extends possibility (Ibid., p.19), its *transformative guise*, the way that presence is concealed in manifold instantiations via the modalities of space and time (Ibid., p.14).

Poetry is *magic*, in the sense that it reaches into an effecting mode of transmutation that exists outside the modern rationalist and materialist-scientistic paradigm of causal effectuation. For Heidegger, the magical quality that poetry is endowed with, the power to usher something into its presence, reaching into the invisible realm to render it to manifestation, is a function of the *underlying unity behind unconcealment*: its *unity* and *primal openness* makes possible the dance of form, the rippling transformation of life. It's an *openness* that simultaneously acts as an *ordering principle*, forms a *rhythm*: a *song*. Existence and its very possibility is a song, a musical poem, the rhythm of openness as it sways between ebb and flow. Poetry and its redemptive potential is predicated on its primal openness, opening the crack between this world and the Open, divine world. Being is what is Open: Enframing is what is closed. The Open is where the *magic* of life happens, a blooming and efflorescence of *possibility*, where the renewal of possibility finds itself situated in the world; the space where potentiality arises, site of all burgeoning and blossoming.

Heidegger's Goddess lives in the Open poetic realm.

Heidegger has a direct encounter with the Goddess in his tract *Parmenides*. Parmenides wrote a 'didactic poem' in which he is greeted by the Goddess on his travels and ultimately arrives at the home of the Goddess. She is Aletheia: Aletheia is the Goddess truth, in the sense that *truth itself is the Goddess*: she is *not* the Goddess *of* truth. This notion that Aletheia is a Goddess might seem strange to us moderns (Parmenides, p.4-5). But the notion that the Goddess can be dismissed as a poetical and pseudoscientific decoration is an error; she *really is a Goddess* (Ibid, p. 6, 162). Aletheia ordinarily means 'truth', Heidegger says, or a literal translation is 'unconcealedness' (Ibid, p.11) as well as offering the alternate translation of 'dis-closure' (Ibid, p.12). She is the Goddess that *allows the unconcealed to show itself*. She does not coerce or

impose, but *leads to herself*, the place where the querent must, via the querent's own resources, follow the Goddess's lead. The leading way of the Goddess is *liberation*, thrusting one into the open realm (Beginning of Western Philosophy, p.108). What it means to travel the way of the Goddess means to open one's sight to the unconcealed, that which shows itself: one is tasked with seeing Being clearly (Ibid, p.109).

Being offers itself, its gaze as its gift: "Aletheia is *the looking of Being into the open that is lighted by itself as it itself, the open for the unconcealedness of all appearance*," (Parmenides, p.162-163). In other words, Aletheia accesses the *openness* that gives unconcealedness room to blossom, bequeathing its possibility.

"Only the essential sight of authentic thinking beholds Being itself," (Ibid, p.159). To experience Aletheia is the *destiny* (Ibid, p.163) of the primordial thinker and the site where the primordial thinker resides, the essential dwelling place of the thinker as thinker (Ibid, p.127).

Poetry is fundamentally a mode of *understanding* and is what lets us dwell via the space it upholds: its architecture comprises an edifice, a *building*, offering a space to *dwell*. (Poetically Man Dwells, p.226). *Dwelling* is a mode of *thinking* and *building* (Building Dwelling Thinking, p.158): in other words, the open manifold of poetry gives rise to the possibility for human *dwelling*, dwelling as *poetic thinking*, the poetical primordial understanding. The essential dwelling place of the thinker is the open, poetic realm: the primordial thinker is a *poet*.

The primordial thinker as poet sees poetry *everywhere*, perceives the alien in the familiar, discerns the invisible of the heart in the visible. The primordial thinker as poet *sees* the *magic language* of life, perceives *life as a magic language*. Heidegger's poetry is a rune's invocation, invoking the replenishment of transformation in the valence of materiality, infusing the meaning

of materiality with a revived divine presence, holding space for the pealing chime of Being to resound and unfurl new manifestations of presence, in materiality, as well as in the heart. As the next chapter relates in greater detail, the way the poet invokes transformation in the material world is the creative perception of a *magic language*, incising a *rune* into the material world to let the divine presence in, bringing-forth new manifestations.

Heidegger's Goddess is a poetic Goddess, her gaze a rupture of openness, invisible to enframed perception. She is the poetic thinker's *vision*. I identify her in one of her guises as the ancient Greek goddess, *Medusa*, a Goddess who is also famed for her mysterious and piercing gaze. Using Medusa as a locus point, I will transition here to trace a trail of images in ancient myth that, like Heidegger's Goddess, enfolds the leitmotifs of poetry, magic and the gaze of the Goddess.

Medusa has a twin iconographic avatar, a doppelganger in the Hindu religion: Manasa. Her name meaning intimates the power of the psyche: power of the mind or conceived in the mind. Like Medusa, Manasa is a Goddess who wears a crown of snakes around her head. She is *one-eyed*, or known as the '*blind goddess*'. Like Medusa, she possesses a venomous glare, and her vision can emit a snakelike poison.

The one-eyed Goddess mirrors Odin's distinct symbol or image: Odin is a one-eyed, long-bearded wanderer-Shaman-God of *wisdom*, *war*, and *magic* of Norse myth. He is known by many monikers: *The One-Eyed God*, *The God of Gods*, *The Masked God*. He is one-eyed because he *sacrificed one of his eyes* in exchange for a single sip from the spring of Mimir, a watery reservoir infused with cultural wisdom. Mimir is a character whose name means '*the rememberer*' possessing unsurpassed wisdom. Like Medusa, Mimir is beheaded, and his head is

returned to Odin. Odin cradles the head, embalms it to prevent decay, then sings charms over it, returning to Mimir's head the power of speech. Odin is depicted at times as carrying around the embalmed head of Mimir, and it spews secret wisdom to him (Crossley-Holland, p.8).

Having drunk a sip from the Well of Mimir, Odin gained great wisdom, but his thirst increased for more. To achieve such an end, Odin devises another plot of personal sacrifice for wisdom, this time performing a *self-sacrifice to himself*.

"I know I hung in a winded tree nine whole nights, spear-pierced, ardent to Odin, me to myself on that tree whose taproots no one will ever know," (Poetic Edda, p.53).

He goes without food or drink for nine days and stabs himself in his side with a spear. These self-sacrifices catalyzed a new vision, enabling him to glimpse into the nine worlds, and seizes the runes, a magical proto-Germanic language. Shrieking, Odin dies, but the wisdom possessed such power that he immediately is revived (Ibid, p.53). Finally, in a related incident of wisdom by sacrificial magic, Odin swipes the *Mead of Poetry*, the Mead of Suttungr. The Mead is the mixture of the blood of a man possessing ultimate wisdom, Kvasir, with honey (Crossley-Holland, p.28). Occasionally Odin offers it to humans: the gift of poetry; whoever drinks of this mead achieves poetic inspiration (Ibid, p.32). The themes of poetry, the divine, the magic of language and a relinquished vision re-emerge in poesis, and the poetic.

These overlapping images can be employed as a map, a secret passageway weaving through the mythic landscape. Medusa acts as a mirror image to Manasa, her Indian counterpart deity; Manasa is the blind goddess, one-eyed, her glare piercing. On a visual level, these motifs are contiguous with the iconography and folklore of Odin, one-eyed progenitor of the proto-Germanic language, who totes around a decapitated head that spews secret wisdom, and lord of

poetry. I want to suggest that Medusa, through the atlas of imagery carved through these aesthetic resonances, can be understood to be related to Odin, connecting her to the realm of poetry and magic. Odin, as its progenitor, is also the bestower of poetic inspiration, paralleling the link between *magic* and poetry in Norse myth that is also implicit in Heidegger.

Modern enlightenment rationality sought to master, capture and enframe truth. In its attempt to capture her, she hid, was obfuscated but could not be grasped. She refuses the enclosure of ordering of modernity's objectifying enframing, escaping from its confines with her ephemeral self-concealment, resisting capture, sliding from its snare. She is a *transforming* truth-principle: she shows the *way*, the way that truth *transforms*, *amorphous*, rendering herself in new formulations. As she conceals her tracks, effacing her countenance, she simultaneously reveals herself in all things.

The openness of poetry is her refuge in the destitution of modernity: poetry is the portal of the sacred feminine, her primordial truth. Her gaze awaits the poetic thinker whose discernment can perceive the invisible in the visible, the primal opening of things: the openness that grants all life.

Her self-revealing reveals a long lost, mythical, primordial truth: an effusive *enchantment* underlies reality, a primordial *openness* that gives Being its shimmer and ring, its magic of manifested presence. To reach into the infinite depths of creativity and openness is to renew the presence of the divine.

This creativity meets an ensorcelling feminine gaze, resistant to materialist causality, the shape-shifting effulgence and miracle that gives the gift of all possibilities, the formlessness that

underlies all forms, what gives form its shape, offers its potentiality in its showing of formulation.

She is *Medusa*: Heidegger's Medusa.

Having elucidated Heidegger's magic of *poetry*, its primordial openness, its connections with rhythm, time and *Medusa*, the subsequent chapter takes its point of departure with a focus on Heidegger's *transformation of art*, or *art of transformation*. Such a discussion solicits juxtaposition with a particular theoretical interlocutor: Deleuze, who evinces a comparable transformation of art, art of transformation.

Figure 1. Medusa, Odin by Cecilia Rose Inkol

Figure 2: The Empress by Cecilia Rose Inkol

4. Heidegger and Deleuze: The Technological Form of Unconcealing and Becoming

Having elucidated Heidegger's notion of poetry as a *portal* to the open realm, this section explores the transformative capacity of *art* in Heidegger, and delves more deeply into the *threshold* Heidegger evinces where technology and magic coincide. Heidegger is in good company here: Deleuze espouses comparable notions of *aesthetic transformation* via a *magic* clothed in technological ciphers; this chapter is thus a *dialogue* between Heidegger and Deleuze.

For Deleuze and Heidegger, form is imbued with becoming and unconcealing. For Heidegger, form is revealed via the shape-shifting of the *rift*; the *rift* is the meeting place between the world of the work of art and the earth. The work of art stretches the boundaries of the earth's delimitations to reveal what lies beyond it, reaching into the realm of the divine. The work of art acts a metaphor for a *creative mode of perception* that enables one to meet the gaze of Being herself, the divine presence hidden beyond the illusory contours of the materialist world as it is confined, and enclosed by enframing modern perception.

For Deleuze, form is encrypted with becoming via the Figure. The Figure is comprised of a diagram, a diagram that is evinced by spontaneous marks; those marks direct its motion as it draws beyond the scope of its boundaries, dancing with infinity and becoming-animal. Deleuze's liberatory forms, the Figure, the contour and the structure of the painting can be understood as *machinic interfaces* of becoming. Understanding the machinic component of Deleuze's aesthetic theory illuminates the way form is constantly enfolding the limits of its perimeter, and opening its breadth to involution.

Heidegger's *unconcealing* and Deleuze's *becoming* can both be characterized in terms of 'technology'. I argue that it is productive to interpret Deleuze and Heidegger's understanding of

form as effective at the ontological level in terms of a *primordial or esoteric* facet of technology. ‘Esoteric’ means something that is hidden, secret. It also makes reference to ancient notions of ‘magic’, defined as an ontological causality and rationality at odds with a scientific-materialist framework. Heidegger’s technology is a primordial mode of understanding that discloses secret ontological processes of effectuation. Deleuze’s form as the Figure is likewise effective at the ontological level, tapping into the secret will and hidden processes of the machinic unconscious.

The aesthetics of unconcealing and becoming for Heidegger and Deleuze are thus both elucidated via the notions of technology and ‘magic’.

What follows offers a presentation of Heidegger’s aesthetic theory, focusing on his theory of form, the figure produced by the *rift*, its shape negotiated between the *world* and *earth*. This discussion leads to a broader account of Heidegger’s aesthetics of technology that will be elucidated as *magic*. Such a project begins with Heidegger’s work of art that conjures, or *sets up*, a world.

Heidegger imbues the work of art with the possibility to invoke the *world* that lies within it. Heidegger’s *world* does not refer to a collection of things, or to an imaginary framework of representations that is attached to the things within it. “The world worlds,” Heidegger says: this is to say that ‘world’ is a *movement* revealing a fuller state of being in comparison to the tangible and perceptible realm in which we conceive ourselves to be situated. World never consists in an object that is visible, standing before us as seen. World is the *nonobjective* realm that we are always subject to, so long as we are plugged into Being via death, birth, blessing, curse. It is through the opening of a world that things achieve the way they linger and haste, how they are remote and near, the breadth of their scope and the confinements of their limits. The worlding of

the work can invoke the presence of the divine; it is in the worlding of a world that spaciousness is gathered, a spaciousness of which either conjures or withholds the protective presence and grace of the *gods* (Origin of Art, p.170).

In the way it *sets up* a world, the work also creates a *set-up* for the *earth*; the work brings the earth into an open province of a world, and maintains it there (Ibid, p.172).

World and earth are different at the level of essence, but are necessarily intertwined with the other. The world uses the earth to ground itself; and the earth protrudes from the world. The world rests upon the earth, but striving to overcome it. In the way it opens itself, it resists closure. But the earth, in the way it shelters and conceals, pulls the world into its own domain, and wants to maintain it there (Ibid, p.174).

This confrontation between world and earth, Heidegger calls *strife*. In the essence of strife, the warring parties inaugurate the other into the articulation of their essential natures; via opposition, they achieve expression through the other, and with the increasing intensity of the strife, achieve their self-overcoming (Ibid, p.174). The work rests in the strife it instigates (Ibid, p. 175).

Heidegger's strife is connected with his understanding of truth. Heidegger understands truth in the Greek sense that he elaborates as *aletheia*, which refers to "the *unconcealment of beings*." From its early times, Heidegger says, it decides how everything that is present presences (Ibid, p.176).

The essence of truth as unconcealment exists as a *denial*. Concealment does not hinder truth, but comprises its movement essentially. Essentially, truth is "untruth", its denial of itself (Ibid, p.179). Heidegger is not espousing here that truth is ultimately falsehood- nor that truth

cannot be viewed, but rather that in a certain diametrical sense, truth also consists in its converse movement: concealing (Ibid, p.180).

The precise occurrence of truth is its “concealing denial” marks the site of genesis for all clearings, but simultaneously, in its evasive denial, dispenses the possibility for erroneous perception. The action of the concealing denial intends to demarcate the strife within the essence of truth between concealing and clearing (Ibid, p.180).

Truth exists as what is *not truth*, in the sense that it draws from the well of what lies hidden. *Truth is the primordial strife* whereby the open region discloses itself as the site from which everything achieves its standing, yet also withholds itself (Ibid., 185). Truth institutes itself via the work, within the strife between world and earth. This strife *achieves the unity of world and earth* (Ibid, p.188).

This strife forms a *rift*: not in the sense of the gap left where something which has been ripped, but in the sense of the “intimacy to which opponents belong to each other” (Ibid, p.188). This rift transports the opponents at play into the province of their intertwined unity through their shared ground. The rift formulates a basic design: it is a sketch, outline, drawing a shape for the clearing of beings. The rift does not allow its opponents to wrench from the other: they are steadfast, entwined though its “common outline”, enclosing that which resists measure and boundary, the warring opposites and their war (Ibid, p.188).

In German, *rift* (der Riss) implies: a crack, but also a plan, or design, as in a *drawing*. It is derived from the verb ‘riessen’ which is analogous in English to ‘word’ or ‘writing.’ The rift, in this sense, is an incision of writing, a *rune*, or a letter. In this way, the rift implies the primordial written form (Ibid, p.188).

The establishment of truth takes place as a *process from within beings*, via strife; truth is comprised through the strife; this is to say that a being is *immersed into the rift* (Ibid, p.188).

Strife is brought into the rift and set back within the earth, fixed in place as the *figure* (Gestalt). Figure here refers to the “structure” of the shape that gives composition to the rift. Heidegger understands the term ‘figure’ or ‘Gestalt’ in the sense of the placement (stellen) as well as enframing (ge-stell) that the work manifests in the way it sets itself up and forth (Ibid, 189).

Via the rift in the work of art, truth instantiates and sustains itself in its primordial strife. Art is conceived here as the “creative preservation of truth in the work”. As such, art is evinced as not only truth’s *happening*, but also its *becoming* (Ibid, 196).

As the movement of the clearing and cloaking of beings, truth occurs via this warring, paradoxical composition. In this sense of truth as the truth of beings which is allowed to happen, all art is essentially *poetry*. Art’s poetic essence can be attributed as the means whereby, within beings, art shatters open a place which is fundamentally open, whose openness discloses everything other than its usual appearance. In this way, everything hitherto existing *emerges as unbeing*. The effect of the work is *not related to a cause, or causality*; it is a change that is emitted from out the work as the unconcealment of beings, and thereby *Being* (Ibid, p.197).

Heidegger’s vision of poetry does not refer to the flights and fancies of whimsical or aimless imaginings; poetry, in the sense of clearing projection, unfurls from unconcealment and directs ahead into the “rift-design of the figure” is the open province which poetry allows to occur, such that only in that way, beings are moved to “shine and ring out” (Ibid, p.197).

This concludes my account of Heidegger's form in the work of art, ending on the note of the work of art as poetic. Poetry reappears in Heidegger's aesthetic ideas concerning the possibility for grace in the destitution and darkness in modernity. In the section that follows, I weave through a few different late Heidegger texts to render an account of his aesthetics of modernity, and how it relates to technology, poetry, and *magic*.

Heidegger links the modern view of truth and its will-to-control as complicit with a scientific-technological programme of objectification, and representation. Truth has been degraded to *the certainty of representation*. In this mode of science, nature and history become objects: representations imbued with explanation. (Age of the World Picture, p.127).

As result, in the modern technological regime, human seeing is occluded. What appears in perception to the modern human is no longer the emerging power (physis), but mere appearance, a copy or degradation, illusion. Vision has decayed to correctness of vision conceived in terms of apprehension as representation (Introduction to Metaphysics, p.154-55).

He later termed this occluding domination or representation 'enframing'. The essence of modern technology, Heidegger says, is ultimately this enframing of nature whereby nature is challenged to appear only as stored energy, and to always have it on standby, in *standing reserve* (bestand) (Question Concerning Technology, p.17). Under such enframed vision, humanity is restricted to an ordering that silences all other visions of showing, constricting and closing off the openness of unconcealing (Ibid, p.25).

The modern scientific age is for Heidegger, the "world's night" (What Are Poets For? P.92), but even in the midst of such darkness, there exists the possibility for redemption in the modern, and it is located in the essence of technology.

Heidegger elucidates that the secret nature of technology is *revealing*: it is how things reveal themselves, taking place in the realm of truth (Question Concerning Technology, p.12,13). ‘Techne’ stems from the Greek, *technikon*, its meaning: belonging to techne (Ibid, p.12). The meaning of the word ‘techne’ in ancient Greek, he says, encompasses not only the skills and craft of the craftsman, but makes reference to the arts in the sense of: to bring forth, or *poiesis*. As a mode of making something appear into presence, techne is called *poiesis* (Ibid, p.10).

Techne also denotes a form of *knowing* or *understanding*, as apprehending what is present. Techne as this *knowing* is a *gathering* that gathers things together in a particular organization, and determines the way things are constituted, the way they are brought-forth (Ibid, p.13).

The power of art can save the human in her technological cataclysm, it can return the human to the height of the dignity of her essence (Ibid, p.32-35), to *watch over unconcealment*. The means of overcoming enframing is art; and the nature of art is poetry (Ibid, p.32).

Technology is a mode of revealing, and a form of knowing, the realm of truth. Technology illuminates how in our apprehension of things, and how we approach those things, formulates the way they arise within us. Heidegger distinguishes between the kinds of understandings elicited by poetry and modern technology as at odds with one another: one is unconcealing, the other obfuscates. Heidegger’s poetry is a *different kind of technology* in comparison to the modern manifestations: it is an originary, *primordial technology*. There already exists a term for such a designation of ancient, primal technology or mode of understanding, and I argue that we can understand Heidegger’s primal poetic technology using such a term, a term that Heidegger himself uses, as *magic*. Such a term can be delineated by

understanding ancient and esoteric ideas of *magic* as an *ontological power* that effectuates transformation via “acausal” or “nonrational” means by the standards of materialistic science.

In his overcoming of scientism, materialism and representational thinking, Heidegger is inspired by Nietzsche, who conceives of the *world* as a work of art (The Will to Power as Art, p.420). Since, in Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche, *this* world is one true world (as opposed to a nebulous, Platonic world of forms), Nietzsche elects *art* to spiritually redeem it (Nietzsche Vol I., p.73-4).

Among other influences, for instance the pre-Socratics (see Heidegger’s *Parmenides*, and *Heraclitus Seminar*), Heidegger is also significantly inspired by Zen Buddhism, which is a hybrid of Buddhism and Taoism (Caputo, p.203). We also know that Heidegger was reading Taoist texts by the 1930s (*Heidegger and Asian Thought*, p.7). Taoism and its significance, particularly with reference to Deleuze’s ideas, will be elaborated later in this chapter.

Aletheia is the *enchantment* that has been lost in the modern world, via scientific-technological obfuscation. The *rift* that institutes her revealing is a poem; significantly, it is also a *rune*, which is a *magic letter* from the ancient, primordial Germanic language. The rift is a magic poem that exists not only in the work of art, but also in the way we apprehend things in a general sense. Understanding *the world as a work of art* in the Nietzschean sense, our site of existence is for Heidegger, a site for continual revelation, divine presence, and creative perception: an *alchemy of perception* that takes place in the clearing of beings. This alchemy of (inner) perception involves *meeting the gaze of Aletheia* (Parmenides, p.162). Heidegger’s notion of the truth that conceals itself is a *Goddess*; truth as a Goddess, her *way* is the path her querent must follow. “Aletheia is the *looking of Being* into the open that is lighted by itself, as it itself,

the open for the unconcealedness of all appearance,” [my emphasis] (Ibid, p.162) Lacan reformulates Heidegger’s gaze of truth, Aletheia staring back at one, as the *Real*, the external world (which is the *unconscious*) staring back at oneself, the unfragmented totality of the whole leaking through the confines of one’s understanding (Lacan, p.72-3).

Meeting the gaze of Aletheia, or in Lacan’s terms, the secretion of the Real, I want to further characterize using Heidegger’s *magic*. Heidegger’s *magic* is the *alchemy of perception* that discloses the divine presence, its overflow: it is a mode of perception in which art and poetry are understood as a mode of *creative looking*; this looking has ontological power, is a bringing-forth, charged with acausal, supra-rational force. In other words, art, and poetry are the *techne* or *technology* to reach, and disclose the divine presence. In this sense, I have suggested that Heidegger’s alchemy of perception of which invokes the divine presence can be understood as a form of *primordial technology or magic*.

