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Abstract

This project weaves together the theoretically rich and diverse work of ancient materialist philosophers, modern philosophy which advanced a theory of monism, and contemporary philosophies that further extends monism into new terrain, including 'new materialism.' While monism is a strand of this project, the core features of this project are materiality and bodies; these two concepts create the particular entanglement and central thrust of this project, which is becoming. While this project is conceptually organized around matter and bodies, and a particular notion of becoming traced from ancient through contemporary thought, this project, also, introduces the importance of Gloria Anzaldúa as a philosophical thinker whose writing is theoretically rich with concepts of matter and becoming. Using the body, broadly construed, as the framework for which both matter and becoming are mobilized, this project further complexifies the material entanglement of becoming by suggesting a never-receding horizon of becoming through the language of interconnectedness, which is the precise metaphysics that is advanced by Gloria Anzaldúa. Framed by the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, this project privileges a queer strategy in dismantling the hegemonic interpretation of matter and bodies by suggesting an Anzaldúan turn through the replacement of interrelatedness.

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The Entanglement of Anzaldúan Materiality as Bodily Knowing:
Matter, Meaning, & Interrelatedness

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the University of Denver
and the Iliff School of Theology Joint PhD Program
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Robyn Henderson-Espinoza
June 2016
Advisor: Theodore M. Vial, Jr.

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This project weaves together the theoretically rich and diverse work of ancient materialist philosophers, modern philosophy which advanced a theory of monism, and contemporary philosophies that further extends monism into new terrain, including ‘new materialism.’ While monism is a strand of this project, the core features of this project are materiality and bodies; these two concepts create the particular entanglement and central thrust of this project, which is becoming. While this project is conceptually organized around matter and bodies, and a particular notion of becoming traced from ancient through contemporary thought, this project, also, introduces the importance of Gloria Anzaldúa as a philosophical thinker whose writing is theoretically rich with concepts of matter and becoming. Using the body, broadly construed, as the framework for which both matter and becoming are mobilized, this project further complexifies the material entanglement of becoming by suggesting a never-receding horizon of becoming through the language of interconnectedness, which is the precise metaphysics that is advanced by Gloria Anzaldúa. Framed by the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, this project privileges a queer strategy in dismantling the hegemonic interpretation of matter and bodies by suggesting an Anzaldúan turn through the replacement of interrelatedness.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*Writing is a shared act of creation, an act of the imagination for both
writer and reader.*

—Gloria Anzaldúa, “Putting Coyolxauhqui Together”

Del Otro Lado: A Brief Bio

A philosopher-poet and critical social theorist, Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1942-2004) disrupted the landscape of critical Latin@ studies and Chicana feminism(s) with her 1987 oft-cited and seminal work: *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.¹ This book, a philosophical manifesto and cultural theory/critique, is an important staple in the Anzaldúan corpus. This text helps shape and in turn shifts to illustrate her theorizing the positivity of difference, and her pre- and post- borderland work conforms to this, too. She is often labeled as ‘other’ and on the ‘other side’ (del otro lado) of her contemporaries, notably scholars who are recognized by the academy as legitimate producers of knowledge: academic philosophers and critical social and cultural theorists. For some, she is not an academic; yet, others, readily identify Anzaldúa as an academic. Anzaldúa transgresses the stable boundary of what an academic is. Her life’s vocation was that of a writing artist, a shaman, someone who created art with both word and image and who

¹ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books), 1987.

was intentional about seeking radical social change. What is produced is a materialist philosophy, self-organizing in both word and image, destabilizing the shape and form of current materialist agendas and expanding into new contours of a queer materiality / queer matter. This work transgressed the fiction/non-fiction divide in philosophy and theory, and in this transgression, Anzaldúa created a new style of critical social theory that is rooted in the ontological plurality of the self, the materiality that is both her own body and connecting to the radical interconnected web of other bodies, spanning the speciated divide. Doing this initiated a new type of relational theory, or connectionist thinking, which is often theorized as (a) “metaphysics of interrelatedness.”²

Born in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas means that for Anzaldúa she would face several barriers: language, education, economic, and so forth. I believe because of Anzaldúa’s fortitude, drive, and perfectionism, she was well poised to change the landscape of education and institutional structures with her theories, and she notes in her *Borderlands* text that she was the first in six generations in her family to leave the Valley.³ In 1968 Anzaldúa obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English, Art, and Secondary Education English from the then Pan American University (now University of Texas-Pan America), and following her undergraduate degree, Anzaldúa returned to the Texas Valley and worked as a preschool and special education teacher. Anzaldúa returned to school, this time earning a master’s degree in education from the University of Texas,

² See AnaLouise Keating’s work.

³ Anzaldúa talks about this in *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Austin. While in Austin, and after she completed the coursework for a doctoral degree in comparative literature, she joined politically active cultural poets and radical dramatists such as Ricardo Sanchez, and Hedwig Gorski, and in 1977, she moved to California, where she supported herself through her writing, lectures, and occasional teaching stints offering classes in feminism, Chicano/a studies, and creative writing at San Francisco State University, the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Florida Atlantic University, in Boca Raton, Florida, among other universities. She also entered a doctoral program in American Literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz, though she died just prior to defending her dissertation.⁴ Her program of study was in literature and there she taught courses and influenced a generation of students on such topics as autohistorias and women of color theorizing in the U.S.

Anzaldúa is perhaps most famous for coediting *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981) with Cherríe Moraga, editing *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990), and coediting with AnaLouise Keating *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation* (2002). These books have significantly shaped and shifted the theoretical landscape. I argue that Anzaldúa's theories have initiated new paths of intersectional thinking as a central feature of her theories. This has cultivated what AnaLouise Keating theorizes as a post-oppositional consciousness. While

⁴ The dissertation is now being edited for publication, edited by AnaLouise Keating. Also, it is important to note that the program director at the time called Anzaldúa and communicated that because of *Borderlands/La Frontera's* success and importance, UC Santa Cruz would award Anzaldúa the PhD. Anzaldúa declined this gesture and instead moved forward to complete a traditional dissertation in the program.

intersectionality is a dominant theory in women of colors feminisms, Anzaldúa revolutionizes intersectionality, and I have come to understand her intersectionality as that of a type of assemblage thinking that focuses on affinity and differences. A now staple in feminist theorizing, intersectionality takes seriously the co-constitutive realities of race, class, gender, class, and sexuality. I see these realities (or interlocking “standpoints”) in Anzaldúa’s work, yet Anzaldúa does not theorize the sameness of these standpoints across multiple communities; she invites differences and communities to find affinity with one another. This does not flatten or freeze differences or legitimate sameness. Instead, Anzaldúa use affinities as a modality to investigate differences. Anzaldúa also revolutionizes feminist standpoint theory theorizing, instead, a participatory epistemology that focuses on relational knowledge production. Her epistemology develops from *Borderlands/La Frontera*, through the *Interviews / Entrevistas* text, and finally put together in her last published essay during her life, “now let us shift...the path of conocimiento...inner work, public acts.” It is clear that from *Borderlands* through to the end, Anzaldúa blurred the lines between epistemology and ontology, and recent research suggests that prior to *Borderlands/La Frontera*, this work was being done by Anzaldúa herself.⁵ The semi-autobiographical and philosophy-manifesto *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) is likely where people (scholars and activists alike) invest in understanding Anzaldúa. Her children’s books include *Prietita Has a Friend* (1991), *Friends from the Other Side — Amigos del Otro*

⁵ AnaLouise Keating makes this connection, too, in her forthcoming text.

Lado (1993), and *Prietita y La Llorona* (1996). She has also authored many fictional and poetic works that can be found in the 2008 *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (edited by AnaLouise Keating). Her works are both creative and critical, weaving English, Spanish, and Nahuatl together as one language, an idea stemming from her theory of “borderlands” identity. Her autobiographical essay, “La Prieta,” was published in (mostly) English in *This Bridge Called My Back*, and in (mostly) Spanish in *Esta puente, mi espalda: Voces de mujeres tercermundistas en los Estados Unidos*. “La Prieta” was later published in its entirety in the *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. In her writing, Anzaldúa uses a unique blend of eight languages, two variations of English and six of Spanish; this ‘transgression’ motivates new forms of knowledge production and theories of reality that mobilize new contours of interrelatedness. In many ways, by writing in “Spanglish,” Anzaldúa creates a daunting task for the non-bilingual reader to decipher the full meaning of the text, but the “Spanglish” is central to her cultural context that spans multiple locations. The use of multiplicity as difference in language stimulates a type of philosophy of movement and interconnection in Anzaldúa’s work, which should be understood as part of the materialist philosophy that Anzaldúa develops. This movement or mobilization is central to Anzaldúa’s theories that I see intersecting as ethics, epistemology, and ontology, the politics of which characterize new contours of interrelatedness that produce a new shape and form of matter and meaning.

Initiating a diverse theoretical approach to the lived and colonized space of the US Borderlands with the use of philosophy, poetry, autohistoria and autohistoria-teoría (which is how Anzaldúa describes her singular form of theory-biography that is at once an exploration and elaboration of personal and collective history), and art, Anzaldúa’s

work presents a significant critique to traditional epistemological assumptions regarding the dualism that proliferates in current day philosophy and critical social theory. Her work theorizes a notion of materiality, bodies, and *Mestizaje*, presenting critical social theorists a new way to interrogate acting in the world, knowing practices, knowledge production, and reality; this new way resides in the borderlands of ontology, epistemology, and ethics—an entanglement that is explored in this project that further initiates the concept of becoming and becoming material. Anzaldúa's theory of the mestiza body, including the central retrieval of the consciousness of the mestiza and the flourishing of her theories of nepantla, is the point that ignited my own investigation concerning materiality and bodies.⁶ By seeing Anzaldúa's significant contributions to new theories of *Mestizaje* and the plurality of bodies, I began to see the shape of what might be considered Anzaldúan materiality, an entanglement of bodily knowing where bodily is broadly construed and allows for the ontology of becoming to intersect with bodily materiality.

Scope of This Project

This project investigates the question of matter and bodies, broadly construed, points toward dynamic and connected ways of being and becoming, ways of knowing, and the ethics of mattering by exhaustively exploring the philosophy-theory of Gloria Anzaldúa in two published essays, and exposing a theory of materiality that does not depend upon a theory of substance metaphysics. Through researching Anzaldúa's

⁶ This is largely due to the face that I am a mestizaje person who constantly negotiates nepantla in my own becoming nepantler@.

archives and paying careful attention to the trajectory of her theories, I argue that one should orient Anzaldúa's theories in philosophical terms. Philosophically, Anzaldúa privileged a single-matter substance that is often called monism. She defines the material universe in this way: "The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow."⁷ Though she never uses the term monism, it is evident in her writing that she saw that all matter and things are stemming from the same source, connected in the same web of being, and further articulates a theory of becoming throughout her work, most noticeable in her piece *El Mundo Surdo*. This source may or may not be considered a "substance" in the technical sense. I prefer to think of Anzaldúa's materiality (or Anzaldúan materiality) in similar ways to how Rosi Braidotti and what other Deleuzian thinkers consider single-matter substance where matter is not dependent upon substance but stems from the singularity of matter; Spinoza is an example of this. I largely draw from the New Materialisms movement that rereads Benedict de Spinoza, and together the work of Anzaldúa with Spinoza-inspired scholars helps mobilize new thinking regarding materiality. I argue that materiality is central to a queer theory of bodies, and that 'body' transcends and moves beyond the anthropomorphic tradition, which proliferates in feminist and queer theories. I look to Gloria Anzaldúa and her invocation of plural selves, something other than what is theorized as a unified human self, and a theory of materiality that vibrates throughout her work. The disciplinary boundaries that revolve

⁷ The Gloria E. Anzaldúa Archives, The University of Texas, (Box 102, folder 2) 1999, 2014.

between these pages are ontologies, epistemologies, and ethics and emerge from a diverse and critical set of theorists. I draw from the continental tradition that includes diverse feminist, queer, and Deleuzian thinkers to re-imagine ontology, epistemology, and ethics. The use of post-war French philosophy stimulates my thinking and disrupts the traditional pairing of Latin@ studies with Anzaldúa. The creative and critical work of Gloria Anzaldúa ties the dissertation together by reading and utilizing Anzaldúa as a critical social theorist and philosopher-poet, an agent of writing-material-art. I argue throughout the dissertation that the philosophy-poetry of Gloria Anzaldúa envisions a new, perhaps queer, way of producing knowledge by inventing new ways of being and becoming in the world and queer ways of materializing one's agency. Ways of knowing and theories of reality for Anzaldúa are blurred, often residing along the same axis of analysis. Certainly, this project exists in the borderlands of thinking and feeling; there are places where fluidity and queerness are privileged over against the concretizing and certainty of hetero-patriarchal normativities, and disciplinary boundaries are betrayed, intentionally.

This project takes up the specific challenge of articulating bodies in material terms over against the more popular discursive tendencies dominating feminist theories and feminist philosophies. I utilize both queer and feminist Deleuzian scholars to help make my case for a materiality that does not subsist on a theory of substance, queer epistemologies that point to a larger and more robust theory of ways of knowing stemming from the relational work of Gloria Anzaldúa, and the work of Karen Barad whose work both unmask and animates the critical and diffractive framework that I use in this project. I place this all in conversation with Anzaldúa's own work, archival

findings, as well. What results is an entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, which enlivens a theory of becoming that is strategically related to the material body, queer ways of knowing and knowledge production that is central to Anzaldúa's bodies, and a sense of moral agency that points toward a radical queer ethics of interrelatedness.

