

Article

Desire, Delirium, and Revolutionary Love: Deleuzian Feminist Possibilities

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Abstract: In Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* volumes, revolution, social transformation, and the possibility of a new future are all linked to desire: minimally, to the freeing of desire from the false refuges of Oedipalization and its constructs of molar sexuality. Everywhere, they seek to uncover the potential of desire, sexuality, and love, asking us to consider that what we take to be the most personal is impersonal, how the most intimate is the collective and social. Thus, it calls us to rethink our material and affective relations and reconceptualize the sphere of intimacy itself. I develop the concepts of delirium and revolutionary love, suggesting that we interpret these as perpetual processes of transformation and conjugation, initiating relations of intimacy and advocate for more nuanced, complex forms of subjectivity and to become more sensitive to the varying relational complexes within a given space. Revolutionary love gains its newness from both the extension of Deleuzian desire and from its return to several heritages of feminisms which have themselves been marginalized in the forward sweep of new materialist and posthumanist discussions. The point is to sharpen our focus on the conditions that produce certain social bodies, certain kinds of consciousness, and certain molar identities—not to deny the realities of the socius or reject subjectivity, but to move from a majoritarian to a minoritarian politics that widens our purview of what forces and desires exist within these spaces so that we may transform and build less fascistic, more attuned relational complexes.

Keywords: desire; delirium; revolutionary love; feminism; liminality; pedagogy; intersectionality; intimacy; affect



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1. Why Revolution? Why Love? Why Now? Why Deleuze

In the aftermath of the Trump presidency, having weathered patent falsities, outlandish conspiracy stories, and sensibility-offending rhetoric—all of which defy any application of logical analysis and rest on a very public rejection of the truth-telling function—we are awakening to the fact that many of our political problems are grounded in the intractability of certain collective affects. Lauren Berlant, whose work is focused on identifying and developing accounts of affects that circulate and become something of a collective obsession, is quite good on this point. According to Berlant, we become attached to affects in the way we become attached to lovers, the circulation of which she defines as a kind of communal or social intimacy. Two points should be noted here, both of which cast Berlant's propositions as quite Deleuzian. First, as opposed to those who relate intimacy with the personal, the sexual, or the private, Berlant says that intimacy can be quite impersonal and quite public: "The intimate is everywhere: you bring it everywhere and it circulates everywhere. It registers as intensities of attachment and recognition, inferred and explicit, that pass across people, groups and movements" [1]. Deleuze and Guattari's accounts of affect, love, and desire also defy a purely personal or individualized interpretation generally associated with conventional attitudes about romantic love [2] (p. 99). For both, the intimate, as a channeling and circulation of desire, is related to the construction or arrangement of our collective lives; i.e., it is inherently political. This tendency to read the intimate in terms of the political also appears in the work of decolonial theorist Anne Stoler. In *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* [3], Stoler uses intimacy to indicate

the realm of domesticity or the private, and is interested in how colonial rule came to introject itself into the private, internally regulating things such as race and class. Although this represents an expansion from its traditional association with purely romantic or sexual spheres, it is a very different understanding than the impersonal and public circulation to which both Berlant and Deleuze and Guattari appeal—which has the advantage, in my opinion, of helping to explain the group think and contamination of attitudes that has swept through our *socius* as of late.

Second, Berlant claims that the circulation of affect (intimacy) is world-building [4] (p. 282), and they want to expand the worlds that are possible by both disrupting routinized pathways of affect and creating new ones, calling for the queering of spaces: “Queer practices bring the intimate into circulation to create spaces of intimacy in registers including, but not identical to, the register of freedom” [1] (np). This idea of the circulation (and freeing) of intimacies corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari’s project. Indeed, in *Anti-Oedipus*, they associate intimacy with worlds as well—“we always make love with worlds” [5] (p. 294)—and seek to expand the purview of our intimacies—towards a thousand tiny sexes. Not only do they share a sense of the collective nature of intimacy and affect, but they also recognize the constrictive and transformative power of affect, utilizing this understanding as an opportunity for social commentary and critique. Additionally, the stakes could not be higher at this very moment. The unreasonableness of our discourse and depth of feeling that animates the supremacist, fascistic, and misogynist elements in our society determine the kind of revolution that we need, a rechanneling of desire and radical reframing, or recentering, of relationality and intimacy.

The aim of this article is to develop an account of revolutionary love inspired, but not explicitly conceptualized, by Deleuze and Guattari, as a new way of thinking about love, intimacy, and ethico-political engagement. In so doing, I intend to align Deleuzian concepts of love and desire as collective forces that constitute our lives, geographies, and histories with several feminist lineages, particularly, the activist and liberation-oriented work of women of color feminists,¹ whose theorizing has been at the vanguard of the political analysis of the radical potential of affect, offering explicit conceptualizations of love as a transformative and motivating force and feminist thinkers, who have been instrumental in reintroducing issues of care, love, and intimacy into philosophical discussion.² Women of color feminists have highlighted the necessity of thinking of love and intimacy beyond the private realm, and, more pointedly, as an ethical and political necessity for coalition-building, solidarity, and survival. Furthermore, care ethicists’ emphasis on interdependence and vulnerability as that which establishes intimacy and bonds of obligation, to each other and our surroundings, upends the ethical prioritization of autonomy and individual rights in favor of a worldview that prompts us to pay closer attention to our relational nature. Moreover, within Third World feminists and antiracist, anticapitalist liberation movements, the idea of linking love and revolution has been a longstanding part of the praxis.³ Yet, to my knowledge, no one has substantially addressed revolutionary love in Deleuzian terms. Additionally, though Hannah Stark has provided some of the leading analysis of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of love, characterizing it as “a radical framework for thinking about human intimacy, as it is premised on the proliferation of difference and is part of his project of critiquing identity and identitarian systems” [2] (p. 100), I wish to offer a different perspective, one that conceives intimacy (and love) as a kind of immersive spatial attunement, sensitivity to immanence, and embrace of the liminal moment and what circulates between the elements of relational complexes, which can then be taken back up to enhance our ethico-political engagements.

In *The Universal (in the realm of the sensible)*, Dorothea Olkowski suggests the need for just such a new sensibility to surmount a vision of a plane of immanence which is the pure affirmation of indiscriminate, interchangeable desire, which would be “anonymous, empty, gray” [6] (p. 47). Olkowski posits an ontological unconscious arising from our sensible relation to the world, where we absorb and emit flows of sensible information which cause subtle transformations of milieus, spaces, and experiences. Her insistence that

becoming more sensitive to these minute perceptions provides a framework for renewed ethics and new forms of intimacy is also an inspiration for my work. Yet, whereas Olkowski argues that there is no place in Deleuze and Guattari's work for said intimacy, I attempt to appropriate their work for these very purposes, arguing that they offer resources which help us develop said sensibility. My reasoning for this is that I reject the new materialist reading of Deleuze as primarily focused on the inhuman, whose emphasis on relations remains primarily conceptual and metaphysical. Yes, Deleuze and Guattari provide us with a relational ontology, but their focus on becoming (actual relations) requires attention to the singularity and intimate exchanges which happen in those relations. This kind of relationality is the hallmark of another important line of feminist thought—care ethics—where the specific needs and situations of those entities in relation must play center stage and underlie the demand for a situational politics that accounts for the interrelations between material conditions, systems of power, and subject formation. Invoking the ethical directive in Deleuze and Guattari's work, the establishment of relations which sustain and empower could be considered along the lines of an ethic of care. The pedagogy of liminality that I will derive herein advocates for greater attention to the contours between beings and the establishment of a concerned sensibility, perhaps providing a helpful methodology for care ethics for determining the exact nature of the situational and relational contexts that constitute the focus of their ethical consideration. Further, whereas care ethicists claim that the experience of need and interdependence provides solid reasons for shifting towards the values of care and love, Deleuze and Guattari recognize that the production of desire itself operates below the level of our conscious interests or representations to ourselves and, thus, if we want to shift our sensibilities, we have to actively participate in shifting the flows of desire, disrupting the machinery and assemblages of desire that constitute us—else what we love and what we desire to care for could be entirely fascistic.

