

The Other and its Double: Performance and representation revisited

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Introduction to our subject, the Other

If I were to choose a slogan for XXth century continental philosophy, I would say: “I is another.” Rimbaud’s well-known metaphor is omnipresent, cited and re-cited, this elementary affirmation intruded into the field of philosophy and broke its identity. Theories of difference and multiplicity turn around and around the breach opened by it, trying to understand, to give a form to this metaphysical event, the split of identity. One could be tempted to affirm that French theory, especially, would be “constituted” as an incessant reformulation, or re-affirmation of this metaphor, chanting the eternal return of the Other. Otherness opens up identities to their multiple possibilities, identities to their future becomings. It opens up a space of metaphoricity, metamorphoses and theatricality – a space of interaction between physical and metaphysical approaches, somewhere in the no man’s land shared by reality, fiction, creation and invention. Metaphoricity, metamorphoses and theatricality would be the triple discourse of becoming-other: the metaphor is the *pro-found* act of becoming something different (as difference *is* a metaphor, the very *act* of altering identities), the alterity or otherness that it vehicles is theatrical in this sense.

This kind of altering identity will be our *subject*, in its double sense, the acting subject and the one being acted upon: the subject which is subject to itself,

as a self, that is, as something fundamentally different. We'll see: a subject is *alter-native*, altered from its birth.

As an alternative constitution, multiple in itself, our subject loses its identity; its loose boundaries don't fit the strict definition of a determined identity. Indeed, it's the very status of being as a subject which is in question here. The problem of the subject is one of de-definition, as the subject becomes in-finite in the process of its alternative constitution.

Our subject is a non-essential, *self-abandoned* being, an *open-minded* consciousness, always on the move, in ceaseless metamorphosis, one cannot fix its limits, its body is de-limited: it is a "*personne*", a no-body, an any-body, impersonal and pre-individual as Deleuze would say, and any person or individual would be just a stabilized, closed representation, a poor, rigid image of the becoming self.

This person without personality reminds us Diderot's *Paradox of Acting*: it is an *actor* – and the same *personne* (this (im)personal no-body or no-body in person) is at work in 20th century avant-garde theaters beginning with the Über-marionette of Edward Gordon Craig, Meyerhold's biomechanics, the epical theater of Brecht, Artaud's hieroglyph, the after-war generation: Grotowski, Barba, Brook, Tadeusz Kantor, Bob Wilson - we could continue the list.

That split subject opens theatre and ontology to each other, and with French (and French-oriented) theory it turns out that theatre is the proper space of becoming a subject, a multiple One. A becoming multiplicity requires a free space for its becoming, that I would consider as an inter-active scene of alterities.

If the problem of subjectivity, that is, the problem of otherness, occupies the scene of 20th century philosophy, then philosophy cannot help but admit its theatricality and welcome theatre as its own other, but it doesn't happen without difficulties. Theatre is seen as philosophy's dangerous other, the field of instability, of simulation, illusion, fiction – theatre is out of Reason. I would go even farther: it's

not only “out” of reason, but it has “inner” effects on the Reason, it’s the “inner outside” of the Reason, its “constitutive outside”, as Judith Butler would say. Philosophy fears losing its identity in the interaction with theatre. Because theatre “itself” has no identity. It only has a dominant image, as representation of dominant values, which the scene would impose to its passive, uncritical, even “ensorcelled” public. Theatre is still seen as an oppressing cultural structure, something that at first sight needs to be overcome. That’s what we can witness in the works of Gilles Deleuze and Judith Butler, whose texts are representative in this sense, as they struggle against and for theatricality, without ever succeeding in delivering theatricality from its devaluating commonplaces - hence the end of the age of representation in the texts of Gilles Deleuze, and Butler keeping her distances from performance in the elaboration of performativity.

