

Niels Galgenbeld

August 2016



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

# “We’re Only Particles of Change”

Ethnicity, Identity, and Authenticity in Continuous  
Variation



Radboud University Nijmegen

Faculty of Arts

Master’s Thesis Research Master HLCS

Dr. I.H. Thibaudeau-Boon

Dr. L. Muntéan

Niels Galgenbeld  
0329274  
Research Master HLCS

“We’re Only Particles of Change”:  
Ethnicity, Identity, and Authenticity in  
Continuous Variation.

## Table of Contents

❖ Table of Contents.....	ii
❖ Epigraph.....	iv
❖ 1. Introduction: An Open-Ended Society.....	1
❖ 2. Thinking Difference Positively: Ethnicity and Becoming.....	7
○ Against Representationalism: Closing the Gap.....	10
○ Language and Expression in Continuous Variation.....	12
○ On the Mutual Emergence of Content and Expression.....	15
○ Smoothing Space for Continuous Variation.....	18
○ Attributing Ethnicity: An Incorporeal Transformation.....	21
❖ 3. The Politics of Difference: Collective Identities.....	27
○ Against the Fear of Difference.....	28
○ Identities and Becoming: “Movement Residue”.....	31
○ Movement and Indeterminacy.....	33
○ Stirring the Melting Pot.....	36
○ Linda Martín Alcoff: Against the Three Assumptions.....	39
○ Collective Identity, Interpretive Horizons, and Embodiment..	42
○ Conclusion: Identity Beyond Conformity.....	45
❖ 4. Authenticity: Determining the Indeterminate.....	48
○ To Eat the Other and Keep the Border Too.....	49

- **The Concept of Authenticity.....54**
- **Adding Movement to Authenticity and Authenticity to  
Movement.....56**
- **Authentic Style: Expressing the Collective Becoming.....59**
- **A Recipe for Change.....61**
- **Conclusion: Staging the Past or Opening the Future.....62**
- ❖ **5. Conclusion: Probing for Potential.....65**
- ❖ **Bibliography.....71**

We're only particles of change I know I know  
Orbiting around the sun  
But how can I have that point of view  
When I'm always bound and tied to someone

-- Joni Mitchell, "Hejira"

## Introduction: An Open-Ended Society

---

In his presidential announcement speech of June, 2015, Donald Trump pledged that, if elected president, he would “build a great, great wall on [the] southern border” of the United States (*Time*). The purpose of such a wall would be to prevent would-be Mexican immigrants from crossing the border into the United States. Trump’s description of these Mexican immigrants makes clear why he feels the necessity to build such a wall:

When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us [sic]. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. (*Time*)

Trump’s characterization of Mexican immigrants serves to create a strong division between the American ‘you’—“They’re not sending you”—and these ostensibly criminal, drug-running Mexican rapists (and a few “good people,” too) trying to enter the United States. For good measure, Trump also includes Latin and South America, as well as the Middle East to these places who are “sending us not the right people” (*Time*). All this creates a strong dichotomy between the good Americans north of the border, and all the dangerous Latinos lurking south of the border, awaiting their chance to enter the United States.

However, Mexico and the United States are not opposites; in fact, there are a lot of historical and ongoing cultural ties between the two nations, not in the least because Mexico ceded half of its territory to the United States with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Because of this and subsequent immigration, almost 11% of the population of the United States claimed Mexican ancestry in the 2014 census. The number of Hispanics in the United States is even larger: they constitute 17.6% of the total population according to 2015

estimates. By 2060, this latter number is expected to reach almost 30%.<sup>1</sup> In light of this, the creation of a strict opposition between ‘Mexican’ or ‘Hispanic’ and ‘American’ seems problematic at best. The suggestion that a large wall needs to be built to keep Mexicans out of the country also creates boundaries between groups of people within the United States.

Clearly, to Trump and his supporters, people of Mexican descent are not part of what would “make America great again.”<sup>2</sup> In response to the divisive rhetoric through which Donald Trump, specifically, and the Republican Party in general, exclude many groups, not only Mexican Americans, from what constitutes ‘America,’ former *The Daily Show* host Jon Stewart argues that it is not the place of Trump or the Republican Party to claim ownership of the concept of America when they say they want ‘their America’ back:

... You feel you are this country’s rightful owners. There is only one problem with that. This country isn’t yours; you don’t own it. It never was. There is no real ‘America.’ You don’t own it. ... You got a problem with those Americans trying to fight for their place at the table. You got a problem with them because you feel like the ... ‘subgroups’ of America are being divisive. Well, if you have a problem with that, take it up with the founders: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” Those fighting to be included in the ideal of equality are not being divisive, those fighting to keep those people out are. (*Late Show*)

This points towards a difference in the way of conceiving of the United States as a nation. When Jon Stewart says, “There is no real America,” he is saying that there is no preexisting notion of the United States that dictates, once and for all, who or what belongs to it, who or what are included in it, and who or what owns it. To him, the United States is an open-ended, inclusive concept, rather than an eighteenth century measuring stick that determines who is in and who stays out.

With this project, we are picking up where Jon Stewart left off. If we believe that what he is saying is that the concept of the United States is open-ended, rather than a preconceived

---

<sup>1</sup> These numbers are based on estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau. See: [factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk) and [www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html).

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans generally do not share a unified collective identity. In fact, their identities are at times constructed precisely in opposition to each other (Vila *Crossing Borders* 9). Moreover, there is no homogeneous ‘Mexican’ identity. Even in Mexico, people construct their identities along, to name but a few, regional, class, ethnic, and gender lines, rather than only the nationality (viii).

fixed notion, the question we have to answer is what an open-ended concept of the United States would look like. This is the important question that leads us through this project: How do you conceive of national and other collective identities—specifically with regard to the United States—so that they are inclusive of difference in a way that does not make difference external to the identity, but rather part of its open-ended becoming? Put in less abstract terms: How can the culturally diverse groups that make up the multicultural society of the United States become part of “What Makes America Great” (Chez 243)? To be clear, we are not talking about the so-called melting pot, which only dissolves differences into a preconceived notion of what the nation is and should be. To be inclusive means to be able to incorporate difference, not to dissolve it. It is a question of how you treat difference within a multicultural society.

In order to conceive of an open-ended inclusive notion of national and other collective identities, we will develop our understanding of these concepts in ways that allow them to remain open to difference. To achieve this, we will engage with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari—especially their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). An important aspect of their philosophy is the development of a positive conception of difference. A positive conception of difference means that difference is no longer viewed as only derivative or as a deviation ‘from’ something, but as difference in and of itself—immanent difference. Throughout this project, this positive conception of difference will be the premise from which we start. We will develop our understanding of the concepts with which we engage in light of a positive conception of difference. This not only means that we will consider the implications of a positive conception of difference for our understanding of these concepts, but also that we will develop these concepts in such a way that they do not work against continuous variation in their interaction with the world by promoting a negative conception of difference.

If we consider collective identities with regard to a positive conception of difference, this means that these identities are no longer viewed as preexisting unities against which difference is measured. Instead, a unified collective identity is extracted from ongoing difference—or, to use another term, continuous variation. This means that difference comes first. Variation is primary. There is first continuous variation from which, then, a collective identity is extracted as a constant unity. This also means that variation is ongoing—continuous. Difference is immanent, not external. Variation does not end when an (collective) identity is extracted; variation continues to run within, through, and underneath any identity. If we can develop the concept of collective identities in a way that is commensurable with a positive conception of difference, we can make it more inclusive and open-ended. It will,

then, no longer function as only a rigid standard that excludes difference and creates boundaries between and within groups.

In this sense, the goal for this project is to develop an understanding of the concept of collective identities that is open to continuous variation. To this end, we will also engage with the concepts of ethnicity and authenticity because we believe these concepts to be potential barriers on our path towards conceiving of collective identities as open-ended and inclusive. We want to think these concepts beyond being into becoming. Since our focus is on developing the way we understand the concepts of ethnicity, identity, and authenticity, our approach for this project will be predominantly theoretical. However, this does not mean that we are trying to explain what these concepts mean. Instead, our focus is on what these concepts do and how they might do differently.

This is also in line with the way Deleuze and Guattari develop their performative understanding of language in *A Thousand Plateaus*. According to them, the power of language is not to describe, represent, or signify, but to affect. Deleuze and Guattari describe language as it affects and is affected by all other, both discursive and non-discursive, elements with which it interacts.<sup>3</sup> Language acts and concepts even more so. Concepts are not just the theory ‘behind’ the world, or through which one looks at the world; concepts are of the world and active in the world. To strictly define the concepts of ethnicity, identity, and authenticity would, then, be contrary to the spirit of our endeavor. It would give a static impression to what we believe is open to difference. Concepts are specific to each situation as they affect and are affected by the elements with which they interact; at the same time, a concept is collective in the sense that it draws from all situations in which it is and has been active (P. Cook 31, 32). In this sense, concepts, too, are open to indeterminacy—that is, the virtual potential to be other than they are.

In light of the above, our approach for this project is two-fold: on the one hand, we are opening up these concepts and developing our understanding of them in light of a positive conception of difference. On the other hand, we also view these concepts as active participants in the world. Concepts affect those entities with which they interact. Therefore, we also want these concepts to open up that with which they interact to its own indeterminacy; that is, we want to develop these concepts so that the way they act in the world

---

<sup>3</sup> Or “intra-acts” as Karen Barad would put it: “It is through specific agential intra-actions that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful” (139). For Deleuze and Guattari these phenomena would be “events”: “In the event . . . everything undergoes a particular actualization in relation to the other elements active within the event” (Dolphijn 16).

opens it up to continuous variation, rather than close it off from the flow of difference. Although our main focus is theoretical in nature, at certain points we will link our development of these concepts back to examples of how they act in the world—specifically examples relating to ethnicity, identity, and authenticity in the United States.

So, how are we going to tackle these concepts in the rest of the chapters? In chapter two, we will first delve deeper into Deleuze and Guattari's positive conception of difference. In this sense, chapter two serves as an extended introduction of the theories that shape this project. We will shed light on some of Deleuze and Guattari's terminology and concepts that will return throughout this project. An important part of chapter two will be to show how Deleuze and Guattari engage with the relation between the material and the discursive in light of a positive conception of difference. They oppose the role they see for language and expression to ways of thinking based on the notion of representationalism. The relation between the discursive and the material is important when considering collective identities because identities shape and are shaped by this relation. It also raises some questions. How do discursive formations relate to bodies? If it is not a relation of representation, then what is the basis of this relation? Deleuze and Guattari argue that the relation is one of mutual intervention—an affective relation. We will explore this idea and, at the end of chapter two, discuss its implications for the way in which we understand the concept of ethnicity, which is an important concept within the multicultural society of the United States.

This will lead us into chapter three. The concept of ethnicity as it was discussed in chapter two shapes the relation between different collective identities and a collective national identity. The concept of identity, in turn, functions in solidifying these relations and, if conceived in light of a negative understanding of difference, creates boundaries and limitations. Variation is contained within and/or kept out of collective identities. In order to open up these boundaries, the third chapter is devoted to developing an understanding of collective identities in light of a positive conception of difference. To this end, we will engage with the work of Rosi Braidotti and Brian Massumi. They describe identities as secondary to continuous variation—as “movement residue” and “instant archaisms” (Massumi *Parables* 7; Braidotti 168). Furthermore, the second half of chapter three will focus on countering a number of arguments that assert that collective ethnic identities should not have a place in, or are even dangerous to, politics in the United States. Linda Martín Alcoff offers compelling points against the idea that collective ethnic identities have no place in American politics. At the end of this chapter we will connect Alcoff's ideas back to the rest of our discussion up to this point.

The fourth chapter builds on the idea that a collective identity can be a force of solidification that attempts to close off the connection to continuous variation. A concept that polices this solidification and reduces the relations within a collective identity to relations of conformity is ‘authenticity.’ We will open this chapter by examining a number of ways in which authenticity has a solidifying effect in relation to ethnic food in the United States. If whether or not a thing or an act will be qualified as authentic depends on the degree of conformity to a preconceived notion of what belongs to a collective identity, this easily brings us back to a negative conception of difference. So, for collective identities to remain open to continuous variation, we also need to develop an understanding of authenticity that actually allows for variation. Elizabeth Grosz offers us the first step towards achieving this with her development of a positive conception of freedom that incorporates indeterminacy. The concept of authenticity can be thought positively along parallel lines. Since we are dealing with collective identities, it is important that we also devote attention to the relation between the collective and the individual in our consideration of authenticity. For Brian Massumi, neither the collective nor the individual comes first in this relation; instead they both build on each other. We will engage with his ideas on this relation. This will help us explain how the concept of authenticity as we see it can open up collective identities and moves them forward into their own determinacy.

Ultimately, with this project, we are looking to counteract the power of preconceived and fixed ideas about what a particular collective identity should be—whether it be a national or an ethnic identity. In the United States, such a preconceived and fixed idea about what ‘America’ is serves to exclude groups that are inexorably part of the nation from participating in shaping its future. Collective identities are solidified and boundaries are reinforced; difference is pushed to the margins or excluded entirely. To counteract these processes, we engage with Deleuze and Guattari’s positive conception of difference, which calls attention to the variation that preexists any notion of a collective identity, and from which such identities are, in fact, drawn; moreover, a positive conception of difference shows that variation is always there, no matter how rigid an identity may seem. Variation is always (at least) one step ahead of the constant that repeats it. It is difference, not conformity, which moves us forward. By opening collective identities up to this continuous variation, their boundaries are no longer (pre)determined, and their internal, immanent difference is made part of their becoming. This is the plan. Now we can jump into the still indeterminate potential of the nation’s open-ended future. Who knows where it might lead?

## Thinking Difference Positively: Ethnicity and Becoming

---

‘Ethnicity’ is a broad concept; it encompasses many different things that together form a distinct collective culture differentiated from those around it. It is a concept that shapes the relation between collectivities with a different cultural background (Spickard and Burroughs 1). The term is generally used when a number of culturally different groups live within a single nation, and sometimes to differentiate groups with a particular cultural background from the perceived standard culture of a nation. For this project, the focus is on a nation for which both of these brief descriptions are true: the United States. The question of how to maintain groups with different cultural backgrounds within a single nation is a question that has been part of the development of the United States since its inception, but no definitive answer has been found yet. Put differently, the answers change with the times but the question remains. However, our goal here is neither to attempt proposing a final answer to this question, nor to offer strict definitions of related concepts—concepts such as ethnicity, identity, and authenticity. While they are important to this project, our aim for this and the next two chapters is, instead, to experiment with these concepts in light of both the above question—of how to maintain groups with different cultural backgrounds within a single nation—and the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari.

The development of a positive conception of difference has been an important element in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. A positive conception of difference means that difference (or variation) is posited not as a difference from something, or a difference between things, but as difference in itself. This means that one no longer presumes a preexisting unity against which difference is measured or from which differences are derived; instead, difference is primary. Thinking difference this way requires a way of looking at the world that is different from what we are commonly used to. When thinking difference positively, constants are viewed as extracted from variation, rather than variation being derived from constants. It is a way of thinking in which the unities and wholes we habitually perceive—such as, for this project,

groups, nations, or other collectivities—are no longer considered the grounds from which difference is derived. Instead, it asks us to consider in itself the flow of difference from which these ‘extended’ unities or wholes are contracted. It is not the unity that captures and contains variation within a name—of a nation or another collective identity—that we consider primary; rather, it is the underlying variation from which an apparent unity was extracted, and which still runs through it, to which we return.

Considering variation primary over constants—that is, thinking difference positively—raises a number of questions about ethnicity, identity, and authenticity that we will explore further in this project. What is the position of (ethnic) identities if variation is primary? Are (ethnic) identities still relevant in light of continuous variation? What is still authentic if we prioritize becoming over being? How can authenticity incorporate continuous variation? Or, in other words, how can variation be thought of as authentic? In light of a positive conception of difference, identities no longer serve as a strictly solid ground against which difference can be measured; authenticity, in turn, no longer depends on degrees of conformity to such a preconceived solid ground. We will deal with these issues in chapters three and four. For now, let us continue thinking about a positive conception and ethnicity.

Although the concept of ethnicity as it is commonly understood suggests difference, it concerns derivative difference at the extended, molar level; that is, different collective identities are measured against one another as separate, unified, molar wholes. While significant as a current socio-political reality, this is not the dynamic we will be focusing on. In this project we are interested, instead, in the interplay between the molar and the molecular levels of collective ethnic identities: the ‘thousand tiny struggles’ going on at the (Deleuzian) molecular level of continuous variation underneath any collective identities at any given time. We want to draw a map on which to experiment with opening up the future for different potentialities, rather than provide a tracing of the current reality and how it came to be (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 13).

So, following Deleuze and Guattari, we start on the premise that variation is primary and that, as such, (collective) molar identities are secondary extractions from this ongoing, molecular flow of continuous variation. This necessitates engaging in a molecular politics of connection and variation over, but not entirely disconnected from, a molar politics that deals with seemingly unified and separate wholes. If we consider variation to be primary and ongoing, ethnic identities are not closed off wholes, but, instead, consist of a lot of intrinsic variation with a multitude of lines running through and between them. Concretely, for us this means we have to put our focus on the intrinsic variation of any collective identity and all the

lines that escape from it. Difference is an intrinsic or immanent part of any (ethnic) identity. Everything constantly escapes from the capture of the apparent overlying unity (Deleuze *Two Regimes* 129). For Deleuze and Guattari there is an ethical component to keeping things open to continuous variation—to allow the lines to run their course, to experiment with them, rather than closing them off and getting stuck on a point, making difference, once again, derivative.

These lines that continuously escape from any apparent whole are lines of deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 8, 9). They consist of shed particles, elements, functions that re-enter into the flow and allow for new connections to be made with other deterritorialized particles on the plane of consistency. This, in turn, may lead to the emergence of new molar entities or move existing molar entities in different directions. This is a process Deleuze and Guattari refer to as ‘becoming.’ It is a perpetual stream of molecular variation away from molar entities. In this sense, it is not the molar entity that ‘becomes,’ as becoming is precisely a movement away from the molar on the molecular level. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the ‘final stage’ of becoming is “becoming-imperceptible” or “the becoming everything of everybody” (*devenir tout le monde*) (325). This implies a disconnection from all molar entities—dissolving into the flux of difference. However, this is not an actual goal of becoming; it is not a teleological process. ‘The becoming everything of everybody’ is simply Deleuze and Guattari’s way of stressing the molecular nature of processes of becoming. In reality, somewhere down the line, most deterritorializations must eventually settle down again through processes of stratification—Deleuze and Guattari call this ‘reterritorialization’ (9).

The hierarchical concepts of the majoritarian and the minoritarian are important to understanding processes of becoming. These concepts do not refer to quantitative difference but to a hierarchical difference in which the majoritarian is the standard and the minoritarian a movement away from that standard—the extracted constant versus continuous variation. Understanding this also helps shed some more light on Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas about the relation of constants to variation: “a constant or invariant is defined less by its permanence than by its function as a center, if only relative” (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 110). A constant is understood as a standard, rather than something that is impervious to variation. If everything is always in flux—that is, carried away from the major through the minoritarian—the major is not an actual state of affairs but an unattainable standard from which deviations are habitually measured in the actual world (123). Becoming is always both molecular and minoritarian.

As we commonly understand them, collective identities are majoritarian. Nonetheless, ethnicity is generally associated with minorities. In this sense, it is important not to confuse minorities as such with the minoritarian: a minority in the sense of, for example, an ethnic group is very much a molar entity that often is majoritarian in serving as a cultural standard for those within its collective reach. At the same time, Deleuze and Guattari also suggest that minorities in the molar sense can nonetheless “be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority”—that is, within larger molar multiplicities, such as nations (123). It is partly in this sense that we need to negotiate between the molar and the molecular levels of collective identities over the course of this project. On the one hand, we have minorities as molar entities with their own processes of capture and deterritorialization running underneath; on the other hand, these same minorities can deterritorialize overarching molar entities from within on the molecular level—even nation-states. Ethnic minority groups can be both molar and molecular, majoritarian and minoritarian depending on the relations under consideration.

The common molar conception of ethnicity as a ‘standard’ involves processes of capture that subsume the multiplicity (that is, ethnicity in its various actual and virtual dimensions and variations) under a signifier: “The notion of unity (*unité*) appears only when there is a power takeover in the multiplicity by the signifier or a corresponding subjectification proceeding . . . . Unity always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding)” (7, 8). These processes involve ideas about language, which Deleuze and Guattari more broadly include in their views on expression. Within the mechanism of capture described above, ethnicity is reduced to—or limited to—a signifier; this may concern ethnicity at large, as well as more specific ethnic identities, such as, for example, ‘Mexican American,’ or ‘Asian American.’ These mechanisms are related to the notion of representationalism, which is a way of thinking about the world—and, here, specifically, about language and expression—that Deleuze and Guattari argue against in their own treatment of expression. The next sections will deal with the way in which Deleuze and Guattari conceive of expression in a non-representationalist way and what this means for our understanding of the concept of ethnicity.

#### Against Representationalism: Closing the Gap

Deleuze and Guattari’s rejection of representationalism is expressed, for one, in their insistence on the univocity of being—the notion that there is only one ‘being’ which, in their

view, is immanent difference. Similar to their positive conception of difference, with univocity, too, there is no ground from which difference is derived, as this would require equivocity. This insistence, therefore, no longer allows reliance on dualisms or transcendence. It is for this reason that univocity problematizes representationalism, which Karen Barad succinctly describes as “the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent” (46). The notion of univocity does not allow for such a distinction. This is why Deleuze and Guattari describe the supplementary signifying dimension, which suggests unity through a mechanism of capture, as “empty.” Deleuze and Guattari do not ask what something means—as is the case with what they describe as “signifiante,” which operates in this separate empty dimension of signs that requires constant interpretation—but, instead, map what something does. They map how things affect and are affected by other things—including the linguistic and the material, the discursive and the non-discursive, words and things, expression and content—without relying on ontological distinctions between them.

Nonetheless, representationalism has long been prevalent in western thinking, even to the extent that it has taken up a “common-sense appeal” (Barad 48). However, adherence to representationalism has a number of consequences for the way in which one regards the world. For example, a representationalist outlook on the world necessitates a reliance on notions of signification, mediation, or reflection in order to explain the relation between representation and represented—the relation between ‘words’ and ‘things’—which, in turn, has important implications for the way in which language is conceived. For Deleuze and Guattari the relation between ‘words’ and ‘things’ that adherents of the notion of signification use relies on “an oversimplified model”: “From the word they extract the signifier, and from the thing a signified in conformity with the word, and therefore subjugated to the signifier. They operate in a sphere interior to and homogeneous with language” (*Thousand Plateaus* 76). This way one remains stuck within language at a remove from the material world. Within such a representationalist framework, people are not in direct contact with the world but rely on language to reflect an underlying world; as such, language is accorded a very prominent position in shaping (our access to) an apparently otherwise fixed world.

One of the problems with representationalism, then, is that, with it, the relation between ‘words’ and ‘things’ becomes one of conformity. Either words become signifiers that are supposedly in conformity with things, the signified, or words come to shape—construct—the things, which end up being little more than passive, empty slates awaiting inscription by language. The material aspect is left out of the picture. The representationalist idea that what

is considered ‘true’ and ‘real’ depends on a level of conformity leads us right back into a negative conception of difference. This also problematizes the potential for change and raises questions about identity and authenticity. With regard to ethnicity, as a signifier, it once again becomes a standard that subsumes expressions, bodies, and acts. These expressions, bodies, or acts are consequently evaluated by their degree of conformity or rendered insignificant if the degree of conformity does not live up to some preset standard. This is what a collective identity might be within a negative conception of difference. It creates boundaries and excludes variation from consideration.

Nietzsche warned against giving the formal aspects of language such an important position in our thinking; he argues that we should not give in to the seduction of thinking that linguistic structures somehow reflect the ontological organization of the world (*Beyond Good and Evil* 45, 46). Thinking should not depend on grammatical structures, or be limited by dualisms that are fortified in language—think of nature versus culture, or a binary conception of gender—which prove to be far more fluid than language often affords. Deleuze and Guattari follow Nietzsche in taking issue with the representationalist perception of the world and its consequences for thinking. They provide alternative ways of “thinking with the world,” rather than “thinking about the world” in a representationalist sense. They offer performative alternatives to representationalism, especially to the simplification and separation of preexisting ‘words’ and/or ‘things’—the cornerstones of representationalist worldviews. Acts of many kinds come to matter again.

In what follows in this chapter we will first look into Deleuze and Guattari, who devote a number of chapters in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) to the question of language. This will allow us to further explore their alternative to the representationalist views of language, especially through what they refer to as the relation between ‘content’ and ‘expression.’ This also provides us with the opportunity to continue our exploration of the implications of a positive conception of difference—in this case for the way in which we view language. We will then look at how, in light of these ideas, we might conceive of the notion of ethnicity and the connection between its discursive and non-discursive dimensions—how they affect each other.

### Language and Expression in Continuous Variation

For Deleuze and Guattari, the primacy of difference as we discussed it earlier in this chapter also applies to language. To them, the organized, structured version of language that is, for

example, commonly taught in schools is secondary to the variation from which it is extracted, rather than variation being a deviation from a preexisting primary language. In other words, here, too, constants are derived from variation, rather than variation being a deviation from constants; it is a question of how you treat a language:

There are not . . . two kinds of languages but two possible treatments of the same language. Either the variables are treated in such a way as to extract from them constants and constant relations or in such a way as to place them in continuous variation. (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 120)

The risk of viewing constants as the primary elements of language is that variation could end up being placed outside of language. This, in turn, might lead to the invalidation of certain elements of a language, which could lead to the exclusion of any number of people as well as stifle a language's growth; the continuous variation through which a language evolves would be limited to a supposedly preexisting system—linguistics comes to favor prescription over description. To Deleuze and Guattari all this is a fundamentally political affair in which power takes hold of a language (118); after all, the ethical element of Deleuze and Guattari's project entails probing the potential for continuous variation. This is what it means to view difference positively.

Continuous variation is an important element of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking, especially with regard to their development of a positive conception of difference in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In terms of language, if variation—or difference—is viewed as primary there is “no basis for a distinction between a constant and a collective language, and variable and individual speech acts” (117). This means that neither the individual variable expression nor the constant collective language is effectively primary; the two are iteratively, immanently, and mutually constituted through continuous variation—a process of molecular leapfrogging.<sup>4</sup> Viewed this way, language is creative and performative. Look at what a language does, not what it means. Performance, here, is not the performance of something preexisting, as if it were a play in the theater. Such an understanding of performance is how representationalism sneaks back into, for example, social constructionism, which is a system of thought that does end up relying on the subject's (albeit mediated) expression of a

---

<sup>4</sup> We engage with the relation between the individual and the collective in greater detail in chapter 3 (see pages 59-62). “Molecular leapfrogging” should not be understood as a teleological process pushing “progress” forward in a linear fashion; the lines dart and escape in all directions. There is no preconceived destination of becoming, only indeterminacy and the potential to vary.

preexisting structure—or, more passively, the expression of this structure through a subject (Massumi *Shock to Thought* xvi).

In the performative, creative sense, language or, to broaden the playing field, expression, does not consist in a preexisting, solid structure that is being expressed by an individual subject; rather, “[e]xpression is broad in the world—where the potential is for what may become” (xxi). With every expression the structure and the subject themselves are mutually reconstituted alongside each other. This is an element of the continuous reconstitution of the world through continuous variation, which is an important part of Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking about expression. Neither expression nor the expressed is primary, and both can fill either role. They are not (yet) bound. Such an understanding of expression renders the constructionist debate on free will vs. determinism—the former positing the subject and the latter discourse or underlying structures as primary—obsolete. As Judith Butler shows, the two sides of this debate are really two sides of the same coin: both have strong representationalist underpinnings that a performative approach can try and begin to overcome (8).

With regard to the creative force of expression, it is important to note, therefore, that expression does not create from nothing. As Brian Massumi points out:

There is no *tabula rasa* of expression. It always takes place in a cluttered world. Its field of emergence is strewn with the after-effects of events past, already-formed subjects and objects and the two-pronged systems of capture (of content and expression, of bodies and words) regulating their interaction: nets aplenty. (*Shock to Thought* xxix)

The ‘building blocks’ actualized through ‘the field of emergence’ are what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘assignifying signs’ or ‘particles of expression.’ These are the shed functions of previously articulated contents and expressions we referred to earlier, which are “broad in the world.” However, while creating the ‘new’ in their re-emergence from the plane of consistency into which they had been released, particles of expression do carry with them the ‘tension’ of their previous articulations. In this sense, the new is never truly new, but rather a deterritorialized element within the (continuous) rearticulation of the world.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s univocal view of the world, language and expression are part and parcel of the same processes of deterritorialization and becoming that we described earlier in this chapter, rather than operating in a separate dimension. Expression is seen as a

creative force within this conception of continuous variation. Understood this way, language and expression as perceived by Deleuze and Guattari elude both the representationalist relation of ‘words’ and ‘things,’ as well as its mediated incarnation in social constructionism. However, if the relation of language and, more broadly, expression to the material is not one of representation, how do we conceive of the relation between the discursive and the non-discursive? In what sense is it performative? How might we view the notion of ethnicity and its material components in light of all this? Next we will look more specifically into the way in which Deleuze and Guattari understand the relation between the material and the discursive—which they describe in terms of ‘content’ and ‘expression’—as well as how we might conceive of the concept of ethnicity in light of this.

### On the Mutual Emergence of Content and Expression

Above we discussed Deleuze and Guattari’s views on language with regard to a positive conception of difference. Their conception of language attempts to circumvent the traps of representationalism in order to allow the world to remain open to the potential of continuous variation. One way in which they try to achieve this is by conceiving of language or, more broadly, expression, in a performative sense. That is, they do not ask what expression represents, signifies, or means, but what it does. The performative element resides in the affective relation between content and expression—Deleuze and Guattari’s alternatives to the non-discursive and the discursive.<sup>5</sup> In this section we will elaborate on this affective relation and the way in which it allows Deleuze and Guattari to provide an alternative to representationalism. How do content and expression affect each other and what are the implications of this with regard to continuous variation?

First, it is important to realize that content and expression are not preexisting forces or entities that operate on one another externally—in whichever direction. Rather, to elude the traps of representationalism, Deleuze and Guattari argue that both content and expression emerge through the mutual intervention of deterritorialized particles on the plane of consistency. All these deterritorialized, molecular particles make up the flow of difference through which they may enter into new relations with other particles and settle, once again, into functional forms of content and expression. These are processes of de- and

---

<sup>5</sup> It is a little more complex than this: content (the non-discursive) is not simply an alternative term for “things” and expression (the discursive) is not simply an alternative term for “words.” We discuss this in greater detail at the end of this chapter (see pages 21-22).

reterritorialization. Of course, with a positive conception of difference, reterritorialization into functional forms is not the end of the line. Deleuze and Guattari argue precisely for the continuous nature of processes of de- and reterritorialization. Particles continue to run off on lines of flight, probing for new relations. The molar and the molecular are always active in one another.

As this is their alternative to representationalism, Deleuze and Guattari stress the independence of forms of content and forms of expression: the relation between the two is not one in which either content or expression represents or conforms to the other; they affect each other. Content and expression are always deterritorialized together as they affect one another on the molecular level, pulling each other away on the lines of flight that escape from the molar entities in which they had previously settled. It is always a double deterritorialization into a mutual reterritorialization. Neither is primary. Neither emerges from the other; they only emerge from the molecular flow together. This is neither to suggest that the degree of deterritorialization is always equal for both sides of the equation, nor that either expression or content is always the most deterritorialized: “Sometimes the semiotic components are more deterritorialized than the material components, and sometimes the reverse” (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 102). The point is, simply, that neither functions as the form of the other. There is no signifier or signified, no representation or represented; instead, both content and expression emerge with a form of their own—each form with its own separate history, carrying the tension of previous articulations.

So, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the world is continuously reconstituted through the ongoing rearticulation of deterritorialized particles of content and expression that are broad in the world—a process also known as ‘becoming.’ “Becoming is the actualization of the immanent encounter between subjects, entities and forces which are apt mutually to affect and exchange parts of each other in a creative and non-invidious manner” (Braidotti 68). The relation between content and expression is not representational; it is affective. The mutually affective interaction between these “entities and forces” at the molecular level occurs when they enter into what Deleuze and Guattari call a “zone of proximity.” Proximity, Deleuze and Guattari explain, “is a notion, at once topological and quantal, that marks a belonging to the same molecule, independently of the subjects considered and the forms determined” (*Thousand Plateaus* 318). Proximity suggests that diverse particles are able to find an immanent connection on the molecular level, independent from any molar attachments—whether it be prior attachments or attachments that emerge through the formalization of the

connection. Proximity occurs in ‘the between,’ not ‘in-between.’ The points become indiscernible; with proximity there are only lines.

Deleuze and Guattari also refer to what Braidotti called “the immanent encounter between subjects, entities and forces” as an ‘event.’ Within an event, deterritorialized particles connect on the plane of consistency and reterritorialize through processes of formalization. Content and expression settle into functional forms. Rick Dolphijn elaborates, “In the event . . . everything undergoes a particular actualization in relation to the other elements active within the event” (16). All the elements are immanent to the event; forces do not operate on the event from the outside, but work within and through each event, and are themselves (at least partially) reconstituted in the event. This means that each event is made up of many, very heterogeneous elements—a great diversity of molecular particles.

The notion of proximity introduced above explains how such diverse particles are able to mutually affect one another on the plane of consistency. However, this still leaves us with the question of how Deleuze and Guattari account for the emergence of actualized, coherent entities from such apparent heterogeneity. What accounts for the dual formalization of independent forms of content and expression? It is, after all, not self-evident that these forms fit together; they are distinct and independent. Indeed, “even to fit the forms together, and to determine the relations between them, requires a specific, variable assemblage” (*Thousand Plateaus* 76). It is through an assemblage that a non-discursive multiplicity of content and a discursive multiplicity of expression emerge in mutually functional forms. Such an assemblage may consist of many, heterogeneous elements: “An assemblage is first and foremost what keeps very heterogeneous elements together: e.g. a sound, a gesture, a position, etc., both natural and artificial elements” (*Two Regimes* 179). Assemblages connect the molar and the molecular. They allow the molecular proximity of particles to emerge into a dual actualization of functional forms of content and expression.<sup>6</sup> To this same end, Deleuze and Guattari also use the term “intensive continuity,” which evokes the immanent connection at the molecular level between otherwise heterogeneous elements (*Two Regimes* 179). One could look at intensive continuity as the potential step that may follow proximity. It relates to the molecular side of an assemblage. Intensive continuity is the sticky result of the mutual intervention of particles of content and expression; it is what provides the molecular adhesion that gives assemblages their consistency, while simultaneously allowing the independence of

---

<sup>6</sup> It may help to realize that the French word Deleuze and Guattari originally used for what has been translated into “*assemblage*” is “*agencement*,” which adds the suggestion of an active organizational function to the notion of ‘simply’ putting things together in assemblages.

forms of content and expression. This is what distinguishes Deleuze and Guattari's views from representationalist ideas; deterritorialized particles of content and expression affect each other on the molecular level, but content and expression remain independent in their dual formalization into molar forms.<sup>7</sup>

### Smoothing Space for Continuous Variation

The fact that assemblages operate on both the molar and the molecular level at once also creates a certain tension within each assemblage. Adrian Parr describes this tension: "Every assemblage is territorial in that it sustains the connections that define it, but every assemblage is also composed of lines of deterritorialisation that run through it and carry it away from its current form" (147). On the molar level, content and expression are two functions of stratification (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 51). This is the process of differentiation through which distinct molar entities emerge from the flow of difference. Stratification is the formalization of content and expression that takes place through assemblages. This 'territorial' side of an assemblage also involves processes of subjectivation. At the same time, the molecular side of an assemblage keeps it open to continuous variation. Assemblages are composed of lines that run through them and offer the continuous potential for deterritorialization, while territorial forces within the assemblage attempt to seal off the lines.