As a queer project, there are several plumb lines, or strands, that help give material "legs" to this project. First, there is a commitment to the materiality of the body as a site for formative philosophical discourse. Secondly, there is a commitment to re-imagining reality as that which is becoming. Both materiality and a becoming reality intersect as they have ontological values or conditions. Third, there is a commitment to queerness and Mestizaje that is informed by both different ways of knowing and becoming. It is here in these three points of departures, or intersections, that the plumb lines make contact and transgress normative stabilized assumptions of what materiality, bodies, and queerness are. Each of these commitments is derived from the work of Anzaldúa, and I chart my intellectual genealogy by beginning with the critical social theory that AnaLouise Keating develops.⁸ I read Anzaldúa as an enchanted⁹ philosopher who helps to dissolve mind-body dualisms and strengthened theories of materiality that further advance a sense of radical interrelatedness. The body is central to Anzaldúa's

⁸ In her most recent book, Keating demonstrates a new and emerging critical social theory as a threshold theory. As the foremost authority on the work and theories created by Gloria Anzaldúa, I see my work as a critical departure from the work that Keating pursues, but also in relation to the horizon of justice that Keating imagines.

⁹ I borrow this term from Jane Bennett, and I situate Anzaldúa as an enchanted philosopher. By that, I mean that there is genuine wonder in the work of Anzaldúa. She theorizes spirit and the web of interrelatedness, which maximizes the spirit of wonder and undermines neo-liberal suspicion.

work and emerges in almost everything Anzaldúa theorizes be it its plurality, materiality, or becomingness. In light of these three features, I argue that theorizing about the materiality of body is not only an important topic to research, but also a topic that has the potential to yield greater understanding for ontology, epistemology, ethics, and agency that also advances Anzaldúan theories as primarily philosophical.

The project begins with the initial chapter, BRIDGING AND REWRITING ANZALDÚA AS A 'GENERATIVE' MATERIALIST: A NEW LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF MATTER as a way of privileging Anzadúa as a philosopher. Next, I offer a genealogy of matter, charting the particularity of movement and becoming. I do this in three chapters and begin with Lucretius. Following, I articulate the body in material terms, and I situate my pursuit of materiality and materialisms in the tradition of Democritus-Epicurus-Spinoza-Diderot-Deleuze more than Hegel-Marx-Adorno, and draw heavily from authors within the New Materialism movement. I am not concerned with historical materialism, as the Hegel-Marx-Adorno group theorizes. I come to this project following my engagement with Gloria Anzaldúa, Jane Bennett, Rosi Braidotti, and the feminist New Materialism(s) movement. Chapters 5 and 6 detail ways the body has been theorized, noting major theorists who analyze the body in feminist theory and feminist philosophies. I critique the failed and passive materiality of Judith Butler. I end each chapter by pointing toward Anzaldúan bodies that are conceived in material terms and grounded in the thing-ness and a material-ness of the world that is always becoming, and I use her first published poem in the first several chapters to do this and then use Anzaldúa's own theories in chapters 5 and 6 to illustrate her materiality and material bodies. Evident in these chapters is the importance of the relationality that signals a becoming material body, a

particular phenomenon that is central to this project. Bodies for Anzaldúa transcend the anthropocene, and while I begin with a humanistic account of bodies, this move is important as it shows the importance of articulating bodies in material terms over against bodies as a discursive reality.

Chapter three is my first substantive chapter that details matter (LUCRETIUS, AN ANCIENT MATTER). I focus on the development of movement in Lucretius' poem, *On The Nature of Things*. I chart the element of movement as becoming in this poem and also place Anzaldúa's first published poem at the end of the chapter to illustrate the nature of becoming and movement that is inherent or native to matter. It is this chapter where I first claim that Anzaldúa's poetry and theory is material and should be analyzed on those terms.

Chapter four follows chapter three and addresses the question of modern matter, or representatives of modern matter, Spinoza and Nietzsche (MATTER AND 'VITAL BECOMING' IN SPINOZA AND NIETZSCHE). This chapter continues the theme of movement and becoming by looking at the doctrine of conatus in Spinoza and the *Will to Power* in Nietzsche. Again, I place Anzaldúa's first published poem at the end of this chapter to illustrate once again the material nature of her theory / ontology of becoming.

Chapter five is the chapter on contemporary matter that brings together the ancient and modern representatives of materialism (CONTEMPORARY MATTER). This chapter also charts the question of movement and becoming, but does so with the element of vital impetus discovered in Bergson's work, the fold in Deleuze, and then brings together the feminist new materialists into a particular relief for this project. Once again,

Anzaldúa ends the chapter and I theorize her poetry as a particular material fold of becoming.

Chapter six (THE LOGIC OF THE BODY: A GENEALOGY OF A MATERIAL SOCIO-SENSORY REALITY) takes up the burden of dualism and points toward the active evacuation of dualism by putting into conversation Spinoza, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty, and finally Anzaldúa. This chapter specifically addresses the importance of materiality and bodies that go underdeveloped in philosophy, but recognizes the importance of Spinoza to materiality and bodies. This starting point helps further locate the importance of Anzaldúa and her theory that I recognize as being a material phenomenology that re-politicizes materiality with phenomenology, a sometimes difficult bridge to build. Reading Anzaldúa both as a materialist and phenomenologically allows for the pre-discursive and post-reflexive theories to take root, or become material. Central to this chapter is the recognition that there is a nexus or matrix of materiality that is becoming different, emerging, too, in connection with knowledge production and ethics. Highlighting the positivity of difference that is becoming, in connection with the production of knowledge and social practice, helps highlight the important force of materialism. Chapter six takes up the issue of material and discursive bodies in feminist theory and feminist philosophy. I see this as an important strand to the development of a material phenomenology in that feminist materialist thinkers contribute to the re-materialization of bodies by engaging and enacting an active materiality over against the failed materiality of Judith Butler that I recognize as passive. Chapter seven (RECONFIGURING & REIMAGINING BODIES: MATERIAL, DISCURSIVE, & DREAMBODIES) also shows the distinction of Anzaldúa's theorizing in light of feminist theory and the

body. It is also a chapter where I trace the discursive body and the failed materiality of Judith Butler. I consider this chapter to ground the materiality of bodies in a type of relationally networked reality. I trace the thinking of three feminist thinkers and conclude with the horizon of plurality seen in Anzaldúa's work. Plurality is a particular horizon for difference in Anzaldúa's work, I argue.

Foregrounding the work on the materiality of the body points toward a new shape and form of a spirit-inflected and interrelated ethico-onto-epistemology, animated by Anzaldúan materiality. Doing this materializes bodies in a particular way and fashions a new set of theoretical tools to further mobilize Anzaldúa's materiality as a theory of being and becoming. I suggest a turn to a diverse set of disciplines (from queer studies, Latin@ studies, Spinoza and Deleuze) to initiate an enchanted and creative opening for the materiality of bodies to become (an) ontology (and in many ways to become 'more' than (an) ontology—it emerges in the thresholds of onto-epistemology and ethics).

This project does not necessarily depart from Bennett and Braidotti regarding materiality and bodies, but seeks to use these two thinkers in creative and critical ways and bridges Anzaldúa's theory of materiality with these two. The New Materialists help me gain access to a language around materiality, while Anzaldúa offers me the content that I analyze. This collective of thinkers propels me into new theoretical terrain that helps build greater capacity to think about the interrelatedness of ethics, ontology, and epistemology.

This project, then, is rooted in the emergence of what AnaLouise Keating calls threshold theories. Threshold theory, according to Keating, is the active underscoring of

theories and practices of “nonbinary, liminal, potentially transformative status.”¹⁰ As

Keating uses this term, thresholds

represent complex interconnections among a variety of sometimes contradictory worlds—points crossed by multiple intersecting possibilities, opportunities, and challenges. Like thresholds—that mark transitional, in-between spaces where new beginnings, and unexpected combinations can occur—threshold theories facilitate and enact movements “betwixt and between” divergent worlds, enabling us to establish fresh connections among distinct (and sometimes contradictory) perspectives, realities, peoples, theories, texts, and/or worldviews.¹¹

While Keating enacts a type of threshold theory for radical political change, I enact the thresholds of theory to motivate theoretical transformation that can also be applied to ‘on the ground’ realities. The theoretical work in this dissertation betrays static disciplinary boundaries and looks for the in/between spaces for theories to emerge, knowledge to be produced, and politics to become material. Because of its ‘threshold’ status, this project features ideas concerning multiplicity and difference, and seeks to imagine bodies as that which are always becoming multiple and different, and an orientation to matter that is always ‘tied’ to the materiality of the body as the condition under which we exist. This initiates a way to reconsider ways of knowing that are tied to the materiality of the body. Finally, a turn to queering the materiality of the body and an ontology of becoming helps show the radical interrelatedness of all things. Upon concluding, I detail the intersections of ontology, epistemology, and ethics in the language of bodily materiality as an intra-

¹⁰ AnaLouise Keating, *Transformation Now!: Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 10.

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

active ontology of becoming. I argue this is what points toward the ethics of interrelatedness that is developed throughout the oeuvre of Anzaldúa. I end in my conclusion in the same place where I began: materiality and point to where this work can flourish and next theoretical steps that flourish along a plane of becoming.

If We Read Anzaldúa This Way, Then...

Reading Anzaldúa as a philosopher and critical social theorist pushes the theoretical envelope(s). This is a first order commitment. While her work transgresses the fiction / non-fiction binary, her work should also be recognized and interpreted as philosophy and critical social theory. Doing this work as a first order initiative means that when we read Anzaldúa as a philosopher, we see the ties to early philosophical thinking and the links that are strengthened as her work develops. For example, the notes in the marginalia that I discovered in the archives at the University of Texas, Austin, reveal that Anzaldúa was reading many more theorists than she cites. For example, in the archives she has notes on reading Bergson, Butler, Spivak, Derrida, and many others. While her lack of citation is questioned among scholars, I want to raise up the reality that a queer woman of color writing philosophical manifestos and critical social theory that sought to dismantle existing 'liberationist' agendas chose to create her work in conversation with other thinkers but never cites these thinkers. The ethics of this is questionable for some, but what if there is intention in leaving out the recognized thinkers like Butler in her later work, and Derrida, Lacan, among others in her earlier work? What does leaving out these thinkers say to readers who are consuming and analyzing Anzaldúa's work? Perhaps leaving out this work creates the space of the intersection or the ethics of interrelatedness. A careful reader can pick up nuances that are drawn from other philosophers and critical

social theorists, but the act of leaving out well-known and overly cited theorists of Anzaldúa's citation might trigger a new style and politics of writing philosophy. That said, one cannot read Anzaldúa without recognizing that Anzaldúa participated in a particular style of academic and cultural production that is often called the politics of citation. What openings might this version or style of the politics of citation create for queer women of color? Does it **delegitimize** their work, or **legitimize** their work in a critical manner? I wish to establish the importance of reading Anzaldúa as a philosopher who created a new stylistic meter in her theory that transcends stable categories and disrupts normative assumptions, and doing this answers the question of legitimizing women of colors' theorizing in a critical manner.

If we read Anzaldúa as a philosopher, then we have a very different point of departure when we consider her philosophy-theory in fiction and non-fiction works. I want to suggest a reading strategy for engaging Anzaldúa, and this strategy also applies to reading this dissertation project. Reading Anzaldúa is never a purely objective task, nor is it purely subjective. The careful writing art of myth making, poet-shaman aesthetics¹², and her metaphysics of interrelatedness all diffuse throughout Anzaldúa's work. Because of this, the reader might be compelled to engage Anzaldúa's written work as an interconnecting philosophy that multiplies and connects throughout. Reading Anzaldúa means that you are met with the future, ignited by the past, and resituated in the present; Anzaldúa's theories are a never-receding horizon of difference becoming. She is

¹² I first heard this term in Colorado Springs at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs in the winter of 2011 when AnaLouise lectured as part of a conference.

almost the now, but not yet. And so, reading her means you are reading in the space of the already/not yet. For religion scholars this might signal an eschatological horizon. Anzaldúa is just out of reach, just over the horizon, she is akin to the force that makes the sky pink after the sun sets and pink again right before the sun rises; her work is the space in/between the already and not yet. She is both pre and post everything, like the feeling before a meal of being famished followed by the feeling after the meal of being satiated. She does what no other queer or Chicana feminist thinker before her could do: she upends Plato and Descartes, she quiets Hegel, Levinas, and Foucault, and she puts all the little thinkers to bed.