The image of classical theatre persists as the model of cultural authority, representation of the inalterable given (the identity of being, the authority of an achieved knowledge offered as a present act, as presence of self-identical, eternal truth, law, inalterable Reason – all that the philosophies of difference would subvert in order to open thought to its differentiation, to open philosophy to an inventive thought). “Subversion” would be the way out from the culture of the One, of similitude, of well-structured, mapped bodies and pre-formed thoughts, the royal road of liberation: the event (the free act, maybe) of escaping the dangers and traps of metaphysical consciousness on the one hand and the socially/culturally determined self on the other.

It doesn’t mean that subversion would imply a kind of “revolutionary change”. Deconstructive theories do not target social or political changes (at least not directly), rather an ontological questioning of its possibilities – for there’s no need to change a dominant social structure for an other, even different one, as it would maintain the same binary structure of “dominant and oppressed”. For any deconstructive theory subversion begins with the idea of open structures, the inner

differences of cultural constructions. To put it simply: no structure can persist as identical to itself, as time introduces a difference which changes it in its very “essence”: the repeated self is never the same, it’s the self as another, its new present repeats, that is, changes its past identity in supplying it with a new present, a new presence. A subject which could be conscious of its fundamental alterity, who would not fear losing its identity or its stable place in the society, such a subject would be open to subversion.

Judith Butler chooses the term of “performativity” and Gilles Deleuze opts for “repetition” in describing an involuntary activity of becoming-something (that is, something else, something different, other than before). When Butler opposes performance to performativity, and respectively, Deleuze opposes representation to repetition, they struggle against the common image of “classical” theatre, as it masks its inner reality, the evidence of “as if”, of play (the most “serious” thing ever, one is tempted to say), just as if theatre wouldn’t assume its “reality”: theatre is the phenomenon of pure multiplicity, the evidence of multiplicity: in its space, representational dynamism, the way this space is occupied by the play of differences.

Butler stresses that a culturally determined conscious subject can never be subversive – that’s why performance in the “classical” sense, as she understands it (as the conscious act of a subject who wants his act) is out of her interest. Subversion is not a question of will or self-control, it’s not a voluntary liberation of itself, it’s a question of openness, given by the very process of becoming. Subversion is not a “revolutionary act”, we’ll see, it’s all about contingency. But a contingent “happening”, if it’s not an “act”, is always an event, and we’ll have to reconsider the notion of performance in order to understand this event. Performance, as we understand it, as coming to presence is never a single, conscious act of will, it’s a process of quasi-conscious becoming.

We must then reconsider the very notion of representation as performance: as the “Eternal Truth” cannot come to presence (that is, repeat itself) in its metaphysical wholeness or essence, its representation will be its differentiation. Culture then turns to be a kind of representation in becoming, a kind of “coming to presence” in a performative or affirmative, that is, creative sense. Thus its structure will be destabilized by its own, inner difference.

We’ll see: Performance and Re-presentation, both forms of repetition (that is, difference, always-other in itself) *are* subversive – not as voluntary acts, but as processes that unavoidably change the performed/represented: a performed/represented structure is inevitably altered by its very becoming. In the next few pages we’ll try to supply Butler’s theory with some Deleuzian approaches to the problem of becoming as repetition and representation. Reconsidering representation with Deleuze would bring to light the dynamism of performance as unvoluntary, free play of difference. We’ll try to find the act, the free and unique, maybe “original” act masked by the iterative activity of Judith Butler’s performativity and Deleuze’s repetition.

The Alter-native

In Judith Butler’s theory human bodies are socially constructed, but, as she puts it in *Gender Trouble*, their construction is neither a single act, nor a causal process initiated by a subject and culminating in a set of fixed effects. Construction is instead a temporal process which operates through a reiteration of norms, a process that she calls “performativity” (Butler 1999, 9-10, 163-190.). It is a constitutive constraint. Bodies appear, live, think only within the productive constraints of certain (highly gendered) regulatory schemas, constituted by and also constituting a social order.

Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate “act,” (that is, performance in her sense) but, rather, as the reiterative and citational

practice by which discursive power produces the effects that it names. Every single body is called to affirm (that is, enable and enforce) its “own” constitutive order. This (re-)affirmation is performative, as it actualizes the order. Without this re-affirmation the social or cultural order would be merely virtual, it needs to be actualized, hence the necessity of re-affirmation in- and by every-body. That’s how bodies are constituted by and constituting a social order: by the very act(ivity) of (re)affirmation. Butler stresses that it cannot be an act, because an act would be conscious, that is imbedded in culture, determined. In her sense performativity would be a kind of activity without act, a kind of unconscious, machinal process of becoming some-body. In other words an *actor*, or a performer, would only be a performed, determined any-body in a well-structured society. No-body could act freely upon him/herself or upon any other body. For Butler the main question would be: what does it mean to *be* a body amongst others, if it cannot be seen as a conscious, active self.

Butler seeks to improve social constructivism as it was developed in early gender theory, because it didn’t take into account the materiality of bodies. For social constructivism limited itself to criticize the psychic inscription of pre-given bodily entities, maintaining the metaphysical dualism of nature and culture, form and matter, active and passive. Judith Butler develops a kind of dynamism of bodies which would be prior to this classical dualism in metaphysics: for her there is a constitutional inter-action between the opposites as the “outside” must be seen as constitutive to any inner experience.

In *Bodies that Matter* she accepts that bodies are socially constructed, but construction in her sense involves the very materialization of the bodies (Butler 1993, 3-19). Matter is seen as a *process of materialization*, not a site or surface that would be prior to its formulation. In this process materializing matter stabilizes over time and produces the effect of boundary, fixity and surface –

that's what Butler calls matter, or materiality of the body, even more exactly: materiality *as* body.

Butler's theory has three sources: the linguistic theory of performative acts or speech acts, Foucault's theory of constitutive power, and the psychoanalytical account of the imaginary body schema. The core of her theory would be de-analysis of the regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs in their very materiality. This regulatory force is a kind of productive power, the power to produce (that is, determine and differentiate in their deepest materiality) the bodies it controls. What constitutes the fixity of the body, its contours, its movements, will be fully material, but materiality will be rethought as the effect of power.

By tracing the contours of a body one separates the space in an inner and an outer domain, thus, giving a subject its contours, that is, delimiting and defining it as a subject, means that power enables certain models, certain identifications, and forecloses some others. This means that the production of subjects requires a simultaneous production of a domain of "abject" beings, those who are not yet "subjects," but who form *the constitutive outside* to the domain of the subject, in other words, a psychical Other for the subject, which is not incorporated but still operative in the constitution of its body.

The abject designates a kind of "unlivable" or "uninhabitable" zones of social life that will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain, argues Butler. In this sense the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, which is, after all, "inside" the subject as its own founding repudiation. The subject and its abject Other are thus constituted simultaneously and bound together by their common limits. The latter is not even the opposite of the former, it is just foreclosed, present as the spectre of the subject's impossibility. It's not even an absolute outside, a neutral thereness that simply exceeds the limits of the subject, it is

constitutive because without that Other the subject couldn't be thought, it would be simply unintelligible. Paradoxically it is the Other that defines the Self.

Thus Butler conflates Foucault's theory of microphysical regulatory power with the element of prohibition in the psychoanalytic notion of identification. Her account of the dynamism of human bodies as a process of identification presupposes Lacan's separation between the Real and the Imaginary, that is "nature" and its cultural others, the unconscious/conscious, or, in Deleuzian terms virtual/actual or chaosmos/cosmos poles.

In the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage the imago plays a fundamental role in the genesis of the ego, as the body schema delineates and produces the human body through identification. The imaginary other has an impact on the bodily subject, deep into its flesh as it incorporates the image of an Other. It even defines the nature of human bodies as phantasmatic.

Following Lacan it is impossible to determine the chronological priority of the psychical image of the body or the physical body. For him the psychical body is not merely a mapping of a prior body but the condition through which bodily materiality appears and can be experienced as such. The experience of body emerges simultaneously with the idea of the body which is the very possibility of experiencing one's body. The psyche can no more be separated from a "preexisting" material body, since it actually takes part in its becoming, it has its formative effects.