Deleuze and Guattari describe these dual processes that are part of any assemblage as the striating or smoothing of space. The striating or smoothing of space refers to the degree to which boundaries are held up or torn down that (de)limit the range of the de- and reterritorializations of an assemblage, or the degree to which lines are bound to points. In other words, to what extent is the focus either on preset destinations or on the journey itself? Are particles free to follow lines that run through assemblages—even lines of flight that escape from an assemblage—or are the lines tightly sealed off? These forces are part of assemblages, rather than operating on them externally, which means that these forces themselves can affect or be affected by other elements within the assemblage.

In the same vein, Deleuze and Guattari argue that space, too, is actualized together with other elements that are part of an "event." All the elements affect each other. For

---

<sup>7</sup> Here consistency should be understood in the way a substance holds together, rather than in the sense of regularity or being without contradiction (assemblages can be full of (seeming) contradictions).

Deleuze and Guattari, then, space itself is one of these elements immanent to each event, rather than a preexisting container in which events take place.<sup>8</sup> All the elements are part of the same assemblage, the same event; it is within the assemblage that certain forces may open up the space for creative lines to run their course, while other forces may attempt to “seal off and tie up” these same lines (Deleuze *Two Regimes* 127). Deleuze and Guattari prefer to use the terms “striating” and “smoothing” actively—that is, in the present participle form—rather than adjectivally. This is because they use these terms to refer to the interchanging and continuous processes by which the space of encounters is continually made either more smooth or more striated, rather than space being predefined as either smooth or striated. Striating and smoothing forces are constantly active within one another in each event: the space for dynamism is itself dynamic, rather than fixed. It, too, is affected by the other elements and continually reconstituted with the other elements through these affective relations.

The idea of the smoothing and striating of space is important to us here because it touches upon the forces that play a part in, for example, the way intrasocietal relations between different collectivities develop—as in a multicultural society. Is there room for deterritorialization and connection, for the lines to run (creatively), or are there mostly boundaries that engender separations and stasis? To reiterate, this is essentially what we are exploring with this project: How can we rethink particular concepts in order to elude certain intra- and intersocietal boundaries? How can we rethink these concepts to smoothen the space for potential connections over separations? Thinking difference positively is itself a smoothing force. Although the concept of ‘ethnicity’ has a mostly striating effect—dividing a society into groups—this certainly does not mean the boundaries it suggests are impermeable; smoothing forces remain active within all the elements that encompass ethnicity. Moreover, as we suggested earlier, ethnic groups can also have a deterritorializing effect on the majority—ethnicity can be a molar as well as molecular concept depending on the elements under consideration.

In a paper in which he develops an understanding of race beyond its conception as a representational construct, Arun Saldanha argues for viewing race as an open-ended event—that is, as part of processes of continuous variation and, therefore, as much about connection

---

<sup>8</sup> We are not too concerned here with the creation of geological or geographical space, but rather with the immanent space of events. Deleuze and Guattari’s work has, however, been used in geography and geology. See, for example, Mark Bonta and John Protevi’s *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (2004).

as it is thought to be about exclusion. This way he incorporates both sides, the continuous emergence of connections as well as exclusions (boundaries), into his conception of race. The latter view—race as a mostly exclusionary construction, which has long been the prevalent view—has its roots in a negative conception of difference. While ethnicity and race are not strictly the same, these ideas about exclusion and connection are relevant to our project, too.<sup>9</sup> After all, opening up the concept of ethnicity requires considering both sides—exclusion *and* connection, striating *and* smoothing forces—in their own creative significance.

In this view, race and ethnicity are neither inherent qualities of people, nor external forces working upon bodies from the outside; instead, race, ethnicity, and people and bodies are all continuously reconstituted in mutual presupposition—double de- and reterritorializations. Race and ethnicity, in each instantiation, would be an event. The question is: within the variable assemblages at hand, do race and ethnicity have a strictly stratifying effect—subjecting bodies to processes of capture—or are these concepts themselves also open to the potential of continuous variation? This depends on power arrangements that are themselves part of the assemblages: each reterritorialization involves a power arrangement, which could go so far as to reduce the entire assemblage to a signifier. At the same time, assemblages also “include points of deterritorialization” (Deleuze *Two Regimes* 125). The power arrangements that seek to solidify the reterritorialization by sealing off lines of flight, as well as these lines of flight themselves are all part of the assemblage under consideration. Striating and smoothing forces all exist within the same assemblage.

In his paper, Saldanha uses the concept of “viscosity” to evoke the sense of the interchangeable nature of the smoothing and striating of space in events and assemblages. He succinctly defines his understanding of viscosity as “continuous but constrained dynamism” (18). Generally, viscosity refers to the ease with which a fluid can change shape; certain forces may help it flow more easily, whereas others congeal or coagulate the fluid. This is an image that works well with the idea of a continuous flow of difference; it never fully solidifies, but it may be congealed in certain areas, whereas it may flow easily elsewhere. We can look at relative deterritorialization this way, too: “there are degrees of deterritorialization that quantify the respective forms and according to which contents and expression are conjugated, feed into each other, accelerate each other, or on the contrary become stabilized

---

<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau blurs the lines between race and ethnicity in their surveys by asking people to self-identify according to “a social definition of race.” Options for self-identification include Japanese, Samoan, Native Hawaiian, which could easily be regarded as ethnicities, rather than races. See: [www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/qbyqfact/2016/Race.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/qbyqfact/2016/Race.pdf)

and perform a reterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 102).

Acceleration and stabilization, flowing and congealing are all related to the striating and smoothing forces that may open up or seal off the lines running through and from an assemblage.

One task for us in this project, then, is to identify and attempt to smoothen striating forces within a society—or, more specifically, within ideas pertaining to ethnicity—so we can open up the potential for connections, rather than fortify boundaries. To achieve this, we are taking a largely conceptual approach. We focus on certain concepts that are active as striating forces within the larger framework of ethnicity to see where they might be opened up to smoothen the space of a multicultural society. As indicated earlier, we chose the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘authenticity’ because, within the concept of ethnicity, one of the elements that solidifies boundaries is the concept of ‘identity.’ Within identity, a similarly striating element is the concept of ‘authenticity.’ This is why, in the subsequent two chapters, we will engage with these two concepts respectively. First, however, let us see how our discussion so far affects our understanding of what the concept of ethnicity does.

#### Attributing Ethnicity: An Incorporeal Transformation

So far, we’ve mostly described content and expression as Deleuze and Guattari’s terms for the non-discursive and the discursive, things and words. However, content and expression are a little more complex than that. That is, content is not simply a thing and expression is not just words:

[T]he form of expression is reducible not to words but to a set of statements arising in the social field considered as a stratum (that is what a regime of signs is). The form of content is reducible not to a thing but to a complex state of things as a formation of power (architecture, regimentation, etc.). (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 77)

Content and expression are non-discursive and discursive multiplicities, respectively, that always operate in relation to each other. It is important to remember that Deleuze and Guattari are not looking for ‘meaning’; they are looking for ‘affect.’ What, then, do content and expression do? As we argued in the previous sections, they affect each other. So, in light of the above quote, expression as a variable on “a set of statements arising in the social field”

affects content “as a complex state of things” (77): the statement affects the state of things, rather than simply represent or signify their meaning. This is important for our discussion of ethnicity below.

Up until now, the image we have painted of how content and expression intervene in one another and emerge through their dual formalization in assemblages has been rather abstract, but how does all this relate to the concept of ethnicity on a more concrete level? Let us, once again, turn to Deleuze to help us. In an interview he offers a relatively concrete description of the relation between the discursive and the non-discursive within a society:

In assemblages you find states of things, bodies, various combinations of bodies, hodgepodes; but you also find utterances, modes of expression, and whole regimes of signs. The relations between the two are pretty complex. For example, a society is defined not by productive forces and ideology, but by ‘hodgepodes’ and ‘verdicts.’ Hodgepodes are combinations of interpenetrating bodies. These combinations are well-known and accepted . . . . Verdicts are collective utterances, that is, instantaneous and incorporeal transformations which have currency in a society (for example, ‘from now on you are no longer a child . . .’). (Deleuze *Two Regimes* 177)

What is of special importance to us here is that Deleuze explains the relation between the discursive and the non-discursive in a society in terms of “verdicts,” which he further describes as “incorporeal transformations.” In *A Thousand Plateaus* these verdicts are called “order-words” (91). Order-words affect bodies by intervening in them in a non-physical way; the transformation consists in that order-words “[mould], subtly or directly, the potential actions of its addressees” (Massumi *Shock* xviii). Order-words are discursive actions that affect the “potential actions” of those bodies they insert themselves in—actions acting on actions (xviii). This is part of Deleuze and Guattari’s vision of language as performative.

Order-words need not be actual orders, imperatives, or even statements (though they certainly can be). In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari all use of language carries some of this performative power to affect bodies because intelligibility depends on conventions, which means that everything that is said comes with a certain conventional expectation towards a response, thereby inevitably, however subtly, shaping the actions of the other (xviii). This is also why Deleuze and Guattari argue for the collective nature of order-words—that is, as variables on a collective assemblage of enunciation (*Thousand Plateaus* 97). Order-words are variables in that their effect is specific to a situation, but simultaneously collective in that

there needs to exist a collective field—the collective assemblage of enunciation—within which both the order-words and the incorporeal transformations have currency for there to be an effect at all.

Deleuze and Guattari use the example of a judge pronouncing someone guilty of a crime to illustrate the notion of an instantaneous incorporeal transformation—namely that of a suspect into a convict. However, the same pronouncement would not come with the same incorporeal transformation if said by a child in the street; the same incorporeal transformation would also not occur if there was no collective discourse on delinquency and justice. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari also describe order-words as “implicit presuppositions” (97). The incorporeal transformation resides in a statement implicit within the words: “That is why every statement of a collective assemblage of enunciation belongs to indirect discourse. Indirect discourse is the presence of a reported statement in the reporting statement, the presence of an order-word within the word” (97). The words by themselves do not necessarily carry the performative force, but gain this power within the collective assemblage of enunciation, which formalizes the implicit presuppositions of “an order-word within the word.”<sup>10</sup>

So, if we define a society by “hodgepodes” and “order-words,” where does this leave us with regard to our consideration of ethnicity in the United States? Let us first have a look at a statement by postcolonial and literary theorist R. Radhakrishnan: “[W]e must keep in mind that in the United States the renaming of identity in national terms produces a preposterous effect. . . . The culturally and politically hegemonic identity is now a mere qualifier: ‘ethnic’” (205). Radhakrishnan describes this effect in terms of ‘rebirth’ and ‘transformation,’ in the sense that upon naturalization as a U.S. citizen one’s sense of self becomes that of a member of an ethnic minority who “defers to her nationalized American status” (205). This suggests the presence of an overarching national identity, under which (hyphenated) ethnic minority identities are subsumed; these relations are organized through a collective discourse on ethnicity and nationality in the United States.

The ‘preposterous effect’ Radhakrishnan describes is not simply the (linguistic) reduction of an identity to a qualifier; it is an incorporeal transformation. ‘You are now an ethnic minority,’ which is an implicit statement that resides in many variables of the collective discourses on ethnicity and nationality within the United States—‘you are not simply

---

<sup>10</sup> Because Deleuze and Guattari believe all use of language carries some of this underlying performative force, they argue that “language in its entirety is indirect discourse” (*Thousand Plateaus* 97).

American, but something different.’ These can be ideas, assumptions, questions, perhaps even a glance, all of which can carry this implicit presupposition. These are order-words that “insert [themselves] into [people’s] actions and passions” (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 94). People—their bodies and their actions—may become, for example, subject to questions of identity and authenticity, which themselves carry the implicit force of order-words—assigning and simultaneously delimiting people’s actions. We will devote closer attention to these questions of identity and authenticity in the next two chapters.

It is important to remember that all this is, once again, not a matter of representation: “In expressing the noncorporeal attribute, and by that token attributing it to the body, one is not representing or referring but *intervening* in a way . . .” (100). Attributing ‘ethnicity’ to a body does not mean representing this body because a body, as a form of content, has qualities independent of expression, which has its own form; the expressed—that is, the incorporeal transformation—neither represents the content, nor does the content determine the expressed (100). This independence of form of content and form of expression is essential to Deleuze and Guattari’s alternative to representationalism. Incorporeal transformations are a way to explain the way in which expression *intervenes* in content, rather than simply refer to or represent it.

This brings us back to the relation between content and expression as we discussed it earlier in this chapter. It is a relation of double relative deterritorialization: “[T]he way an expression relates to a content is not by uncovering or representing it. Rather, forms of expression and forms of content communicate through a conjunction of their quanta of relative deterritorialization, each intervening, operating in the other” (102). This is what intensive continuity is. An incorporeal transformation, then, is an instantaneous relative deterritorialization—relative because it also involves an instantaneous reterritorialization. Nonetheless, there has been a transformation and the outcome is by no means predetermined. Sometimes content is deterritorialized more, while on other occasions expression is deterritorialized the most. In the example of a naturalized immigrant,<sup>11</sup> the content—a body—will generally be deterritorialized the most; however, think of, for example, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and one can see how bodies might carry away order-words and, through this, perhaps even effect a transformation of the collective assemblage of enunciation.

---

<sup>11</sup> The notion of the so-called “illegal immigrant” also effects an incorporeal transformation. It is an incorporeal transformation that has grave consequences for one’s options with regard to living, moving, working, etc. To be branded an illegal immigrant definitely “moulds, subtly or directly, the potential actions of its addressees” (Massumi *Shock* xviii).

What we ultimately draw from this is that ethnicity is neither an inherent, preexisting aspect of a person, nor externally imposed. It is a conjunction of elements in relative deterritorialization, which constitutes an incorporeal transformation. However, ethnicity may easily come to be seen as an essential, preexisting aspect of a group, which is how a negative conception of difference sneaks back into the picture; difference comes to be measured against a standard—‘difference from,’ rather than ‘difference in itself.’ In the case of ethnicity, this standard might be what we commonly refer to as a ‘collective identity.’ A collective identity is easily susceptible to a negative conception of difference, both with regard to sealing off the lines of flight from the inside, as well as being pigeonholed within a group through external forces—“you belong to our group, so you must behave this way” vs. “you belong to that group, so you must behave this way.” Actions may be affected from both sides.

In this chapter we elaborated on our understanding of Deleuze and Guattari’s positive conception of difference, especially in relation to the chapters in *A Thousand Plateaus* that deal with their ideas on language and expression.<sup>12</sup> The main idea is that difference is primary, rather than derivational, which means that one no longer evaluates something based on notions of conformity to a perceived standard, but, instead, probes for fruitful openings onto the flow of difference—that is, to keep the world open to continuous variation. Notions of conformity are definitely present in representationalist views of the world, which is something Deleuze and Guattari argue against with their performative conception of the relation between content and expression; affect, rather than conformity, characterizes this relation. Content and expression mutually affect, rather than represent, each other, and emerge through assemblages that formalize their relations in continuous processes of de- and reterritorialization.

This creates a tension that is important to this project. On one side, assemblages are open to the flow difference, while, on the other side, they also have territorial elements that try to seal off the lines of flight—closing it off from the flow of difference. In fact, the formalization that occurs through assemblages inevitably has a territorial element to it. We have to deal with both the molar and the molecular. All of this has implications for the way in which we view ethnicity as it pertains to the multicultural society of the United States. We

---

<sup>12</sup> These are chapters 3 (“The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?”), 4 (“November 28, 1947: Postulates of Linguistics”), and 5 (“587 BC-AD 70: On Several Regimes of Signs”).

explained ethnicity as an (ongoing) event or assemblage in which the relation between expression and content is one of incorporeal transformation. That is, expression in the form of order-words as variables on a collective assemblage of enunciation affects the state of content in the form of interpenetrating bodies within a society. Expression affects a body. With the territorial forces that exist in assemblages, the effect of this could very well be limiting—sealing off the lines. For the purposes of this project, we believe a collective identity is what forms the territorial side of an assemblage when considered in light of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of society.

For this project, we committed ourselves to the ethical imperative of trying to keep things open to continuous variation, so as to allow connections to prevail over boundaries. If we believe identities to effect territorial, molar formations, then collective identities are a potential roadblock on our path towards viewing a multicultural society in light of a positive conception of difference. A collective identity can work within an assemblage as a power formation that attempts to seal it off from continuous variation. With this in mind, our next step will be to deal with the territorial side of assemblages, which, with regard to ethnicity, is what we believe identities to be. It is precisely this with which we will engage with in the next chapter. That is, we will engage with the concept of identity—especially collective identity—in order to find ways to smoothen the space of identity-based assemblages.

## The Politics of Difference: Collective Identities

---

In the previous chapter we explained the idea that within our conception of ethnicity in the United States collective identities congeal the territorial side of assemblages; they work as power formations that seal an assemblage off from the flow of difference. A collective identity may even reduce an entire assemblage consisting of multiple multiplicities to a single signifier. However, our goal for this chapter is not to present a definition or genealogy of the concept of identity. Instead, we want to come to an understanding of collective identities in relation to continuous variation. What does a collective identity do and how can we prevent it from closing off an assemblage entirely? In this light, we see collective identities as perpetually emergent; yet, they also solidify (in) an assemblage through repetition. This process of solidification is what may cause for an identity to come to be seen as primary and even back-form the variation from which it emerged. This way an assemblage is sealed off. Through these processes a collective identity can easily be seen as primary and, therefore, come to serve as a standard against which difference is measured. Understood this way, it is not hard to see that collective identities can be difficult to reconcile with a positive conception of difference. It is clear that, if, in light of our discussion of ethnicity in the previous chapter, we want to keep the multicultural society of the United States open to continuous variation, we will have to engage with the concept of identity.

While identities seem incongruent with a positive conception of difference, we cannot simply do away with this concept in favor of continuous variation. It would be naïve to suggest the abolition of all molar identity formations—especially considering, for example, the fact that certain minority groups in the United States are still struggling for equal opportunities. Focusing on individuated variation over collective identities would likely achieve very little towards improving their position. This is without even considering the fact that, with regard to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical ideas, assemblages simply cannot exist without a territorial side. As we said in the previous chapter, we need to engage with our concepts on both the molar and the molecular levels. Some form of molar politics is required.

This is precisely what we will be doing in this chapter: we will look to develop an understanding of collective identities that allows openness to continuous variation without disregarding the validity, or even necessity, of identity formations for minority politics.