Consider it this way: if we imagine the past (or the present, since we teeter on both the past and present in reading this dissertation project) as a hallway full of doors marked dualism, binary thinking, either/or, mind/body, transcendence/immanence, then Anzaldúa makes philosophy contemporary and compelling by drawing a series of escape hatches on the ceiling of that hallway and marking them borderlands, plural, multiple, both/and, non-dialectical materialism, immanence and transcendence, and interrelatedness. Anzaldúa is open, associative, and connective in radical ways. Anzaldúa is digital (in the sense that so much of her work is contained in draft form in the archive), affirmative, productive, and innovative, becoming different at each turn. In her we have a blueprint for navigating the 21st century and beyond. Finally, if we read Anzaldúa as a philosopher affirming the positivity of difference, multiplicity, and materiality, then we come to find that she affirms the multiplying differences and heterogeneity over stasis of homogeneity. As a philosopher of difference, Anzaldúa becomes more different in her connective theories, and this ultimately shapes both the metaphysics of interrelatedness

and her poet-shaman aesthetics. That said, we must also read Anzaldúa as an ethicist who is concerned with re-imagining our moral imagination and actions in the world, and the ways relationality plays such a significant role in our becoming-being. But! To read Anzaldúa as an ethicist also means to read her as an onto-epistemologist, and then realize that these three philosophical domains cannot be untangled. This is the reality of her differences multiplying and her theories becoming a cartography for the 21st century. To read Anzaldúa is to participate in the entanglement of becoming.

A Note on Methodology

I do not understand ethics as something that is tied to reason, rights, or duties; it is something that is strategically tied to ways of being and becoming, ways of knowing and knowledge production, and the reality that materiality matters in this world. Hence, I believe ethics is part of the entanglement of ontology and epistemology. Another way to write this is ethico-onto-epistemology.¹³ I re-imagine this tripartite way of thinking (ontology, epistemology, and ethics) as something that is fundamentally important to the queering of ethics and to the overwhelming reality of interrelatedness and interconnection. Interrogating materiality points to this! I believe this is seen in the work of Anzaldúa; we have simply not recognized this interdisciplinary method of thinking, knowing, acting, being, and doing. I pursue this line of thinking throughout this project, and as a result, I deploy a diffractive methodology¹⁴ and lean into the planetary

¹³ I borrow this term from Karen Barad who uses it in *Meeting the University Halfway*.

¹⁴ I borrow this term from Karen Barad.

entanglement of becoming. This project, methodologically, yields a new manner of queer theorizing in that the methodological framework is diffractive. Diffractive signals the ability for theories and philosophies to intersect, bend, and mobilize. I see this when ontology, epistemology, and ethics connect. The method-framework of Ontology-Epistemology-Ethics-Agency emerges, diffractively so, and the emergence of (a) radical queer ethics of interrelatedness becomes a material reality.

Diffractive, borrowed from Karen Barad, simply signals my interdependence upon multiple philosophical standpoints and critical social theories and seeing these multiple standpoints crossing over one another and weaving together in a critical mode. I signal this as a queer way of engaging philosophy and critical social theories and deploying these theories in a critical and creative manner. Pursuing interdisciplinary work as I have done in this project gives shape and form to my thought that materiality is the current by which bodies come to be and become, knowledge is produced, and agency is enacted. This project takes up the challenge to not only articulate a way of thinking and doing theory from three philosophical domains (ontology, epistemology, and ethics, diffractively and queerly), but also seeks to re-imagine agency and ethics as that which is part of an overwhelming reality of interrelatedness, or interbeing. I believe the work that I do to re-imagine the materiality of bodies as that which is being and becoming and the ways that materiality is central to thinking (or re-thinking) theories of the body accomplishes this.

Why Anzaldúa?

In Anzaldúan style, I will answer this from the space between objective and subjective, hoping to point toward a metaphysics of interrelatedness. I discovered

Anzaldúa when I was in graduate school in Chicago, IL at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. My thesis supervisor had the intuition to introduce me to Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and later to *this bridge we call home: radical visions of transformation*. I discovered these books uncovered a way of thinking and doing theory that I found very compelling. Sitting in a room full of whiteness as a first-generation high school graduate, college graduate, and now graduate student initiated an epistemological rupture for me. During this time in my first graduate program, I looked for scholars who were similar to me, mining these thinkers for their theoretical gems as I journeyed in theological education. I found Anzaldúa's work the most compelling and under-theorized. As a result, I began reading and re-reading Anzaldúa's work, ordering as many of her books or books about her work that I could find to buy. During the time off between my first entrance into graduate school and my second (doctoral work), I began rereading Gloria Anzaldúa. I began reading *Borderlands/La Frontera* with a theoretical lens much stronger than when I first read it. Being introduced to Feminist Standpoint Theory in my first graduate program, I began seeing standpoint like contours, but Anzaldúa's epistemology was not situated, necessarily, but rather a theory of participatory expansion relative to epistemology. I found this curious. I also began rereading *this bridge we call home: radical visions of transformation*. It was this text that sparked my interest in queer theory and the questions of epistemology and ontology. I also saw contours of an ethical paradigm. I read and reread the text trying to trace the theoretical reality without reading theoretical gaps into the text. Then, in my doctoral program, I began investigating Gloria Anzaldúa again, and discovered there was a society that is designed to showcase her work and the work that others develop using her theories

and methodologies. After attending my first Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa conference, I was determined to mine Anzaldúa's philosophy-theory for theoretical gems. I have not been disappointed! I had also virtually met AnaLouise Keating prior to my first SSGA, and I met her in person at this meeting. Our correspondence with one another has fueled my thinking and prompted me to ask the theoretical questions and push the theory that I see in Anzaldúa beyond its logical end. Keating's companionship has been remarkable for my own scholarly development and thinking about Anzaldúa beyond normative frameworks.

I have read both primary and secondary literature and continue to be compelled by the philosophy-theory of Gloria Anzaldúa; her theories continue to revolutionize scholarly and activist communities. In many ways, Anzaldúa's work became a bridge as I discovered other decolonial and queer thinkers. I often was reminded of Anzaldúan concepts when I read other thinkers. I then began to read Gilles Deleuze and Deleuzian thinkers several years after I began reading Gloria Anzaldúa. I found similarities and resonances with their work, especially when I would read them together (Rosi Braidotti, especially). The similarities I discovered prompted me to continue to explore Anzaldúa and find ways of introducing Deleuze and Deleuzian thinking at critical turning points within my research. But perhaps this does not completely answer "why?"

Anzaldúa's craft of writing-art entirely disrupts stable academic disciplines. I found that I appreciated this unstable (and perhaps queer) way of creating scholarship, and the affirmation and hope that I discovered in Anzaldúa's theories. Anzaldúa's work creates a sustained reflection for radical social change, culminating in personal and collective transformation, and it is deeply political. It is perhaps these things that compel

me to journey on a scholarly path of one who was never recognized by the academy as a legitimate scholar and only posthumously awarded her PhD.¹⁵ Anzaldúa's work radicalizes personal and collective transformation. Anzaldúa is concerned with both self and other, recognizing that the space in between these two beings is a quantum space. I am compelled by this philosophy-theory because Anzaldúa produced stellar writing projects, oftentimes agonizing over drafts for years. Now recognized as a founding contributor to U.S. based queer theory, Anzaldúa remains under theorized. Several feminist philosophers recognize this, namely Linda Martín Alcoff. Perhaps this is another reason why I journey this scholarly path: to help energize new ways of theorizing and interpreting Gloria Anzaldúa's work.

Anzaldúan Materiality: The Theoretical Arc of the Dissertation

In one of the final essays published during her life, "now let us shift, the path of *conocimiento*...inner works, public acts," Anzaldúa details a theory of reality, an epistemological framework, the impulse to act justly in the world, and a theory of materiality. Though never referring to 'other' materialist thinkers, especially not the New Materialists, I have come to read Anzaldúa as a speculative New Materialist thinker and one who privileged a spirit-inflected materiality throughout her work. Therefore, an Anzaldúan Materiality is a spirit-inflected materiality that animates Anzaldúa's theories, but also animates throughout this project.

¹⁵ The director of the graduate program at UC Santa Cruz did contact Anzaldúa to let her know that the school would recognize her completed work and published material in *Borderlands/La Frontera* and award her the Ph.D, but Anzaldúa declined this offer. She died not long after and never earned the Ph.D.

Matter is all around. We cannot escape it. Anzaldúa's oeuvre details a rich commitment to what New Materialists call the active materialization of all things and the important role that matter and relationality have in today's world. It is sufficient to say that Anzaldúa did not theorize about passivity, or the passivity of matter. All matter and things are constitutive of a type of being and becoming, or a becoming-being in Anzaldúa's work. Spirit, an indeterminate being, is alive in all that Anzaldúa wrote, and vibrational energies oscillate throughout her writings. That said, the theoretical arc throughout this dissertation project begins and ends with "now let us shift, the path to *conocimiento*...inner works, public acts." This essay frames much of what I am attempting to do, which is detail a speculative queer material reality, or a queer material realism—queer matter. I have read across disciplines to help me situate thinkers and theories with Anzaldúa's own work, which I have read exhaustively, including secondary literature. While I begin and end with Anzaldúa's last published essay as the theoretical arc, I do not ignore her previous work. I simply use "now let us shift..." as a theoretical point of departure and return that concretely frames this project.

What is important about this essay is that it gives voice to the scholarship that began emerging during the 1990's that is now referred to as New Materialism. New Materialism reimagines materiality as ontology, which then retextures epistemology and ethics and privileges a form of materialism over against language and the linguistic turn. New Materialism is a category of theories that were generated as a response to the linguistic turn. Infused with commitments to specific knowledge-becoming practices and a history linked to feminisms, new materialism attempts to offer a different perspective to signification, materiality, and methodologies of crafting knowledge. It is in this way that

materiality becomes an entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, the framework of “now let us shift...” To suggest that Anzaldúa unmasks a bodily materiality is not redundant but rather true. She materializes bodies in her work; “now let us shift...” shows this. Furthermore, the entanglement of matter and meaning come to the fore and the positivity of differences populate throughout this essay and her work. Materiality is not determinative of a certain mechanism, or correlate. It is also not passive. The entanglement of materiality for Anzaldúa is the active materialization of a becoming-being that spans the speciated divide, while intersecting or colliding with new ways of producing knowledge and acting in the world. The juridico-political roots to Anzaldúa’s work provide a substantial frame for new ways of thinking justly.

The thrust of this dissertation project functions as a cartography. I use “now let us shift...” as my theoretical frame or arc that creates the rhythm that fuels my interest, and I detail materiality and bodies through a humanistic and posthumanistic lens. The humanism with which feminism is imbued rarely reaches beyond the human body. I take seriously the notion that body is something more than the human container that defines bodies and that bodies are comprised of other bodies. Decentering bodies to include countless other types and forms of bodies that are called into being by materiality signals another turn in (new) materialist scholarship. I do this because feminist scholarship has focused their theories on historical materialism and humanistic bodies. While throughout Anzaldúa’s work, her theory on the body points toward a posthumanistic body, I begin with an unstable human body as my referent.

Working through the Cartesian split, discursive body and Butler’s failed materiality, I look to New Materialist scholars to help reframe materiality and bodies.

Keeping “now let us shift...” at the fore, I carefully trace the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics throughout this project. The end result is my conclusion of Anzaldúa’s materiality, which is rooted in an ontology of becoming and a transcendent immanence. This points to Anzaldúa’s insistence on an ethic of interrelatedness. This is the entanglement that is most evident in Anzaldúa’s work—immanence and interrelatedness, not dependent on correlationism, and a self-organizing process of active materialization. This is the entanglement of material becoming body.

Beginning with ancient philosophy may seem futile to some. For, what can Lucretius tell us about today’s philosophical problems? Can he, even? Can the father of physics shed light on new contours of a materialist philosophy? Likewise, what can modern philosophers teach us about the flow of material becomings?

Cartographies, usually used to illustrate land and other geographical areas, are important because they help show the terrain of change, altitude, and other changes that are pertinent to understanding the geography of place. Some cartographies are topographical, showing mountains, hills, and water. Others simply are one dimension and illustrate the connections of one place to another. Like a traditional cartography of place, a material cartography is important to show the shifts in the ways in which materialism shapes and shifts, the manner in which the connection of material thought dominates philosophy, and the ways in which the feature of vital becoming is just one connective synthesis in a philosophy of materialism. I have chosen one particular element in the philosophy of materialism and only a handful of thinkers on which to build this particular material cartography. The feature of vital becoming is the one material thing that I have chosen to trace throughout a select group of ancient, modern, and contemporary thinkers.

This material cartography is limited by these thinkers and in turn, this project conforms to a project that is becoming but only with the material thought of these thinkers that coalesce. This is an effort to show how the element of vital becoming creates a material mass in the philosophy of materialism, and I show this by tracing movement and becoming in Lucretius, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Deleuze, and the New Materialists and ways movement is reflected and refracted in Anzaldúa's theories.

Though material cartographies have been displaced by philosophies of structuralism and psychoanalysis (in many respects, the same thing), the philosophy of materialism can help recover our thinking about truth, reality, and issues of justice, and I argue that the New Materialists and Deleuzian materialists tackle issues of justice in their work. I believe a cartography is one way to think about achieving this, but there are other related importances. I identify them below.

Taking a stratified chronological approach to rethinking materialism and the emergence of becoming unmask an importance in the philosophy of materialism and new dimensions in New Materialist thinking. The major importance that I believe this strategy unmasks is that there is a connection inherent in the New Materialist philosophy that is not so new and that what they promote as a vitality in their philosophy is actually linked to former thinkers that go as far back as Lucretius. Noting this is not to suggest that the New Materialists are simply duplicating Lucretius' thought. I note this to show the depth to the New Materialist's material framework, and to also show that New Materialism engages with other discourses, like feminism and queer theory in productive ways. Perhaps that is another term to identify in this material cartography: productive. Materialism, as a long-standing philosophy is a productive philosophy in that there is

something always generative and generating from this philosophy, and I believe Deleuze and his followers get at this in a critical manner.