As Lacan puts it, the productive moment of the imago is a response to an organic insufficiency in man's natural reality (Lacan 1977, 1-7.). Thus human ontology is an ontology of lack, but this lack is the very possibility of human autonomy (or to the becoming human as such) as it propels humans from nature into culture (society, law, culture). A human is born when the identification with an image of a stable body organizes the presubjectal into a subject.

Lacan operates a kind of ontological turn: a subject as a body has no reality, as it is constructed, thus phantasmatic. The Real is the instance who disturbs this imaginary world of sensorial illusions, deconstructing any determination. Fundamentally different from any “foundation”, or determination, or other closed structure, it can be understood as pure Difference, as Deleuze would say, something like his *chaosmos* which persists in the fissures of the *cosmos*. The Real would be the Other of the self-structuring social Other. Then, there are two Others in the process of identification: the constitutive, determining, incorporated Other, and the absolute outside, that is the Real.

The Real would be the source of any subversive change in the order of the Imaginary, it would introduce a “time out of joint”, when a given structure loses its stable identity, when it differs from itself. This undetermined interval, that identity insistently seeks to foreclose, that is the point where we can start reconsidering performativity and representation as cultural structures.

As the existence of this gap, this hiatus in its constitution implies the instability of the structure, its contingency, that’s the exact point of the space/time where difference takes place and subversion becomes possible.

As any structure, social performativity has an inner and even constitutive critical point. It becomes problematic in its very constitution as *reiteration*, that is, as a temporal dynamism of difference. If bodies are constituted by the dynamism of differentiating matter in time, then time brings its difference in the process, hence the possibility of subversion.

That this reiteration is necessary is a sign that materialization is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled, as Butler mentions (Butler 1993, 3). A body is different.

The instability of the structure opens up a possibility for rematerialization, where the force of the regulatory law can be turned against itself. A body in

Butler's sense is nothing but a sedimented effect of a reiterative or ritual practice, but it is also by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up as the constitutive instabilities in such constructions. Performativity as repetition is a power that undoes its own effects of stability. A body has always the possibility to exceed or escape the norms, it can never be wholly defined and fixed. A body is something that can always retrace and displace his contours.

Thus subversion becomes possible from inside the law, inside culture. That means that any "sedimented", passive being holds the possibility of subversion as it bears difference in its very materiality. As an effect of repetition, *body is made of difference*, I would say. That's why any-body matters.

We need to reconsider the subject as differential, and the dynamism of matter as the constitutive play of difference. This differential subject would be as an open consciousness, able to welcome its constitutive outside as its alter-native. Then, every created entity (body) would be an alter-native for (as) itself.

Virtual and actual

Bergsonism, as Deleuze understands it, provides us with an alternative for Butler's theory of materialization. The idea of a dynamic materiality, where matter itself is invested with a subversive dynamism will help us understand the importance and the functioning of the "gap" in the matter which makes difference. Butler proceeds from culturally determined bodies to their process of materialization; it's a Kantian approach. Deleuze, following Bergson, takes the opposite way, he proceeds from matter to culture.

As a first step, Bergsonism abolishes the difference between matter and its perception, it postulates a continuity between matter and its sensorial perception. Bergson's *Matter and Memory* introduces us to a world, where there's nothing but images: an existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation', a "self-existing image", as he puts it. In this sense the development of matter

(even in its Butlerian sense, as materialization) would be nothing else but the interaction of images.

Matter is not something shown or mirrored in images (perceived as such by a mind), matter *is* an aggregate of images. Matter is by itself and in itself as one can perceive it: an image, a series of images. Perception on the one side and memory on the other are our modes of access to matter. Both located at the point of intersection of mind and matter, they reveal the complicity of mind with matter. In matter, the images are oriented according to their own connections, their own milieu of other images; but the same images can be directed toward an organizing central image, the image of a body which perceives them. The difference between matter and perception is not the difference between an object and a subject capable of perceiving matter, subject would be just a peculiar sort of object (image), one that can be seen as central to the others, as it's provided with a perspective, thus capable to organize the rest of the matter.

My body is one material object (one image) among all the others, but it has a peculiarly privileged relation to action: it is the central organizing site through which other images are ordered. In perception my body doesn't intervene in the direct communication between images. There is still no obstacle to their direct interaction. A perceiving body just reacts to the impulses of its outside. Governed by the imperative to act, perception is *actual*, and always present. It leads me, as a body, to my outside, to the other images in space.

But with memory everything changes. Memory constitutes a different dimension of space-time. Instead of memory being regarded as a faded perception, as its commonplace representation dictates, it must be regarded as ideational, or *purely virtual*. Memories are not ours, they are independent from us, they constitute a past which is not personal, but objective. They are images in time; they form the dimension that Bergson calls *duration*.

A present perception and a past recollection are not simply different in degree (one a faded, diminished version of the other) but different in kind. Memory is the domain of past experiences, experiences which are still “real”, which exist as such, in duration, “virtually”. Memories are real, *as* virtual. They have no connection to the immense materiality of present images, they are connected to only one of them, a central image, the living, conscious one, our body, which can *actualize* them, *if it wants*. Actualizing memory would be a matter of choice, an individual act of the body. A body becomes conscious by its capacity of actualization.

Perception and memory are not attributes to our body. According to Bergson (and Deleuze) they don't belong to us, it's just the opposite. Perception places our body in space, memory places it in duration, a fundamentally different dimension of existence: our body belongs to the space-time, where the axes are perception and memory. Placed in the intersection of perception and memory we are the origin of our world.

Thus, every lived present of a conscious body splits into a dual-sided actual and virtual, one of which has actual effects, the other of which joins and adds to the past. A body becomes conscious in assuming this duality, being virtual and actual at the same time. Consciousness, as the inter-action of the two dimensions is nothing less than an ontological event: the ontological difference of Being and Existence doubles itself in the conscious self.

The fold

Matter is organized in folds, a folding materiality. Its folding/unfolding process creates something like an inside and a narrow breach through which it can communicate with its outside. A fold is an almost closed interiority.

Deleuze will use the image of the Leibnizian monad to describe this phenomenon: a metaphysical point, a quasi-closed interiority, that can perceive its

exteriority through a narrow window as the light penetrates it and projects the exterior world onto its inner walls (Deleuze 1993, 3-41). Thus a monad is constituted by the intrusion of the exterior, which is incorporated as an image, or as a series of images, a constitutive one since it makes up the very materiality of that inner space called monad. Despite its intrusive constitution, the monad is not simply a passive object which would bear the traces of this original aggression: it comes to birth by the very act of intrusion, and becomes active. A monad is the image of its exterior, but an active image as it organizes its unlimited outside within its own limits, creating a double of it. A monad is an elementary subject, its inside is subjective, as it has a perspective of its own. Perspective is even invented by the monad, one could say, it's a novelty brought to the world by the monad: it sees and doubles the world from its specific point of view – that's the difference that a monad makes, the difference that it *is*.

The incoherent amount of external images will be organized and unified in a coherent image, and by that coherence that inner space of the monad becomes spiritual. Space thus differentiates with(in) the monad into a spiritual and a material field. Physics and metaphysics would then be the outside and the inside of the same ontological fold. The monad is the point of indiscernibility, spiritual and material in one, physical and metaphysical at the same time: it is the body of ontological difference. For Deleuze the fold would be the rule of the process of organizing the matter: a spiritual automaton, *camera obscura*, a difference-making machine as it splits the matter of being in a double creation, an objective, automatic development doubled by its active reorganization: its re-affirmation, or re-creation.

Dionysus and Ariadne

Deleuze creates an ontology of difference: Being is a matter of moving, folding/unfolding matter, which is differentiated by his own movement, repetition

as an activity without act, we could say, incessant re-affirmation of Being. Deleuze's notion of differentiation is creation, but without any will or intention to create. Creation is the free play of difference. It's by this differential movement, a repeated movement of automatic differentiation, that Difference creates the world, its physics and metaphysics. Objects, bodies are differentiated, that is, altered differences. Altered, as they got a form, they became something, objects or persons: bodies, which were delimited in their becoming by the movement of matter that circumscribed them.

Difference is a temporal instance, a matter of time, one could say. Space would be a mere product of differentiation. As differentiation takes place, and produces bodies, it constitutes space as a structure for the created bodies, as a web for the process of becoming. But the constitution itself is a temporal process. Bodies are produced in time, as multiplicities of time synthesis, as a kind of condensation or sedimentation of temporal singularities, individual moments (Deleuze 2009, 104-114). Following Deleuze there are three kinds of synthesis, that is, three types of bodily constitution in time:

Habitus

The first one would be the automatic, unreflected, unfiltered collection of the independent moments, which result in the present moment, actual present, experienced as such – it's the time of our habits. It is first of all physical, material, it consists in contracted sensations. Deleuze describes it as a passive synthesis because it is not an activity of the spirit, rather an activity that happens in the spirit, and it determines the subject as passive, receptive. This synthesis is a kind of contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism before it constitutes the sensation. It constitutes the self as one who is only what one has – a dissolved self as Deleuze puts it, a mere modification in the machinal activity of difference.

Mnemosyne.

The second synthesis is the time of the memory, the pure past, which is not a passed present, rather the Foundation of the past, the ground on which the moments can pass, a passive, stable socle of memories. It's a past that does not exist, even never existed as such, but which insists - as the Proustian, spiritual time of memory. We cannot say it was, and it surely no longer exists, but it consists, it insists, it *is* – it is the in-itself of time, temporality as such.

Dionysus.

The third synthesis of time would be the form of ontological repetition, pure movement of a free mind, out of joint, unlimited: the movement of Nietzschean eternal return in its chaotic entirety, the affirmation of Being. For Deleuze it is the synthesis of the future, the unpredictable, informal becoming.

These three syntheses would coexist in a conscious being, obviously, at different levels of existence, in different proportions, with different effects on the body. The first two syntheses are passive, they don't imply any consciousness yet, just some kind of impersonal, dissolved self. Passive syntheses are sub-representative, even if they (as the human subconscious) may be subordinated to the representation that organizes them according to his choice in forming a conscience. Habits and memories can only be the "object" of conscious representation. But the third one calls for a conscious double. Dionysus needs Ariadne. Deleuze needs an active synthesis, which he considers to be a kind of representation (Deleuze 2006, 175-194).

Dionysus is the god of affirmation, god of unlimited becoming, without rules, without restrictions, actor of the absolute play of differences. But as such, his repeated affirmation is informal. Without a form, without a body, his affirmation wouldn't be effective; his affirmations would be purely virtual. In order to make a *real difference*, he needs his Other.

Dionysus needs procedures, forms, definitions, reason and existence. That's why he chooses Ariadne, daughter of king Minos, who charged her of the labyrinth of the Minotaur. She ends the Dionysian myth of the Minotaur by the simplest (and most elegant) solution ever, as she opens the most complicated labyrinth of the world by the linear logic of the thread, the purest reason possible. She is a simple, reasonable, finite being – she is the opposite of Dionysus, thus his other. Dionysus espouses his ontological difference in order to double his Eternal Being with a unique existence. Their marriage is the ontological link between Being and Existence, that is, the double affirmation of the world: affirmation as infinite repetition, the eternal return of Being, and affirmation as its finite, existential representation.

Repetition and representation, then, can be understood as the ontological *activity* of difference *actualized* as an existential *act*. The only active syntheses (that is, existential form) in the Deleuzian system would be then representative. Representation in the Deleuzian system is the active synthesis which subordinates all unconscious movement to the identity of the actual. It is repetitive consciousness, representative repetition, a double of the ontological repetition, the double of the pure movement of difference. It is active in so far as it makes its choice between the various coexisting levels of temporal existence, in order to make a representation. According to *Difference and Repetition* representation is the becoming-active of the passive self. A determined self or closed identity will become active only by virtue of representation. In other words, the existence of representation attests that a body is not a mere product of ontological (or at a second level) cultural repetition, but it takes active part in the self-constitutive activity of differentiation.

Concluding remarks

Deleuze and Butler are amongst the first theorists to reconsider corporeality in the discourse of the Other: corporeality as a space of interaction between a multiplicity of forces, corporeality as a kind of dynamics of becoming a body, corporeality as the matter of discourse. Their alternative readings match the material and constitutional procedures of becoming a body, the virtual and actual sides of becoming – because one doesn't have a body, they stress, one becomes a body, perhaps even more bodies. One or multiple, it's always a matter of representation. Bodies matter as representation. Bodies perform themselves as representation. They act upon themselves in order to come to presence as bodies. A body in its deepest reality appears to be a mere fiction that realizes itself, it comes to presence as representation of its corporeality. Butler's anthropological and Deleuze's ontological approaches are complementary in evaluating theatrical procedures of bodies that come to presence as alternatives for themselves, as multiple bodily identities. Corporeality seems to be theatrical as such, as it implies doubling, a double process of becoming a body.

Deleuze's Dionysus throws a light on the representational process of materialization. A body is matter in representation, double from its constitution. As materiality is seen as folding matter that operates forming an interior Self and an exterior Other, Deleuze links the Self and the Other in the process of becoming a body, that is coming to presence as a body in the act of representation: Ariadne reaffirms, thus reformulates the creation of Dionysus, and a body becomes conscious by this secondary act reaffirmation. Ariadne gives a body to the ever changing matter handled by Dionysus. The bodily constitution is thus representational, theatrical from its very beginning, as the body gains consciousness in the *act of actualizing* its infinite materiality, *performing* itself as actual.

A conscious body is a complex being, it takes place as an interaction of different dynamisms of difference. “Differentiation and differenciation”, or “different/citation” is the name of the double movement of difference. When the actual meets the virtual, a conscious body is created – but created as creative, since it is a being that actualizes the process of its own becoming, in other words, it understands (or misunderstands) it. A conscious body doubles the movement of his becoming with an image of his origin: a representation, an image of what it is, how it understands itself. Even if it’s false, simulated, or phantasmatic, the image created by the conscious is a product of his own, the image of himself is the product of an active understanding of its own constitution. His performance doubles the ontological performativity of difference. The representation of the self is the double of its constitution, a stabilized and limited image of it, one would say – but the act of “imagination”, the activity to produce images, takes a constitutive part of this constitution. A conscious body is different, that is, active. A conscious body is an *actor*, as it acts upon its constitutive differences. A body acts performing itself as representation of its materiality from the very beginning of its being. That’s why a *body comes to presence as an actor*, representing its own materiality: it acts upon itself, doubling itself in the process of representation. As an actor it holds an active part in the activity of becoming, in the play of differences, in the development of doubling interiorities (inner/outer, self/other, natural/cultural, etc.). The body plays a constitutive role in the incessant metamorphosis of matter, the main role in the theater of life.

Theater in this sense is not a mere metaphor – unless one takes metaphoricity for seriousness. Entering in the details of Deleuzian ontology one can find out that metaphoricity, metamorphosis and theatricality are always in interaction, quite often interchangeable. As related forms of differentiation, of the play of differences, they always imply each other, giving actual forms for the

dynamism of the never ending process of materialization, that is of becoming bodies.

Obviously “all the world’s a stage”, but a dynamic one: each representation gives an alternative for its whole structure. This alternative stage would be open to the Real, in its Lacanian sense, not only to the reflected realities of the world. Thus every-body is called into representation in the theater of matter: everybody matters in the theater of being and existence, as every single body calls into presence an alternative for its actual world. No reflection, no imitation, no illusions, no games of truth: this theater is open to creation and invention.

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