My purview here is to foster a truly generative fecundity by aligning or combining with the aforementioned legacies of feminism to offer new methodologies for disrupting the routinized channeling of intimacy through systems of domination and power. These couplings present a new direction for French philosophy and Deleuzian feminism particularly, which has begun to lean in the direction of new materialist and posthumanist concerns at odds with so-called identity or subject-oriented feminisms. Despite the insistence on nonoppositional, positive approaches, new materialism has created an agonistic ethos generated from a desire to carve out a territory which results in the rejection of whole swaths of philosophy (and feminism) under the auspices of moving beyond the linguistic, the cultural, or identity-oriented that, according to their narrative, have dominated both the large part of French poststructuralism and so-called American feminism. This narrative is solidified in Braidotti's *Metamorphosis: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* [7], a foundational text for feminist new materialism, in which she explicitly claims that American feminism cannot theorize the body or sexual difference. One finds echoes of it in the implicit manner that new materialism assumes that the theoretical tools they offer are better, as they do not fall prey to the theoretical mistakes of the past (identity politics, metaphysical individualism), evidenced in the way that Grosz [8] (p. 92) and Barad [9] (p. 98) independently reject intersectionality and identity politics, mainstays of black feminist thought and liberation struggles.⁴ One sees the progression of this line of thinking in Coole and Frost's characterization of identity politics as a shorthand for subject-centered politics or idealist accounts of subjectivity, which they dismiss as merely "fashionable constructivist approaches and identity politics" [10] (p. 19), and Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla's claim that new materialism is unique in acknowledging the body as a material-semiotic actor [11]. Both of these claims neglect the way that decolonial and women of color feminisms, for instance, have complexified discussions of identity and embodiment. This territorialism contributes to its inability to address the contemporary problems that frame our political landscape.

Likewise, when Deleuze and Guattari are claimed by new materialists, it is either in terms of affinity for their process-oriented, relational ontology and championing of monism through their concept of the univocity of being, or their insistence on a world of inhuman,

impersonal, natural forces, which necessarily counters the primacy of the humanist subject. This is evidenced in two of the most prominent of Deleuzian feminists: Braidotti hails the influence of Spinoza's monistic material vitalism on Deleuze, which becomes the bases of her understanding of onto-egalitarianism [12], and Elizabeth Grosz claims that nonhuman forces are "Deleuze's primary preoccupation throughout his work" [13] (p. 19). New materialists' intense focus on Deleuze in terms of affinities to their materialist, relational ontology has led to the glorification of the impersonal and the inhuman and a forgetting of the cruciality of desire and the intimacy as what animates, circulates, and establishes the specificity of relations and provides the potential for collective transformation. Rather than flattening relations into an onto-egalitarian mesh or emphasizing the sheer fact of bodies as ontologically intra-related or relationally constituted, we must pay heed to the intimate contours of these relations and foster a relational consciousness/attitude of concern that simply cannot neglect the function of the subjective awareness or sensibility of the entities involved.

2. They Say They Want a Revolution

In the *Anti-Oedipus* volumes, revolution, social transformation, and the possibility of a new future, a new Earth—all of these are linked to desire; minimally, to the freeing of desire from the false refuges of Oedipalization and its constructs of molar sexuality, which, as they argue, are the handmaidens of capitalism. Everywhere in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari seek to uncover the potential of desire as the key to a revolution in consciousness and, presumably, social transformation. Yet, there is a pervasive sense that this project fails, or more pointedly, that the revolutionary promise of *Anti-Oedipus*, of the liberatory effects of desire, never manifest and do not offer any practical, tangible methods of political action and/or application.⁵

To be sure, when Deleuze and Guattari use the term revolutionary, they are using it in a way that grates against the intuition of those who associate the term with literal, direct political upheaval—leading, I assume, to some of the judgements related to the lack of political efficacy. It is not my intent to defend *why* revolution is not directly associated with a particular political movement, nor is it my intent to write a treatise on Deleuze and Guattari's political involvements. Rather, my intention is to shift the typical conversation concerning what needs be for political transformation as such. As I think Deleuze and Guattari were aware, the production of the new requires more than external shifts in material configurations or a focus on extensivity; it requires transformation at the levels of the intensive and the subjective—an affective revolution.

In what follows, I will unpack Deleuze and Guattari's language of desire to understand its potential, impediments, and reductions, and to develop an account of their obscure, yet provocative, notion of revolutionary love as a necessary counterpart to their more familiar concept of revolutionary desire.⁶ Then, by extending this analysis to their later formulations of love, the sense and scope of the revolutionary is fleshed out (or rather, corporealized) in order to imagine new practices of intimacy and a pedagogy of love and liminality, that supports the kind of differential consciousness developed through US Third World feminisms, Chicana feminisms, and black, intersectional feminisms, and encouraged by others drawing attention to the cruciality of acknowledging the experiences of subordinated subjects.⁷ The presence of intimacy in Deleuze's work has been occluded by separating Deleuze's ontology and metaphysics—in what amounts to the glorification of the impersonal—from his ethics of events (becomings) and a schizoanalytic method of approaching, understanding, and tracing desire.

To wit, Deleuze and Guattari insist on a different kind of ethical and political engagement—working on the level of desire, they recognize that certain shifts in how we think and feel must be engendered. Revolution does not begin with ideology or class consciousness, and it is not a sacrosanct term reserved only for physical overthrow, war, or the seizing of the means of production.⁸ Revolution begins with desire, the uprooting of eidos, and the shifting of affective being and relations: "A politics of love is necessary in the sense that

how one loves matters; it has effects on the texture of everyday life and on the intimate ‘with-ness’ of social relations” [14] (np). The intimate ‘with-ness’ means that what circulates (affect) between relations, that movement of the corporeal/incorporeal liminality, is a fragile space that is rife with myriad potentials; it is where intimacy happens—a passional space. How do we traverse these fragile relations without destroying or imposing ourselves, so as to receive the lessons and potentials that they offer, so that they remain “with” us, or that we become “with” them?

Machinic Desire, Revolutionary Desire

Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of revolutionary desire calls us to consider that how what we take to be the most personal is first and foremost *impersonal*, how the most intimate is the collective and social. Deleuze and Guattari ask us to consider the unconscious libidinal investments that inform our values, our morals, our homelands, and our identities (whether sexual, political, or personal). Desire is at once repressive and revolutionary and *Anti-Oedipus* is both critique and anticipation. To retrieve another possibility for desire, revolutionary desire, we must understand the ways that desire has been invested, constricted, or reduced. Deleuze and Guattari are very clear: we desire our own repression, and the whole social framework is constructed through restriction and blockage: to couples, family, persons, molar and binary sexuality and sexes, and that this repression is not merely ideological, but instead immanent to desire itself [5] (pp. 120–121). Yet they also insist: “Sexuality and love do not live in the bedroom of Oedipus, they instead dream of wide-open spaces, and cause strange flows to circulate” [5] (p. 116).

Thus, sexuality and love occupy the same liminal space as desire—they are double (at least); Deleuze and Guattari perform a critique of sexuality (and love) as “false refuge” in order to open up a space for other manifestations. Thus, the other two guiding themes of this essay are delirium (of sex and sexuality) and revolutionary love. If, as they claim, “Love and sexuality are the exponents or the indicators, of the libidinal investments of the social field” [5] (p. 353), then what we love, who we love, and how we love are both indicators of what our society values *and* could be catalysts for the transformation of society. What do intimacy, love, and sexuality become in wide-open spaces; what do they dream of, want to be?

Deleuze and Guattari overturn traditional paradigms of desire in several senses: desire is a productive force rather than lack; desire is not the satisfaction of need nor the creation of hallucinatory effects; desire is characterized by real effects rather figurative or metaphorical. It is not focused on objects of desire, but the process of production. It is not a state of mind, an agitation of the soul, a psychological wish; it is a material process of production; and, perhaps most profoundly, desire exceeds or precedes the human. It is related to the power of material bodies to extend to their limits through various modes of connection and is a decidedly inhuman force in which humans participate. Desiring-production, as a matter of material connections, form assemblages and milieus—which is why Deleuze and Guattari insist that desire is social rather than individual. Every manifestation of personal desire is the result of a collective assemblage of forces—desiring machines that operate according to impersonal and nonsignifying modalities of synthesis.

This theory of desire stands at the base of their realizations concerning subjectivity, social collectivity, and sexuality. Schizoanalysis, most basically, is a project of revealing this level of desiring-production and anticipating the potential revolutionary effects of liberating this desire. Unfortunately, this aim is constantly disrupted by the nature of desiring-production and its inherent tendency toward its own repression. Therefore, one of the goals of schizoanalysis must be to reveal this tendency towards repression [5] (p. 115). This is why Deleuze and Guattari insist that schizoanalysis must proceed by way of destruction; particularly, the destruction of the Oedipal structure that has constricted and routed the full range of desire. Oedipal structures of desire reduce the expression of sexuality and generate specific symbols and structures that restrict bodies and connections.⁹ This is the infamous “theft of the body” related to the figure of the girl, which is ultimately

related to the prioritization of becoming-woman that has been the subject of much debate in feminist circles.

Rather than critiquing Oedipus at the level of signification, (which would be to remain tethered to the principle of desire as merely an orientation to objects, even if these objects could be expanded or changed), they give explanation of the immanent conditions of its construction. Deleuze and Guattari do this by distinguishing the legitimate versus the illegitimate uses of the synthesis of production [5] (p. 75). As Olkowski explains, “it is the same syntheses that produce desire and its repression—what makes the difference [either legitimate or illegitimate] is the quality (nomadic and polyvocal or segregative and binary)” [15] (p. 114). Moving closer to identifying the kinds of repression though illegitimate synthesis that desire undergoes is, theoretically, the first step to releasing desire for its revolutionary potential.

There are three modes of synthesis: connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive—different levels of synthesis which are respectively associated with the functions of production, recording or distribution, and consumption (identification); these syntheses provide an explanation of organization and determination of bodies, subjects, and social formations. Connective synthesis is the binary process of couplings of partial objects/flows; it is, basically, the production of production which lays out a plane of immanence by setting up series or combinations. It has the linguistic form of “and . . . then.” Rather than linear couplings that go off in every direction (the nomadic form), the illegitimate use of connective synthesis assumes unidirectionality, and connections are assumed to have a necessary relation. This happens because of extrapolation—that is, instead of beginning at the primary process of production and connection of flows/partial objects, it is focusing on a particular partial object (product) and taking it as a starting point (thereby locating the process of connection at a particular point—fixing the linearity). This is what happens with the phallus: it becomes the “reason” for the series of connections, despotically organizing all meaning around itself. More broadly, with the familial use of the synthesis (parental images serving as co-ordinates), a regime of pairing replaces the connection of partial objects (instantiating binary logic). This surface is where all production is recorded and takes on different characteristics according to its restrictions [5] (p. 10).

Disjunctive synthesis is the production of recording, a law of distribution which produces co-ordinates or points of reference and ordering. Deleuze and Guattari explain the function of this synthesis as that of setting up of significance vis-à-vis relational distributions. In other words, disjunctive synthesis distributes terms or gives form to the relation of terms (and follows the form of “either, or, or”). The derailment of disjunctions happens at the point where these relations become exclusive (either this or that) and also repeats the mistake of extrapolation, taking the product as the starting point. Oedipus imposes restrictions on ordering with its triangulation; for instance: it can *only* be man or woman; parent or child. The distributions (recordings) then arrogate all productive forces to their purposes. Recording processes are immediately consumed, and these are directly reproduced. A repetition that begins to take itself as origin or foundation.

Conjunctive synthesis is the production of consumption; it is the point where the individual “identifies with or consumes” certain zones of intensity on the BwO and follows the linguistic form “it is this then.” This is the level of the production of a subject through the share of product it takes for itself. Desire, which is both product and producer of the full body of the socius (BwO), is enveloped and mistaken as the property of particular subjects (I am a woman, I am a man). How these distributions are ordered reflect the kinds of subjects, roles, passions, and desires that will be expressed on/through it. (I am an American, nationalist, Republican, good-guy gun-owner). As Deleuze and Guattari say, “Society constructs its own delirium” [5] (p. 10).

3. SEX: To Be or Not to Be

What do we do about sex—at least what Deleuze and Guattari identify as the molar aggregates of binary sex? Where the nuclear Oedipal family and its insistence on hetero-

sexuality, patriarchy, and the normativity of binary sexual categories is articulated and re-instantiated as natural and inevitable is precisely where Deleuze and Guattari locate “the degree of disfiguration it implies and brings to bear on desiring-production” [5] (p. 175). Molar, binary sexual difference reduces the expression of desire and sexuality; therefore, the liberation of desire could produce new forms of gender and sexuality by and through investments of desire that are directly plugged into social organization and disorganization [5] (p. 163). On this view, desire and sexuality would be contextual and local, more or less mutable and transformational depending on its mode of capture and acquiescence to transcendent ideals. However, just interrogating the ways that these normative structures operate (in order, perhaps, to either construct more “accurate” one’s or less exclusionary ones) does not reach the radical conclusion that revolutionary desire requires. Revolutionary desire is not just a reorientation of our conscious desires—this would be to remain at the level of preconscious interest. Deleuze and Guattari claim, “down below, there are desires, investments of desire that cannot be confused with the investments of interest, and on which interests depend in their determination and distribution: an enormous flux, all kinds of libidinal-unconscious flows that make up the delirium of this society” [16] (p. 36). How is this delirium constructed? They have already provided the answer. Revolutionary desire would be a synthesis according to its legitimate forms—a connective synthesis of partial objects and flows which is not bound by one linear direction; it would be a disjunctive synthesis that does not fix itself between binary oppositions which exclude each other, thus leading to the conjunctive synthesis of a mobile, non-totalizing form. Revolutionary desiring machines remain in motion, at the limits or margins (transversal and polyvocal).

Thus, Deleuze and Guattari envision a proliferation of desire at the molecular level with a concomitant multiplication of sexes (*n*-sexes), instead of the binary division of sex into male and female, which are revealed as aggregates derived from respective positions taken up in relation to the phallus/castration. *N*-sexes refer, first, to the multiplicity of desiring-machines that make up any organism, and second, to the relations between desiring-machines that make up assemblages of organisms and bodies. “Sexes” refer to fragmented, partial objects (desiring-machines), while sexuality refers to the transversal communication between these partial objects—flows and communication that “seem” aberrant because they do not follow the rules of exclusionary logic. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari posit a primary trans-sexuality that characterizes desiring machines themselves, a designation which is meant to focus our attention on the characteristic of transversality, as a property of transfer between heterogeneous series. As Nir Kedem explains in “To Have Done with Sexuality: Schizoanalysis and the Problem of Queer-Feminist Alliances,” Deleuze and Guattari do not refer just to “a movement between or from male and female or female to male but transversal communication between multiple types of bodies, partial objects, and assemblages” [17] (p. 118). Sexual difference, according to Deleuze, “functions not between the sexes but between the *n*-sexes and the reduction of the latter to the two sexes” [18] (p. 78), while the unrestricted form of sexuality refers then to transversal relations between a multiplicity of nonhuman sexes; a thousand tiny sexes that are materially embedded in relational assemblages—a delirium of sexes.

It is worth noting, in light of the fascination with the inhuman that has come to define some branches of Deleuzian theory, that when Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that there is always a nonhuman sex in human sexuality, it is “not because they have nothing to do with human bodies, but because they deal with partial objects which lack nothing and thereby with breaks and flows that are independent of the human idea of castration” [19] (p. 13). Transsexuality refers not to identities but to the behavior of desire itself as irreducibly transversal and connecting to partial objects. Trans, in this sense, indicates crossing or passage between aberrant or heterogeneous elements that have not yet been bound by founding mythologies and apparatuses of control. Deleuze and Guattari are attempting to reconfigure sexuality/desire beyond psychological identification to an informal (in the sense of not yet configured or formed) mode of being in the world and interaction with humans, nonhumans, and things.

Thus, their consideration of trans-sexuality is idiosyncratic to their theory of desire (one could still find issue with the appropriation of the term itself, an acknowledgement that makes it all the more imperative to clearly qualify their usage). They do not refer to “transsexuals” as a person-type and, as Stark and Laurie point out in “Deleuze and Transfeminism” [17], Deleuze and Guattari do not address transgender issues in their work. This is not to say that their work has not been taken up by trans theorists. On the contrary, many trans theorists have been influenced by or utilized their ideas of desire, becoming, and transversality in productive ways. Garner writes, “Becoming is a high productive concept in transgender studies . . . [which] has the potential to undermine the accusation that trans bodies are unnatural or constructed” [20] (p. 30), a sentiment that echoes Stark and Laurie’s positive perspective that gestures, Deleuze and Guattari’s among them, that endorse the mutability of bodies can counter the stigma attached to transgender bodies as lacking credibility [17] (p. 129).

Many have embraced the reconceptualization of desire, imagining the implications of libidinal investment preceding sexual differentiation or proliferating beyond its particularly historically and culturally oriented forms (see [21,22]), but this radical destabilization of sexuality has also led to deep anxieties amongst feminists concerning both the possible incommensurability between the Deleuzian multiplicity of sexual desire and sexual difference and the blows to political visibility brought about by the dis-solution of the subject that accompanies this vision of desire/s. Extending this point to the realities of trans experience, Cremin points out that many within the trans community see the movement toward one or the other pole of binary sex as the goal and worries that Deleuze and Guattari’s dissolution of sex, and its location in the very term “transsexuality,” may render the trans-woman’s desire to identify as woman a kind of “enslavement” (1) or capitulation [23]. Yet, Cremin seems optimistic that trans theorists can find productive alliance with Deleuze and Guattari, and similar to Stark and Laurie, suggests that if we consider the object of schizoanalysis to be the destruction of myths, beliefs, and representations, their work can be very fecund for thinking through trans issues and beyond pejorative and damaging belief systems or myths about sex and gender which exclude them [23] (p. 3). Stark and Laurie also suggest that Deleuze and Guattari’s work on becoming generates an understanding of transition that can be extremely productive and illuminative of the experience of some within trans communities—that is, a nonteleological understanding of becoming that does not posit a point of arrival nor a point of ideal completion—which is exemplified in trans* theorist Jack Haberstem’s work, as well as the writings of Paul Preciado and Maggie Nelson [17] (pp. 132–135).

Finally, the idea that social and political change is predicated on liberating the explosive potential of revolutionary desire¹⁰ leaves some nonplussed, as it seems to be a generalized and nondirectional affirmationism—deterritorializing, delirious desire—the further criticism being that advocating for the liberation of desire does not offer any meaningful strategies. At the very least, acknowledging the molecular level of machinic desire is not the same as accessing it. For instance, Stark and Laurie warn against the romanticization of transition and the tendency for concepts such as becoming and transversality to be used as conceptual abstractions at the “expense of engagement with lived realities and the practical demands of living trans lives” [17] (p. 129). This is reminiscent of feminist critiques of the neutralization of the specificity of sexual difference and women’s experience in the uptake of becoming-woman. Such wariness is absolutely warranted. We should be ever vigilant in considering lived experience as situated and unequally impacted by forces of power, societal control, and material and conceptual constraints. The latter part of this article emphasizes the importance of aligning the conceptual apparatuses that I derived from Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy with the activist practices and specific histories of women, particularly women of color who have often been pushed to the periphery of mainstream feminist movements, and the next section offers rejoinders to some of these problems by probing the concept of delirium and intertwining it to those of loving and

learning. Although the focus of these latter sections is not on trans communities, I believe some of the same strategies can apply in addressing these similarly situated concerns.

4. Delirium, or Becoming-Liminal

What is the power of delirium? Deleuze and Guattari certainly place a lot of faith in it: “flows capable of hallucinating history, of reanimating the races in delirium, of setting continents ablaze” [5] (p. 105); “the genetic matrix of every unconscious social investment” [5] (p. 277). The delirium of a society comprises desire, which precedes conscious investments of interest. However, as with the syntheses of desire themselves, delirium can be either legitimate or illegitimate. They say: “delirium has something like two poles, racist and racial, paranoiac-segregative and schizonomadic” [5] (p. 105). The former invests in totalizing, central sovereignty and disinvests every free figure, while the latter invests in lines of escape and assemblage machines at the periphery, proceeding from a kind of disidentification. While acknowledging then that delirium is not just good in itself, we can still draw some conclusions about how delirium operates and what it can do.

Deleuze and Guattari insist that desire is excessive and that the potential for desire to break out of the social forms is fundamental: “desire does not want to be revolutionary, it is revolutionary in its own right” [5] (p. 116). Thus, desiring-production cannot be completely bound into the repressive mechanisms/codifications of any *socius*; it is always escaping, seeping out, threatening the social order. This excessive potential is encountered as delirium. However, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that, for the most part, we are perfectly content to follow the well-traversed furrows and paths of desire; the ways that desire is already invested (and that we are already invested in forms of captured or structured desire as central to our sense of self and sexuality) means that our awareness to free desire is severely limited. Our delirium is systematically tamed.

Referring to its Latin origin, to be delirious means to go outside the *‘lira’* (the ridge between furrows)—to be “off the beaten path”, outside society’s norms. This, rather than some uncontrollable, ir-rational frenzy or madness, is what Deleuze and Guattari associate with the specific experience of schizophrenia: “Schizzos exist at the very limit of the social code.” In not abiding by the social coding of desire, the schizzo renders visible the presence of liminal spaces, these cracks and fissures that those consumed by, or consuming, social investments of desire cannot see. Deleuze and Guattari, quoting Laing, say: “They will see that what we call ‘schizophrenia’ was one of the forms in which, often through quite ordinary people, the light began to break through the cracks in our all-too-closed minds . . . madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be breakthrough” [5] (p. 131). It is not that we should all aspire to schizophrenia, as if we could, but that we can learn something about ourselves and about the limits within which we exist.

Beyond misjudging, failing to see, or even negating the limits that bind desire, the schizzo reveals another way of addressing liminality: “[the schizzo] *remain[s]* at that unbearable point where mind touches matter and lives its every intensity, consumes it” [5] (p. 20); moreover, the schizzo also knows *how to leave*. This implies that, rather than being defined through restrictions, the schizzo exists *in* liminal spaces but is not constricted by these limits (i.e., can traverse the space freely), a model of free connective synthesis (or transversality).

What is interesting is the spatial dynamics of desire, what I refer to as “the space of passion.” Desire, rather than being about or for some “thing”, is envisioned as fields of attraction, conjugations, connections, and excessive becoming. The schizzo crosses the limit, knows how to leave, and follows lines of escape or flight. Yet, this is not a matter of extensive movement; we know that Deleuze and Guattari insist that nomadism is movement in place, a journey of intensity [16] (pp. 37–38). Thus, to escape is to sweep away the social covering, to cause pieces of the system to become lost, to break through the wall of molar constructs and reveal the molecular level of desiring that is already there. The intentional ambiguity in the terms *fuir* and *fuite* in *A Thousand Plateaus* resonates with the spatial dynamics and sense of liberation of flows from molar structures that I

have developed above. Although “leaving” or “fleeing” are the most obvious translations for these terms, *une fuite* is also a leak. As Deleuze and Parnet underline in *Dialogues II*: “[To flee] is also to put to flight—not necessarily others, but to put something to flight, to put a system to flight as one bursts a tube . . . to flee is to trace a line, lines and a whole cartography.”¹¹ So, when they write about *fuir* and *lignes de fuite*, we should hold together the idea of “leaving” with that of bursting something from within.

So, delirium would be a matter of occupying space differently—I might say, *more intimately*. Rather than continuing to operate according to the segregative paradigm, it is to become-liminal, reconnecting relationally to the milieu and its desiring-machines. While the fascist pole of delirium is oriented towards the world comprising complete or totalized objects, vis a vis identification, opposition, or violent rejection, and it, essentially, fixes limits, the schizonomadic pole of delirium suggests an ability to exist within liminal spaces without closing them off and to attend to the movement between relations, where affect flourishes. It is this space that we must become intimate with, and to appreciate (even nurture) the quality (to use a Bergsonian distinction) of that space is everything. It is an indeterminate zone—whether it is filled with love or hate determines the nature of the complex. Desire may lead us there, but the feel of this space reflects the importance of relational attitude—intensive and incorporeal dimension of love.¹²

For Deleuze and Guattari, sexuality is a gathering—but rather than around organs or individual bodies, illusionary or phantasmagoric, around intensities and milieus (see Beckman 2013). Desire thus has the potential to reframe physical experience by constituting proximities and distances, affinities and affectations—the space of passion.¹³ Given that desire is no longer conceived only along prefigured routes and patterns, learning to find the inflection points and points of excess is crucially important. When describing the potential of a nonreductive sexuality, they say: “Sexuality is by no means a molar determination that is represented in the familial whole; it is the molecular undetermination functioning within the social and secondarily familial aggregate that *trace desire’s field of presence and its field of production*” [5] (p. 183).

Unlike the schizophrenic, whose experience is instructive but not literally replicable, to invoke this delirium we would need to engage in what I am calling a Deleuzian *pedagogy of liminality*, which would involve tracing the limits that exist as social investments of desire, finding the contours of the different assemblages of desiring machines that make up the body of the socius, exploring these lines and contours by rejecting unidirectional linearity, finding the lines of flight through the conjugation of our bodies *with and in* the milieu. The term liminality, related to the Latin verb *limen* (threshold), was coined by Arnold van Gennep, a French ethnographer, in 1909, to explain how rituals in small societies transform the status of those who undertake them, leading to productive transitions or, in Deleuzian terms, becomings, of social groups and individuals. I align the concept of liminality with Deleuze and Guattari’s development of a language of lines as indicative of transversal spaces and interactions between all kinds of material and immaterial stratifications. In “Negotiating Liminal Spaces” [24], Masmira claims that one of the key features of liminality is its ambiguous nature. My version of pedagogy of liminality retains this affiliation; one of the most interesting elements of Deleuzian spatial dynamics is the potential of what he calls *zones of indetermination*. Recognizing that our milieus are saturated with these latent or virtual potentialities, which are never predetermined, is what prompts us to posit the need for a more subtle development of our sensibility to these milieus, these paradoxical spaces, and to suggest developing a practice of tracing and following these liminal interactions. Masmira also writes that liminality becomes a key concept for Chicana feminist philosopher, Gloria Anzaldúa, through her concept of *nepantla*, meaning *torn between ways*. The connection to Anzaldúa’s work is a felicitous coincidence that serves to strengthen my claims later in the article concerning the potential for renewed alliance between feminist theories outside of its European or new materialist-oriented strains.

The idea of tracing, or mapping, which is found in several places in Deleuze and Guattari’s work, is an important component of the pedagogy of liminality. Limits are also

meeting places, points of connection; pedagogy of liminality would be learning to trace those lines and meetings points, and, rather than eliminating paths, placing ourselves in these spaces. The particular mode of tracing gets cashed out in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they develop a vocabulary of lines that equips them to, as they say, be “in a better position to draw a map” [25] (p. 222). There, they offer a taxonomy of lines to explain social and political formations and how it is that we are always delineated in particular fashions, that we are, in fact, segmented from all around and in every direction—circular, linear, multiple lines. However, there is also another way of encountering lines. They refer to an activity of mapping informal flows: it is the flow (of desiring-production) which “continues beneath the line, forever mutant, while the line totalizes” (p. 219); “The only ‘great’ Statesmen are those who connect the flows, like pilot signs or particle-signs . . . drawing them, sounding them out, following them” [25] (p. 225). Thus, mapping is more than tracing the already present molar lines; it is recognizing where “particle-signs” have eluded formalization, to find the unformed within the formed and to ride those flows of the unformed beyond the form; to follow nonintegrated lines and remain open to the vicissitudes of chance encounters—those that operate according to the principle of transversality. Lines of flight are described as modes of passage that assure connections-creations between flows, rather than arrest [25] (p. 223). It is a matter of following the line and puzzling in its process of formation and movement rather than anticipating its destination into a final figure—to remain at the intensive point between mind and matter.

Deleuze and Guattari proceed to list several artists who occupy this schizzo space; they are men who know how to leave—Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, Malcolm Lawry, Henry Miller, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac. However, maybe leaving is not the only means of resistance, which brings me to the second idea related to this pedagogy of liminality: the concept of learning itself, introduced in *Difference and Repetition*: “to conjugate the distinctive points (*points remarquables*) of the body with singular points of the objective Idea in order to form a problematic field” [26] (p. 165) to transform our bodies, ourselves. It is a transformative practice not formatted on repetition or recognition. It is not difficult to hear the erotic undertones of this—to conjugate is to couple, connect, unify; learning specifies a certain manner of intermingling of bodies. My conjecture is that, if learning is a kind of conjugation—a making of love—it must refer to a particular *kind* of love—what I am associating with revolutionary love. I am interested, then, in combining learning and loving as a specific model of love. The question is: “what does the model of learning/loving teach us?”

First, to move from segregative delirium to schizzonomadic delirium, to discover the schizzes-flows of desiring production in the first place requires not just leaving – but loving. In other words, rather than leaving, we need to learn how to love. Second, loving rather than leaving recognizes the deeply immanent nature of intimate relations, requiring that we begin to think of ethics in terms of milieus and all their constituent interactions. Third, this is also my way of tapping into the debate about what a postpatriarchal, postcolonizing relationship or intimacy would look like. Elevating loving over leaving supports the critiques of Third World feminists and postcolonial theorists, for whom, theory is not a game and leaving is not an option. As Edward Said exhorts, “There is a great difference, however, between the optimistic mobility, the intellectual liveliness, and the ‘logic of daring’ described by the various theoreticians on whose work I have drawn, and the massive dislocations, waste, misery, and hours endured in our century’s migrations and mutilated lives” [27] (p. 332). We should extend the figures of literature, aesthetics, and philosophy beyond the ones associated with Deleuze’s schizzo model of “leaving” and uplift others that skew towards what I have termed “loving” and which explore and tarry with space and embodiment, and thus can better address the lived experiences to which Said refers. This is also a reason to align these discussions with care ethicists, who not only take love and intimacy as their goal, but do so by emphasizing the embodied, corporealized ethical encounter which lends itself to this cartographic practice.¹⁴

5. Revolutionary Love

Identifying a concept of desire free from the ideological constraints of lack and the repressive organizing structure of Oedipus is sometimes assumed to be the goal of *Anti-Oedipus*—it is not, however, truly revolutionary. It represents a first step—barely stepping outside of a paradigm that has stymied the discussion of desire. This is as revolutionary as loosening the chains of the prisoner in the cave—there is still a long way out of the cave and, as we mentioned, just lodging the critique does not offer any paths or strategies. If we must relate differently to the paths laid out before us, respond differently to the milieu and materiality with which we are confronted, how do we learn this? *We need revolutionary love to even begin to recognize or unleash revolutionary desire*. Why? As Deleuze insists, social investment underlies and circumscribes individual investments of desire and, therefore, desire-delirium is “a libidinal investment of an entire historical milieu, of an entire social environment” [5] (p. 275). While love, like the syntheses of desire, like delirium, can be either restrictive or revolutionary, it happens to be the peculiar characteristic of love that it connects us to worlds, and possibly *other* worlds. There are two interpretations of what this means.¹⁵ The first image, from *Proust and Signs*: is that to become in love is to invest libidinal energy in an object choice (the beloved), individualizing that object, and turning it into a particular person, separate from the anonymous mass of the world [28] (p. 7). Loving makes a world other than my own appear, vis a vis the singularities of another person. The second image of love that is found in *A Thousand Plateaus*: to ‘paint the world on oneself, not oneself on the world’ [27] (pp. 199–200), indicates that, through an encounter with otherness, we depersonalize ourselves, allowing other worlds, imaginaries, and experiences to emerge; this is akin to the other mode of delirium: “only through the harshest exercises in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the multiplicities everywhere in them, to the intensities running through them. [This is] a depersonalization through love rather than through subjection” [25] (p. 6). Which means that accessing delirium as revolutionary desire would be *through love*.

The difference between the two images of love seems to be what desire is mapped onto, conjugated with, or connected to. Both are important for developing ethical encounters, but it is the latter that constitutes the revolutionary form of love and which could provide an opening beyond our individual preconscious investments of interest to make unconscious libidinal investments revolutionary. Rather than an object, i.e., persons, organs, and figures as so many simulacra indicative of social axiomatics, revolutionary love is a mode of connecting with affective and intensive milieus—to be in love is not to be fascinated with just another person, to identify an object that one desires; it relates to the spatial dynamics that we have already developed—sexuality as infinite shifting connections and relations. Conjugation would indicate tracing *between* bodies and milieus, a pedagogy of liminality that reveals multiple intensive paths of the space of desire. In other words, we do not just make love *with* worlds—we are *out-in* love with worlds. The difference speaks to Ahmed’s warning about the double-edged sword of love as a catalyst for alignment—nationalisms are built on love as well [14].

Hence, another delineation between restrictive or revolutionary loves revolves around whether one loves worlds that are totalized and identical to one’s own (ones constituted by predefined and familiar co-ordinates and attributes) *or* one cultivates an attitude of loving that open up to more spacious, unknown worlds, as Berlant describes: “as long as the normative narrative and institutionalized forms of sexual life organize identity for people, longings are mainly lived as a desire for love to obliterate the wildness of the unconscious, confirm the futurity of a known self, and dissolve the enigmas that marks one’s lovers” [29] (p. 95). For Deleuze, being in love means the subject has been moved by a world beyond itself: “There is no love which does not begin with the revelation of a possible world as such, enwound in the other which expresses it” [26] (p. 261); “a possible world unknown to us” [28] (p. 7).

This experience is an occasion to hold open a space as a further level of understanding of the other’s situatedness in milieu, establishing a nonreductive relation between her

singularities and one's own situatedness. In both Deleuzian images of love, it seems crucial that loving is not to assume possession of these milieus or worlds (or persons), collapsing them back into a mode of recognition. As Stark writes, when "philosophy is divorced from the prerogative of mastery and becomes an act of love. It is at those moments when the self is undone, and we are confounded with what is unknown . . . that thought and creativity become possible" [2] (p. 105). This vision of loving as a paradoxical encounter bears resemblance to the model of genetic paradox in *Difference and Repetition*, which motivates the faculties to go to the limits of powers and be transformed. There, Deleuze even seems to make this connection himself: "Eros is constituted by resonance but overcomes itself in the direction of the death instinct which is constituted by the amplitude—of a forced movement" [26] (p. 122).

There is a further distinction to be made here, especially in relation to revolutionary love being necessary for constituting a new delirium. Delirium relates to the whole social field and is thus about unleashing revolutionary desire upon the body without organs. Thus, revolutionary love is not just a matter of being *in love*, but of being *out-in love*—love as an immersive experience that reaches towards a deterritorialized earth. It is the cosmic earth that represents desire in its liberated state—permeated by unformed and unstable flows, which we may associate with affective, sensible encounters that often wash over us. The distinction helps us understand the relation between the two images of love: loving, in the first Deleuzian sense, is a paradoxical encounter that opens up of a world of singularities which then gets taken up by a revolutionary form of being *out-in love* (sense two), which provides the potential of constituting a new Earth (as arrangement of intensities and desire of the milieu) and, by consequence, a new people (or *socius*). *Just to be clear*, Deleuze and Guattari understand the stratification of the Earth as both inevitable and necessary. Delirium is not a vision of purely fluid, unattached desiring-production, but making different kinds of assemblages because desire has become *unformed*. Thus, we are capable of connections beyond routinized and selective boundaries.

So, what *form* of love would indicate the revolutionary character of investment—the formation of a new Earth, or spatial investment of desire? My gambit is that we must rethink the notion of form itself. Rather than form being the equivalent of a type, role, a figure or structure, we must think of it as an activity, a kind of process or approach that indicates an investment of revolutionary desire. Rather than choosing or identifying with a world, which would be love defined by its object, love is a way of being in the world—a new form of loving, love as *forming*, epitomized by Rumi "love gives birth to a thousand forms; the world is full of its paintings but it has no form" [30] (p. 198). Simply put, it is not just *whom* we love (identify with, form community with) but *how* we love that is crucial. This nonfigurative form of love implies an infinite process of forming. The equivalent methodology for this form of loving is learning, i.e., a pedagogy of liminality.

We situate ourselves in the between of a paradox (the liminal), to become who we are not and to open new worlds through these encounters as an infinite project. Deleuze says "the paradox of this pure becoming . . . is the paradox of infinite identity" [31] (p. 2). But as Erinn Gilson has emphasized, to move beyond our selves is not to lose ourselves completely, or to become imperceptible as a political gesture. As she writes in "Undoing the Subject: Feminist and Schizoanalytic Contributions to Political Desubjectification," "To desubjectify for Deleuze and Guattari does not mean to lose the self but to find ways to keep the self-moving, passing through different affective states" [17] (p. 70). Here again, care ethics could be a particularly valuable counterpart, in that the ethical relation is based on reciprocity, whereby neither element of that relation is subsumed or exhausted and relation requires responsiveness to the other, whether that other is person, place, or thing. The form of loving as a paradoxical space that engenders a comportment of reciprocity, movement, and exchange is also a space of cultivation and concern, which sustains one's ability to remain in flux and liminality. Just as care ethics elevates care as a value that should accompany all relations, we could say that revolutionary love should be the ethical goal to be engendered between all relations.

Revolutionary love is thus related to the pedagogy of liminality, as an affective comportment. Our tarrying within these spaces is not characterized as confrontation or violence, but of remaining with, contouring ourselves to, and conjugating with that which is other than Other, for which Paul Preciado provides a visceral image: '[l]ove as a map of connections (movements, discharges, reflexes, convulsions, tremors) that for a certain time regulate the production of affects' [22] (p. 400). Love, as an intra-active milieu, is an infinite process of learning/transformation through conjugation with otherness. This is an ecological approach to loving: to be informed (fully embodied and immanent) by our material engagements—*incorporated*. It expands the realm of love, invites our reconceptualization of the erotic, as an exploration of potentials of our whole bodies in congress with their environments, as intermingled with, tantalized, provoked, and challenged by a plentitude of sensorial, material encounters. As Deleuze and Guattari write, "desire does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined" [5] (292). Unfortunately, this reality has been obscured by the way that our social, psychological, and philosophical worlds have been constrained by hegemonic signifiers and modes of capture of that very desire.

This *infinite eros* speaks to the necessity of opening ourselves, in thought and action, to the unfamiliar, the unknown, and the other-worldly, as an interwoven dance of differences, pushing us beyond the concretizations of those worlds which may in fact inhibit us—politically, socially, ethically, and creatively. Rather than *eros* bound between a subject and its other, we are interested in the infinitude of affects and encounters that proliferate desire and institute becomings. Revolutionary love is learning to love beyond our intended love interests, learning to love transversally and being more attuned to the plethora of forces at play in any given milieu—especially those which become muted and silenced as they are trampled by dominant routeness. These indicate a new capacity for intersubjective relation, one which gravitates toward singularity and undoes molarizing prerogatives that limit our abilities to engage with one another and hinder our ability to recognize the multiplicities within ourselves as well. Through, what Sholtz and Carr describe in "Infinite Eros" as an "infinite engagement with the otherness of our immanent and fluid relations to each other and the world" [32] (p. 461), we widen our understanding of what ethical loving and relation should be. When we shift to the understanding of selves as always within dynamic interactions with milieus, what Guattari calls "existential territories" [33], we see that different flows of desire are constitutive of spaces and bodies whose becomings are intimately related. As Guattari proposes, such a recognition lends itself to "create new systems of valorization, a new taste for life, a new gentleness between the sexes, generations, ethnic groups, races" [34] (p. 92). This resonates with our desire to comprehend love as a differential spatial sensibility and imagine the schizzo as one who disrupts patterns of desire from hierarchical, systemic confines, to discover the other flows and relations within a milieu, by learning how to love rather than leave.

6. Conclusion: War Machines of Love and Ethico-Political Intimacy

I intensely love Soudeh Oladi's transmutation of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of war machine—the war machine of love—in which she couples the concept with Rumi's advocacy of selfless love, "to indicate a third space where there are multiple versions of reality" [35] (p. 71); I understand this coupling as an essential component of moving toward ethico-political intimacy. In Deleuze and Guattari's work, the war machine's main characteristic is to extend fluid, smooth space, that is, space is not immobilized, settled, or colonized. Linked to nomadism, the war machine represents a practice of shifting between various relations and forces. Nomadic consciousness encompasses a flowing quality that resists sedentary ways of being and permanent identities. However, without mooring or directionality, these concepts risk becoming detached and apolitical.¹⁶ This is where the alliance with feminism, and particularly with Third World feminisms, provides a crucial lesson—the loving side of learning.

It is here that the legacy of feminist thinkers who have theorized the power of love as both ethical comportment and political necessity should be reintroduced. Houria Bouteldja [36] uses the concept of revolutionary love explicitly, calling upon the legacy of Third World feminism and women of color feminisms that trace love as a radical ethic and political methodology, as does Natalie Havlin in reference to 1970's Chicana Feminism's commitment to love as "a radical ethic and political methodology" [37] (p. 78). Bouteldja explicitly credits Chela Sandoval for the term and understands the concept as indicating that future politics requires a militant antiracism. For Sandoval, revolutionary love indicates the kind of sensibility necessary for those with nonmarginal status to break free from the latent racism (and its privileges) embedded in practically every institution and even those movements that purport to fight against it: "Third world writers such as Guevara, Fanon, Anzaldúa, Emma Pérez, Trinh Minh-ha, or Cherrie Moraga . . . similarly understand love as a 'breaking' through whatever controls in order to find 'understanding and community' . . . a "rupturing" in one's everyday world that permits crossing over to another" [38] (pp. 138–139). Deleuze and Guattari's characterization of the comportment and actions of the schizzo bears a striking resemblance to this. In fact, we could say that it is only by addressing these existential realities that Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual personae could come alive—as it is the boundaries of racial categorization and capitalist exploitation that must be "broken through" or ruptured to create spaces for self and communal definition and the reorganization of the socius that operate from within—a seepage or leak, rather than flight towards some ideal, futural horizon. In other words, the cavalier vision of the intrepid wanderer who escapes, leaves, does not do justice to the realities of the oppressed, who must form other means of resistance than leaving. This is what necessitates our transition from leaving to *remaining with* as a form of loving—as Deleuze says, "a motionless voyage" [25] (p. 220).

Drawing upon the strategies of Third World women who advocated for coalition and alliance, Sandoval proposes a "hermeneutics of love" [38] (pp. 136–137), a differential consciousness wrought from the experiences of inbetweenness, code shifting, and basic survival common to those who experience oppression and marginalization. Sandoval's hermeneutics of love is reminiscent of the existential experience of split (*mestiza*) consciousness developed by Gloria Anzaldúa and the spatial politics of Maria Lugones, who developed the concept of loving perception to indicate the comportment necessary for compassionately understanding the worlds of others, and bears resemblance to the transversal sensibility found in Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of nomadism and becoming.

Sandoval appreciatively mentions Gilles Deleuze as one of the postmodern thinkers engaged in defying dominant modes of thought [38] (pp. 6–7) and even describes the differential consciousness that she advocates as "mobile," "flexible," "diasporic," "schizophrenic," and "nomad." Yet, it seems clear that she considers his work, along with other European thinkers, as voided of the most crucial element: "it must be realized that these mobilities align around a field of force (aside from motion itself) that drives, inspires, and focuses them. This force is the methodology of the oppressed" [38] (pp. 80–81). Sandoval's desire is to build bridges across theoretical differences and, even more importantly, acknowledge the ways that the resources and realizations of the oppressed and marginalized have often been colonized and sanitized by and through postmodern theories that generalized the strategies of resistance and challenges to dominate forms of perception generated by the oppressed. As she rightly criticizes, this standpoint provides an ethical mooring that is absent from much of the poststructuralist hailing of plurality, disruption, and resistance. Grounding theory in the realities of the lived experience of the oppressed is a poignant reminder that philosophizing or conceptualizing love is not enough. Moreover, any consideration of the political dimension of love must remain vigilantly focused on these singular experiences, rather than merely using singular examples to generalize from, and, further, attend to the plurality of intimate, affective relations that pass between singularities. Natalie Havlin makes a similar point with respect to the difference between Chicana feminist activists' use of revolutionary love and their male counterparts. Whereas Che Guevara invoked love as

an abstract national feeling, Chicana feminists described a revolutionary love-praxis that arose from intimate daily interactions—to *live a humanity under the skin* [37].

Of course, I would be remiss not to mention that political theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have engaged with this topic of revolutionary love, especially given their theoretical affinities with Deleuze and Guattari.¹⁷ Negri and Hardt suggest that love has been destroyed as a political concept, in part by individualism and in part by its relegation to the romantic. Hardt and Negri view political love as the antidote to fascistic forms of community which are based on a vision of love as fusion. They emphasize the radical and transformative potential of love, seeing it as a collective and generative force for creating a new form of democratic community which is brought together not by recognition of sameness but rather by a common feeling or experience generated by “the common material project of the multitude” [39] (p. 352). Political love would “operate in a field of multiplicity and function through not unification, but the encounter and interaction of differences” [40] (678). These common experiences and co-operative practices ideally produce an ontological transformation into a new community while respecting and retaining differences.

Their aim to restore the political valence to love is a priority shared by feminist and decolonial thinkers as well as Deleuze and Guattari. Yet, according to several critics, Hardt and Negri are guilty of the same tendency towards abstraction or generalization that Havelin identifies between masculine and feminine liberation movements. Their version of revolutionary love is geared towards producing a common feeling and idealized community of difference but does not account for specific, affective lived experience (see [41]). Her point is that for feminist Chicana activists, love is not a universal ideal/concept of abstract communion, but a deeply interpersonal and interactive set of affective nuances.

Wilkinson makes a similar claim, arguing that Hardt’s reading of love presents a “limited understanding of the affective dimensions of love” [41] (p. 1). For Negri and Hardt, there are either communities of difference (predicated on love as fusion) or communities of sameness, and these are the consequences of a particular orientation to love.

Their emphasis on general types of communities also runs afoul of Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the ambivalence of desire. There are affinities between Hardt and Negri and Deleuze and Guattari’s accounts of love: both seek to renovate the concept of love itself, framing it in terms of difference rather than merging and unity, and both invoke a Spinozist project of enhancing affective encounters as an ethico-political imperative. However, as Stark and Laurie argue, “they [Hardt and Negri] treat the bonds of love as ideal types, corresponding to virtuous or fascistic political subjectivities” [42] (p. 76), while Deleuze and Guattari would see the potential for fascism within the microphysics of any intensive group formation, which means that we must focus on both extensive and intensive relations within communities. Deleuze and Guattari’s recognition of the potential for even supposedly “liberated” movements to succumb to fascistic tendencies parallels Lauren Berlant’s insistence that we must consider the ambivalence and incoherence of love, which she articulates in response to Hardt [43]—in part, the blindness to the variety of affective registers of love results from the assumption of a “common feeling” of love in the first place, which assumes what one might call a “centered position,” a point that Stark and Laurie emphasize as well: “any effort to claim a political monopoly on “love” risks abandoning critical discussion altogether” [42] (p. 76).

Deleuze and Guattari understand that there are multiple affective dimensions within communities rather than identifying communities as either ideal or defective types. They give us resources to think of love as an accompanying affective attitude that guides how we engage milieus, presenting us the opportunity to contour ourselves to the liminal designs and relational spaces within which desire and affects flow—to become more sensitive to that which is unformed and potential in order that we can work within to reorganize and transform but also to assess complex formations that may be composed of both liberated and fascist desires. It strikes me that this is a good way of making sense of the phenomenon in feminism, which is ostensibly a movement predicated on challenging hegemonies, of trans exclusionary feminism which has caused so much consternation as of late. Rather than

positing a common feeling “of love”, the Deleuzo–Guattarian conception of revolutionary love developed herein is rather a practice of loving as an open inquiry into the spatial, material, and affective dynamics in which we find ourselves—which leaves open the possibility of encountering other forms of love and engaging realities and experiences other than our own.

Wilkinson [41] also argues that Hardt and Negri’s version of political love relies on a problematic fascination with the new, or with future communities, citing Hardt and Negri who claim, “love is an ontological event in that it marks a rupture with what exists and the creation of the new” [40] (p. 181). Yet, with respect to Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the schizoanalytic project, we find the catalysts for transformation within what exists, by occupying these spaces differently and retrieving or liberating desires and affects from within assemblages in which we are fully immersed. In other words, it is not to some anticipated future community that we must address our concern, but to the communities that already exist—loving juxtaposed to leaving.

The spatial-attunedness and ability to attune oneself to the specific contours of liminal spaces and relations that I have advocated engages the embodied self, demands responsive awareness, and retains the lifeblood, the sensuality, and the materiality of the concept of love—its affective dimension; but even this is not enough for a politics—it must be bound to an understanding of the power relations that have and still govern our social and political spaces, a lesson clearly gleaned from our engagement with feminism. As Wilkinson writes, “when discussing the political potentials of love, we must always take into account both “the standpoint of the subordinated” (Jaggar, 1989: 168) and the “politics of location” (Rich, 1986). It is vital to question who is defining the parameters of what makes love political, and to examine how others may perceive love in very different ways” [41] (p. 2).

Aligning the version of revolutionary love developed through Deleuze and Guattari with its alternate origination in resistance philosophies of Third World theorists and transnational and women of color feminisms, teaches us that any consideration of the spatialization of desire must move beyond philosophical abstraction, and, although the first step must be to redefine what a space is in order to imagine/ reinvent what it could be. As I say in “Schizoanalysis and the Deterritorializations of Transnational Feminism,” this must be accompanied by the acknowledgement of “the experience of those who have become dislocated or marginalized, who have had to reimagine their own relation to space and locality” [17] (p. 158). Deleuze entreats us to trace/find the cracks and the fissures, like the marbling within stone, that would allow social desires to become liberated, as so many lines of flight. This image is apropos of Patricia Hill Collin’s “outsider within” [44] and her understanding of black feminist standpoint is instructive here. Essentially, we must look to those whose experience has necessitated such creative consciousness and recognize the epistemic privilege that occupying a social position outside of the dominant order confers.¹⁸ This is Sandoval’s point as well:

“This nomadic “morphing” is a set of principled conversions that requires (*guided*) movement, a directed but also a diasporic migration in both consciousness and politics, performed *to ensure that ethical commitment to egalitarian social relations be enacted in the everyday, political sphere of culture*” [38] (pp. 60, 61)

The theme of this volume, new directions in French philosophy, speaks to me here. The trend in new materialist feminism is to move further away from principles of identity or anything that prioritizes the subject or social, toward abstract and universalizing considerations of the vitality of all matter and the univocity of life force that does not privilege, or even thematize, the human in and of itself. Yet, these priorities seem at odds with liberation movements’ calls for justice, as well as any robust concept of love. In “Love as the Practice of Freedom,” bell hooks combines these issues, insisting on the necessity of an ethic of love in moving beyond systems of domination and claiming that the inability of political movements to establish a true collective lies in their failure to acknowledge the needs of the spirit [45] (pp. 289–298). Likewise, in *All about Love: New Visions*, bell hooks ties love to justice, insisting that love is an act of cultivating awareness so that we can give

care, be responsible, show respect, and indicate a willingness to learn [46]. For hooks, love is crucial for coalitional politics and identified as a necessary tool fighting racial injustice and oppression. In both of her formulations, one cannot conceive of love without positing the importance of human consciousness and awareness, and she cannot conceive of justice without the presence of love. How do we do politics that refuses to acknowledge the place that awareness, consciousness, has or that does not address the specific effects of injustice on particular bodies and identities?

I am not the first to recognize this as problematic—that is, in currents of feminism insisting on a radical, posthuman egalitarianism, the capacity to address the real existential conditions of the marginalized, to affirm the lives of others as human, and to muster the political will to address the atrocities committed in the name of humanity and the prioritization of certain identities over others is severely curtailed (see [47–49]). I think that Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy has, in a sense, been hijacked by a one-sided desire to eschew the anthropomorphic tendencies of philosophizing as such. Their philosophic prioritization of machinic desire and univocal becoming is misunderstood if it is understood as a denial of differences between beings or of the nuances of thought and consciousness of specifically human beings. Rather, their critique sharpens our focus on the conditions that produce certain social bodies, certain kinds of consciousness, and certain molar identities—not to deny the realities of the socius or reject subjectivity but to move from a majoritarian to a minoritarian politics that widens our purview of what forces and desires exist within these spaces so that we may transform and build less fascistic, more attuned relational complexes.

Revolutionary love is thus a new direction in Deleuzian feminism, but one that gains its newness from both the extension of Deleuzian desire and from its return to these heritages of feminisms which have in fact been themselves marginalized (as so many versions of “identity politics” or being all-too-human) in the exuberant and forward sweep of posthumanist discussions. Revolutionary love is a revelation of our situatedness and the love necessary to cede space to those whose version of reality have been ignored or, worse, smothered, as well as being an attunement to the myriad miniscule forces which comprise these relational milieus within which we have these encounters. As Oladi’s reconceptualization of the war machine suggests, revolutionary love fosters spatial awareness of multiple realities existing in the same place [35] (p. 71), an existential condition which standpoint feminists have sought to illuminate on numerous occasions.

We must learn to embody space differently, to become more sensitive to the varying relational complexes within a given space but to do so in a particular way: to direct our awareness to the forces, affects, and relations at play through a sensitivity to that which is occluded, and, likewise, to recognize that one’s own positionality makes one more-or-less obligated to do so. The greater one’s own visibility, the more dominant one’s spatial presence, the more effort to establish a stillness of their own relational milieu to become phenomenally open to otherness (to, in effect, cede space) is required, both ethically speaking and epistemologically.

Concomitantly, revolutionary love as spatial awareness also acknowledges that many in our society (and world) have not had the luxury of occupying space freely or without threat—it is an intimate concern for the differential struggles, needs, and obstacles to survival and it is meant to draw attention to the impositions, privileges, or appropriations enacted by those of us who blithely occupy a form of dominant space on those who do not. In the end, revolutionary desire, the affirmation or liberation of desire, is not enough. It requires the directionality of revolutionary love—which is to say a sensitivity to our spatial milieus, within which the fragility of affects and relations can be acknowledged, celebrated, and demanded. The strength of understanding revolutionary love through both the Deleuzian model that energizes the level of prepersonal desire, as well as by reintegrating feminist models of collective awareness or community building and care ethicist models emphasizing affective, relational selves and interconnectedness is a kind of “intersectional transversality” [17]—a double-pronged approach fostering a perspective sensitive to material differences and which recognizes the contribution of those whose

differential consciousness gives special purchase on our social situation, as well as incorporating a pedagogy of liminality that addresses the nuances of prepersonal affects, forces, and desires which can transform our embodied experiences in ways that constitute new relations beyond the level of interpersonal models or levels of identity. It is both posthuman *and* political, personal intimacy that can be accomplished through the realizations extracted from Deleuze and Guattari to form this concept of revolutionary love: remaining with, contouring to, conjugating with—these are immersive ways of exploring potentials and disrupting patterns of desire from hierarchical, systemic confines. Revolutionary love encourages concern with which to clothe our creative, deterritorializing practices, an infinite process of learning/transformation through conjugation with otherness. Cultivating this immersive experience provides a methodology of connection, creation, and attuned awareness. Ultimately, it is not enough to merely become better attuned to the level of ontological relatedness or be better at describing material configurations.¹⁹ To attain an ethics, one must care about relations—that is, cultivate this affective space between those relations through the all-too-human dimensions of love and desire.

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Notes

- ¹ Maria Lugones' loving perception [50], bell hooks linkage of love and freedom [46], and Audre Lorde's erotic [51] are explicit examples of this longstanding recognition of the galvanizing force of affect.
- ² I am primarily referring to care ethics and their revaluation of care and concern, alongside their emphasis on a relational self, but I have also incorporated some discussion of affect theorists such as Berlant and Ahmed, who work on intimacy and emotion.
- ³ For instance, Elizabeth Martinez and Enriqueta Vasquez' integration of feeling and interpersonal care into collective struggle [52], Chela Sandoval's hermeneutics of love [38] and Havlin's excellent article on the political praxis of Chicana feminists in the 1970's [37].
- ⁴ Eleanor Wilkinson succinctly makes the point: "Many authors and activists have emphasized the necessity of identity-based politics for liberatory struggles. They have highlighted that identity politics is not divisive, but instead is an expansive force that opens up the possibility for multiple forms of engagement across difference ... identity politics can be about both self-actualization, and a way of transcending the self, as a way to imagine "relationality" "outside of the elisions of identity politics""[41] (p. 5).
- ⁵ During Deleuze's seminars, his notion of anarchic desire caused rancor amongst academics and political dissenters/activists, who, one assumes, were looking for more traditional political action/critique/revolution. Alain Badiou, a proponent of Marx's view of political process/class revolution, published an anonymous attack on his idea of desire entitled "The Fascism of the Potato" and staged disruptions of Deleuze's seminars: "Badiou feared that Deleuze and his fellow 'eroticists' were rerouting revolutionary fervor into bourgeois, individualistic sexual channels" [53] (np).
- ⁶ While Deleuze and Guattari say that love is neither intrinsically reactionary nor revolutionary [5] (pp. 352, 365), they also emphasize that there are forms of love which are indices of revolutionary investments of the social field [5] (pp. 352, 366).
- ⁷ This last consideration flows from the alliances between feminism and Deleuze developed in Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Feminism. There, I address the need to deterritorialize mainstream American and European feminism via consideration of transnational and third world feminist perspectives [17].
- ⁸ Arun Saldanha's claims support my position; he insists on the delineation of Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of revolution from its Marxist predecessors. Saldanha argues that revolution is not to be understood in utopian socialism terms and that their recourse to a new earth and new people is more revolutionary in that it requires a spatial and psychical divestment from past forms rather than their resolution [54] (p. 42).
- ⁹ The Oedipal structure is the primary pseudo form of our (collective) unconscious; Deleuze and Guattari's main objective is to show how this transcendental illusion represents a particular repressive investment of desire that has become entirely bound up with the economic prerogatives of capitalism, prerogatives which themselves must be understood as desire's unconscious investments of the social field.
- ¹⁰ "If desire is repressed it is because every position of desire, no matter how small, is capable of calling into question the established order of a society ... it is explosive; there is no desiring machine capable of being assembled without demolishing entire social sectors" [5] (p. 116).
- ¹¹ See [18] (p. 36). Thanks to reviewer one for calling my attention to this subtlety.

- 12 See Chantelle Gray's excellent article, Love at the Limits: Between the Corporeal and the Incorporeal, in *Infinite Eros* [55] for a discussion of love as a liminal space/event between the corporeal and the incorporeal.
- 13 In Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth, Elizabeth Grosz articulates something similar with her concept of sexual territories [56].
- 14 In *Ethics Embodied* [57], Erin McCarthy aligns care ethics with what she calls "intimacy-oriented cultures", which stress the somatic, the affective dimension, and the relational belonging together of self and other.
- 15 Laurie and Stark [2] locate this inconsistency in Anti-Oedipus, where love is sometimes used to describe conscious attachments; as a euphemism for sexual intercourse ("making love") or sexuality [5] (p. 296), and else-where positioned as an a-personal force [5] (p. 291).
- 16 Teresa Ebert's "The Difference of Postmodern Feminism" [58] distinction between ludic and resistance postmodernism and Sandoval's critique of postmodern theory [38] both draw out the importance of attending to real material conditions in order to safeguard against abstraction that seems to plague many theoreticians and render their work politically ineffective.
- 17 A more detailed engagement is beyond the scope of this article, but one can find an excellent analysis of the two in Timothy Laurie and Hannah Stark's "Love's Lessons" [42].
- 18 Collins develops her version of standpoint theory and the understanding of the epistemic privilege of black feminist thought in Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment [55].
- 19 New materialists do attend to the affective and corporeal dimensions of ethical encounters, and Donna Haraway utilizes care-related language in her articulation of ethical coexistence between the human and nonhuman. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa [59] applies new materialism to care ethics, advocating for the subversion of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism, in favor of de-centered and distributed agencies that allow the extension of care to nonhumans and whole ecologies, and Johns-Putra [60] claims that new materialism represents a critical intervention onto care ethics itself, recognizing that understanding the world as a system of dynamic constellations of intra-actions complicates the cared for and caring relationship. Ultimately, Johns-Putra says that care would need to be modified by "thoughtfulness" as a way of paying attention to the ebbs and flows of care. While I am persuaded by new materialists demands for more open-ended considerations that address the level of indeterminacy and reciprocal influence, as well as the extension of the caring relationship to other kinds of beings/entities, I am less satisfied with the reduction of "care" to what seems to be merely a greater degree of perspicuity in identifying the composite nature of events.

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