In the first half of this chapter, then, we will look into the relation between identities and a positive conception of difference by engaging, especially, with Rosi Braidotti's writing in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002). In this book she focuses on processes of becoming that are open to the future, rather than analyzing the current state of things in light of the past; she devotes special attention to viewing difference positively, as opposed to viewing difference as pejoration. We will combine this with our engagement with Brian Massumi's ideas about movement in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002). In this book Massumi focuses on the relation between movement and stasis and argues for the primacy of movement. In combining the ideas of these two scholars whose work is influenced, if not inspired, by Deleuze and Guattari, we aim to conceive of a notion of collective identity that combines the molar and molecular in a way that keeps it open to a future of continuous variation.

Despite advocating for a positive conception of difference, we do not believe the abolition of collective ethnic identities to be beneficial to minority groups within the multicultural society of the United States. However, resistance against the assertion or even presence of collective ethnic identities in the public and political arenas as it is found in the U.S. is often based on arguments that have little or nothing to do with ideas about a positive conception of difference. In the second half of this chapter, then, we will go on a slight detour in order to engage with these arguments as well as Linda Martín Alcoff's rebuttal. In fact, Alcoff asserts that collective ethnic identities are not only *not* detrimental or dangerous, but necessary to processes of inclusive democracy in the U.S. At the end of the chapter we link Alcoff's thoughts on this to ideas about identity and a positive conception of difference as expressed in the previous chapter.

### Against the Fear of Difference

The notion of identity as it is commonly used is difficult to reconcile with a positive conception of difference, as identity is precisely one of those molar entities against which difference tends to be measured; the consideration of a molar identity as primary inevitably results in a negative conception of difference. Against this, Rosi Braidotti, too, argues for a positive conception of difference. She does this not only to free difference from its derivative

and secondary position in much of hegemonic Western philosophy's binary thinking; she also wants to free difference from the negative associations that come with it in everyday life. Difference and deviation are projected to be scary things that one should seek to avoid. In Western thought, Braidotti writes, there has been a view of "difference as pejoration" (170). This is something that easily applies to identities: 'difference from' a certain identity is easily perceived as degeneration. This is often the case with an identity to which one might subscribe, which has value to the way one perceives oneself or those one holds close. In those cases, difference is considered bad.

However, when it concerns the identities of others, people seem less attached to the importance of conserving an identity as is. In fact, demands that people change aspects of their collective identities are commonplace in cases of immigration.<sup>13</sup> In these situations, it is tempting to fortify one's own identity position in a process of polarization: us versus them, positing the binary notion of an inside opposed to an outside. We see these processes taking place in response to immigration throughout the western world—stratification over connection, difference as pejoration. In order to allow for a molecular politics to operate underneath the molar conception of such perceived insider and outsider identities, one will have to break through the reluctance to think oneself and one's own identity differently. With a positive conception of difference, continuous variation applies to all collective identities, including one's own.

Braidotti suggests that one way to combat the negative perception of difference is by changing the focus "from the issue of differences between cultures to differences *within* the same culture" (14). This redirects attention to the molecular level of collective identities perceived as molar entities. Granting intensive variation ontological primacy over external relations of difference between molar constants can open these identities up to a positive conception of difference. The molar entities are multiplied from within by revealing, once again, the internal variation from which the identity was extracted as a constant in the first place—as with Deleuze's "thousand tiny sexes" (*Thousand Plateaus* 249).<sup>14</sup> This way

---

<sup>13</sup> Cultural difference is not the only issue that can occur with immigration. Questions of logistics, housing, and economic circumstances also play a big part in discussions about immigration, but these questions are beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>14</sup> "If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes" (249). Elizabeth Grosz also wrote an article titled "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics" in which she assesses the potential of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus* for feminism.

seemingly rigid categories become more inclusive as their internal diversity is made explicit. Space smoothens as the territorial forces within an assemblage that hold the points together give way to the lines that always already ran through them. Variation itself is foregrounded, rather than the identity as a standard that would render variation deviation.

However, the fact that we consider variation to be primary does not equal an uncritical celebration of the new. Karen Barad, for example, warns that “the recent uncritical embrace of the new that has been in vogue among certain critical theorists and their followers” plays right into the hands of capitalism—specifically, capitalism’s continual creation of desire for the new, the better, the shinier in processes of planned obsolescence (473 n. 57). Julie Wuthnow, on the other hand, worries that an emphasis on movement and variation, such as in the work of Braidotti, might dissolve the subject and his or her experiences. According to Wuthnow, this danger also applies to embodied experiences such as the experience of racism (193). While these are legitimate concerns, we are not looking to embrace variation wholly uncritically. With Braidotti, we will account for processes of stratification and sedentarization and the necessity for minority groups to also engage in molar politics. We are not looking for variation at all cost; rather, we are looking for openings onto continuous variation that allow the *potential* for productive immanent difference—for fruitful connections and inclusion over boundaries and exclusion.

So, while Braidotti argues for making internal variation explicit in order to open up rigid molar formations, she does not advocate following through on such multiplications in practice at all cost. In fact, Braidotti believes doing so would not always be beneficial to those who are in everyday life seemingly inexorably linked to existing molar identities. A multiplication of sexes, genders, or the feminine would, for example, not necessarily help the position of women in everyday life. One is far more likely to effect positive change from a collective position. Indeed, Braidotti argues that for minorities to effect social change, some form of identity politics is, in fact, necessary: “[Minorities] first need to go through a phase of ‘identity politics’—of claiming a fixed position. This is both inevitable and necessary because . . . you cannot give up something you never had” (84). Molar identity politics are necessary for processes of emancipation, even if further down the line this molar identity itself needs to be reopened to continuous variation.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> We will focus on the importance of collective identity formations for minority politics in greater detail when we engage with Linda Martín Alcoff’s work in the second half of this chapter.

Following through on internal variation before a collectivity has achieved a desired position in a society could erode the intensive continuity that holds the collectivity—such as, for example, a certain strand of feminism—together as the assemblage that is necessary to achieve this position. This is not to suggest that such an assemblage should be tightly sealed off; it should remain open to internal variation to some degree and goals and strategies may shift accordingly—consider, for example, women of color in the feminist movement. One should remain aware of internal variation. It is, simply, to say that the idea of a positive conception of difference is not to follow every line of flight *ad infinitum*, dissolving every molar entity and assemblage in the process. The idea is, rather, to remain open to productive lines—to remain open to the potential of continuous variation moving assemblages forward and allowing new assemblages to emerge. It is, as we said, a question of how one treats variation.

#### Identities and Becoming: “Movement Residue”

We can conclude that to implode identity formations from within through internal variation is not the solution. Taken too far, this would be the “becoming everything of everybody” we discussed in the previous chapter. In some ways, this notion is not dissimilar from the point that is sometimes made that “despite all our differences, we are all human.” However, this simply shifts the problem by creating another rigid boundary further down the line. The category of “the human” becomes the next territorial formation that seals off the lines of flight and posits difference as deviation to the point of exclusion. Moreover, as we said, collective identities are necessary for emancipation. So, instead of abolishing collective identities, we will have to accommodate for them in our discussion of multiculturalism in the United States with regard to continuous variation. In this section, then, we turn to Rosi Braidotti to help us approach the concept of identity in light of a positive conception of difference.

The Deleuzian notion of “becoming” is an important aspect of Braidotti’s thinking in *Metamorphoses*. We explained becoming as the perpetual motion of continuous variation away from the molar and the majoritarian through productive connections of deterritorialized particles on the plane of consistency. Becoming is always molecular and minoritarian. Since collective identities are molar and often majoritarian formations, they conflict with a strict adherence to Deleuzian notions of becoming. Braidotti acknowledges this: “In terms of temporality the consolidation of identity is a coagulation of time and space which interrupts and interferes with the process of becoming” (169). However, this formulation still allows for

a positive conception of difference, as it posits “the consolidation of identity” as secondary to processes of becoming.

This does not mean that we are making an exception for collective identities when it comes to our positive conception of difference. So, while the common understanding of identities in everyday life may suggest them to be primary, essential entities that preexist difference, Rosi Braidotti, following Brian Massumi, presents identities as eternally secondary. Even if repetition and habit have led us to perceive molar identities as preceding the molecular flow, Brian Massumi argues that it is, in fact, the other way around: “The collectivity consolidated by an identity politics is an instant archaism, if not in spite of then because of its success” (qtd. in Braidotti 168). Braidotti elaborates that, consequently, collective identities are “constitutively doomed to be one step behind the reconfigurations of identity that are actually taking place . . .” (168). That is, the molecular flow of becoming renders everything, including identities, in perpetual flux, which means that collective identity formations that arise from coagulations on the flow of difference will always necessarily be behind on the flux. What is captured in the molar formation of collective identity is instantly escaping from it again.

This idea that identities, despite seeming stable, are in eternal flux is an important element of Braidotti’s project: to her, a Deleuzian framework is not necessarily incommensurable with sedentarized, molar conceptions of identity and identity politics. In fact, she believes that sedentarization and flux are both necessary parts of collective social movement(s). Therefore, her goal is not to discard but to complexify emancipatory identity politics “by introducing movement, dynamism, nomadism into it” (206). This is in line with both her point that, in today’s world, more attention should be given to differences within cultures, rather than differences between cultures, as well as her belief that “the Deleuzian process of becoming need not be a normative standpoint” (168). Identities should not be dismissed simply because they do not strictly fit in with the process of becoming as theorized by Deleuze.

In fact, viewing identities as extracted from the ongoing flux of difference is similar to Deleuze’s point about societies and ‘resistance phenomena’: “I . . . have no need to posit the status of resistance phenomena if the first given of a society is that everything escapes from it and everything is deterritorialized” (Deleuze *Two Regimes* 129). Another way to put this is that societies are leaking. The same is true for identities. In these cases, perceived ‘resistances to’—or, to put it differently, ‘deviations from’—a society or identity are actually primary. These ‘resistances’ are part of the deterritorialization into the flux of difference. Seen this

way, it is the society or the identity that offers resistance to the flow continuous variation that always already runs underneath. Again, in light of a positive conception of difference, they are the territorial forces within an assemblage that attempt to seal it off from continuous processes of becoming.

Deleuze and Guattari often visually describe processes of becoming as lines without points. If we view identities as instant archaisms on an eternal flux, we could say that an identity is often perceived as a point, or a series of extended points. However, such an extended identity is only a perceived contraction on lines of becoming that, in fact, have little regard for such points. It is only through repetition and habit that such a point emerges as a constant that subsequently attempts to shut itself off from the very lines from which it emerged. It is, however, important to understand that lines of becoming do not move through or towards points; they move on the molecular level without regard for molar formations—that is, points. This is how a society or an identity ‘leaks’: there is not first a society or an identity, which then starts leaking or falling apart; there is the flow, which is then, in certain places, slowed down through processes of repetition until an identity appears. This should not, however, stop the flow; the lines continue to move, which is how an identity leaks.

This is not to say that identities have no power. Some stagnation will inevitably occur with the contraction, as the contracted identity back-forms the conditions of its own emergence into a set of ‘rules.’ The constant extracted from variation comes to evaluate this very variation, often in terms of conformity to itself. In his book *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002), Brian Massumi is concerned with precisely these processes and their part in the relation between movement and stasis. This is also what we need to engage with in order to be able to open identities up to continuous variation.

### Movement and Indeterminacy

Massumi feels that thinking has often put position before movement. To continue with the picture sketched above, we could say that, in Massumi’s view, movement often ends up being nothing more than the line between the dots: “When positioning of any kind comes a determining first, movement comes a problematic second. After all is signified and sited, there is the nagging problem of how to add movement back into the picture . . . . Movement is entirely subordinated to the positions it connects” (3). This, Massumi argues, leaves the gaps or intervals between the dots, that is movement, a “theoretical nobody’s land” (4). To really think movement and real potential for change—not merely move to a different dot on a

predetermined grid with an overarching definitional framework—Massumi turns to Henri Bergson. The trick, in what Massumi terms the ‘Bergsonian revolution’ is, again, to think movement as primary: “[position] is secondary to movement and derived from it. It is retro movement, movement residue. The problem is no longer to explain how there can be change given positioning. The problem is to explain the wonder that there can be stasis given the primacy of process” (7). This flips the problem around and shows the dots to be retrospective tracings of movement; extensive positions appear to us from intensive movement.

So, how does Massumi explain the relation between movement and stasis with regard to a positive conception of difference? For this, Massumi turns to Deleuze’s ideas about ‘the virtual.’ The virtual is another term for the molecular side of an assemblage; the actual is another term for the molar side of an assemblage. The virtual and actual always accompany each other in mutual presupposition. The virtual accompanies the actual as its “nonpresent potential to vary . . . . Real, material, but incorporeal. Inseparable, coincident, but disjunct” (4, 5). Succinctly put, the virtual is the actual’s potential to be(come) other than it is. It is the potential for movement and change through any assemblage’s connection to the flow of difference. The actual is the (molar) result of the formalization of the relation between content and expression that occurs through an assemblage. The actual is what territorial forces within an assemblage attempt to seal off from the virtual. However, any assemblage always has both a molar and a molecular side; no matter how rigid the actual may appear, a positive conception of difference asserts that there is always the virtual potential for it to be other than it is (Parr 182). The actual is only a snapshot of being in a world of virtual flux.

However, this does not render the molar side of an assemblage obsolete. Massumi describes the relation between the actual and the virtual as one of determinacy and indeterminacy. Complete indeterminacy is the becoming everything of everybody that is the (abstract) final stage of becoming. It is becoming-imperceptible. While we want assemblages to remain open to the virtual—to the potential to vary—and we do not want collective identities to seal off this connection, we also do not want collective identities to dissolve into the flux. Complete indeterminacy would remove all grounds from which to act; for there to be a virtual potential to vary, there needs to be an actual that can vary. Reality consists in both sides of the coin—the actual and the virtual, determinacy and indeterminacy. In more concrete terms with regard to our project, people need a position from which to act, which (especially for minority groups) can be a position held together through a collective identity; however, we do not want this collective identity to capture all variation and bring us back to a negative

conception of difference in which variation is no more than deviation—a no man's land in between the points.

So, even if we consider collective identities to be “movement residue” and “instant archaisms,” we do believe them to have relevance. In fact, as Rosi Braidotti pointed out, to minority groups collective identities are essential for emancipatory social movement(s). The point of a positive conception of difference, then, is not to dissolve collective identities into molecular particles of individual variation; it is for collective identities to remain open to their virtual potential to be other than they are. The collective identity should be not thought of as a preexisting standard that needs to be protected from difference. Variation should not be excluded. Instead, a collective identity should be thought of as itself secondary to the variation from which it emerged. This variation still runs through the assemblage within which the identity is a territorial force. It is a way of conceiving of a collective identity that does not posit it as an essential element of people, but as part of the affective relation between content and expression that holds an assemblage together as a molar entity. A collective identity, then, should not be a means to hold people back, but a means to move people forward.

However, considerations and criticisms of identity are not limited to theoretical or philosophical academic discussions. In public debates, especially when related to the political arena, collective (ethnic) identities are often considered problematic, and at times even suspect. Such criticism often maintains that adherence to a collective identity interferes with the democratic potential of the rational, free-thinking individual. Critics also point to the danger of pitting groups with different (ethnic) identities against each other. Therefore, these critics argue, collective (ethnic) identities should have no place in political and public life. They are harmful to democracy. These points of criticism are a far cry from Rosi Braidotti's assertion that collective identity politics are necessary for the emancipation of minority groups. So, how can we explain Braidotti's assertion in light of such criticism? What makes collective identities important or even necessary to the emancipatory processes of minority groups?

To answer these questions, the second half of this chapter will take us on a slight detour away from Deleuzian philosophy. In this part of the chapter we will follow Linda Martín Alcoff to help us find answers to the questions we posed above. In her book *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (2006), Linda Martín Alcoff argues against the idea that collective identities are harmful to democratic processes. In fact, she agrees with Rosi Braidotti that they are necessary and shows why. At the end of this chapter we will connect

back with our discussion on collective identities and a positive conception of difference. This will allow us to find ways of synthesizing the ideas expressed in the two halves of this chapter, which will help us develop an understanding of collective identities that allows their significance to minority groups, while simultaneously remaining open to a positive conception of difference.

### Stirring the Melting Pot

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between extensive and intensive multiplicities. Claire Colebrook defines this difference: “An extensive multiplicity just collects more or less already differentiated things. An intensive multiplicity, on the other hand, changes with each addition or subtraction . . .” (59). A good example of an intensive multiplicity is art. Certain works of art may cause people to wonder what art is—what makes certain pieces of art ‘art’. It is precisely this wonder that indicates art as an intensive multiplicity: the idea of what art ‘is’ changes with the creation of each work of art. There is no rigid preexisting definition that gathers up precisely those pieces that fit this definition; instead, the variable works are primary and continually change the ‘definition’ with each new piece pushing the boundaries ever further, challenging any notion of a static definition. To view collectivities as intensive multiplicities means that one considers them to be open to continuous variation.

When we look at the United States in relation to ethnicity, it makes up an extensive multiplicity. In fact, the notion of ethnicity itself works precisely to maintain the nation as an extensive multiplicity—that is, to maintain the United States as is despite the existence of many different cultures within its geographical territory. Although the previously popular notion of the United States as a ‘melting pot’ suggests an intensive multiplicity—the mixture should change with each addition—this has certainly not been the case in reality. In fact, it would have been characterized better as a centrifuge than a melting pot. The process of centrifugation is used to separate elements in heterogeneous liquids. In the case of the United States—that is, if you stir hard enough—the centrifugal effect of the so-called ‘melting pot’ separates people’s ethno-cultural identities at the space or the hyphen. This allows the supposedly ‘American part’ to join the (public and political) center, while the other elements are relegated to ‘ethnicity’ at the margins—perhaps to be used in, for example, ethnic restaurants, or otherwise to remain confined to life at home.

This is, in fact, precisely what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. advocates in his book *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (1991). Schlesinger

acknowledges the “mulatto character of American culture” (Gooding-Williams 29) but only in the form of the melting pot. In his view, the U.S. was well on its way towards achieving his ideal of the melting pot, when the 1960s “‘cult of ethnicity’ derailed this steady progress” (Alcoff 16). He believes that expressions of ethnic identity should be limited to the cultural aspects of life, preferably even to the home, and certainly do not have a place in politics. He is, then, strictly opposed to the politicization of collective ethnic identities, as this is what he fears will bring about the ‘disuniting of America.’ In his view, there are core American democratic values to which every American citizen, regardless of their cultural or ancestral background, should subscribe. A politicization of collective ethnic identities would jeopardize people’s subscription to these values, as their rational individual thinking becomes muddled with collective ethnic interests. This might, subsequently, lead to the ‘Balkanization’ of America when different ethnic groups with different interests part ways with the *unum* of the American motto (*E Pluribus Unum*)—the *unum* which, for Schlesinger, consists in these core American democratic values—and clash.

However, as Linda Martín Alcoff points out, the core democratic values that Schlesinger believes are what keep America together are, in fact, originally European ideals. Schlesinger acknowledges this but, at the same time, argues that different groups of European immigrants shed their ethnic identities and subscribed to these same ideals. This, Schlesinger feels, is precisely what every ethnic group within the United States needs to do (17). Moreover, Schlesinger argues, these are the values that shaped America, European or not: “It may be too bad that dead white European males have played so large a role in shaping our [American] culture. But that’s the way it is. One cannot erase history” (122). While Schlesinger recognizes the atrocities that have also been committed in the name of these values, he argues that this same European culture also provided the cures for the damage it caused, which is what, in his view, separates it from other cultures (127). However, he fails to acknowledge that non-European groups, who may well have been on the receiving end of said atrocities, are likely to view both these values and the supposed cures rather differently, despite undeniably being part of, even Schlesinger’s, America—think only of the (ongoing) history of African Americans.

Schlesinger seeks to overcome difference by placing the ideals of one Anglo-American and, later, more broadly European, ethnic group at the core of both past and present-day American public and political life, while at the same time warning against the inclusion of precisely such ethno-specific ideals into politics. In fact, he is warning against acknowledging collective ethnic identities in politics at all (134, 135). This is an issue related

to the invisibility of the standard's own specificity. Robert Gooding-Williams explains the problem with this: "Schlesinger's flight from difference cannot escape difference, because difference reproduces itself in the contest over the disputed meanings of unifying democratic ideals" that, in a democracy, "remain open to democratic debate" (30). That is, these supposedly 'unifying democratic ideals' do not supersede or transcend difference because these ideals are themselves subject to and effectively mandate different possible interpretations.

This is one of the reasons why Gooding-Williams argues, with Braidotti and Alcoff, for greater consideration of the differences within groups over the predominant focus on differences between groups. A positive conception of difference makes this easier because it removes the ontological primacy from molar entities such as collective identities—or Schlesinger's America with its 'core democratic values'—and (re)casts them in the light of the difference from which they emerged without necessarily detracting from their value. It, once again, opens them up to variation. Here it might be good to reiterate Braidotti and Massumi thoughts on identity: think of one's national identity—or any other collective identity for that matter—as movement residue on the flow of difference, rather than something solid from which difference is measured. This affords a society greater openness to difference. Put differently, such thinking may loosen an identity's resistance to the flow of difference. It may even allow a society or identity's 'leakages'—that is, deterritorializations—to make it more inclusive and move it forward, rather than trying to plug all the holes.

This is the problem with viewing a nation as an extensive, rather than an intensive, multiplicity. If there is, apparently, a preexisting notion of America—before all the different people who inhabit it—who gets to decide what it is, what is included in it, and what is excluded? In fact, it is precisely the notion of such a preexisting, unchanging standard that leads to processes of stratification within a multicultural society. Boundaries are created. Difference is evaluated as deviation. Acceptance depends on conformity. An intensive multiplicity does not break apart as a result of difference; it embraces difference. An extensive multiplicity with a strictly enforced 'unifying core' serving as a standard might run the risk of losing those elements that feel they are not included in this standard.

Societies leak. The more majoritarian a nation becomes—the more it functions as a standard—the more minoritarian forces will work towards deterritorializing it. The minor will work upon the major from all directions. However, to effect anything this will often require minority groups to adopt an intra-group molar politics that renders it "locally major" in order to have a collective ground from which to act as a molecular seed of becoming that can

deterritorialize the major (Deleuze and Guattari *Thousand Plateaus* 67). This is how ethnicity can operate as both a molar and a molecular force. The effect of Schlesinger's emphatic enforcement of a standard achieves, then, the opposite of what he desires: the assertion of ethnic identities in U.S. politics.

Linda Martín Alcoff makes similar points that we will explore further in the next section. Contrary to Schlesinger's fear of the rupturing dangers of difference, she believes that difference is something that needs to be engaged with actively, rather than kept out. Similar to Braidotti, Alcoff also feels that the sense of difference as pejoration is widespread: "Differences, it is widely believed, pose an a priori danger to alliance, unity, communication, and true understanding" (Alcoff 5). However, Alcoff believes it is not difference itself but a failure to acknowledge the significance of difference that has proven to be dangerous to unity: ". . . the acknowledgement of the important differences in social identity does not lead inexorably to political relativism or fragmentation, but . . . , quite the reverse, it is the *refusal* to acknowledge the importance of differences in our identities that has led to distress, miscommunication, and thus disunity" (6). Simply put: differences matter. Below we will look more closely into Alcoff's arguments against criticism of the significance of collective ethnic identities in U.S. politics, while simultaneously engaging with her ideas about why collective ethnic identities do have a role in the political arena of the United States.

#### Linda Martín Alcoff: Against the Three Assumptions

What Schlesinger is ultimately afraid of is the emergence of different ethnic identities in the political arena. In his mind, these different identities will inevitably end up being pitted against each other in an insurmountable clash of different interests. This would be the end of unity in the United States. Schlesinger's fear points to the first of three commonly used arguments in critiques of collective identities that Linda Martín Alcoff identifies and argues against. The first problem critics have with collective identities in the political arena is, then, that different collective, ethnic identities within a nation will clash with each other, which leads towards separatism. Alcoff terms this "the separatism problem" (36). The second common criticism Alcoff identifies is related to intragroup dynamics, rather than the intergroup issues on which the first argument is based. This second concern critics have about collective identities is that emphasizing a collective identity leads to the reification of that identity, which raises questions of conformism, authenticity, and a "discouragement of internal differences" (37). The main problem critics have with this is that a reification of

identity forms a constraint on individual freedom and therefore interferes with democratic processes. Alcoff calls this second issue “the reification problem” (37). The third and final common argument Alcoff points us toward is that collective identities, especially when strongly felt, make rational deliberation more difficult. Objective evaluation, critics argue, requires distancing oneself from one’s cultural traditions. Collective identities, again, make this harder. Alcoff terms this “the reasoning problem” (37).

After summarizing the three common issues she finds critics have with collective identities, Alcoff proceeds to identify the underlying assumptions on which these criticisms are based. She explains, “I am classifying these as assumptions because they are deep-seated beliefs in the Western philosophical and political traditions rarely given explicit articulation or defense” (37). Alcoff connects each of the assumptions she identifies to one of the criticisms described above. The first assumption, which is related to the problem of separatism, is the “assumption that strongly felt identity is necessarily exclusivist” (37). The second belief, which is related to the problem of reification, is that whatever is externally imposed on a person is a limitation of their individual freedom. Alcoff terms this “the assumption of the highest value being individual freedom” (38). The third and, again, final assumption underlies the reasoning problem. It is the assumption that objective reasoning requires the greatest possible detachment, which is complicated by identities that are seen to present a commitment to “a set of beliefs and practices across categories of individuals” (38).

After presenting both the three points of criticism and the underlying assumptions, Alcoff offers her rebuttal: “Strongly felt identities *in reality* do not uniformly lead to the political disasters the critics portend because identities *in reality* are not what the critics understand them to be” (41). To illustrate this point, especially in light of the first problem and its underlying assumption, Alcoff provides the example of a study by José E. Cruz (1998). Cruz analyzed the Puerto Rican Political Action Committee (PRPAC) in Hartford, Connecticut for both the effects it had on the Puerto Rican community in Hartford—which comprises over a quarter of the city’s population—and its impact on the overall political scene in this city, as an example of identity politics in public life (39-40, 120). What he found was that, rather than leading to separatism as critics fear, this increased focus on Puerto Rican identity operated as an entryway for Hartford’s Puerto Rican inhabitants into “mainstream society and politics” (Alcoff 39). Cruz’s ultimate conclusion is that “societal integration and political power are inextricably bound” (qtd. in Alcoff 40). This suggests that separatism is not an effect of identity politics within the public domain; in fact, in the Hartford case identity politics had an inclusive effect.

If identity politics are a way to help minorities enter into mainstream public and political life, mainstream politics risks excluding a large portion of the population in cities such as Hartford if identity politics are rejected out of fear of separatism—remember that over twenty-five percent of the population is of Puerto Rican descent. Differences need to be engaged with and identity politics offers a way of doing so. Cruz's study suggests that if people feel that their specificity matters in the political arena, they are far more likely to take part in mainstream society and politics. Seen this way, identity politics has inclusive potential with regard to the relation of people to American society as a whole. If mainstream politics shuns differences for fear of disunity, it inadvertently risks excluding portions of the population. It might, in fact, promote indifference or even animosity towards mainstream politics among these groups, which poses a far greater risk with regard to separatism than identity politics would.

Alcoff links the idea of inclusion through identity politics to Renato Rosaldo's concept of "cultural citizenship" (40). She explains, "The concept of cultural citizenship is meant to counter a model of the abstract individual citizen who participates in civil society as a rational agent imagined to have no gender, race, or cultural background" (40). Alcoff believes that the "model of the abstract individual citizen" underlies some of the issues critics have with the assertion of a collective identity in politics: namely, the notion that collective identities form a constraint on individual freedom and make rational deliberation more difficult. The point of the concept of "cultural citizenship" is that one does not, in fact, enter the public arena as a fully detached individual. This also applies to white Anglo-Americans, except that their cultural attachments often are attachments to the standard and therefore more difficult to see. In the case of members of minority groups, the simple fact that the way one is perceived influences how what one says is received is a testament to the fact that one does not—cannot—enter the political arena as a fully detached, rational agent. Moreover, the belief that such detachment is preferable and even possible is itself culturally specific to a certain Western way of thinking. The specificity of this standard has, however, rendered itself largely invisible in the United States in presenting itself as an indispensable element of the unifying center.

Examples such as the PRPAC in Hartford work, for one, because they overcome the paradox of being expected to shed one's cultural identity in the public political arena, while simultaneously being assessed in light of it—even if assessed only for the degree to which one is able to shed this identity. Alcoff describes the problematic consequence of moments when this paradox is not overcome as the splitting of the self. This splitting is required of minority

figures in order to gain recognition in the mainstream public domain. The painful irony in this is that, in such cases, recognition comes with an “alienating self-consciousness of [minority] subjectivity and agency” (119), which, one could argue, means that recognition is ultimately really not recognition at all. It is the conforming part of the split self that gains recognition, while the minority part remains (or even, to the self, becomes) other.

Alcoff elaborates, “This [splitting] is more than just putting aside for the moment one’s ethnic habits; it is having to attempt to at least temporarily erase and even denigrate a fundamental aspect of one’s self” (120). PRPAC and similar initiatives remedy these issues precisely because they make the minority group identity central to political participation in the U.S., which means that members of the group no longer have to discard or deny part of themselves when engaging in politics. Rather than leading to separatism, in this case the assertion of a collective identity allows a group of people greater entry into the American political arena. Of course, this is the way a seed of becoming may be planted into mainstream American politics; the minority group might deterritorialize mainstream American politics, or at the very least make the specificity of the standard apparent.

#### Collective Identity, Interpretive Horizons, and Embodiment

With regard to the first problem—the separatism problem—we can say that allowing collective identities to play a role in mainstream politics has inclusive potential, rather than threaten to tear the nation apart. That leaves us with the two other points of criticism with which Alcoff engages: the reification problem and the reasoning problem. She believes these two problems stem from the way in which critics conceive of collective identities. That is, these critics view collective identities as if they were (representative of) a specific set of interests, much in the same way as interest groups (41). While Alcoff admits that in politics collective ethnic identities sometimes do operate in ways similar to interest groups, she argues that collective ethnic identities are nonetheless not reducible to a specifiable set of interests. So, to counter these two points of criticism that she believes are based on a false idea of what a collective identity is, Alcoff comes up with her own conception of collective ethnic identities.

Although we are not looking to strictly define the concept of collective identities, we will still have a brief look at how Alcoff conceives of collective ethnic identities in a way that renders the second and third points of criticism moot. On top of dealing with these remaining points of criticism that argue against the fruitful presence of collective ethnic identities in

public and political life, this will also give us an opening to connect back with our discussion of both the previous chapter and the first half of this chapter. As it is impossible for us here to do justice to the full extent of Alcoff's nuanced engagement with collective identities over the course of several chapters in her book, we will mainly concern ourselves with the points she makes in order to refute the aforementioned points of criticism.

To reiterate: the critics whose points Alcoff refutes fear mostly that subscribing to a collective ethnic identity limits the freedom of the individual, with regard to both their ability to think and their ability act. The idea is that, if a collective ethnic identity in politics mainly consists in a specifiable set of interests, then the individual citizen who subscribes to this collective identity will forego their individual interests in order to support (and conform to) this collective set of interests. These critics believe this to be detrimental to the individual's democratic potential. These fears rest on the premise that there is a clear distinction between the individual and the collective, as well as the notion that there is such a thing as a "free individual" that exists prior to or outside of any collective attachments. Alcoff argues that both these premises and the idea that a collective identity is reducible to a specifiable set of interests are false (41). She argues that there is an inexorable relation between the individual and the collective: there is no such thing as an individual that can reason from a position prior to and free from any collective attachment because collective social attachments are necessary to have a position to reason from.

To further make her point about the relevance of collective identities for the democratic engagement of members of minority groups in the United States, Alcoff combines elements from the hermeneutic and the phenomenological tradition. From the hermeneutic tradition, especially Hans-Georg Gadamer, Alcoff takes the inexorable link between a person's perspective and tradition, as well as the fluidity and openness of this perspective. She explains this link through the concept of the "interpretive horizon" (95). Alcoff describes an interpretive horizon as an opening out onto the world, a starting place that is different for everyone, but which is nonetheless inevitably bound to the collectivities that shape a person's horizon by making certain perceptions possible and others impossible (95). This does not mean that people with different backgrounds will never be able to achieve mutual understanding: for one, because people's horizons are shaped by multiple collectivities—not only, for example, ethnic cultural ones. Moreover, Alcoff points out that a person's horizon is not static; as an opening out onto the world, a person's horizon is shaped by experiences and perceptions. At the same time this horizon also functions as the very condition for perception. This breaks down the separation that critics make between individual subjectivity and

collective social identity. It is a person's social environment that shapes their very ability to perceive.

However, Alcoff feels that the notion of an interpretive horizon alone is still too abstract with regard to collective ethnic identities. For this reason, she attempts to ground it by connecting it to the phenomenological concept of embodiment. The point she makes with this is that a person's "subjectivity is never detached from the world . . . providing its own foundation" (110). Instead, a lot of the experiences that shape a person's interpretive horizon are embodied experiences. The main significance of this phenomenological approach is that, once again, it breaks down the separation between an individual and their (inevitably social) position in the world:

The most important implication of the phenomenological approach for the question of social identity is to reject the dualist approaches that would split the acting self from the ascribed identity. It is just such dualist approaches that lead to the view that identities must of necessity always fail as representations, that there is an 'I' that always exceeds my identity." (111, 112)

While viewing collective identities as representations runs the risk of returning us to a negative conception of difference, Alcoff's point that there is no underlying, essential self that exists separately from the collective is, as we will elaborate below, commensurable with our theoretical framework.

If we accept Alcoff's analysis that collective identities are vital in shaping an individual's interpretive horizon and that embodiment plays a significant part in this shaping process—to the extent that conceiving of an individual (or subjectivity) as existing prior to these processes is a transcendental illusion—then we can see how this counters the assumptions underlying 'the reification problem' and 'the reasoning problem' that Alcoff identified earlier. Neither the idea that freedom from anything that is externally imposed is the most valuable thing for an individual, nor the idea that the greatest possible detachment from any external influences is necessary for rational reasoning makes much sense in light of Alcoff's conclusion that the very condition for knowledge is socially grounded. In fact, both the way these critics perceive individualism, as well as their inability or unwillingness to recognize the relevance of collective ethnic identities for the political engagement of minorities are themselves part of their interpretive horizon. However, since in the U.S. their

interpretive horizon is—at least in this regard—the standard, the specificity of these ideas to a particular collectivity is rendered largely invisible.

However, the above does leave open the idea that there is always an excess to any collective identity ascription and that this is where a person's 'real self' resides. There is no doubt that a single or even any number of identity ascriptions will never completely constitute a person. However, Alcoff argues that this does not mean that there is a "true self that resides in the residue of identity, in what exceeds the interpellation: the lived bodies, identities themselves, are fluid and dynamic" (112). While we agree with the final point, we view the relation between identity and excess somewhat differently. As we explained in the first half of this chapter, we see identity as "movement residue." So, instead of the excess being the residue that is left after a collective identity has set up its territory, we believe this identity to be the residue of continuous variation.<sup>16</sup> That is, any (collective) identity is necessarily behind on the ongoing flow of difference. This means that the excess is what we would explain as the indeterminate opening out onto continuous variation of any assemblage—a potential to vary. It is the virtual that accompanies the actual. No collective identity ever fully constitutes a person because there is always the virtual potential to vary; there is always an opening onto continuous variation—onto indeterminacy.

### Conclusion: Identity Beyond Conformity

Where does all this leave us with regard to collective ethnic identities in light of a positive conception of difference? We argued in the previous chapter that order-words as variables on collective assemblages of enunciation, especially in the form of discourses on ethnicity and nationalism, effect incorporeal transformations on hodgepodes of bodies. The assemblages through which these relations of content and expression are arranged have a territorial side and a side that is open to continuous variation. We believe collective identities to be active on the territorial side of assemblages; that is, collective identities are involved in processes of capture and sedentarization that attempt to seal off lines of flight that always run through any

---

<sup>16</sup> People are generally within the reach of multiple collective identities—class, gender, regional, national, or even mixed ethnic and/or racial identities. We do not believe such identities to be completely separated; elements from one identity will play a part in the other—as we see in our discussion of the relation between ethnic identities and a national American identity. Elements from different identities interact with each other on the molecular plane of consistency, potentially deterritorializing molar identity formations. We also do not believe that multiple collective identities do fully constitute a person (just keep adding identities until you have covered all the bases); instead, we believe there is an indeterminate excess to each identity formation. There is always the virtual potential to be otherwise that accompanies the actual state of any person and any identity formation.

assemblage. This is how an assemblage coagulates on the flow of difference. This is how a molar entity emerges. Taken further, an identity may take on a majoritarian appeal. It comes to serve as a standard against which difference is evaluated. Conformity becomes the measure. This is how a negative conception of difference returns, which is the reason why we need to engage with the notion of collective identities in this chapter.

To avoid returning to a negative conception of difference with identities, we view collective identities not as primary, but as secondary to the very flow of continuous variation that they attempt to slow down by sealing off the lines. In this sense, Brian Massumi and Rosi Braidotti argue that identities are “movement residue.” Collective identities are always necessarily behind on the ongoing flow of difference. Identities are the leftovers of what was previously extracted from continuous variation. They are always leaking. However, even if we believe identities to be secondary to the flow of difference, this does not mean they are irrelevant. In fact, the formation of molar entities that occurs through the territorial power of identities is necessary for a collective and effective minoritarian politics. Minorities need a collective position from which to act. A collective identity provides the necessary cohesion to maintain such a position.

Linda Martín Alcoff takes this even further to argue that the ethnic specificity from which a collective ethnic identity emerges provides the condition for perception and knowledge. She emphasizes the social foundation of knowledge, which is not dissimilar to Deleuze’s idea that statements do not come from a single subject, but are, instead, variables on a collective assemblage of enunciation. Alcoff elaborates that perception and knowledge are shaped by experience; experience does not take place in an empty, individual vacuum, but through an embodied engagement with a social world. Collective identities hold together these experiences, perceptions, and this knowledge across a collectivity of people. Even if we might believe collective identities to be behind on the flow of difference, they still provide the solid grounds from which people perceive, know, and act. It would, then, make little sense to keep collective identities out of politics for fear that they might get in the way of the individual’s ability to act or reason when these identities consist of the very elements that provide the condition for acting or reasoning.

However, this is not to suggest that collective identities cannot be limiting. If a collective identity becomes firmly majoritarian, it does limit the potential of both individuals and the collective. Its functionality as a ground from which to act becomes a force that limits the potential for action. It attempts to shut the actual off from the accompanying virtual potential to vary. As individuals act through a collective identity as part of an assemblage, so,

too, does the collective identity live through these individuals. All the elements within an assemblage affect each other. Identities themselves are dynamic, as are the assemblages within which they operate. Smoothing and striating forces work upon each other. Identities are a territorial force within assemblages, but what is it that solidifies a collective identity. What shuts a collective identity off from its own potential to vary?

We believe the answer to this question to be the concept of “authenticity.” If a collective identity is a striating, territorial force that gathers elements together in an assemblage and attempts to seal it off from continuous variation, then the concept of authenticity is what maintains the collective identity as a majoritarian standard. This is the aforementioned reification problem. Authenticity demands conformity to a preconceived image of the elements that are captured in a collective identity. This limits the potential for variation. Representationalism is back. In the next chapter, then, we will engage with the concept of authenticity in an attempt to conceive of it in such a way that variation will not be seen as deviation—that difference is not pejoration. If we can think of authenticity in ways other than conformity, but, instead, as somehow validating openness to continuous variation, then we can open up collective identities and ethnicity as they pertain to the multicultural society in the United States in light of a positive conception of difference. We will do this by engaging with Elizabeth Grosz’s analysis of the concept of freedom in light of Henri Bergson’s ideas on indeterminacy, as well as the relation between the individual and the collective as Brian Massumi explains it. Further, we will illuminate this largely theoretical discussion on authenticity by also engaging with ethnic food. This will link our discussion more closely to the actual material context of ethnicity in the United States.

## Authenticity: Determining the Indeterminate

---

In a way similar to identity, authenticity is also a difficult concept with regard to a positive conception of difference. In fact, the notion of authenticity is what, in its common understanding, serves as the ‘border patrol’ for an identity as a territorial force within an assemblage. In this sense, authenticity promotes a negative conception of difference by putting identity as the ground from which difference is derived or measured; authenticity ‘protects’ a preconceived notion of what constitutes an identity by guarding its boundaries, thereby cutting the elements within its range of capture off from the flow of the difference. The idea of “difference as pejoration” that Braidotti articulates is, therefore, especially strong in relation to this understanding of authenticity. However, if we view identities in light of a positive conception of difference and therefore as always behind on continuous variation—as movement residue—then authenticity should take on a different role as well.

Our goal for this final chapter is, then, to develop an understanding of the concept of authenticity that is commensurable with a positive conception of difference. We no longer want authenticity to shut a collective identity off from difference, but for it to allow an identity to be open to continuous variation. Simply put, authenticity must allow for change, and, therefore, change must be allowed to be considered authentic. To develop such an understanding of the concept of authenticity, we will look at a paper by Elizabeth Grosz in which she develops a positive conception of freedom. The ideas expressed in this paper will allow us to take our first steps towards allowing variation within an understanding of authenticity. We will then turn to Brian Massumi’s exploration of the relation between the individual and the collective to further develop our understanding of authenticity with regard to collective identities. The relation between the individual and the collective also helps us understand the relation between tradition and variation, which is significant for our development of collective identities in light of a positive conception of difference. First, however, we will ground our discussion of authenticity by looking at a number of ways in

which this concept promotes stasis with regard to ethnic identities in the United States, especially by engaging with examples of ethnic food.

### To Eat the Other and Keep the Border Too<sup>17</sup>

If we think of stasis in relation to an identity, we might formulate stasis more positively as ‘tradition.’ Certain elements within the range of a collective identity are repeated consistently and in a particular manner over a period of time. These elements take on a certain appeal and come to serve as a standard. It is this standard that we might call ‘tradition.’ Difference from this standard becomes deviation and the collective identity is closed off from continuous variation. We have described this process before. If we add authenticity to the mix, we can see how this concept only reinforces the notion of stasis—or tradition—by measuring value according to a level of conformity to a preconceived idea—that is, again, tradition. However, if we consider any (collective) identity to be a secondary coagulation on the flow of difference, then tradition is only a back-formation of this coagulation. Tradition is not primary in light of a positive conception of difference.

However, the intention of our project certainly is not to devalue tradition entirely and to brand those things that remain from the past as necessarily inauthentic; it is, rather, to have authenticity also allow for variation and transformation. In fact, when considering the primacy of difference, this is how it has always been; what we consider authentic today was at some point in time also extracted from variation and captured in identity and tradition. Problems occur when authenticity is, whether or not inadvertently, used as a tool to prevent change, when it is used to shut identities off from the flow of difference. The risk of this occurring is especially great in situations where elements or certain expressions of an identity are desired in their molar form.

One such situation is when elements within a minority culture are desired by the outsider majority; problems arise especially when this desire is for the ‘authentic other.’ The culture of the other is in these cases not viewed in all its variation but as a static image that, in fulfillment of the desire, should be approximated as closely as possible. Authenticity becomes the degree to which certain expectations are met. In these cases, Trinh Minh-ha speaks of

---

<sup>17</sup> This section title is paraphrased from Suzanne Bost: “By transplanting the border symbolically inside the United States—Taco Bells in every town, Coca-Cola saturating Mexican markets—corporate culture disavows Mexican challenges to U.S. profits and national boundaries. The United States can then eat the other and keep its border, too” (513).

‘planned authenticity,’ which, Meredith Abarca argues, “makes people act as representatives of foreign, exotic cultures somewhere else” (7, 8). Cultures and identities are rendered static, a snap-shot from a particular moment in time and space—a tourist postcard. It is a demand for authenticity that Trinh-ha translates as saying: “We no longer wish to erase your differences; we demand, on the contrary, that you remember and assert them” (qtd. in Abarca 8). The cultural expressions of the ethnic other need to remain sufficiently other for the majority to feel that they are able to experience authentic elements of the other’s culture—even if the immigrants themselves are often expected to assimilate in other areas.

This is the commodified cultural opposite to Schlesinger’s political. Remember that in the previous chapter we discussed Schlesinger’s notion of the melting pot; his ideal is that all the different ethnic groups in the United States shed their ethnic specificities and join the ostensibly American center. This seems contrary to the demand that ethnic groups in the United States assert precisely these ethnic differences in order to fulfill people’s exotic desires. However, these two demands are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are two sides of the same coin. One side seeks to preserve a certain political center by requiring the assimilation of those who seem to differ from that center; the other requires the cultural other to preserve ‘authentic’ elements of his or her culture for consumer demand.<sup>18</sup> Both promote static images of collective identities and demand conformity to a preconceived standard. Both also serve to maintain the notion of what ‘America’ is—in the majoritarian sense—by excluding anything that might deviate from it. Both reinforce the boundaries between what is considered inside and what is considered outside of the preconceived notion of what constitutes ‘America.’ We will see how this works below.

Writing about the culinary cultures of immigrants to the United States, Keridiana Chez argues that as food is used to express ethnic identities, “so is liberal cosmopolitanism also practiced by culinary choices” (234). The ability for Americans to practice cosmopolitanism within their own country depends on their ability to experience actual, preferably ‘authentic,’ other cultures through people who have migrated to the U.S. In the case of such immigrants to the U.S.—whose cuisines, for example, may be available to the broader public through restaurants and at festivals—this renders them necessarily, and perhaps permanently, the

---

<sup>18</sup> Pablo Vila also identifies and describes this ambiguous approach towards the other: “The new racism that arises in multicultural global capitalism splits the other into two halves in order to celebrate one of the halves while demonizing the other. Thus some aspects of the culture of the other are accepted and, sometimes, incorporated . . . . But other aspects are framed as ‘fundamentalism’ and rejected” (*Ethnography* 332).

ethnic other. Understood this way, Nina Glick Schiller writes, cosmopolitanism “becomes a relationship to the ‘otherness of the other’” (526). The separation between such cultures within the same country needs to be strictly guarded in order for gustatory elements from the one culture to contribute to the possibility of expressing cosmopolitanism within the other.

However, what is desired and what is considered authentic do not always match: Frank Wu argues that the way a western society approaches the eating of dog meat provides a good measurement for the “meanings and limits of diversity in all its forms” (220). It shows that culinary cosmopolitanism, in its desire for experiencing the culture of the other, has its limits. For example, the recent increase in popularity of Korean food in larger American cities does not mean that people are ready to try or even condone eating dog stew—despite the fact that this is a traditional, albeit nowadays sometimes controversial, part of Korean cuisine.<sup>19</sup> Wu elaborates that even at ethnic festivals where people can sample foods from different cultures, “Asian entrepreneurs” are “unlikely . . . to offer up a bit of dog stew, even though it would be authentic . . .” (220). Some sensibilities prevail over the desire for culinary adventure and authenticity. In fact, the recent and recurring international outcry over the Yulin dog meat festival in southern China shows that resistance to such practices exists not only when it concerns diversity within one’s own nation.

In light of the above, the separation and stagnation of an ethnic immigrant cuisine could be seen as a matter of supply and demand: the demand for ‘authentic’ food has ethnic restaurants perform a notion of authenticity that meets the cosmopolitan consumer’s desires and expectations. Ian Cook agrees, “demands for authenticity necessitate that the ethnic group essentialize and spectacularize themselves in order to attract customers” (823 *Mixing*). Cook goes so far as to say that, in this sense:

the essentialized versions of (culinary) culture that might be criticized by mainstream critics can be seen as *created (and policed)* by mainstream consumers, retailers, food writers, etc., rather than simply being ‘ethnic’ entrepreneurs’ misguided, backward, introverted ways of thinking. (823)

---

<sup>19</sup> John Feffer explains, “Even in Korea, where a bowl is quite expensive, dog soup exists at the margins, associated with older traditions, both culinary and medical. In its postwar struggle to make a place for itself at the global table, Korea has left poshintang [dog soup] behind. Countryside culture is popular in Seoul, with restaurants serving makkoli (rice liquor) and country-style pancakes, but it is a carefully sanitized version of the countryside . . .” John Feffer wrote this article on the Korean tradition of dog food about a month before the start of the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan, which brought increased attention to the rural Korean tradition of eating dog meat, which, as Feffer points out, was (subsequently) kept off the menus in the more cosmopolitan cities—even those that specialized in countryside cooking.

One could argue this is a form of cultural appropriation—a form in which the members of the appropriated culture are required to perform that particular desired form of their culture. Keridiana Chez, however, feels it is an exchange, rather than only a one-sided essentialization: what comes to be expected is at times also the result of what ethnic entrepreneurs have chosen to make available to consumers (240; see also Reisinger and Steiner 70). There is interplay at work. Chez does stress the importance of noting the power imbalance between the groups involved in this exchange (239). It is an exchange, but one that does not occur on equal footing and that runs the risk of creating a vicious circle that promotes stasis over process in the minority culture.

This is where we return to the difference between extensive and intensive multiplicities; an extensive multiplicity “collects more or less already differentiated things. An intensive multiplicity, on the other hand, changes with each addition or subtraction . . .” (Colebrook 59). Authenticity as a tool to promote stasis in immigrant cultures leaves the U.S. an extensive multiplicity; moreover, as a result of this stasis the immigrants and their cultures remain excluded from ‘America,’ even as the generations pass. The relation of these immigrants to the United States remains extrinsic, even though they live within its borders. Chez explains, “The Other, and his/her cuisine, must remain sufficiently authentically Other, different-from/than, in order to *add* to What Makes America Great, without actually threatening to transform, or constitute, ‘America’” (243). This is what occurs when preexisting notions of what a culture or a nation ‘is’ come to determine what it will or should be. Difference and change become derivative instead of primary; process is hampered. It is putting the cart before the horse: rather than letting process be the guide towards a nation or culture’s own indeterminacy, its potential is limited by this preexisting image—limited to the possibilities implied in the image.

This reduction of both American and immigrant cultures to preconceived ideas of what they are also occurs on the side of the immigrants themselves. Nostalgia can be a factor in this. Anita Mannur writes about, especially South Asian, “culinary nostalgia” and finds that “. . . immigrants often invent an image of the homeland as an unchanging and enduring cultural essence and are often singular about the ontological coherency of their national cuisines, despite the fact that memories are fragmentary, partial, and ‘irretrievably lost’” (14). Faced with an entirely new situation in a different country, culinary practices from the homeland can serve as a retreat back into experiences felt to be exemplary of the homeland (Roy 472; Lindholm 81). This may lead to the reification and ossification of those memories,

experiences, and practices, potentially cutting these, in this case, culinary traditions off from the flow of difference—especially when the ossified is seen as the authentic. This might lead to the situation that, while the cuisine of the homeland progresses through innovation and change, the immigrant version of it stagnates and lags behind.

Of course the opposite can also be true. The new environment can serve as an impetus for change, opening up a cuisine for new connections to emerge. To an extent this will depend on the immigrants' relation to their homeland, as well as their connection to the adoptive country. Of course these connections can also change over time with subsequent generations born in the new country. The latter part of the equation, the connection to the adoptive country, can work both ways: elements from the adoptive country may find their way into an immigrant's kitchen; at the same time, elements from an immigrant culture may find their way into the kitchens of, in the case of the U.S., other Americans, deterritorializing both (Ferguson 699). The development of a cuisine in the context of immigration is often an ambiguous "cluster of processes" that, scholars have noted, consists in neither complete resistance nor complete assimilation to the culture of the host country (Ferguson 689; Campbell 208; Anh Williams 77; Mintz and Du Bois 109).

That immigration can have both these effects—stagnation, or serving as an impetus for change—is a reflection of the nature of culture in general. Ian Cook, following Don Mitchell, puts it this way:

Culture . . . has this paradoxical identity. It is *both* the enactment of a 'powerfully determined idea' of neat, relatively stable, essentialized, homogenous, bounded, separate 'cultures' as 'things' which act, *and* messy, changing, non-essential, heterogeneous, embodied, diasporic, hybrid, everyday, leaky, viscous 'cultural' practices. (824)

The top part of the quote describes the static part of cultures and identities as molar entities that the common understanding of authenticity is related to. This understanding of what cultures are is what leads to a perception of difference as secondary and derivative. However, by adding the bottom part, the difference and variation from which a molar identity is extracted are brought back into the picture. The molecular flow has a role to play again. The quotation is also indicative of the relation between the collective and the individual that we will engage with later on in this chapter: individuated "messy" expressions of the "relatively stable" collective may set the collective in motion again and open it up to variation.

In fact, we can position our understanding of the concept of authenticity that we are developing below on the “*and*” of the “paradoxical identity” of culture and, more specifically, collective identities. The authentic as we want to present it here is what respects tradition, without engaging in a relationship based only on conformity or resemblance. It acknowledges the primacy of difference and is open to variation. As we do not see process or change itself, whatever we may label ‘authentic’ is necessarily a retrospective qualification of repeated acts that, for us, open identity up to variation—to more than it is. Such an understanding negates authenticity’s stifling effect: by allowing authenticity to also encompass variation, premature dismissals of the supposedly ‘inauthentic’ based on a limiting conception of authenticity could be prevented. In fact, maybe such dismissals could even be replaced by an appreciation for the ‘authentic-to-be.’

### The Concept of Authenticity

Above we have had a brief look at what the concept of authenticity does with regard to ethnic identities in the United States, as well as the relations between different collective identities and the United States as an overarching majoritarian identity. We also presented an idea of where we want to take our understanding of authenticity in order to help prevent the solidification of the boundaries of and between collective identities, as well as the separation of ethnic identities from the notion of ‘America.’ We want to find a way of incorporating continuous variation into authenticity in order to allow for connections and inclusivity over boundaries and exclusion. However, before we begin to develop the concept of authenticity in this direction—especially by engaging with Elizabeth Grosz and Brian Massumi—we will have a brief look at some ways in which authenticity is currently understood. This will help lead into our own engagement with the concept.

Yvette Reisinger and Carol J. Steiner analyzed (scholarly) literature on tourism for ways in which the concept of ‘object authenticity’ is interpreted and understood. They define ‘object authenticity’ as “a term used for the genuineness of artifacts and events” (65). Reisinger and Steiner distinguish three broadly conceived interpretations of object authenticity based on three broad ideologies: “modernism/realism, constructivism, and postmodernism” (66). They briefly summarize the differences between these three interpretations:

Modernists/realists argue there is a discernible objective basis for the authenticity of artifacts, events, cuisine, practices, dress, and culture, generally underpinned by a fixed and knowable reality. Constructivists argue the basis is social or personal and hence unfixed, subjective and variable. They note that authenticity can be negotiated and deny any fixed, objective reality to which people can appeal. Postmodernists assert that authenticity is irrelevant to many tourists, who either do not value it, are suspicious of it, are complicit in its cynical construction for commercial purposes, or are aware that it is merely a marketing device. (66)

Based on their analysis of these three interpretations, Reisinger and Steiner conclude that the differences are insurmountable. Subsequently, they consider the usefulness of the concept of object authenticity for research in light of Thomas Kuhn's notion of the 'basic concept.' This they define as "an idea accepted 'once and for all' by all members of its community" (65). Based on all of the above, Reisinger and Steiner ultimately conclude that the concept of 'object authenticity' as used in tourism literature cannot be accorded the status of a 'basic concept' and should, therefore, "as a concept and a term . . . be abandoned by researchers" (81). Instead, researchers should use such terms as "genuine, actual, accurate, real, and true when referring to judgments that tourists and scholars make about the nature and origins of artifacts and tourism activities" (66).<sup>20</sup>

Abandoning the concept of authenticity is not an option for us in this project. If we wish to develop an understanding of the concept of identity that is commensurable with a positive conception of difference, we need to also engage with the concept of authenticity. Simply dismissing or abandoning it would leave it lingering, only to appear again later for it to close off identities from the flow of difference. To abandon the term as researchers does not mean that its significance disappears; it only means that we leave it outside our considerations. Authenticity would be an invisible shadow accompanying identity, ready to pull difference back into derivation and pejoration. If we wish to open up identity to a positive conception of difference, we need to develop an understanding of authenticity that also allows for the primacy of difference.

---

<sup>20</sup> It can be argued that people who are looking to practice cosmopolitanism in their own country by visiting what they hope to be authentic ethnic restaurants are also engaged in acts of tourism. In this sense, Steiner and Reisinger's ideas on object authenticity with regard to tourism can easily be related to our discussion of authenticity and ethnic food above.

In the same paper, Reisinger and Steiner do, however, propose an alternative understanding of authenticity based on a Heideggerian phenomenological perspective. Basically, and quite simply, they propose for tourists to accept what they experience as it appears. Tourists should not use preconceived ideas to determine the value of their experiences with regard to ‘genuineness’ (78). Researchers, Reisinger and Steiner feel, should stop using the concept of object authenticity, not only because of a lack of consensus with regard to its meaning, but also because, within their Heideggerian framework, attempts to find a strict definition of object authenticity within tourist experiences does “violence to the ontological integrity of things . . .” (81). What this means is that, in defining authenticity, things as they appear (phenomenon) are measured against things as they should be (authentic, noumenon), which could detract from the experience of things as they appear. Reisinger and Steiner, then, believe that the best way to understand authenticity would be to regard all that is as it appears as authentic.

While this may seem like an overly simple approach, it is an important step towards an understanding of authenticity that allows for openness to difference: It moves authenticity beyond derivation and representation. However, this phenomenological approach is still very much focused on ‘being,’ rather than ‘becoming.’ The focus with such an approach is on the dots. We need to account for the lines. Difference and movement need to be incorporated into our understanding of authenticity in a way that does not render them merely derivational in relation to the dots we perceive. That is, we need to create the possibility for change itself to be considered authentic. Elizabeth Grosz and her development of a positive understanding of freedom will help us take another step in this direction.

#### Adding Movement to Authenticity and Authenticity to Movement

In a chapter titled “Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom” (2010), Elizabeth Grosz develops a positive conception of freedom. She develops this notion of freedom in light of ‘freedom to,’ rather than ‘freedom from.’ This does not mean that Grosz wishes to substitute the former for the latter; both have their place since freedom from, for example, oppression is necessary but this should not be the only way in which freedom can be defined—that is, negatively. Freedom as she presents it is a freedom that is not transcendent or inherent in subjects, but immanent in events and relations. Grosz writes, “Free acts are those which both express us and transform us, which express our transforming” (146). That is, free acts are those acts that incorporate the actual *and* the virtual, rather than only deriving from the actual molar state of

affairs. Authenticity could be developed in a similar positive direction that allows room for transformation. This is our goal for this section: to develop an understanding of authenticity that runs parallel to Grosz' positive conception of freedom.

In order to reconsider freedom in an attempt to think it positively, Grosz turns to Henri Bergson. For our project, the value of her paper on freedom consists in the fact that Grosz posits freedom not as a preexisting "transcendent quality" that can be bestowed on or is inherent in subjects, but as something that subjects to a greater or lesser degree express in their acts (148). As Nietzsche put it, "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming . . . the deed is everything" (*Genealogy of Morals* 45). Grosz asserts that "[a]cts are free insofar as they express and resemble the subject, not insofar as the subject is always the same, an essence, an identity but insofar as the subject is transformed by and engaged through its acts, becomes through its acts" (145). This adds movement to the notion of the subject as being free in expressing him or herself as a dynamic subject who does not depend on others to grant them freedom; the subject becomes free to move in smooth space. The suggestion Grosz makes, following Bergson, is that freedom resides in the indeterminacy that is in the virtual that always accompanies the actual. The extent of a person's freedom is, then, the extent to which a person is able to express this indeterminacy in his or her acts:

It is this 'zone of indetermination' that for Bergson characterizes both the freedom representative of life and the capacity for being otherwise that life can bestow on (elements or factors of) material organization . . . . The degrees of indetermination are the degrees of freedom" (145).

In the earlier quote, Grosz opposes identity to transformation; however, understanding identity in light of a positive conception of difference renders this opposition far less solid. That is, understood more dynamically, identity is the determinate actual that accompanies the indeterminate virtual. It is the collective that acts in mutual presupposition with the individual. It is only through a negative conception of identity—one that demands conformity—that it becomes opposed to Grosz' understanding of freedom. This is why we need to engage with the concept of authenticity in order to move away from the relation of conformity that, under certain circumstances, characterizes the relation between a collective identity and an individual.

To understand authenticity in light of such a conception of difference is to argue that those acts that are free by Grosz and Bergson's understanding could also be labeled as

authentic. This removes the link between authenticity and representation; that which is authentic would no longer be that which most closely conforms to preconceived notions. The degree of authenticity would not be that of the least deviation from an existing norm; instead, it would be the degree to which an act expresses a subject or object in its transformation—in the flow of becoming. Grosz asserts, “[Freedom] is not a property or a right bestowed on, or removed from, individuals by others but a capacity or potentiality to act both in accordance with one’s past as well as ‘out of character,’ in a manner that surprised” (152). An act that is truly free and authentic should be at once “in accordance with one’s past” and “‘out of character,’ in a manner that surprised” to involve both the actual and the virtual.

However, this is all rather oriented toward the acts of an individual subject. For our project, we are especially interested in the relation between authenticity and collective identities. While the freedom or authenticity with which a single subject expresses him- or herself (in his or her transformation) is not wholly insignificant, it is not our focus here. However, Grosz’ ultimate goal does not stop at the individual level either; with her paper, she hopes to open up the concept of freedom for a ‘feminism of difference,’ which might help women “partake in the creation of a future unlike the present” (154)—that is, in the creation of the new. This she opposes to what she calls ‘egalitarian feminism,’ which is more focused on the attainment of rights and recognition (142). While relevant, such an ‘egalitarian feminism’ is also limited and potentially limiting; it limits the options for the future to existing actual states of affairs—wishing to be allowed greater access to the world as is. The belief within this strand of feminism is that behind the constraints and limitations placed upon women in this world there is a “natural or given autonomy,” which will be able to emerge when these constraints are lifted (141). This is the aforementioned ‘freedom from.’ However, to Grosz this view is, in fact, an abandonment of autonomy: “If we rely on a conception of freedom that is linked to the controlling power of the other . . . we abandon in advance the concept of autonomy” (153). For Grosz, autonomy resides precisely in the subject’s ability to express a ‘freedom to’; if you limit yourself to existing options that only come available when others lift constraints placed on you—‘freedom from’—there is no autonomy.

The important difference between these two approaches towards, in this case, feminism, exists in their treatment (or lack thereof) of the relation between the actual and the virtual. Egalitarian feminism limits itself to the actual and the possibilities therein; feminism of difference is open to potential and the virtual. The former hopes to make available to women all that is; the latter strives to make life become more than it is through the creative power of women. This is the difference between possibility and potential. Possibility

accompanies the actual as its “post-facto shadow” and is implicit in the actual’s “region of nominally defining—that is, normative—variation” (Grosz, 147; Massumi *Parables* 9). What this means is that the possible never prefigures the real but is at once derived from it while also contributing to its prescription; possibility follows the real while also capturing it in its actuality, limiting its variation to the implicit. The possible is already determinate. Potential, on the other hand, “only feeds forward” into indeterminacy (Massumi 9). Potential variation is indeterminate; possible variation is predetermined. In fact, “[p]ossibility is back-formed from potential’s unfolding” (9). It is from potential and the virtual that the real emerges, which is then both accompanied and prescribed by possibility.

This difference is important for us, here, because we do not wish to limit our conception of identity—and, therefore, with it, our understanding of authenticity—to the possible, but for it to be open to the new. The possible alone does not allow identity and authenticity to be open to continuous variation; it would limit them to the actual’s “nominally defining . . . variation” (9). If we translate this to the relation of minorities to an American national identity, they would only be able to become part of a preconceived notion of what ‘America’ is, rather than play a part in its potential becoming. Our understanding of authenticity must, then, as with Grosz’ understanding of freedom, also be able to include potential and indeterminacy, which is, admittedly, a large step to take from the way the term is commonly used today. In the next section we will explore how we may come to an understanding of authenticity that is open to the future in the way that Grosz explained her conception of freedom, while at the same time having a collective relevance.

#### Authentic Style: Expressing the Collective Becoming

While Grosz connects her seemingly individual conception of freedom—as it is rooted in individual acts—to the larger social cause of a ‘feminism of difference,’ in this particular paper she does not elaborate on how these individual acts that would be ‘free’ according to her definition work to move the collective forward into the future. This is also a problem with which we have to deal in our attempt to open up the concepts of identity and authenticity in order for them to be commensurable with a positive understanding of difference. How does one open up identity and authenticity to both indeterminacy and difference—that is, if we understand authenticity to be expressed in free acts, rather than to reside in stasis—while also allowing them collective significance?

For this we return to Brian Massumi, specifically his book *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002). We should remember the importance of the primacy of movement, of difference for our project. We view difference not as ‘difference from’ but as a molecular flow of variation from which molar entities are extracted. It is precisely in this variation that the relation between the individual and the collective works to move the collective forward. To show how this works, Massumi analyzes the workings of a ball sport—e.g., soccer (71-80). While the rules of a sport can seem to be the foundation of a sport, Massumi points out that they only constitute the sport in its formal, official form. Before this formal sport there is, what Massumi calls, a ‘proto-sport,’ the variation of which is *ex post facto* captured by the rules. The rules are the formal foundation of the sport, not the effective foundation. The rules follow the emergence of the sport itself and *then* come to serve their prescriptive role. “It might be argued that all foundations are of this nature: *ex post facto* regulatory framings rather than effective foundings. Once they apply themselves, the rules do effectively frame and regulate the play, taking precedence” (71). This is similar to how we explained, for example, language and identity in the previous chapters: first, there is variation, which is captured in a language or in an identity, which then takes on a prescriptive—territorial—role that makes this language or identity seem primary, which, in turn, makes subsequent variation seem to be deviation from this norm.

In Massumi’s example there is relatively free variation from which a molar sport is extracted and captured. However, this capture does not spell the end of variation. It is “through stylistic, free variations that an already-constituted sport evolves” (78). Style is what accounts for variation within an existing molar entity; style constitutes an individuation within the collective:

The ‘individuality’ of the style is a collective individuation: it is ‘collective’ in its absolute dependence on an intermixing of the multiple and heterogeneous elements of the sport, and it is an ‘individuation’ in the sense that it is the mother of the sport’s unique evolution. A style is a germinal individuation *of the sport*. The single body channeling the evolutionary potential is a node of expression of a collective becoming. (78)

The style of an individual may work outside the range of the formal rules without breaking them, thereby forcing—in the case of a sport—the referee to stop and consider the play. As the rules are a retrospective capture of emergence, this may move the entire sport forward

should the referee decide to accept the stylistic action of, what Massumi terms, the ‘star’ (individual) (77). Style may escape the rules but the rules can chase and retrospectively capture style—a leapfrogging of relative de- and reterritorialization.

It is important to note as well that Massumi does not consider individuals and societies (the collective) as separate entities who enter into an extrinsic relation with each other; he believes they are mutually constitutive of each other in immanence. There is no individual without a society; there is no society without individuals (71). Their mutual constitution is seen in the becoming of the collective as it is expressed through individuals. In the previous chapter we emphasized the importance of collective identities as a ground for the politics of minority groups. It should be clear now that these grounds are not transcendental in the sense that they exist prior to the members of the minority group. Instead, the collective identity consists in the acts of the individuals, while also making these acts possible: it is a relation of mutual presupposition.

The rules, which in the case of identity may be called ‘tradition’ (as policed by authenticity), are significant for the process of moving forward in the sense that they allow for the repetition of play that is needed for variation to emerge. The rules do not only capture and contain variation; they also retroactively condition its re-emergence. “Codifying capture cuts both ways. Negatively, it stops and contains variation. Positively, it preserves the game for repetition. If the game were not repeated, variation would never have a chance to restart” (79). To be open to the flow of difference, then, is not to wish to abolish tradition—that which is consistently repeated over a period of time—altogether. It is to be open to change. It is to grant variation a chance to creep back into molar formations through repetition. In such continuous processes, stylistic variation can become part of tradition through repetition when it is captured by ‘the rules.’ This is how an identity is open to variation without dissolving.

### A Recipe for Change

We can have a brief look at cooking recipes as an example of how these processes manifest themselves in relation ethnic cuisines. This links us back to the examples of ethnic food we engaged with earlier in this chapter. Cooking recipes are a form of “codifying capture.” They clearly have a prescriptive function; in this sense, they “stop and contain variation.” At the same time, cooking recipes also allow for the repetition that is necessary for variation to reinsert itself. For these reasons, cooking recipes have a complicated relationship with the concept of authenticity. Authenticity in cooking is often linked to a history of meals cooked in

the home by a family's line of (usually) mothers, or at least within a family setting. What lends certain dishes an air of authenticity is, then, "precisely the long memory of the nonmodern and self-effacing line of . . . forebears that has nourished and disseminated down a . . . line a sophisticated culinary lore without the aids of formalized recipes, precise measurements, and modern kitchen equipment" (Roy 486). Recipes contain the line but also make its further dissemination easier. Authentic meals are linked to this "self-effacing line" but the wider availability of such authentic meals depends on their capture and formalization in recipes that seem to negate precisely these elements that lend a meal its air of authenticity.

However, recipes need not be completely limiting. Debra Castillo prefers to look at a recipe as "less a formula than a general model; less an axiom of unchanging law and more a theory of possibilities . . ." (xiii). We can imagine recipes to be enablers of the general, while also being conducive to style: a recipe for a meal in the hands of a 'star,' to use Massumi's term—which need not be a Michelin star chef but could also be someone cooking for their family—may well be transformed by this person's style. Free variation is added to the preparation of the meal as it was pre- or described by the recipe. The molar, collective meal may be transformed and/or enriched by the molecular individuated "node of expression of a collective becoming" (Massumi *Parables* 78). Acts, in this sense, are no longer strictly individual, but individuated expressions of a collective identity, without being strictly bound to an essentialized, static understanding of this identity. This is how one performs a recipe both "in accordance with one's past" as well as "'out of character,' in a manner that surprised," that is, authentically. You may be bound to a collective identity, but you are not tied down by it. It is from variation's capture that repetition occurs, and it is from individual style in collective repetition that variation re-emerges. This variation may, in return, be captured by collective repetition, moving the collective ever forward into its own indeterminacy.

### Conclusion: Staging the Past or Opening the Future

Although, in this project, we understand any identity to be a solidification of variation on the flow of difference, this certainly does not mean that variation and difference are prevented from flowing entirely. Openness to the flow of difference necessarily remains and is, in fact, vital for the continued existence of an identity. A collective identity consists in its expressions; for an identity to continue its existence, the acts through which it is expressed need to remain relevant to the present and the future. If they are not, these expressions will be

no more than repetitions of an image of the past; they will constitute a staged performance of that image, rather than a viable identity. This leaves us once more with representationalism. However, despite the fact that transformation is vital to the continued relevance of a collective identity, difference and change are often viewed with suspicion; consequently, identity and authenticity are considered in light of a negative conception of difference.

In this chapter we have developed an understanding of authenticity that incorporates indeterminacy; that is, acts are authentic when they engage with both the actual and the virtual. The virtual is the potential of anything to be other than it is. This indeterminate potential emerges through individuated expressions of a collective becoming. Individuated expressions can only emerge from a collective. The collective only becomes through these individuated expressions. This is how authenticity keeps a collective identity open to continuous variation: rather than depend on a preconceived notion of what constitutes a collective identity, the collective identity is open to variation through individual expressions of style that both emerge from and transform it. This understanding of authenticity allows a collective identity to be an intensive, rather than an extensive, multiplicity.

In her study of cultural authenticity in Taiwan, Chiu Kuei-Fen provides a further example of what a positive conception of authenticity might look like in practice, when it no longer depends on levels of conformity, but also allows for variation to move the collective forward. Specifically, Chiu ponders the question of cultural authenticity in, what she terms, “an age of ceaseless change and border-crossings” (160). Although, here, we would not choose to call this an ‘age,’ but rather the flow of difference manifesting itself, the use of the concept of cultural authenticity as Chiu’s study finds it in Taiwan is a good example of what we are looking for. Authenticity as Chiu describes it resides in, what she calls, “the critical act of inheriting” (162). She explains: “This act of inheriting implies that ‘authenticity’ is not determined by the place of origin. Rather, ‘authenticity’ is what comes alive in the critical act of inheriting” (162). Rather than simply repeating what is passed on from the past in reproduction without variation, the critical act of inheriting suggests that the role of the next generations is not only to decide what to continue, but also “to select, to filter, to interpret, and therefore to transform; not to leave intact . . . critical appropriation rather than mechanic reproduction” (162).

Appropriation, here, works both ways: as the present and the future capture the past, so the past will fold over the present and the future in its own act of capture and appropriation—it is in this way that identity moves forward and is authentic in its transformation. Within a collective identity as an intensive multiplicity, transformation is not

the end; it is its continuation. As Meredith Abarca asks and answers the question, “What does it mean to lose one’s cultural identity? . . . We do not lose our cultural identity[;] instead, it is in a constant process of transformation” (17). If we understand a collective identity as an image of the past that is to be expressed in accurate repetition, the degree and value of which are measured by authenticity, it would, indeed, at some point cease to exist as the result of transformation. As the world changes and transforms, such an identity in its particular form would become obsolete. While this does occur, it is often a failure to transform, rather than transformation itself, which spells the end of an identity.

## Conclusion: Probing for Potential

---

In a multicultural society people have to deal with difference. There are multiple ways for a nation to approach cultural differences in an attempt to maintain itself as a unity. An important element of determining such an approach is how a nation conceives of difference: what is difference? In many cases, those with a different cultural background are expected to assimilate. That is, they are expected to conform to a preconceived, and apparently static, image of the mainstream culture. In these cases, difference is seen as deviation from a preset standard. Difference is viewed as secondary to whatever it differs from. This is a negative conception of difference. Conceiving of difference negatively can render cultures—both the mainstream as well as the different (‘ethnic’) culture—static as conformity becomes the measuring tool. Moreover, difference as deviation can be disregarded as irrelevant for not meeting the standard or, worse yet, perceived as dangerous for threatening the standard. Either way, difference is pushed to the margins of a society, rather than made part of a society.

Against such a negative conception of difference that only creates boundaries between groups within a multicultural society, we want to follow Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their development of a positive conception of difference. A positive conception of difference means that difference is no longer viewed as a secondary deviation from an existing, apparently solid, entity—that is, a molar entity. Instead, difference becomes primary. Difference—or variation—becomes the grounds from which molar entities are extracted as constants and which continues to run through and underneath extracted molar entities. Molar entities are in a mode of ‘being,’ whereas a positive conception of difference argues for continuous variation in the mode of ‘becoming.’ Becoming is molecular. However, the molar and the molecular are not necessarily opposites; they are active within one another. Molecular variation always runs underneath any molar entity, but molar entities also always work towards containing molecular variation.

When molecular variation escapes this molar containment—that is, follows a line of flight beyond the territorial forces of a molar entity—this is called ‘deterritorialization.’ When, conversely, molecular elements settle once again within the territorial reach of a molar entity, this is called ‘reterritorialization.’ It is important to remember that with a positive conception of difference, the variation that escapes from a molar territory is, in fact, primary. These particles of variation were always already there; it is, after all, from such particles of variation that the molar was extracted as an apparent constant. It is through territorial forces that variation is contained and the molar comes to be seen as primary. When the molar subsequently comes to serve as a standard, Deleuze and Guattari call it ‘majoritarian’ (or the major). This is when difference comes to be seen as deviation. Within the multicultural society of the United States, the notion of ‘America’ as the nation’s cultural identity is molar and majoritarian.

However, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the larger and the more rigid the major becomes, the more it is worked upon by all the internal variation it attempts to contain. Deleuze and Guattari refer to these elements that seek to break open and deterritorialize the major as ‘minoritarian.’ Deleuze and Guattari use English as a world language as an example of the relation between the major and the minor. For them, variations on the English language all over the world are not external to the English language; variation is not dismissed as irrelevant deviation. Instead, this variation is viewed as internal to English as a world language. It is minoritarian in its power to deterritorialize the majoritarian language from within. Becoming is always molecular and minoritarian.

This is also how we want to view the United States as a multicultural society: instead of positing different ethnic groups as external to what makes ‘America,’ they are internal to the concept of ‘America’ as minoritarian forces that can open it up and move it forward in a more open and inclusive manner. While this may seem to be the case in the ideal of the melting pot and the American motto—*e pluribus unum*—these notions ultimately also come to demand assimilation to a preconceived idea of ‘America.’ We want to look at the United States as an intensive multiplicity that is open to change. This has required us to engage with the concepts of ethnicity, identity, and authenticity in order for us to open up, especially the concept of collective identities. Of course this works both ways: opening up a multicultural society to be more about connections and inclusion than boundaries and exclusion requires opening up not only the overarching notion of ‘America,’ but also the minority identities, which are themselves often majoritarian in serving as a standard for a minority group.

Part of this process has been to engage with Deleuze and Guattari's alternative to representationalism. Representationalism reduces the connection between the discursive and the material to a relation of conformity. If our understanding of identity depends on notions of representationalism and conformity, it will promote a negative conception of difference. Against this, Deleuze and Guattari develop a performative alternative that posits the relation between the material and the discursive as a relation of mutual intervention. They use the terms content and expression to explain this relation. Deterritorialized particles engage with each other on the molecular, virtual plane of consistency; these particles affect each other in processes of double deterritorialization. Ultimately, these relations are formalized through an assemblage that provides the necessary coherence for such diverse and heterogeneous particles to actualize in mutual presupposition. This is how a molar entity emerges from the flow of difference: it is a coagulation of the mutual affective relations of deterritorialized molecular particles on the flow of continuous variation.

Within an assemblage, which formalizes the relations of content and expression, territorial processes of solidification take place that attempt to hold it together by sealing off the lines of flight that might deterritorialize elements of the assemblage. Striating forces create boundaries and seal off potential connections; smoothing forces open up the space for continuous variation to reemerge. For our project, we view identities to be such territorial forces within an assemblage: identities congeal the territorial of assemblages on the flow of difference. Identities work as power formations that attempt to prevent an assemblage from leaking. They shut it off from continuous variation by solidifying an assemblage to the extent that it comes to be seen as existing prior to the variation from which it was extracted: this way we return once again to relations of conformity.

However, Rosi Braidotti and Brian Massumi point out that if we view collective identities in light of a positive conception of difference, collective identities are, in fact, "movement residue." That is, collective identities are secondary coagulations on the flow of continuous variation from which they were extracted in the first place. This returns the focus to internal variation within identities over differences between identities. A rigid formation is made more inclusive by bringing its internal diversity to light: variation itself is foregrounded over the identity as a majoritarian standard that makes one think of difference as deviation. This smoothens the space within an assemblage, which has been an important part of our project. We want to smoothen the space of the way we understand the United States as a multicultural society—as well all the collective identities of which this society is comprised—in order to promote connections over boundaries. All this places collective identities in the

light of becoming over being. If an identity is a secondary coagulation on the flow of difference, whatever it contains as a territorial force will always be behind on the ongoing flow of becoming. Whatever is captured within the territory of a collective identity, instantly escapes from it again.

Brian Massumi explains this relation between movement and stasis in terms of indeterminacy and determinacy. Tension always exists within an assemblage between its territorial ‘actual’ side, and the side of an assemblage that is open to the flow of difference—the ‘virtual.’ The actual, molar side is the side of determinacy; the virtual side is the side of indeterminacy. What this indeterminacy on the virtual side of an assemblage means is that the assemblage has the potential to be other than it is—the potential to vary. The actual and the virtual are two different modes of the same reality; they exist in mutual presupposition. Simply put, for there to be an indeterminate potential to vary, there needs to exist a determinate actual that can vary. Without a molar, actual side, there would be no assemblage at all. This is important because it shows us why we cannot simply dissolve a collective identity and focus on molecular variation alone. Collective identities also offer a position from which to act. A collective identity should not be a rigid standard that limits people’s range of action, but a means to move people forward.

Linda Martín Alcoff, too, argues that collective identities are necessary for people to engage with politics. She argues against critics who believe that within the United States, engaging in identity politics posits a threat to the nation’s unity. These critics fear what they perceive to be the rupturing danger of difference and would, therefore, prefer to keep difference out of politics. Linda Martín Alcoff argues, however, that the danger lies precisely in ignoring or denying the significance of difference in politics. A study by José E. Cruz shows that when the specificities—differences—of an ethnic minority become a part of politics, this increases their participation in public and political life. It allows them entry into the mainstream culture, rather than create the desire for separatism that critics fear. According to Alcoff, the reason that identity politics increased participation in mainstream politics, rather than tearing it apart, is that knowledge and perception are socially grounded. Critics fear that identity politics interfere with the democratic and rational potential of the individual subject to think and act. Alcoff argues that there is no such thing as a rational individual subject who exists prior to their social ties. Collective ethnic identities provide the very grounds from which individuals think and act. There is no strict separation between the collective and the individual; there is no individual that exists prior to or outside the collective.

The relations between the collective and the individual as well as determinacy and indeterminacy are also important for our development of the concept of authenticity in light of a positive conception of difference. We argued that if a collective identity is a territorial formation that shuts the edges of an assemblage off from the flow of difference, then the concept of authenticity is what polices these boundaries through demands for conformity. If we want assemblages and identities to be open to continuous variation, we needed to develop an understanding of authenticity that would allow for movement to be considered authentic.

For this, we engaged with Elizabeth Grosz's development of a positive understanding of freedom. She develops the concept of freedom in light of 'freedom to' over 'freedom from.' The relation between the (determinate) actual and the (indeterminate) virtual play an important part in the way Grosz conceives freedom positively. She believes that 'freedom to' resides in acts that incorporate both the actual and the virtual: "Free acts are those which both express us and transform us, which express our transforming" (146). The degree of freedom, she argues, resides in the extent to which a person is able to express indeterminacy in his or her acts. In light of a positive conception of difference, we developed the concept of authenticity along similar lines: an act is authentic not when it most accurately conforms to a preconceived notion, but when it incorporates both the actual as well as the indeterminacy that resides in the virtual potential to vary. This way authenticity incorporates becoming and not only being.

This, however, focuses mainly on individual acts. When considering authenticity in light of collective identities, the relation between the individual and the collective becomes very important: with a negative conception of difference and authenticity, individual acts would have to conform to a collectively set standard in order to be considered authentic. However, with a positive conception of difference and authenticity, individual acts can be seen as variations on the collective. Understood this way, Brian Massumi argues that individual acts are "[nodes] of expression of a collective becoming" (*Parables* 78). The individual and the collective are not separate entities: individual acts are, in fact, individuated expressions of a collective. The collective consists in its expression through the acts of individuals, while at the same time making these acts possible. Neither the collective nor the individual exists prior to the other: they only emerge together. In light of a positive conception of difference, then, such individuated acts can move the collective forward by expressing the collective's indeterminate virtual potential to vary—that is, expressing the collective becoming. This is how acts are authentic in transforming a collective identity that is open to continuous variation.

We set out on this project with the intention of experimenting with the concepts of ethnicity, identity, and authenticity in light of Deleuze and Guattari's development of a positive conception of difference. We want to promote connection and inclusivity over boundaries and exclusion. The idea behind this has been to conceive of the multicultural society of the United States in a more open and inclusive way—a way that would incorporate minority groups into its internal variation. In light of a positive conception of difference, it should also allow this variation to move both American society as well as these ethnic minorities forward as a whole, rather than relegate difference to the margins or even positing it as external to the concept of 'America.'

While, in our largely theoretical approach, we have conceived of collective identities and authenticity in ways that allow for continuous variation, this whole project is a starting point, a means, rather than an end. It can serve as a platform from which to engage with these concepts in specific case studies. Each time, we must ask what these concepts do, not what they mean. Concepts, too, are an element within each event and therefore act on and are acted upon by the other elements within the event. Each time, the concepts will transform, grow. The world does not stand still and neither do concepts. Let us end, then, on this ethical imperative that we never stop probing for the potential of the world to be other than it is.

## Bibliography

- Abarca, Meredith E. "Authentic or Not, It's Original." *Food and Foodways*. 12.1 (2004): 1-25. Web. 6 Jan. 2014.
- Alcoff, Linda Martín. *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- "American Community Survey (ACS) Why We Ask: Race." *Census.gov*. United States Census Bureau. <http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/qbyqfact/2016/Race.pdf>. Web. 24 Oct. 2013.
- Anh Williams, Laura. "Foodways and Subjectivity in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies." *MELUS*. 34.4 (2007): 69-79. JSTOR. Web. 19 Sep. 2013.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke UP, 2007. Print.
- Bonta, Mark and John Protevi. *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004. Print.
- Bost, Suzanne. "Women and Chile at the Alamo: Feeding U.S. Colonial Mythology." *Nepantla: Views From South*. 4.3 (2003): 493-522. *MUSE*. Web. 13 May 2015.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge: Polity, 2002. Print.
- Campbell, Howard. "Chicano Lite: Mexican-American Consumer Culture on the Border." *Journal of Consumer Culture*. 5.2 (2005): 207-233. *SAGE*. Web. 20 Sep. 2013.
- Castillo, Debra. *Talking Back*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992. Print.
- Chez, Keridiana. "Popular Ethnic Food Guides as Auto-Ethnographic Project: The Multicultural and Gender Politics of Urban Culinary Tourism." *Journal of American Culture*. 34.4 (2011): 234-246. Web. 10 Dec. 2013.
- Chiu, Kuei-fen. "Cosmopolitanism and Indigenism: The Uses of Cultural Authenticity in an Age of Flows." *New Literary History*. 44 (2013): 159-178. Web. 6 June 2014.
- Colebrook, Claire. *Understanding Deleuze*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2002. Print.
- Cook, Ian, et al. "Geographies of Food: Mixing." *Progress in Human Geography*. 32.6 (2008): 821-833. *SAGE*. Web. 30 Aug. 2013.
- Cook, Peter. "Thinking the Concept Otherwise: Deleuze and Expression." *Symposium*. 2.1 (1998): 23-35. Web. 10 June 2016.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*. Eds. David

- Lapoujade. Trans. Anna Hodges and Mike Taormina. New York: Semiotext(e), 2006. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. 1980. Trans. Brian Massumi. (1987). London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Print.
- Dolphijn, Rick. *Foodscapes: Towards a Deleuzian Ethics of Consumption*. Delft: Eburon, 2004. Print.
- Feffer, John. "The Politics of Dog." *The American Prospect*, 22 May 2002, prospect.org/article/politics-dog. Web. 20 Feb. 2013.
- Ferguson, Priscilla. "Eating Orders: Markets, Menus, and Meals." *Journal of Modern History*. 77.3 (2005): 679-700. *JSTOR*. Web. 30 Aug. 2013.
- Glick Schiller, Nina. "Situating Identities: Towards an Identities Studies Without Binaries of Difference." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. 19.4 (2012): 520-532. Web. 5 Dec. 2013.
- Gooding-Williams, Robert. "Race, Multiculturalism and Democracy." *Constellations*. 5.1 (1998): 18-41. Web. 24 Oct. 2013.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics." *Topoi*. 12.2 (1993): 167-179. Web. 6 June 2014.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom." *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*. Eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Durham: Duke UP, 2010. 139-157. Print.
- "Hispanic Americans by the Numbers: From the U.S. Census Bureau." *Infoplease*. Sandbox Networks, n.d. www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html. Web. 31 July 2016.
- "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin." *United States Census Bureau*. factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk. Web. 31 July 2016.
- Lindholm, Charles. *Culture and Authenticity*. Malden: Blackwell, 2008. Print.
- Mannur, Anita. "Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora." *MELUS*. 32.4 (2007): 11-31. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Feb. 2013.
- Massumi, Brian. Ed. *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. Print.
- Mintz, W. and Christine M. Du Bois. "The Anthropology of Food and Eating." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31. (2002): 99-119. Web. 18 Feb. 2013.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. 1887 and 1908. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale and Walter Kaufman. (1967). New York: Random House, 1989. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. 1886. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. (1973). London: Penguin, 2003. Print.
- Parr, Adrian. Ed. *The Deleuze Dictionary: Revised Edition*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2010. Print.
- Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. Print.
- Reisinger, Yvette and Carol J. Steiner. "Reconceptualizing Object Authenticity." *Annals of Tourism Research*. 33.1 (2006): 65-86. Web. 6 June 2014.
- Roy, Parama. "Reading Communities and Culinary Communities: The Gastropoetics of the South Asian Diaspora." *Positions*. 10.2 (2002): 471-502. MUSE. Web. 20 Sep. 2013.
- Saldanha, Arun. "Reontologising Race: The Machinic Geography of Phenotype." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 24 (2006): 9-24. Web. 20 Sep. 2013.
- Schlesinger Jr., Arthur M. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. New York: Norton, 1993. Print.
- Spickard, Paul and W. Jeffrey Burroughs, eds. *We Are a People: Narrative and Multiplicity in Constructing Ethnic Identity*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2000. Print.
- The Late Show with Steven Colbert*. "Jon Stewart Takes over Colbert's Late Show Desk." Online video clip. *YouTube*. *YouTube*, 21 July 2016. Web. 30 July 2016.
- Trump, Donald. "Presidential Announcement Speech." *Time*. Time inc., 16 June 2015. [www.time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/](http://www.time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/). Web. 30 July 2016.
- Vila, Pablo. *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2000. Print.
- Vila, Pablo. "The Limits of American Border Theory." *Ethnography at the Border*. Ed. Pablo Vila. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. 306-341. Print.
- Wu, Frank H. "The Best 'Chink' Food: Dog Eating and the Dilemma of Diversity." *Gastronomica*. 2.2 (2002): 218-231. Web. 18 Feb. 2013.
- Wuthnow, Julie. "Deleuze in the Postcolonial: On Nomads and Indigenous Politics." *Feminist Theory*. 3.2 (2002): 183-200. Web. 19 Oct. 2013.