Likewise, performing a material cartography of the above listed thinkers around the issue of animated material or becoming helps show a new trajectory in New Materialist thinking that expands their philosophy beyond what some might call ‘strict philosophy’ toward other creative works that en flesh a New Materialist framework. Another importance is also to show the entangled reality of a materialist philosophy that further mobilizes new dimensions of thought, new methodologies, and undoes traditional disciplinary categories that help initiate new forms of doing and practicing philosophy in materialist ways. In fact, methodologies and the subject become transversal in New Materialist thinking. The ‘trans’ part of transversal is important to note, as it does not refer to transcendence but rather immanence and the radically intersecting material thoughts that are ever emerging.

So What?

Important to this project is the recognition that Gloria Anzaldúa not only paved the way for a trans-disciplinary approach to scholarship, but also demonstrated such scholarship in both writing and art, along with the production of children’s books. Her life orientating vocation was one of art-making-theory, and she used metaphors of bridging and webs of connection to illustrate such dynamic work. Philosophy, while it is the love of wisdom, is also a practice, and Anzaldúa practiced a love for wisdom that was generated from the whispers of ancestors, myths that performed a strategic vision of wholeness and difference, and epistemic strategies that stemmed from her body and the

bodies of the universe. So, what is important about reading Anzaldúa as a philosopher and theorist, and why should we pursue this endeavor?

The manner in which we engage theory and philosophy matters. Matter matters, too, as I have argued in this dissertation. And, with a focus on the materiality of the body and urging to re-imagine bodies as matter becoming different, a particular and differential strategy lens should be used when reading Anzaldúa's work. I prefer to bridge together (or weave, as a particular entanglement of becoming) ontology, epistemology, and ethics as a particular frame that helps re-imagine ontology as an orientation of becoming, epistemology as that which is rooted bodily, and ethics that is tied to both the previous philosophical categories. That in turn generates new practices. This is achievable when we recognize the entanglement of these philosophical categories and Anzaldúa's work is one such theorist philosopher who perfects this entanglement. This is important because when we re-read her work as a particular entanglement of ontology—epistemology—ethics, we learn the value of her work as work of philosophy and the productive and generative output of ideas that is grounded in both decolonial work and queerness. Recognizing this productive and generative output necessitates new reading strategies that are informed by the confluence of the multiplicity of ideas from Anzaldúa and the web of entanglement that is woven throughout her entire work.

CHAPTER TWO: BRIDGING AND REWRITING ANZALDÚA AS A
'GENERATIVE' MATERIALIST: A NEW LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF MATTER

With awe and wonder you look around, recognizing the preciousness of the earth, the sanctity of every human being on the planet, the ultimate unity and interdependence of all beings—somos todos un paiz. Love swells in your chest and shoots out of your heart chakra, linking you to everyone/everything—the aboriginal in Australia, the crow in the forest, the vast Pacific Ocean. You share a category of identity wider than any social position or racial label. This conocimiento motivates you to work actively to see that no harm comes to people, animals, ocean—to take up spiritual activism and the work of healing. Te entregas a tu promesa to help your various cultures create new paradigms, new narratives.

—Gloria Anzaldúa

Anzaldúa's scholarship, her life's work, her art-making-theory is framed by the process of images and communication, lines of flight, if you will.¹⁶ This process, or becoming-being, as she articulates throughout her writing, connects the tongue (the physical part of the body) with thought, both matters of materiality that should not go unnoticed. Combined, these two machines of the body (the mouth and the brain, which are both bodies) help illustrate the connectedness of thinking, being, and becoming. In this sense, Anzaldúa's work (from art found in images and art found in narrative or poetry) stimulates a generative material reality that mobilizes a framework of becoming. In order to give you a foretaste of the work of Anzaldúa, I wish to detail the importance

¹⁶ This is illustrated in her essay on the red and black ink, found in *Borderlands*. I also borrow this language from Deleuze & Guattari whose philosophy very much are 'lines of flight.'

of her work (that I understand to be at the particular intersection of theory and praxis) in this chapter. I will use this chapter to connect Anzaldúa's theory of generative materiality that I trace throughout her work with the larger work I am attempting relative to the materiality of the body as that which is becoming. I will do this in the following ways:

The first feature that is important to note is that of motion or movement, which contributes significantly to Anzaldúa's theory-making-practice work. Seen particularly in the titles of *this bridge called my back* and *Haciendo Caras / Making Face, Making Soul*, and even further to *this bridge we call home*, movement is the art of a becoming motion. The work of seeing Anzaldúa's work as 'becoming motion' or a 'generative materiality,' is in part recognizing the processes by which her theory comes to be, or becomes. There is always movement in Anzaldúa's theories, and also in her imaginal work, that helps frame her theories as something that has an internal force of becoming. In this way, Anzaldúa's work in its entirety is the art of becoming motion and contributes to a generative materiality.

When I theorize movement, it is important to note that sometimes movement is on the wind-swayed bridge, and other times it is the movement of political action. The title of these books frames such motion of becoming and secondarily suggests a particular style of movement that is generative, which is manifest in the in/between spaces of becoming, often characterized by *nepantla*. In the *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, a chronological collection of writings and images, the reader is not only introduced to published material of Anzaldúa, but is able to chart the motion and movement that is central to her theory-making-practice work. Likewise, in connection with motion and movement, the second feature is the concept of bridging and radical interconnectedness,^a

central feature of Anzaldúa's work. Both bridging and Anzaldúa's metaphysics of interconnectedness are woven throughout her work. They give texture to the already existing philosophical framework of her scholarship. Given the ways in which Anzaldúa used her own racial positioning as a Chicana and Tejana to bridge with white feminists, this not only generates a new contour in anti-racist coalitions, but also builds bridges with difference as a political act. One must also recognize that the act of bridging is not an act to solidify ideas or actions but to create a much more porous orientation in relationality that further contributes to a sense of radical interconnectedness. The third feature that is incredibly important for my work is Anzaldúa's anti-normativity approach that results in a new contour of anti-disciplinarity. This feature is important for my work because I actively leverage Anzaldúa's resistance to static norms and normativity in her theories that privilege multiplicity and becoming, a particular philosophical thread that I trace throughout this dissertation. While norms are incredibly valuable in ethical method and theories, I find that the anti-normative shift is central to a more robust queer and decolonial orientation, which conforms to Anzaldúa's own work as a work of resistance in an attempt for an orientation of radical interconnection with all things. I do not suggest that Anzaldúa abandons values; her work is rich with value-laden theories that often are under-determined, enfleshing a notion of queer freedom. This notion of queer freedom is non-teleological in orientation, but directed and framed by radical interconnectedness. In this sense, then, it differs from Spinoza's *conatus*, which is strategically teleological.

Anzaldúa's own anti-normativity helps frame her anti-disciplinarity, which is helpful for my own work, since I transgress normative disciplinary categories and privilege theoretical promiscuity over against privileging the singularity of one theory

over another, or the stability of one singular norm that is not porous or cannot change. These three features mentioned above help coordinate the porosity of bridging and radical interconnectedness that is rooted in a generative materiality. These three features, seen through Anzaldúa's work, should encourage researchers to mine Anzaldúa's theories for their rich philosophical roots. Likewise, these three features fit together as part of the overarching assemblage theory that Anzaldúa has utilized, particularly the exteriority of consciousness, nature, myths, and other elements, to displace and replace what it exists in an effort to continue to chart her becoming-being. This is very much a 'bottom up' framework that privileges fluidity and exchangeability through multiplicities.

I see this work as bridging work, a familiar terrain to Anzaldúa's own theory-making-practice work. I will attempt to detail generative materiality as a reality and philosophical register that is not only becoming but also contributing to a larger ontological frame that connects knowledge production and ways of knowing with our everyday practices, or ethics. Doing this type of bridging work helps further generate the radical interconnectedness of ontology-epistemology-ethics, an entanglement of becoming-being. While Anzaldúa herself does not use the philosophical categories, others—like Karen Barad—attribute these terms to Anzaldúa's work. I follow suit in advancing this thought further to root Anzaldúa's theory as deeply embedded philosophical work that is productively decolonial and queer.

In a field (philosophy and critical theory) where Anzaldúa has either been fetishized or marginalized, it is important also to illustrate the importance of Anzaldúa's theories as they relate to a larger philosophical domain that otherwise go unnoticed and certainly under-recognized. When I speak about Anzaldúa's work, I am referring to the

corpus of her work, and do not focus primarily on *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. The importance of looking at the entire corpus of Anzaldúa's work leverages a greater philosophical frame, whereas simply focusing on *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* minimizes the larger philosophical framework that she deploys. I do not want to marginalize the robust philosophy that is included in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, but I wish to expand my focus to include pre- and post-borderland materials. The importance of illustrating Anzaldúa as a serious thinker and producer of knowledge destabilizes traditions that have eclipsed her work, among others' works. To mobilize Anzaldúa as an important philosophical thinker is to not only transgress dominant strands of theory and philosophy but to imagine and enact a creative opening to rethink the domain of philosophy and our love for wisdom, which, for Anzaldúa, is located in the imagination producing bodies, *el cenote*.

To begin this important work, I outline generative materiality as a primary framework for Anzaldúa's materialism that is supported by what I call animation. I will argue that animation is a particular style of nomadic movement that is seen throughout Anzaldúa's life and work.¹⁷ Secondly, I connect generative materiality and its animated feature with Anzaldúa's knowledge-making framework that is grounded in a metaphysics of interconnectedness. Doing this ties together (or bridges) ontology and epistemology, two domains that have driven the discipline of philosophy and in turn radically

¹⁷ Anzaldúa moved from the Rio Grande Valley to Austin and to the Bay Area / Santa Cruz, among other places, during her life. I argue that these nomadic movements contribute to her own theory-making-art practice.

marginalized the work of women of color theorists, and most certainly Anzaldúa. What Anzaldúa gives us in this work that is grounded in the reality of bridging together domains of thought and action is a way to rethink our reality, and embrace the light of imagination that is always being animated in the dark, in the folds of matter becoming.¹⁸ Certainly, every theory has a practice, and Anzaldúa's work elucidates this claim. The act of bridging privileges a relational ontology, or what I call becoming-being, first mentioned by Anzaldúa in her poetry/narrative of *El Mundo Surdo*. This language is found in Anzaldúa's own work but has yet to be theorized sufficiently. This is one attempt to theorize the importance of the ways Anzaldúa's work is philosophically rich and motivates readers to think in a philosophical register. And, furthermore, this move to think about Anzaldúa in a philosophical register is a particular style of movement in philosophy and theory. The move includes the self in all of its plurality of becoming and is strategically part of the philosophical register through which Anzaldúa theorizes.

Anzaldúa's Materialism as a Generative Materiality

As I have investigated the account of 'new'¹⁹ materialism, I have discovered that this account of materialism is one that is in motion, or animated. I have come to understand this motion akin to a material becoming and I call this material becoming generative. Generative materiality is matter that is in flux, in process, or becoming. Its lure is framed by both the affirmative qualities of matter becoming and the negation of

¹⁸ Anzaldúa's dissertation, which she never called a 'dissertation' is titled "Light in the Dark."

¹⁹ I place 'new' in quotes to draw attention to the fact that what is being done in New Materialisms is not all that new. The language that is being deployed in this philosophical camp is contributing greatly to philosophy and cultural theories, but it is far from being new.

what is. The apophatic reality of matter that closes off and creates a new line of flight is the very potentiality of a becoming-being. It is a material reality that is animated by its self-organization. Self-organization is an organization that is internal to self, but also in relationship with other material realities that exist in the web or entanglement of connection. The relational importance of generative materiality is one that is important to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa that is also mobilized through the act of bridging. An example of bridging is the political act of relating with white feminists about which Anzaldúa writes, which for many Chicanas and women of colors during the 1980s and 1990s was problematic. The metaphor of bridging not only creates the capacity of connection, but it also privileges an open-mindedness to reality becoming material.

Anzaldúa's poetry is one place to begin thinking about movement and motion relative to matter. In her first published poem, "Now Let Us Go" or Tihueque, the reader is drawn into the periscope of becoming. I quote the poem below to build a case for elements of motion that are internal to poem. I also quote the poem to show the importance of Aztec myth that materializes as revisionist mythmaking in Anzaldúa's work. I do not analyze the poem in terms of meter, measure, or rhyme, but rather the materiality of the language that is offered, metaphors such as rise that denote movement and motion. The act of carving hearts and the sun rising all cast a motion-filled shadow that moves with the poem, and poetic rhythms motivate our thinking regarding a framework of becoming.

One year in a distant century during Teoteco,
The 12th month of the solar year Five Rabbit,
in the reign of the Four-Water Sun,
I carved 12,000 hearts in honor
of Huitziltopochtli, God of War,

who made the sun rise each morning.
 In each succeeding year thereafter
 ceremonial drunkenness robbed me
 as many hearts embraced the furnace sacrifice.
 Only the hearts of the finest Náhuatl braves
 and luckiest prisoners and warriors
 at the sacred flesh.
 Today I lie in a musty museum
 and register 5.5 on the Mohs scale.
 But my origin, my volcanic obsidian,
 hard as granite
 comes in good stead.
 In my childhood I was a mirror.
 I threw a vitreous luster, dark-green.
 But now the iron oxide running in my veins
 dulls my edge
 and the air bubbles trapped in me
 reflect my age
 Time passes.
 I rest and await the flesh.²⁰

The Aztec calendar uses animals to frame their solar year, and the year of the Rabbit occupies a particular direction or orientation, South. The only other animal that is oriented to(ward) the South is the lizard. We can position the South as being ‘bottom’ to North (Top), and when we reframe South as bottom, as would be the case in sexual minority or Kink communities, we come to a greater awareness of the role of the South that might motivate a particular movement in Anzaldúa’s poem that motivates an urgency of ‘now let us go...’ Recognizing the power of the South (or bottom), one begins to see how that particular power shapes and shifts reality and recasts a new contour of becoming motion. When we consider the role of the South or the Valley in Anzaldúa’s life, we

²⁰ This is Anzaldúa’s first published poem that appears in the *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. AnaLouise Keating.

come to an awareness that the South, in particular the Global South for centuries, has been the object of imperialism and the particular subject for colonialism; the South has bottomed for the Global North and has resulted in ongoing colonialism. The Valley in Texas has certainly been that, as have the rest of the South in the United States. And, yet, while we recognize the role of the South, it is also important to recognize the ways in which the South continues to enfold power. While this power is not one that is mobilized in the Global North, it is important to acknowledge the inherent power of the Global South. Noting this, Anzaldúa writes using the imagery of God. Turning to the motion of sun and the power of the sun helps to continue this journey of becoming motion.

The imagery of the God of War making the sun rise each morning creates not only a metaphor of movement but real, actual moments of movement and motion where the matter of the sun is in flux, rising each morning, and it is interesting to think about the sun rising at the hands of the God of War when the bottom positioning to that of ongoing colonialism recasts notions of becoming.

In this sense, the God of War is the cause of the sun coming to light. The sun is becoming. The sun as subject for part of the ceremonial ritual of the knife becoming, once a mirror and now a knife, is a central feature to recognizing the ways in which the multiplicity of interconnectedness frames this poem. It is in this moment of acknowledging the multiplicity of interconnectedness of Global North (Top) and Global South (bottom) that reframes such positionings and instead invigorates new contours of movement.

The language of origin also motivates a type of movement in this poem that initiates beginnings or becomings, an ever-expanding reality. I interpret this move of an

ever-expanding reality as one where Anzaldúa assumes a new positioning relative to the orientation of the South. One might read a particular contour of power into writing about the knife's origin and the ability for the knife to shape and shift. There is power inherent in the knife's origin, so how does the orientation of the South (or bottom space) affect the movement of 'now let us go'? When Anzaldúa writes about the knife's origin, as volcanic obsidian, we recognize and acknowledge that the once obsidian nature has become something as hard as granite. The use of the language of origin, also, puts this poetry in motion, not in progression. The poem is moving, though the words on the page are captured in a particular frame of becoming. Even the language of 'lying in a musty museum' is a type of movement, perhaps nomadic movement, that is illustrated in Deleuze's work, but a movement nonetheless. The metaphor that is created by the language of lying in a musty museum helps further illustrate the becoming nature of matter and the ways in which matter generates itself and is self-organizing. This frame of becoming, I argue, is throughout Anzaldúa's work and the socio-analytic category of the body can be used in conjunction with the frame of becoming.

Anzaldúa's material becoming is not spirit phobic, unlike the work of Jane Bennett. Spirit is alive and captures the nature of this material becoming-being. Spirit is what mobilizes the movement of becoming and roots the entanglement of interconnectedness. Important to note when writing about origins is that Anzaldúa assumes a particular orientation relative to the ceremonial knife. She assumes the knife to

be her, and in particular, the Indian inside her. In various places,²¹ Anzaldúa writes about the Indian inside all of us, the one that we police the most, and who is la Chingadada.²² When thinking about Top and Bottom space in sexual positioning and in thinking about her assuming the knife to be Indian self, there is a consistent doubling of movement happening. What I mean here is that the consistent doubling is one of simultaneously embracing bottom space and also topping from bottom space. There is not only the doubling but also the duality of being both / and. Simultaneously, she is assuming Bottom space and identifying that as the Indian inside of her (and even writes that the knife is laying down, presumably in a waiting position), but what is interesting is that she infuses a contour of power into this Bottom space and enlivens the knife (herself) with a particular agency that is rooted in power becoming, which materializes along planes of waiting for flesh, according to the poem. This further shows evidence of an animated matter-reality that is in motion and becoming.

To suggest that Anzaldúa creates a philosophy of animated matter that is generative and becoming is to say that the foundations of Anzaldúa's theory-making-art-practices are not rooted in language or what some philosophers and theorists might call the linguistic turn. Haunted by the becoming nature of matter, Anzaldúa uses language in material ways. She has done this throughout her writing, and her poetry helps readers engage this element of her theories. She uses language in material ways by engaging the

²¹ *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, among other places.

²² The literal translation of 'la chingadada' is 'the fucked one.'

imaginal as a very real and material thing that exists. This ‘haunting’ is always a return to the material, always a return of the matter becoming different. The poem, I argue, is one such way. Other examples are the ways in which she writes about walking on the beach in Santa Cruz and the ways in which her path was undulated.²³ This language helps materialize language and further illustrate the materiality of language. The importance of pointing out the movement of matter helps strengthen the reality of becoming, a reality that is in flux or in process. Movement, also, helps illustrate the ways that matter is a self-organizing unit, which is also becoming.

Becoming as a particular feature that illustrates a generative materiality has roots in matter that is animated. Animated matter that is self-organizing, organic in its essence or nature, helps to further frame a material reality that is also rooted in movement.²⁴ So, with the connection of a material reality that is entangled with movement and is also animated, the result of this equation is becoming. Becoming as a framework of always being in flux or in process also illustrates the relationality that animation has with matter that is self-organizing.

I see this frame of becoming particularly useful in interpreting Anzaldúa’s work. Not only does Anzaldúa’s work privilege ongoing movement but her work also privileges a frame of interconnectedness and this entanglement of connection or connectedness is a central part of her own philosophy of becoming. Movement, also, for Anzaldúa can be

²³ This is a phrase that is used repeatedly in her writing.

²⁴ I use the term ‘rooted’ to help illustrate the stability of matter, even in a highly contingent reality that is our world. Matter is stabilized by its roots of nomadic movement.

related to a Divine process, I think. She often talks about moving alongside the ocean, which is a double-movement, and a further entrenching of the entanglement of becoming. This double-movement is also a lure into becoming, which should not go unnoticed.

I also see the frame of becoming and the frame of interconnectedness as part of the overall frame of plurality, or multiplicity. That each of these are implicated in the entanglement of Anzaldúa's work, which might be understood as a unit but the multiplicity of the features of the entanglement help produce the ongoing plurality that has been a part of Anzaldúa's work from the start. This so-called 'unit' should never be understood as a singularity. Her poem, Tihueque, invites the reader to take note of the multiplicity of becoming, or the ways in which the self is ontologically plural.²⁵ Noting this does not diminish her single-substance reality, or monist vision, but it does help readers bridge together the real capacity of a framework of entangled becoming to multiply within a web of interconnectedness. It is similar to the entanglement of a spider web. The spider web is a single entity, but plural and multiple in its connections with the larger web. It is radically entangled in its becoming as the spider spins repetitiously and the web becomes a single yet also plural or multiple material reality.

²⁵ In reading the *Entrevistas / Interviews* book, I have a clearer picture that perhaps she not only thought of herself as a multiple or multiplicitous, but also as plural. And, yes, I do not betray her monism or monist orientation in suggesting that she is an ontologically plural self; I follow Deleuze and Guattari's formula that monism = pluralism. They cite this in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and we might be able to understand this as an aberrant monism. The experience of multiplicity or the multiplicitous self that is a unified One is not one that emerges from an experience of subtraction, but rather from addition. I follow this formula as it relates to the ontologically plural self that is always adding more selves through pure experience.

The Intersection of Continental Theories and Gloria Anzaldúa: Method and Tracing Anzaldúan Features in “Materialist” Philosophies

Methodology is always an important place to start when analyzing philosophy. Derrida creatively used the methodology of deconstruction and illustrated this sometimes by crossing through terms or words in his writing. In some ways, to read Derrida as a materialist deconstructionist would be transgressive to the field. Yet, Derrida did as much constructivist work in the field of deconstructionism as he deconstructed norms within philosophy. Likewise, Gloria Anzaldúa’s own code-switching and use of Aztec metaphors and terms, including *Nauhtl*, creates a new contour of materialism. I use the term ‘new’ not to denote something that has not existed prior, but to indicate an emergence, an irruption, of a contour of becoming.

While Gilles Deleuze collaborated with Félix Guattari and generated a new schizo-analysis for philosophy, Gloria Anzaldúa charted new terrain in her theory-making-art-philosophy. This new terrain is often found in the work of bridging. Through this method of bridging that establishes her theory-making-art-philosophy, Anzaldúa was likely a forerunner in what is now called New Materialism. As mentioned above, movement and the often-times double-movement remains an important feature to Anzaldúa’s materialism.

Found in children’s books, poetry, short story, fiction, and theory, along with her archives, this theory-making-art-philosophy, as I am calling it in this project, helps to not only destabilize dominant and normative methodologies that are used throughout the

domain of philosophy, but also illustrates a new turn in the philosophy of materialism.²⁶ I mention Anzaldúa as a new turn in the philosophy of materialism, because her work not only bridges together matter and language in compelling ways, but her work ignites our thinking in new materially tangible ways. The tangibility of Anzaldúa's work is something that is keenly important for tracing her as a materialist philosopher. Tangibility, also, illustrates Anzaldúa's aesthetics and affect (a predecessor to what is now termed affect theory). The tangibility of Anzaldúa's work is an important feature to her materialism, that is often dismissed as creative writing. Yet! In a popular category, such as creative writing, readers encounter a growing philosophical register whose intra activity is identity, aesthetics, and philosophy. The identity category that is deployed in Anzaldúa's work transgresses traditional representational politics. The Mestiza, while existing on an ontological plane that is always becoming, does not conform to traditional second wave feminist identity categories. The Mestiza transcends these politics of representationalism by including aesthetics and a larger ontological framework that I see as that of becoming.

Important to this is the way Anzaldúa offers readers new tools in the construction and the 'doing' of a materialist philosophy, and the most important tool is that of the imagination, or the imaginal. One of the turns that I see as important in emerging materialist philosophies that relates to Anzaldúa is the use of images to create theory. The

²⁶ I use the phrase theory-making art-philosophy as a way to raise up the in/betweenness of Anzaldúa's own theories and the ways in which she engages thresholds and ongoing moments or spheres of *nepantla*.

imaginal is an important feature to Anzaldúa's production of a materialist theory that should not go unnoticed. The imaginal, comprised of both images, words, and other meta ideas mobilizes her philosophy. Herein lies another example of the double-movement that I think is important in re-thinking Anzaldúa as a materialist philosopher.

The image of *el cenote*, for example, found in the *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*²⁷, is one such example of the ways in which the imaginal is used to access a materialist register in Anzaldúa's philosophy. Recalling the motion and movement (becoming-being) of Now Let Us Go / Tihueque, the image of el cenote compliments this poem by showing another layer to the recurring features of movement and motion that are animated throughout Anzaldúa's theory-making-practice work. Whereas Anzaldúa adopted the voice of an Aztec ceremonial knife in Tihueque, she, in this image, paints herself into the imaginal movement of dreams that are becoming. Dreams, which reside in el cenote, irrupt Anzaldúa's reality through the process of mental and physical nepantilism²⁸ and her becoming a threshold being. Dreams, another contour of a fold that is becoming, is Anzaldúa's theory of el cenote that is far under utilized but should be framed as a productive flow of becoming.

²⁷ "El cenote," Gloria Anzaldúa, #8, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. by AnaLouise Keating, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 224.

²⁸ I use this variation of nepantla to refer to thresholds and in/between space.

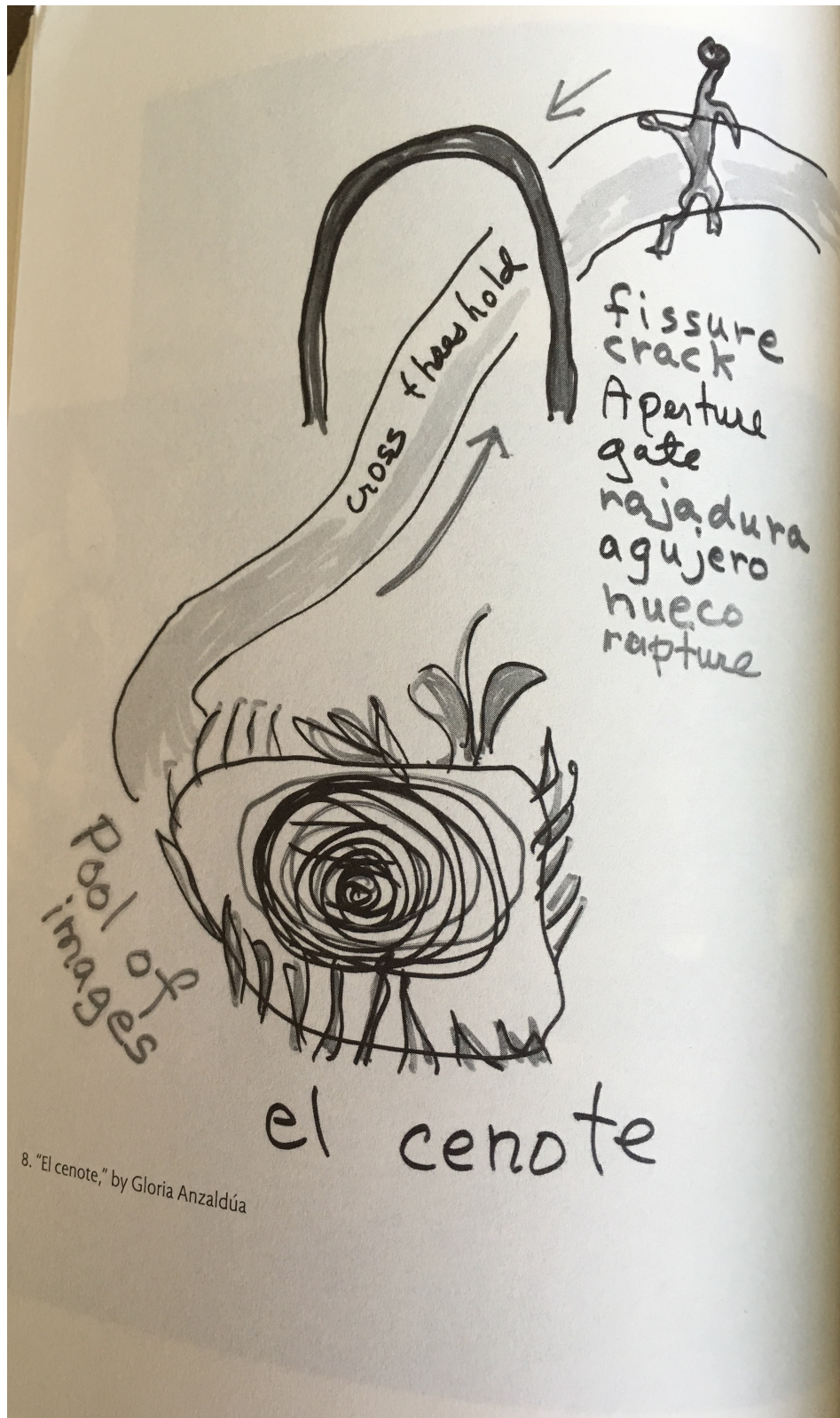


Figure 1.

The image depicts something akin to a river, which helps visualize and further mobilize movement. There are several moving pieces to this image, contours of becoming, as I call them. There is an image of a figure, but it remains to be known if it is human, or not. This figure is pointing toward and across the threshold, where there is an arch extended from one side of the flow to the other side. The flow leads to the pool of images, el cenote. Some terms that are associated with the flow that leads to el cenote are: “fissure, crack, aperture, gate, rajadura, agujero, hueco, and rapture.”²⁹ These terms are all written with a different color or firmness, allowing them to be lighter or darker. Even in the listing of these terms, there is movement. Fissure begins at the top of the list, and going with the flow to its left, the list moves downward toward the pool of images, and the last term is ‘rapture.’ Interesting to this image is the fact that there are two different arrows. One pointing in one direction and another, below the cross threshold, pointing in the opposite direction. This is evidence of the ongoing, double movement of the flow, similar to the ways that Anzaldúa describes the universe being flows of energy. This intentional doubling of movement within the flow that is carved on the canvas, the flow multiplies, or becomes, a new-fashioned reality. The emergence of such doubling is the centrality of a becoming force, a material reality that shapes and shifts toward and away from the pool of images. The energy forces the flows (symbolized by arrows) help further contextualize movement.

²⁹ *Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, 224.

Noting this is important to further mobilizing a framework of generative materiality. What is generative about this image / material is the fact that there are forces of becoming that are central to the image. The image itself is in motion, a particularized flow of becoming material.

The other image that I think helps create a framework of generative materiality is that of “nepantla.” A Nauhtl word, meaning “in between,” signifying flow(s), Anzaldúa’s image in the *Reader*, again, has arrows that articulate multiple flows of becoming. Also important to this image is the text that is used to explain the image. Words of becoming, like that of changing identities, are used to articulate the meaning of nepantla. While I do not want to focus on the politics of identity and rather on movidas, as articulated in the image, it is important to note that materiality might very well have an identity, one of generativity. Similar to el cenote, Anzaldúa explicitly writes *movidas* below the flow that is spliced that illustrates an in betweenness. Movidas is translated as ‘move’ in Spanish. Nepantla, a Nauhtl term, as a term that is rooted in movement enfleshes a double movement, that of generating a new(er) identity and also moving bodies from one point to another. This movement is always predicated on the force of becoming. Movement is already a flow that meets and connected with the flow of becoming. These flows are not in competition, but that are coalescing in their becoming. Their becoming results in a difference becoming different. Identity is different during the nepantla process. Nepantler@s at root are ones who are becoming different, due to process and internal/external movement. The explicitness of Anzaldúa’s mentioning *movidas* further

implicates the multiplicity of movements, the doubling in becoming. The following image is Movidas, as illustrated by Gloria Anzaldúa in the Gloria Anzaldúa Reader.³⁰

³⁰ Gloria Anzaldúa Reader, 220. I find it curious that both “changing identities” or movidas and nepantla are on the same page in the image. I think it is important to note that Anzaldúa uses the god of wind to illustrate nepantla, and for her changing identities, she uses the term ‘movidas.’

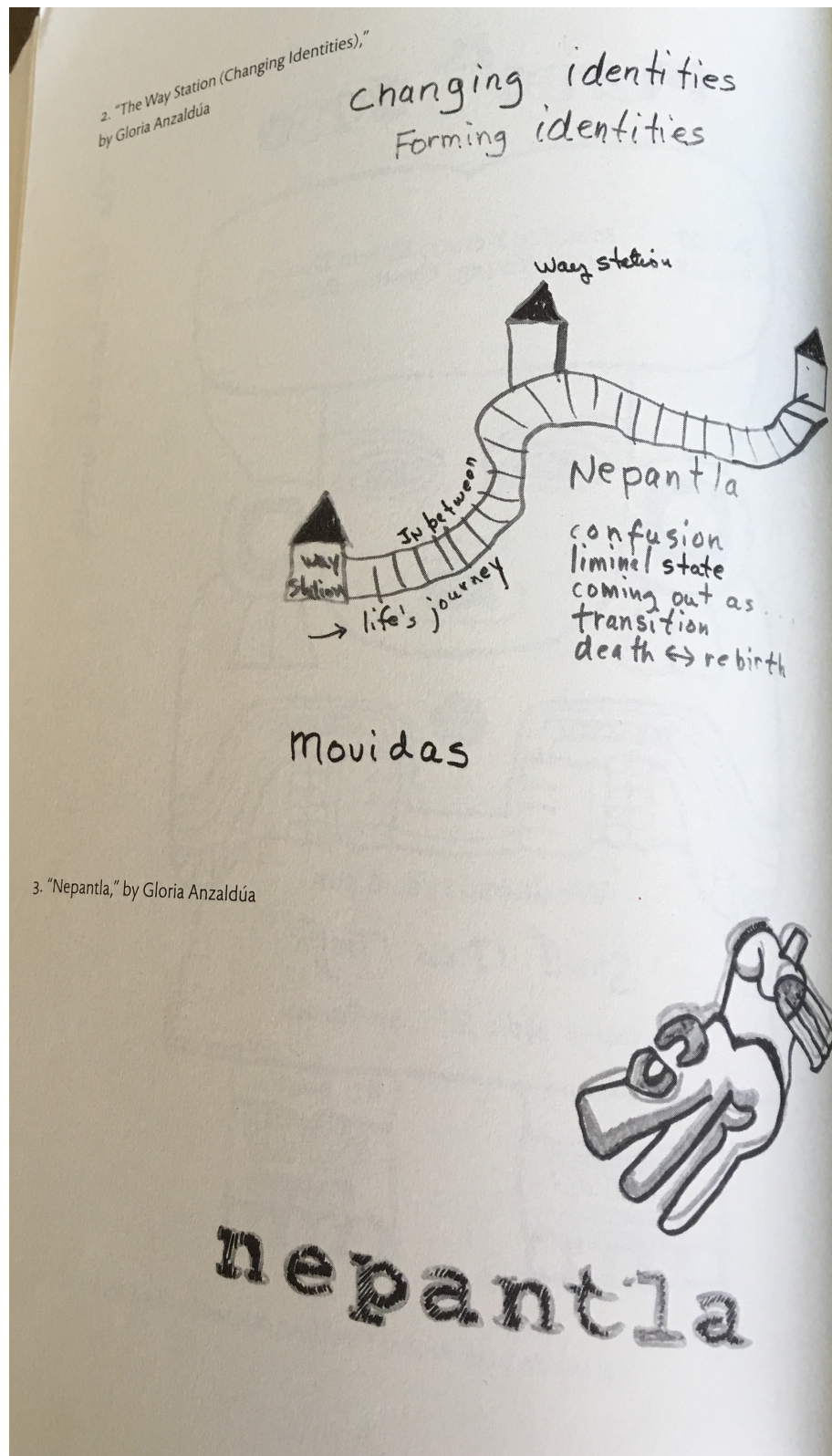


Figure 2.

Generativity, as illustrated even in Lucretius' work in the chapter to come, are moments of becoming, moments of change and process that are always a process of difference becoming different. I use this formulate of difference becoming difference because it implies a radical process of change, a process of change that is rooted in the very process of change and becoming. Anzaldúa's work, which I think is rooted in a movement of difference becoming different, is a type of theory-becoming-practice that privileges the imaginal and creates contours of material becoming. The imaginal, as a medium that displaces the over-dependence of language, produces new material contours and generates a framework of becoming. In Anzaldúa's work, while there is movement that is central to her theory, movement is also central to the imaginal, and this acknowledgement further mobilizes the ways in which movement doubles and proliferates, causing matter to become a plurality in its very becoming material. Anzaldúa's very definition of the universe rests in the power of plurality that is a singular reality, a productive monism, if you will. By productive I mean to suggest that the monism is materializing in the flows of the imaginal. The imaginal should not be displaced as mere fragments of becoming, but should be claimed as real moments of material becoming.

To read Anzaldúa as a generative materialist is to transgress (in some ways) the normative frameworks that contain (new) materialism. By this, I mean that the new materialists privilege an ontological framework that conforms to a monist perspective, and while I do not discredit this perspective or orientation, I want to destabilize the singularity of the monism that is privileged by the new materialists and advocate for a monism that is becoming and generative, a monism that is part of the plurality of the

imaginal. I think Anzaldúa's work re-imagines monism as a plurality becoming through the imaginal, through the flows she privileges. These flows, while plural, should not indicate a Cartesian dualism, but rather a monism that is productively becoming in its singularity.

Bodies of a Generative Materiality

I will argue in this dissertation two concepts that are intimately connected and cohere to be a singular reality: that bodies are material and material bodies are always becoming. By analyzing the role matter and the becoming nature of matter, then also analyze the role matter has in contributing to the discourse on bodies, bodies become much more than a humanist project. Noting the ways in which language has shaped our understanding of bodies, I put forward a framework of movement and doubling that is central to matter that in turn affects bodies. I see this same frame of movement in Anzaldúa's work and theories. Bodies, though never outlined or contained as "material" in Anzaldúa's work, yet imagined and materialized in her art and theorized in her essays as material realities, are generated by a material imagination. This material imagination, mentioned earlier as the imaginal, is generated from contours that are material and emerge from physical elements. The acknowledgement that matter is generated from what is in the world is not a surprise. That I suggest this idea of matter is in movement, or comprised of a flow, helps frame matter's generativity. Bodies, too, emerge out of a generative materiality and bodies take shape and form within the flow of becoming.

A generative materialism, as I see in Anzaldúa's work, involves not only lines of flight (the movement of matter), but also the emergence of the imaginal, connected together to generate contours of matter becoming material, a creative evolution of bodies.

CHAPTER THREE: LUCRETIUS, AN ANCIENT MATTER

Never can nothing become something, nor something nothing.

—Lucretius

Qualifying the ‘vital force’ of Lucretius with that of the ‘vital becoming’ found in modern and contemporary thinkers can only be done by using a materialist framework and the creative intuition that emerges from materialist philosophies. Whether it is force, will, becoming, movement, or process, an event of becoming emerges throughout the ancient, modern, and contemporary materialist philosophies. I take this to be the central qualifying feature of an ontology of becoming that I will discuss later. Yet, as I note that this feature is found throughout each of the thinkers I discuss, the case for a ‘vital becoming’ may still yet be made, or readers may still be unconvinced. What is important to note is that affirming animated material or material as becoming is that this is not solely an external reality, or external force that stems from the void. Animated material or the process of becoming is also both an external and internal material reality that motivates the anticipation of a flow. Linked together with consciousness for Bergson and Anzaldúa, it is the intersection of Deleuze and Anzaldúa who help confirm the reality of not only a philosophy of materialism that is always becoming, but also the reality of this philosophy being a philosophy of immanence. The distinction between organic and inorganic matter that is always in flux, participating in the flow of life, becomes indiscernible. What is, however, discernible is this flow or becoming that is radically

material. I argue this flow of becoming is seen in ancient, modern, and contemporary thinkers that helps create a new dimension to thinking materiality, bodies, and becoming.

The movement and feature of becoming that is inherent to Lucretius' materialism is important to identify for this project. I will argue that there is a force or an animation that in turn translates into an ontology of becoming in the work of Anzaldúa and is particularly noticeable when both Deleuze and Anzaldúa are in conversation with one another. More on that in later chapters. While vitalism or animation is not the language that is found in Lucretius and only attributed to him by later scholars, I find this language important and helpful as I think about the element or feature of becoming that is central to matter. For Lucretius, the movement of matter is described as the *clinamen*, or swerve, which has neither a beginning nor an end. Rooted in Epicurean philosophy, Lucretius polemically responds to three Pre-Socratic philosophers who represent three rival physical systems. They are classified in the Aristotelian tradition as monism, finite pluralism, and infinite pluralism.

Heraclitus, with his reduction of everything to fire, is the token monist; Empedocles, with his four elements, represents finite pluralism; and Anaxagoras, read through the lens of Aristotelian doxography as making all the 'homoeomerous' or 'like-parted' stuffs the elements, is treated as fundamentally *sui generis*.³¹

Reacting polemically to these three Pre-Socratic philosophers sets up Lucretius' philosophy-poetry as a strategy to take over Epicurean thinking and advocate for a vital

³¹ Quoted from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lucretius/>. Accessed on 30 November 2014.

becoming inherent in his theory of matter that is also eternal.³² Recognizing that matter does not end, but only transforms, leaves matter as energy that is traced by material becomings. Lucretius' work is also an ontological vitalism of becoming because in his polemic attack, he destabilizes traditional ideas regarding both monism and pluralism. In his passionate arguments, Lucretius is able to fashion new contours of monism by utilizing the language of movement, particularly in his use of *clinamen*, having no beginning or end. It is perhaps in this development and critique of Pre-socratic monism and pluralism that Lucretius can be understood as providing a nascent thought of vitalism, ushered in by the language of movement and becoming. Noting the importance of matter as a vital becoming from the point of departure of Lucretius, as the foundational thinker of materialism that I interpret as being animated matter, enables this project to develop both chronologically and thematically with a focus on the material becomings found in Lucretius' philosophy-poetry that then is connected to Gloria Anzaldúa.

Movement, or that which is vitally alive, is native to Lucretius' thought. While vitalism is a particular school of thought that emerges much later, one can see that there is something like vitalism in *On The Nature of Things* that Lucretius wrote, and later, in the poetry of Anzaldúa. I note this now, because matter as vitally becoming is what is central to this project, and I will make the claim that something like matter as vitally becoming is native in Lucretius' poem. Lucretius' framework of movement and

³² The eternality of Lucretius' philosophy is, as cited above, *sui generis*. The reality of his philosophy of materialism being an infinite pluralism is important to keep in mind as I trace the reality of movement and becoming in his work.

becoming contributes to the very foundation and bedrock of how I understand materialism to be a significant resource for understanding bodies as becoming, though bodies here are understood as a broad construction of material becomings.

This chapter analyzes *On the Nature of Things*, detailing important parts of the poem that help generate a robust conversation around materialism, but specifically, this beginning section of the chapter addresses the language of motion and movement. I will argue that this language of movement will help generate a new discussion around becoming. Secondly, this chapter addresses the affirmation of the self-organization or autopoiesis and decomposition that establishes the matter of Lucretius as self-organizing and in motion. Third, this chapter bridges a discussion around force and motion. Finally, I introduce Gloria Anzaldúa and cite her first published poem, “Now Let us Go.” I use this poem as a running example throughout my chapters on materialism to show how Anzaldúa, herself, began her published poetry with something akin to the language of a material becoming. This chapter ends with why the study of a representative of classical materialism is important.

Lucretius and On the Nature of Things

Lucretius, as a representative of classical materialism, establishes the framework for thinking materially about the universe and is a thorough attempt at understanding reality. The ancient materialism of Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius continues to thrive today in much of today’s scholarship that is written by scholars of New Materialism. Classical materialism advocates for a view of reality as a unified whole, stemming from one single source of existence, that is largely attributed to the existence of the atom. In this section, I survey Lucretius’ *On the Nature of Things* and utilize this

thinker as the point of departure in thinking about classical materialism. I also begin with Lucretius to chart a sturdy material foundation that is rooted in a materialist frame. This is important, because I will later argue that bodies are material, and a firm foundation of the philosophy of materialism needs to be in place to then argue against the discursive reality of bodies. As the chapter unfolds, I trace not only the existence of an ancient theory of materialism, but Lucretius' use of a type of animation or 'force' that mobilizes his version of materialism. He uses the language of movement in his poem in all six books. The language of movement is important to the development of an ontology of becoming that I will develop in relationship with both materiality and bodies. Noting this now is important to fully explain why the feature of movement is important in this chapter and in the chapters that follow. Secondly, I connect Lucretius to the modern and contemporary periods that develop something like vital materialism, sometimes identified as vitalism, becoming, or autopoiesis.

Lucretius is commonly called an atomist, and his poem detailing the nature of things and the birth of physics has continued to thrive; it continues to resurface today as New Materialists³³ seek to expand their own understanding of materialism and advocate for elements of change within their materialist accounts. On one level, readers can interpret Lucretius as advocating for a deterministic theory. In other ways, Lucretius' theory of the universe does not provide answers to the ways in which the material world

³³ The New Materialists are a group of diverse scholars who write on the philosophy of materialism. I will address this group and thematic school in the third chapter. They draw from Lucretius, among others who are materialist thinkers/philosophers.

is caused, or other mechanisms of causality, like a prime mover, or even a final cause. He abandons any notion of a theistic beginning, and articulates that matter always was and is eternal. In the first book, Lucretius outright says that matter *is*. In another vein, readers can understand Lucretius' materialism as the framework of becoming material that has survived the enlightenment and postmodern periods. This theory is important to establishing a materialist philosophy that imagines new dimensions for understanding the materiality of the body (discussed later), and so I begin with *On The Nature of Things* and highlight the movement and autopoiesis that is central to the atom's becoming.

Materialism functions differently for thinkers throughout the ancient, modern, and contemporary periods, but the central driving point on which I focus in this chapter and the two subsequent chapters is how elements of animation of matter are deployed. I argue that a vitality is apparent in the ancient theory of materialism and philosophy of Lucretius, and this vitalism shapes and shifts throughout the years but is central to the recovery of materialism as a primary framework for thinking through our own philosophical problems.

Following Epicurus, Lucretius devised a large book of poems that illustrated his atomic theory. The illustration of his atomic theory is done so in a poem that reads like a didactic essay. Lucretius writes without including any people. Instead, his poem offers a treatise on natural science and the philosophy of his day. His philosophy is a strict materialism, denying the existence of anything magical or mysterious, and even denying the transcendent, or a god. Interestingly, there is discussion of the soul in the first book detailing a feature to existence that is complicated by the entanglement of materiality. It is unclear whether Lucretius developed a non-transcendent ontology that included souls,

or whether the discussion of souls was part of his materialism. The discussion of souls seems to be in response to other philosophers existing at the time that remains unresolved. This is not a theology, nor is it metaphysics in the strict sense. Lucretius' poem is not a study of being, but rather a study of what existence is in the world at large. As a study of existence, which is material, Lucretius revolutionizes the ways in which the history of philosophy theorized material existence. Noting this is important for both the material foundation that Lucretius builds and subsequent theories of materialism that stems from Lucretius' poem. Lucretius writes that Nature's³⁴ first principle is that *nothing's brought Forth by any supernatural power of thought*.³⁵ *On the Nature of Things* is the creative invention of Lucretius, outlining the first robust theory of materialism. This poem continues to be cited by thinkers today as a substantial reworking of Epicurus' thought. Much of Epicurus' work has not survived, but the work of Lucretius in this poem has, and many scholars believe that *On the Nature of Things* uses Epicurus' philosophy to revitalize an ancient theory of materialism.

On the Nature of Things begins with matter and the void, and throughout the poem, Lucretius highlights how the earth is pregnant with all of life. Pregnancy, as we know, is a process, an event that corresponds to life as becoming. This is a material process. Citing the earth as mother, which is pregnant with all life, also highlights a

³⁴ Nature is always capitalized in the poem.

³⁵ Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, Translated by A.E. Stallings, (New York: Penguin, 2007), 7.

process of becoming, or a type of vital materialism that is becoming.³⁶ Inherent in Lucretius' poem is what I am calling an internal "vitalism" that helps shape the materialism of today. Central to his lengthy poem is the reality that it is a strict materialism; it is not dependent on forms or ideas, or the structures of language.

Book I begins with the phrase "Life-stirring Venus."³⁷ The imagery and metaphor utilizing the language of movement or becoming is important; to stir something is to help it become, to help motivate the process of further materializing into a shape or form that is visible (and perhaps also recognizable), but the stirring is native to the material; matter stirs itself. Lucretius continues writing in the beginning of this poetic essay about how matter, atoms, generative bodies, elements and seeds, and first-beginnings all proceed³⁸ from this "Life-stirring" phenomenon. Book I successfully lays a foundation for us to rethink philosophy in material terms.

Book II is titled, "Dance of the Atoms." Again, the language of movement that helps make up the book's chapter title further illustrates the importance the relationship of motion to matter. I should also note that both Book I and Book II utilize the term *clinamen*. *Clinamen* is a Latin term meaning swerve and Lucretius argues it has no beginning. This is important to point out, since one question that many readers have is 'from where does the motion come?' Movement is part of the dynamic nature of reality,

³⁶ I call Lucretius' materialism a vital materialism. He does not, but he does talk about a materialism that is a process or becoming—moving in the world. He also talks about a vital force in his lengthy poem.

³⁷ Lucretius, 3.

³⁸ Lucretius, 5. Adapted from the poem.

and I argue that this motion or movement is highly contingent on the other features of reality. Meaning, motion and the other elements of reality work in an interrelated manner to achieve the outcome that Lucretius experienced, and also the reality we experience today.

In the second book, Lucretius successfully illustrates and dramatizes the dynamism of reality. It is perhaps in this book that the language of movement becomes more sophisticated and targeted to atoms existing in the world. He even mentions bodies at a certain point in the poem and argues that bodies of matter are also in motion. I will detail that later.

Now by what motion atoms come together to create
Various things, or how these things once formed can dissipate,
And by what force they are compelled, and what freedom of motion
They have to meander through the vasty void, I shall explain
Just pay close attention. Clearly matter's not compressed
Into one heap, because we notice things becoming less,
And we perceive that, over time, everything ebbs and wanes,
And old age steals them from our sight, while yet the sum remains
Undiminished. This is because the particles that go
From one shrinking object cause another thing to grow,
Making the former shrivel up, while making the latter flower,
Never lingering. Thus the Sum of Things is every hour
Renewed, and thus, in order to thrive, all mortal creatures need
Each other. While some species are ascendant, some decede,
And generations are renewed again in a brief space,
Passing on life's torch, like relay runners in a race.³⁹

In the above quote, Lucretius poetically illustrates that there is some type of motion that is alive, or there is an awareness that matter has that is equivalent to being alive. This is complicated. To suggest that something is alive (even inorganic matter) is to broaden the

³⁹ Lucretius, 38.

definition of life. Perhaps what is important here is to reframe the term life as that which is entangled with the larger reality and pair it with becoming.⁴⁰ Central to this quote is that Lucretius sufficiently demonstrates the internal self-organizing reality in matter whose cumulative effect generates a material becoming. The internal self-organizing reality in matter is also a reality that is in motion. One important feature of this quote is Lucretius' insistence that matter is not a heap, but rather is animated with the force of motion. By force, I do not think Lucretius means that there is an external force, but rather a self-animated motion that signals a particular becoming, or aliveness. Evidence for this self-organizing motion can be seen in Lucretius' statement that "particles that go from one shrinking object, cause another to grow."⁴¹ Causing one to shrivel and another to grow without an external force allows matter to engender a type of relational motion fueling the becoming of a material reality. In many ways, this becoming is an organic element that matter produces and thus causes atoms and particles to dance among the universe.

The reality of motion is not independent to the dance of the atom. The atom moves, too, and generates new material becomings with other atoms and particles. The relationality and intersubjectivity of the atom is important to trace in Lucretius' poem, because it shows the ways in which the relatedness of atoms and particles and universe all coalesce together all from a shared or related motion. The emergence of the physical is

⁴⁰ I want to acknowledge indigenous philosophy here and mention that Lakota philosophy is one that theorizes life as what moves moves.

⁴¹ Lucretius, 38.

related to the void through which atoms and particles travel. Later in Book II, Lucretius writes:

Since atoms wander through a void, then they must either go
Carried along by their own weight or by a random blow
Struck from another atom, seeing that when atoms crash
Into one another, they bounce apart after they clash
(And no surprise, since they are hard and solid, and they lack
Anything behind them to obstruct their moving back).⁴²

The language in this translation, suggesting that atoms wander through a void, suggest that atoms have something akin to agential qualities, or they have some sort of internal mechanism that propels their wandering. Again, the relationality of the atom and the ways in which it is propelled is important to develop a framework of vitality for Lucretius' materialism. Following this quote, Lucretius talks about bodies being in motion, and I think it is best to quote the poem and tie the above quote with the quote on bodies.

All bodies of matter are in motion. To understand this best,
Remember that the atoms do not have a place to rest,
And there's no bottom to the universe, since Space does not
Have limits, but is endless. As I have already taught
And proved with reason irrefutable, it opens wide
And far in all directions, measureless on every side.
And therefore it is obvious no respite's ever given
To atoms through the fathomless void but, rather, they are driven
By sundry restless motions. After colliding, some will leap
Great intervals apart, while others harries by blows will keep
In a narrow space. Those atoms that are bound together tight,
When they collide with something, their recoil is only slight
Since they are tangled up in their own intricate formation:
Such are the particles that form the sturdy roots of stone,
And make up savage iron and other substance of this kind.

⁴² Ibid., 36.

Of the other particles drifting through the vast deep, we find
A few leap far apart and bounce a long way back again,
Providing us with thin air and the shining of the sun.
And many more besides stray through the void, either out cast
From combinations, or which alliances could not hold fast
In harmonious motions.⁴³

What this illustrates to us is a framework of entanglement with motion and matter, best illustrated by the term bodies. For Lucretius, bodies are a dynamic reality of a collection of matter that is in motion. This is important for my own research as I intend to develop bodily materiality as that which is becoming. Once again, Lucretius lays a sturdy foundation for both a philosophy of materialism and provides a way to intervene with a productive materialist strategy in rethinking bodies with matter.

Perhaps central to Book II is the argument that “nothing physical can lift itself by its own force,”⁴⁴ further substantiating that there is an internal motion stimulating matter.

This is the point I shall establish for you in due course
That nothing physical can lift itself by its own force,
Nor can it drift up on its own, nor is it able to rise.
Do not let fire fool you into thinking otherwise!
Yes, flames start upward, and they leap up higher as they grow,
And upward rise the gleaming crops and trees too, even though
However much they weigh, that weight is always tugging down.
And when a fire pounces on the rooftops of a town
And laps up beams and timbers with its flicking tongues of flame,
Don't think it hurls itself up on its own. It's just the same
With blood, when it is let out of the flesh and starts to pour,
And spurts up in a throbbing fountain spattering with gore.
And haven't you seen with what force water spits and logs and lumber?
For the deeper that we shove them and the more we push them under,
Many of us pressing down with all our might and main,

⁴³ Lucretius, 38-39.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

That much more eagerly the water spews them out again,
So that the beams leap up out of the water with such strength
They jump into the open air by more than half their length.⁴⁵

Here, Lucretius creates the framework of materialism in motion using different elements (liquid and fire), all material, to illustrate the importance of motion. This connects with Book I's material foundation, highlighting the importance of an entangled material reality that is dependent on internal atomic relations and movement. This does not quite answer the question on how matter is internally self-organizing. What the above quote illustrates is that matter is connected to an organic aliveness. Lucretius continues illustrating an aliveness that is native to matter:

Even so, there cannot really be a doubt, I think,
That all these things – as much as it is in their power – sink
Downward through an empty void. And that is why flames rise,
Because they are squeezed up by draughts of air, though their weight vies,
As much as it can, to drag them down. Don't you ever gaze
Up at the heavens and behold the torches there that blaze
In the night sky, and how they drag behind a fiery trail
Along whatever trajectory that Nature lets them sail?
And haven't you seen stars and other heavenly bodies plummet
To the earth? And take the sun, broadcasting heat down from the summit
Of heaven out in all directions, sowing the fields with the light;
Thus heat as well tends towards the earth. And haven't you
Caught sight
Of lighting flitting slantwise through the thunderheads? – a flash
Now from this part, now from that – fires run around and smash
Out of the clouds. And often blazing bolts drop to the ground.⁴⁶

Finally, Lucretius illustrates the self-motivating reality of matter in the following quote and utilizes the *clinamen* as the primary component that motivates both movement and

⁴⁵ Lucretius 41-42.

⁴⁶ Lucretius, 42.

becoming, an internal force that changes the path of the atom in relation to other atoms. These relational moments stimulate a new becoming for matter, because something further materializes in the void. The recognition of a new materialization further supports the internal workings of the *clinamen* with Lucretius' materialism.

Another basic principle you need to have a sound
Understanding of: when bodies fall through empty space
Straight down, under their own weight, at a random time and place,
They swerve a little. Just enough of a swerve for you to call
It a change of course. Unless inclined to swerve, all things would fall
Right through the deep abyss like drops of rain. There would be no
Collisions, and no atom would meet atom with a blow,
And Nature thus could not have fashioned anything, full stop.⁴⁷

In the above quote, Lucretius privileges the *clinamen* and its intentionality within atomic relations. It is in this quote that the reader begins to imagine something other than gravity pulling matter through the void and to an end. With the *clinamen* at the center of the self-organizing movement for Lucretius, he is able to describe the atomic relationality that compels matter's becomingness. This relationality and intersubjectivity supports the internal movement that is native to matter, elucidated by the *clinamen*. With the *clinamen* in mind, Lucretius continues to illustrate the ways in which movement is the central dynamic for material becoming.

But if anyone should chance to think that heavier bodies drop
Straight down through the void with greater speed, so as they go
They catch up with, and strike, the lighter particles below,
And thus give rise to fertile motions, he has gone astray,
Wandered far from the path of reason and has lost his way.
Why? Whatever falls through water and the nature of thin air
Do not resist all objects equally, but give way faster

⁴⁷ Lucretius, 42.

To heavier objects, overcome, while on the other hand
 Empty void cannot at any part or time withstand
 Any object, but it must continually heed
 Its nature and give way, so all things fall at equal speed,
 Even though of differing weights, through the still void. And so
 Heavier bodies will never strike the lighter ones below,
 Nor by themselves will they initiate a blog that sets
 The divers motions going out of which Nature begets
 Creation. Thus, I repeat, the atoms have to swerve a little,
 But only by the smallest possible degree, a tittle –
 We do not want to look as though we thought things moved
 Along
 In sideways motion, when the Truth would come and prove us
 Wrong!
 For as far as you can see, weights falling from above can't veer
 Sideways – that is something that is obvious and clear.
 But do weights never waver by the slightest bit and stray
 Out of their vertical path by just a littler? Who can say?
 Again, if every motion is connected, and we hold
 New motions that arise, arise in due course from the old,
 And atoms do not swerve a little and initiate
 The kind of motion which in turn shatters the laws of fate,
 But leave effect to follow cause inexorably forever,
 Where does that freewill come from that exists in every creature
 The world over? Where do we get that freewill, wrenched away
 From the fates, by which we each proceed to follow pleasure's
 Sway,
 So that we swerve our motions not at a designated spot
 And fixed time, but the very place we will it in our thought?
 Without a doubt these motions have their beginning in the whims
 Of each, and from that Will these motions tickly into the limbs.⁴⁸

Lucretius, in the above quote, capitalizes on movement's becoming central to matter.

What this signals is that the self-organizing reality of material becomings cannot be siphoned off as singular atomic moments, but rather are collective moments rooted in

⁴⁸ Lucretius 43-44.

atomic relationality where becoming takes a material shape, and this idea of movement and becoming is matter's internal rhythm.

Autopoiesis & Decomposition

Important to both Book I and II are the features of autopoiesis and deconstruction. The fact that Lucretius argues for an internal self-organizing element to matter compels me to further investigate his work. Outlined largely in Book I and II, both autopoiesis and decomposition are important to a material becoming. At times, this material becoming? is radically different than its previous instantiation. This section lays out these two features in a way that further illustrates the self-organizing impetus of matter. While a collection of objects (let's say rocks, for example) appears to only be a collection of rocks that are unmoving, there is, internal to the rocks, a feature of self-organization and decomposition.

Autopoiesis

Autopoiesis is the theory that an object or an organ is self-organizing.⁴⁹ This is an important theory to consider in conversation with Lucretius' poem, and helps further articulate the ways in which matter self-organizes in Lucretius' poem and also lays a foundation for an internal process and language of becoming to be attributed to the ancient theory of materialism that is found in Lucretius. Lucretius details the foundation of reality that matter is the very building blocks of the reality that we experience. He

⁴⁹ Autopoesis has traditionally referred to the question of life and situated in both evolutionary epistemology and evolutionary biology. I use this term as it is used in both new materialists work and feminist new materialist work that advocates for a self-organizing material reality.

writes:

“And shall reveal the building blocks all things are fashioned of, Nature’s

prime particles, from which she nourishes and grows

All things, and into which once more she makes them decompose.”⁵⁰

The autopoietic reality of matter—that which is self-organizing and becoming—is central to the poem. Matter is not an independent reality, or a collection of realities, that self-organize. The material reality is dependent and entangled with matter, which is also always becoming autopoetically. This is important, because it unmasks another feature (discussed in the next major section), which highlights the reality of matter being a force of becoming. Matter as self-organizing in Lucretius helps further develop the argument that there is an internal meter (rhythm) or feature that allows for its becoming and this is rooted in the concept of autopoiesis. The endowment of an emergent self-organizing and rhythmic feature compels matter into a movement of becoming. Recognizing both the self-organizing features and its internal rhythm indicates that there is a pulse native to the becoming. This is an important feature to what I am identifying as becoming in Lucretius’ philosophy.

Matter, for Lucretius, is self-organizing—it gives birth to itself and also has the properties to decompose. Important here to note is the internal movement that establishes the autopoiesis of matter. This self-organizing feature put matter in motion, conforms to Lucretius’ language of movement, and helps to further support the internal movement or

⁵⁰ Lucretius, 4.

motion that is native to matter. There is a movement or an animation to this material that is primary, and he obviates any binary between life and death. Death or decomposition, he writes, is part of the material process, and Nature contributes to this part of the becoming material.

Decomposition

Lucretius advocates for matter becoming alive and becoming, also, decomposed, but this does not translate into a lack of existence; death or decomposition is also a becoming process that matter must undergo. Decomposition is supported by other material elements that in turn help other elements become. It is clear in this part of the poem that there is something animating material that cannot be eschewed; matter is a becoming force in reality. An example of Lucretius' teaching about life and death, material composition and decomposition is found early in the poem, teaching us that matter is never destroyed and returns to its primary form, particles:

Again, one cause would send all things wholesale to their demise
If they weren't knit together, loosely or tightly, from the ties
Of everlasting matter. For the mere tap of a feather
Would be sufficient to destroy such things not put together
From particles of eternal substance; there would be no call
For a certain force to fray the bonds of their material.
But as it is, since elements are of eternal stuff
Linked with bonds of different strengths, unless a strong enough
Force encounter it, a thing stays safely as it was.
Therefore nothing turns to nothing. All things decompose
Back to the elemental particles from which they rose.⁵¹

⁵¹ Lucretius, 10.

Noting that there is both a dialectic of autopoiesis and decomposition alive in the poem of Lucretius helps further illustrate that there is an internal striving or an internal movement that helps matter to become.

Movement or Force Inherent in Lucretius

Highlighting a type of force that motivates material to become, even in its decomposition, is important to note. Following this portion of the poem, Lucretius continues with his language of movement and becoming, teaching his readers that nothing is made of nothing, something that is repeated throughout the first book. While particles cannot be seen by the naked eye, Lucretius exhorts his readers that one must admit to oneself that there are particles

“Which *are* but which cannot be seen. First, take the force of squalls

That whip up, lash the ocean, founder sea-going ships and scatter.”

In this section of the poem, Lucretius affirms some type of native force or movement that motivates matter to become. This style of thinking dominates book one, making the case for a vital force of some sort, not superstition, motivating matter. What is also interesting in Book I is that matter can be interpreted as a type of flow that is becoming. While rivers or oceans can be understood as flows, matter, too, can be understood as a flow that is becoming due to an internal force. Matter, for Lucretius, is inherently moving and forceful, but not due to an external force. Lucretius waxes poetically that matter is inherently in motion, displaying a type of force in motion, or a motion as force. This feature of Lucretius’ work/model of matter is largely illustrated by the discussion of autopoiesis and decomposition in Book I. There is always a generative and generating

quality to Lucretius' philosophy of matter, and his philosophy of materialism develops as a result of the framework of internal motion and force.

Lucretius even names in the poem that there is a vital force, which prevails. He genders the vital force as masculine, the earth as feminine, and this vital force roams the earth and aligns the earth in proper categories. This vital force is something that is material for Lucretius. Yet, it is never named more than a vital force.⁵² This is important, because as the philosophy of materialism develops beyond antiquity, vitalism takes a definite shape and form to extending the foundation of materialist thinking, yet called various things throughout the years.⁵³ Lucretius, as the progenitor of the philosophy of materialism, is the first to suggest that there is something like vitalism existing in this philosophy.

On the Nature of Things details that matter has always existed; it is eternal, having neither a beginning nor an end. