The Pedagogical Imaginary and Trans/formation: Rethinking Teaching and Learning Beyond Identity

Sharon Todd

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ABSTRACT

The Pedagogical Imaginary and Trans formation
Rethinking Teaching and Learning Beyond Identity

Sharon Todd, Ph D.
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The thesis develops a notion of the pedagogical imaginary in order to further transformative educational projects concerned with social justice. In addressing identity and difference as a means for social transformation, transformative pedagogy often relies upon a conception of identity as constructed in and through social difference Seeking to move beyond the limitations of this view, this dissertation draws upon psychoanalytic conceptions of the imaginary and argues that identity involves complex psychical dynamics which need to be engaged pedagogically This position is developed through the double theme of trans/formation which: 1 draws connections between identity formation and transformation, or agency; and 2. discusses the ambivalence of transformative pedagogical practice: at once forming identities as it seeks to transform them. Throughout, the centrality of the imaginary dimensions of identity and pedagogy are revealed in relation to three aspects of transformative education: the pedagogical encounter; the interpretation of the encounter; and the goals and visions guiding that encounter. It is argued that the pedagogical imaginary provides a necessary psychoanalytic intervention into overly deterministic accounts of identity as a social construction. This intervention is significant for rethinking teaching and learning in ways that embrace the space in-between identity and difference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis owes a great deal to the patience and dedication of a number of people who have had to listen, read, and live with my struggling thoughts for a number of years I wish to express here my gratitude to a few of those who have had a direct impact upon the shape and content of this dissertation.

First and foremost I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Joyce Barakett, who kept me on track, organized, and focused. Her confidence in this work and the invaluable suggestions she offered have enabled me to complete a project which only a short time ago seemed like a loose collection of nebulous thoughts and nascent ideas. Her courage, warmth, and humour over these past few years has taught me more than I have ever let her know I am also indebted to Kaarina Kailo, whose energy and keen sense of commitment to psychoanalysis and feminist pedagogy came through in every tutorial, every discussion As a result, the final product of this dissertation has benefited tremendously. Henry Giroux's passion for life and social justice has (hopefully) kept me honest. The spirit of his thinking pervades throughout these pages. Joni Lugtig's integrity and thirst for questioning has continually inspired me to push at the limits of my thinking. And, finally, to Stan Nemiroff who has taken care of the homefront while this thesis was being written, and has commented astutely on every page - your love and trust have made it possible to imagine and live other worlds, other "beyonds," full of hope and desire.

NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Where available, I have provided citations to already existing English translations of works originally published in French. However, I have taken the liberty of altering many of them. All other translations from the original French are my own.

A gain in meaning is a perfectly justifiable ground for going beyond the limits of direct experience.

Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious"

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INTRODUCTION

Issues, Assumptions, and Interpretation

> How are subjects formed "in-between," or in excess of, the sum of the "parts" of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)?
>
> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

Essentially, this thesis poses two questions: How *are* identities engaged in educational projects committed to social justice?[1] How *should* identities be engaged in these transformative pedagogies, if the goal is to work with, through, and across social differences?[2] In responding to these questions, I take into consideration Bhabha's own interrogation of the space "in-between" identity and difference, and suggest that it is here

[1]I am making a distinction here between "identity" and the "subject." At the risk of greatly oversimplifying what warrants a thesis on its own, identity signals a subject's relation to itself - a relation which shapes how the subject comes to relate to others. Thus it is neither purely conscious nor unconscious, and is, in this respect, akin to Freud's conception of the ego. The "subject," for the purposes of this thesis, is less specific, referring to many different aspects (not only an identity or ego) of a person, particularly as defined in and through a set of social circumstances.

[2]The term "transformative" here is meant to signal those educational projects which explicitly seek to change existing oppressive social relations through a politics of difference. That is, through a practice which seeks to work across, through and with difference. Thus curricula, teaching strategies, and classroom assignments reflect attention to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Emphasis in this thesis will be placed on feminist and critical pedagogical discourses, although I have deliberately refrained from signalling out any one pedagogy. Instead, I wish to underline the transformative character of various projects, and raise issues which I think are pertinent for anti-racist and queer pedagogies as well.

where the potential for agency and transformation is to be found. In my view, it is the psychical dynamics of identification, fantasy, desire, and, more generally, the *imaginary* which form this in-between space of indeterminacy.[3] Thus in promoting social justice through a politics of difference, it seems to me that this indeterminacy must be rendered as fundamental to the work of transformative pedagogy. Indeed, it is my contention that the imaginary and psychical dimensions of identity *formation* need to be taken into account if *social transformation* is to be at all possible, for altering identities is central to altering social relations.[4] *It is the primary purpose of this thesis to develop a notion of the pedagogical imaginary; a notion which integrates a psychoanalytic view of the imaginary dimensions of identity formation with a notion of agency and social transformation.* It thus seeks to move "beyond" essentialized or overly-determined notions of identity, "beyond" overly-simplified notions of identities as social constructions, and "beyond" the view that identities simply mirror social differences. Instead, it highlights *how* identities are simultaneously formed and transformed through imaginary and social dynamics.

A corollary to this is the contention that transformative pedagogical practice itself *forms* even as it seeks to *transform* identities. That is, in seeking to alter existing identities and social conditions, transformative pedagogy is simultaneously concerned with *making*

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[3]As will become evident throughout this thesis, the imaginary has many different definitions, and indeed this work seeks to articulate one which is consistent with transformative pedagogical concerns. At this point, I am using the term generally to signify the process of creative imagination involved in staging fantasies, identifications and desires.

[4]I make the assumption throughout this project that in order to transform existing social relations one must disrupt identities which are formed in and through these social relations. There is a necessary relation between identity transformation and social transformation. Thus for the sake of economy I will refer to "identity formation and social transformation" instead of the more cumbersome "identity formation and identity (and social) transformation."

possible other identity *formations*. In this sense, it performs a certain ambivalence: at once challenging existing identities while attempting to institute others.[5] *A secondary purpose of this thesis is to rethink what it means to teach and learn through this trans/formative ambivalence* Thus, in developing a notion of the pedagogical imaginary, I weave the double thread of trans/formation. It signals the simultaneous and indeterminate character of a identity formation and agency; and b. pedagogical formation and transformation (ambivalence).

To pursue these objectives and thematics more thoroughly, the thesis is divided into two parts, and focuses on post-secondary educational concerns. The first part sets the educational context. It begins by outlining the commonly-held conception of identity in transformative pedagogy as that which is socially constructed; it then examines the psychical and personal dimensions of pedagogy. Here I suggest that pedagogy needs to be rethought as a site of ambivalence and liminality. The second part of the thesis explores psychoanalytic theories of the imaginary, and by extension, identification. By relating the imaginary to the double theme of trans/formation, I stress its relevance for: 1. pedagogical practice; 2. our interpretation of pedagogical practice; and 3. the goals and visions which guide our practice. Each chapter covers a different aspect of what I will come to call the pedagogical imaginary, and hence discusses one or two of these pedagogical areas at a time. The dissertation concludes with an outline of the pedagogical imaginary itself and

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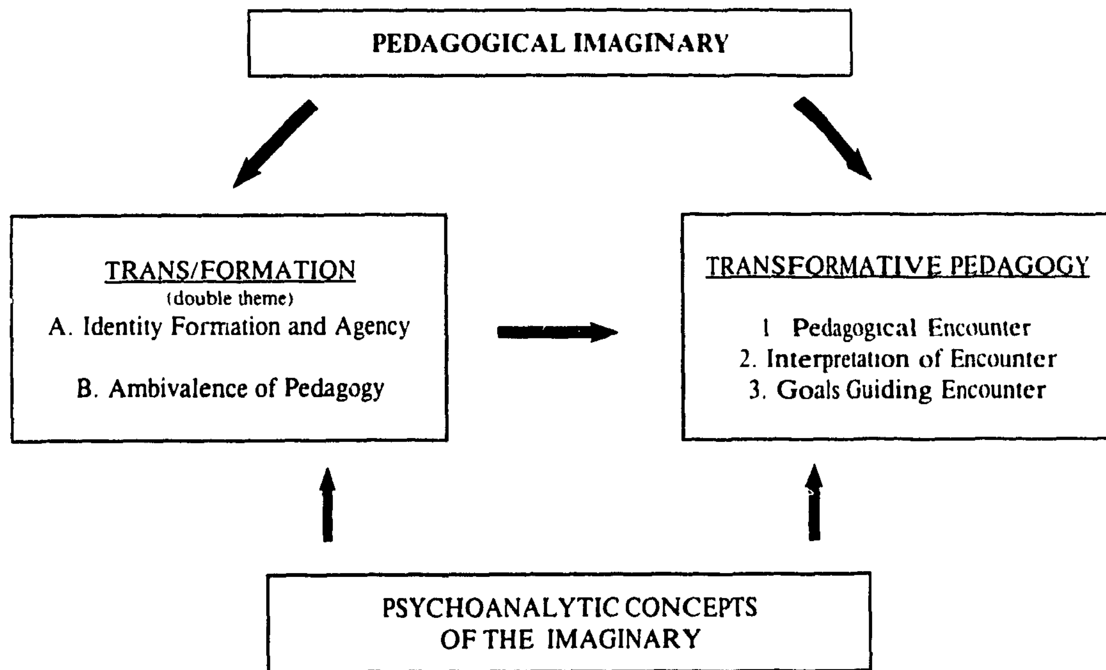
[5]I echo Freud's use of the term ambivalence here. According to Freud, ambivalence is not two contradictory affects (e.g., love and hate), but a single affect of contradiction (love/hate). In terms of pedagogy, it is the simultaneity of formation and transformation (trans/formation) that is my concern here. For a discussion of ambivalence see Freud, "Transference," in *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1917] *Penguin Freud Library*, [hereafter cited as *PFL*] trans. James Strachey, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1991), 482-500.

reveals its full implications for all three areas of transformative pedagogy. A schema of the main concepts is presented below, illustrating how psychoanalytic theories of the imaginary subtend the relation between my theme of trans/formation and the three areas of pedagogy mentioned above:



To elaborate more thoroughly what led me to my questions of identity, and to my procedure for answering them, let me begin with a story of identity, a story of pedagogy.

I. Narrative Beginnings

There is story recounted in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* which I often think about when teaching or when writing about identity. The story raises some central questions for me as an educator and theorist committed to transformative pedagogy. As Freire retells it:

> A group in a New York ghetto was presented a coded situation showing a big pile of garbage on a street corner - the very same street where the group was meeting. One of the participants said at once, "I see a street in Africa or Latin America." "And why not in New York?" asked the teacher. "Because we are the United States and that can't happen here."[6]

For Freire, this story is about retreat. The students retreat from an offensive and oppressive reality, disavowing a representation of their everyday living conditions. They cannot put themselves in the place of - identify with - this re-presentation. The image that they in fact identify with is not the one re-presented in the photograph. It is an *imaginary* construct, seemingly far removed from garbage heaps and ghetto street corners. It is an image of success, a myth of American plenitude. The photograph reveals, in their eyes, an *other* place, an *other* reality. These students, for Freire, have internalized the myths manufactured for them, internalized an image of themselves that dehumanizes them.

However, while I agree that internalization and identification are important notions for understanding what is happening here, this Freirean reading of the situation leaves me troubled. For we assume that this internalization takes place, without understanding how and why it takes hold in any one individual, and how it forms as a collective identity. And, if we are not sure how this identity formation occurs, then how do we begin to unravel it, undo it, unlearn it? What does it mean to "internalize" or "identify"? How do we transform and re-imagine social relations and new identity formations when faced with the mediating power of the imaginary?

Part of the answer to these questions lies in reconceiving identity, of thinking *beyond* identity as either pure social construction, or as pure psychological reality. As I

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[6]Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [1968] (New York: Seabury Press, 1989), 155.

suggested above, it is about figuring the space "in-between" identity and difference; self and other. For me, the story that Freire recounts is not only about internalizing, swallowing, ingesting, or consuming a manufactured ideology - although it is all that - but also about an imaginary - yet powerful - refusal, about an invocation of otherness in order to protect a sense of self, of identity. It is an identity which lies in the articulation of this refusal ("we *are* not that image!"), and not prior to it. These students in Freire's narrative, as much as they have internalized their oppression (the myth that they are somehow less than human, that America is the land of hope and plenty), also identify with its iconography - an image of themselves handed down by others, to be true, but also fashioned into the very body of identity which they live. They have unconsciously fantasized, identified with, desired, and imagined themselves in relation to social myths, ideologies, representations and images. In some measure, therefore, they have not merely swallowed American society, but have made it their own. Such a process of unconscious negotiation means that social structures do not simply and directly *determine* identities. Instead, identities are forged in continual conflict and ambivalence with these structures; for we *can* imagine something other than what society or the symbolic prescribes for us. Indeed, transformative pedagogy builds its hopes on such a possibility: the possibility of indeterminacy. We often identify with images that are in conflict with our public personas; or imagine an existence beyond the limits of our daily lives, as these students' declarations attest to. As a result, transformative pedagogy must respond to a number of questions: How do we work with identities that are ambivalent? How do we know when the words we utter or the knowledges we teach are not constraining as well as liberating new forms

of understanding? How do we alter existing social relations - and, therefore, identities - while our words and gestures constitute a discourse through which students identify, desire, and fantasize? How do we as educators affirm the experiences and stories of others, while challenging their sense of identity and self? In short, how does transformative pedagogy live its own ambivalence?

II. The Project of a Social Psychoanalysis

This dissertation explores these questions through what I call a social psychoanalysis. That is, through a language that enables us to think beyond rigid distinctions between identity and difference; the social and the psychical; self and other. Moreover, it is a language that highlights a strong tie between the role of the imaginary in the *constitution* of identity and the role of the imaginary in the *transformation* and revisioning of identity and society.

As well, by looking at the nature of pedagogical ambivalence, by seeking ways to live through the formative and transformative impulse of the educational encounter itself, this thesis attempts to disrupt a notion of transformative education as "redemptive."[7] It suggests that transformative pedagogy is not about *saving* people from others or from themselves; but about exploring, with the intent of understanding and changing, the social conditions that marginalize people on the basis of class, sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, and age. Part of this exploration, to my mind, requires that attention be paid to the

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[7]Erica McWilliam, "Beyond the Missionary Position: Teacher Desire and Radical Pedagogy," in *Learning Desire: Perspectives on Pedagogy, Culture, and the Unsaid*, ed. Sharon Todd (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

imaginary dimensions (those dimensions of fantasy, desire, identification, and transference) that work through our actions, words, and gestures in the pedagogical encounter itself. Hence, the development of the pedagogical imaginary is concerned with the productive as well as the formative features of the psyche.

To this end, the work of Freud, Annie Reich, Cornelius Castoriadis, Luce Irigaray, and Jacques Lacan is helpful in exploring the liminality of identity, and the many concepts required in order to flesh out the threshold between what is outside and what is inside the subject. My attention to these authors in the second part of the thesis is framed within how well they explain the *formation* of identity through identification and internalization, and the *transformation* of identity through imaginary constructs. In this sense, Freud and Lacan do more to explain identity formation, while Irigaray and Castoriadis focus on the intersections between formation and transformation (what will be referred to as trans/formation). I have intentionally focused on these authors - and not on others such as Julia Kristeva, Michèle LeDoeuff, or Jean-Paul Sartre who have also elaborated various conceptions of the imaginary - for the simple reason that the former (with the exception of Freud) have made the imaginary a central concept in their *psychoanalytic* understanding of how the subject is simultaneously inside/outside.[8] Moreover, inquiring into the

[8]Of course, Kristeva's psychoanalytic work focuses on the imaginary in some measure. However, she does not see the imaginary as a source of transformation. Instead, she develops the concept of the semiotic *chora* in order to signal that which exists prior to the imaginary (specifically, the Lacanian imaginary). Also, like Lacan and Freud, she still sees the father as being necessary for introducing the child to sociality and so posits (unlike Lacan and Freud) an "imaginary father." Thus, Kristeva's view of the imaginary is linked to patriarchal representations which offer little in the way of the project outlined here. Hence, partially for reasons of terminology, and partially for reasons of focus, I have chosen to explore the overtly feminist reading of the imaginary from Irigaray's perspective. For Kristeva's views on Lacan's mirror stage see, for example, "Revolution in Poetic Language," abridgement reprinted in *The Kristeva Reader* ed. Toril Moi (New York:

workings of identity in this manner raises questions for pedagogy which go beyond the usual social constructionist project, and which provoke the use of metaphors for identity beyond the usual ones of borders and boundaries. In effect, this thesis explores pedagogy psychoanalytically. The pedagogical imaginary is an attempt to psychoanalyze pedagogical practice, uprooting its unconscious workings and its imaginary underpinnings with respect to its own ambivalence vis-à-vis the trans/formation of identity. For it is my contention that without a rigorous appraisal of how identities are engaged pedagogically (and ambivalently), our practices cannot hope to fulfill our transformative agenda.

While the imaginary cannot be written about without making reference to the "psychical" (that which is usually understood as "inside" the subject), the imaginary, as I will be developing it here, simultaneously signals a necessary outside, an outside of representations, texts, and bodies with which the psychical is engaged. In this way, the thesis works with notions of fantasy, desire, and most importantly, identification, as terms which bridge inside to outside, the psychical to the social.

This thesis does not discuss any identity in particular, although feminist and critical modes of discourse are central to this dissertation.[9] To reiterate, its overall purpose is to open up possibilities for rethinking pedagogical practice as a place of liminality and

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Columbia University Press, 1986), esp. 100-102. Also, see Kelly Oliver's discussion of the imaginary in *Reading Kristeva* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 35-39; and Elizabeth Grosz's interpretation of Kristeva as being the "dutiful daughter" to the psychoanalytic fathers (Freud and Lacan) in *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 150-167. For Michèle LeDoeuff's position see *The Philosophical Imaginary* (London: Athlone Press, 1989); and for Sartre's view of the imaginary see *L'imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940).

[9]Chapter 5, which concerns itself with the work of Irigaray, primarily discusses women's identity, following Irigaray's lead.

ambivalence, by acknowledging the imaginary dimension of identity trans/formation. As well, while I also conceive of pedagogy as something broader than classroom relations (as I intend to discuss below), my analysis remains confined to the three issues in transformative pedagogy previously mentioned: 1. the relation between students and teachers; 2. the interpretation of this relation; and 3. the goals and visions of pedagogy invoked through this relation. This project is a *theoretical* attempt to lay out some of the issues that confront students and teachers alike in their daily encounters. Optimally, the concepts developed here will be useful to educators and students for interpreting some of what goes on in their classrooms (and in their relations with each other in general). For I think there is a need to move beyond *accepting* that oppression is internalized, that identities are social constructions, and ask ourselves to look at models that explain *how* identity is simultaneously constructed psychically and socially. My discussion of what I have called the pedagogical imaginary is involved both in theorizing *about* identity, and theorizing *for* pedagogical action. As a social psychoanalytic project, this thesis attempts to place at the centre that which, for too long, has existed only at the periphery of transformative pedagogical work.

I turn now to discuss the unholy alliance between psychoanalysis, pedagogy, and social justice which this thesis proposes. This will be followed by a discussion of the interpretive framework informing the thesis, and then, a summary of the chapters and their objectives.

III. An Unholy Alliance? Pedagogy, Psychoanalysis, and Social Justice

The imaginary introduces a new dimension to contemporary discussions on the politics of identity, particularly in feminist and critical discourses on pedagogy. It is a dimension which acknowledges the dynamic aspect of fantasy, desire, and, particularly, identification As chapter 1 outlines, transformative pedagogical discourse has viewed identity as a social construction, one which is mediated through discursive and linguistic contexts, as well as being historically and culturally situated. However, subsequent chapters attempt to extend the understanding of identities as social constructions, by exploring them as simultaneously psychical, affective, and embodied. I say simultaneously, for there is no clear division-line between the psychical and the social in the formation of identity. This is not to say there is no distinction, as if the terms could be collapsed easily. Rather, the "social-historical" is a frame within which identity and subjecthood are assumed, shaped, and molded, but not determined.[10] My appeal to the language of psychoanalysis may strike some as incongruent with the objective of social justice that transformative pedagogies advocate; for psychoanalysis is often conceived as a "psychologizing" of what are, essentially (to these transformative views) social, economic, and historical phenomena. Yet, as Diana Fuss has pointed out, "psychoanalysis

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[10]This concept will be more fully discussed in chapter 6; suffice for now to state its complex character. It is not merely the common sense throwing together of society and history in some form of adjectival conjunction. Instead, it is concerned with the confluence and the irreducibility of the temporal and spatial ordering which unfolds as the "social-historical." To quote from Castoriadis here: "For the social-historical comes into existence as, [sic] a figure, hence, as spacing, *and* as the otherness-alteration of the figure, temporality." *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 304; *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 219. This is not incompatible with Irigaray's reconsideration of space and time. See her "La différence sexuelle," in *Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, (Paris: 1984), *passim.*

has no need to incorporate or to identify with sociology since *it has always been* a science of social relations."[11] Indeed, this project may be seen as continuing in the footsteps of a radical psychoanalytic tradition, initiated by such diverse analysts as Otto Fenichel, Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich.[12] I wish to demonstrate that the imaginary can be a source of liberatory potential, while acknowledging the conservative function of the unconscious as well (as indeed the Frankfurt School's studies on fascism attest to). In the spirit of maintaining an ethical and political commitment to social justice, this thesis will elucidate how the imaginary can be mobilized, addressed, and acknowledged as a fundamental aspect trans/formation; that is, as a fundamental aspect of transformative pedagogy.

My conception of pedagogy has developed along two distinct lines. On the one hand, pedagogy has to do with "how" knowledge is produced in the context of teacher student encounters. It involves curricular materials, teacher-student relations, as well as hopes, possibilities, and visions.[13] On the other hand, pedagogy can be more broadly extended to account for how we learn about our culture and our place within it. That is, cultural traditions are internalized, people come to form identities connected to larger communities, they adapt to social mores, and struggle to work against the social and cultural contingencies which structure their lives. In this sense, pedagogy is a process of

[11] Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 40.

[12] For a study of Otto Fenichel's contribution, see Russell Jacoby, *The Repression of Psychoanalysis: Otto Fenichel and the Political Freudians* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). Also, part of the radical tradition I am speaking of here includes work by the Frankfurt School, R.D. Laing, Juliet Mitchell, and Jessica Benjamin, to name a few.

[13] See Roger Simon's discussion of these dimensions of pedagogy in *Teaching Against the Grain*, (Toronto: OISE, 1992), particularly 56-7.

identity and cultural formation, where individuals gain a sense of who they are through numerous meaning-making encounters with, for example, film, sport, advertising and technology. These meanings are neither "free floating," nor determinate, but forged and mediated through social relations.[14] It is the intention of this thesis to focus on the narrow sense of pedagogy (pedagogy as an encounter between teachers and students) as an *instance* of pedagogy in the broader sense of identity and cultural formation. Student-teacher encounters will be seen to be one moment in a life-long process through which we learn how to become human/social beings.[15] Thus, the formation of identity is simultaneously a pedagogical and imaginary process.

However, the call to liberation and social justice that transformative pedagogies make also suggests that pedagogies enact more than a *formative* gesture. I wish to examine briefly how this *transformative* gesture can be informed by a psychoanalytic reading of the imaginary, for the universalistic underpinnings of transformation have come under criticism within transformative discourse itself. Elizabeth Ellsworth, for instance, has critiqued liberatory educational models for their adherence to *abstract* and *universal* conceptions of liberation, democracy, and social justice, and to their posing of simplistic strategies which do not deal with the everyday problems of cultural difference.[16] In her view, there is a need to attend to the *particularity* and *specificity* of cultural difference in

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[14]Henry Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 19.

[15]Castoriadis expresses this broad view of pedagogy in "Psychoanalysis and Politics," in *Speculations After Freud: Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, and Culture*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani and Michael Münchow (London: Routledge, 1994), 8.

[16]Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," *Harvard Educational Review* 59, no.3 (1989): 297-324.

the classroom. What I wish to emphasize is slightly different from Ellsworth: that working for social justice and working across, through, and with cultural differences are not mutually exclusive actions. On the one hand, the call for social justice and liberation must be defined in terms of the *specificities of the present*, undergoing constant reappraisal and redefinition; on the other hand, social justice as an *ideal* cannot simply be dismissed as an empty signifier, for it signals the possibility to imagine a different *future*. And here is where the imaginary is important. To engage the present transformatively, there is a need to *posit* an ideal, to "radically imagine"[17] an alternative to the present. Constructing a vision of a future different from the one we know speaks to our ability to produce, construct, and create a powerful imaginary alternative. To turn our backs on these alternatives amounts to a retreat from the face-to-face realities of human suffering, a retreat of an enormity akin to that enacted by the students in Freire's anecdote. As long as we continue to alienate ourselves from these realities, appeals to liberation and social justice will, paradoxically, remain necessary and desirable. Thus my focus on social justice and psychoanalytic views of the imaginary are not at odds with each other. Together they enhance the possibilities for thinking about teaching and learning trans/formatively.[18]

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[17]This is Castoriadis's term for the psyche's ability to create and represent to itself images *ex nihilo*. I discuss this term in greater detail in chapter 6.

[18]"Trans/formative" pedagogy (with a slash) signals a recognition of its own ambivalence and of the connections between identity formation and agency. Transformative pedagogy (without the slash) generally refers to the discourse and practices which currently form educational projects committed to social justice.

IV. Interpretive Framework

The approach I take with respect to the texts I draw upon here is, necessarily, a question of interpretation rather than "methodology." Overall, I am situating my interpretation within a disciplinary in(ter)vention - one which attempts to reach beyond the bounds of established disciplinary knowledge, using psychoanalytic theory. Moreover, I also situate my project in terms of a trans/formative approach that politicizes the categories under discussion

A Psychoanalytic In(ter)vention

In general, my interpretive framework is characterized by its attempt to disrupt established disciplinary borders through what is largely a psychoanalytic reading of pedagogy. It is a reading that considers the importance of the interstices, to work within/outside the liminal spaces which disciplinary knowledges leave in their wake. In this vein, I have entertained "interdisciplinary," "transdisciplinary," and "postdisciplinary" as terms to "capture" this interpretive stance. Yet, they all seem to be inadequate for my purposes. "Interdisciplinarity" suggests that knowledges specific to certain disciplines can be integrated, synthesized, or brought to bear on a particular research question, leaving the disciplines as guardians of certain knowledges intact.[19] "Postdisciplinarity,"[20] while it

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[19]Linda Brodkey suggests that interdisciplinary study is a commitment to a topic, not to a method, "consequently... a particular axiology rather than a method links one text to another." *Academic Writing as Social Practice* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 21. Also, she remarks on numerous occasions how interdisciplinary studies is regularly seen as lacking "scholarliness," (11) so entrenched is the academic community in disciplinary borders.

"insistently gesture[s] to the beyond,"[21] nevertheless signals that we are temporally "after" the disciplines, in a new age of non-disciplinary activity that ignores the terms of hiring, tenure, and publishing - all of which remain, largely, *pre* "post." "Transdisciplinarity"[22] connotes working "across" or "through" the disciplines, yet it does not highlight the interstitial, the spaces between the disciplines which I am hoping to capture

Instead, I read my approach partially through an Irigarayan lens, where the strategic deployment of the liminal, the fluid, and the mucous is fruitful for articulating the spaces in-between the disciplines I am thus suggesting a disciplinary in(ter)vention The "(ter)" surrounded by two parenthetical lips, held within the invention; two lips of production, two lips surrounding flow. It positions the "(ter)" in a liminal space, one that is contingent upon invention and production; yet it is one that does not deny that intervention is important. It is an intervention born out of invention; a creative, generative capacity to transform the disciplines. Simply put, I wish to demonstrate that an approach which seeks to "dismantle the master's house," to skew Andre Lorde's famous expression, cannot rely *solely* on the master's disciplinary language, but must invent its own [23] However, to be heard, one does have to be fluent in the former.

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[20]See David R. Shumway, "Integrating Theory in the Curriculum as Theorizing - A Postdisciplinary Practice," in *Pedagogy is Politics. Literary Theory and Critical Teaching*, ed. Maria-Regina Kecht (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 93-110, for a brief discussion of "postdisciplinarity."

[21]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 4. Here, Bhabha is specifically referring to the "post" in poststructuralism, postmodernism, and postfeminism.

[22] Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, "Theory as Resistance," in Kecht, *Pedagogy is Politics*, 25-47.

[23]The phrase comes from the title of one of Audre Lorde's essays, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984).

Psychoanalysis is hence an ideal theory to work with in terms of in(ter)vention, for it offers a language which pries open the spaces in-between identity and difference; subject and object; self and other. Psychoanalysis as an interpretive framework provides a way out of either defining identity purely in terms of sociological categories (which tend to be overdeterministic) or defining identity in psychologistic terms (which suffers from interpreting actions and meanings as individual mechanisms decontextualized from social processes). Thus, as discussed in the previous sections, terms such as identification, transference, and fantasy provide us with tools for rethinking the identity formation-transformation connection, for rethinking the problem of identity for pedagogy, and for rethinking pedagogy's own ambivalence. For this reason, I do read it as compatible with a trans/formative educational project.

A Trans/formative In(ter)vention

Both the selection of certain texts, as well as the interpretation I lend to them, are informed by a commitment which I have termed trans/formative. This double theme reflects a concern with agency and social change and thus guides my approach to the pedagogical and psychoanalytic texts under study. For instance, how well they challenge, or can be used to challenge, systems of power that mark patriarchal, racist, heterosexist, and capitalist identities is of central importance. My interpretative stance and commitment to seeking out viable sources of agency are rooted in a simultaneous appreciation of feminist and critical theories. The theories, while both "critical" in the everyday sense, are nonetheless irreducible to each other. That is, while feminism has moved beyond a

simple focus on gender,[24] the attention to sexual difference which I take up in a chapter on Irigaray suggests the need to retain the explicitly feminist emphasis.[25] Similarly, while critical theories may take into consideration issues of gender and sexuality, not all of them do: yet they remain useful for articulating notions of agency. In this respect, my project is concerned with sustaining a sense of hope in making connections between identity formation and social transformation. In short, a trans/formative in(ter)vention recognizes its own political commitment to social justice from the start.

V. Outline of Chapters

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first, "Setting Contexts: Transformative Pedagogies and the Identity Question" deals more directly with transformative pedagogical discourse; the second, "Identities and Imaginaries," with psychoanalytic literature on identity. Each chapter contributes to a definition of the pedagogical imaginary, which will be fully outlined in the conclusion. The thread of trans/formation is woven throughout the thesis, sometimes emphasizing one of its double meanings over another. Moreover, the implications for all three areas of transformative pedagogy (1. the encounter; 2. the

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[24]Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter have argued that the use of the term feminist no longer focuses solely on gender. "Each [woman] lives at a different node in the web of oppressions. Thus, to refer to a liberatory project as "feminist" cannot mean that it is only for or about "women," but that it is informed by or consistent with feminism. It seeks, in current feminist parlance, to unmake the web of oppressions and reweave the web of life.""Introduction: When Feminisms Intersect Epistemology," in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 4.

[25]For an important discussion of the feminist debate on sexual difference, see the various essays in *The Essential Difference*, ed. Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

interpretation; and 3. and the goals) are spread over the entire thesis, and do not necessarily appear in every chapter. Thus, chapter 3 focuses more on interpretation, while chapter 6 focuses more on the goals and visions guiding transformative practice.

Chapter 1, "Pedagogy and Identity: Issues of Formation and Transformation," outlines how transformative pedagogies have defined pedagogy itself, and focuses on their underlying assumptions regarding identity. It addresses how the politics of difference is a legitimate and important project which nonetheless must be reframed with respect to the psychical, liminal dimensions of identity formation if it is to fulfill its goal of working across, through and with difference. I propose that pedagogy begins to look at itself as a site of articulation where difference is produced, and not merely neutrally represented. In this way I discuss the ambivalence this creates, and suggest that coming to terms with the psychical dimensions of identity formation is useful for living through this ambivalence.

Chapter 2 examines literature that has taken into consideration the psychical and "personal" dimensions of the pedagogical encounter. Entitled, "Transference, Performance and the Liminal: Unsaid Dynamics of Pedagogy," it discusses psychoanalytically-oriented pedagogy and its corollary notion of transference. As well, it focuses on the performative nature of teaching. Here I point out the possibilities and the limitations of these views and argue for a liminal pedagogy, one that is concerned with the imaginary as something beyond Lacanian transference and teacherly performance, and centres on the dynamic of teaching and learning in a context of identity trans/formation.

Part 2, "Identities and Imaginaries," opens with a discussion of identification, moves on to discuss three views of the imaginary, and closes with a discussion of the pedagogical imaginary.

Chapter 3, "Identifying Identification: Imitation, Internalization, and Interpretation," examines how identification functions in the production of identities, and how we "identify" it, or interpret it, in our classes. It is an important, yet undertheorized concept in social constructionist views. I explore how identification is often too easily conflated with imitation, and how identifying it in our pedagogical practices requires a certain attunement to what I have called the politics of identification. As well, I include 2 appendices which deal in depth with Freudian identification and the correlative notions of introjection and incorporation (Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively). Through this discussion, I draw out the implications that a view of identity formation has for transformative pedagogy, arguing that there is a need to rethink how we interpret it in our practice. The chapter closes with a reading of Chris Amireault's essay "The Good Teacher, The Good Student: Identifications of a Student Teacher" in order to highlight the problems and potentialities of identifying identification. This chapter also acts as a conceptual support for future chapters on the imaginary, as it deals primarily with Freudian texts which Lacan, Irigaray, and Castoriadis all draw upon. As well, the discussion here underscores the point that identification is an important aspect of the pedagogical imaginary.

The following chapter, "Imaginary Beginnings: Lacan's Wandering Shadow," takes a closer look at Lacan's re-reading of identification and his conception of the imaginary

The chapter serves as a necessary link between Freud and Irigaray and it is important for providing the context out of which the next two chapters on the imaginary emerge. This chapter opens with a reading of Lacan's "mirror stage," and examines how this early view contributes - albeit limitedly - to a notion of agency. It is my intention, however, to demonstrate that the later Lacanian division between symbolic identification and imaginary identification is ultimately not helpful in conceiving of the subject as an agent of change. The chapter concludes with a re-reading of Amireault's essay, highlighting the idea that the imaginary has to be reconceived if it is to play an important role in agency.

Chapter 5, "Imaginary Others: Irigaray and an Other Identity," discusses Irigaray's reconception of the imaginary outside of the Lacanian frame, and suggests ways in which her thesis leads to important reformulations of identity, difference, and liminality. In particular, I focus on how the imaginary operates in a dialectical relation with the symbolic (and not in a subordinate relation, as Lacan suggests). Irigaray's thesis points to the need for a sense of ethical responsibility in dealing with issues of identity and difference in transformative pedagogy. The chapter considers Irigaray's proposed dynamic between identity formation and social transformation, and the importance of the imaginary for initiating social change. Unlike other chapters, this one largely, although not exclusively, centres on a specific identity, namely women's. The chapter concludes with a consideration of what Irigaray's view of the imaginary means for the goals and practices of transformative pedagogies, and raises the question of how we go about "instituting" social change.

The sixth chapter, "Radical Irreducibility: Castoriadis's Social Imaginary and Radical Imagination," explores the irreducibility of society and the psyche. In particular, I discuss his view of the imaginary as a creative source which intervenes into existing social and symbolic practices, forming the basis for agency. Here, Castoriadis's idea that the formation of the "individual" as a social institution constitutes the meaning of pedagogy will be explored. More importantly, this chapter examines his view that pedagogy is central to a "politics of autonomy" where each individual learns to live its difference in and through collective deliberation. Castoriadis's extensive discussion on the importance of pedagogy for social transformation raises crucial issues for the goals and the ethical implications of transformative pedagogical practice.

The concluding chapter of the thesis, "The Pedagogical Imaginary: Bringing it All Back Home,"[26] outlines what the notion of the pedagogical imaginary is concerned with, and places it within the context of its "home:" trans/formative pedagogy. Here I will highlight how the double theme of trans/formation is intertwined with the imaginary dimensions of: 1. pedagogical practice; 2. the interpretation of that practice; and 3 the goals and visions which guide that practice. The conclusion offers new possibilities for rethinking how identities should be engaged in trans/formative pedagogy.

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[26]This echoes the title of an essay by Lawrence Grossberg, "Bringing It All Back Home: Pedagogy and Cultural Studies," in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies,* ed. Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-28. I outline my reasons in the conclusion for repeating it here.

In addressing itself to the question of identity and pedagogy, this work straddles the borders of many theories, both old and new. Trying to appropriate certain aspects of these theories has been (and continues to be) a relentless struggle. Perhaps relief can be found in Stuart Hall's sentiments: "The only theory worth having is that which you have to fight off, not that which you speak with profound fluency."[27] In coming to terms with the concepts and discourses mentioned above, I have had to learn new languages and engage in much fighting. I let the reader judge whether the skirmish was worthwhile.

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[27]Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies," in *Cultural Studies,* ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 280.

PART ONE

Setting Contexts: Pedagogy and the Identity Question

CHAPTER ONE

Pedagogy and Identity: Issues of Formation and Transformation

> What is it to write for you? What is it to teach? What is it to learn? What is it to assume that one already knows the meaning of the words "something is taught by me and something is learned by others"?
>
> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

In pursuing my double theme of trans/formation - both in terms of identity and agency, and in terms of pedagogical ambivalence - this chapter offers a detailed view of the state of identity and transformative pedagogy. This chapter begins with the first meaning of trans/formation: identity. Here I trace its emergence in transformative pedagogy and outline how it is has been rendered with respect to identity politics and the politics of difference. In the conception of identity as a social construction, there is an odd tension at work. On the one hand, identities are formed through symbolic systems, cultural practices, and social relations. On the other hand, it is necessary to speak of the possibility of transforming identity, which suggests that identities are *not over-determined* by this social conditioning and are amenable to change. The point I wish to highlight here is that identity formation must be *more* than a social construction if identities can become something other than the sum of symbolic systems, cultural practices, and social relations.

A question which lies just beneath the surface here (and one which I raise throughout the thesis) is how do we imagine ourselves differently from what society has deemed possible? This chapter does not answer this directly, but instead provides the beginnings of a response. To this end, I examine the assumptions of identity formation which operate in transformative discourses, suggesting that they need to focus more on *how* identities are socially (and psychically) constructed and not merely that they *are* so. This, I contend, opens up new possibilities for a pedagogical project committed to a politics of difference.

Secondly, this chapter focuses on the second meaning of trans/formation: that is, in terms of pedagogical ambivalence. As we shall see, it is not unrelated to the first. On the one hand, transformative educators are rightfully concerned with talking about (both in theory and in the classroom) how "race," "class,""sexuality," and "gender" mark various axes of social difference through which identities are "taken up" or formed. On the other hand, by (re)iterating these categories of difference, by speaking, writing, and communicating them, educators also *name, articulate,* and *enunciate* difference for their students. That is, they may not only be providing students with the language necessary for conscious reflection, but may also be providing the symbolic material through which student identities are formed. Thus, both classroom and theoretical discourse on difference serve not only to heighten awareness and optimize transformation, but also to *constitute* identities. For if we are going to accept that identities are formed in relation to representations found in advertisements, films, pieces of music. or television episodes, then we need to be more aware of how our own classroom discourse on difference

functions in a similar vein. Hence, as it seeks to transform identities, transformative pedagogies also provide the opportunity for identities to be shaped and molded. However, I wish to push this idea one step further and claim that transformative pedagogies not only cannot *avoid* this, but need to see the formation of identity as *central* to the project of transformation itself. In this way, transformative pedagogies are simultaneously creating the possibilities for identities to form and alter. In my view, there is, therefore, a need to address how transformative pedagogies can work and live through this ambivalence, at once trans/forming identity.

The first part of this chapter situates what identity has to do with pedagogy and what pedagogy has to do with identity, tracing the intertwining of the two. This will be followed by discussions of identity politics and the politics of difference. As will be made evident below, it is my intent to address the ambivalence inherent to a pedagogical project of transformation by conceiving of it as an articulatory space.

I. What's Identity Got to Do With It?

Identity can be read as a sense of self, as that which remains identical over time, or as two terms which refer to the same thing.[1] Indeed, as Irigaray puts in terms of patriarchal renderings of identity, it works within a "logic of the same."[2] When

[1]Of course, these readings are often discipline-oriented, identity being a key term in mathematics as well as logic, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Nonetheless, there is a self-referential component to "identity;" it refers to something *like itself*; in common parlance, it does not signal difference but similitude.

[2]This term is woven throughout Irigaray's critique of psychoanalysis and philosophy in *Speculum. De l'autre femme* (Paris: Éditions Minuit, 1974). I deal with this term more fully in

transformative educators write or use the term identity, they are often referencing an *aspect* of subjectivity. That is, one's subjectivity is composed of many different identities, or identity positions. For instance, a subject can identify herself as "having" or "negotiating" working class, heterosexual, feminist, white, Irish, academic and anglophone identities. However, the focus on identity in transformative pedagogy has only begun to be expressed relatively recently.

Feminist and critical discourses of the 1970s and 1980s were more concerned with the role of *consciousness* in the liberatory process.[3] Consciousness was seen as necessary to overcoming ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy which define not only our relations to others, but our relations to ourselves. It was thought that by becoming aware of how our conceptions of ourselves are so defined one could take action against such ideological systems. Beginning in the late 1980s, a perceptible shift in these discourses ushered in new problematics. The influence of Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Irigaray, Kristeva and

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chapter 5.

[3]See, for instance, Clare Bright, "Teaching Feminist Pedagogy: An Undergraduate Course," *Women's Studies Quarterly* vol. 15, nos. 3&4 (1987): 96-100; Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973); Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1989 [1968]). Henry Giroux, "Radical Pedagogy and the Politics of Student Voice," *Interchange* 17, no. 1 (1986): 48-69; Frances A. Maher, "Toward a Richer Theory of Feminist Pedagogy: A Comparison of "Liberation" and "Gender" Models for Teaching and Learning," *Journal of Education* 169, no. 3 (1987): 91-100; Nancy Schniedewind, "Teaching Feminist Process," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15, nos. 3&4 (1987): 15-31, Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogy for Liberation* (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1987), Carolyn Shrewsbury, "What is Feminist Pedagogy?" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15, nos.3&4 (1987): 6-14. More recently, these discourses have been subject to a reexamination of both their political-philosophical assumptions as well as their practical implications; see, for instance, Jennifer M. Gore, *The Struggle for Pedagogies: Critical and Feminist Discourses as Regimes of Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1993), the essays in Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore, ed. *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Kathleen Weiler, "Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference," *Harvard Educational Review* 61, no. 4 (1991): 449-474. However it is not my intent here to rehash individual arguments.

Lacan (these latter three to a lesser degree) upon feminist and critical discourses problematized the notion of the subject upon which earlier theories had been grounded.[4] And the attention given to postcolonial writing shifted the emphasis of these two discourses from patriarchy and capitalism, to issues of how subjects become racialized, colonized, and marginalized through processes both outside of and connected to capitalism and patriarchy[5] Thus the emphasis on consciousness in liberatory pedagogy has been largely superseded by discourse on the "subject" and "identity." Concurrent with, and drawing upon, the theoretical work in the areas of feminist, cultural, postcolonial, Afro-American, and queer studies, many authors are focusing a great deal, although not exclusively, upon theorizing how identity, while being neither fixed nor unified, can provide a viable link to political/educational action. Most often, underlying this view is a conception of identities as being produced through matrices of social power, and rooted in historical contingencies and discursive constructions. As Deborah Britzman writes, "to theorize about identity,

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[4]See Rebecca Martusewicz, "Mapping the Terrain of the Post-Modern Subject: Post-Structuralism and the Educated Woman," in *Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructed Text*, ed. William F. Pinar and William M. Reynolds (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), 131-158, for a discussion of these and other poststructural issues. There has been a vast amount of work done in education concerning poststructuralism and postmodernism. While this area of study is too large to list, some significant contributions are: Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux, *Postmodern Education* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), Stephen J. Ball ed. *Foucault and Education* (London: Routledge, 1990); Cleo H. Cherryholmes, *Power and Criticism: Poststructural Investigations in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988); William Doll Jr., "Foundations for a Post-modern Curriculum," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 21, no.3 (1989): 243-253; Barry Kanpol, *Towards a Theory and Practice of Teacher Cultural Politics: Continuing the Postmodern Debate* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1992); Maria-Regina Kecht ed., *Pedagogy is Politics: Literary Theory and Critical Teaching* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Patti Lather, *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Gore, 1993; Luke and Gore, 1992; and Pinar and Reynolds, 1992.

[5]For a discussion on postcolonialism as it intersects with critical and feminist issues in education, see Henry Giroux, *Border Crossings* (New York: Routledge, 1992), chapters 2 and 3.

then, we must be concerned with how language positions experience as it inscribes the self."[6] In the reevaluation of consciousness-raising, there is often a sense that agency is more complexly tied to language and cultural forms than was previously thought, and that agency is not something which simply flows from self-reflection

Resulting, in part, from these shifts in language and outlook, engaging identity has been rendered in terms of how to engage experience, voice, narrative and storytelling in the classroom.[7] These general concerns, coupled with the introduction of poststructural, postmodern, and postcolonial theories into transformative pedagogical discourse has led to more recent formulations on identity politics and the politics of difference With respect to these formulations, there appears to be a general consensus on what is usually meant by identity in transformative pedagogical discourses insofar as they are concerned with the way identities are "negotiated," "taken up," "assumed," "constructed," and are "hybridized," "shifting," and "contradictory."[8] This language speaks to identity as a social

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[6]Deborah Britzman, "The Terrible Problem of Knowing Thyself: Toward a Poststructural Account of Teacher Identity," *JCT* 9, no. 3 (1992): 32.

[7]The current emphasis on autobiography and life history reflects on ongoing concern with putting the subject at the center of pedagogical practice. See, for example, Ann-Louise Brookes, *Feminist Pedagogy: An Autobiographical Approach* (Halifax Fernwood Publishing, 1992), JoAnn Pagano, "Teaching Women," in *The Education Feminism Reader*, ed. Lynda Stone (New York: Routledge, 1994), 252-275; and Sue Middleton, *Educating Feminists: Life Histories and Pedagogy* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993). For the importance of storytelling to pedagogy see, for example, Sherene Razack, "Storytelling for Social Change," in *Returning the Gaze: Essays on Racism, Feminism and Politics*, ed. Himani Bannerji (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993) 100-122; and Ellen White and Jo-ann Archibald, "Kwulasulwut S yuth [Ellen White's Teachings]," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 19, no. 2 (1992): 150-164.

[8]These terms appear regularly in the literature. For instance, Britzman focuses on "negotiation" in "Knowing Thyself."; Giroux often speaks of "struggle" and "shifting" in *Disturbing Pleasures* (New York: Routledge, 1994), chapter 5, Simon writes of "taking up an identity position" in *Teaching Against the Grain*, (Toronto: OISE Press, 1992), 92; McLaren deals with the "construction" of "border" identities in *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture* (New

formation. It is something which is articulated and gets altered through social relationships (including social roles, expected behaviours, and material conditions), and through interaction with cultural artifacts such as films, the media, music and advertising. Thus gender identity, for example, is seen to be a social construction, where girls learn "appropriate" ways of speaking, acting, and thinking that are constantly being forged through their exposure to representations of women, and in their social interactions with families, schooling communities, and street life. While there are differences in transformative discourses over what factors influence the "taking up" of identities, and over how individuals "negotiate" these factors, there is nonetheless an overarching view of the socially constructed nature of identity. Thus, whether one pursues a Foucaultian emphasis on the discursive construction of identity; a neo-Marxist view of identity and political economy; or a feminist view of the socialization of gender, all share an assumption of "social construction" which enables a great amount of cross-fertilization between these views, and which, in fact, makes it difficult to position any one author solely within any one of these areas.[9]

Thus it is the way identity is *assumed* to be socially constructed, and not fully considered in light of the *processes* through which it is "taken up" by individuals and communities, which leads to my interrogation of identity politics and the politics of difference in this chapter. It is my intention to suggest that there is: 1. a need to view

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York: Routledge, 1995), chapter 3. Indeed, most of these authors (and many others as well) have used these metaphors interchangeably.

[9]Of course, there are important differences between these views as well, particularly in terms of designing curricula and strategies for "engaging" identity in the classroom. However, they all emphasize the constructed nature of identity, and this is the point I wish to emphasize here.

identity as something "beyond" social construction, in order to work across, through and with difference in the name of social change; and 2. a need to assess critically how the politics of difference itself requires some reconfiguration if it is to be more fully engaged pedagogically. However, before embarking on this analysis, let us say a few words about what pedagogy signifies for transformative educators more generally, and what it has do with identity in the first place.

II. What's Pedagogy Got to Do With Identity?

As a term, pedagogy is slippery at best and nonsensical at worst; and, as Simon points out, it is a term that confounds, it being not easily understood by those not "in the know."[10] However, even for those of us *supposedly* in the know, the word never has a secure and stable meaning, with well-defined connotations and usages. A quick purview of recent literature on pedagogy concerned with social transformation reveals a little of what I am talking about: there are anti-racist, black feminist, border, critical, emancipatory, engaged, feminist, interventionist, liberatory, postmodern, poststructural, queer, radical, and transformative pedagogies; there are pedagogies of possibility, of hope, of liberation, of arguments, of meaning, of popular culture, of place, and even of pedagogy; and lastly, pedagogies are said to be a form of political activism, of cultural politics, and of discourse. In spite of the rich diversity expressed here, I wish to focus on how transformative pedagogy has generally coalesced around three areas which speak to pedagogy as both a formative and transformative practice. These are: 1. pedagogy as a

[10]Simon, *Teaching Against the Grain*, 55-6.

form of knowledge production; 2. pedagogy as a form of classroom politics; and 3. pedagogy as a cultural politics with a social vision.

Pedagogy as Knowledge Production: Formation

Following David Lusted's definition (which has been taken up regularly by critical and feminist theorists)[11] "pedagogy addresses the "how" questions involved not only in the transmission or reproduction of knowledge but also in its production."[12] As Simon puts it, "any practice which intentionally tries to influence the production of meaning is a pedagogical practice."[13] In this view, pedagogy is seen to be a *formative* instance, where attitudes, beliefs, and knowledges are generated and forged. Giroux explains the ways in which films, advertising, and the media (and not only schooling sites) enact a form of pedagogy: "the influential pedagogues of the twentieth century are not simply the hard-working teachers of the public school system; they are the hegemonic cultural agents who mediate the public cultures of advertising, radio talk shows, the malls, and the cinema complexes."[14] Following this logic, then, pedagogy as knowledge production can also be

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[11]For example, see McLaren, *Critical Pedagogy,* 43; Simon, *Teaching*, 56; and Patti Lather, "Post-Critical Pedagogies: A Feminist Reading," in *Feminism and Critical Pedagogy*, ed. Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore, 121.

[12]David Lusted, "Why Pedagogy?" *Screen* 27, no. 5 (1986): 2.

[13]Simon, "For a Pedagogy of Possibility," *Critical Pedagogy Networker* 1, no. 1 (1988): 3.

[14]Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures*, 45. Also, Michael Eric Dyson has coined the term "public pedagogue" to refer to the figure of basketball star Michael Jordan and the influence of his image on young, black, male, North American communities. "Be Like Mike? Michael Jordan and the Pedagogy of Desire," in *Reflecting Black: African-American Cultural Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 64-75.

seen as an instance where identities themselves are formed, where the knowledge created in the pedagogical relation has tremendous bearing upon how one conceives of and relates to oneself and others.

Pedagogy as Classroom Politics: Transformation

Pedagogy is also seen as a *transformative* instance, as a set of practices which intervene into the way the reality is socially constructed, thus making the classroom a site of disruption, where previous attitudes, beliefs, and knowledges are challenged. In this view, pedagogy is a form of classroom politics where issues of empowerment[15] and (power more generally) are of primary import. In its transformational moment, pedagogy is involved in the "undoing" or "unlearning" of certain thoughts, affects and identities, as it seeks to posit possibilities for new thoughts, affects and identities. Thus, even in its transformational moment, pedagogy is involved in tensions between what must be "unlearned" and what must be "learned" simultaneously. bell hooks illustrates the complexities entailed in pedagogy as a classroom politics:

> Sometimes students who want professors to grapple with class differences often simply desire that individuals from less materially privileged backgrounds be given center stage so that an inversion of hierarchical structures takes place, not a disruption.[16]

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[15]See, for instance, Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy;" Clare Bright, "Teaching Feminist Pedagogy;" and Laurie Finke "Knowledge as Bait: Feminism, Voice, and the Pedagogical Unconscious," *in Learning Desire: Perspectives on Pedagogy, Culture and the Unsaid,* ed. Sharon Todd (New York: Routledge, forthcoming) for some different perspectives on issues of classroom power and empowerment.

[16]bell hooks, *Teaching To Transgress* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 188.

hooks suggests that hierarchical power structures operate in the classroom despite the intentions of the teacher. In this way, then, pedagogy is "political" both because it seeks to transform society, and because it participates in complex circuits of power (and desire) in the class itself - power which is not under the control of the teacher. Viewing pedagogy as a form of classroom politics enables an understanding of the ambivalences which frame our teaching and learning experiences. For there are few instances where power is always already marked as formative or transformative; as hooks suggests "it depend[s] on what one [does] with it."[17]

Pedagogy as Cultural Politics: The Social Vision of Transformation

There are two ways in which pedagogy is viewed as a transformative cultural politics: as a *strategy* for progressive action, and as a *political* and *ethical* relation itself. Beverly Gordon, for one, connects the significance of pedagogy to the vision of "emancipation" for African Americans.[18] In this she sees pedagogy as a political "tool" and strategy for change: "students do not learn to read and write; they read and write to order to learn."[19] The best expression of the second view, and one which I will focus on throughout the thesis, is found in Simon's *Teaching Against the Grain*. Simon's primary focus is on a view of pedagogy which articulates the relationship between pedagogy as a

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[17]Ibid., 187.

[18]Beverly M. Gordon, "African-American Cultural Knowledge and Liberatory Education: Dilemmas, Problems, and Potentials in a Postmodern American Society," *Urban Education* 27, no.4 (1993): 456.

[19]Ibid., 457.

classroom activity and pedagogy as a cultural activity. At the root of this relationship is a conception of educational practice as a "provocation of semiosis," "a practice within which one acts with the intent of provoking experience that will simultaneously *organize* and *disorganize* a variety of understandings of our natural and social world."[20] Intimately connecting meaning and understanding to social power relations enables Simon to suggest that "to propose a pedagogy is to propose a political vision."[21] What is at stake here is the political and hence moral or ethical vision that *is* pedagogy. It is not simply that "underlying" pedagogy are a set of philosophical assumptions about the subject and ethics (although this is certainly a legitimate form of analysis), but that *pedagogy is itself a political and ethical construct.* And, this is important not only for the pedagogical encounter itself, but for how we interpret the pedagogical encounter, and how we deliberate about what goals guide that encounter. Simon suggests: "As we do our pedagogies, the moral vision they imply must be clarified and subjected to constant critique. Such visions need to be democratically struggled for and never omnipotently imposed. Indeed, I would suggest that part of the responsibility of a pedagogy of possibility is to make visible and problematic its own production as both content and teaching-learning strategies."[22] Thus, the point to be made here is that as an ethical and political construct, pedagogy is necessarily involved in certain formations of possibility while seeking to transform others.

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[20]Simon, *Teaching*, 56 (my emphasis).

[21]Ibid., 57.

[22]Ibid., 62.

A Return to the Pedagogy-Identity Question

The trans/formation of identity works in all three concepts of pedagogy simultaneously: In terms of pedagogy as a form of knowledge production, identities are viewed as being *formed* in and through cultural practices, such as film-watching, music-listening and schooling. In the second instance - of pedagogy as a form of transformative classroom politics - identities are seen to be capable of *altering*, as becoming something other than they are currently. In this sense, pedagogy incites new identity formations which disrupt old ones, thereby often creating conflicting power relations in the classroom. Thus, pedagogy as transformation involves processes of "unlearning" and "relearning," which suggests to me that *transformation* itself is about installing new possibilities for identity *formation*. The third view of pedagogy as a social vision implies that transformative educators have some notion of what identities *might* look like, images which guide our practice and enable us to act with students "as if" these possibilities already exist. Thus, it lives out an ambivalence, caught between "what is already" and the "not-yet" implied in the goal of transformation.

With this said, how do we engage identity safely if pedagogy is at once about creating meaning and disrupting it, is at once about critiquing dominant forms of knowledge in the present and adhering to utopic visions? That is, how do we act "as if" the world were a better place while we submerge ourselves in exposing the oppressive aspects of our current social order? How do we talk about identity as a social formation and still have a sense of what agency looks like? As McLaren has written:

> For the criticalist educator, agency is structurally located and socially inscribed. While every formation of agency is an arbitrary imposition of meaning and value and not a transparent reflection of universal selfhood, subjectivities are overwhelmingly shaped by articulatory practices that include the social relations of production and consumption, as well as the social construction of race, gender, and sexuality.[23]

While the rest of the thesis seeks out the space in-between social difference and identity (and will respond to the questions raised above more thoroughly elsewhere), what I wish to do in the rest of this chapter is to probe the *relation* between transformative pedagogy and identity, and to begin to examine pedagogy as one of those "articulatory practices" where "subjectivities are overwhelmingly shaped." That is, I wish to explore how pedagogy not only engages identities that are formed *elsewhere*, but how it participates in the formation and transformation of identities itself. Furthermore, it is my intention to demonstrate that there needs to be a coming to terms with the psychical dimensions of the formation of identity in order better understand the agentic possibilities of the subject. This chapter thus in(ter)venes into the relation between pedagogy and identity, one that takes into consideration the notion that identity is also something "beyond" (yet always in relation to) social relations and forms of representation.

III. Let's (Not) Do Identity Politics

Identity politics generally refers to the assertion of one's collective identity for the purposes of challenging dominant structures of power. Identity is, therefore, seen to be central to the creation and sustenance of an oppositional politics. As Liz Bondi remarks,

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[23]McLaren, "Critical Pedagogy, Political Agency, and the Pragmatics of Justice: The Case of Lyotard," *Educational Theory* 44, no. 3 (1994): 320.

however, it has received "mixed press."[24] Rooted as it is in diverse experiences, caught up in the interplay of systems of representation and social relations, identity politics has been championed, criticized, and given different connotations. In an attempt to understand what identity politics is, Jodi Dean is helpful:

> Supporters of identity politics are united by the ideals of inclusion and community. They struggle against exclusions enacted in the name of universality. They endeavor to establish a space of belonging, a community that strengthens its members and gives them a base from which they can say to others, "I am different, recognize me."[25]

One of the major issues informing a critique of identity politics is its peculiar relation to essentialism. However, it not my intent to focus on this here.[26] Rather, it is to make explicit how the formation of identity is connected to agency in a transformative view of identity politics. Simply put, identity is seen as that which arises out of one's social location, one's sense of belonging in a group, and that the assertion of one's identity *formed by and through this group* becomes central to one's assertion of *agency*.[27]

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[24]Liz Bondi, "Locating Identity Politics," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), 84.

[25]Jodi Dean, *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism After Identity Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 6.

[26]Todd Gitlin, for one, offers a critical comment on the subject: "The rise of "identity politics" forms a convergence of a cultural style, a mode of logic, a badge of belonging, and a claim to insurgency. What began as an assertion of dignity, a recovery from exclusion and denigration, and a demand for representation, has also developed a hardening of its boundaries...But there is a hook: for all the talk about the "social construction of knowledge," identity politics in practice slides toward the premise that social groups have essential identities." "The Rise of "Identity Politics": An Examination and Critique," in *Higher Education Under Fire: Politics, Economics, and the Crisis of the Humanities*, ed. Michael Bérubé and Cary Nelson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 308-9.

[27]For critiques of identity politics which understand the political importance of identity see Linda Briskin, "Identity Politics and the Hierarchy of Oppression: A Comment," *Feminist Review* 35 (1990): 102-8; and Lisa Duggan, "Queering the State," *Social Text* 39 (1994): 1-14.

Giroux, for one, outlines a critical view of identity politics which centers on representation, community, and difference.[28] Valuing identity politics as that which "celebrates differences as they are constructed around the categories of race, class, gender, and sexual preference,"[29] Giroux explicitly ties identity to community. In this sense, identity is about one's social location and positioning within broad systems of social values and material conditions, and one's identity is a crucial ground for one's political activism. Identity politics is productive in the sense that it challenges various hegemonic notions of culture through its reliance upon voice, experience, and narrative. Thus, identities often speak narratives and engage in forms of cultural representation which form, as Simon notes, counterdiscourses;[30] that is, counter*hegemonic* discourses, which challenge received knowledges and cultural forms. However, Giroux also sees negative aspects to such a celebration, as do a number of other critics.[31] For example, it can often assume a direct and unproblematized linkage between one's social location and one's political position."[32]

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[28]See Giroux's discussion of the term in *Disturbing Pleasures*, 72-4. I shall be discussing "difference" in more detail in the following section.

[29]Giroux, *Border Crossings*, 172.

[30]Simon, *Teaching Against the Grain*, 57-62.

[31]See Gitlin; Cameron McCarthy notes that identity politics is too often seen as a minority issue in "Contradictions of Existence: Identity and Essentialism," in *Higher Education Under Fire*; Diana Fuss critiques identity politics for its essentialism in *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Linda Briskin suggests that it often produces hierarchies of oppression, "Identity Politics," *passim.*

[32]Giroux, *Border Crossings*, 173.

A recourse to the "pitfalls of essentialism"[33] stresses the social and historical contingencies that shape identities. In being contingent upon various and specific forms of representation, there can be no singular "working class" or "white" or "black" or "lesbian" identity. In this sense, identities are caught up in a *pedagogy* of representation, whereby images construct possibilities for identification and, consequently, meaning. Drawing on Stuart Hall's definition of identity as a process of identification,[34] Giroux positions identity as a "dialogic process in which the issue of self-representation is constituted in our relationship with others."[35] That is, the issue of self-representation here is tied to with whom and with what we identify. Hence, how a community struggles to define itself in and against dominant power relations effectively creates the conditions in which cultural identities are negotiated through a field of identification. In this sense, identity politics is useful for bridging identity to both community, on the one hand, and processes of identification, on the other.

However, transformative pedagogical practice has focussed on making the connections between community, identity, and social difference evident to students, and has missed out on the implications of identification for pedagogical practice. Instead, emphasis has been placed on how cultural forms such as film, advertising, and music function to secure identity positions, but a close examination of identification, desire, and fantasy is left relatively untouched. Thus, identity politics manifests some serious

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[33]Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures*, 60.

[34]Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference," *Radical America* 13, no. 4 (1991): 15.

[35]Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures*, 59.

shortcomings in terms of the importance of psychic investments and the general interplay of culture and psyche. For if we are going to speak of how identities are constituted through identifications, then we need to have some understanding of the mechanisms, processes, and dynamics of these identifications. Furthermore, we need to suggest ways of transforming or intervening into these processes. Giroux himself suggests that

> the relationship between theory and practice must focus not simply on the pedagogy of identity formation, but also on addressing how structures of inequality and injustice can be understood and transformed. Central to such a position is creating a discourse of agency, one which recognizes that the problem is not the geography of multiple subject positions that students and others inhabit, but how they actually negotiate them within a geography of desire, affect, and rationality.[36]

While I agree that the relationship between theory and practice cannot simply focus on identity formation but must also develop within a discourse of agency, I also think that the model one uses to suggest how identities are formed is going to heavily influence how agency is conceived. Identity formation and agency are not separable. Indeed, an omission in this view of identity politics concerns the question of *how* identities get formed, and what precisely this means for agency. By this I mean that it is not good enough to claim identities are social, political, and cultural constructions. Rather, we need to make explicit the *kind of model we are using in making that claim* in order to develop a consistent discourse of agency. In this sense, models of identity formation are crucial for strategies of intervention. Secondly, processes of negotiation involving "a geography of desire, affect, and rationality" have to be rendered in terms of psychic investments, for desire is a social phenomenon which we nonetheless understand in terms of our

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[36]Ibid., 62.

subjectivity, often desiring "against the grain" of our public personas and political commitments.[37] Consequently, making identity and agency central aspects of pedagogy requires a concomitant responsibility to outlining the interplay of psychical and cultural formations in the configuration of meaning. I think it is important to speak of teaching and learning beyond identity politics, and indeed beyond certain conceptions of identity itself. In this way, I hope to make more apparent that the politics (the social, cultural frames) involved in identity formation are closely linked to the politics (as agency) of identity. At the risk of repeating myself, identity is not something negotiated outside of political struggles over material conditions, meanings, or representation, but is nevertheless dependent on something *more than* cultural formations.

A slightly more nuanced version of the importance between identity and difference has been articulated under the name of "politics of difference." However, as I intend to point out below, this view often fails to move "beyond" rigid notions of identity, and I think risks repeating some of the debilitating assumptions to be found in identity politics discourse. However, not wanting to give up on the project of working across, through and with difference[38] to undo the structuring of disparity and the distribution of both wealth and cultural capital - indeed, to legitimize other forms of cultural capital - I propose that

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[37]I address this issue in "Looking at Pedagogy in 3D: Rethinking Difference, Disparity and Desire," in *Learning Desire* (forthcoming).

[38]Some books working around issues of identity and difference which are very concerned with community cross-over are: Carl E. James and Adrienne Shadd eds., *Talking About Difference: Encounters in Culture* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1994); Angelika Bammer ed., *Displacements* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Becky Thompson and Sangeeta Tyagi eds., *Names We Call Home: Autobiography on Racial Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Himani Bannerji, ed. *Returning the Gaze: Essays on Racism, Feminism, and Politics* (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1993); Wendy Waring ed. *by, for and about* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1994).

transformative pedagogy begin to take account of its own production of difference as a form of knowledge production, as a classroom politics, and as a social vision which intersects with psychical investments of student and teachers alike. It needs to confront its own ambivalence, and learn to live through it.

V. Let's Do Difference Differently

The postmodern appeal to a politics of difference in transformative pedagogy has been a much-needed attempt to address, in order to transform, existing disparities rooted in perceptions of difference and identity.[39] The explicit emphasis on difference is an attempt to disrupt the security of identity politics, recognizing the fragmentary nature of subjectivity. It positions identities as "transgressing" or "crossing" "borderlands," "borders," and "boundaries." For instance, McLaren's notion of "border identities" aptly conveys a sense of what working across, through and with difference is about. McLaren highlights the *provisional* character of identities, linking them to the narratives of self and

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[39]With respect to the politics of difference and pedagogy, there is an extensive literature devoted to the topic that began to appear in the late eighties, early nineties. For a sampling of the issues, see Lawrence Grossberg, "Introduction: Bringing it All Back Home - Pedagogy and Cultural Studies," in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, ed. Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-28; Deborah Britzman, Kelvin Santiago-Válles, Gladys Jiménez-Méñoz, and Laura Lamash, "Slips that Show and Tell: Fashioning Multiculture as a Problem of Representation," in *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*, ed. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow (New York: Routledge, 1993), 188-200; Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," *Harvard Educational Review* 59, no. 3 (1989): 297-324; Henry Giroux, "Resisting Difference: Cultural Studies and the Discourse of Critical Pedagogy," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 199-212; Henry Giroux, *Living Dangerously: Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); Fabienne Worth, "Postmodern Pedagogy in the Multicultural Classroom: For Inappropriate Teachers and Imperfect Spectators," *Cultural Critique* 25 (fall 1993): 5-32

Other we choose to enact.[40] These identities, moreover, work across differences in the effort of creating solidarity. As McLaren puts it, "what we might become together takes precedence over who we are. In other words, before I speak in solidarity I should not demand that others present to me their identity papers."[41] Here, difference among, between, and within individuals disrupts a "unified concept of identity."[42] Instead, there are "hybridization" of identities, existing between the "borders" of social location (usually defined in terms of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality).

However, unless difference is also seen in relation to specifically embodied subjectivities, where the psychical interplay of such factors as fantasy, desire, and identification are also considered to shape how social difference is *mediated*, the radical commitment to a "politics of difference" may fail to break what it set out to do in the first place: the stranglehold of the identity politics copula, where social location *is* the ground of one's identity and activism. As Lawrence Grossberg points out, identity can be subsumed under the logic of difference with the assumption that "such structures of identity belong to certain subject groups."[43] Ironically, then, a "politics of difference" can end up underlining a causal connection between difference and identity, and may, in Grossberg's

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[40]McLaren, *Critical Pedagogy*, 106. He is careful to note that this choosing does not occur "in conditions of our own making."

[41]Ibid., 109.

[42]Joan Scott critiques this concept in her "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," *October* 61 (summer 1992), especially 13-14.

[43]Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies and/in New Worlds," in *Race, Identity and Representation in Education*, ed. McCarthy and Crichlow, 98.

words, "too quickly assume a necessary relation between identity (ethnicity) and culture."[44] And this can be the case, despite the assertion that cultural differences are never stable. That is, identities remain tied to social difference: as social differences change, so, too, do identities. I wish to probe the implication of this view, not because I do not think identities are disconnected form social difference, but because they cannot always been seen as flip sides of the same coin. Indeed, Homi Bhabha warns us that "the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition."[45] That is, while we may not assert that there is "an" Irish identity, for instance, we nonetheless often presume that one's Irishness is constructed out of this specificity, without interrogating the space in-between difference and identity. For instance, my own Irish identity does not simply derive from the play of social difference, but is also complexly tied to my relation to my grandmother, to my fantasies, desires, and representations of Irishness that produce meaning for me, and which do not easily parallel how other people of Irish descent identify or talk about themselves. Thus it is the assumption that identity is always the mirror of difference that I wish to challenge in terms of how transformative pedagogy engages identity through a politics of difference. In this way, the significance of theorizing the psychical/imaginary dimensions of identity formation for identity transformation may be underscored.

I wish to retain the political significance of the "politics of difference," recognizing that differences are structured *differently*, and remain committed to the idea that building

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2.

bridges across differences means understanding the ways in which discrimination, poverty, and stereotype function - along with privilege, wealth, and imaginary standards - to sustain difference. Thus an engagement with difference cannot fail to understand the oppressive conditions that shape people's lives differently, while simultaneously working toward relieving these conditions. In other words, it cannot fail to fully recognize the play of difference within identity.[46] However, with this said, it is also necessary to highlight how pedagogy may engage the "third space" between identity and difference, by interrogating its own production of difference and, consequently, its own ambivalence. (I leave discussions of the imaginary for future chapters.)

The specific quandary faced by transformative educators is that categories of difference are inevitably *reproduced* even while we seek to *undermine* the social disparity that supports difference in the everyday. For instance, transformative pedagogy calls into question our racialized, classed, and sexed readings of popular media, canonical literature, and institutionalized practices of power. However, in so doing, it reinscribes the "popular", the "canonical" and the "institution" in terms of "race," "class," and "gender," iterating specific markers of difference. In this sense, difference is not only something that is inscribed "outside" the classroom, but is part of the discursivity that organizes what we learn, teach, and read "inside" the class as well. It is not that race, class, and gender are invalid categories of analysis. Quite the contrary. The point is that in order to "talk" about race, class, and gender, teachers continually *re-present* and *perform* social

[46]Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 228.

difference to their classes. Thus there is a "doubling effect" or ambivalence in transformative pedagogy: a tension between *transforming* disparity in relation to difference, and *forming* conceptions of difference in the process. Viewing pedagogy as an ambivalence suggests we examine how difference is *articulated* through words, images, and actions in the scene of pedagogy, and how this process of articulation produces, mobilizes, and frustrates certain identities over others. I wish to suggest at this point that transformative pedagogy may learn to live with its ambivalence if it can begin to view itself as a site of articulation.

The Scene of Pedagogy as the Scene of "Articulating Otherness"

As discussed briefly above, the appeal to a politics of difference brings with it two pressing issues of trans/formation. On the one hand, there is the danger of installing a causal connection between difference and identity formation in such a way that invites an over-determined view of the subject. On the other hand, transformative teachers are faced with the ambivalence of naming, performing, and re presenting difference in their classrooms, even as they seek to dismantle the disparity underlying differences. Both of these issues can be addressed more fully, I believe, if we begin to look beyond difference as "being an Other" to difference as "articulating Otherness;" a shift, therefore, from an ontological to a symbolic question of difference.

Difference conceived as "being an Other" often equates the social meanings of race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender with an originary notion of identity. According to Joan Scott, this view occupies a central place in the rhetoric of "diversity" which "refers to a

plurality of identities, and it is seen as a *condition of human existence* rather than as the *effect of an enunciation of difference* that constitutes hierarchies and asymmetries of power."[47] This notion of "being an Other", risks viewing difference as lying in an immediate relation to identity and, often, experience.[48] As Spivak notes, "identitarianism can be as dangerous as it is powerful, and the radical teacher in the university can hope to work, however indirectly, toward controlling the dangers by making them visible."[49] "Controlling the dangers and making them visible" suggests to me that pedagogy may need to see itself as implicated in the articulatory practices which make difference a lived phenomenon.

Difference as "articulating Otherness" places the emphasis on the symbolic practice of demarcating difference, and to my mind largely avoids the debilitating reduction of difference to secure identity positions.[50] It therefore enables an exploration of the

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[47]Scott, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," 14 (my emphasis).

[48]Clearly, I do not wish to suggest that the experiential effects of living one's difference do not influence, or cannot result in, different forms of knowledge resistant to dominant and oppressive knowledge claims. The literature on standpoint epistemology, for instance, makes evident the connections between difference and identity in a way that highlights how knowledge is mediated through social relations of power. Moreover, it exposes the delegitimation and devaluation of these particular forms of knowledge in mainstream discourses. In this sense, then, writing from one's experience of difference is a crucial method of subverting the disparity that structures difference. However, my point is that relying too heavily on the way otherness, alterity, and difference are always an aspect one's "being" presupposes the very causal link between social difference and individual identity that needs to be exposed and challenged.

[49]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 54. Interestingly, Grossberg's phrase "logic of difference" becomes the flip side of the "logic of identitarianism," underlining how easily we recognize difference as meaning identity.

[50]I am using the term symbolic in a rather broad sense here, to refer to the general use of language, visual images, and sounds for communicative purposes, rather than to specific signs and symbols Similarly, "articulating" is usually associated with speech; however, as will become more evident below, "articulating" also suggests the production of these general symbolic forms through

indeterminate space in-between identity and difference, and allows us to connect the formation of identity to both individual and collective forms of agency. As Bhabha writes, "what is theoretically innovative and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the *articulation* of cultural differences."[51] Focusing on these moments of articulation enables a close examination of the specific ways "articulating Otherness" offers up the textual, discursive, and visual material with which subjects identify, with which subjects constitute their identities. In other words, as Bhabha suggests, a re-presentation of difference does not lead to any single identity position, but is open to the play of the "ambivalent, psychical process of identification."[52]

For example, whether difference is articulated as stereotype or as a celebratory marginalized other, the articulations do not produce the same identifications for all.[53] It seems to me, then, that what lies "in-between or in excess of the sum of the "parts" of difference"[54] are psychical dynamics as they intersect with symbolic and cultural forms of representation. Hijab-wearing women, for instance, do not "identify" with any single

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gesture as well as spoken discourse.

[51]Bhabha, 1 (my emphasis).

[52]Ibid., 70.

[53]Reiterating this point, Spivak remarks that "for the long haul emancipatory social intervention is not primarily a question of redressing victimage by the assertion of (class- or gender- or ethnocultural) identity. It is a question of developing a vigilance for systemic appropriations of the unacknowledged social production of a *differential* that is one basis of exchange into the networks of the cultural politics of class- or gender-*identification*." *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 63.

[54]Bhabha, 2.

meaning of the hijab. While their identifications are tied to complex patterns of history, geography, ideology, and religion, there is an indeterminate influence of identification, fantasy, and desire - in short, of imaginary investments.[55]

Pedagogically speaking, difference as "articulating Otherness" necessitates having to confront the limits and possibilities of pedagogy in a way that does not foreclose on transforming people's attitudes and beliefs about difference. If we are to view the site of pedagogy as a site of articulation, then we need to acknowledge that what we say about difference and how we demarcate it offers the symbolic material through which individuals in the class form and transform their identities. Teachers who wish to work across, through and with difference are always offering up categories of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class. Whether in championing Native American educational aims, bringing gender issues to bear on philosophical inquiry, or looking at the racist subtext of a popular film, teachers are engaged in cultural activity, *producing* difference, rather than reinterpreting or relating difference. "Articulating Otherness" means that difference is performative, constantly (re)iterated, (re)presented, (re)enacted and (re)defined. It is, then, a form of knowledge production, and not only a form of classroom or cultural politics. That is, in articulating difference, we set the limits and possibilities through which students begin to identify themselves as racialized, classed, and sexed subjects.

Viewing difference as an articulation, as performativity, can have a number of effects on living through the ambivalence of classroom interaction, and on the formation

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[55]See my "Veiling the Other, Unveiling Our "Selves:" Media Representations of the Hijab in School," in *Classroom Voices: Issues in Teaching about Genocide and Intolerance*, ed. Judith Robertson (NCTE, forthcoming), for a discussion of this issue.

and transformation of identity itself. For instance, thinking about pedagogy as a site of articulation allows us to question how our words, actions, and images produce differences in such a way as to open up or close down certain kinds of identifications, legitimating certain identities over others. It also compels teachers to be self-reflexive about their own invocations of difference; seeing them more as *iterative* and *formative* practices, as well as mimetic practices which repeat the mantra of race, class, and gender for the purpose of *transformation*.[56] Furthermore, it gives students and teachers an opportunity to examine the symbolic dimensions of difference, and compels us to reflect upon the way we interpret the pedagogical encounter. Also, it opens up the possibility for educators to begin to think about how they might intervene in the "in-between" space where identities are "negotiated," "taken up" or "assumed." Consequently, it enables us to revision the goals of our practice in such a way that makes identity formation central to social transformation.

However, to do so requires exploring in greater detail what this space in-between looks like. If identities are constructed through this liminal space, then how do we engage it? How do imaginary investments get installed in ways that subvert and disrupt dominant or oppressive social conditions? Or, more importantly, perhaps, how do they factor into sustaining restrictive social realities? How do we engage this imaginary space both as an aspect of identity, and as part of our articulations of social difference, our own social vision? And, what does it mean for us to do so? These questions form the basis of the rest of the thesis.

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[56]Mimetic here is used in a conventional sense, and not in the sense that Judith Butler and Irigaray use it to denote a citational (and potentially subversive) practice. See, for instance, Butler's discussion of Irigaray and Plato in *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 36-55

This chapter has attempted to give the reader a sense of how identity is conceived in transformative pedagogy. It has suggested that notions such as identity politics and the politics of difference have not always been successful in moving beyond *statements* of the socially constructed nature of identity to provide models that integrate the psychical dimensions of identity formation with their projects of social transformation. The failure to engage the psychical aspects of identity means, in my view, that concepts such as identification are used to support notions of identity formation, while remaining external to the business of social change. Indeed, identification is a very complicated issue which demands attention if we are going to see its usefulness as an explanatory and, possibly, transformative device.

However, in working toward a notion of the pedagogical imaginary, I am not suggesting that we dispense with a politics of difference, but that we rethink the relation between identity and difference, and question the kinds of assumptions we make regarding our selves and our students. After all, transformative educators are engaged in relations with people, and, in this respect, we also need to come to terms with how theories of identity influence our responses (and responsibilities) to those whom we educate. What I wish to do in the following chapter is to examine how there has been some attempt to theorize the psychical dynamics of identity in pedagogy (albeit not always of the transformative type) in order to extend, not raze the terrain that transformative pedagogy has cultivated. Thus, the next chapter discusses the need for a liminal pedagogy, where our articulatory practices are conceived more broadly, recognizing pedagogy as being

involved in the formation and transformation of identity, and in the ambivalent process of teaching and learning beyond identity.

CHAPTER TWO

Transference, Performance and the Liminal: Unsaid Dynamics of Pedagogy

> ...every true pedagogue is in effect an anti-pedagogue, not just because every pedagogy has historically emerged as a critique of pedagogy..., but because in one way or another every pedagogy stems from its confrontation with the impossibility of teaching.
>
> Shoshana Felman
> "Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable"

The "impossibility of teaching" is a reference to all that remains unmeant, unfulfilled, unsaid, and imaginary in the educational encounter. Teaching is impossible because it cannot fully succeed in what it sets out to do. Psychic factors intervene in knowledge transmission, thereby disrupting pedagogical intentionality and hubris. This chapter examines how the unsaid, psychical dynamics of teaching and learning are central for rethinking transformative pedagogy and its relation to identity. Through examining notions of transference and performance, I outline how pedagogy may be conceived as a *liminal* pedagogy: a pedagogy of ambivalence, where identities are formed and transformed in the pedagogical encounter itself. It thus moves away from a focus on the "impossibility" of *teaching* to the "ambivalence" of *teaching and learning*. Its implications for the way we practice teaching, for the way we interpret what goes on in our classrooms, and for

reflecting upon the goals that make pedagogy a political and ethical construct form the cornerstone of the pedagogical imaginary. In this way, this chapter responds to the omission of the psychical from discussions of identity in transformative pedagogy outlined in the previous chapter, and sets the context for subsequent discussions of identity trans/formation.

Some of the literature under study here relies upon a Lacanian conception of transference and the subject-presumed-to know which, to my mind, problematically clings to a notion of authority detached from social and political meanings. Yet other analyses are concerned with a broad conception of the personal, conceived in terms of the performative nature of teaching, devoting little attention to learning. Despite my criticisms, I wish to explore how these configurations of pedagogy push at the limits of what we have heretofore been examining in terms of the relation between identity and pedagogy, and in terms of the politics of difference. By focusing on the unsaid, they redress a lacuna in transformative pedagogical discourse, namely the implicit unconscious dynamics operative in the educational setting. Hence, it is no surprise that psychoanalytic conceptions of pedagogy have played an important role in rethinking the relationship between teacher and student. In looking to the unsaid dynamics of the classroom, I intend to demonstrate how pedagogy may be seen as a liminal space where the negotiation of identity is both psychical *and* framed by institutional contexts of power. Thinking about pedagogy as threshold enables, in my view, a coming to terms with the ambivalence that marks the trans/formation of identity implied in the politics of difference.

First under discussion will be those views of the psychical dynamic in pedagogy which rely upon what Robert Con Davis has called "the semiotic Freud." That is, those which specifically take a Lacanian notion of transference as their starting point.[1] I then turn to discuss other formulations of how the psyche is important for pedagogy which may or may not draw directly upon a full-fledged psychoanalytic theory, but which nevertheless focus on categories such as desire, identification, and other aspects of the "personal."[2] I will conclude this chapter with a discussion of liminal pedagogy, and what this has to offer in the way of working toward a conception of the pedagogical imaginary and identity trans/formation.

I. Transference and The Lacanian "Subject Presumed to Know"

In Lacan's reading of Freud, the concept of transference holds a special place in the analytic treatment. In the analytic scene, patients (analysands) project infantile unconscious fantasies onto the analyst, providing the raw material which has to be analyzed.[3] In analyzing the transference, the analyst effectuates a cure. But how does the

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[1]Lacanian analysis has largely dominated psychoanalytic readings of pedagogy. Some exceptions are Robert de Beaugrande, "In Search of Feminist Discourse: The "Difficult" Case of Luce Irigaray," *College English* 50, no. 3 (1988): 253-272; Ann Murphy, "Transference and Resistance in the Basic Writing Classroom: Problematics and Praxis," *College Composition and Communication* 40, no. 2 (1989): 175-187; and various essays in Sharon Todd ed., *Learning Desire: Perspectives on Pedagogy, Culture and the Unsaid* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

[2]I will be focusing mainly on essays collected in *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*, ed. Jane Gallop (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[3]It should be acknowledged that given the importance of this concept in psychoanalysis, and the various nuances of meaning attributed to it, the definition offered here is painfully inadequate; yet, I believe, it offers a basic view of the function of the transference in the analytic setting. See J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis's extensive entry for transference in *The Language of*

transference begin? In Lacan's words, "as soon as the subject presumed to know (*sujet supposé savoir*) exists somewhere...there is transference."[4] This oft cited phrase in psychoanalytic writing on pedagogy seems more than apt for depicting a scene where teachers *are* assumed to have the very knowledge the students need to learn.[5] Hence, it has taken on enormous importance for theorists and educators concerned with psychical dynamics in the pedagogical encounter. Perhaps the simplest explanation of what Lacan is referring to here in terms of transference and the subject presumed to know is given, not by Lacan (to no one's surprise!), but by Robert Con Davis. I wish to quote him here at length, in order to make clear the basic outline of this dynamic:

> for the semiotic Freud [i.e., Lacan's reading of Freud] pedagogy is the science of *positioning*, of understanding a student's relation to a dominant discourse, a discourse the student is *constituted by* as well as has *an effect on*. The discourse itself is unconscious, and when the student projects the teacher as someone in possession and with mastery of knowledge [the subject presumed to know] there is "transference" in effect - that is, the student attributes to the teacher the power and prestige of the entire semiotic system.... The teacher subject to this transference can still legitimately teach but does so as an *imaginary projection*, presenting knowledge as a kind of bait (promising everything) that lures the student into the recognition of the unconscious discourse they both articulate so that, ideally, as the instruction succeeds, the student will find a place from which to produce (rather than merely repeat) language. The student in this

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Psychoanalysis, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), 455-462.

[4]Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 232. I have here moved away from the English translation of *sujet supposé savoir* as "subject who is supposed to know," adopting the less-awkward translation offered by Shoshana Felman and others as "subject presumed to know."

[5]I am not drawing upon the work in the field of psychoanalysis concerned with the educating of analysts (while interesting, this work is concerned with technical and clinical matters in general). Instead, I focus here on work concerned with classroom dynamics in many disciplines, however, it should be noted that departments of English, French Studies and Comparative Literature tend to be well-represented within this subfield.

> Freudian [Lacanian] model marks the site of the continual possibility of speech, of discourse - initially a suppressed articulation in someone else's language but eventually a site of language with its own relation to the unconscious.[6]

This means that pedagogy is both *impossible*, for it can never fulfill the student's desire to know all; and *possible*, insofar as it enables students to learn a new way of articulating themselves through language. According to Laurie Finke, it "fashions" a new subject position.[7] To shift the terminology slightly, one could also claim that pedagogy constitutes not just an im/possibility, but an ambivalence: at one and the same moment the limits and potentialities of desire and identity are conjoined. The "unsaid" exchange of transference sets the context for learning to emerge (or not). Because of the emphasis on Lacanian transference in psychoanalytic explorations of pedagogy, what follows will provide an overview of different ways of rendering transference in the pedagogical scene, and will discuss the problems and contributions it makes to a liminal pedagogy: a pedagogy concerned with maintaining the possibility of social transformation.

In a now-classic article, "Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable," Shoshana Felman reads this paradox of the pedagogical process as a psychoanalytic encounter. Felman claims that in giving insight into the "radical impossibility of teaching" psychoanalysis (that is, Lacan's reading of Freud) has "opened

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[6]Robert Con Davis, "Pedagogy, Lacan, and the Freudian Subject." *College English* 49 (7 1987): 752 (my emphases, except for the first one).

[7]Laurie Finke, "Knowledge as Bait: Feminism, Voice, and the Pedagogical Unconscious," *College English* 55, no. 1 (1993): 13.

up unprecedented teaching possibilities."[8] Paradoxically, it is through reading teaching's *impossibilities*, that teaching's *possibilities* may be found.[9] Indeed, Felman proposes that pedagogy (the possibility of teaching) necessarily "stems from its confrontation with the impossibility of teaching." But what precisely is this "impossibility of teaching" which lies at the heart of the pedagogical encounter? Four aspects to this core can be gleaned from Felman's analysis.

First, she, along with Lacan, conceives of pedagogy as an act, a *gesture*: "it is not just meaning: it is action; an action which itself may very well, at times, belie the stated meaning, the didactic *thesis*, the theoretical assertion."[10] Thus while there "may very well" be, *at times* a disjuncture or contradiction between action and meaning, there is nevertheless *always* a gap at the heart of the teaching process, which can never be totally recovered by any pedagogical method. The gap between what is said and what is unsaid remains unamenable to pedagogical closure; remains insurmountable; remains outside of the field of the teachable itself. Consequently, and this leads us to the second point, at the root of this disruption between action and thesis lies the *unconscious*. For the unconscious is the type of knowledge which cannot know itself (Lacan), but only expresses, gestures, and slips in and through the symbolic. For Felman, it is "a kind of *unmeant* knowledge

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[8]Shoshana Felman, "Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable," *Yale French Studies* 63 (1982): 22.

[9]In this sense, my own project of seeking to find transformative possibilities in the formation of identity is similar.

[10]Felman, 26.

which escapes intentionality and meaning."[11] Proposing that knowledge is unmeant suggests to me that pedagogy is not *necessarily* nor *solely* about knowledge production, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Indeed, for Felman, pedagogy is not only about knowledge, but about ignorance. Felman conceives of ignorance as part of knowledge itself: it is not "*opposed* to knowledge: it is itself a radical condition, an integral part of the very *structure* of knowledge."[12] Thus, the impossibility of teaching is intimately connected to its profound dependency on ignorance-knowledge, where in order to "have" knowledge, one must also "have" ignorance.

Thirdly, Felman draws on Lacan's postulate of the "subject presumed to know," claiming that the teacher, in occupying this position, is a *figure of phantasmatic proportions*. The teacher is invested with a set of expectations and attitudes on the part of the students, setting off a dialectical relation based on transference and countertransference. By presuming the omniscience of the teaching authority, students transfer a number of affects, desires, and expectations onto the teacher and the learning situation as a whole. In this respect, teaching is not only about cognition, but about "emotional, erotical experience."[13] Provoking a counter-transference on the part of the teacher, the pedagogical gesture becomes a space charged with *unsaid* and *unmeant* content. In this sense, then, teaching is an interminable exchange where learning is coextensive with ongoing transferential relations. Thus the teaching is always

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[11]Ibid , 28.

[12]Ibid., 29.

[13]Ibid., 35.

"impossible," insofar as it is an unending process never coming to closure, never quite making its intended target of what is to be learned - for the unconscious discourse continually interrupts/deflects its trajectory.

Fourthly, and lastly, because of this unconscious dynamic, teachers teach what they learn in "poetic ignorance;" that is, not only transferring knowledge in terms of subject matter, but also teaching unconsciously - unknowingly - in terms of gesture. In this final sense, teaching is necessarily interminable, for the unconscious dynamic knows no end, the pedagogical continually - and literally - gestures toward the unsaid.

Felman's analysis, rightly in my view, attempts to make explicit the undercurrents of teaching, all the while knowing that these undercurrents can never be made explicit in the class, but must remain part of the implicit nature of the teaching relation. This is not to say we cannot talk about them, but that they cannot be put under our control and manipulated at will. And, as we shall see, this is central to coming to grips with pedagogy as a liminal space of trans/formation, and for acknowledging the imaginary effects of identity in the classroom.

As important as Felman's insights are, however, this particular reliance on Lacanian transference reveals a number of tensions. While an explicit critique of Lacan's notion of the imaginary will be taken up in more detail in chapter 4, I wish to mention two criticisms of Lacanian transference here in order to give some indication of the different direction both I and others (discussed below) take in a psychoanalytic reading of pedagogy. First, Felman's specifically Lacanian reading of the teaching and learning dynamic is based upon the recognition of the "subject presumed to know" as *sole* authority in the

transferential dynamic, which is consistent with the Lacanian interpretation of the analytic scene. This view of pedagogical authority is troubling, not because such authority does not exist in some "real" or "imaginary" sense, but because it is posited as the unquestioned *basis* of the transference relation. That is, according to this view, in order for transference to occur, there needs to be an authority figure that is appealed to. While such a transference dynamic clearly enables a fuller understanding of how certain emotional and unconscious investments are intertwined with the overtly pedagogical goal of cognition, it seems to me that another model of transference is needed. For it is not only *students* who project, identify, and cathect onto the teacher, resulting in the teacher's *counter*-transference. From the beginning, the *teacher* has plans, objectives, and curricula (as well as an embodied presence) which not only *set the conditions* in which the transference takes place, but themselves enact their own transferential relation, without having, it seems to me, imagined the students as an "authority." The "course" itself is the symbolic material through which the teacher's desires begin to manifest themselves even before the students - as embodied subjects - enter the class. If, as David Crane notes, "a class... is a course caught in the act,"[14] then the course certainly marks off the teacher's desires, whether or not the students explicitly take it up as such, or talk about it. We must remember what Lacan himself remarked in this regard: "to divide [the transference] in terms of transference and counter-transference - however bold, however confident what is said on

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[14]David Crane, "A Personal Postscript, and Impostured Preface," in *Impersonation*, xiii.

this theme may be - is never more than a way of avoiding the essence of the matter."[15] The "essence of the matter," in my reading, is the dynamic of psychical interaction itself. Part of my own solution to the problem outlined above has been to move away from a Lacanian position - ironically moving closer to the position Lacan alludes to in the quote, but seems to forget elsewhere - taking into consideration the transferential dynamics Annie Reich and Luce Irigaray put forth. So, while I think Felman's analysis - and Lacanian transference in general - is useful for getting teachers to think through the impossibility of teaching and examine their students' desires, it nevertheless, through the category of *counter-*transference, keeps the teacher's own desires - in terms of *transference* - at a safe, and (too) respectable, distance. If we are going begin to live through the trans/formational ambivalence of teaching and learning, then it seems to me we need to do more than examine students' transferences; we need also to interrogate our own.

The second problem with respect to Lacanian transference is that the subject presumed to know is as much an imaginary construct of the *institutions* in which teachers and students relate as it is an imaginary construct of the *student*. That is, teacher authority is part of what Castoriadis calls the "instituted imaginary" - a fantasy or image that is necessary for social institutions to function.[16] While Felman, to my mind, construes intersubjective classroom dynamics brilliantly, it remains to be seen how the "unconscious meaning" in the acts and gestures of teaching occur within specific political, social, and

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[15]Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 231. Nonetheless, Lacan consistently appeals to authority as a condition of the transference.

[16]See, for example, Cornelius Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), *passim*.

cultural temporalities. Thus, there is insufficient *politicizing* of the ways in which meanings and "unmeant knowledges" are constructed through social relations which are supported by, but not *determined* by, psychical ones.[17] Felman's view fails to consider identity as something "beyond" the immediacy of intersubjectivity, as something which is struggled over and defined in and through communities and modes of sociality. It is not that the "subject presumed to know" cannot have any truck with transformative pedagogical theory, but that the kind of authority it invokes must (in any transformative project committed to social justice) be thoroughly questioned, evaluated, and acted upon in specific contexts.

However, not all those whose work focuses in some measure on Lacan have failed to pay attention to the question of authority. Some have attempted to extend a Lacanian notion of transference with specifically feminist teaching practices, and others address themselves more generally to critical, if not overtly feminist, applications. For instance, both Constance Penley and Laurie Finke, in responding to feminists who claim that teaching does not, or should not involve authority, have problematized the notion of teacher authority and how it operates in feminist classrooms. This is important for looking at the imaginary dimensions of transformative pedagogy, and for drawing out its ambivalent relation to identity formation and transformation.

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[17]Chapter 6 explores the irreducibility of the social and psychical in light of Castoriadis's views

Drawing on Lacan's "subject presumed to know," Penley rightly observes that this is an imaginary position, both at the level of institution and individual.[18] Not only is it based on a larger context of institutional structures of authority, but it is also rooted in psychical investments in this authority. This does not, of course, mean that as an imaginary position, it is less effective or powerful. On the contrary, because it is an imaginary position, invested with affect, desire, and fantasy, it is far less amenable to change. Penley suggests that "to relinquish that imaginary position would be to lose the most important pedagogical tool of all."[19] Finke states something similar. She asserts that not only does teaching engage the unconscious, "but is implicated in the very formation of the unconscious itself."[20] Because of its dynamic quality, Finke, following Lacan and Felman here, does not claim that the unconscious is a "pre-existent" *entity*, but is a *movement* through discursive practices, a series of ruptures which reveal the playing out of desires and affect.[21] Moreover, because the unconscious interchange involves both real and imagined power relationships between student and teacher, and because knowledge does not occur without the transferential relationship between "unequals," Finke suggests that the teacher's authoritative role also functions as "bait." The inequality of the relationship "baits" students into an exchange that makes knowledge possible: the authority of the teacher lures the students into a desire for knowledge. It is clear, then, that both

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[18]Constance Penley, *The Future of an Illusion: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 168.

[19]Ibid., 168.

[20]Finke, 15.

[21]Ibid., 14.

Penley and Finke are concerned with the imaginary aspect of teacher authority, and the unconscious dynamic that it implicates. Most importantly, pedagogy is thus conceived here as having a psychic propulsion that is framed within larger contexts of authority, which feminists, if they are to work against patriarchal structures, need to engage on both levels.

Patrick McGee also makes important links between Lacanian transference and the political edge of pedagogy. According to McGee, because the intersubjective dynamic of desire is bound by the symbolic, it is, therefore, political.[22] In this sense, then, the symbolic is not a detached view of language and other symbolic structures which make meaning possible (or impossible, as the case may be); but, as it functions between people through social systems, the symbolic is fundamentally political. The transference-countertransference situation, therefore, invokes relations to power and authority that are not only inscribed interpersonally, but discursively. This emphasis on the political ties in with Gregory Jay's claim that Felman's account omits the politics of reading, and the implicit power relationship embedded in the structuring of teacher authority.[23] According to this critique, and one with which I am in agreement, Felman at once theorizes an important aspect of pedagogy for transformative pedagogy (authority) while not making explicit how that authority functions in relation to social and institutional processes. Jay,

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[22]Pat McGee, "Truth and Resistance: Teaching as a Form of Analysis," *College English* 49, no. 6 (1987): 671.

[23]Gregory Jay, "The Subject of Pedagogy: Lessons in Psychoanalysis and Politics," *College English* 49, no.7 (1987): 786.

in contrast, attempts to render the unconscious as a "structure of investments"[24] which has connections to teacher's authority "as part of a larger superstructure of institutional arrangements of power and thought."[25] Jay, in effect, posits this political connection as a way out of the spectre of total relativity which, he claims, looms over psychoanalytic readings of pedagogy. For Jay, pedagogy must connect the political to the psychical (and the symbolic). Accordingly, a "pedagogy of the unconscious must dislocate fixed desires rather than feed us what we think we want to know."[26] Indeed, as Arthur Frank puts it, the lecturer, in recognizing herself as a "subject presumed to know" must seek a disruption of pedagogy through her authority.[27] Akin to Jay's view, Frank suggests that what the subject presumed to know can ask students is not only "what do you want from me?" but also the question which lies "behind" this: "what should you expect of yourself?"[28] For those who critically appropriate Lacan's conception of transference, then, the goal of pedagogy is to enable students to recognize their own desires through the transferential relation, desires which are connected to a symbolic (and therefore political) interaction.[29]

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[24]Ibid., 790.

[25]Ibid., 786.

[26]Ibid., 790.

[27]Arthur W. Frank, "Lecturing and Transference: The Undercover Work of Pedagogy," in *Impersonation*, 32.

[28]Ibid., 33.

[29]Critical of Lacanianism more generally, Ann Murphy suggests returning to Freud (and not Lacan) "for some understanding of transference and resistance, not as a linguistic/theoretical metaphor, but as a practical and functional explication of human behavior in a particular kind of relationship." "Transference and Resistance," 182. However, while she claims that those who have drawn on Lacan have only used his work to highlight the *analogous* relation between pedagogy and analysis, I think the discussion above suggests, in fact, that these authors are interested in

But more importantly, for my purposes, these authors propose that an interactive relation exists between the imaginary and the symbolic: they at once suggest that changes to the symbolic (and the social) are tied to disrupting the imaginary authority of the teacher, *and* emphasize that the imaginary authority, and indeed the unconscious itself, is formed through the pedagogical encounter. In this sense, they begin to sketch what, to me, constitutes the ambivalent nature of transformative pedagogy.

Thus, we can see that psychoanalytic emphases on transference and the Lacanian subject presumed to know can be either politically disengaged or politically-focused. This seems to suggest that it is how Lacanian theory is appropriated for specific ends, or visions of pedagogy, which matter here. However, there remains the risk of relying upon an unproblematic adoption of Lacanian categories. For instance, the *inevitable* authority of the one who is presumed to know, and the conception of desire as *inevitable* lack may be more conducive to sustaining a notion of pedagogy as a depoliticized terrain of affective exchange, than a notion of pedagogy as transformation. (Nonetheless, as is evidenced in some of the works mentioned above, this has more to do with a combination of specific Lacanian concepts lacking an adequate view of power and pedagogy, than it does with a general problem of informing our understandings of pedagogy through all psychoanalytic theories.) Also, as intimated above, there is a limit to this theoretical model of transference. For the interplay of other dynamics - for instance among students or among colleagues - is necessarily occluded from the pedagogical picture. Moreover, transference does not account for the way authority operates differentially according to social categories

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transference as a *dynamic*, albeit sometimes too abstracted from actual classroom activity.

(such as age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation) and to the social meanings ascribed to those categories. With the exception of the feminist works mentioned above (i.e., Penley and Finke), what is painfully evident in many psychoanalytic accounts of pedagogy, is how identity is often not adequately considered as part of a larger matrix of social relations of power. I turn now to discuss briefly some authors who do address the importance of ethnicity, sexual orientation, and race in their accounts of the psychical, or what they have called the "personal," in the pedagogical encounter.[30] These authors furthermore, invite a consideration of how students and teachers are caught up in a dynamic of identification and desire, even as the psychical aspects of such a dynamic are not fully addressed.[31] For this reason, their works are helpful for examining the specificity of the pedagogical encounter, and for taking into consideration precisely what gets formed and transformed therein.

II. Theorizing the Personal as Performative: *Other* Unsaid Dynamics

The significance of the personal in pedagogy has been elaborated upon by a number of authors in a collection edited by Jane Gallop entitled, *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*. In her introduction to the volume, Gallop informs us of her shift in focus

[30]I do not mean to suggest that the personal and the psychical are interchangeable terms. Nevertheless, for my purposes here, the authors upon whom I draw either make use of psychoanalytic theory in their discussion of the personal, or rely upon psychoanalytically-charged categories such as desire in their analyses which, at least implicitly, involve psychical investments.

[31]As Diana Fuss points out, however, there is no easy demarcation line between Freudian conceptions of identification and desire. See her discussion in "Identification Papers," in *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 21-56, *passim*.

from the "personal" - which was the subject of the conference at which these papers were originally presented - to "impersonation." Without going into detail about her reasons for altering the focus, it is nevertheless significant to discuss how something so "personal" as the "personal" in pedagogy is construed as an act of "*im*personation", calling into question the very meaning of the personal itself. Gallop writes, "the personal in pedagogy acts not unlike the personal on talk shows, a performance that nonetheless functions as real."[32] While the category of impersonation seeks to account for the performative nature of teaching, the essays in the volume make it clear that performance and impersonation are very "personal." Commenting upon the proverbial "we" which teachers often use in descriptions of their classes, Gallop draws our attention to the teacher's desire to merge with the group as an act of impersonation. "Getting personal, or rather in this case social, playing a member of the class like any other, the teacher impersonates a student."[33] Thus, what is nominally a mask or masquerade[34] is nevertheless simultaneously that which is most personally connected to the teacher and her pedagogical interaction; it suggests a hidden dynamic: the impersonation solicits, not unlike the transference itself, the mobilization of unconscious desires and identifications.

Unlike the Lacanian transference model of pedagogy, the personal as performative is not always about a rupture or failure determined by investments in an authority figure

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[32]Jane Gallop, "Im-Personation: A Reading in the Guise of an Introduction," in *Impersonation*, 17.

[33]Ibid., 2.

[34]For a discussion on the theatricality of teaching, see Joseph Litvak, "Discipline, Spectacle, and Melancholia in and around the Gay Studies Classroom," in *Impersonation*, 19-20.

(real or imagined) which are *brought* to the pedagogical scene. Instead, by conceiving of the personal *through* the performative, Gallop underlines the idea that the pedagogical performance is that which *produces* the personal in teaching itself. For the way we interact with students constructs the very notion of what is personal in our teaching. This performative aspect is useful for understanding social and, as I will suggest below, psychical - dynamics in teaching-learning situations.

The intertwining of the social and psychical may be seen in Indira Karamcheti's view of the personal. She notes that the minority teacher cannot ignore the personal in her pedagogy for she is always involved in an impersonation, performing a "generic ethnicity in which the personal is simultaneously a symptom of powerlessness within academia and a strategy for gaining power."[35] The teacher, in this case, is always already read by her students as "being personal," for her very presence in the classroom as a minority woman signifies a disruption in the "norm" of classroom expectations. The very body of the teacher signifies to the students that there is something beyond the "norm" of white teacher authority. As Karamcheti puts it: "the minority teacher does not necessarily have the choice of deliberately engaging the machinery of the personal in order to problematize authority. Authority has already been problematized by the fact of visible difference The insistence of the personal preexists the decision to engage in the practice of self-inclusion, the politics of the personal."[36] In this way, Karamcheti taps into the unsaid dynamic which constitutes a teacher's authority (or lack of it) through students' confrontation with visible

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[35]Indira Karamcheti, "Caliban in the Classroom," in *Impersonation*, 146.

[36]Ibid., 138.

difference. This confrontation challenges students' imaginary relationship between teacher authority and whiteness, and also challenges the institutional imaginary where the same relationship operates. Moreover, as an institutional imaginary, what Karamcheti's analysis makes clear to me is that minority students as well as white students confront this difference as a disruption to teacher authority. Difference is *instituted* through the social positioning of minority teachers in academia, and not necessarily by whether or not the teacher is of the same cultural, ethnic, or racial group.[37] Compelled to perform a "generic ethnicity" that at once affirms and problematizes her authority as teacher, Karamcheti highlights the complexity of the personal in light of imaginary constructs.

Roger Simon's "Face-to-Face with Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy" has also taken up the personal and the issue of difference in pedagogy. Unlike Karamcheti, however, Simon discusses the importance of eros and desire within the specific context of doctoral studies, and how his own transgressional practice of "teaching as a Jew" is implicated in the dynamic of desire between teacher and student.[38] I wish to dwell on this essay, for Simon's sensitive discussion of difference and desire offers some important insights into the way teaching is not only *affected* by the personal (Karamcheti's view), but also how one can *willfully* introduce the personal into pedagogical relations, through an enactment of difference, through "articulating Otherness. In this way,

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[37] I want to be clear that I am not claiming some essentialized notion of what constitutes an ethnic, cultural, or racial group; but instead wish to suggest that even if students identify with the minority teacher (seeing themselves as being like her), this is done within a social and institutional context that has positioned the minority teacher as always already the embodiment of difference.

[38] Roger Simon, "Face to Face with Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy," in *Impersonation*, 90-105 (all further references will be made in the text).

Simon's essay provides an example of the ambivalence faced by teachers attempting to work across, through, and with difference within a project of social transformation. And, to my mind, it reveals the psychical dimensions that must be considered in any view of the performativity of teaching.

In a postmodern move, Simon cites *his* (not *a* or *the*) Jewish identity as part of his teaching. In teaching as a Jew, he brings to the fore that which is usually suppressed in the pedagogical exchange, drawing into the field of pedagogy his ethnic identity as a *re*-presentation of difference, as an articulation of Otherness. In "articulating Otherness," Simon's teaching is a political gesture, both in challenging the effacement of identity in teaching, and in attempting to elaborate upon "what it might mean to live and work ethically within the embrace of heteronomy" (92). In so doing, Simon questions the effects this has on doctoral students who are, like him, simultaneously caught up in the "play of desire" between teacher and student (95).

According to Simon, doctoral education is marked by a "distinctive intimacy" and dynamic which is comprised of specific student and teacher desires.[39] When students are confronted with Simon's articulation of Otherness, the interplay of these desires condition the receptivity of difference in the doctoral exchange. In this way, then, difference as

[39]For instance, some of his professional desires involve: the desire "to arouse and instruct desire of others;" a narcissistic desire to see himself in his students; a desire for an "intellectual partner;" and a desire for "solidarity," for collectivity (96-7). Students' desires, he notes, are connected to power relations inherent in traditional university settings, where students' lives are structured by dependent relationships to faculty. An eroticization of faculty may be based on desires for: a professor as a subject presumed to know; a teacher who knows how to know; a teacher who provides hope; and an intellectual home (97-100). Simon qualifies his discussion by noting he is writing about his own experience and not all educational experience.

"articulating Otherness" is set within the context of these on-going student-teacher dynamics.

However, the issue I am interested in pursuing is slightly different from Simon's. It has to do with the specific investments and the engagement of the personal forged through a practice of "articulating Otherness," and the ambivalence of trans/formation. While Simon does not address the explicit connection to psychical reality here, nor use psychoanalytic categories of desire, I read the psychical as an *implied* condition for this intersubjective play of desire, and how difference is taken up as a result. By not addressing the psychical explicitly, and the difficulties and/or ease with which students come "face-to-face" with difference, Simon cannot fully come to terms with how his articulation of Otherness *forms* certain identifications and desires, and not just *taps into* them. In articulating difference, what kind of desires are set in motion between individuals, and how does this affect the transformative impetus of the articulation itself? One way to begin a response is to acknowledge how the articulation itself provokes, reassembles, and produces desires. Re-presenting difference does not *only* "occur" or "take place" within the dynamic of institutional desires, nor does it *only* disrupt or support these "background" desires. It also re-presents to students the teacher's own desire to teach through his identity, his desire to articulate Otherness, his desire to define himself as a Jew. What kinds of psychic structures are being mobilized or frustrated through this confrontation - and, more accurately, through perceptions of this confrontation? For me, the answer lies in pushing some of Simon's insights to their (psycho) logical conclusion, delving a little deeper into some of the implications for trans/formation.

Students come face-to-face not only with a citational practice, but with the desire that structures that practice, that makes the citation possible. In other words, students encounter the desire, on the one hand, as it is *produced* in the performativity of the teaching - that is, through the articulation of difference itself - and also, on the other hand, may conceive of it as a *underlying* the citational practice - that is, see it as a personal desire "belonging" to the teacher. And it is these double desires (the manifest and latent - for want of better terms) whose meanings always leave themselves open to student interpretation, identification, desire, and imaginary investment.[40]

The flip side, then, of the teacher's "articulating Otherness" is the range of student responses. Students may question, identify with, or even deny the importance of Simon's articulation of his own identity in the pedagogical exchange, and in so doing risk securing or alienating more than symbolic difference in the process. They risk the relationship with the teacher as well. This is because they are also responding to the teacher's desire in its symbolic form: an unconscious want played out through the articulatory practice Therefore, the stakes are high for students confronting alterity, for the teacher's assertion of that alterity is highly invested. Moreover, the stakes are high for the teacher as well, since student response may challenge or reinforce that initial investment. How students interpret "teacher's desire" and how they articulate their own identification, disavowal or indifference installs their own desires in the pedagogical encounter. It seems that students,

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[40]I wish to emphasize he e that teaching through one's identity can be the result of a number of desires which cannot simply be read off from an article or even the performance so easily. While psychoanalytic interpretation is concerned with discourse and texts, the presumption that an individual's desires are transparent or amenable to decontextualized readings eclipses the radical *specificity* of analysis, in my view.

in the act of confronting alterity, are not only confronting a social other, but a psychical aspect of themselves. This may take the form of a disruption of *their own* investments, a frustration of *their own* desires, as Simon himself is aware (100); or, it may involve intense feelings of wanting "to be like teacher," setting into motion a cycle of identification and desire that goes beyond intellectual or even erotic student-teacher relations.

The pedagogical encounter itself, then, *forms* certain identifications and desires as it "disrupts" or "dislodges" others through an articulation of difference. It is this interplay between what is formed and what is disrupted or altered that needs to be more clearly acknowledged if transformative pedagogy is to grasp its own significance; that is, its own possibilities and limitations. In other words, invoking difference does not only *mobilize* or *frustrate* the kinds of desires Simon suggests are already part of doctoral education *per se*, but also *produces* new identifications and desires, instantiating psychical change in a way that affects students as gendered, ethnic, and racialized subjects caught up in life situations outside of education. The specific difficulties of attending to identification and the imaginary will be fleshed out in subsequent chapters. The point to make here is that attention to the specific dynamics of pedagogical ambivalence thwarts any simple, generalized reading of a "confrontation with alterity." What a psychoanalytic reading of identity trans/formation and pedagogical ambivalence can offer educators is an awareness of how little and how much effect teaching performances can have on another person. For this reason, the performativity of teaching needs to attend to the performativity of learning.

What remains an important insight in Simon's essay is that he not only "deals with" the liminal spaces between identity, desire, and power, but indeed brings them to the fore

through his act of transgression. Hence Simon's *conscious* decision to teach as a Jew affects the *unconscious* interplay of desire; and for this reason, I read this essay as opening up a new terrain of the personal which neither psychologizes relations between teachers or students, nor simply renders them as divorced from all affective investment. And if, as Britzman points out, such an opening up of spaces is part of what queerness is about, then Simon's essay can be read as a queering of pedagogy itself.[41] I wish to conclude, now, with a discussion of what such an opening implies for transformative pedagogies in light of my comments above. The rest of the thesis is an attempt to work through such an opening, connecting the liminal character of pedagogy to the significance of the imaginary.

III. Conclusion: Toward a Liminal Pedagogy

Work which addresses the "unsaid" in pedagogy, both within and outside of psychoanalytic frameworks, often remains marginal with respect to what I loosely refer to as transformative discourses. Of course, there are cross-over writers, like Finke, Jay, and Simon, who are expressly concerned with the transformative, political nature of pedagogy and use their discussions of the psychical and/or the personal to further these projects. Overall, work on the unsaid underlines the delicate and intricate relationships that are formed and transformed in the interaction between teachers and students. In my view, these relationships need to be at the forefront of our thoughts as teachers committed to working for change. For the way teachers engage, perform, and are immersed in

[41]See especially Britzman's discussion on the terms "queer" and "theory" which together "signify *actions* , not actors. It can be thought of as a verb, or as a citational relation that signifies more than the signifier." "Is There a Queer Pedagogy?" *Educational Theory*, 45, no. 2 (1995), 153

pedagogical encounters with students - and students with teachers - is shaped by identification, desire, and fantasy; in short, the imaginary. By way of summary, I wish to outline how I see both transference and performance as fruitful for moving toward a conception of pedagogy as liminal, as ambivalent. I do so through examining their significance for: the pedagogical encounter; interpretations of the encounter; and the goals which guide the encounter. As well, I call for a further understanding of imaginary processes as they intersect the learning, and not only the teaching, aspect of pedagogy.

First, introducing the notion of transference into the discourse on transformative pedagogy fleshes out what pedagogy as "knowledge production" involves in terms of psychical investment. Transference places the unconscious as central to the way knowledge and authority are invested, and suggests, therefore, that some accommodation needs to be made in transformative practices themselves. This would mean creating a space in which to talk about the existence of the transference. This space would enable students and teachers alike to *accept* that there is a dynamic of desire and identification (without having to "name" each person's desire or identification explicitly), and to understand their implications in the teaching-learning situation. This does not mean that the goal should be to "evacuate" the unconscious, but to have a language for understanding its presence and effects in the encounter. Secondly, as an interpretive strategy, transference enables teachers to think about how knowledge is neither heard nor said as a neat little packet of information that students swallow like a vitamin. Instead, transformative pedagogies need to consider "unmeant" knowledges: those that circulate despite *and* because of the best intentions of any teacher (or student). Hence, in

interpreting what is taking place in our classrooms, we need to ask ourselves whether we are *listening* to our students, or are we only hearing an echo of our own voices? Moreover, if students give back to us what they think we want them to say, what does this tell us about our teaching, and our listening in the first place? Thirdly, transference can make us more aware of how the goal of working across, through, and with difference produces a psychical dynamic which not only forecloses on certain desires and identifications while opening up others, but *forges* these desires and identifications. In this way, transference may compel us to reflect upon o'. goals and accept the ambivalence that lies therein.

With respect to the performative nature of engaging the personal in teaching and learning situations, we have seen how it constitutes the teacherly dynamic of the unsaid This means refiguring the pedagogical encounter as that which defines us as teachers; for it is through our performances that the personal is constructed. In this sense, the encounter is the domain which produces teachers, not the other way around. Thus the practices that make up the act of "teaching" make evident the embodied nature of pedagogy, in a way that transference thus far described, does not.[42] Conceiving of teaching as performative allows us to question the effect of how teachers speak, gesture, and represent themselves to their students. At the level of interpretation, this requires addressing ourselves to what

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[42]For discussions of the body in pedagogy see my "Educating the Body Politic Radical Pedagogy, Agency, and Identification," *Educational Theory* (forthcoming); Cheryl Johnson, "Disinfecting Dialogue," in *Impersonation*, 129-137; hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, chapter 10, Peter McLaren, "Schooling the Postmodern Body: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Enfleshment," in *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics*, ed. Henry A. Giroux (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 144-173; and Erica McWilliam, "Beyond the Missionary Position Teacher Desire and Radical Pedagogy," in *Learning Desire* (forthcoming).

investments we are making in such performances, and reading these investments as central to the pedagogical encounter itself. In this way, performance is not divorced from the imaginary aspects of our identities as teachers. In terms of the goal of transformative pedagogy, performativity suggests asking ourselves whether our teaching practices are consistent with the kind of social vision we are advocating. Do we perform in ways that effectively work across, through, and with difference? Most importantly, for my purposes here, the question is: do we perform with the knowledge that our practices are ambivalent?

With this said, there are a number of concerns to be raised which can be mitigated, I believe, by a conception of pedagogy as liminal. Understanding the personal through performativity ultimately focuses on the performance of *teaching*, not learning. While, for the reasons just mentioned, teacher's performance is significant to students' learning, students' learning cannot be seen as an *effect* of teacher performativity alone. For the student's learning is also conditioned by interactions with peers and with institutions outside of the purview of the individual teacher. The student has a life history connected to various communities which makes her open to some identifications and closed to others. Similarly, as previously outlined, transference too often focuses on the student's presumption of authority, leaving the teacher seemingly immune from enacting a transference herself. Furthermore, the tightly intertwined transference relation ignores the fact that teachers and students are not merely reflected (or projected) images of the other, but are also complexly related to other people, other communities, and other institutions outside of the intersubjective context. These criticisms are important to keep in mind in thinking about a liminal pedagogy which acknowledges the importance of both the

specificity of the encounter in trans/forming identities, and the fact that this encounter is but one instance in a complex process of identity formation for individual students, and, arguably, teachers. For it is my contention that acknowledging both aspects is necessary for creating a sound ethical practice of trans/formation which does not foreclose on the integrity and personal history of the student herself.

In accordance with this view, then, it seems necessary to retrace our steps, to look at how pedagogy can be conceived as a threshold situation, as a liminal space where meaning is neither merely institutionally imposed, nor simply internalized by individuals Instead, it is a space where meaning is constituted in the *dynamic* of pedagogical interaction. This dynamic is not only an intersubjective one, but one that is intimately bound up with communities and institutions. Pedagogy is thus a form of knowledge production where we produce meaning and "learn" about our culture and our place within it. It is, therefore, a space of *formation.*

However, since this learning may involve unmeant knowledges, pedagogy is also about ignorance, about unsaid dynamics of identification, and about imaginary constructs. The point to be made here is that pedagogy involves an unconscious dimension that makes the reception and/or production of knowledge indeterminate. Thus even in its formative capacity pedagogy is never entirely nor always "successful." It is a space of transition in which teachers perform, and intersubjective relations are forged, but never predicted. And, it is this space of indeterminacy which requires us to look at pedagogy as something other than *either* disruption *or* formation. A liminal pedagogy is a place where learning refers to the crossing of the threshold between our selves and an other - symbolic,

imaginary, and real - always recognizing that learning is a simultaneous and ambivalent process of trans/formation. Crossing into new spaces means always having to negotiate one's way out of the familiar into the as-yet-unknown. It is a passage which cannot be crossed back the same way again. For if learning has occurred, meaning has shifted, and one's identity is no longer in exactly the same spot as it was previous to the learning experience. Thus to enter into the unknown, which all pedagogies request of students, means to trans/form an identity.

Pedagogy as a liminal practice embraces the ambivalence of this threshold. It acknowledges itself as a place of transition where unlearning and relearning accompany the oft-times painful and disruptive sense of one's self. We need, therefore, to be ever mindful of how the formation of identity - the psychical as well as social production of identity - factors into the possibility for agency and ethical pedagogical practices. For we cannot attend to the work of transformation if we are ill-prepared to face the consequences of that work, and thus need to have a sense of what trans/formation entails psychically. In working toward this end, a liminal pedagogy opens a space for: 1. attuning ourselves to how identities are simultaneously being formed and transformed in the pedagogical encounter; 2. appreciating the indeterminacy of the unconscious and imaginary in interpreting our performances and, more generally, acknowledging students as more than the "effects" of those performances; and 3. interrogating what our own imaginary investments are in the social visions that guide our practices as ethical and political constructs.

Indeed, the following chapters attempt to address these three areas in varying degrees. That is, while not all chapters focus on all three areas, part 2, taken as a whole, focuses on the psychical and imaginary workings of identity (both in terms of formation and agency), drawing out the implications for both transformative pedagogical theory, and transformative ethical practices.

Part Two

Identities and Imaginaries

CHAPTER THREE

Identifying Identification: Imitation, Internalization, and Interpretation

> What we've learned about the structure of the way in which we identify suggests that identification is not one thing, one moment We have now to reconceptualize identity as a *process of identification*, and that is a different matter. It is something that happens over time, that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference.
>
> Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference"

Accepting Hall's invitation to reconceptualize identity as a process of identification, this chapter addresses itself to the Freudian model which psychoanalysts from Lacan and Irigaray to Castoriadis draw upon and/or critique in some way. Here, I examine this model as an aspect of the pedagogical imaginary, particularly as it relates to the ambivalence of trans/formative pedagogical practice. In the context of exploring the other thread of trans/formation woven throughout the thesis (identity formation and agency), a Freudian model of identification offers little in the way of defining social agency, nonetheless, it primes the canvas for future chapters on the imaginary which take up this theme in full. Indeed, as we shall see, identification alludes to the fantastical, representational capacities of the subject, but ultimately only addresses their function in the formation, not alteration of identities. For now, I wish to argue that identification is

nevertheless important for a liminal pedagogy in that it places emphasis on what is at stake in our interactions with students. Placing consideration upon how we "identify" or interpret identification in pedagogical practices, we call attention to the ethical and trans/formative potential of the pedagogical encounter itself. To do so, however, requires identifying identification in another sense; that is, defining it as a concept. Hence, the first part of this chapter tends to the task of outlining a Freudian view of identification, the second part to interpreting it in the pedagogical scene. The two aspects of identifying identification, as we shall see, are not disconnected.

I. Identification's Innocence?

Freud himself states that the ways in which we "identify" are "insufficiently known processes and hard to describe."[1] Despite the difficulties of identifying identification, Laplanche and Pontalis offer a useful working definition to begin our exploration. it is a "psychological process whereby the subject assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model the other provides. It is by means of a series of identifications that the personality is constituted and specified."[2] Identification, therefore, is something integrally related to the establishment of self and identity in psychoanalytic discourse. However, it is a concept which, as film critic Anne

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[1]Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, [1921] trans. James Strachey, *Penguin Freud Library* (hereafter referred to as *PFL*), vol. 12 (London: Penguin, 1985), 133.

[2]J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), 205.

Friedberg notes, is too often treated as both innocent and assumed.[3] For instance, discourses dealing with the social construction of identity do not explain *how* processes of identification work so much as they state that they *do* work to "construct identities." Troubling this innocence requires being clear about identifying identification in both ways mentioned above: defining it and interpreting it. In examining identification as a potentially rich trans/formative concept, I have chosen to focus on the relation between identification and imitation. For this, it seems, has become the primary way we so innocently assume identifications are formed, performed, and transformed. Uncoupling identification and imitation is important, in my view, for viewing identification as an important political *and* psychical category, one which has significance for a liminal pedagogy.

However, championing identification as an important concept for understanding pedagogical interaction does not simply mean that one can interpret all such interaction as moments of identification. Indeed it raises the very question of how we identify/interpret identification. What I wish to do in this chapter is wrest identification from the grip of imitation, to view identification as something beyond imitation. To this end, I explore the notion of internalization, as one of the processes through which identifications are secured.[4] For it is my contention that identification may be better understood in terms of

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[3]Anne Friedberg, "A Denial of Difference: Theories of Cinematic Identification," in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, ed. Ann Kaplan (New York: Routledge, 1990), 36.

[4]The other two important processes are introjection and incorporation. Due to the focus of this chapter, I have included only a discussion of internalization in the text itself and have appended a detailed account of introjection and incorporation at the end of the thesis. Interested readers may consult Appendix B.

unconscious and imaginary dynamics which cannot always be so easily read or interpreted as can imitative gestures. Indeed, this chapter lays the groundwork for future chapters which focus on what the imaginary dimension of identity lends to agency.

This chapter tackles the problem of "identifying identification" by first outlining the concept of identification, discussing its significance in the formation of identity and as a political category. The second part of the chapter delves into how we go about identifying it in pedagogical practice. To this end, I examine how identification has been identified in the transference, drawing on Annie Reich's distinction between imitation and identification, and suggesting the usefulness of this distinction for interpreting identification in the pedagogical scene. The chapter concludes with a reading of Chris Amireault's essay, "The Good Teacher, The Good Student: Identifications of a Student Teacher," in order to examine the problems and potentialities of identifying identification.

II. Preliminary Identifications

In the Freudian corpus, identification receives relatively little detailed attention, particularly odd, perhaps, given its centrality in the formation of the ego according to Freud's later works and given its influence in recent works in cultural studies and the politics of identity.[5] At times seemingly conflated with other psychoanalytic concepts such

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[5]A particularly relevant addition to the cultural studies literature is Diana Fuss's book, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995). As well, identification has been identified in Freud's texts: in relation to desire (we identify with others who share the same object of desire), in relation to topography (Oedipal identification produces the superego); and in relation to the economic functioning of the libido (identifications lead to sublimated and desexualized relations between people). See, respectively, *Group Psychology*; *The Ego and the Id* [1923], *PFL*, vol. 11, and *Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930], *PFL*, vol. 12.

as incorporation, introjection and internalization, identification has remained elusive and problematic. Yet, for all its elusiveness, it is a concept which has attempted to account for the subject as a relational, and not atomistic, entity. It has highlighted the nature of unconscious relationality, an unintentional connection between people. Through a notion of identification we get a sense of how subjects form identities - unconsciously - through encounters with others. However, identification is also about the "beyond" of intersubjectivity. It not only encompasses relations between people, but is also concerned with the internalization of social norms and patterns of social relations. Thus, it is important to examine how identification (and, by extension, internalization) works if we are to critically question the fusion between imitation and identification, and to understand the relation between identity formation and social agency.

III. Identification or Imitation?

Of late, there has been much importance placed on imitation or mimesis and its role both in politics and in identificatory relations. Butler's groundbreaking work on gender identity portrays the complicated ways imitation, through parody and camp, constitutes a "performativity" of identities (e.g., practices such as male drag).[6] However, in *Bodies That Matter*, Butler reconsiders her earlier emphasis on a politics of mimesis and shifts to a citational politics in which imitation gives way to a more concerted effort to read

[6]Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

"performativity" as a "citation" of cultural codes.[7] That is, as we saw with Simon's citational practice of "teaching as a Jew" in the previous chapter, Simon does not "imitate" being a Jew, but "cites" his Jewishness. And this is important for thinking about identification outside of imitation. However, my intention here is not to focus on citationality, but rather to revisit the identification-imitation relation in Freudian theory, for, in my view, the Freudian relation has been misread as supporting the conflation of imitation and identification, and this remains the dominant view guiding our "naming" of identities.

From its appearance in the analyses of dreams in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, as well as in his early forays into the etiology of hysterical symptomatology, Freud identified identification in connection with imitation.[8] He links his patients' replication of bodily mannerisms, attitudes, and behaviours to unconscious psychical processes, claiming that they reveal, among other things, identifications between the patient and the person being mirrored. There is thus a significant emphasis placed on mimesis in these initial characterizations of identification (Freud's analysis of the dream of the "butcher's wife" is a good example of his early thought).[9]

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[7]Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York Routledge, 1993).

[8]There are also earlier references to identification in a letter Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fleiss dated May 2, 1897 in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 1 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 248-9.

[9]Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, [1900] trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1969), 180-4. For readers interested in a detailed reading of Freud's interpretation of this dream, please consult Appendix A.

However, even in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud is careful to distinguish between an imitation and identification. Asking himself what the meaning of hysterical identification is,[10] he responds by claiming that imitation is the phenomenon observed, while identification is essentially a "mental act,"[11] hidden from transparent view. Freud further clarifies this by stating: "identification is not simple imitation but *assimilation*."[12] Here, Freud asserts that identification is something more than mere imitative gesture. For Freud, the hysteric "reproduces" or "mirrors" in the act of hysterical imitation, but this mirroring is only identification *if* it is successfully integrated into her unconscious. Thus, it appears that we can only claim an identification is going on if imitation *means* something to the hysteric's unconscious, if it takes up residence, so to speak, in her unconscious desires and fantasies. This does more than hint at the possibility that there are indeed forms of imitation that do *not* signify identification, since not all imitation takes up residence in the unconscious - that is, it is not always "assimilated" into the psychical life

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[10]At this point in time, Freud is concerned with hysterical symptoms, and therefore phrases his question on imitation with respect to this concern.

[11]Freud, *Dreams*, 182-3.

[12]Ibid., 183-4.

of the individual [13] This is question begging of course, for how do we know when something has indeed been "assimilated" into the unconscious?

Since the key word here is "assimilation," psychoanalysts (including Freud) have had to develop other concepts in tandem with identification that help to refine how we interpret that an identification is occurring (or has occurred). In this sense, then, the importance placed on internalization, introjection, and incorporation has become essential to the positing of an identification's presence or absence [14] The fact that these terms are often used overlappingly, and are confused with each other in non-clinical discourse suggests that they all operate to depict a "bringing into" the subject elements of external reality [15] However, it is only internalization which focuses on how a subject "brings into" itself social relations - and relations to authority Thus internalization is crucial, it seems to me, for understanding how culture and social relations affect the way people are said to have "internalized their oppression," or even that they are "socially constructed " Thus

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[13]Otto Fenichel remarks that "the existence of conscious imitation does not contradict this view [that identification is not conscious], for such imitation rests on a deeper, unconscious basis, or is unrelated to the process of identification proper..." "Identification," [1926] in *The Collected Papers of Otto Fenichel: First Series* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1953), 101 For this reason, I am in disagreement with Fuss's acceptance of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy's definition that all imitation signifies an incorporation, as I intend to discuss below What this misses out on in my view is the significance of paying attention to the varied motives and reasons for imitation which psychoanalytic theory has been well aware of See Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, "The Unconscious Is Structured like an Affect," (Part I of "The Jewish People Do Not Dream"). *Stanford Literature Review* 6, no.2 (fall 1989): 191-209; and Fuss, *Identification Papers*, chapter 5, *passim*.

[14]These latter two are referred to as the "prototypes" of identification, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, 207. Please consult Appendix B for a detailed reading of these accounts of assimilation.

[15]I use the active term, "bringing into" rather than the more passive term "taking in" as Roy Schafer does in order to emphasize the subject's agency, even if that activity is not conscious. See *Aspects of Internalization* (New York: International Universities Press, 1968), 71.

I wish to outline a view of internalization as part and parcel of Freudian identification, and suggests that it uncouples the imitation and identification conflation.

However, we first must ask ourselves whether relegating imitation to surface and identification to depth is helpful in rethinking the relation between identity formation and transformation. I think it is (perhaps rather unfashionably), but only when placed in a larger discourse of power and social relations. And, since internalization explains how we "bring into" our unconscious existing social relations, I read internalization as important for *beginning* to see how a theory of identity formation can offer us a productive account of agency. Moreover, internalization is necessary for coming to terms with the ambivalence of transformative pedagogical practice: for is not transformative pedagogy about "learning" new social relations?

IV. The Work of Internalization

Internalization is the broadest of the concepts relating to "assimilation" and it is important to dwell on it here, for as stated above it is explicitly concerned with social relations. Roy Schafer writes that "*internalization refers to all those processes by which the subject transforms real or imagined regulatory interactions with his environment, and real or imagined characteristics of his environment, into inner regulations and characteristics.*"[16] In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud underscores how the subject not only "brings into" itself *objects* from external reality, but *relations* (or, in Schafer's words, "regulatory interactions" of external reality). What becomes evident in his account of the

[16]Schafer, 9.

Oedipus complex is its usefulness for theorizing identity as a social formation Moreover, since this account is taken up in subsequent chapters on Lacan, Irigaray, and Castoriadis it is worth outlining it briefly here.

In the section of *The Ego and the Id* concerned with the Oedipus complex, Freud suggests that an early identification is part of the pre-Oedipal phase: it is a "direct and immediate identification and takes place earlier than any object-cathexis."[17] This primary identification establishes an ego ideal - that is, an idea of an object one holds to be a model.[18] Hence, Reich says, the ego-ideal is usually a primary identification with the "early, glorified maternal object."[19] Unlike Reich, however, Freud discusses this primary identification in terms of the father, and suggests the subject (in this case, always the boy) desires the mother. Thus to resolve the Oedipal transgression of the incest taboo, the boy

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[17]There are numerous problems attendant upon Freud's Oedipal story. Aside form its overt focus on fathers and sons (with mothers existing only as objects of desire for the boy), there is an immanent flaw in the story itself. He writes that a primary identification occurs with the father, although he concedes that primary identification can occur with either parent - or care-giver. He then says that Oedipal desire for the mother follows thereafter. The problem then becomes, however, that Freud basis his entire Oedipal theory upon this original bond with the father, and cannot easily substitute the father with the mother as he claims he can. He relies on this bond for his Oedipal theory to make sense - for it is not clear how desire for the mother would develop if the primary identification was with her in the first place. See *The Ego and Id*, 370

[18]See Freud's discussion of the ego-ideal in "On Narcissism," [1914] *PFL*, vol. 11, 87-92 While the ego-ideal is not always sufficiently differentiated from the superego (indeed it is synonymous with it *The Ego and the Id*), nor from the ideal-ego (which is also used interchangeably with the superego), it seems to me that ego-ideal is an earlier construction, which as Freud himself states in the *New Introductory Lectures*, [1933] trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964), 57-9, comprises *part* of the superego. The ego-ideal, as Annie Reich points out, should not be confused with the superego: "the ego ideal expresses what one desires to be; the superego, what one ought to be" in "Early Identifications as Archaic Elements in the Superego," *Psychoanalytic Contributions* (New York: International Universities Press, 1973). However, as we shall see in chapter 4, Lacan suggests that it is the ideal-ego which precedes the ego-ideal. See my discussion of the ego-ideal below.

[19]Reich, "Narcissistic Object Choice in Women," in *Psychoanalytic Contributions*, 201.

forms a *secondary* identification with his father. But, this is like no other identification. It is different from primary identification in two, interrelated ways. First, the father is perceived as a rival figure and, therefore, the aggressive tendencies toward him become intertwined with the identification. Secondly, the identification sets up an ideal-ego, and so "polices" the boy's desires. And, it is this policing through *secondary identification*, this installation of social norms through the image of the father, that strikes me as important for my own purposes here.

Freud's resolution of the Oedipal story suggests that identification with the father is something in *excess* of Oedipal desire. This identification reveals something *beyond* the family. Whether or not one agrees in full with the story - for there are numerous contradictions and a too narrow focus on sons and fathers - there is nevertheless something expressed in this, its final chapter, that demands attention. Many argue that the Oedipal resolution partially explains how the patriarchal, heterosexual Law of the Father becomes internalized as the superego.[20] However, what I am interested in exploring is not so much the bringing of the *father*, or any symbol of the *father*, into the subject, but how it signifies a process of much greater proportions. Freud has attempted here to account for the subject's connection to the social world on a psychical level. This is how he puts it in terms of the necessary giving up of desire (object-cathexes) in favour of identification:

> The object-cathexes are given up and replaced by identifications. The authority of the father or the parents is introjected into the ego, and there it forms the nucleus of the super-ego which takes over the severity of the

[20]See Juliet Mitchell *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); and Mitchell and Jacqueline Roses's Introductions to Jacques Lacan, *Female Sexuality* (New York: W W Norton, 1985).

> father and perpetuates his prohibition against incest, and so secures the ego from the return of the libidinal object-cathexis. The libidinal trends belonging to the Oedipus complex are in part desexualized and sublimated (a thing which probably happens with every transformation into an identification) and in part inhibited in their aim and changed into impulses of affection.[21]

Note the use of the word introject here. Usually, introjection is taken to mean the "bringing into" the subject an *object* from external reality. However, Freud explicitly states here - and elsewhere - that it is a *relation* which is "brought into" the subject: the *authority* of the father.[22] It is, therefore, not an introjection, but an internalization. Unlike introjection - and incorporation as well - internalization is a process through which a social relation is set up unconsciously. In a limited sense, the subject partakes of a social world without consent - a direct challenge to liberal views of sociality. For what is radical here is that the formation of identity - replete with consciousness, unconscious, conscience, and ideational capacity - is related to a set of social relations and conditions which govern the interaction between subjects. And these social relations at once impinge upon the desires of the child while creating the possibility for other desires to emerge throughout its lifetime (in terms of sublimated and aim-inhibited pursuits - such as writing doctoral theses). Freud suggests that a secondary identification with the father is an internalization of conflict; an

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[21]Freud, "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex," [1924] *PFL*, vol. 7, 319.

[22]Of course, he also says "of the parents." But, as mentioned in note 17, Freud invests all his eggs in the father's basket, to the point where his Oedipal story does not make sense without this premise. Also, Laplanche and Pontalis remark that "with the decline of the Oedipus complex the subject *introjects* the paternal imago while *internalizing* the conflict of authority with the father" (277).

internalization of social norms that allows for the continuation of civilization and sociality.[23]

However, it seems to me that one can internalize a relation with authority without a father figure - indeed, without Lacan's paternal metaphor or Law of the Father. Instead, I read Freud's resolution of the Oedipal relation not so much in terms of a family saga, but in terms of what Castoriadis calls the "socialization" of the individual.[24] By internalizing a relation to authority (be it with father, mother, teacher, or neighbour), the subject's identity does not only secure the continuance of civilization as Freud suggests, but also sets up a fantastical relation to the world. For both the desire and the identification which replaces it are rooted in the subject's capacity to fantasize: to represent to itself what it wants to *have* and what it wants to *be*. In this way, then, the paternal authority is not only connected to patriarchal social relations, but is also contingent upon the subject reproducing to itself the father, mother, teacher, or neighbour as a figure or *trope* of authority. And since this representation is never fully determined by social circumstance, there is an important gap between the social and the psyche. Identity can thus never be fully determined or stable in relation to the social order. However, while Freud comes close here to enabling a theory of agency based on this excess, based on the ability to fantasize, he stops short of providing a full-blown conception of the imaginary as a possible "way out" of overdetermination. The flight into illness is the only route left. In terms of identity formation, internalization (along with incorporation and introjection), in

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[23]In particular, see his discussion in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, chapter 7.

[24]See chapter 6 for Castoriadis's reading of Freud.

my view, is important for theorizing how identities are simultaneously "learned" through both fantasy and power relations,[25] yet in Freud's hands it provides only the *rudimentary beginnings* for viewing the psyche as an important dimension of agency.

The significance of the workings of internalization bear upon how we conceive of identification, and ultimately, how we identify it. So far, I have said that identification involves imitation, but that not all imitation is identification. Thus, to be clear about how to identify or interpret identification, it has been necessary to outline the processes with which an identification is "assimilated." In looking at internalization (as well incorporation and introjection), I have suggested that it entails the mechanism by which a subject comes to "bring into itself" social relationships (and the conflicts attached to them). (In the case of introjection and incorporation, it is objects and part-objects, not relations which are brought into the subject.) Moreover, all these processes not only involve actual objects or relations as they exist in reality, but they are also fuelled by fantasy, by imagined constructions and representations. With this said, then, identifications are established with an eye both to reality and the imaginary. The social relation internalized is not necessarily a direct, and over-determined phenomenon, but one requisite on a subject who has, as Castoriadis claims, the capacity to create, to imagine. However, while the social does not determine identity, the psyche does not produce the social. The social environment is the nexus through which identifications are made possible. It both provides the "raw material" of objects and relationships that subjects identify with, and creates a zone of mediation

[25]I have not discussed the ambivalent nature of identification, particularly in regard to incorporation, for this would detract from my main emphasis here. I refer the reader once again to Appendix B.

Thus, with an eye to both reality and the imaginary, the mere imitation of an object, be it a teacher, a pet, a basketball star, or a mother does not mean the object or relation has been internalized, introjected, incorporated, or identified with. Instead it must be read against the social environment and the psyche simultaneously; that is, through the structure of power (of social relations) and the structure of fantasy. The next section looks at how identification, particularly as it is related to internalization, is political in this broad sense. Furthermore, it provides us with a good example of how imitation and identification are not the same.

IV. The Politics of Identification

To reiterate, the point of this chapter is to examine identification as central to developing a liminal pedagogy of trans/formation. Given that transformative pedagogy is ultimately concerned with altering social relations, it is important to figure out what the role of identification is in terms of establishing these relations. And, it is by examining briefly Freud's notion of identification in *Group Psychology* that we may better understand how identification participates in a field of social relations and is not directly related to imitation. These two factors have important bearing upon how we interpret identification in pedagogical encounters.

As we have seen, internalization explains how the individual comes to "bring into" itself the existing social relations. It sets up an ego-ideal (the paternal identification, according to Freud). However, there is another sense in which identification is about sociality, and that is how identification forms social bonds. In *Group Psychology*, Freud

offers his most detailed account of identification as a social relation. As Fuss suggests, "that this most interior of psychoanalytic concepts - itself a theory of interiorization - should find itself embedded at the center of Freud's philosophy of sociality functions as a powerful reminder that every emotional tie is also a social one. Psychoanalysis has no need to incorporate or identify with sociology since *it has always been* a science of social relations."[26]

Freud's opens *Group Psychology* with the express purpose of confounding the borders between the individual and society:

> In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.[27]

Freud suggests that a group psychology - that is, members of a group sharing a common psychological configuration - is founded upon an emotional tie. There are two trajectories to this emotional tie. First, there is a *hierarchical* identification with an authority figure which establishes the ego-ideal in each individual. As we already saw from his discussion of the Oedipus complex, Freud posits a "bringing into" the subject the paternal figure: an internalization of an authoritative social relation. Freud claims that the establishment of the ego-ideal through an identification with a leader (be it of church or state[28]) is necessary for the development of a group. Indeed this identification merely repeats the earlier ego-

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[26]Fuss, 40.

[27]Freud, *Group Psychology*, 95.

[28]Freud examines two cases where the functioning of the group mentality is quite dependent on this identificatory relation: the Church and the Army. See chapter 5 in *Group Psychology*.

ideal of childhood. Freud, in effect, claims that we project onto our later relations the Oedipal configuration.[29] Secondly, there is a *lateral* identification *between* members of the same group. Freud asserts that it is the result of *sharing* a common ego-ideal that individuals identify with each other: "*A primary group of this kind is a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in the place of their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego*" (147). Thus, individuals internalize the leader as ego-ideal, and form bonds, or emotional ties, with others who share this ideal.[30]

To give an example relevant to pedagogy, the teacher can function as an ego-ideal, as a leader who binds the students *as students* together, thus securing the identity of "student" for each individual. However, it is not the case that all relations between the teacher and the students will be internalized by the students - each student may have very different affective and psychical investments in the relationship between her and the teacher. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the figure of the teacher is a signifier that is linked to racially, ethnically, culturally, socially, gendered, and sexed social

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[29]This, of course, begs the question: is there then no resolution to the Oedipus complex? Irigaray brings this critique against Freud, asserting that the Oedipal scenario never dies. See *Speculum. De l'autre femme* (Paris: Edition de Minuit, 1974), 98.

[30]The primal horde for Freud is the first instance of sociality based upon an initial identification with the father as well as a subsequent identification amongst the brothers after they commit patricide. In this regard, the contemporary "group," with its shared ego-ideal (group-ideal) and ego identifications follows this pattern precisely. "Thus, the group appears to us as a revival of the primal horde... we must conclude that the psychology of groups is the oldest human psychology" (*Group Psychology*, 155). As well, the brothers imitate the strength of the father, not only incorporating the father as object, but internalizing the relationship of authority to the father. See his discussion of the primal horde in *Totem and Taboo*, [1913] trans. A.A. Brill (New York: Vintage, 1946).

relations. Thus the subject unconsciously "selects" (and - as we will see in the next two chapters - gives imaginary shape to) what is internalized and identified with.

This sharing of an ego-ideal is important for seeing identification and sociality not as merely imitative, but as involving a *shared fantasy*. That is, a lateral bond binding a community together is premised on the idea that the individuals participate in a collective imaginary. This raises important questions in terms of transforming social relations, for it appears that what has to be transformed is the collective imaginary supporting lateral identificatory bonds. Moreover, what is crucial is that one cannot always read this identificatory bond between individuals off their outward behaviours, or "imitations." For instance, as we shall examine in more detail below, Algerian women who unveiled during the war of independence were able to "pass" as Europeans. Their lateral bonds of identification (as revolutionaries obeying a counter-colonial structure of authority) could not be immediately apprehended from their imitations (as Europeans). The point to be made is that the collective imaginary, and therefore identification, needs to be read with attention to the political and social field.

To summarize, the emphasis I am placing here on internalization and its relation to identification raises yet other questions for imitation and identity. If identification can involve internalizing social relations, then it seems to me that identification can be an important political category. However, the politics of identification should not be confused with a politics of mimesis. Following Freud, mimesis is not necessarily indicative of an identification. My agenda here is to assert that it is only through considering the political field of social relations as much as we consider the psychical acts of internalization (as well

as incorporation and introjection), that we may begin to see how imitation can be differentiated from identification, and what this signifies for trans/formative pedagogical encounters.

Imitation and Social Identity

In order to illustrate more thoroughly what the uncoupling of identification and imitation "look like," and what this signals for transformation, I turn to a reading of Fuss's reading of Frantz Fanon's reading of identification and imitation.[31] Fuss sets herself the task of elaborating the connection between colonialism and psychoanalysis: "when situated within the context of colonial politics, the psychoanalytic *assumption* that every conscious imitation conceals an unconscious identification needs to be carefully questioned, read for the signs of its own colonizing impulses" (148). While my own view is that this is an erroneous interpretation of Freudian identification, Fuss nevertheless provides a useful analysis of the practice of unveiling Fanon observed in Algeria during the war for independence from French colonial rule. The unveiling enables the Algerian women to "pass" as Europeans and thereby carry on their revolutionary political activity under the noses of the colonial authorities. The unveiling, in Fanon's reading, does not necessarily signify an identification with the Europeans oppressors, so much as it signals a politics of

[31]I focus on Fuss rather than on Fanon explicitly, for it is her assumptions about imitation and identification that I am responding to here.

imitation. Thus, it demands we recognize that identification is not necessarily at stake here, unveiling being a *strategic*, not *identificatory* practice.[32]

Moreover, what is necessary for the strategy to have worked is that the "imitative" performance be mistaken, or misrecognized, *as an identification*. That is, the colonial authorities need to "read" or "identify" identification in this practice in order for it to be successful, strategically speaking. However, this misreading is not inherent to psychoanalytic *theory* as Fuss seems to think. Hence I do not agree with Fuss that psychoanalytic identification is a colonizing impulse. As we have seen, Freudian theory distinguishes between identification and imitation, calling attention to the psychical (not apparent) assimilation of a mimetic act. Because of this misreading, Fuss attributes to Fanon "the attempt to install a wedge between identification and imitation" (152). However, in my view, it is not so much his *installing* of the wedge, but his *politicizing* of the wedge that is important here. Fanon views the psyche as a political formation (as Fuss herself is aware), and accordingly, looks to the social and political field as providing the range of possibilities for imitation and identifications. The radical challenge to psychoanalytic theory Fanon poses has to do with making evident the involvement of politics in the formation of psychical reality, and in the mimetic practices subjects engage in. What Fanon does is pay close attention to the distinctions and connections between identification and imitation, broadening the conventional psychoanalytic emphasis on the family.

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[32]This is not to say that the women were not identifying with anything or anyone (for example, an image of the revolutionary), but that their identifications cannot be read directly from the "imitation," which only suggests the possibility of identification with the colonizers.

Fuss writes: "But the point to be registered is that while imitation may either institute or gratify an unconscious identification, it can and does frequently exceed the logic of that identification. Put another way, identification with the Other is neither a necessary precondition nor an inevitable outcome of imitation" (153). Paradoxically I am in agreement with Fuss's conclusions, but for very different reasons than she herself provides. Her reading does not serve the purpose she initially sets out to fulfill: to remedy the alleged psychoanalytic conflation between identification and imitation. That is, her desire to challenge a Freudian conception of identification is her blind spot. It is not that other aspects of identification cannot be subject to critique, but that her conclusion merely underscores the conventional psychoanalytic view of identification and imitation I have outlined above.

In sum, then, because of its relation both to the unconscious and to the political and social field, identification can be quite distinct from the performativity which often is mistaken in its place. Indeed, as Fuss and Fanon analyze, it is precisely this issue of mistaken identity that itself reveals a colonizing impulse. Of course, this leads us to ask: how do we as transformative educators identify identification in ways that might avoid continually attributing mistaken identities to our students - and indeed ourselves?

V. Interpreting Identification

This section draws together some of the issues at stake for transformative pedagogy, and how identification is a question of interpretation in practical ways. In particular, I wish to reemphasize here, that as a liminal practice, pedagogy is always

caught in an ambivalent relation where identities are simultaneously secured and transformed. In this way, it is caught up in systems of identification. Thus, in order to live this ambivalence more effectively, we need to consider how we interpret identification, how we recognize its presence in and through our pedagogical practice.

As we have seen thus far: 1. not all imitation is identification; 2. identification involves processes of "assimilation," namely incorporation, introjection and internalization; 3. internalization explains how social relations are "brought into" the subject; 4. individuals form social identities based on internalization and a collective imaginary; 5. identifications are formed through a political field (that is, through social relations). These points have a significant bearing upon rethinking transformative pedagogical practice in terms of liminality. Indeed, this section suggests that for pedagogy to be trans/formative, it must have a sense of how identifications form in the *specific* context of the classroom. That is, while we as cultural workers can alter our view of the "individual" or "identity" or the "subject," in an abstract sense, we also need to narrow our vision, and fine-tune our hearing, to perceive what the class may be telling us. How do we listen in order to identify identification beyond performance, beyond imitation, as it were? I believe these questions to be crucial in developing a sensitivity in line with our goals for social justice.

For instance, pedagogy as a liminal space requires us to understand that oppressive structures are not always experienced oppressively, or may be experienced differently from what we expect. It seems that in order to transform the pain and suffering endured in oppressive situations, we - as teachers, and as cultural workers, broadly conceived - need

to develop a framework for understanding the paradoxes and ambivalences that structure people's experiences and identifications. Moreover, in advocating intervention into the oppressive conditions of society, we need to explore what such an understanding may offer us. What needs to be faced are the ethical questions this raises for how we interpret the class, and how we consequently act upon it. For our intervention into an "oppressive" situation is *preceded* by an act of interpretation that already codifies the situation as such.[33] As we articulate our views in the class, how do we enable or prevent students from speaking otherwise; from speaking of the pleasures they may find in conditions we already deem as oppressive. How do cultural workers "intervene" in these situations when students have learned to identify and derive pleasure from these situations? I don't think these questions can be answered by claiming on the one hand that "false consciousness" is operating in the minds of these individuals, or, on the other hand, that "no matter what people think, what matters is the material basis of their oppression." Neither, however, do I believe that we can retreat into the view that "oppression" is a figment of our imagination, or that any pronouncement of "pleasure" within oppressive situations automatically renders these situations liberatory or unoppressive. Instead, I am suggesting a third alternative, one that is based on an attunement to the specificities of our classroom. I am calling for what may appear to be stating the obvious for many educators: to let the classroom inform our vision of oppression, to achieve a fine balance between, on the one hand, what we believe and want to believe, and, on the other hand, what our students

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[33]This is not to suggest that oppression is merely a subjective category, but that in *naming* a situation as ppressive we articulate what oppression is for our students, in much the same way, as I argued earlier, that we articulate difference in our classes as well.

believe and want to believe. Interpretation cannot be carried out entirely before the event, so to speak; and neither can it be neutralized, as if interpretation of larger systemic injustices were not central to the pedagogical act, were not central for understanding how capital, racism, and misogynistic practices shape our pleasures, desires, and identifications. Interpreting what is going on in the class requires an openness and sensitivity to how what "we" classify as oppressive situations may not always be experienced by others the way we expect them to be. Thus, there is need on the part of teachers to understand the nature of their own investment in teaching in a way that neither simplistically erases the social need to teach transformatively, nor does away with the plurality of identifications that enable us to derive (perverse?) pleasure as well as pain from the workings of oppression. Interrogating our personal investments in teaching does not mean the whole project of teaching for liberation should be abandoned. Rather it calls for a fine-tuning of how we listen to our classroom communities - to hear what they say about oppression and pleasure, to hear how they identify themselves against the grain of our expectations.

There are two consecutive steps to this in my view. One is recognizing identification as that which not only occurs between individual persons, but as that which occurs between and beyond subjects; recognizing the embodied individual as simultaneously psychical, social, communal - an embodiment of a *web of relations*. This is the *first* step toward identifying identification: allowing ourselves the opportunity to listen and view another person as more than an individual - to look at the "beyond" of that individual, to view the classroom community as more than the sum total of individual bodies.

The *second* step, as I have already suggested, is to look at the pedagogical relation with this notion of the individual in mind. Freudian psychoanalysis emphasizes that identifications are played out in the transferential relationship - a relationship of specificity - between analysand and analyst. In this vein, Annie Reich's model of transference is helpful for understanding how we identify identification in the specifics of the analytic encounter. Her views are a useful model for educators, not because the psychoanalytic arrangement is like that of the pedagogical one, but because her attention to the difference between imitation and identification, and her emphasis on the importance of "trial" identifications lends itself well to exploring identifications as instances of social import. I wish to take a slight detour here, in order to explain Reich's views a little further and suggest ways in which they are central for thinking about the ethical responsibilities of trans/formative pedagogy.

Reich and Transference

Reich makes a distinction between imitative gesture and identification; the former being "transitory,"[34] the latter being a more permanent feature of one's identity. It is this transitory gesture that Reich claims informs the interpretation of identification (and indeed the analytic situation as a whole) on the analyst's part. The "suddenness" of the interpretation which often seems to occur to the analyst, occurs via the analyst's own unconscious: "It is as if a partial and short-lived identification with the patient had taken

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[34]Reich, "Narcissistic Object Choice in Women," 197.

place."[35] Thus for Reich what often appears to be "intuitive" is a result of a transitory identification, an indication not of countertransference but of empathy "There is an essential difference between the empathic use of one's unconscious and acting out in countertransference. Empathic understanding represents an ego activity, while countertransference is based on the breakthrough of id impulses which have to be warded off with more or less neurotic defenses."[36] She stresses that a "trial identification" does not constitute a countertransference, for she believes that only "lasting identifications" (identifications proper) played out as a result of the analyst's own past conflicts are what mark a countertransference relation. Indeed, Reich is clear about this distinction:

> One of the prevailing misconceptions is the equation of countertransference with the analyst's total response to the patient, using the term to include all conscious reactions, responses, and ways of behaviour. This is as incorrect as to call transference everything that emerges in the patient in relation to the analyst during analysis, and not to distinguish between the manifestations of unconscious strivings and reality-adapted, conscious behavior or observations. The analyst is for the patient, and the patient for the analyst, also a reality object and not only a transference or countertransference object.[37]

Thus, Reich emphasizes the importance of being able to make fine distinctions between what constitutes an identification and what constitutes an imitation (or "trial" identification). On the part of the analyst, she "identifies" with the patient, psychically imitating her conflicts, "and in this way participates in the patient's feelings." After

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[35]Reich, "On Countertransference," in *Psychoanalytic Contributions*, 136.

[36]Reich, "Empathy and Countertransference," in ibid., 360.

[37]Reich, "Further Remarks on Countertransference," in ibid., 273. Yet, Reich also states that "Countertransference is a necessary prerequisite of analysis. If it does not exist, the necessary talent and interest are lacking. But it has to remain shadowy and in the background." "On Countertransference," 154.

detaching herself once again, she recognizes the feelings as belonging to the patient. "Thus, the analyst acquires knowledge about the nature of the patient through an awareness of something that went on in his [sic] own self."[38] So long, of course, as the identification is indeed a "trial" one and not one born out of unresolved conflicts. On the part of the patient, Reich is equally adamant about the role of "trial identification." She suggests that patients may be "trying something on" when they pick up and imitate the gestures of the analyst, and are not necessarily always involved in transferring onto the analyst past conflicts and fantasies. Thus, it is important, she claims, not to interfere with the patient's own analysis by either diverting attention away from the patient to expl[illegible] an analyst's countertransference or by assuming that the analyst cannot achieve some modicum of professional distance.[39] In this sense, the "trial identification" with the patient is an empathic device to the *patient's* end, and should not be acted upon for the purpose of furthering the analyst's own agenda.[40] Analytic understanding is thus both intuitive and based on theoretical knowledge.[41] In other words, it is the relationship between the

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[38]Both quotes are from Reich, "Further Remarks on Countertransference," 277.

[39]Here, Reich uses the term "neutrality;" yet she does not mean that the analyst is totally neutral in the sense that some of us might understand, in terms of not responding to the patient. This is why I have emphasized "professional distance" here which seems to get at the heart of her concerns; "Further Remarks on Countertransference," 274.

[40]Interestingly, Reich warns of "pedagogic" attitudes: "The analyst feels tempted to fulfill thwarted infantile desires of patients and thus to teach them that the world is not as terrible as they in the childish ways of thinking assume. Thus anxiety is smoothed over; reassurance is given instead of real analysis of the anxiety." "On Countertransference," 145.

[41]Reich, "Further Remarks on Countertransference," 276.

specificity of the situation and the interpretative hermeneutic which the analyst draws on to guide the course of the analysis.

I see a number of important points here for identifying identification in pedagogical encounters, all of which are interrelated and do not easily stand alone First, by linking a trial identification (an imitative gesture) to the analyst's interpretation of the analysis, Reich puts imitation at the heart of interpretation itself The short-lived identifications made by the analyst are what give the analyst a route into the analytic encounter itself Thus the very act of interpretation, of *identifying* identification, is an empathic one, and not an attempt to call somebody out. For the transformative teacher, then, identifying through imitative gesture (the psychical putting of oneself in another's proverbial shoes), may be the very gesture that leads to interpreting whether a strong or transitory identification is taking place in the classroom environment. And this distinction is important if we are not going to assume that everything that gets expressed in the classroom (by teachers and students alike) is always indicative of their identifications. Indeed it is important for moving beyond a rigid identity politics. Furthermore, it enables teachers to become aware that they are themselves invested in the interpretive act itself.

However, the second point to be raised cautions against providing an overly intuitive grasp of interpretation for, as Reich states, it is the combination of intuition with theoretical knowledge that is important here. It is not enough to claim that empathy defines the relationship between teacher and student. Conceptual understanding is needed in order to avoid falling into the trap that pedagogy is an intuitive activity, or that there is

nothing to teach about the politics of education or teaching, or that teachers are born not made.

Thirdly, envisioning interpretation as a combination of intuitive and conceptual thinking enables teachers to remind themselves that it is neither *their* investment nor *their* intuition that is of primary importance in the pedagogical relationship, but that "trial" identifications are concerned with the *work* of pedagogy, of teaching so that someone (optimally, of course, including the teacher) learns. It is not that teaching should be a "self-less" act, a pleasureless performativity, but that the conflation of high emotional investment with good teaching needs to be questioned for what it prevents students from expressing. Obviously, I do not mean to suggest that there are not, or should not be, moments of elation in teaching, but that we need to continually investigate when our investments become so entangled that we can no longer consistently distinguish the autonomy of our students from our own pedagogical (and other) desires. Moments of high emotional investment can electrify a class or an encounter with a student; it can push limits that might have otherwise prevented breakthroughs from occurring. However, should this become the *raison d'être* of pedagogy? I think not, for if we lose sight of treating our students as subjects who have web-like connections to the world, we may make the faulty assumption that they are "ours," that their responses to us are made *because* of us, as if their identities are not linked to a host of factors external to the classroom relation.

Fourthly, working toward maintaining this balance as an ideal goal to strive toward may give reason for pause; it may, in other words, allow for that critical distance necessary for interpreting the pedagogical scene without assuming that all manifestations

of behaviour are always what we expect them to be (e.g., the woman who files her nails at the front of the class;[42] the man who is covered in tattoos and body piercings; the boys and girls who imitate Batman or Madonna in the schoolyard). Students may be "trying something on," may be experimenting and tinkering with aspects of culture available to them, may even identify themselves with the social relationships these behaviours replicate, and may be doing any of these things for reasons which are beyond the immediate grasp of the teacher. Yet, we must also be aware that "trying on," or tinkering with cultural codes, may be part of the teacher-student relation itself. A student may "try on" something which she perceives the teacher may like or dislike, as we shall see in the analysis of identification presented below. Thus, by not assuming an imitation to be an identification we may, hopefully, be more reflective about the kinds of assumptions we bring to - and form within - the classroom.

Lastly, given the importance of the specificity of the pedagogical encounter for identifying identification, Reich's emphasis on the distinction between "trial" identifications and permanent identifications (on the distinctions between imitation and identification proper), opens up room for interpreting the political field as part of the field of identifications. For how does imitation or identification make sense outside of the social norms that students and teachers alike ambivalently relate to? Teachers need to link specific actions of their students (and themselves) to the realities of the communities of

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[42]This particular example is taken from a description of a class given by Judith Williamson, "How does Girl Number 20 Understand Ideology," *Screen Education*, no. 40 (1981/1982): 80-7. The interesting thing to note here is the off-handed treatment of this woman by Williamson because she engages in stereotypical behaviour.

which they partake. Teachers and students are not *only* fantasy objects, projected objects of the other's construction (although they are certainly that), but they are also reality objects, embodied subjects with limits, who have histories to particular cultures and communities which have a bearing upon what gets imitated, identified with, and why. Students wearing the hijab, for instance, cannot be assumed to be anti-feminist, victims of servitude, or fundamentalist Muslims (just as women who deveiled in Algeria could not be assumed to be identifying with the colonial powers). In assuming, without careful analysis, that "we know why" women choose to wear the hijab, we may be falling into the same trap as the French colonial authorities in Algeria - we may be confusing imitation with identification, thereby setting up a barrier for pedagogically engaging the issue of the hijab in the first place (e.g., why it is banned, what it may represent to different communities, etc.). Collapsing imitation and identification, and presuming (without adequate attention to specificity) to know why people behave the way they do, does little to serve a transformative agenda; for such an agenda needs to establish precisely what it is that one is intervening into, and recognize that this practice in turn enacts its own possibilities for other identifications, other identity formations.

Thus, in sum, identifying identification is attendant upon: 1. examining the specificity of the class in relation to societal expectation and norms; 2. developing an empathic attitude *in conjunction with* a conceptual understanding of how students and teachers interrelate; 3. paying special attention to the political field - that is, the power relations and hierarchies in operation both outside and inside the class - in order to see if individual behaviours and discourses can be thought through their differences, for not

everyone who speaks the same words means the same thing. In this sense, the *process* of identifying identification is extremely important. The aim is not that we get it right for all time, but that we are reflective and held accountable for the process by which we reach our conclusions, through which we identify identification, through which we reassess our interventionist strategies. It would seem, therefore, that identifying identification requires responsibility and respect for students as having web-like connections to the world beyond the bounds of the interpersonal teacher-student relation. In this way, transformative educators may better live through the ambivalence that structures their teaching practices. By way of conclusion, I turn now to discuss how one teacher has interpreted identification between himself and a student in order to illustrate the problems and potential breakthroughs to be had in identifying identification.

VI. Identifying Identification: Problems and Potentialities

Chris Amireault's essay, "The Good Teacher, the Good Student: Identifications of a Student Teacher,"[43] is a story written by a male graduate student who was also teaching a college-level English course on writing. Amireault takes us through two major scenes with one of his students, Shannon, and offers his interpretation of these events first as they occurred, and then as he reflected upon them a year later. Thus, there are two (different) interpretations of identification that appear in the text. As well, his story is interwoven with theoretical accounts of what a good (radical) teacher and a good student are, and these

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[43]This essay appears in Jane Gallop ed., *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 64-78. All future references to this article will be made in the text.

radically alter as a result of these encounters with Shannon. In the opening section of the essay, Amireault paints a picture of the "good teacher" - one that is built upon the image of the "teacher-student" that Freire advocates; that is "the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but who is himself taught in dialogue with the students."[44] Amireault asserts that this neo-logism is the foundation for radical teaching, and identifies himself as embracing this vision, as sharing in this group fantasy (66). Moreover, he identifies himself as one "who tries to attend to gender in my courses and has often looked to feminist pedagogy for help and justification of my classroom practice"(68). In the next portion of the essay, however, after his second encounter with Shannon, this view begins to crumble. Amireault claims he cannot escape the authority inherent in the position of teacher, and cannot see how a "good student" can in turn escape being framed within this hierarchy (71-73).[45] Thus, he ultimately views Freire's conception of "student-teachers" with suspicion. Let us take a look at the two meetings - and Amireault's analyses of them - which compelled this change of heart.

At the first meeting, described in the section on the good teacher, Shannon figures out for herself what she wants as a student, takes control over her own writing, and seems pleased and proud that she has done so. Her declaration to Amireault is: ""I spent all of

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[44]Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1989), 67.

[45]Indeed he offers what in my view is a misreading of Freire's terminology. When Freire states that "the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers," Amireault reads the "with" as an "and" and claims that two terms in fact emerge (72). His misreading causes him to underemphasize the dialogical interrelationship that Freire is advocating; it is the *relation between* the two positions that is important. However, this relation should not be construed as an interpersonal relation, but as a political one.

my time trying to figure out what you wanted me to write, and I couldn't do it," she said "Only now I realize that what I needed to do was to figure out what *I* wanted to write"" (65). Amireault states that "somehow, she had come to learn what I most wanted to teach. Somehow, she had learned that what I most wanted as a teacher was for my students to figure out what they most wanted as students" (65). He leaves the meeting elated and satisfied that he is a "good teacher." And, astutely, in my view, offers an important observation: "clearly, my pleasure in my student's pleasure is connected to a culturally valorized fantasy that structures most teaching, that of the selfless teacher who teaches "for his students" and not "for himself"" (65).

However, the elation does not last. Upon a second meeting a week later, Amireault is shaken: "Expecting another celebration of our teacher/student relation, I asked her in [to my office]; once again, she said she had figured something out, and I smiled in anticipation. "I know what I want to be," she announced with confidence. "I want to be a college professor"" (70). Amireault reacts with horror and concludes that the "fantastic" pedagogy "consummated" only a week before was a product of his fantasy and "nothing else" (70). In fact, now Shannon's statement is read in relation to his practicing the *worst* kind of pedagogy: "reproducing little copies of myself in my students" (70).

His interpretation of these two events after Shannon's second declaration, revolves around identifying identification. He claims that what had happened was that Shannon was being "reproduced" in his own image; she was imitating him, identifying with him, and this shattered the fantasy of the good teacher that *dialogues* with - not *reproduces* - students. The reading of this identification turns into an emphatic dismissal of radical

pedagogy to the point where his earlier self-identification with Freire is entirely and absolutely disavowed. From now on, Amireault takes the line that Freire's "radical pedagogical position is just as much an imposition as any other" (71). His own identifications with the good teacher are thereby transformed by his perception of Shannon's identification with him. (His ability to disavow radical pedagogy *in toto* suggests to me that perhaps he never did *identify* with its practices, but perhaps *imitated* them in the first place).

Reflecting upon these meetings a year later, Amireault offers a reinterpretation of them, reading them as, in fact, indicative of *his* identification with Shannon, and not of hers with him, as previously thought. I quote here at length:

> I finally realized that Shannon had simply declared that she wanted to be a college professor. My frantic urgings that she investigate other disciplines had responded to my assumption that she wanted to be an *English* professor. I had responded to my own projection, not to what she had said; no wonder she was confused. My feverish disavowal was in fact trying to deflect not her identification with me but my identification with her.
>
> In the first scene with Shannon, I identified with a student whose desires seemed wholly her own and not at all the product of an identification with the teacher. Here was a student who knows what she wants and can distinguish it from what her teacher wants. Here was a student who was thus beyond the effects of pedagogy, a student who wasn't being taught anything at all but was simply learning on her own, a student without a teacher - a student, I hoped, like me. But as the second scene reveals, my hope was not that she was like me but that I was like her, a "good student." Instead of saving me from my troubling identifications, the second scene revealed my investment in them...Her statement was thus triply horrifying, revealing what I really am (a student), what I desperately hope to be (a real teacher), and what I desperately hope I am not (neither a narcissistic teacher nor a sycophant student) (74-75).

This new interpretation, occurring as it does in the final few pages of the essay, alters the landscape significantly here - or does it? Remember, in the initial interpretation of the first

meeting, Shannon's statement is read as a learning of what he "*most wanted as a teacher*," and is not as Amireault claims in the quote above, read as desires that "seemed wholly her own." From the *beginning*, he interprets her as having *learned his desire*, and has thereby "consummated" his pedagogy, as he puts it. The student is read as the amourous complement, as that which provides desirous fulfillment for his own identity as teacher Her words are heard solely in relation to his own desire to be a good teacher, so much so that this incident convinces him of being such a teacher. From his recounting of the very first meeting, Shannon's words are not contextualized in relation to her life-situation or even in relation to the institution of learning where students are often encouraged to let teachers "tell them what to do." Hence, Amireault's final reading (that he identified with her words as though they were "wholly her own") has never taken place in the narrative he presents, for he never recognizes Shannon as an autonomous subject with web-like connections to the world. Both in the initial and final interpretation offered, Amireault places himself at the centre of Shannon's discourse. Shannon is either "consummating" the pedagogical marriage, or is the target of "feverish disavowal," or is "his" identification. Shannon is not seen outside the pedagogical relation; she is from beginning to end a faceless student, a student who exists solely in relation to the teacher, and not a subject who exists as a student.

Moreover, Amireault's initial perception of Shannon's taking on his desires sustains his identification with the good radical teacher - that is, as an internalized ego-ideal. Shannon is perceived to be challenging his ego-ideal by imitating him *as he exists as a student* (that is, by imitating *his wish* to be a college professor). Thus she does not share

the collective fantasy of good teacher, but instead has another ego-ideal - that of good student. As a result, Amireault disavows his identification with the ego-ideal, claiming it to be "no more than" fantasy (as if fantasy were not necessary for transformation!). Ironically, his final perception of *his own identification with her* accomplishes the same thing. Recall that for Amireault a good student does not need the teacher. Thus, by identifying with her as a good student, he *cannot* be the good teacher and distances himself from such a position. His disavowal is complete, and he is able to sustain himself as good student.

In both the initial and final interpretations, the good teacher is "nothing else" but fantasy, and even though Amireault assures us that "real teaching and real learning" have taken place between him and Shannon (an assertion which I do not doubt), his interpretation of radical teaching as *only* fantasy has tremendous impact upon his conduct with her. To say that the *ego-ideal* of the good teacher is fantasy is one thing; but teachers and students are also reality objects for each other, and as such they participate in a teaching and learning encounter that is more than fantasmatic projection.

Is there a danger, then, in misidentifying identification? Clearly, Amireault's conduct as a teacher altered depending on how he identified its presence or absence. He was "accepting" of Shannon at the first meeting; and was horrified at her seeming identification with him at the second. However, the risk of identifying identification lies not so much in the end result, but in the process itself. The real failure here is not whether Amireault "got the interpretation right" in the end, but that he missed out on a significant dimension of the identificatory - and pedagogical - relation: its relation to community,

sociality, and authority in a broader sense. While Amireault calls for recognizing "a dialectical movement between the positions of teacher and student, recognizing both positions as fully inhabitable, mutually reinforcing, valuable, and real" (77) his rendering of the relationship is purely hermetic. For example, concerned as he is with gender issues and feminist pedagogical models, he misses an opportunity to examine how gender might have been functioning within and through Shannon's discourse - and through both of their identifications. Instead, identifications are rendered as apolitical, imitation is codified as always already reproductive in the most negative of senses, and teachers and students remain caught in an interpersonal relation seemingly divorced from the realities that subtend their lives beyond the classroom. For instance, what effect, if any, did being in a male teacher's office have upon Shannon's statements? How does her cultural and social background get negotiated in the formation of her identity as student who is gaining a sense of autonomy? Is she "trying on" the possibility of being a college professor because she has identified with the teacher, or are there other identifications and desires at work here? And even if identifications do take place between teachers and students, are they always simply reproductive? Can not imitations and identifications reconstruct the meanings of social norms? How have Amireault's self-identifications as both a "good student" and "good teacher" operated in the very notions of authority and masculinity in the academy? My point is not that Amireault could or should have addressed these *particular* questions, but that his interpretation leaves aside the political nature of pedagogy, the very aspect radical pedagogies are supposed to be about. For instance, Amireault remarks: "For example, I'm convinced that my critique of my relation with Shannon is on target, that *my*

pedagogy has more to do with my investments and identifications than with anything else" (77, my emphasis). Here, Amireault denies the truly radical quality of identification, laundering it of all potential for offering radical pedagogy the hope of revision.

While Amireault acknowledges the effect his interpretation has had upon what he hears and what he says to the student, and offers an intriguing, daring, and in many ways admirable self-analysis, he nevertheless positions the student's remarks around his own investments. And it is this continual positioning of the student around the centre of his own desires/identifications that concerns me in my own advocation of identifying identification. Amireault writes as though the centredness of teacherly investments are *unalterably inherent* to the pedagogical encounter. My own view is that distinctions need to be made and questions raised concerning the *overvaluation* of these teacherly investments. It is not that they are unimportant. Quite the contrary - as this entire thesis is attempting to show. Yet they need to become part of the work and responsibility of transformative teaching, rather than abandoning transformative teaching because they may exist. Indeed, I am suggesting here a working through of what pedagogical ambivalence may mean when students are seen to be more than students, as more than amourous complements or appendages to the performativity of teaching. I do not find Amireault's suggestion that "my pedagogy has more to do with my investments and identification than with anything else" very helpful in coming to terms with way the pedagogical encounter is an encounter between embodied subjects, with social identities that exceed far beyond the borders of the "personal." By placing himself at the heart of the student-teacher encounter Amireault accepts the institutional authority granted him without problematizing

it in the interpretive act itself. It is not that teachers do not carry authority, and it is not that teachers can or should dispense with it, but to assume that its operation always manifests itself in the same way (i.e., as a teacher-centred pedagogy - which is, ironically, a teacher-centred interpretation in itself), is to close off all possibil'ty and hope for working toward maintaining a fine balance between one's own investments as teacher and being able to listen attentively to the other. It is not about "good teachers" and "good students" but about a vision of "ethical pedagogical interaction." For me, some fantasies and imaginary communities are goals well-worth striving for.

It has been my attempt in this chapter to show how identifications and our identifying of them are caught up in a web of sociality, community, and pedagogy in wonderfully strange and ambivalent ways. The complexity of identification is not offered here in order that we may throw our hands up in despair, but that we may appreciate that pedagogical subjects are not atomistic individuals; nor are they bereft of a psychical and emotional life. The identifying of identification is caught up in social systems which constantly need to be interrogated for their oppressive features; neither they nor the identifications they attempt to interpret are innocent. Thus, both the process through which a subject comes to identify with an object or relation, and the process through which we identify or interpret this identification constitute a pedagogy. By this I mean that the interpretation of identification functions as a form of knowledge production that itself influences the pedagogical dynamic - both said and unsaid. And as such operates within a field of power relations that extend beyond the interpersonal context of the classroom

environment. However, this means taking seriously the assertion that not all imitation is identification Instead, student behaviours must be read contextually and with an eye to the ambivalence and ambiguity that constitute their lives as subjects. In other words, it is our imaginary projections and their effect on how we interpret identification that we need to be constantly examining. As I said above, the name of the game is not whether we get the interpretation "right", but that we remain open to the process of interpretation itself, listening to ourselves and our students in order to continually evaluate how the specifics of the classroom function to secure or displace social norms, conventions, or stereotypes, for example. As well, remaining open enables us to confront the ambivalence of our own practices which attempt to form new identities as they disband old ones, and possibly ask ourselves how identificatory relations can be changed to support equitable social relations.

Moreover, understanding identification as pertaining both to imaginary and real objects/subjects provides us with the groundwork needed for venturing into a more detailed account of how subjects are at once socially constructed yet not over-determined. For this chapter has focused more upon how identification is framed within social and political contexts, and how identification (particularly through the process of internalization) abets the *formation* of a social subject, and of identity. In order, then, to theorize the bridge between the psychical and social in a way that does not conceal agency, more attention needs to be paid to how the subject in fact escapes overdetermination. Thus what remains to be explored is the more dynamic edge of the subject-in-excess; the ways in which, for instance, subjects are agents of change as well as being the subjects of internalization of social norms, expectations, and behaviours. How are we framed within, yet lie beyond

the borders of our cultures and histories? In this sense, identification is only one aspect of the pedagogical imaginary.

CHAPTER FOUR

Imaginary Beginnings: Lacan's Wandering Shadow

> What did I try to get across with the mirror stage? That whatever in man is loosened up, fragmented, anarchic, establishes its relation to his perceptions on a plane with a completely original tension. The image of his body is the principle of every unity he perceives in objects. Now, he only perceives the unity of this specific image from the outside, and in an anticipated manner. Because of this double relation which he has with himself, all the objects of his world are always structured around the wandering shadow of his own ego.
>
> Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire II*

The "beginning" in the title of this chapter is both misleading and accurate. Misleading in that I have not begun my discussion of the pedagogical imaginary here at all, but elsewhere, in the previous chapter on identification. Accurate in that, as we shall see, the imaginary is about a most significant beginning: that of the subject whose beginning is also elsewhere - in the other. It is thus a beginning that marks the becoming of a subject, a beginning of a process of a relation with an other which, following Lacan, Irigaray, Castoriadis, and Freud, is both external and internal to the ego. The imaginary is a conceptual device that both draws on and yet moves beyond the limits of Freudian identification. For the imaginary encapsulates identification, and yet attempts to offer a different conception of the relationship between the symbolic and psychical reality. It

attempts to explain the relationship between self and other as a fantastical, representational one. It is this relationship to otherness as part of one's ego, the relation to difference as part of one's identity, that I will be exploring here and throughout the rest of the thesis.

This chapter, in particular, focuses on Lacan's view of the imaginary and illustrates how his conception of it in his early work offers the *beginning* of a productive (if somewhat limited) conception of agency. Lacan's image of the "wandering shadow of the ego" provides an understanding of how fantasy is projected onto the symbolic order, and is thereby the means through which that order is acted upon. In this regard, the chapter primarily deals with one of the themes of trans/formation: namely, identity formation and agency.

Yet, even as this early view gestures toward an agentic subject, Lacan's later views, influenced by structuralism, position the imaginary as subordinate to the symbolic (that is to language, culture, and society in general). This undermines his limited attention to agency in his early work on the imaginary. Indeed, his reconfiguration of how "imaginary identification" is *dominated* by "symbolic identification" leaves little room for conceiving of how one goes about altering the symbolic and the social order more generally.

Thus this chapter is ultimately highly critical of the Lacanian view. Nonetheless, due to the prevalence of Lacan's view of the imaginary, and due to the fact that those who distinguish their own views of the imaginary from Lacan (namely, Irigaray and Castoriadis) are the subject of future chapters, it is necessary to pursue an engagement with his ideas. As well, Lacan compels us to deal with questions about our imaginary identities

which I think are helpful in orienting ourselves to the simultaneity of identity trans/formation: What role does the imaginary play in the formation of the ego? How is our identity always already dependent upon an other? For whom do we identify? Whose desires are being responded to in the process of identification? These questions are of central importance for *beginning* to inquire into how subjects may transform themselves and their identifications. In this sense, perhaps the title of this chapter is not so misleading after all.

What follows begins with a reading of Lacan's mirror stage, outlining his views of imaginary identification and the limited conception of agency derived from his metaphor of the "wandering shadow." The chapter then takes up Lacan's separation of imaginary identification from symbolic identification. I suggest that the imaginary cannot be seen as always subordinate to the symbolic, and discuss Stuart Hall's invocation to the contrary. The chapter concludes with two readings of Chris Amireault's essay on student-teacher identification, in order to explore what the Lacanian paradigm offers in the way of provoking certain questions, while it forecloses on others.

I. Lacan's Wandering Shadow: The Mirror, the other[1]

The imaginary, in common parlance, signifies something which is the product of the imagination, something which is un-real, something which is derived from a creative, active, mental process. However, in psychoanalytic circles, the imaginary is not always

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[1]The "other" here is purposely left in lowercase to indicate the imaginary dimensions of otherness. Other with an uppercase "o" designates the symbolic dimension of alterity.

so simply defined, particularly in the Lacanian lexicon. Lacan's thesis interrogates the relationship the nascent subject has to "images," to a field of representation. But, the term also suggests a relation to the symbolic that is itself unclear and ill-defined. The imaginary, as we shall see, consists in the realm of the fantastical which, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, is neither illusion nor reality, but exists as a third term: psychical reality Fantasy and psychical reality are at once connected to that most seemingly "subjective" of impulses - desire - and to the most "objective" aspects of the external world - images and other people. Fantasy is located "exclusively within the domain of opposition between subjective and objective..."[2] It is the element of fantasy and images both in the formation of identity and in the alteration of representations that concerns me here.

Lacan's earliest formulation of the imaginary, and the one I will be focussing on, is to be found in his essay, "Stade du miroir." Here, Lacan outlines how identifying with an image of an other creates a split at the root of subjectivity.[3] Hence the "mirror stage" provides a model of how otherness is central to the (alienated) self, and how it shapes the way we perceive other objects. Unlike Freud's ostensibly "scientific" descriptions of the oral, anal, and genital stages, the mirror stage attempts to explain the imaginary relations that enable the eventual establishment of selfhood, of the 'I.' But these relations present an ambivalence, a doubling effect with which subjects must henceforth contend. Making

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[2]Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan (London: Methuen, 1986), 6.

[3]Lacan focuses on the formation of the ego and of the subject, and does not specifically use the term identity here. However, given that he discusses both imaginary and symbolic identification, and given identity is significantly tied to processes of identification, then his views are important for rethinking identity.

use of the animal studies of W. Köhler, and the infant studies of Charlotte Bühler, Elsa Kohler, and Henri Wallon,[4] Lacan stages a complex drama wherein the subject at once *recognizes* and *misrecognizes* its own fictional role. It is the doubleness which in effect causes the subject to split and become alienated from itself. Let us begin at the beginning.

Lacan commences with the rather innocent assumption that by about six months the child can recognize (*reconnaissance*) its own reflection in the mirror.[5] This recognition causes the child to make a "series of gestures in which he [sic] experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment" (*MS* 1, *SM* 93). That is, the child begins to recognize its own bodily movements in the image, in the "other." The specular image, therefore, enables the child to "see" itself as an object, and at the moment it identifies the image *as* itself, it sets up a narcissistic relation.[6] As Elizabeth Grosz writes: "the child's recognition of its own image means that it has adopted the perspective of exteriority on itself."[7] When presented with this mirror image, this specular other, the child identifies with it and effects "the transformation that takes

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[4]While most commentators on Lacan recognize his indebtedness to these studies, Borch-Jacobsen goes so far as to state there is nothing new in the mirror stage. *Lacan: The Absolute Master* trans. Douglas Brick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) 46-7.

[5]Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 1 [hereafter cited in the text as *MS*]; "Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'expérience psychanalytique," in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 93 [hereafter cited in the text as *SM*]. In the original French Lacan often uses the term "le petit homme" (literally "little man") to indicate child.

[6]Borch-Jacobsen claims that what Freud meant by primary narcissism was "a state preceding the representational split introduced by the specular image; Lacan, by contrast, proposes to conceive of the ego in the image *of the image*: far from preceding this image, the ego is outside itself form the start, transported into its image." *Lacan*, 46.

[7]Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1990), 38.

place in the subject when he assumes an image;" that is to say it establishes what Lacan (using the Latin) calls an *imago* (*MS* 2; *SM* 94). This means it introjects the image of the mirror, and makes it its own "self." So far, there is no cause for alienation or splitting [illegible] re. The child sees an image, introjects it, and establishes a sense of self.

However, the image (the other) does not coincide with the fragmentary and uncoordinated experience of the child, claims Lacan. In fa[illegible] the *Gestalt* of the image is apprehended by the infant as a unity, a body-image that is complete, whole, and total. The *imago* is an introject of the specular other which fails to conform to the "reality" of the child's uncoordinated body. Hence, Lacan names the identification with this introject a *méconnaissance*, a misrecognition.[8] The infant thus *misrecognizes* itself as a co-ordinated body at the same time as it *recognizes* itself in the image. Moreover, Lacan suggests that the child *anticipates* a future identity as *being like that image*. "The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust [*poussé interne*] is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation... and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development" (*MS* 4; *SM* 97). What has been *misrecognized* is fundamentally an illusion: a self-contained body and an autonomous individual. The *imago* is set up as an ideal-ego - Freud's *Idealich*.[9] It is,

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[8]In the French, the term for recognition is *reconnaissance*, the root word *connaissance* meaning cognition or knowledge. However, the translation of *méconnaissance* into English is often rendered mis*re*cognition rather than *miscognition* which is the more literal meaning here. I have stayed with the conventional translation for the sake of continuity with secondary texts, but wish to point out that the term suggests a fundamental *failure of knowledge*, and not just a *failure of awareness* as "misrecognize' often signals in English.

[9]As stated in chapter 3, Freud does not always conceptually differentiate between the ideal-ego and the ego-ideal. However, Lacan is more strict about his distinctions. Simply put, the ideal-ego is imaginary; it is an image of what one wants to be *like*. The ego-ideal, as we shall see, is

therefore, a *misrecognition* that enables the establishment of "an ideal unity, a salutary imago."[10] Thus there is no "real" unity to the subject. It is always other to itself, for it can only apprehend itself through an "image."[11] The ego is itself *constituted* through introjecting *difference*, and it is through this introjection, that the ego *imagines* itself to be the *same* as the image. The ego is, essentially, an other. As Borch-Jacobsen puts it: "far from having different types of libidinal relations *to* the object, the ego *is* an object (an image) from the very start; and, symmetrically, every love object *is* the ego (an image)."[12]

Thus, taken together, the subject needs to effect a *recognition* of itself as image (as other) before it enacts a *misrecognition* of itself (as unified self) in the act of identification. But what affect does this split have? What does this mean for the subject? According to Lacan, this means that the subject is torn between, on the one hand, the "jubilance" of self-recognition in which the infant dances, plays, and moves before the mirror, and, on the other, an "aggressivity" arising out of the frustration engendered by the fact that it is impossible to fulfill the ideal-ego (or salutary *imago*, or imaginary self) because of one's "real" situation.[13] For example, a child sees itself in a mirror and *re*cognizes that image as her own. Yet, it is an image only of her "exteriority," not of her multidimensional and

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symbolic (akin to Freud's superego); it is that which impels the subject to want to be *liked.*

[10]Lacan, "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis," in *Écrits*, 19; "L'aggressivité en psychanalyse," in *Écrits*, 113.

[11]Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy point out that the child "falls in love" with its image, "tak[ing] the image of his whole body as his love object." *The Works of Jacques Lacan* (London: Free Association Books, 1986) 54-5.

[12]Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan*, 50.

[13]Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 40.

fragmented experiences. In identifying with this image, she *mis*recognizes herself as *being like that image*: unfragmented, coherent, and whole. And, because this identification does not mesh with her daily experiences of her body, she, in effect, sets up an ideal image of what she *would like to be*. In seeking *to be like* that ideal, frustration ensues because her own physical and affective reality prevent her from fully becoming that ideal.

Moreover, for Lacan, not only is the ego constituted as other for the subject, but the *imago*, and the imaginary more generally, has the function of *bridging* the subject to its environment. Indeed, in his own words, Lacan "regard[s] the function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the *imago*, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality - or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* [innerworld and outerworld, respectively]" (*MS* 4; *SM* 96). The imaginary establishes a relation to the "outside" world that is marked by this dual tendency of pleasure and self-recognition, on the one hand, and frustration and aggressivity, on the other. Gone forever is the possibility of any *unmediated* relation to reality. From now on the pre-discursive *imago* becomes a mediator, an imaginary and fictional intermediary between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*. Benvenuto and Kennedy note that "the mirror image organizes and constitutes the subject's vision of the world."[14] The subject thus "sees" objects - including itself - through the filter of its own psychical reality.

In this regard, Lacan says that the agency of the ego, before its social determination, is situated in a "fictional direction" (*dans une ligne de fiction*) (*MS* 2; *SM*

[14]Benvenuto and Kennedy, 55.

94).[15] That is, a subject *acts* in the world through its imaginary (and therefore illusory and fictional) identification with the other. So, identification with the other constitutes the (imaginary) ego which, in turn, shapes how one responds to others. The subject not only *is* a "fiction"(an untruth, a false sense of unity), but its ability to act in the world takes the *form* of fiction. The subject responds to the outerworld through its own illusory (and therefore fictional) oneness: it can neither directly nor *im*mediately apprehend what's "real."[16] If we look at the mother-child relation, the imaginary identification produces . fantastical bond between the infant's ego and the mother. As Grosz writes, such identification

> impels it [the subject] nostalgically to seek out a past symbiotic completeness, even if such a state never existed and is retrospectively imposed on the pre-mirror phase; and to seek an anticipatory or desired (ideal or future) identity in the coherence of the totalized specular image.[17]

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[15]I am translating *instance* here as agency in the tw senses Alan Sheridan and Jacques-Alain Miller suggest. First, there is the sense of agency as being a dynamic system (the agency of the id, ego, and superego); secondly, there is the sense of agency as acting upon, or exerting power or influence (the agency required for social transformation). Since, of course, this thesis is focusing on the latter, Lacan's statements with regard to the agency of the ego are significant.

[16]Grosz gives a quite succinct interpretation of the real: "The child, in other words, is born into the order of the Real. The Real is the order preceding the ego and the organization of the drives. It is an anatomical, 'natural' order (nature in the sense of resistance rather than positive substance), a pure plenitude or fullness. The Real cannot be experienced as such: it is capable of representation or conceptualization only through the reconstructive or inferential work of the imaginary and symbolic orders. Lacan himself refers to the Real as 'the lack of the lack'... The Real is not however the same as reality; reality is lived as and known through imaginary and symbolic representations" (*Jacques Lacan*, 34).

[17]Ibid., 39.

Thus, with respect to the mother, the child not only expresses the *real* need for food or warmth, but demands love, recognition, and completeness.[18] It desires to *be* the ideal unity it has identified with, and seeks out the mother to fulfill that unity. There is enacted by the child a demand that is rooted in an imaginary identification with the mother to provide more than biological necessity. As we know, if we have ever been with infants, their ability to alter the world around them is often dependent upon their expression of demand (through excessive crying, for instance) that exceeds the bounds of need. For Lacan, this agency, this enactment of demand in surplus of need, begins the dialectic of desire (although desire is nevertheless firmly entrenched in the speaking subject and not in the imaginary one, as we shall see below). Fantasies are therefore constructed in order to attempt to fulfill the desire (which is ultimately unsatisfiable).[19] Fantasy is the *mise-en-scene*, the "staging" that takes place in order that desire may be satisfied without the other present.[20] Thus, the infant continues to make sucking motions long after its need for food

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[18]The importance of "recognition" for the early Lacan derives, of course, from his Hegelian influence (particularly the lectures given by Alexandre Kojève). For an interesting discussion of Hegelian recognition for psychoanalytic thinking outside of a Lacanian perspective, see Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), chapter two.

[19]As we shall see in chapter 6, Castoriadis persuasively argues that fantasy or representation is prior to lack, for one must posit (fantasize or imagine) a desire for something, before one "lacks" it. Thus the agency of the subject to posit is much more active than Lacan is suggesting here. As well, Castoriadis emphasizes that desire is not concerned with what cannot be fulfilled in reality - for our fantasies satisfy our desires. Rather desire emanates from that which we cannot represent to ourselves - cannot fantasize about; *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 401; *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 296-7.

[20]This is Laplanche and Pontalis's definition of fantasy in "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," *passim*.

and its demand for love and warmth are satisfied. The fantasy, therefore, co-ordinates the infant's actions in the world and in this respect constitutes a form of agency.

Consider these comments by Lacan (the first repeating the opening epigraph of this chapter):

> What did I try to get across with the mirror stage? That whatever in man [sic] is loosened up, fragmented, anarchic, establishes its relation to his perceptions on a plane with a completely original tension. The image of his body is the principle of every unity he perceives in objects. Now, he only perceives the unity of this specific image from the outside, and in an anticipated manner. Because of this double relation which he has with himself, all the objects of his world are always structured around the wandering shadow of his own ego [*autour de l'ombre errante de son propre moi*].[21]

And,

> Well, approaching from a different angle, we come upon the same thing again - every imaginary relation comes about via a kind of [*se produit dans une espèce de*] *you or me* between the subject and the object. That is to say - *If it's you, I'm not. If it's me, it's you who isn't.* That's where the symbolic element comes into play. On the imaginary level, the objects only ever appear to man within relations which fade. He recognises his unity in them, but uniquely from without. And in as much he recognises his unity in an object, he feels himself to be in disarray in relation to the latter.[22]

If objects are perceived only through the shadows of our egos, then it appears that we project our shadows onto the world around us. Indeed it appears as though projection *is* agency. Laplanche and Pontalis's preliminary definition sheds light on the psychoanalytic concept of projection. For them, projection is an "operation whereby qualities, feelings,

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[21]Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre II: Le Moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique psychanalytique* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), 198; *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-55*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: Norton, 1988), 166.

[22]Ibid., 201; 169.

wishes or even "objects," which the subject refuses to recognise or rejects in himself, are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing."[23] But what is it that gets projected here in Lacan's account? If Lacan is correct in his formulation - that the subject *recognizes* and *misrecognizes* its otherness, is torn between unity and fragmentation - then the subject may be expelling its own otherness, its own image, imago and ideal-ego. In casting its shadow, in other words, the subject assigns to the object what Lacan calls an egomorphic [*égomorphique*] character.[24] That is, the shadow projects the shape of one's own ego onto the external world, and we begin to see others through this image of our own self.[25] As Lacan uses it, the shadow is a reflection of the specular image; that is, a shadow is a darkened reflection of a reflection which, following Lacan, represents both unity and fragmentation. Projecting a shadow, therefore, is reflecting back upon the world the otherness that produced the ego in the first place. The wandering shadow is like the holding up of another - albeit tinted - mirror. I cast upon others the otherness of myself. It is not unlike when we see pets, plants, and stones as creatures *like* us: with similar affects and character attributes. It is the narcissistic fantasy object cast upon all and sundry that enables us to "re-recognize" ourselves. Lacan observes:

> For perception is a total relation to a given picture, in which man [sic] always recognises himself somewhere, and sometimes even sees himself in several places. If the picture of the relation to the world is not made unreal [*déréalisé*] by the subject, it is because it contains elements representing the diversified images of his ego, and these are so many points of anchorage,

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[23]Laplanche and Pontalis, *Language*, 349.

[24]Lacan, *Séminaire II*, 198; *Seminar II*, 166.

[25]The anthropomorphizing of animals and the assumption that if we feel a certain way under certain conditions, all others must feel the same are examples of this egomorphic projection.

> of stabilisation, of inertia. That is exactly how I teach you to interpret dreams in supervisions - the main thing is to recognize where the ego of the subject is.[26]

In this sense, the ego of the subject is bound up with its relations with otherness and is not something which "grows" out of the subject in a solitary, developmental process. And, the agency of the (imaginary) ego is located in its projective capacity, its ability to put itself, to posit itself, in the world of objects, recognizing and misrecognizing, projecting and fantasizing. Gone here is the notion of the ego fully cognizant of itself - the rational ego, the ego with which we usually associate human agency. Instead, we have a fundamentally split, fragmented, and fractured ego whose ability to cast its shadow sums up its "outward thrust" to relate to and act in the external world.

So it would seem that the Lacanian imaginary, unlike, as we shall see, the ones advocated by Irigaray and Castoriadis, accords little agency in the traditional sense of the word. Instead, the Lacanian imaginary suggests, through the figure of the wandering shadow, that it is an ego capable of imaginary identification and projection, capable of introjecting objects, only to cast them outward again in relating to the world. This movement enables other imaginary identifications to develop which, in turn, are the bases for other projections - and so on. Lacan's mirror stage is not a fixed structure: "If there is a "stage" here, it is one that is both unstable and instantaneous, that of an ek-stasis that pro-jects the ego before itself."[27] However, Lacan never deals with how this projective agency may transform the social life of the individual. Agency remains rather narrowly,

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[26]Lacan, *Séminaire II*, 199; *Seminar II*, 166-7.

[27]Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan*, 48.

and individually, construed. Moreover, agency becomes even less of a concern as Lacan subjects the imaginary to a rigourous reappraisal in which it takes a back seat to the symbolic and the identifications to be found therein So, with the emergence of the primacy of the symbolic in Lacan's later work, he relegates the imaginary to a place that ceases to have any potential for disrupting the social order without being labelled a form of "psychosis."

II. Symbolic Identification and the Other[28]

In conjunction with but garnering more importance than the imaginary in his later work, the symbolic operates as that system of signifiers which enables the speaking subject to emerge. As Boothby states, "The agency of the symbolic cannot be understood as an extension of the imaginary but must rather be taken as a challenge to it. The speaking subject is emphatically decentred in relation to the ego."[29] Thus, for Lacan, the symbolic dominates the imaginary.[30] This is a significant shift in terms of how his thesis of identity formation as an imaginary construct has little possibility for transforming the social-symbolic order. For the "symbolic Lacan" (i.e., later Lacan), as Jacqueline Rose states, there is no pre-discursive reality, as we can only conceive of it through language itself.[31]

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[28]I would like to remind the reader that Other refers to the symbolic, other to the imaginary

[29]Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112.

[30]See especially, Lacan, "L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient ou la raison depuis Freud," in *Écrits*, 493-530; "The Agency of the Letter," in *Écrits*, 146-178.

[31]Jacqueline Rose, "Introduction - II," in Lacan, *Feminine Sexuality*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 55.

However, the "imaginary Lacan's" (i.e., early Lacan's) assumption that identification takes place prior to language, and plays a role in the constitution of the self, means that the pre-discursive does "exist" on some level for Lacan. I wish to focus here on the distinctions Lacan makes between the imaginary and the symbolic in order to highlight why his view is ultimately untenable for identity trans/formation. That is, rather than possibly expanding the role of the imaginary for agency, Lacan positions the symbolic as the absolute arbiter of what is possible. It is this thesis which Castoriadis and Irigaray take to task. I look briefly here at this argument, in order to further suggest ways in which the imaginary can be opened up as a central aspect of agency.

The Other in Lacanian discourse has to do neither with image (fantasied or otherwise) nor actual people; instead it represents the field of language into which the proto-subject must eventually be introduced. This introduction into the social order, into the organized symbolic world of relations, breaks with the imaginary identifications of the imaginary order. It is not that the ego ceases to be, or that the imaginary does not continue to shape our relations to the world in some fashion, but that imaginary ego is now *dominated* by the symbolic. The imaginary dyad (self-other) gives way to discourse through a third term (Other). In the Freudian scheme of things, you will recall that the third term which breaks the mother-child bond is the father. For Lacan, since language is central to the birth of the subject, he proposes the paternal *metaphor*.

In Lacan's rewriting of the Oedipus complex, we are not talking of actual fathers, or even of imaginary fathers, but of *symbolic* fathers.[32] Thus, as Shoshana Felman points out, Lacan goes "beyond Oedipus."[33] The Freudian internalization of the father as a *relation of authority* (which we have expl red in the previous chapter) is, for Lacan, a symbolic relation that has little to do with the father one lives with. For instance, the infamous "phallic mother," teachers, bosses, and others in positions of authority all represent *symbolically* to the subject the Other as Law to which the subject must submit. In this sense, his reading of the birth of the subject as an initiation into a social order not reliant upon actual fathers is important for looking at the pedagogical relationship as scene of authority. It suggests that a teacher can act as the initiator for the student.

Nonetheless, Lacan relies heavily on the language of fathers and mothers. The "father" acts as a "paternal metaphor" for the Other - "the domain of law and language, law-as-language." as one author puts it.[34] According to Lacan, it is through the father's *position* that the child comes to have symbolic formation. The implication here being that the alleged symbiotic relation to the other (represented by the mother) cannot provide the impetus for separation from her. Ironically, the mother cannot enable the *birth* of the subject. The relation to her is an imaginary one, linked not by language, but by images. Language always belongs to an Other, to that field where the imaginary has no access;

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[32]He takes as his model not the *Oedipus Rex* of Freud, but the *Oedipus at Colonnus* (Sophocles's sequel), "whose being lies entirely within the word [*parole*] formulated by his destiny, makes actual the conjunction of death and life." Lacan, *Séminaire II*, 271; *Seminar* II, 232.

[33]Shoshana Felman discusses Lacan and Oedipus in *Adventure of Insight* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), particularly 128-159.

[34]Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, 66.

hence the separation of the imaginary relation between mother and child must be effected by the symbolic father.[35] The symbolic father represents that which imposes a structuration of experience; it is the law of the father which must be obeyed.

Here, we have a whole new retelling of identity formation and identification which at once raises important questions for transformative teaching *and* precludes any mobilization of the imaginary (or anything else for that matter) toward social change. Symbolic identification (like Freud's secondary identification) is concerned with internalizing paternal authority: the subject takes up its position in the social world. In this way, again following Freudian theory, it is involved with the establishment of the ego-ideal, and as such, its identity is formed under the Other's gaze. That is, through the dominant and all-seeing eye of the Law. For instance, the network of symbols which constitute femininity in any given culture provides the "gaze" through which women see themselves. Thus, women in North American culture often *identify* with (and internalize) symbolic representations of female body-types, attitudes, and behaviours. Symbolic identification requires acquiescing and identifying with the gaze of the Other in order *to be liked*. Thus women who wish to be loved or recognized will identify with an image of femininity that is likeable, lovable, acceptable. In this view, the ego-ideal is created with an eye to be *likable to the Other*. Thus it is different from imaginary identification. Imaginary identification views the other as something one *aspires to be like*, symbolic identification is about *aspiring to be what the Other desires* - communicated to us through a field of representation that places us all under its "gaze." Slavoj Žižek puts it this way:

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[35]Juliet Mitchell, "Introduction - I," in *Feminine Sexuality*, 5.

> The relation between imaginary and symbolic identification - between the ideal ego [Idealich] and the ego-ideal [Ich-Ideal] - is...that between "constituted" and "constitutive" identification: to put it simply, imaginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing "what we would like to be," and symbolic identification, identification with the very place *from where* we are being observed, *from where* we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love.[36]

So the establishment of the *ego-ideal* (the "I am likeable") via symbolic identification determines how the imaginary *ideal-ego* (the "I would like to be") projects itself. That is, I want to be what the Other wants me to be. This regulation of the imaginary by the symbolic is seen by Lacan as necessary to the functioning of the social subject: a subject who is "beyond the ego,"[37] beyond, therefore, the imaginary. Without this regulation, psychoses or hysteria ensue. Indeed, Lacan claims that hysteria is a prime example of breakdown in symbolic identification which allows the imaginary ego to establish primacy.[38]

According to Žižek, who follows Lacan closely here, in identifying at the symbolic level we are identifying with the gaze. And, we must identify with the gaze if we are to

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[36]Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 105.

[37]Lacan, Seminar II, 175.

[38]This is one point upon which feminist have been divided in terms of *either* their acceptance of Lacan's theory as explaining the patriarchal submission women are compelled to confront (e.g., Jacqueline Rose, Juliet Mitchell, in *Feminine Sexuality* and Juliet Flower MacCannell in *Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious* [London: Croom Helm, 1986]), *or* their challenge to what some see as his patriarchal construct of women (e.g., Luce Irigaray, *Speculum* [Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1974]; Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*; and Catherine Clément and Hélène Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986]). Thus, some feminists see hysteria as an irruptive reaction against the structures of patriarchal social practices. For a discussion on the significance of hysteria in psychoanalytic theory more generally see Monique David-Ménard, *Hysteria From Freud to Lacan*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

have any form of sociality. That is, we must learn about our culture and our place within it, if we are to become subjects at all. From this symbolic identification, our imaginary identifications follow accordingly.[39] Thus, for Žižek, as for Lacan, imaginary identification has a mimetic function, it imitates the image (the other) it seeks to be like. In imitating the image, the imaginary identification is, therefore, visible and transparent. For symbolic identification, it is an identification with a symbolic position which Žižek claims eludes resemblance.[40] It is hidden from view. It is this symbolic identification that is not so easily read, having to be interpreted or analyzed. Symbolic identification is "masked" by the imaginary identification. For instance, Žižek uses the example of Milos Forman's anti-government Czech films to illustrate this point:

> [they] were so subversive in mocking small, ordinary people: in showing their undignified ways, the futility of their dreams ... this gesture was far more dangerous than making fun of the ruling bureaucracy. Forman did not want to destroy the bureaucrat's *imaginary* identification; he wisely preferred to subvert his *symbolic* identification by unmasking the spectacle enacted for his gaze.[41]

Symbolic identification has to do with identifying oneself with the *place* that makes the imaginary identification possible. In terms of teaching, therefore, when students identify themselves as wanting to be like "good students" it is the gaze of the teacher, the institution, and the culture which makes that identification possible. As Žižek asks: "*for*

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[39]Žižek, 108.

[40]Ibid., 109.

[41]Ibid., 107 (my emphases).

whom is the subject enacting this role? Which *gaze* is considered when the subject identifies himself with a certain image?"[42]

Of course this raises some critical questions about how one may not symbolically identify with the gaze of the Other. For it seems impossible, given the fractured and multiple nature of our imaginary identifications that they all fall into, or should fall into the symbolic's regulatory system. In Lacan's view, any transgression (or attempt at transformation) of the symbolic involves hysteria or psychosis. This is a rather limiting view of the possibilities of social agency, because it does not differentiate between different kinds of symbolic systems. By relying too heavily on the impact of the social upon the psychical, Lacan leaves no route of escape except flight into illness. What I read as the pessimism of Freud becomes the psychoanalysis of despair in Lacan's hands. By over-generalizing his theory of the symbolic-imaginary relationship, he does not distinguish what is necessary to the social functioning of the individual, from what is oppressive, cruel or violent, and ultimately crushing to the individual. In other words, necessary repression is level with random oppression. One wonders how any change in the symbolic is possible if it is so regulatory. How do we alter modes of representation? Does not the imaginary (whether the early Lacanian sense of it, or a different definition of it[43]) effect what and how we act in, on, and through the world of representation?

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[42]Ibid., 106.

[43]I think a different view of the imaginary is needed for exploring the possibilities of social agency. Thus, my own view is more in line with the views of the imaginary suggested by Irigaray and Castoriadis. Nonetheless, I am suggesting here that even Lacan's early view of it can lead to a more productive and enabling notion of agency than his later views provide.

III. The Agentic Possibilities of the Imaginary: An Example

It is helpful to look at how a Lacanian-inspired imaginary *has* been seen to be central to agency, to altering the symbolic, to changing dominant systems of representations. In other words, it has been rendered as significant both for the formation and transformation of identity.

For instance, with respect to the politics of representation, Stuart Hall has suggested that the imaginary is a central category for exploring agency. In an insightful analysis concerning the "triangle" of black cultures in the U.S., U.K., and Caribbean islands, he sees what importance a shared history, and imaginary investment in that history, have had on self-representation.[44] Hall claims that there is an "imaginary" unity with Africa, an illusion which does not fully recognize the myriad translations of culture undergone throughout the "triangle." By claiming to have historical ties to African cultures, there is not just a statement of fact being expressed, but an imaginary unity with Africa as an originary homeland. Thus, the image of Africa as homeland is a *projection* of an illusory oneness. While the imaginary unity with Africa does not reference the "real" Africa, it nonetheless serves to unite blacks within the triangle, and secures a collective identity through imaginary investment.

However, rather than seeing this "imaginary" to be simply "false," or its illusory quality as negative, Hall renders it as *necessary* to mobilize new forms of black self-representation. It is necessary for forming new identities and transforming the symbolic

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[44]Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990) 222-237.

systems which have always represented blacks, rather than recognize them as self-representing subjects. Thus the impetus for transformation, the impetus for creating a subversive politics of representation lies in the realm of imaginary identification.

Hall's example pushes the limitations of Lacan's thesis. The wandering shadow of the ego becomes, in the hands of Hall, the wandering shadow of a collective. And it is this move from the individual imaginary to the social imaginary which is central to future discussions in the thesis. However, Hall's analysis leaves aside the critical question of how this oppositional imaginary gets formed outside or in excess of the symbolic system which has historically positioned black representation as a *non sequitur*. The Lacanian thesis upon which Hall draws does little to explain this; for the symbolic always already regulates imaginary identifications. Thus the Lacanian thesis appears to be able to explain how one internalizes the social laws (including forms of oppression), but not how one rebels against those laws. Is the project of self-representation really an hysterical or psychotic project? I think not - as chapters 5 and 6 illustrate.

What I wish to do in the next section is to shift the discussion onto the field of pedagogy, seeing what questions Lacan's thesis opens for transformative educators. I then offer first a Lacanian reading of Chris Amireault's essay, followed by a subversive (hysterical? psychotic?) interpretation.

IV. Symbolic and Imaginary Identifications in Pedagogy

Symbolic and imaginary identifications offer some useful considerations for transformative pedagogy, although, as we shall see further on, the division between them

raises some serious problems. The questions we might ask ourselves in a Lacanian vein are by no means reassuring. First, with respect to teachers who identify themselves as transformative educators, what are the symbolic and imaginary limits to these identifications? Are our identifications as "transformative" teachers caught up in the Other's gaze? Whose gaze? Secondly, how are student identities enmeshed in both imaginary and symbolic identifications - for whom do students enact their roles? Is it always already the teacher by virtue of her authoritative, symbolic position? Thirdly, are teachers and students caught within an imaginary relation of self and other or a symbolic relation of Subject and Other? How does one know how the imaginary is articulated through the symbolic relationship? Lastly, in what ways are our imaginary and symbolic identifications involved in a web of identifications that inform our identities beyond the confines of "teacher" and "student" identities? Can we be as certain as Lacan and Žižek are that one kind of identification is easily marked as imaginary, the other symbolic? Is imaginary identification always an illusory and mimetic oneness with the other, or is it, as Lacan's earlier work demonstrated, rife with contradiction and conflict? Is the imaginary always already dominated by the symbolic?

Here I wish to offer a Lacanian reading of Amireault's essay to illustrate, first, how symbolic and imaginary identifications work, and secondly, how the imaginary's relation to the symbolic needs to be reconsidered. Recall Amireault's recollection of two meetings with a student in his class, Shannon. In the first, Shannon declares she has finally figured out what "she wanted" as a student and Amireault identifies this declaration as an affirmation of his position as a radical teacher. In the second, Shannon declares her desire

to be a college professor. Reacting with horror at Shannon's stated intentions, Amireault's *dis*identification with the posture of radical teacher begins. In the first instance, we may claim that Shannon's *imaginary* identifications of herself as a good student occurs when she imitates "good *radical* student" behaviours: she discovers what *she* wants as a student. This means she *symbolically* identifies with the Other's gaze, that of the radical teacher· she perceives herself to be the "radical teacher's" *likeable* "radical student" who knows what she wants. In this symbolic identification, she sees herself through Amireault's eyes, as it were. In the second encounter when she declares to want to become a college professor, Shannon's *imaginary* identification of herself as a "good" teacher imitates Amireault, setting up an image of what she *would like to be*. Shannon's *symbolic* identification is with the gaze that holds the college professor in such high regard: that is, the gaze of the student under which the radical college professor is *likeable*. Thus at the moment she seems to be the most identified with the instructor (the moment of imitation), she has gained a sense of autonomy (the moment of symbolically identifying herself as student). In fully identifying herself as a student *symbolically*, she no longer exists solely under the eye of the professor. Amireault's negative reaction to her declaration is fully understandable from this symbolic point of view. Shannon, in effect, tells the teacher he is not needed; she *does* know what she wants, she is not in the gaze of his desire anymore - as she was in the initial encounter. Remember in this initial encounter, Shannon states that she originally spent all of her time trying to figure out "what the teacher wanted," only to reach her own conclusions in the end. Yet, she *does* figure out what the teacher most wanted - not a "good" student who "knows what she wants" (as Amireault claims), but a

"good" student who "figures out the teacher's desire in such a way that it appears as her own." Thus in identifying herself as a good student, she supports symbolically Amireault's desire to be a radical teacher.

Indeed Amireault's own *imaginary* identification first as radical teacher, then (in his final interpretation) as student, suggests a shift in *symbolic* identification from student to teacher, respectively. In the first encounter with Shannon, it is Amireault *the student* who tries to be the "good" teacher (something I am not entirely unfamiliar with myself), caught between his desire to be a "real" teacher while remaining loyal and true to his student status. In the gaze of the student, he performs as radical teacher. In the second case, it is the *symbolic* identification with the "good" teacher that enables his naming of his imaginary identification with Shannon as a student: it is the "good" or radical teacher that is legitimized, for it reveals *a teacher who can confess to be like a student.*

However, I'd like to throw a wrench into the interpretation at this point. How do we know when imaginary identification begins and symbolic identification ends? How is it that the self-other relationship in which teacher and student are caught up does not produce identifications that exceed the limits of the symbolic, that challenge the symbolic in some way? For instance, Shannon, in both encounters, identifies with fairly conventional symbolic representations of radical teachers and students. According to Lacanian logic, a *surface* reading of her self-declarations only gives us her imaginary identifications, her symbolic ones have to be "analyzed." Why is her symbolic identification always already marked as that which lies concealed, as if the imaginary identification is always already the surface one, the more palatable one, the one read at

face value? Could it not be that Shannon's imaginary identifications, the ones she introjects as part of her own identity (however illusory), are not so easily read? Can we assume through an analysis of her discourse (taking for granted the accuracy of Amireault's quotes) where her imaginary and symbolic identifications lie? In other words, how does the Lacanian privileging of symbolic identification over the imaginary function work to conceal the radicality and subversive potential of imaginary identifications themselves - as a reworking of Lacan's earlier thesis may support?

For instance, even if we follow Lacan's terminology, it is Shannon's *imaginary* identifications, first as "good" student, then as college professor, which act to subvert the hierarchical, symbolic relationship between her and Amireault. By enacting her imaginary, by articulating her fantasy, she alters the dynamic between them. Her imaginary "outbursts" occasion, in the first instance, reward, and, in the second instance, punishment. That is, first, her imaginary is given full credence by Amireault, initially supporting his own imaginary identification as a "good" teacher; then, Amireault withdraws his support, and his own imaginary and fantastical images are disidentified. Thus, what has caused the crisis for the teacher are the *imaginary identifications* "articulated" by the student, at least insofar as they offer an "image" that the teacher is not yet prepared to accept. Shannon's imaginary *exceeds the limits of the symbolic* in the second instance by virtue of the fact it could not be contained in the gaze of the "radical teacher." And, depending upon her own history and social situation, this imaginary may be subverting traditional models of symbolic identification in a wider sense. That is, her imaginary is not only directed *toward* the teacher, but encompasses a wider field of vision

than the teacher's gaze. Shannon's declaration to be a college professor possibly moves beyond the inscription of what is expected of women in the patriarchal contexts which she has experienced. However, I must say "possibly" here, for as I have stated previously, Amireault never gives us any information about her outside of his symbiotic (and imaginary) attachment to her. In other words, Shannon's imaginary may be creating new possibilities for herself; and rather than being dominated through the symbolic matrix that structures her life, she shifts the symbolic ground upon which Amireault stands.

Moreover, the assumption that the imaginary is always imitative fails to consider how identification and imitation are distinct. That is, Shannon's desire to be college professor is not necessarily an imitation of Amireault, but may also be an enactment or performance of a trial identification. Or, she may be rebelling against other facets of her daily life. As a person with a web of relations to the world, can we read her desire as merely imitative of the teacher? Does she not exist beyond his gaze? Thus there is a danger in Lacanian readings of identification which too neatly package imaginary identifications as imitative, surface, and observable, and symbolic identifications as the hidden and obscure force which drives the imaginary machine. Indeed, we shall see in the next chapter how the imaginary is the fantasy which subtends the symbolic, and which itself remains hidden from transparent view.

Let us reconsider, then, the Lacanian assumption that the imaginary is always already dominated by the symbolic. I think we need to begin to ask ourselves instead what does the imaginary make possible? How does the symbolic restructuring of our experience involve imaginary identifications (and the imaginary more generally)? How do we escape

overdetermination by the symbolic order? In my view, both the Lacanian division and consequent superimposition of the symbolic over the imaginary conceal an important aspect of the imaginary-symbolic relation: its dialectical interaction. For how do we remain convinced, as Hall's work suggests we no longer can, that new forms of self-representation are unaffected by imaginary egos. Moreover, how do we not view those wandering shadows of our egos as perhaps casting a subversive silhouette? The imaginary is, thus, far more implicated, it seems to me, in producing and mobilizing languages - indeed cultures - for understanding and performing our lived experiences, and is not merely "subject" to the constraints imposed by the symbolic alone. For the imaginary identification with Africa evidenced in Hall's analysis, the imaginary identification with "being a professor" for Shannon, and the imaginary identification with sports figures and rock stars amongst teenagers, for instance, *enable* the transformation of symbolic signification. They alter the meanings through which self-representation and other-representation, students and teachers, youth and adults are understood. Thus, I wish to explore in more detail this intricate relation between the imaginary and the symbolic in the next two chapters, revealing how the imaginary dimensions of identity formation constitute the limits and possibilities for transformation, and what this means for working across, through and with difference.

CHAPTER FIVE

Imaginary Others:
Irigaray and An Other Identity

> The transition to a new age in turn necessitates a new perception and a new conception of *time and space*, our occupation of place, and the different envelopes known as identity.
>
> Luce Irigaray, "Sexual Difference"

As Irigaray suggests above, a project of transformation requires a new conceptualization of identity. Her invocation of the envelope is, as we shall see, part of a larger project that insists upon and gestures toward a mobilization of the imaginary for *collective* agency.[1] For Irigaray, how identities are formed under the current system of patriarchy must be refigured if we are to undo its colonizing impulses. To this end, her depiction of the imaginary in terms of sexual difference is an attempt to "name" the fantasy which structures patriarchy (male) and that which can be mobilized to work against it (female).[2] Thus these imaginary fantasies are social formations, and not solely individual,

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[1]Irigaray speaks at length of her goals for social transformation in an interview in *Women Analyze Women*, Elaine Hoffman Baruch and Lucienne J. Serrano (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 149-164.

[2]Irigaray's work on sexual difference has occupied an important place in the eighties' debate on essentialism in feminist theory. It was often cast as *either* being expressive of a biological determinism *or* as enacting a strategic essentialism. While this debate remains important for theorizing women's identity and sexuality, it is not my intent here to rehash these arguments in any

psychical processes. Moreover, her view of the imaginary offers an understanding of the subject as inscribed through the symbolic, yet as also being produced *in excess* of that symbolic. In this way, Irigaray's views link together identity formation with the possibility of agency.

Moreover, in light of Irigaray's attempt to re-symbolize the space in-between identity and difference, self and other, her work is also important for the other theme of trans/formation running throughout the thesis: that of pedagogical ambivalence. She proposes an explicitly ethical relationship that recognizes otherness as central to a project of social justice. For example, her views on the transference and on the symbolization of the liminal space between self and other offers transformative educators new categories for exploring what happens in teaching and learning encounters. That is, for exploring how we may teach in ways that recognize otherness as central for working across, through, and with difference. In addition, her own writings reflect an ambivalence which is, in my view, endemic to transformative projects in general. By focusing exclusively on patriarchy, and, as I intend to argue, by *fetishizing* patriarchy, Irigaray illustrates a double-bind: that we must *at once* believe that oppressive systems (such as patriarchy) exist *and*

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detail. For a particularly relevant discussion on essentialism and Irigaray see, for instance, Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which Is Not One," in *Engaging with Irigaray*, ed. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford (New York: Columbia, 1994) 57-78. Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 55-72; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), chapter 1; and various essays in *The Essential Difference*, ed. Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) For an early critiques of Irigaray who charge her with essentialism see Christine Fauré, "The Twilight of the Goddesses, or the Intellectual Crisis of French Feminism," *SIGNS* 7, no. 1 (autumn, 1981): 81-6. For anti-essentialist comments see Christine Holmlund, "The Lesbian, the Mother, the Heterosexual Lover: Irigaray's Recodings of Difference," *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 283-308; and Carolyn Burke, "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," *Feminist Studies* 7, no.2 (1981): 288-306.

that they do not exist in order to be able to imagine a different future. That is, our positing an imaginary alternative exists alongside our belief in the far-reaching power of the very social system we are struggling against. Thus Irigaray's work speaks to the inevitable ambivalence of all trans/formational goals which guide ethical practice (including transformative pedagogy), yet also posits hopeful strategies for living through this ambivalence productively.

In working through the double theme of trans/formation here, this chapter begins by examining Irigaray's notion of the male imaginary, followed by the female imaginary, and a discussion of her resymbolization of the space in-between identity and difference as exchange. I then offer a productive critique of her views, suggesting that her focus on patriarchy and sexual difference reveals some blind spots, while enabling new categories of identity and difference to emerge. Finally, the significance of her views for teaching and learning through a liminal pedagogy is outlined. Here, the ethical dimensions of pedagogical practice are discussed in relation to how they may influence the goals guiding our practice.

I. Playing with Mirrors: The Male Imaginary

As a product of a philosopher, linguist and psychoanalyst, Irigaray's work focuses on the interrelations between conceptualization, symbolization, and unconscious fantasy. Her notion of the imaginary as the unconscious fantasy which subtends symbolic and conceptual practices is therefore deeply rooted in linguistic and philosophical problems as well as psychoanalytic ones. Margaret Whitford notes that Irigaray's imaginary has some

interesting parallels to Sartre's use of the term in his *L'imaginaire*, yet also obviously moves beyond the philosophy of consciousness model in its inclusion of unconscious fantasy.[3] This emphasis on unconscious fantasy places her firmly within the psychoanalytic tradition, even as she seeks to overturn many cornerstones of psychoanalytic theory.[4] However, for Irigaray, the imaginary is not only intertwined within a psychoanalytic tradition, but also with sexual difference, and the cultural articulations of that difference. Unconscious fantasy is rooted in the *differential* (not the absolute difference) between the *symbolization*, the cultural representations, of the two sexes. This means that it is not anatomical distinctions which determine the imaginary functioning of any one individual, but the way in which social meanings of the sexes are complexly structured in and through unconscious fantasy (a point which I shall return to below). For instance, Irigaray refers to the phallus and to the Lacanian promise of

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[3]Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), 54. Whitford also mentions similarities between Irigaray's imaginary and that of Gaston Bachelard (55). Of course it is Irigaray's affinities with Castoriadis's use of the term which will be seen in the next chapter and of which Whitford also makes mention (56).

[4]It is important to note that Irigaray seeks to dismantle the *patriarchal rendering* of psychoanalysis, not psychoanalysis *in toto*. In transforming psychoanalysis she recognizes that psychoanalysis cannot be purged of its phallocentrism without significant alteration of some basic concepts. Irigaray is thus attempting the very difficult task of making a renewed conception of psychoanalysis pertinent for social change, and still must rely on psychoanalytic precepts to do so. For instance, she must still adhere to the workings of the unconscious However, she makes it evident that she reads the unconscious as a concept with/in a history. Addressing fellow psychoanalysts, Irigaray writes: "You refuse to admit that the unconscious - your concept of the unconscious - did not spring fully armed from Freud's head, that it was not produced *ex nihilo* at the end of the nineteenth century, emerging suddenly to reimpose its truth on the whole of history - world history, at that - past, present and future. The unconscious is revealed as such, heard as such, spoken as such and interpreted as such within a tradition. It has a place within, by, and through a culture." Irigaray, "The Poverty of Psychoanalysis," in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 80. There is, nonetheless, a creative gesture to Freud's theorization of the unconscious which is not simply "determined" by social or cultural significations. Indeed, chapter 6 focuses on this possibility.

plenitude to be found in the phallus as a logic of the One; that is it is only conceived always already in relation to a patriarchal, phallic economy which renders only one body-image as adequate: that of the male, the sex which *is* one. This unconscious body-image is what Irigaray refers to as a *morphology*. Thus, for Irigaray, the imaginary is something of a different order from Lacan's mirror stage, and involves a different conception of identification.

Playing with mirrors, Irigaray reflects back upon Oedipus (and indeed the rest of psychoanalytic theory) the impossibility of its own reflection, the illusory quality of its own image, the profound disavowal of the feminine, of the maternal, and of woman required to sustain psychoanalysis's image of itself as One. What Irigaray does with theoretical texts is to subject them to their own imaginary logic, to their own unconscious fantasies, to reveal to psychoanalysis its unspoken, imaginary truth (a truth that leads it to construct its own "anal symbolic," according to Irigaray.[5]) Irigaray notes that "the body and its morphology are imprinted upon imaginary and symbolic creations."[6] Lacan's mirror, then, is seen to be a projection of a male imaginary that positions the penis/phallus as the centre around which all discourse, indeed the entire symbolic, may be understood.

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[5]Irigaray, *Speculum. De l'autre femme* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1974), 90; *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 75. (All reference to these texts will be made in the text as *S* and *SE*, respectively.) Further to this, she writes: "In place of the feces - decomposed/decomposable matter that is taken from you and that is subject to being appreciated by an other eye - will be substituted the *image, the specular production-reproduction. Which is also speculative. The eye will ensure the recovery, and the mastery, of anal erotism*" (*S* 116; *SE* 95).

[6]Luce Irigaray, *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1984), 70; *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). 68. For a discussion of morphology, see Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 113-9.

Indeed, the signifier of the signifier - the symbolic order's Other - is rendered in Lacan's discourse as the phallus (or as Malcolm Bowie puts it, a "male genital transcendentalized"[7]). Thus Irigaray establishes a connection between, on the one hand, *phallocentrism* - as a way of thinking that privileges the phallus - with, on the other, *phallomorphism* - as a way of imag(in)ing the world in terms that privilege the male body as a standard.

Irigaray claims that the projection of the male imaginary acts like a mirror, reflecting back onto itself a penis/phallic image in which only one sex is expressed. In patriarchy, the male imaginary is a *social* imaginary which seeks to construct fictions - such as Oedipus - that sustain its self-illusion. Accordingly, the male imaginary operates through a language that claims to "designate him [the male] perfectly" (*S* 289; *SE* 233). The Oedipus myth as a phallic *image* is then only a representation of a truncated reality - a reality which cannot recognize its own imaginary projections. It tells the story of sexual difference, of desire, and of identification, through the singular gaze of the male, reflecting back an image with which men are able to identify, with which men may recognize themselves as self-same.[8] In this respect, the male imaginary also necessarily privileges male identification and identity, because it supports cultural articulations of maleness - not because it lies in an immediate relation to male anatomy. Turning the Lacanian logic in upon itself, then, Irigaray claims that the patriarchal symbolic does not recognize itself as

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[7]Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 142.

[8]This does not mean that all men, in fact, do identify with it. However, Irigaray is attempting here to underline the male imaginary as supporting a *social* order (that of patriarchy) which codifies maleness and femaleness in very particular ways which always already privilege the former.

illusion or as being isomorphic. Instead, it sees itself as expressing the universal, rendering everything in its own (illusory) image.[9]

For example, the Oedipus complex in Freudian and Lacanian terms privileges identification with the father or through the paternal metaphor. Indeed, without this identification, sociality, through their eyes, is impossible. The identification process, as we have seen, comes to mean that one assimilates an image - an other - into the self; it becomes the "same" as the self. Thus identity comes to signal that which is self-same. Difference, ironically, while rendered as central to the development of identity is nevertheless neutralized, as it were. For once it is internalized it ceases to exist *as* difference and is absorbed in that entity called identity (even if it is a fragmentary one).

In this way, the Oedipus complex and its identifications function for Irigaray on two, interconnected levels. First, these are *symbolic* constructions; the Oedipus complex is a *theory* of subjecthood, a *discursive* construction, involving a *narrative* of paternal identification. It is, in short, a product of the patriarchal symbolic. Secondly, it is an *imaginary* projection; (re)presenting an *image* of the subject through a male *morphology* (body-image), offering images of what the subject looks like, of what identity is, using only the male body as the *ideal*, as the *standard register* against which human agency and subjectivity are measured. The point that Irigaray brings to light here is how these symbolic models of identification, these "stories" of identity, are profoundly implicated

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[9]Irigaray coins the term "hommologous" to underscore the isomorphism of the patriarchal system. Here she plays on the French *homme* meaning man and *homo* meaning same. She also coins the term hom(m)o-sexuality to illustrate repressed homoeroticism as the primary libidinal relation of patriarchy. See "Le marché des femmes," in *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1977), 165-185; "Women on the Market," in *This Sex which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 170-191.

with imaginary, patriarchal formulations of sexual difference. What Irigaray attempts to do is to read the Oedipal account of identity formation *differently*, through its *difference*, and writes of the need to imagine a *different* model based on an "other" imaginary, as we shall see.

In sum, the male imaginary functions in two ways. First, it operates as an agency of patriarchal discursive practices, subtending these practices, acting as a support without which symbolizations and narratives such as Oedipus would be, literally, unthinkable. However, secondly, within patriarchy, the male imaginary operates as a *hidden* fantasy. It remains unacknowledged within patriarchy.[10] Patriarchy takes the symbolic as its own truth and denies the social fantasy which supports that truth. Irigaray sees it as her project to articulate this unacknowledged fantasy that organizes patriarchy, to unveil what is hidden. For as Whitford notes of Irigaray's project, "the coherence of a conceptual system does not imply its *truth*, but may be the coherence of its phantasy."[11] Irigaray underlines the point that patriarchy creates its own hermeticism by failing to recognize its own unconscious otherness. And, it cannot admit the unconscious, or *irrational* basis of its own construction without dismantling itself. Quite simply, if patriarchy allowed itself to recognize the fantasy of its own truth, it would cease to be patriarchy. By implication, then, any new reconfiguration of society needs to acknowledge the imaginary core of its

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[10]There is also the problem with Irigaray's conception of the male imaginary as being too closely connected to patriarchy alone. For instance, it is the explicit heterosexist as well as sexist dimension which works within and through projections of *a* male imaginary. Moreover her view says nothing of the encoding of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences which have led to genocides throughout history. I take this critique up in full toward the end of the chapter.

[11]Whitford, *Irigaray*, 69.

symbolic practices. By *saying* what has been unsaid, Irigaray challenges the patriarchal symbolic, attempting an in(ter)vention into conventional modes of discourse. In this sense, the hermeticism between the patriarchal symbolic and the male imaginary is not complete or total. Irigaray proposes an alternative social imaginary: a female imaginary that recognizes its own specificity and does not claim a universal identity.[12] In this way, she attempts to theorize the agentic possibilities within patriarchy itself.

II. Spec(tac)ular Limits and Possibilities: The Female Imaginary and Transformation

Judith Butler has depicted Irigaray's views of the feminine along two trajectories: the specular feminine and the excessive feminine.[13] The first corresponds to how women have been objectified within the representational system subtended by the male imaginary, and depicts how they have been rendered as a "specular image" of the wandering shadow of the male ego. The second corresponds to how the feminine exceeds the limits of the symbolic and is capable of reimagining anew the relations between the sexes. Before outlining Irigaray's views in more detail, I wish to shift Butler's metaphor slightly. For my purposes here, given the emphasis I am placing on identity trans/formation, I prefer to categorize her views in terms of the spec(tac)ular. This term plays at once on: 1. the

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[12]It may, at first sight, seem ironic to call forth a female imaginary and claim its non-essential character. However, I interpret Irigaray here as championing a feminist, political alternative that rejects identity as meaning self-same. In this way, the female imaginary involves a social fantasy of difference, rather than a social fantasy of identity.

[13]Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 39. As for the problem of categorizing all exclusion from the symbolic as feminine (and not along other axes), I intend to take up Butler's insightful reading on this point toward the end of this chapter.

specular: that is, the othering process women are subjected to through patriarchal signification; 2. the spectacle: that is, the dramatic public display of refusal of the specular reflection, an assertion of an otherness outside the male symbolic, and 3. the parentheses that holds the terms together, suggesting the interrelationship between woman as specular and woman as spectacular. In this view, I am suggesting that Irigaray's theorization of how women's identities are *formed* as specular provides the means necessary to conceive of women's *agency* as spectacular.

The specularization of women finds its fullest treatment in *Speculum*, and in Irigaray's critiques of Freud and Lacan in *Ce sexe*. She charges that the reflection in the mirror Lacan speaks of in his mirror stage only reflects male modes of identification and of relating to the world. The mirror of psychoanalysis forms an image of femininity and female sexuality that is based on a fantasied projection of what woman "is." "Woman, in this sexual imaginary, is only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment [*mise-en-acte*] of man's fantasies."[14] Psychoanalysis, she claims, uses the metaphor of a flat mirror instead of a speculum in its rendering of human subjectivity, and thus metaphorically misses the orifices, the curves and three-dimensionality of women's bodily specificity. In other words, women have no power over the representational systems which tell each of us who she is, why she is, and how she is. And, according to Irigaray, both Freud and Lacan tell us who women are in order to support their visions of themselves, their own masculinity and maleness. That is, the male imaginary, the fantasy of the male body as

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[14]Irigaray, "Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un," in *Ce Sexe*, 25; "This Sex Which Is Not One," in *This Sex*, 25. The term *mise-en-acte* echoes the view of fantasy as a *mise-en-scène*

One is contingent upon an other who is not One, or "not all," as Lacan professes.[15] In other words, it is the conception of femininity as *other* that keeps intact male identity as *self-same*. As Whitford notes, women have become the "tain of the mirror."[16] This means that women become the necessary "setting," they are the fantastical *mise-en-scène* (to echo Laplanche and Pontalis) through which male desires are made possible. In effect, women exist "behind the screen of representation."[17] Irigaray writes: "Thus I have become your image in this nothingness that I am, and you gaze upon [*mires-tu*] mine in your absence of being. This silvering at the back of the mirror might, at least, retain *the being* - which we have been perhaps and which perhaps we will be again - though our mirage has failed at present or has been covered over by alien speculations" (*S* 245; *SE* 197). But what is this imaginary outside of male fantasy? What does Irigaray mean by "perhaps we will be again" the being re-tained in the silvering of the mirror? How is the female imaginary both within and outside male imaginary-symbolic constructions? How does women's formation lead her to act as an agent of change?

Irigaray argues, both in "Poverty of Psychoanalysis" and "Cosi Fan Tutti"[18] that women are not *entirely* sub-jected by the Lacanian patriarchal system. In fact, Irigaray

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[15]This famous dictum appears in his *Encore* seminar. His two central lectures of the seminar appear as chapter 6 in *Feminine Sexuality*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (W.W. Norton, 1982).

[16]Whitford, *Irigaray*, 34.

[17]Irigaray, "Le miroir, de l'autre côté" in *Ce sexe*, 16; "The Looking Glass, from the Other Side," in *This Sex*, 9.

[18]The former essay appears in the *Irigaray Reader*, 79-104; the latter in *Ce sexe*, 83-101; *This Sex*, 86-105.

recognizes that her description of the condition of woman as merely a prop of male fantasy does little to challenge patriarchal inscription of female identity. That is, it is not enough to *critique* the patriarchal symbolic, but one must *resymbolize* it in order to open up possibilities for the expression and creation of "female identity."[19] Irigaray must conceive of women's agency and her subjecthood as something beyond patriarchal limitations. For this, Irigaray turns to corporeal specificity and female morphology as elements which can be used to mobilize female agency at the symbolic level.

For Irigaray, the constitution of identity is not dependent so much on the visual image of the self and "other" or upon Oedipal identification (as in Lacan), but upon a "fluidity" of exchange that can be rendered in another metaphorical register outside of the phallic - that between mothers and daughters, lesbian lovers, and the lips of auto-eroticism. In this respect she offers an alternative to Oedipal and mirror-stage identification. Women's identities escape overdetermination because their imaginaries are shaped by their corporeality and their same-sex relations to mothers.[20] In this sense the "mirror" as a visual metaphor is insufficient for articulating women's identity. Instead, Irigaray shifts the metaphor onto the register of the tactile, the body, the fluid. She manipulates what Jane Gallop has called a "vulvomorphic logic."[21] That is, Irigaray attempts to project a

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[19]I will look at this term more closely below. Suffice for now to say, that Irigaray troubles the essentialist connotations of identity in her linkages between the imaginary and symbolic.

[20]It is important to emphasize here that the imaginary is shaped by female corporeality to the extent that our bodies are mediated through modes of sociality and representation as well as sensation.

[21]Jane Gallop, "Quand nos lèvres s'écrivent: Irigaray's Body Politic," *Romanic Review* 74 (1983): 77.

coherent "female fantasy" as the condition for a new kind of logic, a new form of rationality based on a multiple sexuality, not on phallic oneness. The sensational use of the vulva is an attempt not to replace the phallus, but to *dis*place it, reformulating the exchange between the anatomical body and imaginary-symbolic practices. As Gallop writes, "if phallomorphic logic is not based in anatomy but, on the contrary, reconstructs anatomy in its own image, then Irigaray's vulvomorphic logic is not predestined by anatomy but is already a symbolic interpretation of anatomy."[22] The deployment of the vulva acts to situate women in terms of a sexuality that is unsaid (and is thus sensational and spectacular) within patriarchal discourse and thinking. Moreover, as we shall see below, the m/others that Irigaray attempts to reconceive are no matriarchal ideals, but sexual, autonomous beings involved in amourous exchange with the world around them. Through these reconceptions (these re-imaginings) she moves beyond the virgin/whore alternative which has often posed the sexual imaginary limitations for those of us who live through the effects of patriarchal-heterosexual (specular) femininity. And it is through her re-imagining and questioning of the primacy of Oedipus - her privileging of fluid exchange - that Irigaray speaks to a spectacular configuration of the female imaginary, one that can be mobilized in transforming the symbolic.

Irigaray thus moves away from privileging identification as the *single* mode through which identities are formed. In fact, for Irigaray, identification is neither about identity nor non-identity (*S* 93; *SE* 77). This, of course, marks a point of departure from other cultural theorists and psychoanalysts (such as Hall, Fuss, and Freud). For instance, Hall's

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[22]Ibid.

view that identities are "processes of identification"[23] is disrupted by Irigaray's refusal to identify identity in terms of identification and the paternal ideal that accompanies it. "Confusing identity and identification is not the same thing as finding an order for the matter and form that we are."[24] For Irigaray, the play of identification is not the sum total of identity; rather, for women in particular, there is an imaginary relation that includes attention to the body, to a female morphology or body-image, which plays a central role in the formation and transformation of identity. And this relation exceeds the limits of Oedipus.

Contra Oedipus?

Irigaray begins by daring to ask the most simple of questions: "Why interpret the little girl's development and especially its relationship to the Oedipus complex, as the opposite - or "almost," more or less the opposite - of the boy's?" (*S* 99-100; *SE* 32). In her response, she does not try to "insert" the girl into the story through an opposite reading of the Oedipal dynamic, nor does she read her as only being "unrepresented," an object of male fantasy.[25] In other words, Irigaray does not posit a female Electra complex, nor

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[23]Stuart Hall, "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference," *Radical America* 13, no. 4 (1991), 15

[24]Irigaray, *Le Temps de la différence: Pour une révolution pacifique* (Paris: Librairie genérale française, 1989), 37; *Thinking the Difference*, trans. Karin Montin (New York: Routledge, 1994), 19.

[25]Interestingly in an interview with Alice Jardine, Irigaray refutes Jardine's suggestion that *Speculum* was about "getting the "female body" to enter into the male corpus, since "the female body has always figured in the male corpus." Irigaray further declares that her intent was not only to critique this figuration, but to elucidate "the beginnings of a woman's phenomenological elaboration of the auto-affection and auto-representation of her body." Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous. Toward a Cultvre of Difference*, trans. Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 59. Thus, her

does she invert the trajectory of identification (girl desires father and identifies with mother), and neither does she merely critique the male imaginary subtending the discourse of sexual difference Rather, she offers a reconsideration of the place of identification and the imaginary minus the (masculinist) desire for origins, for oneness - for Oedipus itself. In this sense, the point is not to explain how the girl develops in and through Oedipal desire, but to resymbolize desire itself as something beyond Oedipus.

To this end, she posits a 'primal economy" [*économie de l'originaire*] (*S* 91; *SE* 76) between mother and child, between women, and between the lips of female sexuality. Irigaray's reconceptualization, remetaphorization, and reimagining of the "primal economy" is not a return to the pre-Oedipal. Indeed, the "pre-Oedipal" only makes sense if one takes the Oedipal narrative as the standard, as the primary locus of desire and identification.[26] In retheorizing desire, then, she reads the Oedipal story spec(tac)ularly.

For example, in the traditional Oedipal reading, there is no discussion (no symbolization) of the girl's desire for her mother, of the amourous entanglement they find themselves in. This exchange is rendered invisible, put under the thumb (or phallus, if you will) of the Oedipal imaginary. That is, the mother-daughter relation is placed within an

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views of the female imaginary are structured simultaneously within this critique and possibility.

[26]I do not think that the Oedipal narrative makes non-sense, or is bereft of all analytic potential; indeed, the power of Oedipus and its collusion with patriarchy cannot be simply dismissed, as the relation between mothers, fathers and children are still hotbeds of intense emotion and physicality that to some degree is captured in the intricacies of the Oedipal drama. See my discussion of Jessica Benjamin's reformulation of Oedipus in "Psychoanalysis and Father-Daughter Incest: An Issue of Culpability," in *Interpersonal Violence: Health and Gender Politics*, ed, S. French (Dubuque: Brown and Benchmark, 1993). However, its overvaluation, and its inability to see itself as a hermeneutic device that can benefit from other narratives is important to recognize - and critique.

exchange between men; it is granted no significance as an interaction which occurs outside the *hommo*sexual one. Similarly, within the traditional Freudian view, lesbian sexuality, is not recognized in terms of amourous exchange, but in terms of "women who act like men."[27] As Grosz notes, "there is no space within such an economy for the "homo-," the sameness of integrity of *women* as lovers."[28]

In an attempt to symbolize the unsymbolized, to speak the unsaid, Irigaray posits the homo, the lesbian love, the mother daughter exchange as a potential point from which relations may be re-imagined and materially altered. Grosz writes,

> The daughter needs to remain in touch, corporeally, linguistically, and in terms of desire, with her homosexual attachment to the mother, if she is to create any positive self-representations, productive rather than rivalrous relations with other women, relations of pleasure, narcissism, and autoerotism. And even fertile creative relations with men. She needs to remain in touch with the corporeality and subjectivity that produced and nurtured her, and to which she remains similar as well as different.[29]

Thus, the mother is not the patriarchal ideal of a sexless screen waiting to receive projected Oedipal desire, nor does she represent an image of fusion for the child. Instead, the mother is part of a homosexual bond, a bond of desire and corporeal specificity: "why must the maternal function take precedence over the more specifically erotic function in woman?"[30] Irigaray insists upon a view of motherhood that is respectful of the *difference* between her and her children. As we shall see in the next section, the resymbolization of

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[27]See Irigaray's critique in *Ce sexe*, 61; *This Sex*, 65.

[28]Grosz, "The Hetero and the Homo: The Sexual Ethics of Luce Irigaray," in *Engaging with Irigaray*, 342.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Irigaray, *Ce sexe*, 61; *This Sex*, 64.

the relation between women and children *in utero* is an attempt to reconceive of identity as recognizing the other as an identity in itself.

The female imaginary, then, attempts to redefine otherness as something which is not the cause of ego conflict, fragmentation, or alienation. For Irigaray, it is otherness *as it is articulated through the patriarchal symbolic* which causes this. Thus, a change in the symbolic to effect a recognition of the autonomy of others outside the logic of the same is necessary. Alienation is not an existential condition, but a social condition, made possible by the logic of patriarchy. The female imaginary, by exceeding specular otherness, by drawing upon its specific relation to female corporeality, is able to posit a *different* other than the one constructed by patriarchy. In this way, the female imaginary can serve as the basis for rethinking and resymbolizing the relations between the sexes anew. In emphasizing the importance of the imaginary for transforming the symbolic, Irigaray has much to offer in rethinking the relation between identity and otherness.

III. The Space In-Between: Symbolizing Identity and Difference as Exchange

Irigaray has outlined in both her political essays/speeches and her philosophical writings how a female imaginary can be mobilized to transform symbolic practices. Thus the emphasis she places on how women's identity formation leads to the possibilities for agency are central to my project. Moreover, as I intend to argue further on, her conception of identity and otherness speaks to what our goals should be in working across, through, and with difference.

Generally, Irigaray's emphasis on exchange - the exchange between women, between the sexes, between identity and difference and between the imaginary and symbolic - contributes to a sense of relationality that takes into account the subject as agent. To this end, Irigaray not only "talks about" how a female imaginary may be useful for working to support otherness in a renewed symbolic, but also "displays" such an imaginary beginning, putting into discourse an imaginary other. Irigaray, it should be noted, writes of the need to define otherness as part and parcel of identity. Thus, while woman is constructed as other in patriarchal symbolic practices, other to male self-identity, there is no *language* of otherness in patriarchy, no understanding of how identity is enmeshed in a sexual other that rightfully has a need for its own systems of representation. Whitford puts it this way:

> ...for Irigaray, that break with the imaginary, in which one is capable of thinking *about* one's own imaginary, instead of being thought *by* it, is unlikely to take a social form as long as there is no real *other*. At the moment, according to Irigaray, what we have is an economy of the Same, exchange between men - the same, male imaginary with nothing to act as the "break," except women (i.e., women in external reality refusing the projections of the male imaginary). In other words, for men to make the break with *their* imaginary, another term would be needed - women as symbolic term.[31]

Irigaray's goal is for women to *appropriate* their own otherness (not mere specular reflection), to compel society to articulate this otherness as an identity. But not, as we have seen above, an identity based on uniqueness or sameness, but one that recognizes otherness as a relation, that accords respect for multiplicity. Irigaray has a number of strategies for rethinking identity as a relational category that, in my view, neither positions

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[31]Whitford, *Irigaray*, 91-2.

women within an ethic of care, nor within an undifferentiated "oceanic" space. Instead, she utilizes metaphors which correspond to (but do not entirely derive from) the female body to fashion a morphology that can underwrite, rewrite and overwrite the male symbolic.[32]

For instance, Irigaray, in a conversation with Hélène Rouch (a biology teacher), examines what a "placental economy" looks like. According to Rouch and Irigaray, it operates according to a different logic than that usually accorded it by patriarchal discourse. I quote from Rouch:

> Firstly, I'll just remind us what the placenta is: it's a tissue, formed by the embryo, which, while being closely imbricated with the uterine mucosa remains separate from it. This has to be reiterated, because there's the commonly held view that the placenta is a mixed formation, half-maternal, half-fetal. However, although the placenta is a formation of the embryo, it behaves like an organ that is practically independent of it. It plays a mediating role on two levels. On the one hand, it's the mediating space between mother and fetus, which means that there's never a fusion of maternal and embryonic tissues. On the other hand, it constitutes a system regulating exchanges between the two organisms... [33]

Women are not in an undifferentiated state with the child *in utero*. They are *not one*. Despite current popular discourse around motherhood which often positions women as being in a state of fusion with their fetuses, or regulates mothers' bodies under the assumption that everything they do has an *im*mediate impact upon the unborn child, Rouch and Irigaray postulate a very different conception, highlighting the placenta's *mediating*

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[32] I say "do not entirely derive from" because it is not that new symbolic practices simply emanate from the body, but that they must be embodied in such a way that it is possible for women to "see themselves" in symbolic form. To suggest otherwise ignores, as Carolyn Burke notes, "Irigaray's suggestion that female writing may be produced in analogy *with* the body and her awareness that it does not simply flow from it." "Irigaray Through the Looking Glass," 302.

[33] Rouch in Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Nous*, 38-9.

role between identity and otherness. This complex system of mediation is best captured again by Rouch:

> The embryo is half-foreign to the maternal organism. Indeed, half of its antigens are paternal in origin. Because of this the mother should activate her defense mechanisms to reject this other to her self... [Yet] the placenta isn't some sort of automatic protection system...On the contrary, there has to be a recognition of the other, of the non-self, by the mother, and therefore an initial reaction from her, in order for placental factors to be produced. The difference between the "self" and other is, so to speak, continuously negotiated.[34]

Here we see that the placenta is other to the mother, as is the fetus. In order for placental development to occur, this otherness that is the embryo must be "recognized." Life itself is dependent upon the *recognition of an other*. It is not dependent upon incorporating the other to make it one; rather, life is dependent upon a self-other relationship where each remains separate, yet interrelated (the placental exchange). The placenta is *between* mother and child, acting not as a barrier, but as a substance which *mediates* their identities. It is not a "border", but a membrane, a porous threshold which regulates mother-embryo interaction and yet keeps their otherness in tact. This deployment of the placenta creates a space for reimagining identity *differently*: identity through its difference. For Irigaray, "the placental relation represents one of these openings with regard to determinism, to vital or cultural closure, an opening which stems from female corporeal identity."[35]

One could read Irigaray as marshalling in an essentialized view of female identity supported by "biology," but I think this would be to misconstrue the entire social project

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[34]Rouch in ibid., 40-1.

[35]Ibid., 38.

Irigaray is advocating here. Given her revisioning of the very notion of identity itself as that which is not self-same, I read her as invoking what Foucault would call a "reverse discourse:" that is, Irigaray strategically uses a discourse which has always positioned women as solely reproductive creatures - that of biology - to *resymbolize* female identity through difference. Irigaray is attempting to lay claim to new formulations of reproduction, cultural production, and genealogy, through symbolizing something that *only* women (*not all* women) can produce (i.e., through their corporeal specificity). Moreover, the placenta is something entirely invisible, unspoken and unsymbolized *as a relation*. Irigaray disrupts the search for original unity with the mother (which have denied women their autonomy) by daring to suggest that women are other-wise.

But what does all this mean for identity trans/formation? For Irigaray, identity is not just self-same, is not a one-to-one correspondence between thought and word. This is its patriarchal meaning. Otherness, moreover, is not just the foil for another's identity, it is not merely its opposite. Identity instead is conceived *as a relation*; not in the sense of object relations theory, for instance, where an "identity" is formed through one's relations with other people, but in the sense that "identity" is itself a nexus of relations (psychic, institutional, social, cultural, and, of course, sexual) that exist in tandem with an other (who is itself another nexus).[36] And this other is not some "thing" or object which gets internalized or identified with, but is *an other that exists on its own and for itself.* The other is not a fantasy object *in toto*, neither is it an "image" in the Lacanian scheme of

[36]In this respect, my own view of identity as a web of relations, while coming close to Irigaray's here, tries also to think about how other aspects of difference and not only sexed ones have a bearing upon our conceptions of identity and the imaginary.

things, but a reality object, with its own history, morphology, fantasies, and desires. As well, identity is not only the sum total of all our identifications with others (or images). Identification, in Irigaray's reading of psychoanalytic discourse, is too often a taking over of the other, a bringing into oneself an other. It is a colonization of sorts which subjects the other to the One and denies the other's independence. Thus identification's aggressive and destructive potential is not lost on Irigaray here. As an alternative model, Irigaray suggests that there is an irreducibility between self and other, a gap, a space in-between them which prevents total identification, total [illegible], total colonization. It is a gap which allows new forms of identity to emerge. Irigaray writes: "I shall never take the place of man, never will a man take mine. Whatever identifications are possible, one will never exactly fill the place of the other - the one is irreducible to the other."[37]

For Irigaray, developing new senses of "place" and identity, requires thinking about how self and other are interlaced and wrapped up, yet separate simultaneously. Indeed, her conception of identity as envelope, rather than as "processes of identification," moves away from focusing on "assimilation" (e.g., internalizing or incorporating the other) toward a positing of a third space of indetermination where self and other are not merged, but share a space of difference.[38] "I caress you, you caress me, without unity - neither yours, nor mine, nor ours. The envelope, which separates and divides us, fades away. Instead of a solid enclosure, it becomes fluid: which is far from nothing. This does not

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[37]Irigaray, *Ethique*, 19-20; *Ethics*, 13.

[38]For a discussion of the envelope, see Irigaray's "Le lieu, l'intervale," in *Ethique*, 41-59; "Place, Interval," in *Ethics*, 34-55.

mean that we are merged. But our relationship to place, which maintained our hierarchical difference, takes on different properties."[39] Thus the envelope brings about a new set of social relations; hierarchy is displaced when the irreducibility of difference is a condition of identity: when the self-same does not depend on excluding otherness, but embraces it. Only in this way, Irigaray claims, will woman-as-other and man-as-self-same, be able to live in adequate relations to themselves and to each other (women as other for an other; men as other for an other). The envelope, in short, is about symbolizing a space through which identity and otherness come together as equal partners, in a new form of sociality.

Thus, her vision of identity remains utopian in this regard, and so raises questions about the present, about our current configurations of identity, what they mean, how we act through them collectively, how we imagine identity other-wise, and how we act on this reimagining. It is not that men do not have an identity in patriarchy, or that women do not have a sense of "self," but that these are unsatisfactory for a creating a society of equals; that is, of equals who are different.[40] Identity in Irigaray's version has an implicit ethic at its core: an ethic where otherness is identical to itself and identity is also other for an

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[39]Irigaray, *Passions élémentaire* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1982), 72; *Elemental Passions*, trans. Joanne Collie and Judith Still (New York: Routledge, 1992),59-60.

[40]Irigaray does not use the term equality to denote social respect for difference. In fact she is highly suspicious of the term: "To demand equality as women is, it seems to me, a mistaken expression of a real objective. The demand to be equal presupposes a point of comparison. To whom or to what do women want to be equalized? To men? To a salary? To a public office? To what standard? Why not to themselves?...Women's exploitation is based upon sexual difference; its solution will come only through sexual difference" (*Je, Tu, Nous*, 12). Also, see her discussion in the preface to *Temps de la différence*, 8-12; *Thinking the Difference*, vii-xii. I have retained the use of the word "equality" recognizing that it can mean social fairness based on treating people differently, according to their needs, and not as is often the case juridically, based on treating everyone the same.

other.[41] As Grosz states, "the other makes possible the subject's relations to others in a social world; ethics is the result of the need to negotiate between one existence and another. Ethics is thus framed by and in its turn frames the subject's confrontation with the other."[42] Moreover, this ethic enables the new forms of identity and social relations to emerge. Gail Schwab notes, "Irigaray's project is eminently ethical in the sense that what she seeks through this imaginary is the founding of a feminine subjectivity capable of establishing new ways of relating to/being with the other."[43] Thus, identity formation does pigeon-hole us forever, but is the place from which we work to transform who we are into who we might be.

IV. Transference and the Space In-Between

I turn now to a discussion of how Irigaray sees the re-symbolization of the space in-between identity and difference in terms of analytic practice. For it is here that she concretizes the ethical relation between self and other, and emphasizes a reconception of the transference as a liminal and transformative space. In this regard, her views are

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[41]Lorraine Code refers to our being an other for someone else as "second persons." See her essay by that name in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, ed. Marsha Hanen and Kai Nielsen (Calgary· University of Calgary Press, 1987), 357-382. Also reprinted in her book *What Can She Know?* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[42]Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, 141.

[43]Gail Schwab, "Mother's Body, Father's Tongue: Mediation and the Symbolic Order," in *Engaging with Irigaray*, 370.

important for addressing both the ethics and the practice of liminal pedagogy: that is, a trans/formative pedagogy.[44]

Transference, in Irigaray's terms is "the projection onto the analyst of that which causes the analysand's speech [*parole*] or desire to reappropriate its place [*cadre*]."[45] Yet, while transference involves the analysand's projection onto the analyst, it does not stop there. Nor is the countertransference a mere projective response. Irigaray proposes that transference is also something beyond this action-reaction constellation and privileges the present, not only the past, as the condition for the transference.[46] For her, the drama of the transference is produced in relation to the different *gestures* of the protagonists, and not only as a result of a prior psychical state initiated by the analysand. Indeed she suggests that "from time to time, he [the analyst] will show signs of slight activity. Sometimes the patient may too: he or she twists his or her ring, moves feet or hands, adopts a stereotypical posture which is far from irrelevant to what he or she is talking about. All of this forms a whole which must be perceived and treated as such."[47] Irigaray suggests that these gestures are part of the discourse between the analyst and analysand,

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[44]Elizabeth Hirsh brilliantly analyzes Irigaray's writing on the analytic encounter and underscores the importance Irigaray places on the analytic scene as being part of the discourse of psychoanalysis. "Back in Analysis: How to do Things With Irigaray," in *Engaging with Irigaray*, 285-316, *passim*.

[45]Irigaray, "Le praticable de la scène," in *Parler n'est jamais neutre* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), 243

[46]Hirsh, throughout her essay, gives much theoretical weight to the *hic et nunc* of Irigaray's reconception of the *praticable*.

[47]Irigaray, "The Gesture in Psychoanalysis" in *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Teresa Brennan (London: Routledge, 1989), 127.

and highlights their "seesawing" or dialogic quality: "the gestures of one give the lead to the gestures of the other."[48] It is in this interchange between the two (*entre deux*) where Irigaray locates the transference and the possibility for transformation. However, she also locates this interchange within the nexus of present power relationships which govern the two subjects according to their sexual difference. Thus, asked whether gestures are the same for men and women, Irigaray replies in the negative "for a very simple reason: the sexual connotations of lying down are different, depending on whether one is a man or a woman."[49]

In this sense, while she locates the transference in the *specific* gestural and speaking relations between analyst and analysand, Irigaray does not decontextualize that relation from social relations. Moreover, the transference occurs in the gap or space in-between the two subjects (*entre deux*). Hence it is neither merely an intersubjective relation, nor is it "neutral." Irigaray attempts to retheorize the transference as an exchange: "within the transference, a certain limit, a certain threshold is never crossed and always transgressed - the porosity of the mucous membranes."[50] Thus there is a "placental economy" at work in the transference which is not patriarchally inscripted as fusion, but bears the imprint of the female imaginary which symbolizes it as a relation between self and other, without collapsing the two. Through this symbolization, Irigaray underlines the importance of respecting the separateness between analyst and analysand more generally:

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Both quotes are in ibid., 129.

[50]Irigaray, "La limite du transfert," in *Parler*, 302; "The Limits of the Transference," in *Irigaray Reader*, 113.

> The third term in the transference [the unsaid gestural exchange] becomes the limits not only of the body but also of the mucous, not only the walls but also the experience of the most extraordinary intimacy: a communication or communion which respects the life of the other whilst still tasting the strangeness of his/her desire.[51]

As mentioned above, there is an implicit ethic at the core of psychoanalysis whose goal it is, according to Irigaray, not only to symbolize the unconscious tensions at work in the analysand, but to do so *outside* of a logic of the same, outside of that which seeks to dominate over an other. It is a "harmony which lets the other be, a sort of extra-transferential reserve which allows the analyst to ensure his/her own solitude and to direct the other in or towards his/hers."[52] For Irigaray, the social, ethical project of symbolizing sexual difference will serve to return to women a sense of identity, a sense of place (*cadre*), and to allow women the "distance" necessary to treat each other as subjects, and not be wrapped up in each other's immediacy.[53] But how does the analyst make this possible, given that the analytic scene itself is not neutral according to sexual difference?

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[51]Irigaray, "La limite," 303; "Limits," 114.

[52]Ibid., 304; 115

[53]In "La limite du transfert," Irigaray explores how woman-to-woman analytic encounters are particularly susceptible to an immediate, "distanceless" relation. Women are each seeking an ideal, symbolic Other which is not there, because a "feminine ideality or model" does not exist within patriarchy. "The absence of an ideal maternal and female figure for women results in the fact that mimicry between women becomes the flaying of one woman by the other, the reduction of the skin and of the mucous to forms *[figures]* into which they flow in order to exist, often quite unconsciously." ("La limite," 298; "Limits," 110-111). Faced with such immediacy and lack of linguistic modes of expression, the female encounter risks being an encounter of devouring - each one forced into a mimetic identification. That is, the woman analysand relates to the woman analyst as a daughter to the mother; and since there is no symbolic mediation of this relation in existence in patriarchy, she inevitably identifies with the maternal, thereby cutting herself off from the sexual. As a result, she can no longer "see" the mother-analyst as an other (a being in her own right), and this dynamic is perpetuated by the analyst herself should she fail to consider how sexual difference plays itself out through the gestures of the analytic scene, and should she fail to render that scene as a space of mucosity.

How does the analytic scene live through its own ambivalence, its own trans/formation, at once enabling new possibilities for women while operating within a system of patriarchal exchange? Irigaray's remarks offer a compelling image for those of us engaged in transformative work:

> In order to offer this alternative, the analyst must constantly keep present the dimension of his or her transference; the other to whom he or she listens must remain close and distant within a reversible and open transferential relationship, that links all possible positions in space and time. Remembering the configuration of bodies and their synchronic or diachronic relations, the analyst perceives him/herself as what he or she is, has been, is becoming, so as to hear the other without confusion. This listening marks the limits of his or her possibilities; it acts as the horizon dividing him or her from the analysand; the horizon of life and death, a matrix-envelope to be constantly reconstituted in its most nourishing and protective dimension, the opening remaining for becoming and reception by/of the other.[54]

Irigaray here highlights the importance of the analyst's abilities to listen at once "close and distant." For Irigaray, what is necessary is a recognition of the space-time through which the analyst listens and enables the analysand to speak. That space-time is the present physical, gestural, and discursive parameters in which the transference occurs *entre deux*. That is, the analyst must be open to analyze her own transference as a dynamic relation which is respectful of the other's autonomy. In this regard, Irigaray echoes Reich's insistence on empathy as a guiding force of analytic interpretation. Irigaray insists that the analyst interpret his or her transference as the condition through which she or he presents "himself or herself as the space-time in which he or she listens."[55] Yet, she is also

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[54]Ibid., 305; 116.

[55]Ibid., 304; 115.

adamant - as Reich is - that "professional distance" needs to be maintained for the purpose of the "patient's end," not for furthering the analyst's own agenda. In terms of women analysands, the "patient's end" signifies the possibility of a new modality for women's subjectivity, a new conception of women's identity *as an other of an other* With respect to the movement toward this new conception, Irigaray highlights that the *formation* of identity (as self-same in patriarchy) is the starting place for the *transformation* of identity (into something that respects and supports otherness at its core). It would seem, therefore, that Irigaray's rendering of the transference has something to offer transformative education, in the sense that it provides a model of practice that recognizes others as autonomous and not as mere projections of our fantasies. It also enables us to examine our pedagogical interaction as a mucous space where what we say and do is caught up dialogically with students' responses. It conditions how we listen to students.

However, using her interpretation of the transference as analogous to pedagogy also poses its limitations for those of us concerned with the specific ways in which difference articulates itself in and through modalities other than sex. Thus the next section offers a productive critique of some of Irigaray's concepts before turning to a full discussion of the implications of her views for those of us working across, through, and with difference.

V. The Blind Spot of a New Dream of Asymmetry,[56] or the Fetish of Patriarchy

I begin this section with some pointed questions Judith Butler raises with respect to Irigaray's position.

> Although Irigaray clearly broadens the scope of feminist critique by exposing the epistemological, ontological, and logical structures of a masculinist signifying economy, the power of her analysis is undercut precisely by it globalizing reach Is it possible to identify a monolithic as well as a monologic masculinist economy that traverses the array of cultural and historical contexts in which sexual difference takes place? Is the failure to acknowledge the specific cultural operations of gender oppression itself a kind of epistemological imperialism, one which is not ameliorated by the simple elaboration of cultural differences as "examples" of the selfsame phallogocentrism?[57]

In my view, Butler cuts to the heart of the matter in Irigaray's formulations of the symbolic, and reveals what I call Irigaray's "blind spot of a new dream of asymmetry " What I wish to explore here is that Irigaray's work contains an ambivalence: there is at once her blind spot, her colonizing of all differences into sexual differences, and her insistence that identity and a renewed symbolic is by its nature multiple, seeming to suggest that otherness in all shapes and forms is central to identity.

Irigaray has often exploded the patriarchal fantasy of "woman as fetish" as we have seen through her analysis of the male imaginary. In this analysis, she adheres to the kind of monolithism Butler discusses above, for she never mentions, for instance, how women are positioned *differently from each other* according to symbolic and cultural articulations

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[56]This is a play on the title of part 1 of Speculum in which Irigaray critiques Freud's views of femininity: "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry."

[57]Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 13.

of class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity That is, Butler is correct in stating that "the power of her analysis" is undercut by such monolithism, and Irigaray does seem to be falling prey to the very universalizing she is "analyzing " However, the key word here is "analyzing "

When she takes as her "patient" the patriarchal symbolic, Irigaray is already taking as a complete unity the sum total of signifying practices in a given social historical moment. In this regard, her interpretation regarding the constructions of womanhood as a fetishized other are *necessarily* dependent upon this monolithic "patient " So, if we disagree with this monolithism, how do we simultaneously agree with Butler and I do that Irigaray exposes something of the nature of patriarchy? That is, how can we agree with her *analysis* of "the patient" if we don't agree that there is such a "patient," or that the "patient" has not been adequately represented in all its complexity? In order to respond to this issue, we have in turn to refrain from reading her texts monolithically, and need to expose her own textual ambivalence, and I would argue, fetishism And, to do this, requires exploding the inevitable ambivalence which structures transformative projects themselves; a point which, in my view, transformative pedagogy needs to learn to live with. In order to write and practice transformation, one has to accept *and* disavow the present conditions that form lived reality. In short, a fetish has to be set up

You will recall that ambivalence is not *about* contradictory affects (love and hate; recognition and disavowal), but is *itself* an affect of contradiction (it is *simultaneously recognition and disavowal*).[58] According to Freud, the fetish becomes the object upon which this ambivalence is projected. On a social level, Homi Bhabha illustrates how the

[58]Freud, "Fetishism," [1927] *PFL*, vol. 7, 345-358, *passim*.

stereotype, for instance, functions as a fetish Hence, in colonial discourse "the black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food), he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces."[59] Yet, unlike Bhabha's purpose in exposing the male-valence of fetishism occasioned by the stereotype, I wish to highlight here the ambi-valence of fetishism itself (in other words, the ambivalence of the ambivalence) occasioned by the adherence to a social category of analysis (patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism) through which collective struggle is defined. Thus it speaks to the predicament of transformative projects in general.

My contention is that in order for Irigaray to think through and against patriarchy, she at once recognizes its over-arching power and disavows its monolithism. Thus, in Irigaray's texts there is always the simultaneity of acknowledgement and denial. Like the fetish, the patriarchal symbolic becomes a contradictory locus of "all" and "not all." Irigaray sets up - rather convincingly - a fantasy of the symbolic that sutures over all other forms of difference outside the sexual. Indeed, whatever is excluded from the symbolic, whatever remains unsymbolized, is relegated to the "feminine". And this, as we have seen, enables her to posit a hope of an alternative. Thus, she refuses the very monolithism of the symbolic as she analyzes it. Her symbolization of the exchange speaks to a

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[59]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 82. Note the reference here is to *male* blackness. This nuancing to some degree underscores Irigaray's point about sexual difference. It becomes clear in both Bhabha's and Fanon's texts that particular instances of colonialism (e.g., the stereotype) do not always make evident the structuring of sexual difference within symbolic terms.

possibility created through the refusal of patriarchy. Patriarchy, as it functions as a fetish object in Irigaray's writing, reveals something about the nature of feminist *transformation*, as much as it speaks about the nature of patriarchal *formation*. What I want to suggest is that fetishizing patriarchy - at once recognizing it and disavowing it - is central to Irigaray's social project. In this respect, if we are to critique her monolithic portrayals of the "male symbolic" - which I think we must - we must also be careful not to throw out her "recognition" of a social order which, for Irigaray, simultaneously functions as the field of possibility.[60] Thus Irigaray's project not only attempts to address the material workings of patriarchy, but through conceiving of patriarchy as *an analytic device* (one that is monolithic), she is able to make *strategic* moves to theorizing its destruction.

Nonetheless, while the fetish of patriarchy as a category of analysis creates the ambivalent space necessary for feminist transformation (i.e., patriarchy exists, patriarchy does not exist), in failing to address difference differently, Irigaray closes down an opening which her work in other respects compels us to enter. Thus, while her fetishism serves to explain the connection between patriarchal formation and feminist transformation, it does not explain why all other forms of social organization - which also depend upon symbolizing otherness - do not enable imaginary spaces of transformation. There are a number of reasons for this, in my view.

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[60]By this I do not mean to suggest that patriarchy somehow *enables* women's agency because it compels women to overcome the oppression patriarchy is responsible for in the first place, but that we must understand, conceptualize, and fantasize the possibilities of patriarchy *as a category of analysis*, in order to understand, conceptualize and fantasize the *possibilities for posing alternatives*. Fantasizing patriarchy as a category of analysis does not mean that patriarchy is non-existent. Rather it means that, following Irigaray's own insights here, the rational basis for understanding patriarchy as an organized system depends upon a fantasy that unconsciously represents women and men within a certain pattern of interaction.

First, Irigaray is unable to see psychoanalysis as having anything to do with the way otherness is constituted symbolically along many axes of difference. For example, the psychoanalytic work of Frantz Fanon, Sander Gilman, the Frankfurt School, or the early socialist projects of Otto Fenichel and Wilhelm Reich never figure in Irigaray's writings. Thus her view of difference is, ironically, over-determined by the Freudian-Lacanian concerns with sexuality. It is the only difference that counts And, this is, of course, the negative effect of the fetishism of patriarchy: it creates blind spots vis-à-vis the various mechanisms of oppression, and the imaginary possibilities forged in the interstices of identity and other articulations of difference.

Secondly, Irigaray views the symbolization of sexual difference as a desirable goal: not as defined by patriarchy, but one made possible through the projection of the female imaginary. In this regard, the symbolization of sexual difference is *necessary to the functioning and survival* of a society - unlike, in her view, other forms of difference (cultural, racial, ethnic, class, etc.).

Thus *as a strategy*, the fetish enables a reinvention of the relation between identity and difference; *as an analytic category*, it comes up short, placing all meanings of otherness under the sign of patriarchy. Indeed, while Irigaray claims that this will result in acknowledging women in all their "multiplicity," she does not tackle the very difficult problem of how women and men are marginalized and colonized through social, political, and cultural articulations of difference in the present: that women's multiplicity is defined through symbolic otherness in ways that cannot be so easily marked as patriarchal. We must also look to the colonizing function of the fetish itself in Irigaray's discourse: why

can not all "others" recoup their otherness and mobilize a social imaginary for a politics of representation based on their own corporeal specificity? Is corporeality only defined in terms of male/female? If not, and if Irigaray is serious about sexual difference not being a biological term, but a relational and symbolic term, then her own reconceptions of identity in fact create the opportunity for such spaces to emerge, in spite of her own silence on the issue.

In this regard, Irigaray reads women's present condition through the ambi-valence of the patriarchy fetish to the extent that she distorts the multi-valent (and male-valent) conditions that structure women's identities. Even if one agrees with her goal for developing an ethics of sexual difference in the future, one cannot ignore her lack of attention to difference *in the present*. To move from "is" to "ought," it seems evident to me that we need to look to the possibilities of transformation created in this present. Ironically, I think some of Irigaray's conceptions of the imaginary and her attention to the present in analytic practice (i.e., transference and gesture) enable us to do just that. Her conceptions are fruitful for reinterrogating the present as a place of multivalent difference.

Having analyzed the fetish, are we prepared to view it as "cured"? Can we look at Irigaray's insights without adhering to her limitations or without laundering all signs of sexual difference from her project (which would be to misrepresent her)? In many respects I think we can, for the issue is not to do away with sexual difference as a formative and transformative moment, but to read difference as a strategy for engaging present structures of oppression and domination. In this sense, all differences must be questioned for the way in which they function to produce identities that cannot be easily marked as "female" or

"male" (e.g., Arab, gay, Chinese, working class, Aboriginal, or Francophone), yet are also always marked as "male" and "female" within their respective cultures, languages, and sexual practices. Moreover, Irigaray introduces a field of questions that appeals to the future of difference and identity in ways that make possible our resymbolizing the space in-between them. In this respect, her work compels us to pose questions about the nature of our pedagogical practices, and the goals of transformation guiding those practices, ones which pay close attention to how the imaginary is central to social transformation.

VI. Pedagogical Questions/Questioning Pedagogy

I have been suggesting throughout this chapter that Irigaray's position is helpful in thinking through what we do as transformative educators and why we do it. It may be useful to offer a summary here of Irigaray's views before turning to discuss their implications:

1. the imaginary subtends symbolic practices; in this it is a social formation.
2. the female imaginary, because it has a different relation to the patriarchal symbolic where it is always "formed" as other, can be the source of a renewed symbolic.
3. identity is something other than identification and the patriarchal self-same.
4. the space in-between identity and difference is resymbolized as mucous, envelope, and placenta.
5. otherness needs to be recognized as *an other who exists on its own and for itself.*
6. the transference is reconceived as mucous space of exchange.

7 the analyst interprets the space-time through which she listens to the analysand - for the analysand's benefit

These points raise questions *for* pedagogy and indeed, raise questions *about* pedagogy as well. For instance, if pedagogy is a site of articulation, then does it not constitute a symbolic practice which is subtended by an imaginary logic? In order to transform social conditions, do we then need to "educate" the irrationality at the basis of symbolic practices and belief systems? How do we engage difference and identity in an ethical manner that acknowledges the other as an other for itself? How do we affirm the formation of identity as a complex and ambivalent process while simultaneously opening up spaces for agency, for the transformation of identity? How can we engage difference as it *presently* exists within a utopian, imaginary project that posits an *other* difference, an *other* identity for the *future*? My intent here is to briefly outline the ways in which Irigaray's concepts can help to inform these questions concerned with teaching across, through, and with difference.

First, it is helpful to build upon the notion of a liminal pedagogy as a site of articulation, where we enunciate difference in our classroom discourses. In this view, there is no escaping the fact that as we seek to transfigure, for instance, what "race" or "femininity" might mean socially, we nevertheless participate in the production of difference at a symbolic level. Following Irigaray here, then, we might ask ourselves what kind of imaginary subtends our discourse of difference, subtends our symbolic ordering of otherness into categories such as class, race, and gender? What unconscious fantasy structures the way we talk about difference and identity? As Irigaray has

demonstrated, I think, unconscious fantasy is not in and of itself an "untruth," nor is it debilitating, hierarchical, or something to be avoided. Rather, the point is to articulate possible imaginary alternatives where otherness can mean something other than exclusion, denigration, and violence With this goal in mind, transformative educators seeking renewed visions of what society and social relations can be have an imaginary investment in what they say and do in the classroom. As teachers, we need to remind ourselves that our symbolic has an irrational component - a *necessarily* irrational component - which allows us to be passionate and committed, to teach with enthusiasm, to embrace a vision and purpose for our educational endeavours - even as it may produce blind spots. The imaginary subtending our symbolic practices poses an ambivalence for us; yet it does not mean that it cannot become an acknowledged part of the work we do.

It seems to me that we cannot simply content ourselves with stating that unconscious fantasy subtends our educational visions, or with pretending it has no effect upon our everyday encounters with students. Instead, transformative educators must look to the ways in which we "fetishize" a system of oppression as a category of analysis (such as patriarchy), which may, at times, prevent us from seeing alternatives, and possibly other explanations. That is, there is a need to work with our fantasies, not in the sense of making them "rational," but in the sense of coming to understand how they structure the ambivalence of the pedagogical encounter. Our imaginary visions of the future continually have to be worked through the limits of our teaching and learning encounters in the present. Seeking to ameliorate, alter, or revolutionize the lived social conditions in and through which we teach places demands upon ourselves and students to radically re-

identify, re-desire, and re-fantasize. The work required to form and re-form ideas, thoughts, feelings and relations to others reveals a profound tension which needs to be constantly under scrutiny. On the one hand, we need to understand the present in order to posit future alternatives. On the other hand, we only understand the present through our imaginary commitments to a future alternative

What I am suggesting here is, first, that we not abandon our projects, our hopes or future alternatives; and, second, that we not regard our imaginary investments as always already negative, something to be overcome, rationalized, or neatly packaged for recycling. Instead, working with our imaginaries means opening ourselves to questions unasked, ferreting out our blind spots, leaving ourselves vulnerable, while also acknowledging the necessity of committing oneself to a project of social change. In this respect, it may be helpful to analyze how our imaginaries work against, with, and through social systems of oppression in the embodied interaction between teachers and students. That is, how do my utterances, my gesture, my tone, my facial expression, my silence work to champion, challenge, denigrate or celebrate certain social relations with students and not others? What kind of symbolic relation gets established through the educational gesture? Even as we may talk about defying specific social relations, how do our actions position us differently?

As Irigaray suggests, analyzing one's own projections in the transference requires listening to the other, acknowledging that there is an *exchange* between two. While I am not suggesting that we are at all times engaged in a transferential relation with our students, I nevertheless think that Irigaray's focus on listening and responding to the other,

and on analyzing the space-time through which we make this listening possible presents us with an ethical obligation to recognize others as distinct from ourselves. That is, to recognize students as reality objects (or more appropriately, subjects) as well as imaginary and symbolic ones. In other words, our "self-analysis," our reflecting upon our teaching and the articulatory space we produce is not purely a matter of "self" evaluation, narrowly conceived. Instead, it is a matter of constantly coming to terms with the responses offered by students. It is about leaving ourselves open to the sounds the imaginary spaces of our classrooms make, in order to transform and retransform our visions, our projects, goals, objectives, and pedagogical strategies. In short, we need to explore the unthought, the unsaid dynamics, and the "coherence of the fantasy" which make teaching critically possible.

This leads me to my second point concerning the imaginary dimension of our own teaching and learning practices. In recognizing that there is an unthought and unsaid dimension to *our* articulations, to *our* symbolic constructions (e.g., our curriculum materials, the way we "dialogue" with students, the values we place upon certain teacher-student performances), we need to ask ourselves how these may be "infected" with the social imaginary structuring racism, homophobia, misogyny, capitalism, and colonialism. For as teachers, we can never entirely stand outside our social environment and can never fully avoid participating in the fantasies that are legitimized in our daily lives. How do we, as teachers and students, embody these fantasies even as we may seek to work against them? How do we begin the process of transforming an imaginary that is compliant in systems of oppression and domination, and that acts as a constant reminder that we (despite

our politics) have been immersed in a social environment of inequity in various forms? To borrow a phrase from Simon, how do we "teach against the grain" of this irrationality, against the imaginary that does not structure hope for the future, but supports and recalls the oppressive aspects of the status quo?

A primary step is to articulate the presence of this imaginary collectively, both with students and with larger communities of which we partake. As Irigaray has taught us, symbolizing the fantasy which organizes an oppressive symbolic alters that symbolic, and mobilizes another social imaginary in the process. Similarly, I read the problem of teaching against the grain of an oppressive symbolic also as a problem of symbolizing this irrationality in the first place. For altering the social landscape is not entirely achieved through rational appeal alone. Indeed, this leaves aside the very occultism which enables these systems to function so successfully. There are no rational reasons to explain why racism is institutionalized or why women are continually subject to assault. Thus to fail to address the imaginary that enables these practices is to forego addressing its roots. For transformative pedagogy, then, the work of articulating the imaginary dimensions of social systems seems to me to be central.

In more practical terms, this would require introducing students to new languages that link the imaginary together with collective forms of agency and critique, encouraging students to comprehend the unconscious workings of the social order, and to understand how collective change is made possible by engaging these unconscious workings. "Engaging these workings" means struggling to transform the symbolic collectively, using new metaphors that ethically position the other differently, that point to new modes of

address and understanding that have direct bearing upon student lives. Indeed, it means constantly re-imagining what is possible, and providing teaching and learning encounters that encourage students to resymbolize identity *differently*. This would mean not only providing essay-writing exercises (which are not unimportant), but also encouraging such things as the construction of community-based projects; mime, dance, or performance art; body sculpting; testimonials; film or video projects, all of which can grapple with linking culturally-available forms of expression to new "discourses" and social relations. It means designing courses with an eye to making evident the links between individual and collective agency; imaginary and symbolic practices; and unconscious and conscious articulations of difference.

However, it is not just what we teach, and why we teach, but *how* we teach that is important here. For transformative, liminal pedagogy does not only "talk about change" or give *students* opportunities to "enact or perform" change, *but is about developing a set of classroom social relations* that flow from a commitment to address identity as a relation of otherness. Thus, I am suggesting a mode of pedagogical relations that is about listening to the irrationality, to the imaginary, to the unsaid, fantastical dimensions which subtend our lives in the everyday. It means listening to students as "an other of an other," or as a web of relations. It is about listening in ways that work from an ethical position which recognizes otherness outside of the logic of the same - and this leads me to my third and final point.

Let us return to Whitford's comment on Irigaray: "that break with the imaginary, in which one is capable of thinking *about* one's own imaginary, instead of being thought

by it, is unlikely to take a social form as long as there is no real *other* " The practical problems attendant upon moving from "being thought" by an imaginary to "thinking about one's own imaginary" has to do with the question: how do we think through identity as something other than self-same? How do we do this not only on an individual basis, but establish it as a social relation? I suggest we reformulate our notions of what transformative pedagogies are about, exploring what it might mean to think about pedagogy and identity in terms of mucous, membranes, skins, and envelopes, instead of borders, strategies, terrains, and boundaries. The latter has the obvious advantage of referencing pedagogy as a form of cultural politics, and identity as a political and social formation. However, as I intimated in chapter 1, this language contains its own imaginary which feeds into (rather unintentionally, in my view) a form of identity politics where ethical relations between identities, indeed identity *as* ethical relation, is at best hinted at and at worst ignored. In suggesting the former as words to be invoked in order to think identity through its difference, Irigaray's rendering offers transformative educators new vocabularies for moving away from a sole focus on identification, positionality, and social location toward an understanding of otherness as a relation demanding ethical responsibility as well. Thus, thinking the "beyond" of identity (and indeed, to some degree, identification) moves us away from having to always interpret whether a student's performativity is indicative of imitation or identification, and to focus instead on the *process of interpretation* that guide teachers' reflections upon their teaching practices. Moreover, thinking about otherness in terms of membranes and mucous, for example,

compels teachers to recognize a student as "an other of an other," as a web of relations, as a social being who is also a student, as a being who makes "the teacher" possible.

As well, exploring the pedagogical scene as a space in which identities can be rethought in terms of envelope, for instance, allows us the opportunity to talk about identities outside of oppression as well as within it. That is, by *not* seeing identity as self-same (as that which is always defined in relation to social location; as that which excludes otherness; as that which identifies and therefore "takes in" the other) gets us out of the identity politics quagmire to a large degree. Instead, it moves us away from zeroing in on hierarchies of oppression, from making stereotypical assumptions about other people, and from collapsing social difference into identity, because it demands of us to put into practice a way of relating that challenges the very notion of *identity as being that which references itself.* In other words, this shift, this thinking "beyond" identity, means asking: What does my claim to an identity mean for an other? What does it mean to think about *others*, not as objects subject to the vicissitudes of social difference and disparity, but also as *subjects of agency*, as *others for themselves*, who are socially, politically, and symbolically able to create and sustain their own imaginaries? What I am suggesting here is a way of discussing, performing, and reflecting upon identity that enables us to imagine it in terms of the future. That is, a way of working through the present that recognizes the past and posits a future as part of continuum. It is a way of trying to work with new modalities of space and time, identity and difference, self and other. It is a way of understanding and of collectively symbolizing the manner in which we may begin to relate to each other anew. All of these are part of what constitutes the pedagogical imaginary.

In conclusion, Irigaray's reformulation of identity speaks to how the transformation of symbolic practices (including social relations) requires the mobilization of an alternative, future imaginary. By doing such, Irigaray underscores the need for seeing the dialectical interaction of the imaginary and the symbolic, meaning that transformative educators need to consider this interaction in the kinds of behaviours, attitudes, and social practices they engage in in the name of transformation. Moreover, by focussing on the ethical dimension, Irigaray (and by extension transformative pedagogy) demonstrates how pedagogical interpretation, reflection, and encounters can forge alternative imaginaries ethically. Transformative educators can embrace both the *fantasy* of a possible future *and* engage students as they function in the *real*, in the present - performing "as if" identities were something other than the self-same which dominant social practices claim they are In this way, then, transformative education is fundamentally about engaging imaginary identities - not in the sense that they are false or untrue, but that they invite us all, teachers and students alike, to reconsider and reimagine the possibilities for social change in engaging the imaginary in the first place. The task is now to determine what the possibilities are for *instituting* these social relations so that they become part of our social-historical landscape, so that they become a basic part of the present, not only the future. And for this I turn to a discussion of Castoriadis's social imaginary and radical imagination.

CHAPTER SIX

Radical Irreducibility: Castoriadis's Social Imaginary and Radical Imagination

> There are no "guarantees" for and of democracy other than relative and contingent ones. The least contingent of all lies in the *paideia* of the citizens, in the formation (always a *social* process) of individuals who have internalized both the necessity of laws and the possibility of putting the laws into question, of individuals capable of interrogation, reflectiveness, and deliberation, of individuals loving freedom and accepting responsibility.
>
> Cornelius Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy"

> We term praxis that doing in which the other or others are intended as autonomous beings considered as the essential agents of the development of their own autonomy. True politics, true pedagogy, true medicine, to the extent that these have ever existed, belong to praxis.
>
> Cornelius Castoriadis, *Imaginary Institution of Society*

As we have seen in the past two chapters, the imaginary has taken on a number of meanings, ranging from an emphasis on the visual and specular production of the imaginary in Lacan's work to its fantastical refusal of patriarchal symbolic practices in that of Irigaray. What I wish to do in this chapter is to extend and broaden, to a large degree, Irigaray's discussion of the interconnections between the formation and transformation of identity in light of the work of Cornelius Castoriadis. As a psychoanalyst, economist, and former Marxist with anarchist sentiments, Castoriadis has focused on a theory of the imaginary that draws connections between the social, the individual, and the psychical.

His work, as one commentator put it in 1989, "has heretofore gone almost unnoticed by sociologists,"[1] but more recently has found its way into collections on psychoanalysis and culture.[2] The chapter largely supports Castoriadis's thesis that the psyche and society "are both irreducible to each other and effectively inseparable."[3] In my view, it lends itself to my project of rethinking the pedagogical dynamic as an issue of identity trans/formation which involves an imaginary dimension. The radical imaginary, for Castoriadis, has both a psychical dimension (what Castoriadis calls the radical imagination), and a social dimension (what Castoriadis calls the social imaginary) which subtends symbolic construction, institutions, and meanings. Taken together, these two aspects of Castoriadis's thought seem to parallel that of Irigaray: for her emphasis on the female imaginary as a radical re-imagining, and the male imaginary as the coherent fantasy structuring patriarchy are also concerned with linking psychical formation to social transformation. Yet, there are some important differences to be discussed, which, to my mind, lend themselves well to responding to many of the questions raised in the last

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[1]Hans Joas, "Institutionalization as a Creative Process: The Sociological Importance of Cornelius Castoriadis's Political Philosophy," *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no.5 (1989): 1184. For elaborations of Castoriadis's work in terms of social and political theory, see for instance, Anthony Elliott, *Social Theory and Psychoanalysis in Transition: Self and Society from Freud to Kristeva* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), particularly chapter 7; and Derek Briton, "Exploring the Social Imaginary: Ideological and Political Implications for Education" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Socialist Studies, Montreal, Québec, June 1995).

[2]See "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *Rethinking Imagination: Culture and Creativity*, ed. Gillian Robinson and John Rundell (London: Routledge, 1994), 136-154; "Psychoanalysis and Politics," in *Speculations After Freud: Psychoanalysis, Philosophy and Culture*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani and Michael Münchow (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-12; and "Logic, Imagination, Reflection," in *Psychoanalysis in Contexts: Paths Between Theory and Modern Culture*, ed. Anthony Elliott and Stephen Frosh (London: Routledge, 1995), 15-35.

[3]Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination," 148.

chapter: a) how to educate the "irrationality" underlying symbolic systems; b) how to deal with the ambivalence of forming and transforming identities through our classroom discourses; and c) how to link the ethical appeal of listening to students to the political projects of installing a new set of social relations.

Castoriadis broadens our conception of the imaginary in a number of ways. To briefly introduce Castoriadis's thought, I'd like to point out what marks his notion of the imaginary as distinct from that of Irigaray, and to highlight its pedagogical relevance. These distinctions form the backbone of this chapter, and will be discussed in greater detail in the main body of the chapter itself.

I. Shifting the Focus: From Irigaray to Castoriadis

The first distinction to draw between Irigaray and Castoriadis has to do with the irreducibility of the social to the psychical. Like Irigaray who does not figure the symbolic *over* the imaginary, Castoriadis asserts that the social itself has an imaginary dimension. Unlike Irigaray, however, this imaginary is not produced in relation to the differential between the sexes, but is seen as the irreducible source of all forms of social organization. For Castoriadis, the social imaginary produces the fantasies which give meaning to our world of significations. More importantly, it is never stable, and never predictable. Again, in contradistinction to Irigaray who "names" the male imaginary as underlying patriarchal symbolic practices (which seem to be the only ones she talks about), Castoriadis does not "name" the "unsayable" in specific terms. The social imaginary is that which continually creates and recreates meaning, makes it possible to link signifier to signified,

and to institute language, traditions, and religions in any given society. In this sense, one may say that Irigaray's male and female imaginaries are particular forms of Castoriadis's more general concept. Thus there is not just a patriarchal manifestation of the imaginary, but capitalist, colonialist, feudal, and modern manifestations as well. In terms of the role it plays in instituting society, the social imaginary is important for transformative pedagogy in that it compels us to address the unconscious dimensions of societal institutions. This means that a change in the institutions would require the agency of the social imaginary. Thus transformative goals have to address how they would set about enabling this agency.

The second distinction concerns Castoriadis's emphasis on how individuals are formed through the internalization - the "learning" - of social significations. He conceives of individuals as "social institutions," and suggests that individuals are made - not born - through an "educative" process conducted from infancy onwards. Thus, unlike Lacan's view, it is not just Oedipus which functions as *the* story of socialization; and unlike Irigaray's view, internalization is not only a patriarchal prescription for women. Rather, it is a social prescription for all subjects. The formation of individuals is, according to Castoriadis, a form of *paideia*, or pedagogy, that is necessary for society to exist.[4] In this way, then, his views have obvious importance for transformative educators in that they underscore a point made earlier: that pedagogy is implicated in the process of internalization and in the formation of individuals, both of which are necessary for the

[4]*Paideia* is an ancient Greek term which has been generally taken to mean the upbringing of a child. The term has been appropriated by conservative educational theorists such as Mortimer Adler in the United States and has been used in this context to underline a "back to basics movement." Castoriadis has no relation to this group whatsoever. I will use the term pedagogy interchangeably with *paideia*, following Castoriadis's own practice.

functioning of society. As Castoriadis writes, it "indissociably contains the instituted procedures by means of which the human being, in the course of its social fabrication as individual, is lead to recognize and to cathect positively the values of society."[5] Hence to *transform* society would mean to ask ourselves how do we *transform* the way students are socialized, and how do we *form* new social relations in the process?

The third distinction between Castoriadis and Irigaray centres on the psychical aspect of the individual. In Castoriadis's view, the ability for each of us to create representations, to "radically imagine," can never be fully subordinated to society.[6] This, perhaps, does not so much pose a radical difference with Irigaray, as it places a different emphasis on imagination and the singular subject. For Castoriadis, the psyche lies residually outside society, and outside the individual as a social institution. It is, therefore, both other to the subject and to the social order. It is the unconscious "raw material" which can never be fully socialized; it is that which remains indeterminate, and therefore, un-formed. Thus, for Castoriadis, it is the ability in each singular individual to imagine (to represent) that becomes the means and goal (not the ground) for social transformation. Our radical imagining capabilities are what make individual agency possible. With respect

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[5]Castoriadis, "Social Transformation and Cultural Creation," in *Political and Social Writings*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 302.

[6]It goes without saying that Castoriadis thinks Lacan's thesis of the imaginary misses the point of psychical agency: "If the imaginary is reduced to the flatness of the "specularity" (and thus to the mere image of something pre-existing, pre-determined, and thus also *determinate*), and if it is then mixed up, in a lamentable confusion, with "deception" and "illusion," then there is a definitive failure to recognise the subject as radical imagination, as indeterminable and perpetual self-alteration which cannot be mastered..." *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 58-9.

to transformative pedagogy, then, this means that we cannot educate the psyche - neither directly *form* it nor *transform* it - but must accept it as the condition that makes alteration of self and society possible. In this sense, Castoriadis's position on the psyche is important for figuring out what may be done to best enable transformative pedagogical means and goals - ones which take into consideration (even if not directly shape) the psychical aspects of each individual within the collective.

And this leads me to the fourth and final distinction, which is Castoriadis's emphasis on autonomy as an individual-social project. Unlike Irigaray's focus on sexual difference, Castoriadis makes a plea for the creation of a society where autonomy is both the means and ends for political action, and indeed sets the limits and possibilities for a revolutionary project. Thus his ethics and politics are not in relation to sexual difference, but to otherness more generally. In this sense, his view of autonomy as inhering only through a society which fully recognizes otherness shares much with Irigaray's view. However, I think that what Castoriadis offers is a more complex understanding of how that autonomy must be *instituted*, must be created through a social imaginary, where *all* otherness, not only *sexual* otherness, is fully recognized. For transformative pedagogy, then, Castoriadis's articulation of autonomy as a political project has a bearing upon how educators may think about their own teaching: are we, should we be, and how do we go about teaching for autonomy in engaging a politics of difference, for example?

This chapter seeks to explore these areas more fully, beginning with a discussion of what Castoriadis means by the social imaginary, for it is important for later discussions in the chapter. I follow this up with an exploration of how individuals become instituted,

how they "learn" or internalize social relations and meaning. Here I discuss Castoriadis notion of the psyche or the "radical imagination" as that which is socialized to form the individual, yet always remains in excess of social determination. Following this, I discuss Castoriadis's notion of autonomy, and its relevance for positing a political pedagogical project which integrates both the psyche and the social as irreducible yet interrelated. In this sense, Castoriadis links the *formation* of the individual to the *transformation* of society. The final section concludes with how transformative pedagogy may begin to talk about its function as a form of *paideia* that seeks to *transform,* by careful attention to: 1. the irreducibility of psyche and society; and 2. the ethical and political importance of recognizing otherness as central to the project of autonomy. This latter discussion underscores many of the points made in the preceding chapter, taking up some of the questions posed there.

II. The Social Imaginary as Instituting

The social-historical, as I alluded to way back in the introduction, is not simply a bringing together of the idea of "history" with "society". Castoriadis posits something quite different here. He attempts to think of their "unfolding" together, of their inseparability, acknowledging that history as the passage of time only makes sense if something is altered; for if everything remained the same, how could we think about time?[7] For Castoriadis, it is the alteration of the institutions of society which enable us to say that

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[7]Castoriadis, *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), chapter 4 *passim*. All references to this book will be made in the text as *IIS* and *IISE*, respectively.

there is history.[8] Thus, the social-historical is the alteration of institutions which together define a given society.

Institutions such as social roles, nations, languages, and technologies become the markers of how we identify, for example, French feudal society, Ancient Greek society, or Canadian capitalist society. They are always changing, involved in a process of self-alteration: "the very being of society as institution [means] society as the source and origin of otherness or perpetual self-alteration" (*IIS* 495; *IISE* 371). These institutions, moreover, are neither merely ideas, or categories, nor are they solely material or intersubjective.[9] Instead, Castoriadis suggests that they are also *imaginary significations*; that is, significations, or meanings which are created, invented, and fabricated - which is not to say they do not have "real" social impact. As Castoriadis remarks, "the mightiest army in the world will not protect you if it is not loyal to you - and the ultimate foundation of its loyalty is its imaginary belief in your imaginary legitimacy."[10]

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[8]Castoriadis writes:

> It is not that every society is necessarily "in" time or that a history necessarily "affects" every society. The social *is* this very thing - self-alteration, and it is nothing if it is not this...In the same way, it is not that history "presupposes" society or that that of which there is a history is always a society in a descriptive sense. The historical *is* this very thing - the self-alteration of this specific mode of "coexistence" that is the social as such; outside of this it is nothing (*IIS* 296; *IISE* 215).

[9]Indeed, Castoriadis remarks -rather deliciously - that intersubjectivity is "a fig leaf used to conceal the nudity of inherited thought and its inability to confront the question of the social-historical." "Power, Politics, Autonomy," in *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 144.

[10]Ibid., 155-6.

Take, for instance, the gold standard as an "institution." Following Castoriadis's logic here, what made gold a "precious" metal cannot be explained by the laws of production; instead it marks a creative moment which posits an *imaginary* link between gold and value.[11] Institutions of this kind are the work of the *instituting* imaginary, what Castoriadis calls the *social imaginary*. This social imaginary *creates* a collective "image" or "fantasy" of how the society *is* and *should be*, enabling the society to perpetuate claims of value, legitimacy and privilege, without, however, allowing society to apprehend itself as imaginary, but real.

Thus there are two dimensions to society: the *instituting* and the *instituted*. The *instituting* imaginary creates society, bringing certain meanings into existence through rituals, social roles, and religions. It is the creating, active "putting into place" of imaginary significations. In this way, society is *instituted*; that is, the imaginary significations form institutions which together constitute a whole called society. They become our "second nature," as it were: our notions of time, our sense of value, our sense of what is the same (identity) and what is different (otherness). These institutions and their imaginary significations become sedimented as "reality" because they do not reveal themselves as having been instituted. That is to say, they conceal the creative, imaginary source that produced them in the first place. As Anthony Elliott suggests, "cultural forms can harden in such a way that the productive core of the social imaginary diminishes."[12]

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[11]Of course, the traditional Marxist response is that the meanings are "produced" by social relations of capital. What Castoriadis is trying to uncover here is that the meanings are "created," and belief in the gold standard requires a collective sharing in its imaginary preciousness.

[12]Anthony Elliott, *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 163.

The social imaginary functions as the unconscious, productive core of the social; it always produces, re-presents, creates, and invents new institutional forms

It is important to note here that the imaginary significations of society neither derive from a "subject" nor an "individual," nor do they arise out of rational intent. As Castoriadis notes, "social imaginary significations place us in the presence of a mode of being which is primary, originary, irreducible. . [they] cannot be thought of on the basis of an alleged relation to a "subject" which would "carry" them or "intend" [*viserait*] them"(*IIS* 487; *IISE* 364). That is, they are the meanings of the traditions, customs, laws, and commonsense behaviours of any given society, produced and reproduced collectively The social imaginary *posits* what *is*, what *can be*, and what *has been* for all the members of society; organizing and creating meaning for individuals.

For example, instituted meanings of the moon and stars in some societies may be quite different from our own institution of them in science-centred cultures. They may be incarnations of gods, signs of portent, markers of time, or animate creatures. As David Roberts notes: "Each society is thus thought of as the institution which arises as form from the magma[13] of imaginary significations, the ground of the social-historical. Each institution is thus a creation *ex nihilo*, a self-creation of humanity, whose amazing variety and diversity of incarnated meanings cannot be subsumed under the teleology of the world

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[13]Castoriadis suggests that imaginary meanings arise from what he calls a "magma" of significations. The best way, he suggests, to think of what a magma is is to think of "all the significations of the French language," or of "all the representations of one's life" (*IIS* 462; *IISE* 344). In this sense, imaginary meanings are virtually limitless. From the magma, institutions are created collectively (but not necessarily intentionally) which then, together, become the defining features and horizons of thinking within a given society.

spirit or reason."[14] The *process of instituting* a particular set of significations is not pre-determined according to laws of history or society, but is the work of the social imaginary which creates and institutes meaning "from nothing," or "out of nothing." In this way, Castoriadis lays the ground for what he sees is the possibility of social *transformation*. Societies do not merely reproduce in endless imitation (otherwise they would not change, and there would be no history). Instead, due to the radical instituting social imaginary, which creates *ex nihilo* (not *cum* or *in nihilo*),[15] new forms of societies are continually possible. That is, it is not that creation occurs in a vacuum, as if what will be instituted will not have any relationship or bearing upon what has already been instituted (including individuals), but that instituting societies cannot be explained by causal theories. For at some point, one hits up against the fact that one cannot explain the imaginary connection between signifier and signifier by appeals to laws or logic. Creation does not obey rules of rationality (why is coal not the money standard?) or any other "rules" of eschatology or teleology, be they religious, philosophical or scientific. Castoriadis's point is that creation itself, this radical instituting imaginary as he calls it, is *irreducible* to deduction, induction, or logical schema of any kind. That gold is precious and has monetary value has nothing whatsoever to do with the scientific properties of gold, or even the economic functioning of gold, but with the *instituting* of an imaginary signification that posits the equation: gold=value (which then, of course, has a history and a political-economic

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[14]David Roberts, "Sublime Theories: Reason and Imagination in Modernity," in *Rethinking Imagination*, 178.

[15]Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination,"138.

function). However, does not this view leave us in a quagmire of relativism? And doesn't this suggest that transformation is always occurring at random?

Taking the moon and stars once again as an example, societies do not produce eternal "truths" about these "objects." Instead, the point that Castoriadis underscores is that the reason the moon and the stars are even seen as *meaningful* objects, and more importantly, even simply seen as *objects* is due to their being posited through social imaginary significations. We see through the lenses of the society we are born into.[16] What Castoriadis is careful not to do here is to succumb to a subjectivist relativism, where each individual sees unlike any other. Rather, he stresses that "truth" and "knowledge" are instituted, and as such, they carry imaginary meanings on the social level. This makes them both amenable to change *and* resilient to simple dismissal, because they are necessary to our very existence, to our seeing *a* world as *the* world. So "truth" is not a matter of understanding an object's ultimate meaning, but is *instituted* as such. In this sense, truth is neither determinable nor unalterable.[17]

As for the seeming arbitrary nature of transformation, Castoriadis is not claiming that societies simply produce new meanings at random. It is merely that the social imaginary does not obey any logical or historical laws. While the social imaginary is

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[16]Indeed Castoriadis remarks that we can "know" about certain times and places "but from our present perspective. And seeing is just that. I shall never see anything from all possible places at once; each time I see from a determined place, I see an "aspect," and I see through a "perspective." And *I* see signifies that I see *because* I am myself, and I do not see only with my eyes. When I see something my whole life is there, incarnate in this vision, in this act of seeing. All this is not some "fault" in our vision, it *is* vision" (*IIS* 55; *IISE* 39-40).

[17]Thus, Castoriadis is self-reflective about his own "theory" as being that which is made possible through the social-historical, and only makes sense within this social-historical as well.

limitless in what it can create by its very definition, it is nonetheless guided by what is *possible* in the social-historical. Thus, it was not possible in feudal societies to make meaning out of "equal pay for equal work." Equality, work, and pay were not meaningful possibilities. What is important, for Castoriadis, is that this phrase means something to us now, not because it was written into the cards of history, nor because an individual made it happen, but because the social imaginary creates social and collective meaning, linking together these three terms in a collective, imaginary configuration. The social imaginary cannot be explained or reduced to individual action. (This is a point we shall return to below.)

However, if the social imaginary is at once collective and anonymous, irreducible to the individuals who compose it, then where *does* the individual fit in here? How do individuals as social institutions agentically act upon and through their societies? Indeed, how does an individual even become an individual?

III. What Makes an Individual an Individual?

To answer this question, Castoriadis invokes a complex set of relations between psyche, the social imaginary, and the institution - terms which one does not often associate as being interconnected. And it is in his explanation of what makes an individual an individual that Castoriadis's sees the interplay between the formation of the individual and the transformation of the individual.[18] Each society, according to Castoriadis, contains

[18]Castoriadis speaks of individuals and not identities, viewing the latter as specific social groupings, and the former as a more general concept. Yet, by claiming that, for instance, capitalist society institutes proletarians, he is nonetheless also referring to how individuals come to understand

within it its own views and incarnations of subjecthood: "there can be no capitalist society unless capitalists and proletarians are reproduced daily in millions of instances by social functioning, where this functioning produced, scarcely a century before, only semi-feudal lords and peasants" (*IIS* 428-9; *IISE* 318). This does not mean, however, that capitalism is "caused" by capitalists, or that capitalism "causes" capitalists and proletarians, but that in order to function *as* a capitalist society, capitalist and proletarian "individuals" have to be *instituted*, have to be *created* by a social imaginary which enables capitalists and proletarians to function within a specific order, and to identify themselves as individuals within that order. Societies provide the subject with the identities that best suit its institutions. Individuals are created alongside businesses, accountancy procedures, contract laws, and rules of ownership. In this sense, individuals are not "contingent" upon society, but, like the latter, are social institutions, defined and created through the socially instituting imaginary.[19] In short, individuals are social, not in the sense that they relate to each other, but in the sense that without society "individuals" and identities would not exist - neither figuratively (as institutions) nor literally (as living beings).

This is a different notion from what has generally been taken up as the "social construction" of identity (and indeed the subject) in a more narrow, Marxist sense; and Castoriadis positions himself at a distance from it.[20] For Castoriadis, it is not that

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themselves *as* proletarians, come to identify and be identified as such. In this sense, his view of individuals is eminently connected to what I have been terming throughout this thesis as identity.

[19]Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy, 145.

[20]Castoriadis does talk about the social "construction" [*formation*] of individuals (*IIS* 431, *IISE* 319), but he differentiates this from the Marxist view which elaborates a theory of subjectivity as epiphenomenal to the mode of production. However, Marx's early work reveals, in my view,

individuals are "produced" by, or are "products" of their society (in that they are determined by material conditions, socio-economic status, etc.). Instead, he makes a finer distinction here. Remember, he claims that societies *are* instituted imaginary significations (of which the individual is one). Thus the individual as *instituted* is a *social imaginary* construction, not merely a *social* construction. This means that, like the gold standard and other imaginary significations, there are no pre-fixed meanings or attributes of an "individual." Indeed, as we know from cultural history, there is a great malleability amongst "humans" to be instituted within a variety of different value systems, incest laws, and kinship patterns which govern sexual relations, death, and the raising of children, for example.[21] Castoriadis stresses that imaginary significations are not in and of themselves good, nor in and of themselves bad, for that matter. The point he attempts to make here is that individuals *qua* individuals are instituted by the social imaginary and as such they exist as an instituted relation.

However, by claiming individuals are instituted, Castoriadis does not mean to suggest that human beings are *tabula rasa*, or that they are entirely socially determined,

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a different notion of individuality. Castoriadis's extended critique of Marxism can be found in part I of *IIS, IISE*.

[21]Indeed, the argument could be turned on Castoriadis himself; for is not his discourse on "individuals" presupposing that all societies have "individuals"? That they all subscribe to some notion or image of the singular human being? My own view, which cannot be fleshed out in full here, is that the identitary logic of "one body belonging to one being," is not merely a logical ploy, but also tied to the sentient nature of our bodies. Like animals, there is generally no confusion about whose body is whose when pain is felt. However, due to the imaginary nature of human existence, it seems to me at least hypothetically possible that a society could be instituted without having "individuals." Nonetheless, societies, to be societies, would still have to regulate institutions and the behaviour of the collective, making distinctions amongst its members for reproductive purposes and for dealing with death. For this reason, I find it difficult to escape Castoriadis's assumption about the need for societies to institute individuals.

despite the fact that they are malleable. In fact, it is through his *psychoanalytic* reading of how individuals are *formed* through the social-historical that Castoriadis opens up possibilities for *transformation*. "When we consider the unbelievable variety of types of society known, we are almost led to think that the social institution can make out of the psyche whatever it pleases - make it polygamous, polyandrous, monogamous, fetishistic, pagan, monotheistic, pacific, bellicose, etc. On closer inspection we see that this is indeed true, provided one condition is fulfilled: that the institution supplies the psyche with *meaning* - meaning for its life and meaning for its death."[22]

Beginning with a reinterpretation of Freud, Castoriadis posits the unconscious as "radical imagination." That is to say, the psyche has (or more appropriately, *is*) the radical, creative capacity for continually representing images to itself.[23] Whether through dreams or fantasies, the subject represents images, sounds, and even smells which are not simply photographic images of reality, or imitative reproductions, but constitute an *other* world that defies the identitary logic which marks our life in the everyday. To state the obvious, perhaps, the psychical image does not offer a mirror image of social reality. Moreover, the meaning of these representations for the subject is not transparent. Indeed, the entire psychoanalytic enterprise works from the assumption that a representation requires de-coding, that it signifies something else than what may appear at first glance, or upon first hearing. What Castoriadis is interested in here is not so much the way in

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[22]Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination," 150.

[23]Castoriadis makes it clear that he is not only speaking of images as "pictures" but more generally as presentations.

which analysts go about interpreting dreams, fantasies, or symptoms, or in even how these may follow primary processes, but in the fact that there exist such representations at all. For Castoriadis, the psyche *is* creation, *is* radical imagination, which means that humans are not totally subsumed under the social instituting imaginary. For if they were, how would they be capable of producing that which they have not seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted? And how do they produce images which are loaded with affect, that are not merely formal replications of the "outside" world?

The psyche is for the individual what the social imaginary is for the society. It is an unconscious source of creation that enables the self-alteration of the individual within society. Just as the social imaginary cannot be seen within institutions, but nevertheless exists as the link between an object and its value, the radical imagination cannot be immediately grasped through dreams or fantasies, but nevertheless exists as the source which makes those images possible. In Castoriadis's thought, the psyche appears as the "emergence of representations or as representative flux not subject to determinacy" (*IIS* 372; *IISE* 274).[24] This "representative flux" is presented as irreducible, resistant to socialization - resistant, therefore, to being instituted. What interests me, here, of course, is how the psyche as radical imagination acts as the possibility for agency as a result. I outline here Castoriadis's theory of this socialization process, exploring: a. the psychical monad; b. the break-up of this monad through the triadic phase; c. the Oedipus complex; and d. sublimation.

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[24]Joas remarks that Castoriadis is concerned with putting forth an "ontology of indeterminacy," 1189.

Psyche as Monad

According to Castoriadis, initially the psyche is everything, is all, for the subject. The psyche initially *is* the subject, or proto-subject, one might say. There are no clear boundaries or borders, no definitions of inside or outside. Psychical elaboration, Castoriadis argues, begins at this point, where there is no separation (psychically speaking) of the infant monad from the external world. Drawing on Freud's suggestion in "On Narcissism," Castoriadis views the infant's psyche as being of the "anaclitic" type. That is to say, a type that "leans on" the material and physical needs of warmth and food. Thus, the first psychical elaborations (i.e., representations and fantasies) are connected to a need for food: the breast. Whereas a Lacanian might argue that the infant merely represents an image of the breast "to fill in, cover over, stitch up a void, a lack, a gap" (*IIS* 390; *IISE* 288), Castoriadis challenges this view by claiming that a lack cannot exist for a subject who is not desiring in the first place. And if a subject posits a desire for an object, then you have psychical representation before you have an experience of lack. Thus the *desiring* subject as a *representing* subject precedes the (Lacanian view of the) *lacking* subject as a *representing* subject (*IIS* 391; *IISE* 288).

Castoriadis distinguishes his view of the "monadic core" of the psyche from Freud's view of primary narcissism on the basis that the monadic core is not about "exclusion." It is not about closing off relations to others, or positing oneself as separate from an other. Instead, it is an "autistic" relation of "totalitarian *inclusion*" (*IIS* 398; *IISE* 294). That is to say, it is a state where the psyche does not and cannot differentiate its "self" from its "id;" nor can it differentiate between its "self" and an "object." (Of course,

the breast is not yet "object" in this sense, and the infant is not yet "subject.") Castoriadis's point is that sensation, perception, and representation are closed up together in the circle that is the infant's monadic core. Sucking into mid-air, satisfying its need for food (if only momentarily) through the staging of fantasy, the infant reproduces itself (for itself) as the object of desire. However, Castoriadis also says that this is a moment of identification, for if the child cannot differentiate self from other, then it seems inevitable that the child *becomes* the "object" it is reproducing. "In this initial, radically imaginary positing of the subject one finds the very first "identification," more precisely, the pre-identification presupposed by every identification... Here, the "terms" which, in language, we call I, mouth, breast, milk, oral sensation, proprioceptive sensation, pleasure, being, all - *are* absolutely the *same* without being "reduced" to one another; they are identical in a non-attributive and non-predicative manner" (*IIS* 401-2; *IISE* 297). Thus, for Castoriadis, fantasy does not signify a *mise-en-scène* in which the subject is actor, but the subject is the scene of the fantasy itself: "at once its elements, organization, "director" [*régie*], and scene in the strict sense *because* the subject *has been* this undifferentiated monadic "state"" (*IIS* 399; *IISE* 295).[25] Thus, with this view of fantasy, desire does not have to do with what the subject cannot fulfill in reality, for our desires are continually fulfilled in our fantasy life. Rather, Castoriadis suggests that what we desire is what we *cannot represent to ourselves*. "What is missing and will always be missing is the unrepresentable element of an initial "state," that which is before separation and

[25]In this sense, Castoriadis states that we cannot speak of fantasy as being either the object or the fulfillment of desire; indeed for Castoriadis it is object, fulfillment and the scene together (*IIS* 399-400; *IISE* 295).

differentiation, a proto-representation which the psyche is no longer capable of producing... This initial desire is radically irreducible... because it cannot find in the psyche itself an image in which to depict itself...*The psyche is its own lost object*" (*IIS* 401, *IISE* 296-7).

Castoriadis suggests that this original autism is projected into our adult life and into our social institutions. And this is important for he is making projection the vehicle through which the imaginary is connected to the social. He, like Irigaray, but for different reasons - and in different language - links this originary psychical desire to the project of reason: "the sperm of reason is also contained in the complete madness of the initial autism" (*IIS* 404; *IISE* 299). Castoriadis's choice of words here would suggest, in an Irigarayan reading, that his view of the monadic psyche is but another assertion of the patriarchal symbolic, of the logic of the One. After all, asserting that there is a unity that one consistently desires is seemingly opposed to Irigaray's mobilization of the placental metaphor. (A metaphor which seeks to challenge this originary oneness, you will recall.) However, what I find interesting here, is that while Castoriadis himself posits such an originary unity, he also emphasizes the *relationality* embedded in the unity. The infant's autistic inclusion signals its inability to differentiate, and is not a state of symbiotic unity with the mother, but a form of relation to the "outer" world.

Furthermore, Castoriadis makes a critical argument similar to Irigaray's concerning the projection of this unity into the institutions of rationality, into a logic of the same:

> Whether it is the philosopher or the scientist, the final and dominant intention [*la visée*] - to find, across difference and otherness, manifestations of the *same*... which would dwell entirely similar to itself in phenomenal diversity - is based on the same schema of a final, that is to say, a primary

> unity... The rational use of the form of the One, which allows access to a world which exists only as one *and* as *other* than one [for Irigaray, "man" and "woman" respectively], almost always tends to be transformed into the rational-imaginary use of the Idea of the One, which swallows up Relation by positing it as a pseudonym of Belonging, which, ultimately, would simply be a form of identity (*IIS* 404-5; *IISE* 299-300).

It appears, therefore, that it is not the positing of oneness in and of itself that leads to the patriarchal logic of the same (for Castoriadis posits it and yet critiques its unacknowledged and dangerous role in the promotion of reason). Rather, it is the continual misrecognition of its role in rationality, the continual denial of how irrationality informs our pursuits, that is important here. Hence, for Castoriadis, the originary monadic core and the desire it produces leave their effects on institutions of society which do not acknowledge its presence. Castoriadis's positing of a monadic core while problematic, perhaps, in an epistemological sense for some empiricists, avoids the patriarchal trappings associated with oneness, precisely for the reason that he does not propose a *mother*-child dyadic unity, but an inclusionary monadic one. Indeed, he skips over any reference to dyads, and moves on to the significance of the triadic phase for socialization.

Triadic Phase

To return to the making of the individual, then, Castoriadis states that the monadic core has to be "broken-up." The psyche must be socialized in order for subjects to function and survive. As Castoriadis points out, even in extreme psychosis some socialization has occurred, the autism is never entirely unaltered (*IIS* 412; *IISE* 306). Separation is a necessary and inevitable step in the socialization process. Unlike

conventional psychoanalytic theory, however, Castoriadis is not referencing here a separation *from* something (i.e., the mother), but a separation *between* the psyche and the social individual, *within* the human being. "A separation which will lead, for the individual, to setting up a private world and a public or common world, which are distinct and yet interdependent [*solidaire*]" (*IIS* 406-7; *IISE* 301). There is a "triadic phase," according to Castoriadis, which is not the conventional Oedipal scene (indeed it is pre-Oedipal in terms of Freudian time), but is related to the psyche's acceptance of the existence of objects as being "external" to itself. Drawing on the Kleinian good breast/bad breast thesis, secondary identifications occur at this phase. The subject, unable to suffer unpleasure, wanting to keep within that which is pleasurable, first rejects the image of the bad breast, and introjects and incorporates the "good." Thus it creates an "outside" in order to expel what it does not want (the bad breast). But the subject, according to Castoriadis, then further recognizes that both breasts, as it were, depend upon the same person: "the unified object which, nevertheless, joins two opposing qualities, is grasped straight away under a double sign. Carrying the bad object, s/he is hated; carrying the good object, s/he is loved. The other is constituted necessarily in ambivalence..."(*IIS* 411; *IISE* 304). In this respect, the other is seen to be omnipotent: it can be warm, loving, and giving *and* rejecting, cold, and indifferent. (The triad hence exists between good object, bad object, and subject.) Yet, Castoriadis does not read this as a necessary cause of the inner "representation" of omnipotence (particularly since representations do not simply mimic "reality"). He suggests, rather, that in constituting this outside, this "other" to itself, the subject *projects* its "own imaginary schema of omnipotence" - the

monadic state where it was *all* (*IIS* 411; *IISE* 305). Constituting an other outside itself, the subject sees the other to be a source of "must and must not" (*IIS* 415; *IISE* 307). It maintains this imaginary relation to the other, implying that the other's actions are "caused" by the subject herself, as if the subject were responsible for the other's behaviour [26]

The socialization process of the individual has begun. The "sovereign character" of the psyche succumbs to necessary molding. It is compelled to constitute an "outside" and repress the destructive affects which accompany the ambivalent identification with the other for fear of reprisal. "In this way, the unconscious in the dynamic sense of the term and a genuine repression are set up: the repression not of that which *cannot* be expressed because it cannot be represented but the repression of that which *must* not be expressed *because* it has been represented and *continues* to be so" (*IIS* 415; *IISE* 308). Thus, while the psyche undergoes *transformation* in the *formation* or socialization process of the "individual," it nonetheless continues to represent *to itself* and *for itself* - in relative freedom - affective images which cannot be expressed publicly. It thereby constitutes the radical imagination. However, this is not the end of the story of socialization.

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[26]Castoriadis writes: "If the other continues to be essentially imaginary, if all its manifestations can be grasped and interpreted by the subject only through its own phantasmatic schema, the other is also an outside agency that may or may not comply with the demands of the subject, may love or remain indifferent, promise, forbid, take away, scold, embrace, punish in a way that the subject construes as related to its own "attitudes," that is to say, essentially, as related to its own representations, affects and intentions [*intentions*]" (*IIS* 413; *IISE* 306).

Oedipus, yet again

The Oedipus complex (once again) deserves some attention here, for Castoriadis refigures it as something beyond the patriarchal family, and criticizes Freud for his pursuit of mythical, phylogenic "causes" for it (the primal horde story). The patriarchal family for Castoriadis is both exemplary, and purely accidental (*IIS* 420; *IISE* 311). The Oedipus complex is a *signifying* relation, not a necessarily paternal relation, marking the constitution of reality for the subject. According to Castoriadis, this constitution can take place in a family of two. "a mother surviving with her child on a desert island after a shipwreck can...socialize the child and make for him or for her a genuine world" (*IIS* 417, *IISE* 309). It is the *signification of the social* for the subject which Castoriadis finds important. "As such, the encounter with Oedipal situation sets before the child the unavoidable fact of the institution as the ground of signification and vice versa, and forces him [sic] to recognize the other and human others as subjects of autonomous desires, which can interrelate with one another independently of him to the point of excluding him from this circuit" (*IIS* 418; *IISE* 310). Thus the constitution of reality for the subject requires a recognition of otherness as it exists beyond his imaginary, fantastical projections. Elliott writes: "The nature of psychical reality, once it has elaborated certain representational forms so as to create a semantic content, does not just "register" other persons and the object-world, but actually makes their *humanization* possible."[27] Coming to terms with society's institutions enables the subject's recognition of the distinction between identity (as self) and otherness (as an other identity *for itself*, not merely a mirror of the subject's

[27]Elliott, *Social Theory and Psychoanalysis*, 28.

fantasy). This closely resembles what Irigaray refers to as moving beyond a logic of the same, accepting the other as being autonomous.

Sublimation

The next step in the socialization of the individual is, according to Castoriadis, to enable the subject to sublimate (some of) its psychical impulses in order to reap fulfillment from its social environment, in order to become, therefore, a social being. And it is here that Castoriadis draws out the most intimate connections between what one sublimates and what the social-historical offers in the way of substitute pleasures: "sublimation is the process by means of which the psyche is forced to replace its "own" or "private objects" of cathexis (including its own "image" for itself) by objects which exist and which have worth in and through their social institution, and out of these to create for itself "causes," "means" or "supports" of pleasure" (*IIS* 421; *IISE* 312). Thus it matters what *kinds* of institutions exist in a given society; how these institutions *relate* to each other through their social imaginary linkages; and what social *meanings* they have, for these shape and feature in what the psyche gives up, what it retains, and what it sublimates to create the "individual."

For instance, in a western capitalist society, the individual is socialized to sublimate certain psychical impulses and derive pleasure out of one's relation to a system of labour - be it owner, worker, professional, self-employed, or unemployed. These are the defining markers which constitute an individual's sense of herself, and are instituted through our

education system as well as through daily conversation.[28] When we hear the question "what to you do in life?" we may assume (without reflection) that what the person wants to know is "what is your relation to the system of labour?" That is, what to do you do for *employment*. As Castoriadis remarks, "The social individual cannot be constituted "objectively" except through the reference to things and to other social individuals, which he is ontologically incapable of creating himself for these can exist only in and through the institution. And he is constituted "subjectively" in so far as he has managed to make them things and individuals *for himself* - that is to say, to invest positively the results of the institution of society" (*IIS* 425; *IISE* 315). Thus the constitution of "reality" is dependent upon what the institutions of society deem to *be* reality for the subject. And this means that a "psychogenic perspective, by itself, is therefore radically incapable of accounting for the formation of the social individual, of the psyche's process of socialization. This is a truism which the vast majority of psychoanalysts - beginning with Freud himself - persist in ignoring" (*IIS* 426; *IISE* 316).

Thus for Castoriadis, the formation of the individual is at once a psychical process and a social process whereby the irreducible social imaginary shapes how the psyche will be molded - or more accurately, what elements of it will be repressed, sublimated, or left intact. In this process two "others" are established: 1. the psyche gets established as "other" of the "individual"; and 2. the individual creates an "outside" for itself inhabited

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[28]The interesting thing, of course, is that one is not *supposed* to derive pleasure out of being unemployed in capitalism as it is instituted; one could argue, I think, that this is indeed a failure of (capitalist) sublimation, underscoring Castoriadis's point that the radical imagination works against existing institutions.

by "others" in the social world. And, of course, it is because the socialization process - the instituting of the individual by the social imaginary - is never quite successful (in the sense that it does not destroy our psyches completely), that transformation in the form of radical imagination is possible. The social imaginary (as it creates *ex nihilo*) cannot hinder the radical imagination (as it, too, creates *ex nihilo*). Thus the psyche becomes "other" to the individual because an aspect of it is "untouched" by the social: it cannot be prevented from imagining, and is, therefore, indeterminate. In this way, Castoriadis's theory of the *formation* of identity (or in his words, the socialization of the individual) gives rise to the potential for the *transformation* of identity. That is, the creative, representational flux presents our capabilities for fantasizing, re-imagining, dreaming, and positing that which is not "real", that which the social does not posit for us. In so doing, the individual has the capacity for constituting itself anew.

However, given what he has also said about the social imaginary, given that it does not "arise" out of individual intent or rational action, then the radical imagination of the singular human being is not sufficient for explaining how *collective* transformation is possible. As an anonymous collective force, the social imaginary is also needed to alter existing institutions (including the institution of the individual). For Castoriadis, social transformation is possible only through the creative action of both agencies. Hence he coins the term "radical imaginary" to encompass both the radical imagination (the psyche) and the social imaginary (the instituting society) as *irreducible* actors in social transformation.

Yet, we have not yet looked at what "social transformation" means for Castoriadis As elaborated thus far his view of how societies and individuals are instituted and are instituting could apply equally well to the formation of fascist societies and individuals as to communist ones; feudal societies and individuals as to capitalist ones; patriarchal societies and individuals as to feminist ones; and modern societies and individuals as to postmodern ones. As Castoriadis himself says about the socialization of individuals: "The minimal requirement for this process to unfold is that the institution provide the psyche with *meaning* - another type of meaning than the protomeaning of the psychical monad. The social individual is thus constituted by means of the internalization of the work and the imaginary significations created by society."[29] So, the question then becomes: how do we shape the meaning that society provides for the psyche? What do we do with the psyche in transformative political projects? Indeed, how do we even construct "projects" that move beyond our socially instituted "reality"? The next section explores these questions in detail, drawing on Castoriadis's notions of autonomy and the project of pedagogy.

IV. Autonomy and Pedagogy

Castoriadis states, "autonomy is freedom understood not in the inherited, metaphysical sense, but as effective, humanly feasible, lucid and reflective position of the rules of individual and collective activity."[30] I wish to dwell for a moment on this

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[29]Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy," 148.

[30]Castoriadis,"Radical Imagination," 153.

definition, in order to clarify its distinction from the liberal connotations of the term (with which we most often associate autonomy). In the latter view, autonomy is linked closely to "abstract individualism" where each individual is an atomistic entity, a monad, capable of fulfilling its own needs, or using society to do so. This is clearly not how Castoriadis uses the term. For as we have seen, the only monad in existence is the initial state of being for the proto-subject. Indeed, the very term "individual" puts the subject in relation to others: both in the sense of other individuals and in the sense of the psyche becoming an "other" within. Internalization is inescapable for there even to be "individuals," and thus individual needs are not only *met* within a collectivity, but they are *defined* within and through that collectivity as well. Castoriadis's view of autonomy reflects the necessity of the subject to be socialized, and it is through its socialization that the question of autonomy can even arise. "If autonomy is the relation in which others are always present as the otherness *and* as the self-ness [*ipséité*] of the subject, then autonomy can be conceived of, even in philosophical terms, only as a social problem and as a social relation" (*IIS* 147; *IISE* 108). Moving radically away from "inherited" conceptions, then, Castoriadis suggests that the project of autonomy has to be worked out for individuals to overcome the alienation that *heteronomous* societies put them in. (I will return to the notion of heteronomy in a moment.)

Note here that Castoriadis at once claims that societies *must* socialize the psyche - individuals *must* internalize their social institutions - in order for any meaning of the self and the world to be established. So, to the extent that society is successful in its socialization, psychical repression (and its consequent "return" in the form of neurosis) is

an entirely "normal" condition. But he does not see socialization as inevitably *alienating* (as Lacan does), instead viewing it as *necessary* for autonomy - for freedom - itself to be achieved. The problem of *alienation* only arises when the instituted society becomes an instituted heteronomy, and indeed he claims that psychoses (radical dis-sociation rather than sociation) are far more numerous in heteronomous societies. This requires some explanation.

Heteronomy, unlike Roger Simon's usage of the term,[31] signals an undesirable state for Castoriadis. The hetero (meaning other or difference) here refers not to embodied "others" with which we have contact in the everyday, but to the "discourse of the other," an abstract other who is presumed to have made the law. "The other disappears in a collective anonymity, in the impersonal nature of the "economic mechanisms of the market" or in the "rationality of the plan," of the law of a few presented as the law as such" (*IIS* 149; *IISE* 109). It covers over institutions as human creations, it institutes the belief that laws are always made by others, not by subjects, and claims universality for its institutions as such. In this sense, we may understand Irigaray's critique of patriarchy as a critique of a particular form of heteronomy. It squelches to a large degree any form of participation in the alteration of the institutions because the institutions themselves exert a form of "independence:" That is to say, an institution "possesses its own inertia and its own logic, that, in its continuance and in its effects, it outstrips its function, its "ends," and

[31]For example, Simon states that the object of a politics of difference is "to live and work ethically within the embrace of heteronomy," suggesting an acceptance of the positionality of alterity. This is more closely allied with Castoriadis's notion of autonomy, as it turns out, than with his notion of heteronomy. See Simon, "Face to Face with Alterity: Postmodern Jewish Identity and the Eros of Pedagogy," in *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*, ed. Jane Gallop (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 92.

its "reasons for existing" (*IIS* 151; *IISE* 110). Institutions thereby separate themselves off from individual members of society, and the individual - itself an institution - is thereby alienated from its own self-legislative abilities. Instituted heteronomy equals instituted alienation.

Castoriadis proposes developing a political project of autonomy, whereby otherness (both in the sense of individual otherness - the psyche - and in the sense of social otherness - other individuals) is recognized as essential to the functioning of both the individual and society in an unalienated condition. Here, it becomes ever clearer that for Castoriadis, oppression (and alienation) is different from repression (and sublimation). The latter necessary for the survival of the human being, the former the result of particular social-historical conditions. Castoriadis's project is to construct new relations between the society and its institutions, and between the individual and the psyche, so that oppression does not have to be invoked for repression and sublimation to proceed. Indeed, Castoriadis calls for a new *relation* between consciousness and the unconscious; and a new *relation* between the social individual and the social imaginary. And it is the freedom which will be forged in these new *relationships* that Castoriadis refers to as autonomy. For it is only when individuals recognize the existence of the other in themselves, and others (as non-projective autonomous beings) in society, that freedom is possible.

The operative term here is "relation." On the side of the singular human being, Castoriadis is not proposing we "rationalize" or "bring into consciousness" our unconscious (our radical imagination), or that we even are able to do so. (Indeed, for Castoriadis such a proposition - that one could "eliminate" the unconscious - is tantamount

to suggesting the "murder" of the subject.[32]) Similarly, on the side of the instituting society, he is not advocating that the social imaginary "reveal" itself in its institutions, for this would likewise be a *non sequitur*. What he suggests instead is that another relation be formed where, on the part of the individual, the unconscious other is fully recognized for what it is - a sometimes Boschian array of images, representations, and affects which can never be "seen" or "understood" in terms of consciousness. It must remain "obscure." Although Castoriadis is a little vague on the specifics of this new relationship, he does suggest that it would consist of the subject not taking fantasies for reality, "to be as lucid as possible about his [sic] own desire, [and] to accept himself as mortal..."[33] Joas puts it well:

> Castoriadis does not put forward the goal of an ideal person who has once and for all achieved control over himself and silenced the voice of his unconscious, but rather of a person who has an open relation to and dealings with himself as with others, and who allows himself to be surprised over and over again by the unforeseeable wealth of his own fantasies and ideas.[34]

Similarly, the "obscure bottom" of the social imaginary cannot be made entirely "transparent" to itself. "It in no way follows, however, that it is impossible to establish *another relationship* between society and it institutions, which would no longer be a relationship of *enslavement* of society to its institutions, but one in which society knows that its institutions have nothing sacred about them, no foundation transcendent to society

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[32]Castoriadis, "The Revolutionary Exigency," in *Political and Social Writings*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 243.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Joas, 1195.

itself, that they are its own creation, that it can take them up again and transform them."[35] Castoriadis further emphasizes that an autonomous society "not only knows explicitly that it has created its own laws, but has instituted itself so as to free its radical imaginary and enable itself to alter its institutions through a collective, self-reflexive and deliberate activity."[36] Thus, there is an element of self-reflection (in the broadest of senses) which is not an attempt to "understand" in order to control the unconscious or the social imaginary, but to "understand" that the presence of the unconscious and the imaginary demands a particular attitude and set of institutions which do not deny their "obscure" existence.

For instance, in analysis, we may understand, through interpretation, how our psychical representations and associations may limit our ability to respond to particular situations in life, or may compel us to respond to particular people in specific ways. In everyday life, a teacher who berates (certain or all) students, a student who falls in love with teacher(s), a colleague who is aggressively competitive with peer(s), a student who is withdrawn in classroom discussion all reveal instances (not necessarily neurotic ones) where an unconscious dynamic operates to prevent or enable certain forms of action. Sometimes reflecting upon this and interpreting it leads us to change these attitudes, behaviours, or thoughts, and functions as a "cure." But, it does not "cure" or eradicate the unconscious as a *dynamic* source which continues to act through us in the most mundane aspects of everyday life as well as in the most extreme of neurotic behaviours.

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[35]Castoriadis, "Revolutionary Exigency," 244.

[36]Castoriadis, "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 7.

Establishing a new relationship to the unconscious does not mean "freeing" the psyche, so it can accomplish whatever it wants, nor "controlling" the psyche, thinking we can empty it of its contents, nor denying its existence, as if meanings are always transparent; it means acknowledging its dynamism as an ever-present and creative force in the shaping of our relations to others, to ourselves, and to society in general. And, as a creative force, it is neither determinate nor determinable.

As we have seen thus far, there is a socialization of the psyche that is produced in interaction with the social-historical. According to Castoriadis, this process begins with a psychical monad, moves through the triadic and Oedipal phases, and eventually leads to sublimation, all the while leaving intact the dynamic aspect of the psyche, or radical imagination. Now Castoriadis sees this socialization process as a *pedagogical* one in general: individuals have to "learn" what it means to be an individual in a particular society. The psychical dynamics involved in the formation of the individual, taken as a whole, are essentially about "learning" and "being taught" by and through others. Pedagogy, then, exists in the most alienating of societies, and is also, for the same reasons, central to the creation of an autonomous society. It is, by extension, also central to developing new relations between consciousness and the unconscious, between social institutions and the social imaginary. Castoriadis places pedagogy (not of the classroom type necessarily) in the centre of his political philosophy (as it was from Plato to Rousseau).[37] He views the *transformation* of individuals and societies, and the institution

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[37]Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy," 162.

of social and political subjects, as essentially questions of, for, and about pedagogy; that is, essentially questions of *formation*.

The project of autonomy as a self-reflective, self-legislative *pedagogical* project means that it cannot simply be a "future" goal; for to be self-reflective and self-legislative one cannot "dri'! [people] by force into becoming autonomous - an idea that merely has to be formulated in order to bring out its absurdity."[38] Castoriadis asserts that treating people *as though* they were always already autonomous is the means for instituting societies as non-alienating and non-oppressive. "Pedagogy has at every age to develop the self-activity of the subject by using, so to speak, this very self-activity."[39] Pedagogy is thus not only about the formation or socialization of individuals, but also can participate in trans/forming individuals beyond the dictates of society. This implies that there is simultaneously resident in the socialization of the individual a moment of formation and a possibility for alteration as well. That is, individuals can be socialized, can be instituted, to recognize themselves as agents of change. As agents, they have the potential to create an autonomous existence out of alienating social conditions, and to forge new relations of otherness: new relations to the psyche and new relations with others through collective deliberation. This is the project of pedagogy which Castoriadis advocates at the core of his politics of autonomy. In Castoriadis's words:

> In terms of the project of autonomy, we have defined the aims of psychoanalysis and pedagogy as, first, the instauration of another type of relation between the reflexive subject (of will and of thought) and his [sic]

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[38]Castoriadis, "The Revolutionary Exigency," 231.

[39]Castoriadis, "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 5.

> unconscious, that is, his radical imagination and, second, the freeing of his capacity to make and do things, to form an open project for his life and to work with that project. We can similarly define the aims of politics as, first, the instauration of another type of relation between the instituting and the instituted society, between the given laws and the reflexive and deliberating activity of the body politic and, second, the freeing of the collective creativity, enabling it to form collective projects and to work with them. The essential link between these two aims of politics is found in pedagogy, education, *paideia*: for how could there be a reflexive collectivity without reflexive individuals?[40]

At this point there are a number of issues we need to confront, if we are to consider Castoriadis's project for autonomy as useful for transformative pedagogy. One is the obvious paradox of instituting individuals as other to the society in which we are currently instituted.[41] How could there be, as Castoriadis says, a reflexive collectivity without reflexive individuals and vice versa? This is a point I will return to below in the following section. The second concerns the ethical dimensions of the praxis he advocates as a means for instituting autonomy. A third and fourth are the investment in self-reflection and the seeming voluntarism which underlines his thesis. I turn to examine each of these latter three briefly.

Ethical Praxis

To my mind, Castoriadis takes up an explicit ethic, a moral vision, of what freedom means in the context of social relations. For if we are to treat each other *as though* we lived in an autonomous society, we are redefining the social relations we have been taught

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[40] Ibid., 8.

[41] Castoriadis himself recognizes the paradox or antimony posed here. See, for example, "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 6 and 8.

to see as our "reality." In this sense, praxis is eminently an ethic of *being in the present* as it works through our *visions of the future*. It is about paying attention to the specificity of the context in which we engage others. Indeed, the project of autonomy demands an ethical praxis which recognizes the open-endedness, the unknown, and the unpredictable as central to self-reflective action: "*praxis* is the making/doing in which the other or others are intended as autonomous beings who are considered the essential agent of the development of their own autonomy."[42] And, "doing [*faire*], doing a book, making a child, a revolution, or just doing *tout court*, is projecting oneself into a future situation which is opened up on all sides to the unknown, which, therefore, one cannot possess beforehand in thought, but which one must necessarily assume to be defined in its aspects relevant to present decisions" (*IIS* 121; *IISE* 87). It seems, therefore, that Castoriadis's view of pedagogy exists liminally, through the fluid interaction of the present and the future; of the formation and the transformation of "individuals;" of the instituted and instituting society. And as such, it proposes an ethics of autonomy, based on attending to otherness in the field of the social.

However, this ethic, the embracing of a possibility, of a future "vision," does not mean that the future is "seen" beforehand, that our actions as teachers can lead simply or directly to specific and particular institutional outcomes. The point, in Castoriadis's view, is for pedagogy to open up possibilities for autonomy by creating the preconditions which make autonomy feasible and viable. The specific shape a society and its institutions will or should take cannot be dictated prior to the pedagogical engagement, but must be seen

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[42]Castoriadis, "Revolutionary Exigency," 230-1.

as growing out of such an engagement. It is not the job of pedagogy to tell students what is to be done, but to open up spaces for encouraging students to see their own autonomy as related to social and psychical otherness.

With this said, pedagogy as a praxis is both a politics and an ethics. It is not, as I've mentioned in chapter 1, that pedagogy is *underpinned* by an ethics and politics, but its very practice, the very nature of its engagement between subjects, its very purpose to form and transform identities and society, *constitute* a political and ethical project. In its purpose of forming and transforming political and social beings, of instituting autonomous individuals, pedagogy performs an ethical relation, altering the configuration of difference and otherness, seeing this as necessary and desirable for freedom. As Castoriadis states, politics is not about ensuring everyone's happiness, but about ensuring everyone's freedom. And, to reiterate, freedom and autonomy are unthinkable outside social institutions.

Self-Reflection as an Institution

Of course, as an ethical praxis, pedagogy also confronts the paradox mentioned earlier. How can individuals be socialized to be other to society, if we cannot step outside the parameters of our own perspective? *Theoretically speaking*, Castoriadis suggests it *is* possible by virtue of the simple fact that we are talking, thinking, and imagining it *is* possible. That is, that our social-historical horizon has enabled us to *question our institutions*, which means that self-reflection has been *instituted* (something which he traces back to ancient Greek society). In light of the fact that our questions and our posing of

possibilities even *make sense* within society, then society has indeed created the possibility to think itself otherwise than what it is. But this, of course, is question-begging. For, if societies (let us say "western" ones, for the sake of convenience) already have instituted self-reflection as a legitimate form of individuality, then why are they not already considered autonomous societies by Castoriadis? I think a valuable answer lies in the fact that what makes society autonomous is far more complex than simply enabling its individual members to question existing institutions. It means enabling their full participation in the continual alteration of social institutions defined by and through the collective. And, as we saw, it means instituting a new relation between the social imaginary and instituted society. Thus, while western societies have enabled the questioning of their institutions, they have not succeeded (yet) in enabling collective transformation of institutions that acknowledge the imaginary dimensions at work therein.

However, what Castoriadis misses out on in my view is the question of who has access to "what is instituted" in a given society. Society, even as it makes the questioning of institutions possible, also in fact, does not make it possible for everyone to question. Indeed, society institutes various forms of punishment for those who interrogate too loudly or too physically; inner city schools are notorious examples of instituting what kinds of questions are allowed or legitimized. In other words, Castoriadis does not sufficiently look at how institutions design different meanings for its different members, for different communities within the larger collectivity. In claiming that society presents individuals with their "reality" and in attributing to this reality a certain coherency, Castoriadis too easily glosses over the imaginary significations which are part of the institution of self-

reflection itself: who we think is capable, able and willing to act self-reflectively is also instituted by society. His project thus risks a social elitism.

Voluntarism

As well, Castoriadis's thesis can lead to voluntaristic notions of political action. This is, to some degree, inescapable since his very project is one of autonomy, is one based on the notion of self-reflective individuals and self-legislative collectivities. Castoriadis remarks that the supersession of alienation and heteronomy

> which we are aiming [*visons*] at *because we will it* and because we know that others will it as well, not because such are the laws of history, the interests of the proletariat or the destiny of being...implies a radical destruction of the known institution of society, in its most unsuspected nooks and crannies... (*IIS* 498; *IISE* 373).

However, Castoriadis's own thesis seems to provide some respite from falling into an overly facile equation between will and action. By insisting upon the indeterminate features not only of the radical imagination, but of the social imaginary itself, Castoriadis implies that social transformation cannot occur simply because we will it. For the social imaginary as a form of collective unconscious, as it were, acts in ways which prevent the social from emanating from the will of subjects. Thus an autonomous society cannot come about simply because we will it and act as though it were the case; it has to be instituted. Nonetheless, the *commitment* to the project of autonomy presupposes that there are subjects who do *will* it, and who will act in conformity with this will to some extent. To the degree that this commitment is made, then, subjective will *can* shape institutional and societal change. For Castoriadis is not claiming that society or individuals *make themselves at will*,

indeed this is the work of the radical imaginary, but that individuals have to reimagine possibilities for the future. They have to reimagine what autonomy may be like, and in this sense, while the *commitment* to autonomy as a political project is willful, it is also eminently imaginary. Which is why, of course, the project of autonomy cannot offer us anything in the way of predetermined endings or utopias. It must always already be seen as partial, as irreducible, and indeterminate. This brings us back to our paradox: How do we institute individuals as other to the society in which we are currently instituted, particularly if our projects are imaginary as well as conscious?[43] How could there be a reflexive collectivity without reflexive individuals and vice versa?

IV. Transformative Pedagogy: Ambivalence and Irreducibility

First, let me state that as a goal which guides pedagogical practice, autonomy, despite some of the reservations mentioned above, is a valuable project for working across, through, and with difference. For taken in Castoriadis's sense, autonomy is eminently about "learning" to be with others as individuals who have web-like connections to the world, who are not mere mirror reflections or projections of our own fantasies. More importantly, it is also about instituting change, instituting social relations and modes of participation that are consistent with this politics of autonomy. Indeed Castoriadis's project underscores the acceptance of autonomy as a condition for establishing a new relationship between the individual and social, as we have seen. But embracing a politics

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[43]Castoriadis himself recognizes the paradox or antimony posed here. See, for example, "Psychoanalysis and Politics," 6 and 8.

of autonomy, conceived through the field of difference and otherness, leads to a prying open of the limits and possibilities of pedagogy itself.

I think at this point, the paradox of instituting individuals as other to the society which has instituted them can be reframed. It is not so much that the *willing* the project of autonomy creates the paradox, but that our imaginary investments in it do. Hence we must face the fact that we are not only engaging in a politics of autonomy because we *will* it, but because we *imagine* it, and this is quite a different thing. It is a product of the radical imagination. It thereby carries with it an affect that at once desires to transform on the one hand, and, on the other, to form, socialize, or fabricate "other" individuals, including ourselves. And it is because of this psychical dimension at the root of our projects that it is more instructive to view pedagogical ethical praxis as an ambivalence rather than as a paradox. It is important to disrupt and in(ter)vene in Castoriadis language of "antinomy" and "paradox," I think, in order to accept that *ambivalence* also has psychical implications and not only philosophical ones. Moreover, these psychical factors play themselves out in our classroom activities and in the goals we set for ourselves as transformative educators. And, both of these contribute as well to how we interpret and listen to students with whom we are engaged. For what does it mean to "perform" autonomy as a means to institute autonomous individuals?

Part of the answer lies in the way we confront the difficulties of the irreducibility of the social and the psyche. The goal of transformation, as I suggested in the last chapter, cannot be to bring the psyche to consciousness in the sense of emptying it of its contents. Rather, following Castoriadis, it is to suggest a new relation between the psyche and the

individual. For pedagogy, this means acknowledging the workings of the psyche as *other* to our identities. It means nothing short of developing an analytic attitude where the radical imagination, as that which remains unsocialized, is fully acknowledged as an *amoral* part of human existence, for it is only socialized individuals who are moral, not psyches. Thus, recognizing the psyche as radical imagination requires developing an analytic discourse in our classrooms where students and teachers explore the responsibilities that this knowledge compels us to enter into as individuals. Teaching and learning beyond identity simultaneously requires us to embrace the otherness of the psyche, the otherness which cannot be determined by the social, and to embrace the responsibility we have to others in bearing this knowledge in the field of the social. That is, we need to conjointly recognize ourselves (and each other) as social institutions within a project of autonomy. For me, this is centrally concerned with the recognition of others *as* others, not as projections of ourselves upon whom we heap our unwanted refuse. This is not to say that projection is entirely avoidable; but because it occurs, it does not follow that this is the only relation possible, or the only relation we ought to advocate. Indeed, the very attempt to think through a project of autonomy signifies otherwise. It signifies an active, creative, and imaginary commitment to the struggle for new modes of relating.

However, in light of Castoriadis's position, the question that still needs to be answered is how do we institute the possibility for alteration, for change within a transformative pedagogical practice? As I have just illustrated, change can begin with acknowledging the irreducibility of the social and the psyche within a project of autonomy. Yet, given the inseparability of politics and ethics as we have seen in Castoriadis's writing,

it remains to discuss the practical, ethical dimensions of relating to and with students *as though* autonomy were already instituted in our society. Engaging in this practice again requires paying attention to how our imaginary investments spark an affect of contradiction which students (as well as ourselves) no doubt experience. The performative aspects of our teaching incite transferential dynamics where teachers are compelled to listen empathically to students, as both Reich and Irigaray have shown us. Furthermore, it requires opening ourselves up to *ourselves* in such a way as to analyze, as Irigaray notes, the space-time through which we listen to and with our students.

As well, it also requires us to be ever-vigilant of the ambivalence that structures our moments of trans/formation. Take the case of Shannon and Amireault once again.[44] What the two encounters reveal is Amireault's ambivalence about his radical teaching practice. Performing in the guise of the radical teacher,[45] he cannot accept that to transform, to liberate his student from an oppressive educational relation, he also must form certain possibilities for that student. He is not able to distance himself from the inevitable ambivalent affects which ensue, and to reflect upon them as such. Rather than interpret Shannon's behaviour as possibly "trying on" identifications, as performing, enacting, and representing the efforts of her own radical imagination, Amireault can only read her desire as his own; her imaginary investments as his own. Without coming to grips with the trans/formative ambivalence, Amireault cannot come to grips with the ethical project of

[44]See my discussions of Amireault's essay, "Good Teacher, Good Student: Identifications of a Student-Teacher," in chapters 3 and 4.

[45]Note that I do not think an identification is occurring between Amireault and the image of the "radical teacher." As I pointed out in chapter 3, his performance, his imitation of the radical teacher, cannot be conflated with an identification.

radical teaching. Thus, it is central, in my opinion, that if transformative educators are going to institute possibilities for autonomy, the ethical and practical ambivalence through which our teaching is structured must be continually made part of the interpretive strategies we use for self-reflection. By not doing so, transformative teachers risk deeming their teaching as simply unbearable, that transformative pedagogy simply isn't worth it. Or, they may retreat into an over-zealousness which alienates students and hinders the openness requisite for teaching across, through, and with difference. For as Amireault's ultimate abandonment of radical teaching *in toto* suggests, a failure to accept our own limitations is equal to a projection of our own omnipotence - a projection of the monadic desire of inclusive totality. We need, in short, to face our own radical otherness, if we expect our students to do the same. Facing otherness is not merely an inner condition, but a social relation as Castoriadis's work has suggested.

In sum, our classrooms are sites of liminality and struggle. Liminal in the sense that identities are continually made and remade - formed and transformed - in between the irreducible poles of the social and the psychical. Struggle in the sense that formation and transformation is, as Joas puts it, confrontational and traumatic.[46] Our actions as teachers who work toward transformation must always disrupt the conventions of instituted society, even while creating an openness to discuss and display the radical potential of imagination (the psyche) and the social imaginary. Performing transformative teaching within the vision of a project of autonomy means paying close attention to the learning aspect of the pedagogical encounter. For pedagogy is not about teaching alone, but the dynamic

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[46]Joas, 1196.

between the two. Thus, listening carefully, interpreting with responsibility, and being vulnerable to the serendipity of psychical elaboration are central to an ethical, analytic pedagogical practice. For this reason, then, teaching across, through, and with difference makes sense within a project of autonomy, so long as it is understood as teaching and learning across, through, and with otherness. It is a project, moreover, which understands that the formation of the individual in relation to otherness is a social and psychical issue. Identities are not only made in the class, nor are they transformed only there, but are the result of the ongoing dynamic of the individual and the radical imaginary. We are, after all, always individuals who are only sometimes students and teachers.

CONCLUSION

The Pedagogical Imaginary: Bringing it All Back Home[47]

> "Home is where we start from," wrote, I think, T.S. Eliot. Our "personal" experience is our personal home - and this home would not be a home, but a solitary cave, if it was not in a village or a town. For it is the collectivity which teaches us how to build homes and how to live in them. We cannot live without a home but neither can we remain hermetically enclosed in "our" home.
>
> Cornelius Castoriadis,
> "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary"

To bring it all back home suggests that one has left a home, that one has gone somewhere and come back again; that one has journeyed and discovered and, indeed, has some*thing* to bring back there. And, following Castoriadis, it also suggests that home is a collective effort, that my personal home is not a home unless its meaning is shared by others. What I bring back home, then, should have a meaning and purpose there. Thus, in bringing the pedagogical imaginary back home, I am suggesting a return to the place

[47]I wrote this title quite spontaneously, unconsciously as it were. It then came to me that is the title Lawrence Grossberg uses in his essay on pedagogy and cultural studies. Instead, of finding another, I have chosen to keep this one, partly because it speaks to my own imaginary workings in the production of the thesis, and because it echoes Grossberg's sense of wanting to return cultural studies to its initial concerns with pedagogy. Similarly, I wish to return the pedagogical imaginary to what gave birth to it in the first place: transformative pedagogy.

from which we began, to ask ourselves anew the question of identity and pedagogy, knowing that by doing so, we've transformed home into a different place, a place we've never been before.

In developing a notion of the pedagogical imaginary, I have responded to both of the questions with which this thesis opened: 1. How *are* identities engaged in educational projects committed to social justice?; and 2. How *should* identities be engaged in these transformative pedagogies, if the goal is to work with, through, and across social differences? How identities are engaged has to do with how transformative pedagogy theorizes them as social constructions. As we have seen, this formulation of identity has been inadequate for addressing the complexities of identities as they relate through and beyond social differences. It has also been shown that, in fact, pedagogy is an ambivalent process that has not been sufficiently dealt with as such in our theories and practices of transformation.

In order to redress both the inadequacy of the theory of identity as a social construction, and the inattention to the ambivalence of pedagogy, this thesis has provided a detailed reading of psychoanalytic conceptions of the imaginary and identity formation. With this in(ter)vention, it is my view that a notion of agency has been rescued; a notion which is consistent both with goals for social transformation and with a psychoanalytic understanding of how identities are formed in the first place: "beyond" identities as social constructions. Thus, in answering the second question, I have taken the position that both the ways in which we think about identity, and the ways we attempt to engage it practically through a politics of difference, need to address the space in-between identity and

difference - a space which psychoanalysis has been fruitful for theorizing. As well, I have argued that identities should be engaged in ways that fully acknowledge the ambivalence inherent to our transformative projects, which I have referred to as trans/formative (with a slash) pedagogy. Thus, this notion of trans/formative pedagogy and the psychoanalytic connection between identity formation and agency are the cornerstones of what I call the pedagogical imaginary.

Each chapter has contributed toward the objective of defining the pedagogical imaginary through the double theme of trans/formation. My intent here is to consolidate the views expressed thus far and offer a coherent outline of how the pedagogical imaginary is central to: 1. the pedagogical encounter; 2. the interpretation of the encounter; 3. the goals and visions guiding our encounters. In this way, each section addresses itself to how we may live through the ambivalence of trans/formative teaching and learning.

1. The Pedagogical Encounter

In working across, through, and with difference, we have seen how rendering our practices as articulating otherness is important for working through our ambivalence. Having demonstrated how identity is not merely the flip side of social difference means that it is imperative to examine the imaginary dimensions of our practices. Thus the pedagogical imaginary is about addressing both the identificatory and psychical implications of the pedagogical encounter, and, following Irigaray and Castoriadis, the social fantasy which organizes and makes meaning possible in our classes. These two aspects of the pedagogical imaginary lead, respectively, to what I see is a necessary

attention to pedagogy as an ethical encounter, and to pedagogy as political encounter engaged in a project of resymbolizing difference.

First, in terms of the identificatory and psychical implications, it is important to keep in mind that as we articulate social difference in our class we are not only "performing" this articulation through speech. As Irigaray's work on the transference has suggested, we are also articulating difference through body language, silence, gesture, facial expression, touch, and emotion (or lack thereof) all of which has an impact upon the encounter with students. In "communicating" with students through a circuit of unsaid exchanges, we must ask ourselves what bearing this has upon how they respond to us. I do not wish to suggest that students' responses are *im*mediately tied to our discourses, just as our responses are not immediately related to theirs. In fact, I have demonstrated throughout the thesis that paying close attention to our articulations of difference does not mean that we decontextualize our teaching, or reduce learning to an *effect* of our performativity. Indeed, my emphasis has been to contextualize the pedagogical encounter as an *encounter*: it is thus a social, ethical and political relation. The pedagogical imaginary compels us to think not only about what we say and why we say it, but about *how* we say it and *with whom* are we in dialogue. It means paying attention to the relation between self and other which we enact *with* students and not only *for* them. It means listening to students empathically in Reich's sense of the term: listening to them so that we apprehend their radical otherness - that is, an otherness not wrapped up in our projections. It also means analyzing the space-time through which we listen to students: analyzing our own actions ethically, examining how what we say is already part of how racial, sexual,

class, and ethnic differences are articulated in the society at large, and how these factors may influence the receptivity or indifference to our teaching. Pedagogical interaction is not, in this sense, a Lacanian transference, where the teacher by virtue of being the imaginary "subject presumed to know" is always caught in an endless cycle of projection and identification. Instead, working, across, through, and with difference means working toward the assertion that to listen to an other is not to consume that other; it is not to constitute that other as a centre of one's discourse. It is only through recognizing the imaginary dimensions of the other in our encounter with the other, that each one of us may become autonomous subjects.

The psyche, moreover, as residual and irreducible to society, suggests that our encounters need to engage this imaginary dimension meaningfully. Of course, as that which has not been socialized, the point of trans/formative pedagogy is not to "socialize" it. Rather, it is to acknowledge its dynamic quality in the production of social institutions, discourses, and pedagogical encounters. In this regard, as I argued in chapter 6, it is not about "evacuating" or abolishing the unconscious, but about teaching so that its presence is fully acknowledged as an other, unsaid, and invisible part of our daily lives. In the encounter itself, it means providing the language for students to question identities as ambivalent or multivalent. Acknowledging the otherness of identity is helpful for moving beyond a classroom discourse of identity politics and hierarchies of oppression. This enables students to reflect upon the way the assertion of identity has an impact upon an other; and that our assertions are complexly tied to unconscious and imaginary structuring of who we are and who we want to be.

Second, in terms of the social fantasies that structure differences, we need to talk about these as a fundamental part of transformation, revealing, for example, the occultism of racist stereotyping, of business-page rhetoric, or of misogynist song lyrics. Again, it requires introducing a new language into the discourse of the classroom. In collectively investigating the unconscious aspects of oppressive systems, we better understand how they become internalized as "second nature." As well, this collective project mobilizes a imaginary which exists "beyond" or "in excess" of dominant forms of representation. That is, it enables, to follow Irigaray, a possibility for reimagining and resymbolizing social relations and representations of difference *differently*. On a practical level, the pedagogical encounter would be open to alternative forms of expression, to work which attempts to examine the space in-between identity and difference in order to recreate possibilities for thinking through difference - and indeed identity - differently.

Lastly, in providing the language both of psyche and social fantasy, the pedagogical imaginary enables trans/formative educators to make their pedagogical practice the subject of dialogue in the class itself. That is, it encourages opening up the discourse of the class to critique and re-imagining. As well, in providing this language, we are less apt to write off students simply as "resistant" to our trans/formative projects, and more likely to question what makes that "resistance" possible. How do institutions, social disparities, psychical investments, and our articulations of difference, provide the means for this resistance or refusal?

2. Interpretation of the Encounter

An important aspect of interpretation I have argued for is the development of an analytic attitude. That is, a "reading" of our practice in such a way that we are attuned to the intricate nature of identification and the imaginary. An important point to be made in this regard, following Freud's distinction between imitation and identification, is to take caution in the kinds of assumptions we make about students; that is, assuming we know when students identify with someone or something by virtue of their imitative gesture. As we have seen in the case with Amireault and Shannon, our interpretation is neither innocent nor neutral, but has tremendous impact upon how we respond to students in the pedagogical encounter itself. Developing an analytic attitude is helpful in combatting against surface readings, and accepting responsibility for the processes through which we evaluate students. As well, it reorients us away from the focus on getting the interpretation right, to a focus on the ethical implications of our actions - and thoughts - as teachers. It underscores the importance of interacting with students as subjects who have web-like connections to the world. And, most importantly, in my view, it prevents us from falling into an "us" and "them" discourse which is unproductive for trans/formative teaching across differences. The pedagogical imaginary, then, is about focusing our attention on how the trans/formative moment impacts upon students in multivalent ways, and leaves our reflection upon the encounter open-ended.

As well, an analytic attitude demands attention to the metaphors we use to give meaning to our practices. That is, in rethinking what happens in our classrooms, we must make the effort not to be boxed in by theoretical models that fix students - and ourselves

as well - into stagnant, rigid roles and identity "positions." Instead, it is important to maintain an active participation in constructing new modes of discourse, as seeing the discourses through which we reflect upon our practices as flexible, open, unfinished, and incomplete. In working across, through, and with difference, it seems to me evident that a search for new metaphors for exploring the relation between identity and other is crucial For if we are attempting to engage difference beyond "identity" (i.e.. beyond a transparent self-same), then we need to think otherwise, to think "queerly," and to push at the limits of our paradigms. It also engages what Castoriadis would call our "radical imagination" in the search for alternative wor(l)ds. In this sense, I find Irigaray's mobilization of the fluid and mucous most helpful in moving beyond identity solely as a border, boundary or position. Rethinking identity as envelope, as involved in constant exchange with others, is an appropriate way of thinking about the liminality, the permeability, the openness, and vulnerability of identity without submerging identity into symbiotic attachments or oceanic oneness. Indeed, as both Irigaray and Castoriadis stress, identities can be rethought outside the logic of the self-same as a relation to otherness which recognizes the autonomy and distinctness of each subject. In this vein, to interpret classroom dynamics within our trans/formative projects that work across differences, it is helpful to think about how an assertion of one's identity always has a bearing on an other. The Lacanian question "for whom do I identify?" while important, is inverted in my concern with the pedagogical imaginary: "for whom do my identifications matter?" Thus, identities are not seen as points from which we speak, but as articulatory practices that have psychical and imaginary supports and effects beyond the "borders" of ourselves.

3. Goals and Visions Guiding the Encounter

The pedagogical imaginary is concerned with acknowledging and working with the imaginary dimensions of the goals which guide our practices. That is, trans/formative pedagogy is only possible because we are able to re-imagine an alternative vision of what social relations should and can be. As I have argued in chapter 5, our commitment to redress particular forms of systemic oppression operates as a fetish. We both must acknowledge their existence and non-existence simultaneously. That is, we must act in the present *as if* our visions were already instituted. We cannot work across difference without dealing with the present social disparities which structure differences differently; but we must enact an ethical relation with our students that does not merely reproduce these disparities yet again. We perform ethically in ways that mobilize in the present how we imagine social relations can be. In this regard, within a politics of difference we must address ourselves to the imaginary that makes ethical social relations possible. By ethical here, I am reading the politics of difference through the project of autonomy that Castoriadis outlines. In so doing, I think we are better able to grasp that the goal of our practice is also the means through which we perform pedagogically.

By engaging identities as relations of otherness, we are engaging each other autonomously - as reflexive subjects capable of deliberation, self-reflection, and of course, capable of creative imagination. Recognizing the autonomy of subjects therefore requires recognizing the otherness that is the unconscious imaginary. For if we choose to ignore the unconscious imaginary, simply seeing pedagogy as caught up within a narrow view of self-reflection, then we are ignoring the very thing that enables us to reimagine the world

differently, to live differently, to live, work, and love across, through and with difference. And, if we fail to make evident the project of autonomy underlying a politics of difference, then we risk merely indoctrinating students as to what "we" imagine the world to be, without listening, without allowing them the space to articulate and resymbolize their own views. This is not an appeal to subjectivist relativism, for the very idea that one cannot resymbolize without a community, that identity is a relation of otherness, and that one's articulations occur within a context of social relations provide checks against some facile view that anything goes. The politics of difference and the project of autonomy together constitute an ethical-political project which is not about celebrating individuality. It is about viewing the residual psyche as necessary for reformulating collective living, while acknowledging the irreducibility of the social to the psychical. In my view, the politics of difference and autonomy puts at the fore the collective means for trans/formation. This requires the difficult task of shedding the hubris of our authority without denying that that authority has been instituted and has powerful imaginary significations for both teachers and students alike. It also requires allowing ourselves as teachers to question what is invested in our knowledge and the goals and visions that guide us.

Lastly, the pedagogical imaginary accepts that a *commitment* to a project of social justice may be both deliberate and willful. However, our imaginary investment in that commitment also highlights that transformative action is not entirely a matter of will, but instead originates in possibility to reimagine the future differently. Thus trans/formative pedagogy needs to create the opportunities for these reimaginings to flourish in order to begin the long process of radically re-instituting society.

Narrative Endings

In bringing the pedagogical imaginary back home, I wish to revisit the quote from Freire which introduced the thesis:

> A group in a New York ghetto was presented a coded situation showing a big pile of garbage on a street corner - the very same street where the group was meeting. One of the participants said at once, "I see a street in Africa or Latin America." "And why not in New York?" asked the teacher. "Because we are the United States and that can't happen here."[48]

As stated before, there is a grave sense in which these students have internalized the myth of American plenitude: there is failure to name their living conditions. However, as has been stressed throughout the thesis, the psychical processes through which identities are formed simultaneously provide an indeterminate space: an unconscious, imaginary space of representation. In the face of the most crushing aspects of oppressive living conditions, I believe that psychoanalysis provides us with a sense of hope. Thus the very discourse which assures us no sociality is possible without internalization and repression, also recognizes that we are neither socially- nor psychically-determined identities. Psychoanalysis thereby gives us a sense of the agentic possibilities to be had in the imaginary capability to defy social logic. It is an imaginary which enables each of us to imagine, to fantasize, desire, and reidentify ourselves differently. And by doing so we imagine ourselves *through* our difference, through our radical psychical otherness. With this hope in hand, we can see that this space of indeterminacy fuels our ability to work collectively, deliberately and wilfully to construct new possibilities in the present for the future.

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[48]Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1989 [1968]), 155.

In sum, then, bringing the pedagogical imaginary back home means having to rebuild that place we call home. To me, this involves nothing short of a psychoanalytic in(ter)vention into how, why, and what we teach in the ethical and political project that is trans/formative pedagogy. This thesis presents a necessary beginning, a sketch of an imaginary blueprint which others may add on to, erase, and redesign. For as Castoriadis says, it is "the collectivity which teaches us how to build homes and how to live in them." My work here is done.

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APPENDIX A

The Dream of the Butcher's Wife and Further Notes on Identification

Initially, Freud's client (the "butcher's wife")[1] is intent on challenging his claim that all dreams are wish fulfillments, and as proof she offers an account of a dream which she interprets, contrarily, as a desire having gone awry. According to Freud's transcription:

> "I wanted to give a supper-party, but I had nothing in the house but a little smoked salmon. I thought I would go out and buy something, but remembered then that is was Sunday afternoon and all the shops would be shut. Next I tried to ring up some caterers, but the telephone was out of order. So I had to abandon my wish to give a supper-party" (180).

Freud, equally intent on showing his client otherwise, interprets her desire gone awry as the wish in fact fulfilled. Freud characteristically requests further associative material in order to interpret the dream. As it turns out, the plump wife is in the habit of denying herself caviar ("obliged to create an unfulfilled wish for herself in her actual life" [181]) and her stout husband has requested that they accept no more invitations to dinner in order that he be able to lose weight. Freud, unsatisfied that these revelations are sufficient for analyzing the dream, probes further. The butcher's wife then claims her husband is attracted to her thin friend; a highly unusual attraction given the butcher's predilection for fleshy women. This friend happens to adore smoked salmon - which she begrudges herself despite her wish to grow plumper - and has on the day of dream's occurrence implored the

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[1]The dream appears in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, [1900] trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1969). All references to this volume are indicated in the text.

butcher's wife to ask her to dinner ("you always feed one so well" she is reported as saying [181]). For Freud, this piece of information is the key to the dream's analysis. He reads the dream as a fulfilled wish: a wish, that is, *not* to throw a dinner party which would thereby prevent the wife's friend from growing plumper and becoming more appealing to her husband. On another, and not incommensurable level, Freud locates the presence of the smoked salmon as indicating that the dream is really about the friend, not the wife. It is her friend who must renounce her chances of having smoked salmon and of gaining any weight, thereby making the friend's wish unfulfilled. Thus there are ostensibly two wishes unfulfilled in the dream: the desire for smoked salmon and the desire for the party.[2] Having identified herself with her friend, "the "I" of the supper party dream is really "she"."[3] The dream is about the friend; or, more accurately speaking, about the wife's identification with the friend. Freud identifies this as an "hysterical identification." The butcher's wife dreams of her friend's unfulfilled wish for smoked salmon by imitating it as her own renounced wish. With this identification in place, the dream's skein of desire begins to unravel. In what direction, however, involves yet other levels of interpretation, other ways of interpreting the desire-identification dynamic.

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[2]Actually, there may be three, since one may presume the butcher himself would be upset if his love object were not to grow plumper. On the other hand, if we take, as Diana Fuss suggests we do, his own desire to lose weight as an identification with the friend (and not as a desire for her as his wife thinks), then her unfulfilled wish may be seen as expressing precisely the desire of the butcher himself. Given that it is the wife's dream, we may place her identification with her husband instead, suggesting that her desire is for the friend herself. Clearly, the analysis here - at least based on the information offered - is virtually limitless. See Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 31.

[3]Fuss, 28.

There have been numerous interpretations of this dream which push and extend the resolute image of "hysterical identification" that Freud conjures up.[4] However, I am less interested in offering my own interpretation here, or pinning down the meaning of desire for the butcher's wife, than I am with examining the assumption of imitation underlying the notion of identification and what this signals for desire more generally.[5] Thus while various interpretations trace the path of identification back (or forward) to explicit desires, it is the understanding and reading of identification and imitation that is my present focus. For it is in the distinction of, as well as the connections between, imitation and identification that is the foundation for any psychoanalytic interpretation. That is, how do we ever know when imitation is anything more than imitation? How do we identify identification?

Attempting an answer from within psychoanalytic discourse requires returning to Freud for a moment. Following his interpretation of the butcher's wife's dream, Freud attempts a distinction between "hysterical *imitation*" and "hysterical *identification.*" Freud asks:

> What is the meaning of hysterical identification? It requires a somewhat lengthy explanation. Identification is a highly important factor in the mechanism of hysterical symptoms. It enables patients to express in their symptoms not only their own experiences but those of large number of

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[4]See, for example, Lacan, *Ecrits. A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 257-262; Cynthia Chase, "Desire and Identification in Lacan and Kristeva," in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Richard Feldstein and Judith Roof (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 65-83; and Fuss, 27-32.

[5]I do not wish to suggest that identification and desire are clearly or easily separable. Indeed Fuss's work convincingly suggests otherwise (particularly with respect to this dream). However, I do think that the notion of identification as imitation is a distinct issue which compels us to sift through a finer sieve the differences between them.

> other people; it enables them, as it were, to suffer on behalf of a whole crowd of people and to act all the parts in a play single-handed. I shall be told that this is not more than the familiar hysterical imitation, the capacity of hysterics to imitate any symptoms in other people that may have struck their attention - sympathy, as it were, intensified to the point of reproduction. This, however, does no more than show us the path along which the psychical process in hysterical imitation proceeds. The path is something different from the mental act which proceeds along it (182-3).

Freud suggests in this passage that identification is different from "mere" imitation in terms of its psychical component. That is to say, imitation is the material that is observed, while identification is essentially a mental act, hidden from transparent view. That imitation is a path, while identification is that which proceeds along it, further suggests the dynamic quality attributed to identification; imitation being the physical manifestation of such a dynamic. In making such a distinction, Freud has not elaborated upon whether imitation exists independently of identification or vice-versa. However, a little further on, Freud writes:

> Thus identification is not simple imitation but *assimilation* on the basis of a similar aetiological pretension; it expresses a resemblance and is derived from a common element which remains in the unconscious. (183-4).

By claiming identification is an "assimilation," Freud expands upon the distinction earlier made. If imitation is the physical and observable phenomenon, then identification is the process which "brings into" the subject elements of external reality. The hysteric reproduces or "mirrors" in the act of hysterical imitation, but this mirroring is only identification if the imitation is successfully integrated into her unconscious.

However, there is also something else which marks the identification, and that is its relation to sexuality and aggressivity. In conceiving of identification in relation to "a common sexual element," Freud is implicitly ensuring a definite relation between desire

and identification. That object choice (the psychoanalytic term for desire) is present, and may even be that which impels the identification, suggests that identification and desire are flip sides of the same coin. For if, following Freud, desire for an other *either* results in identification with that other (thereby successfully de-sexualizing the desire) *or* results in an identification with the other in order to share a love object (e.g. identifying with a sibling through the shared desire for the mother), then identification is the consequence of desire. That is, an internal, desirous impulse creates the necessity for the identification, setting up a causal relation between the terms. However, this assertion would preclude identification from having any effect on desire, as if once the identification is made the desire is satiated or remains unchanged. Yet, this is not what Freud later states in his treatment of identification in *The Ego and the Id* - in which, incidentally, his emphasis on imitation is greatly diminished. Instead, he claims that "object-cathexis [desire] and identification are no doubt indistinguishable from one another."[6] For instance, in looking at Freud's own account of the Oedipus complex, the boy's identification with his father ensures at once a heterosexual desire *and* a desexualization of homosexuality (given, of course, that Freud accepts bisexuality as a child's natural predisposition). It is important to return for a moment to the butcher's wife dream to examine more carefully the significance of this dynamic between identification and desire.

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[6]Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, [1923] *PFL*, vol. 11, 367. However, he is not consistent on this point. Two years earlier in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, [1921] *PFL*, vol. 12, he is quite adamant about the distinction between identification and desire. Indeed he postulates that in the case of Dora's imitation of her father's cough, "identification has appeared instead of object-choice, and that object-choice has regressed to identification" (136). In identifying the regressive nature of identification in some texts, and the regressive nature of desire in others, Freud does not make a consistent case of cause and effect as he seems to want to do.

Consider Freud's summary of his patient's dream: "my patient put herself in her friend's place in the dream because her friend was taking my patient's place with her husband and because she (my patient) wanted to take her friend's place in her husband's high opinion"(184). Previously, we had assumed a certain innocence, even if not a sexual one, about the identification between the wife and her friend. The identification serves merely to reinforce (in Freud's view) the heterosexual bond between wife and husband. As an imitation assimilated into the unconscious involving the desires of her friend, her husband, and herself (the exact constellation of these desires will depend on one's analysis of the dream), the identification itself can be seen to be somewhat pacific despite the inflected sexual nature. However, in the preceding passage, Freud's use of the words "taking the place of"[7] does more than suggest that there is an active, aggressive function of identification. With these words, the term loses it innocence, for "taking the place of her friend" suggests the wish to displace, to annihilate her friend, to do away with the source of her own jealousy and her husband's desire. Thus the imitation of her friend is far from innocent. It involves complex arrangements of desire which are not only sexual, but are involved with destructive impulses, not unlike what Melanie Klein has termed envy.[8] The identification provides the butcher's wife with an acceptable social outlet to

[7]The German original reads "*sie setzt sich an die Stelle der Freunden.*" It contains a reflexive verb, and thus its literal translation means "sitting oneself in the place of her friend." Thus the butcher's wife "sits herself in the place of" her friend. The analysis offered above highlights how the friend is displaced by this action. *Die Traumdeutung*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol.2/3 (London: Imago, 1948), 156.

[8]For instance, Klein writes: "envy is the angry feeling that [one gets when] another person possesses and enjoys something desirable - the envious impulse being to take it away or to spoil it." *Envy and Gratitude: A Study of Unconscious Sources* (London: Tavistock, 1962), 5. She later links this to the internalization of the mother's breast. Also, D.W. Winnicott states that annihilating the

successfully destroy the other by taking it into her self. The "taking the place of" simultaneously involves a desire to be like somebody *and* a desire to do away with that somebody. Thus, for Freud, identification is profoundly ambivalent. "Identification, in fact, is ambivalent from the very first; it can turn into an expression of tenderness as easily as into a wish for someone's removal."[9] In the Freudian view, then, identification, in expressing a desire to be the other (through imitation), also expresses a wanting to do away with that other (through internalization), and sets up the possibility for having the third object which completes the love triangle. Moreover, if Freud's assertion that taking the place of someone is a compensation for object loss, such as he attributes to the process of mourning, it might also signify that the identification - as removal - has in fact created the loss to begin with.[10]

With this said, imitation, like identification, is neither neutral nor innocent. And, it should also be clear by now that not all imitation is identification. Indeed, Annie Reich suggests that imitative gesture may be a "pre-stage of identification." In this, she believes that imitation can be of a transitory nature; "it is only by manifold and long exposure that

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object is central for living life in the "world of objects:" "destruction plays its part in making the reality, placing the object outside the self." "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications," in *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1989), 91.

[9]Freud, *Group Psychology*, 134.

[10]I think the iatrogenic aspect of identification (in which the identification sets up its condition for its further need) has to be looked at more in depth than is allowed here. Indeed, it may be a useful departure point for disrupting teacher education literature which insists on teachers "modelling" behaviour for their students so that they imitate and identify with that behaviour.

any lasting identification comes about."[11] Thus, "for a time the little boy *was* father when he put on his father's coat and played at driving the car.... The child not only makes noises, but learns to talk; he not only holds a newspaper, like his father, but learns to read. Thus he learns to master reality and acquires a capacity for sound reality testing. These now stable identifications are, so to speak, the building materials from which the ego is made."[12] In distinguishing imitation and identification, then, we need to be clear about how these identifications take hold, what they entail, and how they shape identity.

Thus far, three important points can be found within the Freudian definition of identification: First, identification is the psychical process which "assimilates" (or, as I have alluded to, internalizes, incorporates, or introjects) the imitation into the unconscious. Secondly, identification is intertwined with desire; yet it is not simply determined by, nor does it simply influence desire. Thirdly, identification has an aggressive, and therefore ambivalent function. Given this landscape, therefore, identification cannot be confused with imitation, although it is nonetheless connected to it; although imitation is a necessary element of identification, identification is not a necessary element in imitation.

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[11]Reich, "Narcissistic Object-Choice in Women," in *Psychoanalytic Contributions*, (New York. International Universities Press, 1973 [1953]),197.

[12]Ibid. Homi Bhabha also mentions this distinction briefly, mentioning Reich rather obliquely in his essay "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the Postcolonial Prerogative," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 61.

APPENDIX B

The Work of Introjection and Incorporation

Given that not all imitation is identification, we must consider what makes it different. As Freud said, the difference is "assimilation." However, this rather vague term does little to explain what constitutes an "assimilation," to say nothing about how to identify it. Moreover, if identification is about the relationship between subjects (objects), then "assimilation," by its very nature, suggests a kind of sociality - a relationship that is intersubjective, yet lies in excess of that intersubjectivity in three ways. First, "assimilation" also involves complex relationships to authority, morality, and social institutions, as these are the settings in and through which "assimilation" is made possible. Hence cultural, political, and social relations become caught up in the very dynamic of "assimilation" and identification. Secondly, an "assimilation" does not simply "determine" one's identity, fixing it for all time. Indeed it is the vicissitudes of these "assimilations" - and hence of identifications - that make transformation and renewal possible. Lastly, and most importantly, identification does not require another human being. Assimilation can occur with pets, fictional characters, mythical figures, nonliving humans, and machines.[1] Thus, the intersubjective nature of identification and assimilation that we have so far been examining is only apparent. Here, I examine two definitions of "assimilation" -

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[1]Roy Schafer, *Aspects of Internalization* (New York: International Universities Press, 1968), 142. (Hereafter cited as *AI*; all references to this work will be made in the text.) Indeed Schafer claims one can identify with all these things, not only "assimilate" them.

introjection and incorporation - that are interwoven with identification, and will explore how they move beyond the intersubjective [2]

Introjection, and incorporation suggest, at least on the surface, that there is an act of taking parts of *external* reality *into* the subject These concepts therefore appear to presuppose rigid distinctions between inside/outside and internal/external. Yet, they also challenge the stability and the separateness of these distinctions. Indeed they are about how a subject integrates itself with social reality Thus, they problematize the conditions under which these distinctions even make sense. In psychoanalytic parlance there are subtle and important distinctions between these terms that characterize the specific mechanisms through which this integration occurs. And, as we shall see, there is no consensus of employment.

I. Introjection

Perhaps the earliest of the three concepts of "assimilation" to emerge regularly in psychoanalytic discourse is introjection. Ferenczi's 1909 article on "Introjection and Transference" offers an understanding of how the subject brings into itself elements of external reality:

> Whereas the paranoiac expels from his [sic] ego the impulses that have become unpleasant, the neurotic helps himself by taking into the ego as large as possible a part of the outer world, making it the object of unconscious phantasies. This is a kind of diluting process, by means of which he tries to mitigate the poignancy of free-floating, unsatisfied, and

[2]The third type of "assimilation," internalization, is examined in chapter 3.

> unsatisfiable, unconscious wish-impulses One might give this process, in contrast to projection, the name of *Introjection* [3]

Here, Ferenczi highlights that is it is the unconscious wish-impulses, or desires, that propel the need for the neurotic to constantly seek out "objects with whom he can identify himself, to whom he can transfer feelings, whom he can thus draw into his circle of interest, i.e., introject"(*IT* 40-1) Thus, for Ferenczi, the process of introjection is entangled with the elements of identification, and these in turn with desire Introjection therefore involves the subject in a constant inner revolution, for the introjected material becomes part of the unconscious phantasies, installing yet a new layer of "freefloating, unsatisfied, and unsatisfiable unconscious wish-impulses," and setting up a renewed effort of identification and introjection. While this cyclical aspect is not emphasized by Ferenczi himself, one may hazard the conclusion that once an object is introjected in an *attempt* to satiate a desire, the subject undergoes a transformation, a "widening" of the ego (*IT* 41), and is thus open to new desires and unconscious phantasies. In this sense, then, the introjection is not innocent; it takes part in the reorientation the subject experiences to the outer world. The subject takes into the ego an Other, an external object, in order to satisfy

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[3]Sandor Ferenczi, "Introjection and Transference," in *Sex in Psycho-Analysis*, (London: Dover, 1956), 40. (Hereafter referred to *IT*.) References to this work will be made in the text Annie Reich's case study of a man with paranoia provides great detail of the process of introjections and projection or expulsion. See "A Clinical Contribution to the Understanding of the Paranoid Personality," in *Psychoanalytic Contributions*, (New York: International Universities Press, 1973), 46-84.

the desire it cannot express,[4] and while doing so begins another round of desire in the process

Another view of introjection is offered by Roy Schafer. In his view, introjection keeps the internal object separate from the self (*AI* 153) Moreover, he states that an introject (the object which is introjected) does

> not faithfully mirror the external objects that are their models for they are also shared by fantasies, projections, symbolizations, misunderstandings, idealizations, depreciations, and selective biases originating in the subject's past history and present developmental phase and dynamic position (*AI* 73).

Schafer further states that introjection is a process that changes how an object is represented in the psyche of the subject, and does not, as Ferenczi seems to suggest alter the ego, or self representations (*AI* 78). Thus the psychical *representation of the object* is what undergoes change. For Schafer, therefore, introjection does not produce the kind of change that identification does; hence he makes a definite distinction between these two terms Introjection, in his view, does not imitate, but sustains a relation to the object despite the fact that this object appears now as an inner one and not one external to the subject; "in contrast, identification aims to transform the self along the lines of the object; the object is implied in the identification, and is, thus, carried into the inner world, but not as an altogether separate object" (*AI* 153). Indeed Schafer argues that identification and introjection are quite different processes. Yet, by stating that "not all introjects are turned

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[4]By the same logic, Anna Freud points out that introjection may also be a defense mechanism; it enables the subject to repress the original desire it could not face, by transforming itself into the subject of its own desire. By becoming the object of its own desire, a narcissistic position set up and the object which originally represented fear is conquered. *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York: International Universities Press, 1966), chapter 9.

into identifications" he simultaneously suggests that introjection is involved in *some* identifications. But how?

What is common to both Ferenczi and Schafer's views is that introjection involves the "bringing into" the subject particular *objects* (whole or partial[5]) which are set up as psychic characters, and may be experienced by us as distinct aspects of our selves. Thus, unconsciously, we can duplicate the object we introject, and alter our self representations accordingly. That is, the introjected material causes us to apprehend ourselves differently, and we may indeed identify with that inner object. The phenomenon Ferenczi describes as "identification with the aggressor" is particularly reliant upon introjection.[6] Here, victims of sexual assault (and of other fearful, traumatic encounters) often introject the object that is feared, the aggressor becoming an intrapsychic player.[7] Establishing this identificatory relationship means the victim carries the aggressor around, as it were, as part of her own ego. Her imitation of the aggressor, however, is not confined to mimicry of outward behaviours, but may imitate the attitude of hostility that the aggressor directed toward her person, thereby setting up an *internal* mimetic gesture. In this sense, she "imitates" the object by continuing the pattern of aggression unconsciously, long after the

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[5]A whole object is a representation of person (or character, or figure) taken in its entirety often as a love object; a part object is a representation of one aspect of that object, usually referring to parts of the body, real or imagined (such as phallus, breast or feces).

[6]Freud makes use of this term in "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," [1915] *PFL*, vol. 11, 105-138.

[7]See my discussion of this in relation to father-daughter incest in "Psychoanalysis and Father-Daughter Incest: An Issue of Culpability," in *Interpersonal Violence: Health and Gender Politics*, ed. S. French (Dubuque, Iowa: Brown and Benchmark, 1993).

aggressor has vanished from external reality.[8] As Anna Freud points out, in identifying with the aggressor, the subject transforms herself from a person being threatened to one making the threat.[9] Moreover, projecting this aggression outward, the subject may in turn threaten someone else, not only herself. In this sense, introjection may have a lot to do with patterns of abuse that permeate through families. Yet, it is not only abused or neurotic persons who experience introjection and identification. Even the common state where a person "tells herself" what she should do, only to hear yet another voice "telling herself" she should not do it, may be the result of conflicting introjected objects with which she has identified, thereby feeling compelled to imitate both objects internally.

II. Incorporation

Incorporation is closely related to introjection, but it involves a "bringing into the *body* of the subject" an element of external reality. Incorporation may be seen as a particular kind of introjection, related to psychical representations of the body. How elements of external reality are "brought into" the subject are varied. Oral, anal, epidermal and respiratory incorporation all reference the complex mechanisms through which objects and part-objects are integrated into the subject's body.[10] Often,

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[8]See Lynn Chancer's discussion of the significance of this imitative behaviour in daily life in *Sadomasochism in Everyday Life* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[9]Anna Freud, 113.

[10]There is much literature devoted to oral, anal and epidermal incorporation. For an interesting discussion of respiratory introjection as a means of incorporation see Fenichel, "Respiratory Introjection," in *The Collected Papers of Otto Fenichel: First Series* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1953), 221-240.

incorporation and introjection are used interchangeably despite the fact that incorporation is far more specific. Freud links incorporation to identification in two ways. First, in *Totem and Taboo*, Freud relates the eating of the totem animal as an oral incorporative act through which a band (or tribe) identifies itself. Seeing this totem animal as a substitute for the father, and a repetition of a earlier deed ("in the beginning was the deed"[11]), Freud postulates an originary scene of primal murder. A band of brothers, expelled from the horde by a father who wishes to keep all the females of the horde for himself, overthrows the father's ultimate authority through death and cannibalism:

> This violent primal father had surely been the envied and feared model for each of the brothers. Now they accomplished their identification with him by devouring him and each acquired a part of his strength. The totem feast, which is perhaps mankind's first celebration, would be the repetition and commemoration of this memorable, criminal act with which so many things began, social organization, moral restrictions, and religion.[12]

Aside from presupposing (and to large degree legitimizing) the patriarchal subjugation and traffic of women as the primal basis of sociality, this tale illustrates, somewhat magically, the taking in of the father as an object of strength. The primal incorporation of the father is both literal and figural. Literal in that it is based on the actual eating of the father, figural in the sense that identification is secured by the unconscious idea that one's body replicates that of the father. The brothers begin to act like the father, establishing their own authority. As Freud goes on to say, however, this originary incorporation and the

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[11]This is last line of *Totem and Taboo*, trans. A.A. Brill (New York: Vintage, 1946) - the Freudian take on original sin.

[12]Ibid., 183.

subsequent establishment of community comes at a price: guilt.[13] I wish to emphasize here that the imitative gesture on the part of these mythical brothers is acheived through a specifically oral incorporation of the father, the phylogenic story coinciding with the oral phase of ontogenic development.

A slightly different conception of incorporation and its relation to identification is put forth by Freud in "Mourning and Melancholia."[14] Seeming to abandon, at least for the purposes of his subject, a phylogenic basis, Freud ties incorporation to a "preliminary stage of object choice."[15] Yet, he retains the emphasis on orality, asserting that melancholia involves a "devouring" of the object through incorporation. Freud explains the difference between mourning and melancholia through the incorporative act. The former results from an actual object loss (a death of loved one, for instance) which thereby sparks the gradual process through which libido has to be withdrawn from the lost object (*MM* 253). That is to say, it is the normal process of grieving, of giving up the loved object. Melancholia, however, involves an unconscious aspect of loss; it cannot give up the love object entirely, as it has lost something more than the object, something which cannot be identified (*MM* 254). Melancholics exhibit, moreover, a self-deprecating attitude and an "impoverishment of [the] ego on a grand scale" (*MM* 254). The self-destructive,

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[13] Ibid., 185; see also chapter 7 in Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930] *PFL*, vol.12.

[14] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," [1917] *PFL*, vol. 11, 245-268. Hereafter cited in the text as *MM*

[15] This is a problematic statement to some degree. In the *Ego and the Id*, [1923] *PFL*, vol. 11, Freud claims that "object-cathexis and identification are no doubt indistinguishable from each other." 367 However, in *Group Psychology* [1921] *PFL*, vol. 11, he asserts the separateness of the two, claiming that identification is prior to object-choice, and is thus a regression.

narcissistic impulse of melancholia is fuelled, according to Freud, by the ambivalence the subject felt toward the loved one. But why would this ambivalence be directed at the self? This is what Freud attempts to explain through incorporation and identification.

When a loved one is lost, the subject is, in melancholia, unable to give up its libidinal tie However, forced to make some accommodation to the loss, the subject takes the object "into" itself, to some degree preserving the love tie, "by taking flight into the ego love escapes extinction" (*MM* 267). This taking into itself is, Freud says, both narcissistic and regressive (*MM* 258-9). Narcissistic in that by taking into itself the abandoned object, the subject directs its libido inward, toward the self where the object is now located; regressive in that it harkens back to how the infant subject originally related to objects it desired - by orally incorporating them, and forming ideational associations with the objects.[16] However, in incorporating an object, one simultaneously devours it, extinguishes it, as it were, from external reality. In this sense, the incorporation is far from innocent, and serves not only a *re*gressive function, but an *ag*gressive one as well. Thus, the relationship the self establishes with the object is at once aggressive and full of love; it is, in short, ambivalent.

It would seem given Freud's analysis of melancholia, that all incorporations and the identifications resulting from them involve ambivalence. For what it means to incorporate and then to identify with an object means to devour it, absorb it, suck it in, thereby removing it from the external world. "Just as mourning impels the ego to give up

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[16]This infantile incorporation can perhaps best be seen in Melanie Klein's work on the "good" and "bad" breasts. For instance, in *Envy and Gratitude* Klein discusses how the "good breast" taken into the ego restores prenatal unity; the child has the "mother inside" (3).

the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live, so does each single struggle of ambivalence loosens the fixation of the libido to the object by disparaging it, denigrating it and even as it were killing it" (*MM* 267) However, in identifying with the incorporated object, the subject replicates aspects of that object, mimicking its behaviours and attitudes, at least those attitudes imagined by the subject. For it is important to remember Schafer's point that it is not the real, external object that is directly imitated; rather, what is imitated is the *idea* of that object, or the *object representation* With this said, identification as a preliminary stage of object-choice (of desire) not only incorporates in order to covet the object, but in a poetic twist of fate, destroys the very object it desires in the first place. What is preserved in the identification is the *object representation* and the imitative gesture attached to it. The "death" of the object is requisite to its incorporation and identification. As Borch-Jacobsen writes, "to identify oneself with the object is to put oneself in its place or to place it within oneself, to kill it and live off its death."[17] As well, Freud's thesis of the Oedipus complex in the "normal" heterosexual development of the boy through incorporative identification suggests, as Butler notes, that heterosexuality itself is a form of melancholia. The identification between a subject and same-sex parent required by heterosexual convention in psychoanalysis is itself a melancholia, itself an ambivalent, regressive, and narcissistic relation to objects.[18]

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[17]Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 181.

[18]Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 57-72.

Thus introjection and incorporation are about "bringing into" the subject objects from external reality, and are, therefore significant supports to viewing identity as involved in external reality. These psychoanalytic categories confound any easy separation between outside and inside. Moreover, they confound any easy reading of imitative behaviour as an identification. Introjection and incorporation are sufficiently complex to disrupt such over-determined readings.