Having traced an outline of Heidegger’s aesthetics of unconcealing, I want to transition here to Deleuze, and his aesthetics of becoming. The following section contains an account of Deleuze’s aesthetic theory of painting in his book *The Logic of Sensation* about the painter Francis Bacon. Deleuze’s concept of the *Figure* will act as the focal point for my discussion of his aesthetic theory; I will elucidate his *Figure* as a *technology*, as well as a form of *sorcery* or *magic* that links painting to the machinic unconscious, soliciting the hidden workings, and secret will of the machinic unconscious. The discussion of Deleuze’s aesthetic theory that follows begins with his conception of the Figure, and its relation to the contour of the painting.

The painting, for Deleuze, is a tripartite multiplicity comprised of three basic elements: structure, Figure and contour. Deleuze calls the contour a “membrane”, saying that it exists as an interface that maintains the communication between the Figure and the structure.

The Figure *screams* as it experiences “an extraordinary becoming-animal” (Logic of Sensation, p.29) via the matrix of the contour: this is not to say that there exists a correspondence between animal and human in Bacon’s paintings; rather, as opposed to formal correspondences between the terms human and animal, Bacon’s paintings act as the site of interchange between them: a “zone of indiscernibility or undecidability” whereby the human and animal exist in a state a flux with the other. The human *becomes* animal in this site; simultaneously, the animal becomes spirit: the spirit of the human. This procedure does not involve their diverse forms as a combination: there is only the “common fact” of the human and animal (Ibid, p.21). The painter as butcher (Ibid, p.24) opens the domain of the human to the domain of the animal and vice versa.

Deleuze imbues the becoming-animal of the Figure with the means to overcome figuration. Deleuze’s Figure as becoming-animal *is* sensation: specifically, it is *the form the sensible assumes*, as it evinces a sensation. The Figure has an immediate effect on the nervous system, which is comprised of flesh, evoking affects of sensation in its viewer. The spectator enters the painting; she experiences its sensation via achieving the unity of that which senses and that which is sensed. Like Merleau-Ponty says, sensation is Being-in-the-World (Phenomenology of Perception, p.221) (Logic of Sensation, p.31).-

Bacon relates sensation as something that jumps from one “order” to another, jumping between orders, areas and levels (Ibid, p.32) Deleuze solicits *sensation* as the vehicle for

becoming because its affects reverberate beyond the subject, opening the subject to new experiences in the way that it moves between orders, levels, and areas. Sensation bridges the subject-object divide, and the subject achieves its liberation via sensation. In this sense, sensation is encoded with liberation.

In its becoming-animal and the economy of sensation, Deleuze understands painting to be imbued with the capacity to liberate the presences that exist beneath and beyond representation “[O]bjectively, [painting] brings before us the reality of a body, of lines and colors *freed from organic representation*,” (Ibid, p.45).

Such is the primary functions of the Figure, Deleuze says: to render invisible forces visible (Ibid, p.49). These invisible forces are the forces of the future (Ibid, p.51). These are, as hinted in the preceding paragraph, *non-organic* forces of the future. But there exist forces that want to impede the revelation of the Figure, blockages that need to be dissipated- namely, psychic clichés.

Psychic clichés exist as perceptions, memories and apparitions which are pre-formulated; the cliché always already exists on the canvas: it is not enough to merely deform or mutilate the cliché. The first procedure of the painter is that she must “will to lose the will”: such is necessary for clichés to be left behind, and only then the work can commence.

The “will to lose the will” can be achieved via using the technique of “free marks”, which have to be rendered quickly to eliminate the inherent figuration, thus giving the Figure its possibility to exist, “which is the improbable itself.” The marks are rendered by accident, using chance, but a different variety of “chance”: but rather a “type of action without probability,”

(Ibid, p.77). These marks have traits which are irrational, accidental, unconscious; in addition to being nonrepresentational, they are also a-signifying, nonillustrative (Ibid, p.82). In other words, the artist who makes “free marks” taps into the *unconscious* will. This notion of the *unconscious will* will be further elucidated as this section is brought to a close.

These asignifying, nonrepresentational traits, strokes of line and color-patches comprise a “Diagram”. The *diagram* is chaos, catastrophe: yet also the seed of order. Through the chaos of the traits, it displaces nascent figuration, but also acts as the genesis of rhythm for arrangement of the work (Ibid, p.83). From chaos, structure emerges. In its intimation of a new order, the function of the diagram is to suggest, hint at, or introduce “possibilities of fact,” (Ibid, p.101). The significance of the diagram will be elucidated in a later section as it relates to Deleuze’s concept of the abstract machine.

This concludes my account of Deleuze’s aesthetic theory, maintaining a focus on the Figure, and its relation to becoming. In the subsequent section, I want to elucidate the machinic quality of the Figure, unfurl how it is related to his theory of the machinic unconscious and suggest that we can understand the Figure as a *machinic interface* or *technology*.

While the *Logic of Sense* was written by Deleuze alone, I want to explore his concept of the machinic unconscious as it is unfolded in his later work with his coauthor Guattari. They conceive that *metal* is ubiquitous, all-pervasive.

Deleuze and Guattari conceive of a hidden machinic *quality* to all things. This machinic quality does not denote a ‘machine’ in the sense of the word that implies a mechanical artefact fueled by an artificial energy source. Deleuze and Guattari’s machine is rather a *model* that explains the way that connections are forged between things. *All things are machines that plug*

into one another, comprising a machinic network of interwoven processes and flows (*Anti-Oedipus*, p.1).

Desiring is always amalgamating flows and fragmented objects together, acting as an adhesive between terms. Desire can be understood as the *motor* underlying the machinic economy; it moves flows through the machinic network as well as arresting flows (Ibid, p.5). Deleuze and Guattari's machine evinces the way that things connect together, and form the architecture for the movement of the economy of desire.

Machines function as keys: opening and closing domains, allowing ingress and egress between terms that plug into one another: "Machines are always singular keys that open or close an assemblage, a territory" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, p.334). Desire is the motivating force behind the machinic economy, and it is *art* that provides the groundwork for these machinic interfaces of desire (*Anti Oedipus*, p.368).

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the machinic unconscious comprises a "machinic phylum" or "technological lineage" that pierces through elements, orders and substances (p.406). Its phylum is both artificial as well as natural: it is the site of conjunction of the unity of the human and Nature, (Ibid, p.406) also termed the *plane of consistency*, where all forms meet together in unity (Ibid, p.422).

Deleuze goes on to elucidate the secret dimensions of the plane of consistency, condensing his metaphors: at its limit, the plane of consistency formulates the abstract Figure, comprising the abstract machine. "At n dimensions, [the plane of consistency] is called the Hypersphere, the Mechanosphere. It is the abstract Figure, or rather, *since it has no form itself*, the abstract Machine of which each concrete assemblage is a multiplicity, a becoming, a

segment, a vibration. And the abstract machine is the intersection of them all,” [my emphasis] (Ibid, p.253).

The Figure from the *Logic of Sense* reappears here, conceived of at its ultimate singularity, its secret form delineated as the *abstract machine*. The abstract machine engenders becoming, establishing the creation and connection of flows. But the abstract machine is not physically-existent or corporeal; it is rather “diagrammatic”. Its diagram lacks content, expression: it is a *blueprint* separate from the forms, contents and expressions it dispenses, as well as determines (Ibid, p.141). In its diagrammatic form, it plays the role of guide, steering the creation of the new, and new manifestations of reality: “The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality” (Ibid, p. 143).

The creation of the new as drawn in diagrammatic form via the abstract machine, mirrors the function of the “graph” or “diagram” of the Figure, which displaces pre-formulated clichés and nascent figuration with its chaos, germinating a new order or new possibilities. The graph or diagram from the *Logic of Sensation*, conceived of at its infinite limit of n-dimensionality, is consonant with the diagrammatic blueprint of the abstract machine that renders new possibilities of becoming.

As evinced, Deleuze’s notion of technology is an account of a form of technology that sharply diverges from materialistic, scientific conceptions in the modern world. I will proceed from here to link Deleuze’s technology with *magic* in the way that he employs the image of the *sorcerer* to describe the way that becoming effectuates a mysterious transformation that is visible at the material level. His account of “sorcery” mirrors his account of technology; sorcery is one

of the ciphers or *code words* that Deleuze implements to describe the clandestine workings of *becoming*, unfold its secret processes of effectuation, *fusing* technology with magic.

Like the screaming transformation of the Figure, Deleuze discusses sorcery in a chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus* in terms of *becoming-animal*. He says that “we” sorcerers have always known that becoming-animal requires a pack or population; a multiplicity, in other words (Ibid, 239). In a similar vein to *The Logic of Sensation*, these animal populations are fundamentally *affects*, as well as *powers*.

This is the becoming that Deleuze envisages that bypasses ancestry, hereditary production. “It is quite simple; everyone knows it, but it is discussed only in secret. In the becoming-animal, characteristics are reproduced without heredity in ‘unnatural participations’” (Ibid, p.242). Such “unnatural participations or nuptials” exist as “true Nature”, bypassing nature’s heredity.

The way these terms comingle with the other is not related to genetics. They take place between kingdoms of species in their zones of mutual interchange, zones of indiscernibility. “This is the *one way* Nature operates- against itself [my emphasis],” (Ibid, p.242). Or in other words, Deleuze privileges the *esoteric* or secret law of nature as a process of becoming that supersedes heredity, superseding the processes of *exoteric* nature. The beings engendered by “true Nature” defy conventional notions of production- they can only be apprehended in terms of becoming.

As the intersection of all concrete forms, the *plane of consistency* acts as the site for the sorcerer’s becoming (Ibid, p.251); as afore described, the plane of consistency can be

characterized in machinic terms, as the machinic phylum, and is a tentacle that leads to, at its singularity, its diagrammatic form of the Abstract Machine.

Becoming is both sorcery and technology, an invocation of metal and animal. Deleuze's vision of technology is the secret sorcery of the unconscious, its hidden workings and dimensions: invisible desiring-machines, the machinic phylum of the unconscious which interpolates all things, and its abstract machine as the will of this unconscious matrix, steering its secret workings. The machine is the unconscious, but it is not the unconscious of the self.

There is no static subject for Deleuze. Her unconscious is the unconscious of the *schizo*, the multitude: a multitudinous subject, her unconscious a *collective structure*, in Jungian terms, its machinery the secret skeleton that underlies the material world. In mystical Taoist terms, such a secret structure solicits comparison with the *Tao* (or *Way*): the Tao is delineated in the *Tao Teh Ching* as nameless, without form, invisible yet infinite (*Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, p.146), as the condition for the genesis of Earth and Heaven, and as a subtle, or unmanifest principle in all things (Ibid, p.140).

Deleuze calls the machinic order *Nature* with a capital N: his Nature is the higher order of nature; his machinic phylum is something like the *Tao*, a secret principle that interpolates and precedes all things, arranging the circulation of energy. Heidegger is also *Taoist* in his inspiration; as afore said, the querent of truth must follow the *way* of the Goddess, Aletheia to meet her gaze, the looking of Being: the Tao is also called the *way*. Heidegger's subtle principle is his "acausal" revealing of truth, the poetic technology of divine attunement.

There exists significant contiguity between Heidegger and Deleuze's aesthetics of form. Deleuze and Heidegger both conceive of an aesthetics of form, via the *rift* and the *Figure*, as

nonrepresentational, that points beyond itself, overcoming the limitations of its form by acting as an *opening* into new domains: for Heidegger into the realm of truth, and for Deleuze, leading up to the abstract machine that guides the becomings of the machinic unconscious. Deleuze's contour, Figure, and structure are *rifts*: *the rift is a zone of indiscernibility* between the earth and world that negotiates a structure for form to take; Deleuze reconceptualizes Heidegger's *happening and becoming of truth* in terms of *becoming* and *production*: *becoming-animal*, *becoming-machine*, and the *creation of the new*. Whereas for Heidegger, the disclosure, happening and becoming of truth is motivated by art, for Deleuze, the machinic unconscious is effectuated by desire, desire that is informed by the impetus of art, and its affects. One primary point of differentiation is that whereas Heidegger's 'magic' takes the form of *poetical becoming* of the rift via the alchemy of perception, for Deleuze it takes more of the form of an objective *science* of the clandestine workings of the unconscious.

My claim is that they are close gradations of a similar account of *magic*; I have suggested a kind of *Taoist magic*, in the sense of a primordial and invisible technology, evincing alternate visions of causality that overflow and exceed the notions of 'rational' causality at work in a materialistic, scientific understanding. Deleuze and Heidegger iterate similar accounts of *secret forces* which underlie life, elucidating the physics of magic as the work of invisible machines or technology, underlying the materialist frame. The *machine* is Deleuze's gaze of Aletheia; his eye *becomes machine*: "[on one definition of painting:] The eye becomes virtually the polyvalent indeterminate organ that sees the body without organs (the Figure) as a pure presence. Painting gives us *eyes all over*: in the ear, in the stomach, in the lungs. [...] [S]ubjectively, it invests the eye, which *ceases to be organic* in order to become a *polyvalent and transitory organ* [my emphases] (Logic of Sensation, p.45).

Painting *renders* the abstract machine, helping one to *see* it, or, rather, helping it to *see itself*: the abstract machine *is* the Figure, its diagram; painting also enables one to *become part of the machinic interface of becoming, enjoining one to the Abstract Machine*. This “Abstract” level of machinic interface of becoming is Deleuze’s God: painting is the becoming-God of the human. Deleuze’s God is a mycelial machine, intelligently organized, that architects a new involution of reality via its blueprint or Diagram. In Lacan’s terms, Deleuze’s machine is the architecture, and architecting of the Real, as well as its evolution.

In summation, the forms of Heidegger and Deleuze are contiguous with each other in many significant respects, and their aesthetic theories can both be characterized in terms of *technology* and *magic*. Heidegger’s aesthetic of unconcealing takes place in the work of art as a *rift* bridging the earth to the unfurling world of the work. He offers an account of modern perception that is obfuscated by scientistic-technological enframing, stultifying the poetic, divine unconcealing gaze that the work of art intimates. Poetic apprehension is conceived here as a lost primordial or esoteric technology.

Deleuze’s aesthetics of becoming traces the Figure, a technology for eliciting the will of the unconscious. The Figure is the intermediary between form and sensation, figuration and abstraction; it comprises a *tentacle* of the machinic network of the unconscious, devising a blueprint for the liberation of affect, as it releases new manifestations of reality.

Heidegger and Deleuze’s conception of art can be granted the term “magic”; for Heidegger, magic comprises the creative alchemy of perception that meets the gaze of truth, Aletheia; following her *Way* reveals a secret, effulgent truth, once the layers of scientistic enframing are peeled away. For Deleuze, his *magic* or *sorcery* comprises the hidden workings of

the unconscious, its secret transports, and ultimately entails *becoming the Abstract machine* via the eye. Self-seeing Medusa.

The next chapter continues to explore the transformation engendered by art in Lacan's edifice.

Figure 3: Medusa as Technological by Cecilia Rose Inkol

Figure 4: The Gaze by Cecilia Rose Inkol

5. Lacan's Sinthome

This section explores the network that exists between art, language, and technology in Lacan's late thought. In Lacan's psychoanalytic system, the symptom or *sinthome* is a *message* from the unconscious; it's a slippery message, though, working by constantly flitting, reformulating itself, enrobing itself in a new disguise: the message is a *riddle*. The message is the haunting specter of repressed content, the return of the repressed, showing in veiled terms what the ego would otherwise refuse to see. This veiling is the function of metaphor and metonym, the language of dreams and art, evincing the linguistic structure underlying the productions of the unconscious. The *sinthome*, the elusive message from the unconscious, acts as a model for the *structure of language*; the structure of language is strewn with *the real*, which is to say that part of what defines it is its *asignifying* nature. The asignifying facet of language is what makes the messages from the unconscious so slippery, the mechanism that enables its reformulation of meaning, the *sliding* of its signifiers. The asignifying aspect of language is also tied to *sex*: she is a *Woman*. *A Woman that does not exist*. She is God.

In Lacan's thought, therefore, we can understand art as a message from the unconscious, a *technology* of the unconscious to *communicate the uncommunicable*, a *flittering, feminine* manifestation of language. Art is *transformation*, that *elicits transformation*.

Lacan opens his lecture on "the Sinthome", with a retooled version of the Genesis creation story as a didactic myth that encapsulates his psychoanalytic project, crystallizing the triangulation in his thought between language, symptom and sex.

In his revised version, Adam named the beasts with the language that belongs to Lacan's vision of Eve, reworked as "Evie". Her name means: mother of all living things. Evie, in Lacan's

retelling, upon the discovery of her speaking tongue, put it to use swiftly: to converse with the serpent. The serpent takes on a new valence in its revamped Lacanian context: the serpent is transformed into the *phallus* by Evie. This is her fall, her intractable *sin* and *error* that the Lacan's *Sinthome* tract opens with. This is the *original sin*, its line of fault that is ever expanding, unless it were to undergo the cut of castration to halt its progress. Castration exists as the possible: the possible is what brings to a halt via its inscription of writing. Writing brings the original sin to a halt: stops it in its tracks.

What makes her mythical, in Lacan's estimation, is that the myth renders in the singular, her punishment for having taken a bite from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Evie is not mortal: "The Woman in question is another name of God, and it is in this respect that she doesn't exist, as I've said many times," says Lacan (*The Sinthome*, p.5).

Woman is "*not-all*", or another way to put it would be to say, she is *not that*, nor *that* either: she takes the form of *anything but that*. This *but-not-that*, Lacan calls the *Sinthome* (*Ibid.*, p.5), playing on the words *sin* and *symptom*.

The meaning and significance of this myth will become clear as this chapter unfurls, its goal to evince the connections in Lacan's thought between the *symptom*, *language*, *art*, and *the feminine*. Such an elaboration will take the following form: I will firstly trace an outline of the symptomatic mechanisms at work in the unconscious, its productions of *riddle* in dreams and art; this will proceed to a larger discussion of the relation between the unconscious, language and the feminine, a feminine who acts as a structural analog for Lacan's God. Such a project takes the *unconscious* as its point of departure.

The unconscious is the container or a trove of the secret, hidden and buried content of repression. But this hidden unconscious content resists its containment and bubbles to the surface of consciousness, a gift from the hidden site. The unconscious always comes bearing a gift, a message from its hidden place. This gift, secret message from the unconscious is the *symptom*, an eruption that emanates from the subject, demanding acknowledgement.

But the gift is resisted, the gift is unwanted. The unconscious, in psychoanalytic understanding, is always trying to communicate what the conscious mind wants to refuse awareness of, does not want to become aware of. The conscious mind is resistant to awareness of its hidden content, endeavors to thwart its happening (Ecrits, p.118); thus the unconscious mind has to come up with *technology*, in the form of *secret codes* to get the conscious mind to acknowledge what it resists most: its hidden aspect, suppressed truth.

The unconscious *unmasks* its hidden content *using a mask*, in a masked form: a *guise*, to infiltrate the stronghold of the conscious mind's resistance. The symptomatic messages from the unconscious are spoken in the guises of *metaphor*, and *metonym*: these are the mechanisms whereby *signifiers* overcome a correlation with a particular *signified* (Ibid., p. 415, 421).

Metaphor and metonym create chains of signification, a relay of meaning in which meaning is injected into a new domain. For Lacan, the notion of metaphor as signifier refers to the poetic flourish generated when one signifier *replaces* another in a substituting gesture, usurping the place of another. Metaphor strings two signifiers into a signifying chain, and the occulted signifier remains present via its place in the chain. Metaphor *deflects* meaning as it *forges* meaning in a new context, invoking meaning where it did not previously exist. The way

that metaphor relays meaning onto a new terrain is a metonymic substitution, the metonymic act the institution of a *code* for something other than itself (Ibid., p.422-423).

All bodily productions are *symptoms*, *messages* of unconscious origin and *texts* awaiting decryption, including but not restricted to: dreams and fantasy; works of art (The Sinthome, p.29); and slips, or errors (Ibid., p.127). Sometimes these messages take an explicitly linguistic form via language, as in slips of the tongue, but in other instances, as is the case in dreams, fantasy and visual art, the unconscious employs *images* to relay its message, speaks through images. In what follows, I want to first delineate the mechanics underlying the imagery of dreams, and then transition to a discussion of art.

Dreams are foremost signifiers: *alien* texts awaiting the decryption. In dreams, the unconscious attempts to render thoughts into the form of images, plays on words that compose the thought that will allow for an ease of visual representation, plays with homonyms, anagrams. Lacan describes dreams as a *game of charades*: in their spectacle of imagery, they solicit an invitation to the audience to guess their meaning (Ecrits, p.425).

Given that metaphor and metonym articulate their message by veiling it, the images perceived in a dream necessarily do not correspond to a prefigured meaning that can be referenced in a catalogue of dream images or archetypes; there *does not exist a 1:1 correspondence* of meaning between the signifier image and its meaning (Ibid., p.426). Via its deployment of metaphor and metonym, the meaning behind the images of unconscious productions is a *riddle* that requires deciphering.

Lacan sees the structure of the symptom, logic behind the secreting intimations from the unconscious, as rendered explicit in the work of a particular artist: James Joyce.

Lacan says that in Joyce's production of *Finnegan's Wake*, Joyce has hacked into the process of art-production. Instead of rendering his own symptom in his art, Joyce has painted the *symptom* in its pure structural form.

Joyce, says Lacan, splays the symptom open, exposing its anatomic structure, its skeleton and bones. Not only does *Finnegan's Wake* evince the structural form of the symptom, it is itself the symptom, *the symptom-on-wheels*, evincing the rolling motion of the sinthome, its *train* of sliding signification (The Sinthome, p.6). Thusly, Lacan refers to Joyce as "*Joyce-the-symptom*" (Ibid., p.144).

To have achieved such a feat, to have attained the *structural form* of the symptom, Joyce has bypassed his own relation with the unconscious, Lacan says. Joyce has "cancelled his subscription to the unconscious" in the sense that he has created a production whereby the conventional sense of meaning is lost, gets persistently interrupted and reoriented. Meaning takes on new meaning, dislocated from its usual formations to fold in upon itself, enfolding and unfolding in a continuous stream of reformulation (Ibid., p.144).

Joyce has bypassed or "cancelled" his own relation to the unconscious to arrive at the extreme end of *personifying the symptom*, whereby he *evades possible death*, assuming the structure that is the structure of humankind. *Finnegan's Wake*, via Joyce's imagination, partakes in the sinthome that comprises the *collective unconscious*, understood in Lacan's lexicon as the *transindividual structure of language*; in other words, Joyce renders explicit the structure of language that comprises the structure of the unconscious, and *merges with it* (Ibid., p.147).

Through his art, Lacan says, Joyce managed to reach as closely to the sinthome as it is possible to achieve, and the sinthome ultimately leads to the *real*. Joyce's art reveals the

underlying structure of language, a structure shared with the unconscious and all discourse; this is the shape of the *letter*. Lacan's *letter* is the *structure of transformation*, pointing towards the *asignifying facet of language*. Though language is imbued with signification, it is strewn with something that overflows signification, the asignifying countermovement of *the real*. Language is interposed within a *matrix* that exceeds language; in this sense, language *exceeds itself*.

This is why the meaning of the messages from the unconscious are fundamentally slippery, the motion of the signifier a "sliding" (Ecrits, p.419), why there does not exist a 1:1 correspondence between signifier and signified. There are no fixed meanings in language, etched into stone. Language is an *evolving* entity, always *reformulating itself* in new ways, signifiers always extending their range of meaning and opening out beyond their perimeters.

Language can only ever *puncture a hole* in the real, can *never quite grasp* the real; the real is *impossible* to grasp. Lacan designates what he calls the 'phallus' as the *signifier without signified*; the phallus is what must "verify" the false hole punctured by language, Lacan says enigmatically, to *make it real* (Ibid., p.99). The way I interpret such a riddle is that through the phallus as a signifier bereft of signification, language enters into the realm of the real: the phallus is the site where the real and symbolic realms *meet*; the way that the real shows itself via language is in via the reconstitution of meaning.

For Lacan, a change of meaning institutes a change of materiality; a change of perception or exegesis renders a shift in all discourse, manifesting in *material transmutation*. The *letter* as the structure of the unconscious is a structure shared with language and all discourse, including material discourse. Changing the human's relation to the signifier alters the parameters or

“moorings” (Ecrits, p.438) of her being, animating a change of perception, interpretation, meaning, and *manifestation*.

“By ‘letter’ I designate the *material medium [support]* that concrete discourse borrows from language,” [my emphasis] Lacan delineates (Ecrits, p.413). This is to say that the letter is the transformative structure that “*supports*” concrete or material discourse, upholding and underlying it; this is the structure of the re-constitution of meaning. The reconstitution of meaning in material discourse is *a transformation of manifestation, a metaphorical leap of materiality and meaning*.

Language is tied to sex: in Lacan’s lexicon, Woman and man act as *metaphors* or *placeholders* for the movements of language: the symbolic and the real, their dance of signification and asignification, the institution of meaning and its metamorphosis.

Language wants to uphold meaning in its creation of signification, but the real refuses to heed any law, has no order. Language is tangled with this anarchic *real* that lies in *abeyance*; the *real* dwells in the silence of *irruption*, lurking in the background of meaning, omnipresent and *all-pervasive in her absence*. The real is part of the system of signification, but a corrosive aspect of it, compelling it to *turn in on itself*, meaning in its self-destructive aspect, hijacking it, scrambling its codes, defying its authority and thwarting its institution with her kiss of mutation (Ibid., p.38, 50, 118).

This is the sense in which Lacan’s language is interposed with an asignifying counter-movement: meaning cannot maintain its rigidity. The sinthome, its metaphoric sliding, mutation and displacement of meaning, is *Woman*. She is what exists outside the All, unable to be grasped (Ibid., p.98).

Woman is privy to her own language. Lacan posits the notion of a language that belongs to “the set of women”, a feminine language: it is a tongue that can be “broken down”, a language characterized by its *equivokes* and *multiple valences*, called *lalingua*. “what typifies lalingua among all the others is the equivokes that are possible in it,” (Ibid., p.98).

Man is what *makes things signify*. The woman possesses the man: he *obeys orders*, but she is *not subject to them* (Encore, p.73). The woman exists beyond the reach of signification, impervious to its demands and impositions. She *keeps the phallus for herself*, situating *herself* in the phallic function (Ibid., p.74).

Such explains Lacan’s enigmatic, oft-understood and cryptic aphorism that *Woman does not exist*: she *does not exist* in the sense that she exists *only in abeyance*, in the *silence of her interruption*, irrupting through established meaning to *displace* it, *elusive* and *evanescent*, as the *disruption of form*, the source of the transformation of meaning afforded through the mutating kiss of asignification.

Humanity necessitates an Other of the Other, generally referred to as *God*: upon analysis, however, says Lacan, she is unveiled as The Woman (The Sinthome, p.108).

Heidegger's notion that Aletheia's flight of *transformation* exists as a higher manifestation of truth overlaps strongly with Lacan's notion that the feminine always contains the potential to override the symbolic law; Lacan though, makes the assertion that truth manifests in different *forms* within the realms of the *Real* and the *symbolic*. Lacan and Heidegger's notions of truth are also both endowed with a combative edge, *belligerent*: for Heidegger, truth is unfurled from the strife between the opening and closing motion of the clearing, the combat

between world and earth; in Lacan's ontology, the realms of the Real and the symbolic exist in contest, as they negotiate to mete out meaning.

Lacan's nonexistent *Woman* is a *disguised* and *reformulated Aletheia*. Lacan retools Heidegger's feminine truth Aletheia, and her unconcealing motion, who always hides even as she reveals herself, always finding a new disguise, disclosing herself through the creativity of artistic perception, evanescent: the gaze of the Real that seeps through the symbolic, infusing it, the motor behind its involution, evolution and *reformulation*. Transformation. Heidegger's *structure of openness* transposed to Lacan's topology becomes the structure of the moving gears of the unconscious and underlying all discourse.

Deleuze and coauthor Guattari also take their cue from Lacan, when they say that the unconscious is fundamentally an asignifying assemblage. For Deleuze and Guattari, the machinic unconscious is steered by *two abstract machines*: the abstract machine of *overcoding* or *segmentarity*, instituting striations of regimentation, and the abstract machine of *mutation*, which always breaks the rigid codes instituted by the abstract machine of segmentarity, engendering lines of flight, and creating new connections of flows. Between their poles is a realm of "molecular negotiation" (A Thousand Plateaus, p.223). The confrontation between the two abstract machines is a twofold motion of rigidity and liberating rupture, but *an uneven contest of powers*: the abstract machine of mutation *always ultimately overrides* the abstract machine of segmentarity. Such an asignifying capacity provides the architecture for transformation.

The symptom as the message from the unconscious, clothing itself in *code*, is the logic behind all bodily productions, including art. The artifice of the work of art uses the symptom as *material for its construction*, paints with a *hidden truth*. Art is thus endowed by Lacan with a

linguistic structure, as a symptomatic, metaphoric message from the unconscious: art is the language of transformation, its transformative effect reverberating in meaning and materiality. The unconscious is always orchestrating its own evolution, an ever-evolving language: the structural *technology* and interface for the *transformation* of consciousness and material manifestation. Art is a symptom, and the symptom is *art*, the creative bodily production manifested and invoked by the unconscious as author, artist and conjurer.

Figure 5. The Feminine by Cecilia Rose Inkol

6. Kristeva: The Presymbolic, the Womb of Meaning and Abjection

Kristeva's work takes the notion of transformation as its *center of gravity*, circumambulating it. She calls it the *chora*, a *primordial reality* that precedes language and the crystallization of subjectivity, the site that prefigures the formation of meaning: the *womb of meaning*. It's a site of movement and rhythm, but also instability. In its liberatory form, the processes of the chora can be wielded in conjunction with the symbolic social systems to reconstitute its meanings via *art* and *poetry*. But it's a *dance with death*, *art as murder*, and the artist is always endangering her own subjectivity to harness the power of the chora: its force is *annihilation*, site of *abjection*. Where she differs from Lacan is her emphasis upon the threat of *meaninglessness* that exists in the realm of the pre-symbolic, prior to signification: her vision of Medusa as the patron Goddess of abjection.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva wants to mine the revolutionary potential of the work of art. What makes poetry and art revolutionary, she espouses, is its capacity to *shatter* and break; this shattering mechanism is also the *motor* underlying the process of signification.

This capacity of dispersal was held in reverence, conceived of as *sacred* by primitive societies, but in modernity is dismissed as *schizophrenic*. Once ingrained in an alternate tradition of knowledge, it has since been repressed, part of a general trend whereby society tries to deny what exceeds the bounds of its logic: "Magic, shamanism, esotericism, the carnival, and "incomprehensible" poetry all underscore the limits of socially useful discourse and attest to what it represses: the process that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures," (Revolution in Poetic Language, p.17). Society represses the process whereby signification is generated, processes which overflow the subject and her communicative structures, confining it

to the margins and fringes. Magic and esotericism is but a forgotten memory and the remnant of a form of knowledge that recognized the chaotic shattering power that produces signification, buried in modernity.

Its shattering motion is one of *two poles* within the matrix of language, called the *semiotic*. The other pole is the *symbolic*. Whereas the semiotic process is what generates meaning, the symbolic is defined by its law, axioms: the realm of shared cultural meaning. The semiotic and symbolic work together to produce signification, entwined in a constant negotiation and dialogue, generating signification and meaning in their intertwining.

The process of the semiotic takes place in the *chora*. Kristeva's term "chora" is plucked from Plato's *Timaeus*, and refers to a mobile and provisional form, comprised by movements and their stases. The chora's movements can never be captured in axiomatic form, although it can be designed and regulated. All discourse moves in unison with and against it, depending upon, yet refusing it (Ibid., p.25).

The chora is not a sign, nor a signifier, yet its generative motion reaches toward signification. The chora is the *rhythmic process* that exists prior to the crystallization of form, prefiguring the sign's formation. Enigmatic and feminine, the space that gives rise to form is rhythmic, unrestrained, and defies intelligible verbal translation. It's a *space* of rhythm, musical, the movement of *signifiance*. Kristeva delineates *signifiance* as the "unlimited and unbounded generating process", an unceasing, transformative gestation, its movement underlying signification (Ibid., p.26).

The processes that regulate the semiotic and symbolic law are disparate yet interconnected; the chora effectuates its rupturing force via starting to articulate the symbolic law—then in a break, restarts the process, continuously, never-endingly (Ibid., p.26).

The semiotic is connected with the unconscious: it precedes the subject, predates the ego that thinks, prior to the schema of the subject. The state prior to all proposition, before the advent of unified meaning. The subject before it was a subject, was once held into the semiotic realm, immersed in the chora (Ibid., p.36).

On Kristeva's account, the formation of the separate subject is achieved via the subject's sundered relation with the chora. The subject was once submerged in the chora, prior to the schism that established her separate subjectivity. This schism took place in the image relayed by the mirror, staring back at one; the thetic phase, where the thetic institutes itself where the chora existed previously, the process of the creation of a separate subject. Identification with the image in the mirror is a *contract* that *precipitates signification*, and invokes the appearance of the *world of separate objects*. The process of castration completes the process of scission, extricating the subject from the world. The revelation of castration detaches the subject from her identification with the mother, transferring the motility of the semiotic to the symbolic order. Thus completes the process of the thetic phase, that institutes a schism between signifier and signified. Identification with the mother is sundered, morphed into a relation with the symbolic realm, the Other. The thetic phase acts as the site of threshold between the semiotic and symbolic realms (Ibid., p.46-8).

Poetic perturbations of the signifying order derive from drives that the thetic phase was unable to suppress into the modes of signifier and signified: poetry is an *intrusion* of the *death*

drive that overflows the signifier and the mirror's identification contract. In artistic practices, the semiotic mounts an attack on the symbolic institution of meaning (Ibid., p.49-50).

Artistic or poetic practices tap into a *second-order thetic*: both poles of symbolic and semiotic chora are simultaneously maintained in a paradoxical juggling-act, the upholding the signification of language and its acentering intrusion. This double-maintenance is necessary, Kristeva thinks, to ward off psychosis and neurosis (Ibid., p.50).

As it slides from a meaningless glossolalia to an infiltration of the linguistic order, poetry becomes *political*. Modern poetry organizes *an attack* on the *positing of a separate object as well as meaning, the assumption of a subject*. Poetry even attacks the *ossifications of dogma* within what is conceived of as *sacred*, setting in motion countercurrents of meaning: in this way, the process of signification partakes in a guerilla insurgency that strives toward the *revolution of meaning* (Ibid., p.58-61).

Though comprising the *groundwork* of the signification of the symbolic, the semiotic acts within practices of signification by *transgressing and rebelling against* its instituted order of signification, interposed within it (Ibid., p.68).

Art does not abandon the thetic even as it *pulverizes it* via transgression; staying within it, is the only way to work against the thetic. The *only way to overcome* the thetic is *through it*, disguised as part of the machinery, but motivated by a diametrical purpose. The delicate balancing act of upholding the symbolic function as one simultaneously undermines it is the risk within textual and artistic practice that the subject must undertake: *the endangerment of her own subjectivity* (Ibid., p.69).

Counter to religion or aligned with it, art takes on the function of “*murder*” in its invasion of religious perimeters. What makes art *murderous* is its adherence to *death* as it traverses the threshold within the process of signification. Art implies the overstepping of that boundary, death the vehicle that oversteps it. It is as though death is *internalized* by the subject that employs such a practice: she becomes the “bearer of death” employing death as a political weapon. The artist dances across the boundary where the symbolic is established, by *injecting* the motility of the semiotic into it, “through the event of death”. This infusion of death is simultaneously a process of *revivification*, granting new life to what once was static. She punctures the social order with “an asocial drive” that has yet to be captured by the thetic (Ibid., p.71).

Murder and sacrifice is itself part of the thetic process, a phase within any socio-symbolic order, exemplifying the structural order of symbolism. Sacrifice refers to substitution, and ordered continuity, producing the process inherent in its production. Sacrifice makes reference not to language but to the *unconscious* as the *silent precondition* for *linguistic systematization*: that the symbolic is rendered into materiality via an *institution of violence*; meaning is inherently violent, in its crystallization and its shattering of that crystal. The sacred and sacrifice is thus a “theologization of the thetic” (Ibid., p.78), structurally prerequisite for the possibility of language. In sacrifice, the thetic is instituted channeling the violence inherent within murder. The sacred celebrates the violence that withholds the possibility of disruptive violence through its violent restriction. Constructing a “boundary to the infinite” (Ibid., p.79), building a wall of signification: this is how socio-symbolic orders are constructed.

Art as the “*semiotization of the symbolic*” (Ibid., p.79) thus wields the energies of *jouissance* as a force within language. Whereas sacrifice withholds *jouissance* in its confines via

the socio-symbolic order, art holds the means for jouissance to infiltrate that order, cracking its code, releasing latent energies that once were trapped within it. Poetry evinces the way that language can be wielded to perforate the socio-symbolic order via jouissance, jouissance as political weapon (Ibid., p.81).

In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva warns against the possibility of lapsing into psychosis or fantasy with the imperative that the semiotic and symbolic need to be concurrently maintained, a tightrope walk fraught with danger. She delves deeper into this theme in *Powers of Horror*, warning against the threat of abjection, the loss of meaning. The feminine in its pure form is *dangerous*, she espouses, has to be guarded against.

The object is what is opposed to the subject, what threatens the existence of the subject, antagonist to the subject: the suffocation of meaninglessness, evoking a sense of repulsion and disgust. On the brink of nonexistence and illusion, abjection comprises a reality that if acknowledged, *annihilates the self*; in this sense, the repulsive nature of the object protects the subject and culture generally from its nihilistic intent. The repulsion it provokes performs a protective function, maintaining the subject's integrity (Powers of Horror, p.2).

What provokes abjection is what perturbs identity, and defies systemic order, overriding borders, positions and rules. It is what lies between things, the ambiguous, composite, dissembling, betraying the established order (Powers of Horror, p.9, 13).

The object is the *true identity*, the secret self that *pulls* the subject towards its abyss. It is a truth too horrible to contemplate, bursting all illusions of egoic separation. As such, it must be warded off, kept at bay, systematically denied.

Thus abjection becomes a source of fear, a phobia: fear of the mother, a “*maternal hatred*” that one “tries to cleanse himself of tirelessly” (Ibid., p.6). The abject is the only phobia, manifesting in a myriad guises and pretenses to “bracket” the primal fear, to stave off the repressed memory. This is the primary repression: the haunted memory of the Other, prior to the division of the self, a memory the ego endeavors to forget at any expense.

The *affect* that abjection provokes is the mourning of an object that was long-lost, disintegrating the protective walls of repression, returning the ego to its abominable limits from which it was forced to break free in its self-constitution. A prescription of death (Ibid., p.15).

Primitive societies took pains to expel the abject from their cultures, presented as animality and the animal world, their instinctual natures, representing sex and murder (Ibid., p.12). Primal repression also manifests itself as *prohibition against the maternal body*, to guard against the instability within the symbolic function, the withholding the chora. “The sign represses the chora and its eternal return” (Ibid., p.14).

The abject refuses all law, ever-defiant, overturning every prohibition. Morality, law and religion and its inherent prohibitions are the social and cultural safeguards against abjection, manifesting as exclusions and taboos (dietary and others). The history of religion is constituted by its attempts to purify the abject: hence religion’s appropriation of art. Art emanates from the site of the abject, but it is harnessed by this impulse of purification in the religious context, “the essential component of religiosity”, destined to outlive the demise of religion (Ibid., p.17).

The feminine is a taboo site in religious context because of what it represents: the threat of the mother’s identity subsuming the self, as it was prior to castration. This is Kristeva’s explanation for the prominent debasement and containment of the feminine under the pretense of

religious law. The feminine has to be purified. “Defilement is what is jettisoned from the symbolic system,” (Ibid., p.65): the feminine as what exceeds the symbolic order. The fear of the feminine has its origin in literature, Kristeva suggests, the most significant threat: *the demise of meaning*, its dilapidation. Literature, occupying the place religion once held as the codifier of meaning, can also involve an “unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the Crisis of the Word,” (Ibid., p.208). This is to say, Kristeva sees that the only way out of the abject is *through it*: what makes the vocation of art such a perilous and precarious affair. By the artist’s immersion into the realm of the abject rather than attempting to evade it, the abject can be *sublimated*.

Kristeva’s vision of Medusa maps onto this project of immersing into the abject. “Medusa is abject as primitive matrix of that archaic nondifferentiation in which there is neither subject nor object, only the sticky, slimy ab-ject,” (The Severed Head, p.31) she says.

“Cut off Medusa’s head and make it into a reflection if you want to see (it), if you want to know. Spectacle, speculation- whether erotic or philosophic- is rooted in your first triumphs over your archaic terrors; they depend upon your abilities to face head-on, and to make others see, your endogenous melancholies. Beginning from there, you can give your fantasies free rein, including... your Sadean fantasies. Could Medusa be the patron goddess of visionaries and artists?” (The Severed Head, p.33).

By “cutting off Medusa’s head” in Kristeva’s lexicon, we *confront* the terrors of the abject that paralyse us, rendering them to sublimated form. The abject is *reconciled* via the *murderous* tendency of art, deploying the murder of art towards the threat of meaninglessness with a sword’s deflection.

Kristeva's *art* is the gesture of transformation: it is also a *transforming subject*, a subject-on-trial (Revolution in Poetic Language, p.37), which is always reconstituting its bounds. Kristeva's vision of the artist is a poetic subject, navigating the threats of the *chora* and confronting its dangers to engender her own transformation and sublimating the impulse of abjection. Kristeva's artistic subject-on-trial confronts abjection *with abjection* to stir a game of becoming and transformation. Art is a moving subject, the subjectivity of motility, skirting the edge of danger towards novel productions of subjectivity and meaning. The *chora* is Kristeva's underlying fabric, an interstitial site of possibility, the primal reality that produces subjectivity and meaning. Kristeva's subject-on-trial is something akin to Deleuze's *schizo*: a mobile subject, a subject of transformation, movement and flux.

Kristeva's symptom is *abjection* (Powers of Horror, p.11), pointing towards the *destruction of the subject*: Kristeva's subject confronts the monstrous morbidity of her true reality with its mirror reflection. The artist subject-on-trial expands by delving into what threatens her, traversing her true nature by such self-realization and self-confrontation. She opens herself by facing the danger of all openings, but wades through its murky depths, crafting the *technology of art* to keep herself afloat. The way Kristeva's artist-subject expands is via a process of *integration and self-dissolution*, an *ongoing self-destruction* that always maintains the thread of subjectivity; to achieve such a see-saw motion of demolition and reconstitution, the impulse of abjection for the *other* has to be overcome. These themes will be picked up on in chapter 8.

Kristeva is concerned about the threat of meaninglessness, a threat she associates with the *chora*, the semiotic vortex that precedes the crystallization of signification. The *chora's* vortex rearranges the semiotic code, *bends* and *warps* it in the *wefts* of its *web*. This threat of

meaninglessness is the threat of *abjection*, the possibility of the annihilation of subjectivity: its prospect eliciting an autonomic reflex of revulsion. Yet the annihilating, warping weft of the chora can be *revolutionary* when it takes on the role of *assassin*, deployed against the ossified and calcified systems of regimented meaning, including the regimented codes of the crystallized subject. The symptom, a guise of abjection, when deployed against codes of regiment comprises a map to follow, an arrow that points towards *evolution*. The mirror that shows the true self, soliciting confrontation. The mirror of mirror meeting mirror, the opening of infinity.

The chora is the *art of transformation*.

Figure 6. Medusa, monstrous feminine by Cecilia Rose Inkol

7. Schelling: The Divine Language of Art

Schelling conceives of art as an enterprise that reaches towards the divine, its activity bridging the human and divine realms. The artist completes the work of nature, rendering its unconscious forces into conscious creation, thereby completing the work of divine creation: the artist performs God's work. Art is fundamentally philosophical, a *philosophical project*: art makes manifest or objective the *ideas* or *archetypes* that occupy the divine realm of ideality, thusly infusing the ideal realm into the real world. Art is also *linguistic*, as all things are, but art overflows mere meaning or signification, ushering *being* into *presence*. Being is made *manifest* via the symbolic language of art, unveiling the presence of the *gods* or *divine archetypes* in materiality. Art functions in Schelling's thought as a kind of *technology*: the *technology* or interface for the divine as it makes itself manifest, affirming and *realizing itself*. Magic, for Schelling, predicates an underlying unity between things, the principle of the Absolute or God, and its primordial linguistic reality that holds things together, connecting all things into its web of divine creation and order. Art, for Schelling, is *language*, *technology* and *magic*, the vehicle for the divine as it *reformulates itself* through the artist, transmogrifying the *universal into the particular*. These notions find strong resonance in the aesthetic theories of Heidegger and Deleuze: their aesthetic theories are reformulations of Schelling's account, clothed in different metaphors and *ciphers*.

The account that follows traces an outline of Schelling's ontology of art, sourced primarily from his tract, *The Philosophy of Art*.

Art is a *prism* that encapsulates Schelling's philosophical project and its groundwork: this primary tectonic architecture is an ultimate principle, alternately referred to as the *Absolute*, the

All, or *God*. Schelling's God as Absolute All is *infinite* in its self-affirmation. It is absolute identity, absolute totality, absolute unity. A divine principle that is neither conscious nor unconscious: it is *absolute consciousness* (Philosophy of Art, p.24). It comprises nature in its *eternal* aspect; the true universe is eternal (Ibid., p.25). 'Eternal nature' makes reference to the *transfusion of infinite ideality* into reality, encompassing all unities within itself. Schelling's God is a place: the site where all things are enjoined in unison, meeting as one. Its interstice is the site where the ideal and real coalesce, enjoin, fuse: this is the locus of "indifference" that exists between things, their locus of converged "identity"; Schelling's God is the site where real and ideal forms collide and coincide, locking in a single identity (Ibid., p.26).

When individual forms achieve complete unity with each other, forming a single identity, Schelling's God reveals itself completely; this merging of identities between forms occurs through *reason*. God works through *reason*: reason is the image of God, as reflected in the world (Ibid., p.27).

Schelling's God as the force of reason is inextricably tied to the work of philosophy. Philosophy is *self-aware* reason: reason that is achieving, or has achieved, *awareness of itself*, the *presentation of the divine to itself* (Ibid., p.29).

Philosophy has a special relationship with art: they are analogues of similar processes of the expression of the divine, working through the world using different mediums.

Art is philosophy, or is the way that philosophy expresses itself through the valence or “potence” of art. Philosophy functions as a vehicle for the *ideas* of the ideal realm to *achieve objectivity* in the phenomenal world, and in a likewise manner, art is a process *that rends ideas into an objective form* via the art work. Philosophy *becomes objective via art* (Ibid., p.30).

As it enfolds the ideas into objective forms, art is the *convergence* or *coinciding* or the *real* and *ideal*, its locus of indifference. It is the indifference of *knowledge* and *activity*: since art is not just an activity, nor simply knowledge, but rather an activity subsumed in knowledge, a knowledge that has become an activity (Ibid., p.28).

Art is the work of God. God is itself art, its site of origin and possibility: the *cause* of all art, as the source of all formation of indifference where the real and ideal meet, the source of the ideas of art, their divine genesis, the generative source from which all beauty emanates. God is production: “an eternal act of producing,” (Ibid., p.99).

God is an artist, having created the universe: the universe is God’s *absolute* work of art, a work of eternal beauty (Ibid., p.31). It was a self-creation: God is the universe, in itself and for-itself, (Ibid., p.26) God its own work of art. But some facets of the universe impart God’s revelation more fully than others. Phenomenal nature is a place of darkness, an incomplete portrayal of God’s creative power: murky, confused in its conceptions, sundered from the ideal. In contrast, the ideal world is one of clear, veritable conceptions. Within the phenomenal world, form and content are dislocated, meaning and activity sundered; in the absolute, both exist in unity.

The facet of nature that most fully expresses the divine revelation is the human: specifically, the human *artist* exists as God’s *crowning* creative achievement. *God expresses*

itself most fully through art, works through the vehicle of the human artist. The human artist continues God's work of siphoning the ideal world into the real (Ibid., p.31).

The artist channels the unconscious forces of nature into conscious creation, rending the identity of conscious and unconscious aspects. Art is predicated on the formation of an identity between conscious and unconscious activity (Ibid., p.30). Converging conscious and unconscious forces into a higher unity, the artist makes nature sublime, completing God's work (Ibid., p.89). The human artist is a *vehicle* for divine expression.

The human exists as an eternal concept within God. "It is the *eternal concept in God of the human being* himself through which the work of art is produced" [my emphasis] (Ibid., p.83).

Imagination is the faculty that permits the mind of the artist to concert with God. The German word for imagination "Ineinsbindung" means the power of "*mutual informing*" that creates unity, what all creation is based upon (Ibid., p.32).

This is Schelling's account of how productions of genius arise: it is the *divine within* the human that creates such productions. An artist can produce works of genius only to the extent that she is attuned to the "*eternal concept*" of her essence in God. The more that she takes part within that essence, the more she connects finitude with infinitude, and the greater her productivity is (Ibid., p.84).

Genius as it manifests in the realm of the real, its *unity* achieved by the transfusion of the infinite into the finite, Schelling refers to as *poesy*; poesy is the "*art within art*". Schelling traces the term *poesy* to its originary meaning as an *immediate or direct creation* of something *real*, invention for its own sake, for-itself (Ibid., p.85).

The “true construction” of art is the *presentation of forms*, the forms of things as they *exist in themselves*, as they exist within the Absolute, since the universe is a formation within God (Ibid., p.32). These are the forms of beauty, comprising a “*universal content*” called the *ideas* or *archetypes*. The archetypes are *particular*, yet absolute, enfolding a universe within particularity. These ideas or archetypes, forging a locus of indifference between universal and particular, are the *Gods*: the essential nature of the ideas is divine, as they reside within God. The ideal nature of the Gods or divine archetypes does not foreclose their reality: rather, their absolutely ideal nature ensures and ascertains their reality, exists as the condition for their reality; and the reality they occupy is a *higher degree of reality* than that of humans, or phenomenal nature. Ideas that are real, divine, the universe in the format of the particular, archetypal: this is the *universal content* of art (Ibid., p.35).

These idea or forms comprise the content of *mythology*. Mythology is the “*absolute form*” of the *universe* as it exists in-itself, image and symbol of not only life but of the “wondrous chaos” effusive within the “divine imagination”; this mythological *chaos* and its forms are fundamentally *poetic*: mythology is *poesy* and the content of poesy. Given that poesy comprises its composition, the stuff of its construction, mythology itself is the “*absolute poesy*”, the “*eternal matter*” from which all forms emanate, wondrously and variegated. Poesy is the primal matter of all things, from which all else is derived, from which all flows and to which all returns, the *ground* and *world* of the *Gods* (Ibid., p.45).

The absolute can only be portrayed as the locus of identity or “absolute indifference” of the universal and particular as a particular form via the symbol. Schelling’s elucidation of the symbolic mode is the synthesis whereby the universal *does not just make reference* to the

particular, nor vice versa, but exists whereby both universal and particular coalesce into a single unity, converge in a shared identity.

Mythology is *always symbolic*, necessarily so because the particular does not merely *make reference to* or *signify* the universal or vice versa: the universal and particular are fused. Not only do its forms signify, they are taken for what they are in themselves: “Meaning here is *simultaneously being itself*, passed over into the object itself and one with it,” [my emphasis]. In the symbolic mode, reality is fused with the ideal, the *actuality of the ideal* achieves expression as opposed to mere signification. This form of presentation comprises the “*absolute form*” of the imagination (Ibid., p.49).

True mythology is *infinite* and *universal*, evincing the archetypal universe. Via mythology, past and future meet and congeal, the conjugation of past and future (Ibid., p.50). Given that mythology comprises the universal and particular, it is active at the personal level. Every truly creative person must create their own mythology, drawing universal into her particular interpretation (Ibid., p.75).

Poesy as the content of mythology, and its symbolic function, intimates the *linguistic character* of reality. The divine is itself fundamentally *linguistic* in its constitution and manifestations. The *symbol* is the means whereby divine knowledge achieves its *self-understanding* via the mirror of the world. *Divine knowledge attains self-understanding in the world through the symbol.*

Reason and language are synonymous: the eternal act of self-affirmation and production of the divine is the logos, *the divine spoken word*. The *logos* is simultaneously God himself: the reality of the world is a *primordial speech*, God’s act of *speaking*. But the real world is *not* the

living word of God, it is rather the spoken, *expended* word: *the word at work* (Ibid., p.100).

Spoken into the finite world, language *meets its death*.

Language that is still living is the ultimate symbol of *chaos* as it resides eternally in absolute knowledge. In the interstice where all resides in a single unity, the ultimate essence of the Absolute, is ‘primal chaos’, *lawlessness* the symbol of the absolute. Through the perception of chaos, understanding of the absolute is achieved, understanding the world as “the true symbol of reason”. The Absolute *expresses itself, its primal chaos, via form*: “Yet precisely here we encounter that identity of absolute form with formlessness, for that chaos within the absolute is not mere negation of form, but rather formlessness within the highest and absolute form, and, in reverse fashion, absolute form within formlessness. We speak of absolute form, because all form is posited into every form and every form into all form,” (Ibid., p.88). In other words, in the interstice of God’s chaos, the primal *formlessness* that is simultaneously absolute form, becomes instantiated and *speaks through form*. Form is a kind of disguise of primal unity, a temporary sheaf or cloak, a transitive fluttering transformation of absolute form and formlessness (Ibid., p.88).

Having elucidated a general account of Schelling’s aesthetic philosophy, I want to refer back to chapter three. In that chapter, I rendered an interpretation of the overlapping accounts of Heidegger and Deleuze’s notion of technological art, arguing that Heidegger and Deleuze’s aesthetic-technological notions could be interpreted as elucidations of *magic*. Heidegger and Deleuze’s aesthetic philosophies form the rippling echoes of concentric circles: reverberations of Schelling’s aesthetic philosophy of the Absolute. The rainbow light of a refracting prism: bent in different directions but emanating from the same source. In what follows, I set out to map some of the contiguities that exist in such a triangulation: Heidegger, Deleuze and Schelling.

In my aforementioned previous section, The Technology of Art, I argued that *magic* was extant in Heidegger through his notion of *aletheia*, her look of truth as an alchemy of perception, and Deleuze in his alternate vision of causality as the artist infiltrates and merges with the Abstract machine. For Schelling, the notion of *magic* is an inclination predicated on an understanding of the ultimate unity that exists between things, the way that all things are intertwined within the Absolute, as manifestations or potences of the Absolute. This section is worth quoting in full, Schelling is comparing magic with his interpretation of the Christian system:

“The principle of Christianity was the absolute predominance of the ideal over the real, of the spiritual over the corporeal. Hence, this accounted for the direct intervention of the supersensible into concrete reality in miracles. The same predominance of the spirit over nature is also expressed in magic to the extent that it encompassed the activities of conjuring or enchantment. The magical view of things or the understanding of natural occurrences as magic was merely an incomplete suspicion of the higher and absolute unity of all things in which nothing posits or effects anything directly in the other, but rather only through preestablished harmony by means of the absolute identity of all things. For just this reason, every effect that things have on one another solely through the medium of their concepts, and not in a natural fashion, is called magical, for example, the assertion that movements or certain signs purely as such can have a detrimental effect on someone. The belief in magic also expresses the inkling of the existence of various orders or systems of nature, of mechanism as such, chemism, the organism. We all know what effect the first acquaintance with chemical reactions had on the minds of our contemporary age. In a larger sense the retreat of nature as a mystery gave the contemporary world a general inclination toward penetrating the secrets of nature. The

mysterious language of the stars, manifesting itself in their various movements and relationships, acquired immediate historical significance. Their course, their chances, their relationships alluded to various aspects of the destiny of the world as a whole and indirectly of each individual. Here, too, lay the correct assumption that since the earth is a universe in and for itself, the elements of all the stars must inhere within it, and that their various positions and distances from the earth necessarily have an effect very early, particularly on the more delicate constructions or configurations on earth such as those of human beings,” (Ibid., p.77).

For Schelling, the notion of magic as conjuring and enchantment employs the force of the ideal realm to supersede the limitations of the material world; magic wields the power of the ideal to provoke manifestation in the realm of the real. For Schelling, the notion of magic presupposes the interconnectedness of all forms, imparting that form is endowed with power, meaning and purpose: form is a *force* that can be tapped into; to wield it requires an understanding of the purposefulness of all creation. Schelling thinks that such an understanding of the force that underlies form necessitates an all-pervading underlying fabric and continuity between things, a harmonious order and integrity. Magic presupposes a sense of the movement and purpose that winds through and in between all phenomena. Form is purposeful, meaningful: the shape of magic, inscribed within a matrix that enfolds all form in its unity.

Heidegger’s notion of truth is *unconcealment*, rendered visible via the creative perception of art, art that is *poetic* in its *essence*. Heidegger also understands *poesis*, the essence of poetry, as a form of *understanding*, and poetry as a mode of *dwelling*, or *primordial thinking*. Like Heidegger, Schelling marks art as opposed to concealment: “*Art scorns concealment*,” (Ibid., p.198) Schelling iterates, unless such a concealment indicates towards what is behind its veil; Schelling also espouses the same notion of poetry as the essence of art.

Formative art expresses itself via the concrete, and poesy via language, which is *universal*: this is why Schelling would employ the term ‘poesy’ to signify *making* or *creation*, its works an act of *production* and why poesy is the *essence of all art*. “The ideal world is the poesy of the universe,” Schelling says (Ibid., p.202).

Art is characterized by the way it directly reflects the absolute activity of production, its “absolute self-affirmation”. The absolute shows itself *to itself* via its artistic productions. Formative art channels this act in the form of something *real*, as opposed to something *ideal*. Poesy in contradistinction, taking part of the same essential nature as formative art, lets the absolute activity of knowledge disclose itself *through cognition*. Poesy is the *higher aspect or potency of formative art* in the sense that poesy is the means via which formative art expresses its ideas, as part of the unifying fabric of language (Ibid., p.202). Poetry as the vehicle for the absolute activity of knowledge to impart itself via cognition: this is a notion that is strongly resonant with Heidegger’s elucidation of poetry as the site of opening and existential dwelling, a mode of understanding and primordial thinking.

It’s not just Heidegger who is strongly influenced and indebted to Schelling’s ontology, but Deleuze as well. On a basic level, the trifold shape that motivates Deleuze’s architecture derives from Schellingian metaphysics: the way that disparate forms entwine with another, wedded in a space he terms the zone of indiscernibility, acts as a structural analog of Schelling’s God, the point of convergence between things, site of their interposed unity.

Deleuze has also lifted some of Schelling’s terminology, hiding his inspiration in plain sight, extending some of Schelling’s concepts, but distorting them in novel figurations. Case in point: the *contour*.

For Schelling, painting portrays the particular in the universal. What differentiates the particular from the universal is limitation, negation. This limitation of identity is called the outline or *contour* (Ibid., p.127). This notion maps seamlessly onto Deleuze's art-metaphysics whereby the painting is comprised of a tripartite unity, the contour, Figure and background: in a likewise manner, the contour delimits the secretion of the background, enclosing it into form. Deleuze's art-metaphysics analogously carves a space for the universal to inhabit and breathe within the confines of particularity that simultaneously opens beyond itself, a vehicle for the transformation of movement through form.

Uncanny similarities abound. Schelling conceives that the human form is the *highest object of art*. The artist is tasked with the imperative to evince the human form, "*not as it actually appears*" but as it exists in the "*design and idea of nature, which no real form fully expresses*" (Ibid., p.132) [my emphasis], depicting things not as empirically correct, but *as absolute truth, as its "essential nature"* [my emphasis] (Ibid., p.133).

There exists a close affinity between the human and the Absolute in Schelling's ontology. For Schelling, all of creation is the body of God, the human as God's crowning creative achievement. The self-expression of the human in its ideal form is the highest expression of art, the self-affirmation of God. The human is an avatar of God, a vehicle for God's self-affirmation, God as he exists in the material realm. The Absolute permeates all things, enfolding all things in its matrix or web; the human can likewise participate in, and even rework all creation through her mediating power of poesy and art.

For Deleuze, human and divine are inseparable. The human converges onto the machinic network as she constructs her body without organs. Deleuze's exercise of painting is a praxis of

becoming-animal as opening onto the powers that exist beyond oneself, a vehicle for entering into communion with the forces that exist beyond oneself. Deleuze has made Schelling's divine affirmation via painting into a magical practice; painting becomes a map or diagram, the *concrecence* of human and divine. Deleuze has opened a wormhole from his own ontology that leads to Schelling: they meet in a point of identity or convergence. Inseparable.

And finally, for Schelling, language is the *chaos* and construction material for poesy to create the "bodies of its ideas" (Ibid., p.205). Language that is still living is *chaos* at the intersection point between forms.

In Deleuze's metaphysics, the *machinic phylum* is a fundamentally *asignifying*, metallic fold hidden within the material realm that conjoins all things in its matrix: comparable with Schelling's chaotic living word, the meeting point between things, where things meld into synthesis. Deleuze takes Schelling's process of conjugation of identity between things as the principle underlying his networked machine, perforating all things: an *ordered chaos*.

Schelling elucidates a system of philosophy of art predicated on the eternal or God as the intersection of all unities. God is the source of all art, the productive process of art, and as in its artistry, created the universe, the universe as work of art. God is also reason, the logic that underlies the universe; in its self-revelation, God is philosophy, reason that has attained to *self-awareness*. Art as the vehicle that ushers the idea into the realm of the real, becomes objective through philosophy. Art and philosophy form an identity, fundamentally wedded. The content of all art is the archetype: ideas that comprise their own universes, and exist as gods, divine images. These archetypes exist within mythology, the absolute form of the universe. Mythology is comprised of poesy, poesy as primal matter, and is fundamentally symbolic: it portrays the ideas

or gods without merely making reference to them, its meaning simultaneously being. Schelling understands *magic* as something that makes reference to the underlying unity between all things, an attunement to the logic of the absolute. The essence of the absolute is chaos. The persisting word of God is all around, its echo the substance of matter: matter as dead, divine language that has already been spoken. God's unspoken words are chaos, the essence of the absolute: the essence of form, formlessness. God speaks and all around his word persists, echoing, matter exists as divine language. Reason, the logos, is language itself, an anorganic word. God's word is anorganic, its cosmic body is language. Deleuze and Heidegger's accounts of art are congruent largely because they are both reformulations of Schelling's philosophy of art, clothed in new metaphors, disguised in novel ciphers.

8. Benjamin: The Cryptographic Translation of Art; *Sprachmagie* and Mimesis

Benjamin's philosophy offers a mechanics of the reformulating power of language and art: hence its relevance for inclusion in this context. This reformulating capacity is predicated on the *fracture*; the fracture provides the *architecture* for the possibility of reformulation, brokenness that allows for a new openness of possibility. This is the work of translation and criticism as extant in the interpretation of the work of art. Via the interpretative gesture of translation or criticism as a renewal of meaning, the fracture acts as a *technology* that enables an extended perception or understanding, rendering our linguistic site of origin in closer reach, a brokenness that enables new disclosures or formulations of unfolding—bringing us closer to our site of origin as we venture further away from it, a simultaneous coming and going. The fracture provides the *opening* towards new domains for Benjamin, and the possibility for redemption in a world comprised of the shattered, fragmented and broken.

The architecture of the thought-world of Walter Benjamin is constructed with fractures, shards and ruins. This rubble and ruinous dilapidation provides the material formulating the shape of his work and thought: necessarily so, as the only building material at hand in modernity. Modernity's celebrated 'progress' unfolds before Benjamin's 'angel of history' as a catastrophic ruin: a storm of rubble, forming a heap that continually grows higher, ruin compiled upon ruin. (IX, On The Concept of History).

This leitmotif of the Benjamin's fixation with the fragment can be traced to a Kabbalistic originary source. Benjamin was exposed to this current of Jewish mysticism via his longtime friendship with the Kabbalist historian Gershom Scholem. For the Kabbalists, the fragment was the crux of their metaphysics: the genesis of the material world was a product of fragmentation.

As per the Kabbalistic tradition, the movement of the Godhead, or Ein Sof, refracted and emanated light, creating the Torah, 231 gates of pairs of Hebrew letters, its width consisting of the four names of God. The contraction or *zimzum* of the Godhead deflected the light which outflows the Ein sof. The light can't be contained by the first three Sephirot (plural of sapphire or sphere), the manifestations of the Einsof: Keter ("crown") Binah (understanding) and Hokmah (wisdom). The breakage of the vessels was engendered by the overflowing light, accreted in the formation of the four worlds of creation: the three high spiritual worlds and the material world (Scholem, p.87-189). Language thusly exists as the seed and essence of the worlds of creation. With the breaking of the vessels, the Godhead became alienated from its primordial order. For the Kabbalist, humans are mandated to messianic responsibility; cosmic restoration achieved via prayer and devotion.

Benjamin was inspired by the way that all creation is understood as a varying pattern of the primal Torah, divine language. For this conceptualization, language exists as the 'mental entity' of not only humans but all manifestation. The term 'language' is not meant in a metaphorical sense: expression as a communication of mental meaning is understood as language. Expression in itself is linguistic in nature (Scholem, p.314) (Mcbride, p.245).

Benjamin's philosophy is closely aligned with the Kabbalistic account of enfleshed language, taking multiple forms. In its first manifestation, *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man* (1916), Benjamin unfurls a revision of the Old Testament account of the human's fall from paradise. As intimated by the title, it constructs a metaphysical edifice in which language is not exclusive to the human realm.

In this account, language exists as the mental contents of things, enfleshed and veiled in materiality. Given that material objects are mute, the languages they employ are nameless and non-acoustic, manifesting via the formations of materiality. Things communicate themselves to the human, and the human can offer the mute a voice via her act of naming. This was God's assigned task for the human, to complete the work of creation: to *name* things. Language speaks in *name* for the human alone, and this power elevates the human to the lord of nature. The name constitutes the *essence* of language, the mode whereby language communicates itself in an absolute sense. Benjamin conceived of this naming quality of language, *Sprachmagie* or *language magic* as the *glue* that binds humanity and the material world. All nature communicates itself via language in its communion with the human (On Language as Such and on the Language of Man, p.62-70).

The act of instituting the name is an act of *translation*: the conversion of the language of things into the format of name renders the mute sonic, nameless into name (Ibid, p.70).

Such a way with language marked the paradisiacal human state: there existed a single language, the language of perfect knowledge. But the paradisiacal state is short-lived, and the human falls from Eden when the snake seduces with its *nameless* knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil. After this Fall, the human faculty to name is blunted, name-language relinquished and the human word is engendered: the language of knowledge is vitiated by its communication of something other than itself, for the demands of instrumentality and semiotics. Language fractalizes and disperses, causing confusion, amnesia, and the dissemination of untruth (Ibid, p.71).

Fallen, the world is in need of redeeming, and the Adamic language of naming, restitution. The Fall marked the sundering of world and language: thus Benjamin, sees their possibility for reparation as intertwined with the other, and develops various strategies for such an end. One aspect of this project of restitution involves *translation*; while the name has evanesced, the act of translation is still connected with its primal name form.

Benjamin's elucidation of 'translation' is to be understood as the extension of the life of the art-work. Works of art have a natural life, and translation ushers the work into its afterlife, a transposition into a more 'definitive' language domain' resounding with the echo of the originary language. The lives of works of art achieve a renewed, and completed unfolding via translation, returning the gift of Revelation. Via translation, the work is brought closer to the realm of the pure language, which is the realm in which all the various ways of meaning are reconciled (Task of the Translator, p.254-58).

The translator's task is the integration of "many languages into one true language", a 'ripening of the seed' of pure language through translation (Ibid, p.259). Translation was at work in the paradisiacal state, in the act of articulating the language or expression of the material community. Translation is an act of fracturing: the original language is transposed into a satellite language, a fracturing from its originary source, but in a *reconstituted form*, achieving consummation through its multiplicity, its multiplication: through a new valence.

Beyond translation, works of art offer a redemptive potential via criticism, the '*mortification*' of the work: a destructive aspect necessary for the artwork's fulfilment.

The work of criticism is philosophical; Benjamin calls the task of the critic as philosopher to "name the idea, as Adam named nature, in order to overcome the [art] works,

which are to be seen as nature returned” (Letter to Rang, 1923, p.389). This idea-naming, or articulating the language of the work of art, Benjamin conceives of as a restoration of the lost faculty of primordial naming in the fall from paradise.

Benjamin’s *Trauerspiel* or *Origin of the German Tragic Drama* (1924-25), was an early work concerning his view of criticism vis a vis the German Baroque drama or mourning play. *Trauerspiel* also concerns the redemptive potential of the allegory, understanding his philosophy of language as operative within the material world. The allegory expresses the estrangement of a time longing for redemption, and is eschatological. Benjamin distinguishes between the allegory and symbol: he conceives of the symbol as ingrained with the supposition that one can switch between a sensible representation and supersensible idea, a smooth space between form and content. Working with this notion of symbol, Benjamin’s allegory can be conceived of as a mutating symbol, offering a multiplicity of meanings because of the way that it has to be grounded in material existence. (Plate, p.47) (Mcbride, p.246) (Hansenn, p.46).

Structured by allegory, the redemptive task of the human is to read the world in the way that a Kabbalist reads holy scripture, salvation by material exegesis. By invoking the language magic that articulates the expression of the community of materiality, the human summons the power of divine language, redeeming the world. Benjamin’s experimentations with the allegory and Marxism present alternate cryptographies for reading the world. Benjamin propounded the notion that *all images are forms of writing* of which may be understood. Within every object exists its ‘signature’, its ‘monogram’ of essence, but not essence itself, for such is off-limits in Kabbalistic thought: the 50th and final gate of the sephiroth Binah, closed off to human apprehension. The allegorist and Kaballist cannot gaze at truth directly; but given the material

ensoulment of truth, the image of the pattern intimates and is connected to its essence (Mcbride p.247).

The allegorist is tasked with the finding the particular ciphers that render the world into a legible form. Benajmin spent fifteen years devising a cryptoanalytic theory to achieve this elusive noumenal knowledge: first, through a framework of Proustian remembrance or involuntary memory, and secondly through his adoption of Marxist theory (Ibid, p.248).

Benjamin discerned in Proust's concept of 'involuntary memory' or theory of memory a framework in terms of which, the world could be read. Given that all creation is manifestation of divine language, all creation partakes in God's remembrance. In this sense, messianic redemption is achieved through the *medium of remembrance* to redeem the amnesiac oblivion. Remembrance acts as the point of intersection and port between the human and divine languages (Ibid, p.249).

The revealing of truth is not achieved via aggressive intellectual domination: the world will not intimate its secrets via direct confrontation; truth is a stumbling-upon that necessitates attending to the details of materiality preserved in *unconscious* memory traces.

Involuntary remembrance exists within the material presence of the objects themselves, they are traces, the past ensouled in objects. Such a Proustian conception aligned with the Kaballistic conception of divine language in the world, acting as a metaphysical bridge towards arriving at *materialism*. Once he crossed the materialist threshold, Marxism was not such a metaphysical leap. (Ibid, p.251). He saw in Marxism what had been searching for: a vehicle for the realization of the allegory of redemption for the material community,

The challenge of humanity is the translation of the language of the cosmos into knowledge via the process of naming. Naming communicates the mental being of the human to God. Naming involves *communicating the allegory of the material community that awaits its redemptive moments*. Allegory lies between mechanical time and the moment of salvation (Mcbride, p.260). Benjamin's soteriology was the restoration of Adamite naming as engendering world redemption (Ibid, p.261).

The past is interwoven in the present in nonlinear time, awaiting redemption.

While Benjamin's philosophical commitments evolved, expanding to the materialist domain, the preoccupation with the possibility of restoring a primordial name language was maintained, and he never entirely relinquished his early language mysticism, even as he promoted a new theory of language predicated on the human faculty of mimesis. (Hanssen, p.64).

His theory of mimesis manifested in two forms, *Doctrine of the Similar* (1933) and *On the Mimetic Faculty* (1933): the former aligned itself with theological formulations of language, while the latter proposed a 'naturalized' account. Benjamin expanded the scope of mimesis to ontology whereby even objects were imbued with mimetic power. Human possession of mimetic power entailed they possessed the ability not just to recognize but to produce similarities. The historical wear of the mimetic faculty has left it in a state of degradation. Diminished capacity of mimesis reflected a *dulling* of the *perceptual apparatus*, increasingly unable to perceive similarities. Only *language* remained in place of an earlier ability to recognize similarities among astral constellations and ourselves: language the *last refuge* of magic: (On the Mimetic Faculty, p.721).

“To read what was never written. Such reading is the most ancient: reading before all languages, from entrails, the stars or dances. Later the mediating link of a new kind of reading, of runes and hieroglyphs, came into use. It seems fair to suppose that these were the stages by which the mimetic gift, which was a foundation of occult practices, gained admittance to writing and language. In this way, language may be seen as the highest level of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of nonsensous similarity: a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed, without residue, to the point where they have liquidated those of magic,” (Ibid, p.722).

His 1933 *Antitheses* aimed to reconstruct hidden correspondences between the 1916 language theory and mimesis doctrine, culminating in the theory of recollection. “Historically, the fleeting appearance of similarity has the character of an anamnesis- that is to say, of a lost similarity, free from the tendency to become dissipated. The lost similarity, which existed in time, prevails in the Adamite spirit of language (Anti-Theses, p.718). The similarity that was lost in time (the fall) can be restored via the recollective power of the language of names. In this way, restoration of the primordial divine language is simultaneously a restoration of the faculty of perceiving similarities and patterns of mimesis, and Benjamin’s mystical language-magic is reconciled with a materialist framework.

Translation, criticism and allegory are instances of the fracture achieving wholeness and completion, of destruction as creative. “The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room. And only one activity: clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred. ... The destructive character sees nothing permanent... What exists he reduces to rubble- not for the sake of the rubble but *for that of the way leading through it*,” (p.541).

The ruin comprises the architecture of the possibility for redemption. In its redemptive aspect, the fracture presents an opening, a breaking of a shell or limit. It is a shedding skin, necessary for new growth: a rupture, point of entry into a new domain, an interstitial threshold of transposition. The fracture carves an opening pathway, a fissure, to uncover the layers that exist just beyond it: new vistas and landscapes are made available. The fracture offers a clearing for renewed wholeness.

As stipulated by *Theological-Political Fragment*, this redemption is perpetually ongoing, never to achieve a final completion: it is a limit that has to be trailed to its infinity. The fracture is an ongoing process of regeneration and renewal, building architecture, then refashioning it in its demolition, integration and catabolism. *Solve et coagula*. The fracture is *becoming*, continual revolution and redemption. The fracture is a *fractal*, a never-ending process: an accretion of ruin, that enjoins with itself in its reaching beyond itself, forming machinery in its accretion.

Benjamin's account of embedded language and art is strongly resonant with Heidegger and Deleuze; some comparisons and points of contiguity will be evinced in the section that follows.

The faculty of naming is a *mental faculty*; the *perception* of the name or in the form of translation, extends the bounds of meaning in its interpretation; like Heidegger intimates, the essence of language is really a *mode of understanding*, a mode of perception that rends new vistas of possibility into view, opens new landscapes.

Benjamin's programme of architectural ruin can be juxtaposed with Deleuze's machinery of the unconscious, its motions of breakage and institution of form, architected upon the revolutionary rupture of art that underlies all manifestations, fundamentally liberatory,

comprising the architecture for all possibilities of unfolding. Like Deleuze, this network of structured fracturation is fundamentally linguistic: for Deleuze, the network of the machinic unconscious is structured as an asignifying linguistic assemblage; this notion is comparable with Benjamin's notion of the realm of pure language, where all meaning is reconciled: Deleuze and Benjamin's machines formulated by the accretion of ruin and fracture are polyvalent apparatuses, the fracture predicating a mutating valence, a shifting form.

The notion of '*pure*' meaning is not unlike Schelling's divine chaos, the essence of the Absolute that links things together in its web of creation. Schelling and Benjamin are both strongly influenced by the *Kabbalistic* ontology.

Benjamin's Kabbalistic-inspired philosophy of language is a philosophy of reformulation. Language exists in all things, encrypted in materiality and images, awaiting redemption through interpretation, interpretation as reformulation. Reformulation through translation and criticism helps to repair the shattered pure language, the originary name, bringing the work of art closer to the primal space where all meaning is reconciled. The work of translation and criticism enshrines a form with a new guise, bestowing it with a new valence, extending its perimeter of meaning into new territory, unfolding its growth, and evolution. The extension of meaning endows a change of perception, a renewed understanding.

Language is magic and technology. Language is inherently magical, the last refuge of magic, the last remaining highest order mimetic correspondence of similarity between things: magic is a *faculty of perception*, the discernment of perception of *similarity*. The fracturing of language acts as a technological involution, opening perception and releasing new possibilities, a

closing that opens a new threshold, the architecture of life as death, in its self-renewal, death the construction material for life.

Art is language, technology, magic.

9. Slattery and Dick: The Maze

Dianne Slattery

The notion of *reformulation* finds a practical expression in the work of Dianne Slattery; her work offers a valuable resource for understanding its philosophical and theoretical terrains, enfolding its leitmotifs in a unique formation. Her work imparts crucial insight into the question of the relation between language and consciousness, l'écriture feminine, and offering a *model* of a polyvalent language. Slattery's site of epistemological exploration is the threshold between language and consciousness, an interstice she mines to retrieve a new vision of language, a novel formulation of language. Experimenting with altered states of consciousness, Slattery gleaned access to a mysterious and unique language she calls "Glide", its qualities *alien* by the standards of conventional notions of language. Glide is a *polyvalent* language, organizing itself in nonlinear diagrams or 'mazes', as *gestalts* of pattern. Glide is never static, always in motion, perpetually reformulating itself, reformulating itself in its unique diagrams, as a maze of art. It comprises a morphing maze, a morphing architecture that acts as a catalyst for the transformation of consciousness, and a living interface of communion with the unknown other.

Slattery's work is predicated on the notion of language and consciousness as profoundly interwoven with the other: and in their intertwining, propelling a reciprocal evolution and mutation (Xenolinguistics, p.xxx). Slattery espouses the view of language as a *parasite* that has colonized the human consciousness and evolves alongside it; and just as consciousness discloses itself in new ways when a shift in consciousness takes place, such a shift can also affect language, can catalyze new formations of language.

Slattery's epistemology is informed by her direct experience with language and consciousness transforming the other. In 1998, she had taken time off to refine her topic for a Phd proposal with the intent to explore the notion of a visual language, but instead found herself compelled to pen a science fiction story. It took place in a future world, with humans of indefinite life span. Their primary entertainment consisted in a game: a duel between immortal "players" and mortal "Death Dancers". Slattery was immersed within the world of her creation, could communicate with its characters: reality and fiction interpolated with the other, inseparable. At one point, she posed a question to her characters that would unlock the sluices that guarded a flood: "How is the game played?" The answer would be disclosed to her in the form of a sudden influx of information, a "download", immediate and traumatic: what she refers to as a "bright trauma," an irrevocable invocation (Ibid., p.xxii).

As her account relates, instantaneously, 27 glyphs appeared to her, their context as a "maze game", and their underlying grammar. The glyphs formed a transforming maze, acted as the moving architecture of a maze, moving like waves. Slattery also gleaned access to the myth of the genesis of the Glide language. As the myth goes, Glide had been imparted to the characters in her story via the blue water-lily (a plant with hallucinogenic properties), bestowed as a gift for their cultivation of the lily (Ibid., p.26). Through the diffusion of its pollen, the lily "bespoke itself" using *three shapes* that derived from the *gestures* employed to cultivate the lily: an upward curve that denoted the cultivators' cupped hands collecting the lily, a downward curve as the contents of their palms was released into a basket, and those two previous shapes conjoined as one in the gesture of the wave (Ibid., p.27).

In the realm of story, Glide assumed the form of an alien language; it also comprised the physical architecture where the game took place. As Slattery's narrative unfurled itself, the

significance of Glide deepened, the *fractal* architecture of the story, existing at every level of the story. Not only was it the architecture of the game maze, but it also acted as a riddle, oracle, and vehicle for the transformation of consciousness. In the fictional world, via its morphing and moving form, Glide facilitated new forms of thought, perception and feeling. The Maze Game is a fictional story that plays on the theme in her download of the language: the co-evolution of language and consciousness at various levels, individually, culturally and as a species.

Through the creative format of fiction, Slattery employed *imagination* as an epistemological tool to understand her visual language and render its implications. Such a framework also acted as a parallel universe that foreshadowed the endeavor that she herself was about to embark upon: in her story, the “Death Dancer” characters must each enter into a trial of initiation, entailing an ingestion of lily wine and a solitary venture into the maze. Over the subsequent ten years, she would continue her rogue research techniques, experimenting with psychoactive substances to glean further insight into her mystery language, and to commune with the unknown (Ibid., p.27, 28).

Having unfurled the mythological context of Glide, I will proceed to elucidate its mechanics, grammar, and logic. As intimated by the gestures that inspired its form in its mythological context, Glide operates via a trifold logic. Up and down strokes that follow binary logic, and a third stroke “both/and”, the reconciliation of binaries in a sign that comprises both movements in the shape of a wave. Two signs in one form. Thus this language is embedded with metaphysical, philosophical wisdom: a reconciled paradox, demanding a resilient mind that can maintain both aspects at once without collapsing to one or the other (Ibid., p.54). Glide is a paradoxical language, comprises the architecture of paradox.

Slattery refers to Glide as a “visual language”, the notion of which makes reference to language as non-aural, differentiated from the spoken form of language, and *nonlinear*. As a nonlinear signifying system, Glide is a polyvalent language, imbued with a multiplicity of interpretive possibilities, or wandering pathways in its maze.

Slattery defines a Glide “maze” as a configuration of three and more hexagrams. A maze comprises multiple points of entry or starting points, and a choice of pathways where meaning can be forged. How does one interpret a Glide maze? There are a variety of visual properties to consider when interpreting a “maze gestalt” configuration—the size and orientation of the signs, adjacent signs, the configuration of the “maze gestalt” as a whole, color, texture, motion: every aspect acts as a negotiation of meaning.

Meaning is negotiated in a Glide matrix between the individual glyphs, the linkages between them, and the context of the broader meaning of the composition as a whole. Links arise from proximity as glyphs touch, or a deeper link exists where their parts converge with one another, interlocked in a seamless form (Ibid., p.75). N. Katherine Hayles describes the links between glyphs as metaphoric in the sense that, as two characters interact, an identity is forged between them, giving rise to an emergent meaning that did not pre-exist its individual elements (Ibid., p.76).

The Glide glyphs hook onto one another, coordinating a polyvalent, metaphorical meaning via their interactions, but perhaps their most remarkable feature is that they are also imbued with the capacity to *transform into one another*, constantly shifting and morphing: a mobile language. Slattery has incorporated technology to evince this aspect of Glide, designing the software program ‘Collabyrinth’, a language editor that enables her to create Glide

configurations, transform the glyphs into one another, and change the constituent variables of the glyphs. She has also helped design a second program called LiveGlide that renders Glide into three dimensions, creating digital sculptures of text and producing novel expressions of meaning, its glyphs twisting and coiling into one another (Ibid., p.61 79-80).

Slattery's polyvalent, morphing, and coiling language comprises a *moving maze*, its architecture constantly shifting –hence the name Glide—and brought to life via technology: its signifiers constantly *gliding*, transmogrifying. That's how the *maze game* is *played*: a *linguistic maze*, its architecture comprised of *gliding signifiers*; it's about navigating a maze of meaning, an insight was delivered to her by the other, imparting to her that:

“the maze is the maze of meaning which is your life

Your life is a journey through the maze

Glide is the story of your life,” (Ibid., p.46).

As this alien other imparted to her, Slattery's *maze* is a *maze of meaning*. A journey through the maze of meaning makes reference to a personal metaphor of initiation that is concurrently mythological in its scope, and epistemological in its implications: Glide encloses the personal, mythological and epistemological in a single locus.

The maze of meaning is a transforming meaning, Glide a transforming language, effective at the personal level. As a transforming language, its transformative affect is not confined to its constitution but also operative at the psychical level, a language that catalyzes the transformation of consciousness. Slattery credits Glide with effectuating her personal psychical integration and transformation of consciousness (Ibid., p.48).

One aspect of its psychically transformative power is that Slattery experiences Glide as alive, a *living language* that allows for communion with the other. The other she encountered, a presence described as abstract and disembodied, intimate but objective, revealed itself to Slattery in various forms, among them: a Tolkien-inspired wizard-elf, and a mycelial-placental network with golden filaments (Ibid., p.41-42). Slattery likens the biological model of *mycelial mat* to the configuration of a maze: a mycelial mat can be understood as a maze, with its tubular filaments, intertwined with one another, instigating connections that form hyphal knots, the site that gives rise to the fruit of the mushroom (Ibid., p.67). In her dialogue with the other, the other assumed various guises, including taking the shape of the Glides' structural formation: as a mycelial maze; the other at times taking the *form* of the language she was using to commune with it.

Slattery's art-language proves a valuable, real-life resource from which to compare the theoretical notions preceding, commenting on the ideas of Heidegger, Deleuze, Lacan, Kristeva, Schelling and Benjamin.

Glide is a *liberatory symptom, shaped like the sinthome*, its mutating formation of the unconscious, the unconscious as structured like an evasive, slippery language. Slattery emphasizes the transformative nature of Glide: the glyphs are never static, transmogrifying into one another, beyond their inherent polyvalence.

Glide is Slattery's translation, the Absolute as it speaks through her, the revelation of a linguistic form unique to her. Her glyphs animate reality, are transformative at the personal level, ushering manifestation into being, a magical language. It embodies the institution and rupture of Deleuze's machinic unconscious and Kristeva's chora.

Glide renders various theoretical questions. How is it related to the chora and the threat of abjection? Glide coincides the symbolic and semiotic, a poetic art-language, given that the glyphs impart and are endowed with meaning. It's an infinitely poetic poetry, that continually transforms itself, its meanings constantly reorienting. It's a poetic language that embodies the motions of the chora, its moving vortex of structuring and de-structuring. A poetic chora. It invokes the chora, yet does not lapse into meaningless. A constantly shifting meaning, like a moving wave. Its meaning ever-elusive and polyvalent, ephemeral, flitting, fleeting. A moving threshold. Yet Slattery is able to maintain its current, follows the wave to its infinite tangential threshold, is never tempted to relinquish meaning, cast aside her subjectivity. Her subjectivity floats perilously between the Self and Other, but never sinks. Glide seems to *dive into* the chora, going as far as it is possible to go without relinquishing meaning; as a result, meaning is *transformed*.

Slattery manages to evade the threat of *abjection*, as she juggles multiple identities in a tightrope balancing act, a subject-on-trial and paradoxical subject, interspersed with the other, in communion with the other within herself, the stranger to herself. For Slattery, the *thread* that sustains continuity of subjectivity *is maintained*, even in the midst of flux and constant movement, held within the chora-abyss: the thread of continuity is maintained given that neurosis and psychosis are evaded, and meaning never relinquished. Yet paradoxically, the sustaining of subjectivity and meaning is achieved through leap and breach of continuity, propelled by the eruptions of new meaning. The way that the continuity of meaning and subjectivity is maintained through breach is via immersion; the subject immerses into the moving threshold of meaning, meaning as it is encrypted with a multiplicity of different, yet simultaneous possibilities. Preserving a multiplicity of simultaneous meaning unfurls a *map* for experimental exploration; following the lines of the map creates a stable orientation, staving off getting lost, the wayward excursions that lapse into meaninglessness.

Such a balancing act fundamentally evinces Deleuze and Guattari's celebration of the schizo: not a literal celebration of the schizophrenic, but a metaphor for the self as interspersed with the other, the self who grafts the other onto her body, enjoins and entangles herself within the other, yet maintains a unified subjectivity, a subjectivity of Self that is paradoxically and simultaneously other.

Kristeva intimates the possibility of the creation of a new type of meaning predicated by the other that exists within the self in her work, *Strangers to Ourselves*. She says: "The foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder," (1a) The foreigner is a rejected aspect of the self, excavated to form the boundaries of the subject's identity. It is the disruption and "destruction of the self" (Ibid., p.188) that can be instantiated as a psychotic symptom or can impart the possibility for something new to arise. Glide is the feminine language par excellence, the flittering feminine language that doesn't lapse into meaningless or psychosis, an endeavor into the chora and a return, unscathed but *transformed*.

Slattery invokes the *maze* as a motif that renders transformation in a structural form. As does Philip K. Dick: subject of the next section.

Philip K. Dick

Science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick experienced a series of altered states of consciousness whereby, as he claims, the layers of consensus reality eroded, imparting a startling revelation of a reality existing on its underside. Dick conceived that he had accessed the underbelly of reality: a vast, living network, becoming aware of itself, the phenomenal world its body, and described as a *moving maze*. Dick identified his mysterious interlocutor as the Logos,

information, “verbal plasma,” and the mind or wisdom of God. For Dick, the hidden world comprises a structure *of transformation*, interposed within layers of camouflage.

In the early months of 1974, science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick would find himself the main character in a plotline reminiscent of his surreal and fantastical novels: reality and fiction coincided in its unfurling, becoming inextricable, blurring the line between life and art, creation and existence. He was transported into the historical past, the past superimposed on the present, and experienced a fugual state, a change of identity. Reeling from a revelatory confrontation, the intrusion of an alternate reality superimposed upon the consensus model, Dick would spend the rest of his life frantically analyzing and exhaustively ruminating on his experience, attempting to reconcile what had transpired to and within him. This examination, combing over the events endlessly would result in his *Exegesis*, sections of it published posthumously, where he scrambles to make sense of experiences that defy conventional delineations and parameters of reality. Ultimately his musings coagulate into a coherent philosophy flecked with religious undertones. It will be my endeavor in what follows to reconstruct an account of the philosophy contained wherein.

I saw the Universe in its true form, Dick relates, perceived its “active agent”, the wizard behind the spectacle, pulling the strings from behind the scenes. It is intelligent and holy, a plasma, living and sentient, emanating from the future (*Exegesis*, p.5).

The only explanation that can account for such a retreat from the future, Dick surmises, is that time is not linear. Time, Dick concludes, does not merely pass in one direction, but rather turns back in on itself, is superimposed on itself: a double-sided moebius-strip. The level of time, chronically forward ticking clock-time that we find ourselves trapped within in the consensus

model of reality is ersatz time: true time is its *alien countermovement*. The current of time that flows backwards, retrograde or retroactive time, comprises true reality. It *cuts into* reality from the *future*, incising with its *counter-causal force* (Ibid., p.5).

Most of the time we are oblivious to its counter-workings, as it arranges life from the perspective of the future, a retrospective creation.

How can it be that time in its true form is occluded from us, as though a veil of illusion is pulled over our eyes? Dick's answer to this question is the notion of the *Black Iron Prison*, a metal cage we find ourselves imprisoned within, the material world of consensus reality the entrapment of a dark tower. Despite being enveloped in a heavy fog of metal, obfuscating and deflecting the retrograde motion of the divine light, flickers of its light are always seeping through the cracks of the iron prison like a flower that grows through concrete (Ibid., p.180). The divine is always trying to achieve contact through the metal bars of the prison.

Perceiving this flower, the divine force that overrides and overflows the material confines of the surrounding metal enclosure, is what Dick refers to as *magic*. Dick's vision of magic is apocalyptic in its literal sense, a lifted veil. It's the perceptual faculty that peels back the veil of the metal curtain, banishing the false reality that disguises its true form. Magic "can break spells, not cast them," (Ibid., p.137). The black iron prison is a spell, a hypnotic hallucination. Breaking the spell of the prison involves the withdrawal of psychological projections (Ibid., p.183) onto the world to glimpse of view of what lies *behind the projection*.

Dick's God is a shape-shifter, polyvalent, not readily revealing her countenance: likes to hide, wears a disguise, existing in multiple valences of time that intersect. Dick's uses various terms to refer to his evasive deity, one of which is "Zebra," its moniker making reference to the

zebra's stripes, the patterning of its coat acting as a kind of camouflage the shielding concealment of paradox (Ibid., p.225). Gods wears a Zebra pelt, coat, hidden, entwined in the world, escaping notice. The world is its body: at once misleading, yet its true form is interposed within it, hiding in plain sight (Ibid., p.307). God's disguise is part of her act, part of the way she shows herself, through illusion and the perforation of that illusion. *Illusion is just illusion*, pointing towards the deeper reality it contains within itself.

Zebra is also *linguistic*, described as a “verbal plasma” (Ibid., p.361): the *Logos*, the word of God that comprises the world. Inspired by Jung, God is described by Dick as an “autonomous entity of the unconscious”, resisting the assimilation of the conscious mind (Ibid., p.183). Dick's God is an autonomous, unconscious and linguistic plasma, forming a *structure*.

Dick reasons that the world comprises a *moving maze*, the mechanics of God's structure comprising an unconscious architecture, whereas the retrograde infiltration of time comprises God's self-awareness or consciousness. The world is God as *metacomputer* (Ibid., p.683): a moving maze that *analyzes itself*, a riddle that is engrossed with its own self-decipherment. The maze is reality. “Reality [...] is a living maze that constantly changes. [...]It itself poses the very mystery and puzzle that it itself deals with,” (Ibid., p.684). Dick's term for the information-processing maze that becomes aware of itself is Valis (Vast Active Living Information System).

Valis is an information processing *machine*, attaining self-awareness. “It is evolving... The disclosure to me as Valis is a new stage in it (the process-deity of A.N. Whitehead). It is a great info-processing machine that is becoming—has become—aware of itself. Already it was unconscious-machine creator. But then it became conscious. Thus it passes from machine (a la Spinoza) to consciousness,” (Ibid., p.748).

Dick develops his own unique vision of esoteric or secret Christianity. The “solution” to the iron maze-game, Dick concludes, is: *Christ*. “My analysis of the logical paradox posed by Valis is that the narrator is sane and therefore did see Christ: this is the solution to the maze Valis and can at once be extrapolated to the macrocosmic maze reality; viz (Ibid., p.684) Christ is present, but concealed within and by layers of paradoxical camouflage—exactly as in Valis,” (Ibid., p.685).

Christ exists *in* and *as* the maze, camouflaged by the veil of paradox. Christ is a maze-mind-game, the riddle and its solution. And Christ’s true identity is *female* (Ibid., p.491). Jesus was just one of her myriad cloaks and disguises. Her true identity is *Sophia*, the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is God’s secret, feminine form, true, sentient reality (Ibid., p.203).

Dick is inspired in this identification by *Gnosticism*, an esoteric meld of ancient religious ideas: Dick has an ambivalent relation to the Gnostic ontology, sympathetic at times to the notion propounded by Gnosticism of the material world as a *prison*, but the work of his *Exegesis* is to surmount this nihilistic notion, culminating in his paradoxical assertion of the nature of the God and the hiddenness of God, the hidden world within this one. Gnosticism presents a cosmology whereby the creator of the world is female, *Sophia*, wisdom. Dick doctors the original Gnostic creed, which says that her world-creation comes about via a fallenness and creative error (Ibid., p.203).

True reality, Dick conceives, is a *giant brain*, living information, ever-evolving, sentient, female, and also a *magician*, a *conjurer* of forms. She is beautiful (Ibid., p.377). Her thoughts are audible under the right circumstances, when one listens with one’s inner voice. “I saw reality

correctly,” Dick says, “—as a vast living body—and I conversed with its mind (psyche?),” (Ibid., p.307).

I can find God in the world, again and again, Dick says: in *polyform*, the eternal that underlies transitory manifestations. In its perpetual transformation and transmogrification, it remains static, perpetually new and perpetually now (Ibid., p.699). “I can at last comprehend it, how in change, ceaseless change—through the dialectic—it is always the same—oh great Ch’ang Tao! I saw you,” (Ibid., p.698).

One is left to ponder, did Dick conjure his experience through the creation of his books? Dick’s experience seems to impart that creation is never confined to a painting, a novel, an artifact, but exists as a blossoming rose in the unconscious, a *process* that unfolds and works its way through the artist and the world. We speak to reality and *negotiate* with it via the interface of art: reality a *self-creation*. Dick’s creative productions foreshadowed his mysterious experiences, reconfiguring his psychical constitution and subjectivity, conferring new perceptions, manifestations, meanings and interpretations.

10. Tentacles, Transformative and Polyvalent Bodies: Harman and Deleuze

This chapter marks a shift in valence from transformative mazes and linguistic structures to the notion of transformative and polyvalent *bodies*: the transformation of form and meaning is also a transformation of bodies. Deleuze and Harman espouse visions of polyvalent or polymorphous bodies that overflow their ostensible material delimitations and the surfaces of their appearances, interposed within hidden realms; their secret underworlds, clandestine and mysterious, escape the access of representational thought and the metaphysics of the scientistic-materialist imaginary. For Harman, bodies are *objects*, always shifting in their presentation, profoundly ‘weird’ entities, their strangeness and horror surpassing even our best descriptions or inferences, though we can indirectly or ‘allusively’ glean a *sense* of their hidden worlds through vicarious inference. The kinds of bodies Deleuze is interested to unfurl are *bereft of organs*: *bodies without organs* as he terms them, structures of transformation intertwined within a *machinic* network. Using these ontologies as reference points, I examine a particular body: *Cthulhu*, a monstrous figure of abjection and horror in Lovecraft’s mythology, possessing traits of the human, dragon and octopus. Such a discussion will act as an experimental exercise in *noology*: this is Deleuze’s term for the *image of thought*, or thinking through images.

Graham Harman is a contemporary philosopher at the forefront of a new school of thought that calls itself object-oriented-ontology: ‘ooo’ its stylistic signature. Such a movement is unified by a few central tenets, notably: an aim to level the human to the same ontological plane as the object; the assertion of the ontological primacy of the object; a rejection of the notion of a special human privileged access to the world; and affirming a limited human access to the Kantian things-in-themselves. In this first section, I want to expound on what such

commitments entail; subsequently I want to elucidate how such commitments relate to Harman's interpretation of the Cthulhu figure as the proclaimed *emblem* of his philosophical vision.

Triple-o has an ambivalent relation to Kant: it agrees with the Kantian claim that human knowledge can conceive of the things-in-themselves but never know them, but diverges from Kant's view that the human has a special relation to the world that is philosophically privileged, relinquishes Kant's notion of philosophy as predicated on human access to the world. For triple-o, the things-in-themselves *evade* the direct access of the human not because of a shortcoming that is a unique limitation of the human: rather, as Harman explicates, *relations in general* can never fully encompass the things they relate together, and the human-world relation has been foreclosed as the privileged starting point of philosophy (Continent, p.171).

In the triple-o schema, the primacy of the human withdraws into the background, and objects take center ontological stage. *All entities* are collapsed to the category of '*object*': even the human, and *bodies* exist merely as a *subset of objects*, are *certain kinds of objects*. Such a metaphysical maneuver *democratizes* the ontological plane: *humans* and *things* are part of a larger subset that subsumes them, neither more ontologically privileged than the other. Objects are conceived of as just as ontologically mysterious, inexhaustible and rich as the subjects that perceive them: and subjects never perceive objects in their full form directly; a subject's perception is *obfuscated*, never able to grasp the full breadth of the richness and strangeness of the objects she beholds.

The obfuscated vision of the human is a function of the *withdrawnness* of objects. This is to say that we can never fully envisage or appreciate the full magnitude of the strangeness and mystery of *things*, because they participate in a *secret life* behind the veil of their surface

appearances, impervious to our full access. The way objects and things appear to us, their veil of appearance, is what Harman calls the '*sensual object*', distinguishing it from the elusive '*real object*', the *thing-in-itself*. Like Kant, who conceived that we only ever perceive the limitations of the mediations of our cognition, and never the things-in-themselves, Harman affirms the existence of an *unbridgeable chasm* between the appearances of things and the things-in-themselves, saying that we can never access the things-in-themselves directly, the impenetrable '*real object*': only its manifestations as a '*sensual object*' (Ibid, p.171).

Overflowing their material manifestations, objects inhabit *clandestine domains*; the secret lives of objects take place within the enclosure of their own private '*vacuum*' that shelters and maintains their reticent solitude, a void that we cannot access, intrude upon or relate to. Their *secret black hole*: "The only way to do justice to objects is to consider that their reality is free of all relation, deeper than all reciprocity. The object is a dark crystal veiled in a private vacuum: irreducible to its own pieces, and equally irreducible to its outward relations with other things," (Quadruple Object, p.47).

Harman devises a fourfold schema of the links that exist between the different facets of objects, and the gaps in human perception that prevent us from perceiving those facets. '*Real objects*' never relate to one another in a direct way, for '*real objects*' are secluded from one another. The *only* relation that exists whereby objects *directly* encounter one another exists between '*real objects*' and '*sensual objects*'; such a relation encapsulates our human experience, in the sense that the human is a '*real object*' that interacts with the '*sensual objects*' or the *appearances* of the world. As a human or real-object, despite our access to sensual objects, we do not access sensual qualities *directly*. Objects show themselves in different ways at different times; this is the gap that Harman conceives of that exists between '*sensual objects*' and their

qualities. The ‘sensual objects’ that we perceive are not their ‘real qualities’, their ‘essence’: another gap. In Harman’s vision of object relations, *every juncture* between objects, other than the direct touching of real and sensual objects, is *necessarily mediated*. The only kind of link that can exist between *real* objects is *indirect*: what Harman terms *vicarious or allusive* causation (Weird Realism, p.256).

Since the means whereby we communicate with objects is via their appearances, appearances that are *always shifting, polyvalent, indeterminate*, causality is understood as a fundamentally *aesthetic* phenomenon, what Harman terms ‘*allure*’ (On Vicarious Causation, p.222). Relations reach into the “*infinite depths*” of objects, drawing out a particular expression: aesthetics is the way that objects *present themselves to one another* from such infinite depths. In this way, *art* acts as a means of access into the impenetrable depth of objects, (Guerilla Metaphysics, p.105) “releasing magma” from their *hidden core* (Ibid., p.130). On this account of indirect causation, one object can only *allude* to the reality of the other: only *allusion* is possible, despite their close proximity to one another, surfaces grazing against one another (Aesthetics as First Philosophy, p.30).

In vicarious causation, forms do not touch directly, but *converge* with one another through a port or intermediary, their *common space* or “*intentionality*”: such a space is a *meeting-ground* between objects paradoxically marked by those objects’ simultaneous absence or withdrawal from it. This common space where two objects meet in their *shared intentionality* Harman calls the “*hollow molten core*” of objects: this molten core is an intermediary between objects, not a real object itself (Towards a Speculative Realism, p.205).

This *inability to touch reality directly*, except through *illusion, allusion* or *vicariously*, is what makes reality fundamentally “*weird*” for Harman: its incommensurability with representation or measurement (Weird Realism, p.51).

Harman solicits an unlikely figure as the emblem of his philosophical vision of ‘*weird*’ realist object relations: Cthulhu, Lovecraft’s mythological and iconic anti-hero, tentacled and monstrous (Ibid, p.17).

Harman architects his interpretation of Cthulhu with the following quote from Lovecraft: “If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing... but it was the general outline of the whole which made it most shockingly frightful...” (Ibid., 24).

What exactly does Harman find so compelling in the image of such an entity- part human, dragon and octopus? Harman finds in Cthulhu a *metaphor* for the *strangeness* and *mystery* of objects: objects are strange at the surface level in their *monstrous aesthetic presentation*, a *shifting, polyvalent surface*, but the *strangest* facet of objects is the sense in which their *weirdness* and *horror cannot be fully communicated or represented*. Even beyond its tentacles, wings and human chimerical form, in Harman’s interpretation, what *really* evokes the reader’s sense of horror when encountering Cthulhu is the notion that Cthulhu’s ontological strangeness can only be *hinted at*, cannot be fully or literally described, *exceeding determinacy*: this quality is what Harman terms Lovecraft’s ‘Kantian’ sensibility, (Ibid., p. 30) interpreted in the sense that Harman conceives of Lovecraft’s prose as elucidating a “*gap*” between reality and the possibility for human access to such reality (Ibid., p.28). Harman also conceives that Lovecraft emphasizes the *contour* of its *outline* above its features that can be described, in

Harman's interpretation, suggesting that such an outline *exceeds* its mishmash of features, or using Harman's triple-o jargon, 'sensual qualities' that overflow their 'sensual objects'.

Harman's claim in *Weird Realism* is that Lovecraft's tendencies as a writer encapsulates the triple-o project, saying that Lovecraft's writings evince the gap between objects that are fundamentally unknowable and their qualities, as well as the gap between objects that we can access and the different surfaces such objects reveal of themselves (Ibid., .p.31).

Cthulhu for Harman, is a *real object*, despite that its figure occupies the *sensual*, as opposed to the material realm. Though real objects are impervious to our access beneath their surface representations, Harman thinks we can *create* real objects (Ibid., p.260). What constitutes a 'real' object in his view is its experiential inexhaustibility, impenetrability to linguistic descriptions, and its *deflection* of all analysis and perception to capture it (Ibid., p.237).

Objects are 'real' to different extents: but everything is fundamentally an object. The *degree of reality* that an object occupies is its *capacity for relation*, a capacity for relation that acts as a *function of its psychological capacity*. Harman favors the term '*polypsychism*' over '*panpsychism*' given that he wants to articulate the notion that not all objects are minded to the same degree, do not possess the same possibility for relation (Towards Speculative Realism, p.205).

Cthulhu for Harman, inhabits the sensual realm, but is a *real object*: enters into relations with other objects, is minded. Cthulhu, the monster in his estimation, is *real, psychological, indeterminable and at large!*

Having concluded an account of Harman's triple-o project and its championed emblem, Cthulhu, I want to shift gears to *Deleuze*: the following section will impart Deleuze's ontology of

bodies, map its points of convergence with Harman, and espouse a Deleuzian interpretation of the Cthulhu figure.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze invites his reader to discover her *body without organs*, and to figure out how to make it (p.153). Deleuze's ontology of bodies-without-organs, or *BwO*, is an ontology of *expansion*. The notion of a body lacking organs makes reference to a *primordial, formless energy* or *openness* that *pre-exists* and *underlies the organism*, containing *all of its possibilities*. Invoking the formation of the BwO is Deleuze's way of opening his subject to this primordial energy, which will allow the subject to expand beyond herself, to reorient her boundaries, and reformulate herself, reorganizing the forces and intensities of her constitution.

To construct one's BwO then, involves *unearthing the primordial possibilities* that exist *prior* to the specific organization of the system of the organism. The *system of the organism* captures the energy of the BwO in its form, short-circuiting the flow of the liberatory movement of the BwO. In this sense, the *construction* of a BwO is necessarily a *dismantling* of the organism: perturbing the perimeters of its comfortable constitution, and *freeing* the BwO by opening it up to a new space from which it was previously foreclosed (Ibid, p.160).

In the making a BwO, the self reaches beyond itself, reaching beyond the domain of the personal. Interior and exterior are coalesced into a single field of immanence: "like the absolute Outside that knows no Selves." (Ibid, p.156).

Intensities circulate on the terrain of the BwO, swimming through it. The way that intensities are unleashed in new formations on the BwO is the work of *desire*: it is desire that forges new connections, crosses thresholds. In this way, the means of creating one's body

without organs is through *desire* (Ibid, p.149). The BwO is *ultimately* desire, a *system* of desire, is that *by which* one desires. The BwO fundamentally comprises desire as it exists in an *immanent field*, what Deleuze calls the '*the plane of consistency*', and acts as a *membrane* that decides what to incorporate within itself, as informed by the '*abstract machine*' that guides its formation (Ibid, p.165).

These last points require some explanation. What is *desire* for Deleuze, and how is it connected to the '*abstract machine*'?

Desire exists as the *productive force at work in the universe*, and it has a *secret structure* that underlies the material world: hidden tunnels forming *clandestine networks*. All things are interpolated by these hidden networks, the force of desire that moves through all things. This hidden structural formation of desire, invisible at the material level of appearances, comprises a *machine*: a *desiring-machine*.

Desiring-machines function as keys: opening and closing domains, allowing ingress and egress between terms that plug into one another, instituting new connections, and rupturing connections that previously existed. (Ibid, p.334). Desire's capacity to forge connections and invoke rupture is accounted for by means of *art*; it is *art*, its liberatory rupture of creativity and decoding, that *underlies* desire, its primal openness rending the possibility for the function of these machinic interfaces of desire (Anti Oedipus, p.368).

Desire as structure, as a machine that underlies and moves the forces within the material world exists as the *secret formation of the unconscious*: the unconscious is a hidden machinic network at work in the material world. Inspired by *Jung* in this sense, this machinic network of the unconscious is a *collective* unconscious. The psychical vitalism or force of the machinic

unconscious is not disorganized: there are points where it clusters together, converges and overlaps within itself. These points of cluster and organization are called the '*abstract machine*'. The abstract machine, *an intelligence center*, a 'diagram', steers and guides the movements of becoming of a given BwO. BwO's exist at various levels of organization: the 'plane of consistency' is Deleuze's term for the *sum of all BwOs*, (A Thousand Plateaus, p.165) its movements dictated by its highest-level navigational center, its 'abstract machine' the *intersection of all assemblages, constructing the real to come* (Ibid, p.143).

This body without organs that exists on the horizon of the human is a machinic interface or technology that we *plug into* to open ourselves onto the unconscious realm, is an interface of becoming. Such a conception explains why the BwO would be conceived of as desire, the means whereby one desires: through desire we *construct our new bodies*, bereft of organs, and the BwO acts as the primordial openness and space in and through which such a re-constitution can be achieved.

The BwO is connected with Deleuze's vision of *sorcery*. 'Sorcery' is a *cipher* or *code word* that Deleuze uses to describe the clandestine workings of *becoming*, its secret processes of effectuation. To put it differently, sorcery is a *different metaphor* for the construction of one's BwO, in the sense that it is a *reconstitution of oneself* via plugging into the *powers* that extend oneself beyond oneself, is a process that opens oneself onto the unknown.

Deleuze elucidates a vision of sorcery in a chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus* as *becoming-animal*. Becoming-animal is not necessarily meant in its *literal* sense, but is another *cipher*: the *animals* that Deleuze refers to are *affects* and *powers* (Ibid, p.239).

Sorcery is the secret process of nature that overrides nature, superseding ancestry, genetics hereditary production. “It is quite simple; everyone knows it, but it is discussed only in secret. In the becoming-animal, characteristics are reproduced without heredity in ‘unnatural participations’” (Ibid, p.242). Sorcery is the hidden process of “true Nature”, unfurling transformations that can only be accounted for in terms of becoming. The *plane of consistency* is identified as the site for the sorcerer’s becoming (Ibid, p.251); the sorcerer opens herself onto the totality of all BwOs.

Deleuze’s philosophy can be summarized as a philosophy of *becoming-alterity*, of *becoming-other*: of *becoming-monster*. It comprises a process of *becoming-chimera* in a hybrid *reconstitution of oneself*, as one taps into the powers that become available by linking up to the hidden pathways of the unconscious encrypted in materiality. There exists *no boundary* in the construction of one’s own subjectivity that can’t be renegotiated or superseded: all things exist as potential *building material* for the creation of one’s BwO, alien subjectivities and affects that one can plug into, merge with, and access

In this way, Deleuze’s philosophical position is one that is *starkly at odds* with the triple-o brigade, Harman of whom acts as a spokesman here: a movement that conceives that *stringent limits* exist for the human’s capacity for knowledge, that *we can never reach the things-in-themselves*.

Deleuze’s philosophy conceives of *no such limits to cognition, perception or becoming*. The human for Deleuze is an *intermediary entity*, who does not exist in isolation to herself, and *isn’t confined to the perspective of the human subjectivity*. Not only are objects accessible to the human for Deleuze, they exist as *part of the human body*, are her *prosthetic limbs*, comprising

possibilities for her subjectivity to explore. The expansion of human cognition and perception of the human to objects (and the *inhuman*) is *what it means to be human*. Not only can we perceive the unperceivable, the imperceptible: *we can even become what is imperceptible*.

Deleuze's position espouses that rather than assigning objects to a reticent solitude that escapes our possibility for access, we can do better justice to objects by *coming to know them*. For Deleuze, there is *no impenetrable veil of things-in-themselves* concealed behind the blindness of human perception. The things-in-themselves reveal themselves to us as we are open to them, as *we open ourselves onto them*, and allow the movement of the flows of the other to move within us, taking us beyond the preconceived limits of our subjectivity. I can even merge with the *cosmos itself* if the abstract machine that guides me can encompass it. My subjectivity, life and psychic experiences are the *extension of my body as it is connected with the world*, functioning like a mirror: showing me myself, the force and structure of my desire, the construction of my subjectivity, my constructed body.

As such, there exists a certain intersection between Deleuze and the triple-o project; for Deleuze, too, the human exists on the same ontological plane as objects, in the *strict sense* that there exists a phylum of *continuity* that links them together, part of a larger subset that consumes them. But instead of such a *unified ontological field* barring human access to *know* the alterity of objects in a direct sense (as it does for the triple-o adherent), for Deleuze, the existence of such a unified field or continuum *opens human access to them*.

Despite their metaphysical clash, an accretion of contiguities exists between Deleuze and Harman. Both conceive of *a kind of* "molten core" (using Harman's terms) that exists between objects, where objects meet, a *volcanic center* or *machinic phylum* that is *fundamentally*

aesthetic in its function and constitution, and acts as a *port* for the relations between things. For both, the capacity for relation of things is *psychical* in nature. The main difference is that for Harman, such a linkage is indirect, and the way that things meet or fuse in such a port, is a congregation impervious to our full access since we are partly absent from it. For Deleuze, the juncture between things is a *direct pathway* we can follow onto: the fold of the unconscious.

Having thus mapped points of convergence as well as divergence between Deleuze and Harman, I want to return to the image of thought of Cthulhu, Harman's touted mascot for his triple-o programme. I want to suggest that such a vision, its vision of monstrosity, horror and abjection, is perhaps a better emblem for Deleuze's philosophy. What follows is an experiment in *noology*, the image of thought of *Cthulhu*: I want to articulate a Deleuzian interpretation of such a vision.

I want to evince the figure of *Cthulhu* in this context as a *Venn diagram* that maps the intersections of the ontologies of Deleuze and Harman. For Harman, Cthulhu represents what defies representation, cognition and perception, the full horror of its presence that cannot be fully articulated or understood, acting as an arrow that points towards the unknowable beyond: likewise, for Deleuze, I suggest, we can also interpret Cthulhu as an emblem of becoming-alterity that defies representation, indicating towards what exists beyond itself. But just because such a process defies representational capacity, is not to say that the *mystery of the other* cannot be cognized, understood or perceived, or even *grafted onto my organless body*.

Part human, octopus and dragon: a human figure, transposed with reptilian features, wings and a countenance of tentacles. A Deleuzian chimera, a *sorcerer's figure*, the image of a human who has fulfilled its becoming-inhuman, becoming-animal, its *monstrous imperative*:

consecrated its sacred union (*hieros gamos*) with the cosmos. Like a magic mirror that shows me my secret form, the abyss that returns one's own gaze is *oneself*. If horror is elicited by its beholder, I want to suggest that such an affect that emanates from *denial*, *self-denial*: like a Medusa who doesn't recognize her own eyes, not recognizing the outcome of her own construction, or the *possibility* for her self-construction, and rejects her own power. And in her self-refusal and self-abdication, she thrusts her creation and herself into a state of repression, withholding the energy of the BwO.

Cthulhu's head is like Medusa's: a human visage interrupted by the coils of tentacles. Yet Cthulhu's human face has been *effaced* in favor of tentacles, its *human front eviscerated* in favor of tendrils that reach outside of itself: each tentacle a *rhizome* that links onto the machinic phylum, outside of itself, holding open a line of becoming. A *machinic octopus* head whose tentacles act as tubes that transport affects outside of oneself, conjugating new flows and subjectivities: the *technology* for a self that has no end and no beginning. Its tentacles reaching beyond itself, extending into infinity.

The *machinic octopus* is also, I would suggest an apt emblem for Deleuze's model of the unconscious. While the machinic phylum is often described in rhizomatic form, to evince the structure of its movements between planes, it does not strictly occupy such a form, as evidenced by its intelligence structures, its abstract machines, locus points where its tentacles converge. Each tentacle leads to a single port, the head of the octopus, that unifies the structure of the organism, its form a *unity of multiplicity*; a unified organism that exists as a multiplicity.

I want to close now by evincing the intersecting zone of the Cthulhu-Venn diagram I've constructed. Harman and Deleuze espouse visions of secret realms, disclosing that things are not

merely as they appear to be: bodies and objects are profoundly more *strange* and *mysterious* than we can estimate or observe in our ordinary modes of perception. Objects are *psychical*, interpolated by *machinic* or *volcanic* magma, and it is only through aesthetics, the creative possibility of art that things gain their possibility for connection, reveal themselves to us, and that we can extend ourselves beyond ourselves, entering into relations with the unknown. ‘*Weird*’ and ‘*machinic*’ bodies populate and roam the world at large, invisible to representational thinking and the scientific-materialist imaginary, for instance: Cthulhus on the loose, and a machinic octopus whose tentacles perforate all things.

Figure 7. Tentacles by Cecilia Rose Inkol

11. The Machinic Mermaid and her Watery, Mercurial Underworld

The figure of the *mermaid* can be understood as an *emblem* or *metaphor* of the unconscious, her humanoid-fish form providing an *image of thought* and way of talking about the transformation of form, and the flitting, swimming valences of the unconscious.

Carl Jung understands the mermaid to embody an archetype that makes reference to the unconscious. The metaphor that corresponds to the unconscious, in Jungian thought, is the *sea*.

I want to suggest that the mermaid can be interpreted as the being that traverses the oceanic realm of the unconscious. She is not stuck within in, as a neurotic is: her body, a hybrid of fish and human, has adapted to its watery conditions. She is part human, part *overhuman*, in Nietzschean terms: she has overcome the challenges and obstacles posed by the unconscious. In this sense, the process of navigating, and therefore overcoming the personal unconscious will be elucidated as a process of *becoming-mermaid*.

The archetype of the mermaid can be unfurled in a new way via the philosophical architecture of Deleuze and Guattari. Their vision of the unconscious is a *machinic* realm- the unconscious formulates a *machine* comprising a matrix of clandestine networks, processes and flows. The process of navigating the machinic unconscious for Deleuze is a process of *merging* with it. Deleuze's vision of navigating the machinic unconscious will thusly be elucidated not only a process of becoming-machine, but also as becoming-mermaid: it is a process of becoming machinic-mermaid.

For Jung, the unconscious is embedded with primordial images or archetypes. The logic underlying these primordial images is the domain of myth: mythology acts as a *grammar* for the

articulation of archetypes, evincing the *story* that architects the primal images of the unconscious, enfolding its primal motifs into a dramaturgical narrative. A network of images.

This *network of images* that exists as the grammatical content of the unconscious does not appertain to an isolated individual: it is the mythic drama of all humanity, a shared unconscious dream that all are immersed within, inscribed within its matrix, and spurred by. The archetypal realm is universal, a shared, collective unconscious realm: the universal content that is poured into the psychic life of the each individual. Beneath the layer of the personal unconscious is a shared unconscious realm, a “*collective unconscious*”.

The way the unconscious tends to manifest itself in an archetypal form, its primordial image is *water*. Water is its default symbolic mode, its most prevalent form. The *sea* as the symbol of the collective unconscious (Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, p.18) makes reference to a vast expanse that lurks beneath conscious awareness, a watery *abyss*. Water also makes reference to a principle of *generation* (Symbols of Transformation, p.218), the generative element that underlies life. Our bodies are comprised of mostly water; water is our most basic necessity. Water acts as an image for the underlying principle of consciousness, engendering its very possibility: the conscious mind conceived of as borne from out of the unconscious. Thus, the unconscious is also conceived by Jung as a maternal symbol (Ibid., p.219), a symbol that makes reference to the *mother*. The unconscious is thus conceived, in an archetypal or metaphorical sense by Jung, of as a *feminine, watery underworld*. She is the *generatrix* of all, the *womb* from which all consciousness emerged.

Jung also sees water as connected with the Tao, symbol of the Tao, making reference to the “water dragon” of Tao, “whose nature resembles water,” interpreting it to mean: “a yang in

the yin, therefore, water means spirit that has become unconscious,” (Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, p. 18); Jung sees the transformative vitalist principle of the Tao is connected with the collective unconscious. The unconscious is transformative: Jung’s conceptions of the unconscious, as maternal, generatrix, all point towards a principle of creative generation, gestation and transformation.

Based on the notion of the unconscious as an abyssal sea, Jung developed a few different interpretations of mermaids.

“Whoever looks into the water sees his own image, but behind it living creatures soon loom up; fishes, presumably, harmless dwellers of the deep- harmless, if only the lake were not haunted. They are water-beings of a peculiar sort. Sometimes a mermaid or nixie gets ensnared in the fisherman’s net: a female human-fish hybrid. She is “an even more instinctive version of a magical feminine being I call the anima,” (Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, p.24).

The anima is a formative archetype of the unconscious, alongside the ego, the shadow and the Self. The anima (for men) and animus (for women) embodies the qualities of the opposite sex that live inside the unconscious. In other words, every man has an internal feminine archetype that mediates his relation with women and vice versa. This anima is conceived of as the feminine aspect of the man that dwells in his unconscious. She can be a source of danger or inspiration, and needs to be integrated, as an aspect of the unconscious personality, into conscious life (Ibid., p.27).

Jung is also inspired by alchemy, developing a psychological interpretation of the alchemists’ doctrines. The alchemists sought an all-pervading *essence* or *quality* that exists within the human, symbolized by *sea water*: in Jung’s interpretation, this sought-after elixir was

the *collective unconscious*, its nucleus comprising the ordering principle of the self (Mysterium Conjunctionis, p.278).

Jung developed an alchemical interpretation of the mermaid, of the alchemical symbol of *Melusine*, the aquatic and mysterious fish-hybrid woman of ancient European folklore. On his interpretation, Melusine lives in the unconscious, existing in the paradisiacal state prior to the Fall of the human into consciousness. Thus she lives “in the blood” of the human, the blood as the primal symbol that makes reference to the soul, the in-dwelling mermaid spirit of the human. She is an *anima* figure, a variation of the “*mercurial serpent*” of alchemy, sometimes interpreted as a *snake-woman*, a twofold nature that evinces the “*monstrous*” aspect of the alchemical figure of *Mercurius* (Alchemical Studies, p.180): Medusa the other *face* of the mermaid.

Mercurius, in the alchemical lexicon, is a reference to *mercury*, *quicksilver*, but it also holds a deeper meaning: “the world-creating spirit concealed or imprisoned in matter,” (Psychology and Alchemy, 3.1).

Mercurius appears as a *dragon*, the tail-eating Ouroboros, most ancient pictorial symbol of the alchemical arts. The self-devouring dragon Mercurius is the alpha and omega of the alchemical project, its beginning and end, forms a *wheel*. The alchemical dragon devours itself then is reborn, the primal matter that undergoes *constant transformation* and *permutation*. Its body underwent a scission to produce the four alchemical elements, the building blocks of reality.

In the beginning, Mercurius was a hermaphrodite that split into the duality of male-female: the *reunion* of their separated forms completed the *philosopher’s stone*, the mineral manifestation of ultimate wisdom.

Mercurius is a *liquid-metal*, an entity defined by its paradoxical elements: “He is metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison and yet healing draught – a symbol uniting all the opposites,” (Psychology and Alchemy, 3.1).

Mercurius in Jung’s psychological alchemy refers to a unifying and generative principle of *transformation*, guised in paradox, the *molting*, *molten* and *motivating force* of the collective unconscious that perforates all things: its elusive elixir a magical, molten, and molting bath of transformation. Its transformative bath, as we have previously seen, are feminine waters, the maternal womb of gestation and transformation as the guiding force that underlies consciousness.

In Jung’s thought, coming to consciousness is a journey fraught with danger and peril, a mythic journey. For individuation to take place, one must surmount the obstacles and challenges posed by the personal unconscious: monsters and dragons lurk within. Swimming in the personal unconscious not just the anima/us but also a dark, foreboding figure: the *shadow* aspect of the personality that must be encountered and overcome, reconciled. The shadow, is the unacknowledged or dark side of the personality that represents the qualities one is most repulsed by in others: it is the refused and unacknowledged content of the personality that is projected onto others. The fear of the other stems from within, the fear of the unacknowledged self.

“True, whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. [...]

“But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved: we have at least brought up the personal unconscious. The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness,” (Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, p.20).

I want to unfurl an interpretation of the anima figure beyond the notion of the anima and the figure of the mercurial collective unconscious. In my interpretation, the archetype of the mermaid can be interpreted as the vehicle for the transformation engendered by navigating the personal unconscious. She is the *psychopomp* that ferries the human from neurosis to integration. The mermaid can be understood as the figure that navigates the *maze* of the personal unconscious, overcomes the obstacles and relays posed by the shadow and the other indwelling archetypes of the personal unconscious. In this sense, *navigating* and *deciphering* the *maze* of the personal unconscious can be understood as a process of *becoming-mermaid*: to emerge from the traps and challenges of the personal unconscious, *fins* are required to swim through its dark, reflective waters.

The landscape of the personal unconscious is a foreboding one, filled with traps, projections and decoys: but once its abyss is crossed, and its monstrous inhabitants harmoniously integrated, the shadow can be gazed upon, psychological projections withdrawn, human neurosis surmounted. Whereas the neurotic is defined by her capture by her own unconscious indwelling archetypes, stuck within its relays and ensnared by its deceptions, the mermaid as the being that navigates the labyrinthine unconscious, overcomes herself, overcoming the neurotic delusions that typifies the human condition: she evolves. Part human, part fish, as the vehicle that

overcomes and navigates the mirror-maze of the personal unconscious, the mermaid is the *Overhuman*, the Nietzschean bid of the will-to-power as *self-overcoming*.

“The human is a rope,” imparts Nietzsche, “stretched between the animal and the overhuman: a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring. A dangerous looking back: a dangerous trembling and halting.

“What is great in the human is that she is a bridge and not a goal. What is loveable in the human is that she is a down-going and crossing-over,” (Thus Spake Zarathustra, p.126). The human is suspended in a threshold between falling prey to animal instincts and the surmounting of those impulses as the *overhuman*; in her compulsive regress, the human is more animal than the animal but endowed with the capacity to overcome herself, to surmount her neurosis, supersede her human impasse. When she decides to navigate the maze she is confined within, she reaches beyond herself, surpassing the human neurotic condition.

Using the notion of becoming-mermaid as an axle, I want to now transpose this discussion to a new domain, and suggest we can broaden our discussion to the thought-world of Deleuze and Guattari. The elucidation of the mermaid as the figure that navigates and overcomes the personal unconscious acquires a new valence within Deleuze’s architecture. For Deleuze, the unconscious is a machinic realm; the process of navigating it is a process of *merging* with it as one *reconstructs oneself*, and opens oneself onto its broader network that exists hidden in the world.

For Deleuze, the process of navigating the personal unconscious is a process of merging with the broader machinic network, a topography of clandestine networks, shifting and reforming, hidden within the folds on the material world. This process of navigation is also a

process of redefining the delimitations of the personal, opening onto new thresholds of possibility, extending the reaches of one's body, and fusing with the metal phylum.

Deleuze and Guattari render the molten, metallic underworld of Jung's psychological interpretation of alchemy into an explicit form: not only is the collective unconscious made of *metal*, it formulates a *machine*. It is a *self-organizing machine*, its *veins* perforating all things in its machinic network.

The collective unconscious for Deleuze comprises a topographical structure that *underlies* the material world, secret tunnels comprising clandestine network, a hidden lining that pierces through all things, enfolding all things in its matrix. This hidden matrix acts as a steering principle, underneath the material surface of things that guides the circulation of a hidden source of energy at work in the world: the flow of desire.

Desire courses through the veins of the machinic unconscious: desire acts as a secret motivating force at work in the world, provoking the movements of the machinic unconscious, and acts as the composition material for its machinic structure. Desire is *metallic* in its constitution, the construction material of the machinic unconscious and the means whereby the unconscious reformulates itself.

Desire forms the molten metal architecture of the machinic unconscious, dictating its movements and comprising its structure. Desire is a machine: a *desiring-machine*, the structural formation of the collective unconscious, its network of flows, the *metal skeleton* that underlies the material world.

Desiring machines move like keys that open and close domains, instituting and rupturing connections that previously existed, dictating the course of movement of the flow of desire, its

ingress and egress between things. Desire as force and structure, is constantly shifting, reforming itself through its connections and disruptions of connection, creating circuits of energy (A Thousand Plateaus, p.334).

Tapping into this structured metallic stream of desire that comprises the machinic unconscious is a process of building architecture, the construction of what Deleuze calls the *body without organs* (BwO).

The construction of the BwO is a building project whereby what is being constructed is *ourselves*. We are always in the process of constructing our bodies—our body as it exists *outside ourselves*, bereft of organs (A Thousand Plateaus, p.153).

Strewn up with the world, the physical organism is just a superficial delimitation. We always exist outside of ourselves, our body is always strewn up in the world, a *negotiated subjectivity* and *symbiosis*: the construction of the body without organs is the construction of one's subjectivity. Via our desire, and the systems of desire we create within ourselves, we forge a contract that determines our relation with the world.

By retooling the system of desire as it exists within ourselves, we enter into communication with desire at work in the world. Engineering a body without organs is a process of constructing a new system of desire, allowing it to circulate where it was previously stultified. We do this by opening onto the metallic system that exists outside of ourselves, merging with it, recalibrating our connections and superseding previously instituted boundaries.

It is a paradoxical architectural project: we overcome ourselves by recreating ourselves, we transform ourselves by extending beyond ourselves, opening ourselves to liberatory possibilities we were closed off to previously.

The organless body harnesses the primordial energy that exists prior to the institution of form, a liberatory openness that precedes and underlies the organism, where all of its possibilities still reside, accessible. Reaching into the wellspring of the primal energy of the BwO, Deleuze's subject taps into its pure potentiality, enabling her to expand, transform, reconfigure herself, reconstitute the forces and intensities that comprise her.

Ensnared by the system of the organism, the primordial energy of the BwO is trapped, suffocated, stultified. Thus to access this primal energy requires a dismantling of the organism: it has to be taken apart, to release the energies that underlie it, to open the floodgates that have restrained it. Construction is a dismantling, taking the organism apart to reconstruct it. The demolition of the organism is simultaneously a re-construction: retooling the parts that once constituted its form: reformulating it, to create a new system where the flow of desire can traverse and intensities or energy can circulate (Ibid., p.160).

To construct a BwO, the self re-engineers itself, reaching beyond itself, overflowing the domain of the personal, forging new subjectivities and individuations. Interior and exterior meld into a new embryonic subjectivity, a new structural formation "like the absolute Outside that knows no Selves," (p.156).

Intensities traverse the topography of the BwO, moving through its system of relays and movement. Intensities are reoriented in their movement by changing the structure it moves within, such that it permits new possibilities of movement.

The primary construction material of the BwO is desire: desire is what it's made of, and the means whereby it is reconstructed. To create the BwO is a process of retooling desire, reorienting it in more productive, liberating ways (Ibid., p.149).

The BwO is fundamentally desire, the system it engenders and the means whereby one desires. Its space of openness, system of relays and circulation exists as the possibility of desire in that in its primal form, it is pure energy, undifferentiated and total possibility, a primal state that can always be tapped back into, a primal openness that can never be completed closed off (Ibid., p.160).

The construction of the BwO is not haphazard but intentional, its construction guided by a blueprint or diagram, called its *abstract machine*. The abstract machine dictates the formation of the BwO, decides what to incorporate within its membrane and what to reject. The abstract machine acts as a guide, a navigational center that architects the construction of the BwO system. It is an intelligence center, and they exist alongside all BwOs (Ibid., p.165).

BwOs exist at various levels of organization. The highest level, the sum of all BwO is called the plane of consistency (Ibid., p.165). The abstract machine that steers its composition is the intersection of all assemblages, the highest level intelligence center, its map dictating the real to come, designing the plan for the future (Ibid., p.143).

By launching a body without organs that can encompass this highest level organizational center, the ultimate abstract machine becomes accessible, and the subject becomes a co-creator in the world at large, tapping into its architectural plan for the real to come.

Deleuze also elucidates the process of opening onto the network of the unconscious and plugging into plane of consistency, the organized system of powers that exists outside oneself as *becoming-animal*: overcoming the stultifying delineations of the personal is an *animal* endeavor. ‘*Animal*’ in this context does not make reference to *literal* animals: it acts as a codeword to refer to *powers* and *affects* (Ibid., p.239). *Becoming-animal* thus entails becoming receptive to alien

affects and powers. Attaining such receptivity involves opening thresholds between oneself and the world. This is a mode of receptivity that Deleuze calls *sorcery*.

Sorcery is the hidden process behind nature, the veiled, true face of nature, precipitating becomings that defy the laws of heredity, genetics and ancestry: sorcery is *transformation* that can only be accounted for as *magic*, an effectuation at odds with the representational, scientific-materialist imaginary; 'true nature' (Ibid., p.251) is the gesticulation of sorcery: *magic*.

Sorcery is the transformation of subjectivity, a process of inter-subjectivity: the affects and powers leach from their source of origination, funneled and siphoned into a disparate term in an infecting, transversal motion.

The notion of becoming-animal as the transversal path of affects of powers as they are siphoned into new subjectivities is fitting as an interpretation of the mermaid. Half-fish, half human, the mermaid can be understood in terms of becoming-animal, as the human who has opened herself onto the threshold of the unknown, a *metal threshold*, bequeathed alien affects and powers.

Becoming-animal is simultaneously *becoming-machine*: machinic sorcery, a becoming-machinic-mermaid. The mermaid is a body of dislocated organs: she can be understood as an *emblem* of the transversal processes in the machinic unconscious: its influx of alien affects and powers, the movements of conjugation and contagion that invoke the crystallization of new subjectivities.

For Deleuze, the process of navigating the personal unconscious is a process of merging with the broader machinic network, a topography of clandestine networks, shifting and reforming, hidden within the folds of the material world. This process of navigation is also a

process of redefining the delimitations of the personal, opening onto new thresholds of possibility, extending the reaches of one's body via fusing with the metal phylum. Retaining the notion of the mermaid as the figure that navigates the maze of the unconscious, Deleuze's mode of navigation is *fusion and delineation*: Deleuze's subject fuses with the broader network, yet must configure and delineate a system of desire such that the forces of desire can circulate freely, without becoming trapped or stultified. The figurative mermaid that navigates the unconscious in Deleuze's thought-world is the *machinic mermaid*; overcoming the stultified energy of the BwO, overcoming the confines of the unconscious can be understood as a process of *becoming-machinic-mermaid*. She can also be understood as the *structure of the machinic unconscious and what underlies it*.

Connecting my Deleuzian interpretation of the mermaid with the theoretical terrain traversed in the preceding chapters, particularly with Heidegger, Lacan and Kristeva, the mermaid acts as a *figuration or metaphor* for the *monstrous feminine*, the unconscious in its feminine aspect. She is foreign and alien in her form, and seductive as she beckons one towards oblivion: Homer's siren songstresses, the mermaid that lures unwitting sailors to their watery doom: the annihilation of the subject, searing the thread of subjectivity. It is telling that in Jung's alchemical imaginary, the Melusine character that embodies the stirring metallic molting of the unconscious is twofold and two-faced: her alternate visage wearing Medusa's serpentine-tentacled crown. They are images of a humanoid feminine *monster*; she is what is *most* unknown since she is *denied*: the alien true identity, her ensorcelling *gaze* and *song*. Heidegger's Medusa is likewise a *songstress*, her song the zenith of poetry, the pealing chime of transformation. Her ensorcelling gaze-song is the harbinger of destruction that imparts new life and growth, death as revivification, openness of rebirth.

She is the moving gears and motion of a mobile matrix of meaning, emblem of the reshaping proclivity of the deepest watery reaches of the unconscious. The mobile matrix or womb-web she exists within is a maze of meaning, a reformulating architecture and clearing that opens and closes, the jaws of a devouring serpent bestowing the richness of life's possibilities and its very possibility to be.

The ancient Greek myth of the minotaur helps to elucidate these themes. In the ancient Greek myth of the minotaur, king Mino is punished by Poseidon when he doesn't keep his end of the bargain that resulted in his kingship. His punishment is that his wife, Pasiphae, her name literally meaning *wide-shining*, must bear a monstrous progeny: part human, part bull. The minotaur. The Greek hero *Theseus*, whose name indicates *reason*, is tasked to defeat the minotaur, who lives at the center of the maze of Knossos. Theseus navigates the maze with the help of Ariadne, Mino's daughter, her namesake evincing her connection with the spider. She offers Theseus a clue: string or thread, to help him retrace his steps in the labyrinth (Ovid, 152-182). In the mythology that I have elucidated over the course of this chapter using the conceptual architecture of Jung and Deleuze, the minotaur at the heart of the maze of meaning and the unconscious is Woman: a feminine, tentacled, serpentine-crowned mermaid, monster, alien.

The confrontation with the unknown monster situated at the crux of the maze of meaning is a confrontation with death, a meeting with what is most repressed, prior to the contract of the mirror. She is the alien in the familiar. But she need not be conquered by reason and suppressed; she can be assimilated, a lost aspect of the self that can be re-membered, merged with in a twofold motion of integrating the unknown, yet maintaining the thread of meaning and subjectivity: the self is *delineated* but also in the *flux* of transformation. Deleuze imparts that the

way to traverse the maze of meaning of the unconscious is via *following the thread* that leads onto its network, connecting to an unknown territory, opening oneself to the monstrous or unassimilated alien within with the aid of an evolving system that can sustain the incorporation of the unknown; the unknown, alien matrix is Woman in her various guises, the mermaid or Medusa that can be interpreted as the movement that stirs the formation of the maze: a maze transposed by fins and tentacles.

Drawing an image of thought using the figuration of the mermaid as emblem of the unconscious, Deleuze's machinic unconscious can be envisaged as a *mermaid-matrix*, its flows of transport a metallic finned structure, the unconscious architecture of the *machinic mermaid*. A moving nexus of mermaid-tails that formulate a web or maze, a mermaid-rhizome-machine comprised of swimming *metal mermaids*, the transposing motion of her transformation: the metal tubes of the machinic phylum have *fins*— an interspecies and mineral hybrid. Her mermaid fins are like *tentacles*, a conjoined knot of tentacles terminating in fins: each tail comprising a *tentacle* of Medusa's serpentine crown. A crown of fin-tentacles.

In summary, Jung understands the collective unconscious as inscribed with primal archetypes: the archetype most strongly correlated with the unconscious is the sea, an abyss of water, its murky depths. He interprets the mermaid archetype as an anima figure, the internalized other that mediates one's relations with the opposite sex. He also develops his own notion of the metallic mermaid, Melusine, a central figure of alchemy and avatar of Mercurius, the mercurial and polymorphous archetype in alchemy, interpreting her as the molten fluid of the collective unconscious. Transposed into Deleuze's domain, Jung's *metallic* mermaid that lives in the blood of the human becomes a *machinic* mermaid.

I have developed in these pages another notion of the mermaid archetype, as the psychopomp that traverses the unconscious realm, navigating the obstacles of its maze, ushering the subject to its integration. It's a maze out there, inside the unconscious.

For Deleuze, the only way out of the maze is by designing a new maze. A feat of re-engineering. Bodies without organs are always guided by an abstract machine, or blueprint or plan that steers its movements. Change the blueprint and the whole maze changes. Opens.

One's machinic body needs to be actively constructed using the construction material of the unconscious, its machinic connections and flows. In Deleuze's vision of the subject, the subject is only bound by the confines she imposes on herself. She becomes a cocreator in the world by entering into communion with the broader network that exists in the world. This is how she constructs her machinic body, a prosthesis to extend beyond herself. Overcoming the confines of the personal unconscious, its system of loops and relays can thus be articulated as a process of *becoming-machine*. Coalescing my Jungian interpretation of overcoming the obstacles posed by the unconscious as a process of becoming-mermaid with Deleuze's notion of surmounting the structures of the personal unconscious as becoming-machine: self-overcoming can be understood as a process of becoming *machinic-mermaid*.

Figure 8. Mermaid by Cecilia Rose Inkol

Figure 9. The Arrow of Becoming by Cecilia Rose Inkol

12. Conclusion

This has comprised a project to understand the art as a technology that invokes transformation. Where Heidegger, Deleuze, Lacan, Kristeva, Schelling, Slattery and Benjamin meet in unison is at the locus of *transformation*, the transformative capacity of art. Transformation is the crux, the mediating point between forms, the locus situated at the *crosshairs* of art and language, technology and magic.

Art is manifestation of spirit. Art is the opening of poetry, the met gaze of the Goddess. Art is imbued with a message from the unconscious, the reformulating gesture of the *symptom*, *language* and *material discourse*. Art is *murder*, the reorienting gears of the *chora*, interposed within the symbolic frame. Art is *revolution*, threatened by Medusa's annihilating gaze of abjection. Art is the invocation of being into the material world, the siphoning of the ideal into real, the way the divine reveals itself most completely in the material realm. Art elicits *translation* and exegesis, bearing an encoded divine meaning.

These are different ways of interpreting the manifestations that arise in form, or myself, and its transformations. The way that something beyond my confines shows itself to me, transforming me if I listen to it, can be interpreted as a *symptom* or a *spirit*, but these conceptualizations make reference to a transformative flux that exists beyond me, soliciting my awareness to expand, to reach beyond my confines: extending my repertoire of meaning. This is the body of transformation.

This is the realm of dreams and mystery, apparitions, and ghosts. A truth that hides. Always reformulating itself. Awaiting deciphering, but then it will flutter off again, evanescent. Secret. This is the language of dreams. The way that truth covers over its tracks. The workings of

the unconscious, like a machine whose parts are constantly moving, mobile, sentient. A linguistic machine. An underlying unity between things that allows for such motility, that permits its flight. Language and consciousness that are always in flux, reformulating, unfolding in new ways. Flux and movement. Tracing the outline of invisible forms. A metamorphic molting and hatching.

Art is *technology*, a *primitive technology*; technology is the interface that invokes transformation; transformation, whether physical or metaphysical is a *transformation of meaning*. The transformation of meaning requires a permutation of *perception*. Art is a *germination of meaning*, a shift in perception or subjectivity. Art as technology is an interface for the generation of meaning and new percepts, an interface with the world and with the hidden aspects of oneself.

The interconnection of meaning with all discourse is what makes art revolutionary, Kristeva imparts. We can understand the unconscious as a structural formation (via Lacan), the structural support that allows for the transmogrification of meaning, the permutation of language as art that invokes a manifestation, a shifting material formation of meaning, the accretion of meaning upon meaning. This is Lacan's version of Heidegger's structure of the openness that underlies meaning. As Deleuze elaborates explicitly, the unconscious is a *network* that underlies the material world, the shared linguistic structure that permeates all discourse and formation. The unconscious forms a labyrinthine maze of meaning, the shifting meaning of life, that underlies life, the shifting meaning of being. The twisting shape and patterns that underlie life is the technological interface of transformation that art and language mimic structurally (Benjamin); their structural, isomorphic *mimesis* is what enables their ontological effectuation, their formal correspondence replete with *magic* or manifest power. In their isomorphism, the structures of art, language and life interpenetrate, enmeshed in a game of *relay of meaning*.

As Heidegger, Deleuze, Lacan, Kristeva, Schelling and Benjamin iterate, transformation presupposes an underlying unity or continuity between things, a unifying principle or primal reality that form can retreat to in order to undergo its involution. *Magic* as the technology that employs as its medium the invisible network of correspondences between things, requires a fabric of continuity for its coherence and function.

The *feminine* is connected with continuity and the maze of meaning. The maze is historically a symbol connected with the goddess; the *labrys* is an *axe*, shaped like a butterfly, ancient weapon associated with the goddess and the feminine. A strong etymological trace: *labrys* and *labyrinth*. The presence of mazes at ancient megalithic tombs (for instance Crete) once led to the notion that mazes were associated with death. But the feminine offers a structural passageway through death, in her gestating womb, the winding path of the birth canal: her passageway a path of *transformation*, the butterfly's awakening from the chrysalis, metamorphosis and rebirth (Meehan, p.66-69).

For Heidegger, art, language, technology and magic are fundamentally intertwined, united by transformation, its centripetal force. This transformative movement is *Aletheia*, and truth principle. She is a shifting truth, always enrobing herself in a new guise, her self-revelation simultaneously a cloaking, the possibility of her morphing form predicated on the primal openness that underlies all things. She appears in presence via the conjuring power or magic of poetry and art to invoke manifestation, poetry tapping into the primal openness of life; the *structure of opening* is at the beckoning call of poetry. This primal openness comprises the underlying unity within life, granting its very possibility, the precondition of magic. Magic is primordial technology, an *understanding* of the primordial. Heidegger intimates that the precondition of magic, its invoking gesture, is openness. The divine presence exists in openings.

For Deleuze, transformation is the motion of the machinic unconscious, a reformulating movement, constantly reorienting its structure, a secret network that exists enfolded in the world. Hooking up to this structure is sorcery, a magical merging with the structure that dictates the circulation of energy in the world, its clandestine determining structure of effectuation. The rupture of art is what underlies its constitution, and comprises a method of plugging into it. Like Heidegger, Deleuze presupposes an underlying unity between things as a prerequisite for the possibility of magic: Deleuze amalgamates Heidegger's openness into a structural formation. Art is magic, technology, functions of the transformations of the machinic unconscious.

Lacan likewise presupposes a structural formation of the unconscious that underlies the possibility of transformation. Art and bodily productions are imbued with a fluttering message, the technology of the unconscious to communicate the incommunicable, to bypass the resistances of the conscious mind. The unconscious mind is characterized by its transformative structure, transforming and adopting a new guise to precipitate the transformation of consciousness. Lacan retools Heidegger's transforming truth principle to a principle of the unconscious. Heidegger's structure of the Open, of opening, becomes the structure of the unconscious, a structure shared by, and interconnected with all discourse.

Kristeva takes Lacan's framework as her point of departure, but she emphasizes the threat of meaninglessness when the reformulating principle precedes signification, isolated from a signifying system. When strewn up with a signification system, the chora's movement is poetry, revolutionary in its reconstitution of the symbolic and social systems. In isolation, bereft of content, she says, the transformative movement of the chora creates the nihilism of abjection, an attack on subjectivity. Yet, the artist must face the threat of abjection to enter into the transformative realm, it is a perilous undertaking. The artist sublimates the threat of abjection by

immersing into it, holds it at bay by confronting it. Medusa is the patron Goddess of abjection, patron Goddess of artists and poets. The liberatory feminine language is poetry, as Heidegger intimates: poetry is the language of the Goddess Aletheia.

For Schelling, the Absolute is the transformative principle that underlies all things, enfolding all things into its fabric, the underlying unity between things. It is this unity that precipitates the artist's involution of the universal in the particular: as she realizes the essence of the human as it exists in the divine, the Absolute is channeled through her philosophy-art. The artist, as she siphons the ideal into the real, acts as an avatar of the Absolute, performs its work. The artist is a vehicle for the Absolute to achieve self-realization. It is a linguistic self-realization: the Absolute is reason and the Logos, the primordial reality of language, and art acts as an invocation, invoking Being in its symbolic mode, the invocation of magic. For Schelling, the impulse of magic is an inclination of the underlying unity of things as proffered by the fabric of the absolute.

For Benjamin, translation, criticism and allegory are technological vehicles to extend the valence of meaning, predicated on the liberatory death of the fracture, brokenness that issues a new fold of meaning, building material for new involutions of form. Via translation, the site of 'pure language' that the human was sundered from via the Fall of Man, is rendered *closer*, the realm where all meaning is reconciled. Language is also conceived as the pinnacle of mimetic perception, the final harbor of magic, magic as primal correspondence between things as patterns of similarity.

Slattery's received alien language, Glide, is a *sinthome* and manifestation of the feminine, poetic language. Slattery has plunged into the abyss of the chora, inched as close to it as it is

possible to achieve without relinquishing meaning or subjectivity. Her language is a radically polyvalent structuration, transitive and constantly transforming, ascribed the power of psychical transformation. Slaterry's work is predicated on the notion of the intertwining of consciousness and language, and their reciprocal *transformation*. Glide organizes itself as a maze: navigating it requires the maintenance of multiple or paradoxical meanings. Philip K. Dick's paradoxical maze of meaning takes the form of the material world, a maze that preoccupies itself with its own self-decipherment, a paradoxical multi-layered assemblage.

Deleuze and Harman espouse notions of polyvalent bodies. For Harman, bodies are polyvalent at their surface level, a negotiated form contracted between the perceiver and perceived, but behind their surface appearances, surfaces of aesthetic causality, lurks an unknown void, a secluded harbor. For Deleuze, bodies exist outside of their representation delineations: bodies are strewn up in the world, a subjectivity that needs to be actively constructed. The human form is a creative reconstruction project: the ontology of form is an ontology of *bodies* and delineation of *subjectivity*.

Jung's collective unconscious is a *transformative realm*, populated by polymorphous archetypes. Overcoming the personal unconscious is a process of transformation, a becoming-mermaid. In Deleuze's terms, this becoming-mermaid is a process of becoming-machinic-mermaid: the process of overcoming the confines of the personal unconscious is a self-reconstructive process of fusing onto the machinic realm. The metal, machinic mermaid, the fluid motion of the unconscious, is always transforming, changing her form: amorphous.

McLuhan imparts that technology, in addition to reconfiguring subjectivity, also acts as a *bodily extension*, a bodily *prosthesis* (Understanding Media, p.8). For Deleuze, the *cosmos*

comprises the *limit* of such a technological bodily extension. Technology is a transformation of meaning, body, subjectivity, perception or materiality. A transformation of meaning or perception is a metaphysical or ontological transformation. Language and art can be employed as metaphysical technologies, transforming meaning and perception; such a change of meaning and perception can propel a *material change*.

Transformation: a fold that opens, unfolding itself, splaying its breadth, then re-folds, closing in on itself, clasping its edges, turning inwards to evince a new form. Something new emerges, the rose from its thorns, an evolution of form: a new synthesis of meaning.

Bibliography

Introduction

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw Hill Book Company: 1964.

Chapter 1

Elliott, Ralph. *Runes. An Introduction*. W. V. Manchester University Press: 1959.

Legeza, Laszlo. *Tao magic: The Secret Language of Diagrams and Calligraphy*. Thames and Hudson: 1987.

Patterson, David. *Hebrew Language and Jewish Thought*. Taylor and Francis: 2005.

Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah*. Penguin Group. NY: 1978.

Sephir Yetzirah Jason Aronson, Inc.; 1st Jason Aronson Inc. ed edition (June 1, 1995)
trans. Aryeh Kaplan

The Poetic Edda. trans: Jeremy Dodds. Coach House Books: 2014.

Chapter 2

Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*. Translation: Deborah Roberts. Hackett Publishing Company: 2012.

Barash, Jeffrey. *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning*. Fordham University Press, NY: 2003.

Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *Norse Myths*. Penguin Books NY: 1982.

Heidegger, Martin. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Yale University Press: 2000.

Heidegger, Martin. *Parmenides*. Indiana University Press: 1992

Heidegger, Martin. *The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides*. University of Indiana Press: 2015.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 3-36.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Turning." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 36-53.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Age of the World-Picture." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 115-155.

Heidegger, Martin. "Letter on Humanism." *Basic Writings*. ed. David Farrell Krell. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1977. 213-267.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Way to Language." *Basic Writings*. ed. David Farrell Krell. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1977. 393-427.

Heidegger, Martin. "Origin of the Work of Art." *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 15-87.

Heidegger, Martin. "What Are Poets For?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 87-141.

Heidegger, Martin. "Building Dwelling Thinking." *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 141-161.

Heidegger, Martin. "Language." *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 185-209.

Heidegger, Martin. "Poetically Man Dwells." *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 209-227.

Martin, Jay. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*. University of California Press: 1993.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translation: A. D. Melville. Oxford University Press: 1986.

The Poetic Edda. trans: Jeremy Dodds. Coach House Books: 2014.

Chapter 3

Caputo, John. *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*. Fordham University Press, 1986.

Deleuze, G. 2005. *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel Smith (University of Minnesota Press).

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *AntiOedipus*. trans: Robert Hurley. University of Minnesota Press, MN: 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, London: 1987.

Heidegger, Martin. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Yale University Press: 2000.

Heidegger, M. 1991. *Nietzsche: Vol.1, The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (HarperSanFrancisco)

Heidegger, Martin. "Origin of the Work of Art." *Basic Writings*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 140-212.

Heidegger, Martin. *Parmenides*. Indiana University Press: 1992

Heidegger, Martin. "The Age of the World-Picture." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 115-155.

Heidegger, Martin. "What Are Poets For?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers. NY: 1971. 87-141.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 3-36.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Turning." *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Harper and Row Publishers. NY: 1977. 36-53.

Lacan, J. 1981. 'Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*,' *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book XI, trans. Alan Sheridan (W.W. Norton & Company).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans: Donald Landes. Routledge: NY:2012.

Nietzsche, F. 1967. Book Three, Part IV, "The Will to Power as Art," *The Will to Power*, trans. Kaufmann and Hollingdale (Vintage Books).

"A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy." trans by Wing-Tsit Chan. Princeton University Press, NJ: 1963.

Parkes, Graham (Ed.). *Heidegger and Asian Thought*. University of Hawaii Press: 1987.

Chapter 4

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, London: 1987.

Lacan, Jacques. *Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XX Encore 1972-73 On Feminine Sexuality The Limits of Love and Knowledge*. ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. trans. Bruce Fink Norton and Company Inc. NY: 1975.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XXIII The Sinthome 1975-76* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller trans: A R Price Polity Press, Cambridge, UK: 2016.

Lacan, Jacques, *Écrits*. trans. Bruce Fink. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. NY:1999.

Chapter 5

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. trans. Leon S. Roudiez Columbia University Press, NY:1982.

Kristeva, Julia. *The Severed Head*. trans: Jody Gladding. Columbia University Press NY:2012.

Kristeva. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Columbia University Press. 1985.

Chapter 6

Schelling, Friedrich. *The Philosophy of Art*. Minnesota University Press, MN: 2008.

Chapter 7

Benjamin, Walter. "Anti-Theses," trans. Rodney Livingstone, *Selected Writings Volume II*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 409-412.

Benjamin, Walter. "Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism," trans. David Lachterman, Howard Eiland and Ian Balfour, *Selected Writings Volume I*, ed. Marcus Bullock & Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 116-201.

Benjamin, Walter. "Doctrine of the Similar," trans. Michael Jennings, *Selected Writings: Volume II*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 694-699.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Destructive Character," trans. Rodney Livingstone, *Selected Writings Volume II*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 541-543.

Benjamin, Walter. "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*," trans. Stanley Corngold, *Selected Writings: Volume I*, ed. Marcus Bullock & Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 297 - 360.

Benjamin, Walter. "Letter to Florens Christian Rang," trans. Rodney Livingstone, *Selected Writings: Volume I*, ed. Marcus Bullock & Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 387-391.

Benjamin, Walter. "On the Concept of History," *Selected Writings: Volume IV*. ed. Michael W. Jennings and Howard Eiland, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 2003, pp.381-401.

Benjamin, Walter. "On Language as Such and on the Nature of Man," trans. Edmund Jeffcott, *Selected Writings: Volume I*, ed. Marcus Bullock & Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 297 - 360.

Benjamin, Walter. "On the Mimetic Faculty," trans. Edmund Jephcott, *Selected Writings: Volume I*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Bellknap), 1996, pp. 720-723.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*. Trans. John Osbourne. Verso Publishing, NY: 2003.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theological-Political Fragment," *Selected Writings: Volume III*. ed. Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Belknap), 2002, pp.305-307.

Benjamin, Walter. "Task of the Translator," trans. Stanley Corngold, *Selected Writings : Volume I* ed. Marcus Bullock & Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press (Belknap), 1996, pp. 253-264.

Hanssen, Beatrice. "Language and Mimesis in Walter Benjamin's Work." *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*. Ed. David S. Ferris. Cambridge University Press. NY: 2004 , pp.54-73.

McBride, James. "Marooned in the Realm of the Profane: Walter Benjamin's Synthesis of Kabbalah and Communism". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 57.2 (1989): 241–266. Web.

Mieszkowski, Jan. "Art Forms." *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*. Ed. David S. Ferris. Cambridge University Press. NY: 2004, pp.35-54.

Plate, Brent. *Walter Benjamin, Religion and Aesthetics: Rethinking Religion Through the Arts*. Routledge. NY:2005.

Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah*. Penguin Group. NY: 1978.

Wolin, Richard. *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*. University of California Press. CA: 1982.

Witte, Bernd. *Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography*. Wayne State University Press. MI; 1991.

Chapter 8

Dick, Philip. *Exegesis*. ed. Pamela Jackson, Jonathan Lethem: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 1991.

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. trans. Leon Roudiez Columbia University Press: 1991.

Slattery, Diane. *Xenolinguistics: Psychedelics, Language and the Evolution of Consciousness*. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California: 2015.

Chapter 9

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *AntiOedipus*. Trans: Robert Hurley. University of Minnesota Press, MN: 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, London: 1987.

Harman, Graham. "Aesthetics as First Philosophy: Levinas and the Non-human." *Naked Punch*. 09 (2007): 21-30.

Harman, Graham. *Guerilla Metaphysics*. Open Court, ILL: 2005.

Harman, Graham. "On Vicarious Causation." *Collapse*. (2007) 171-205.

Harman, Graham. *The Quadruple Object*. Zero Books, WA: 2011.

Harman, Graham. "The Road to Objects." *Continent*. 1.3 (2011): 171-179.

Harman, Graham. *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures*. Zero Books, WA: 2010.

Harman, Graham. *Weird Realism*. Zero Books, WA: 2012.

Chapter 10

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *AntiOedipus*. Trans: Robert Hurley. University of Minnesota Press, MN: 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans: Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, London: 1987.

Jung, Carl. *Symbols of Transformation Volume 1*. trans. R. F. C. Hull. Harper Torchbooks NY: 1956.

Jung, Carl. *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*. trans. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton University Press: 1969.

Jung, Carl. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 13: Alchemical Studies*. Princeton University Press. 1983

Jung, Carl. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 14: Mysterium Coniunctionis*. An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy. Princeton University Press:1977.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Thus Spake Zarathustra." *The Portable Nietzsche*. Ed. and trans: Walter Kaufmann. Viking Penguin Inc: 1982.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translation: A.S. Kline. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2014.

Conclusion

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McGraw Hill Book Company: 1964.

Meehan, Aidan. *Maze Patterns*. Thames and Hudson: 2002.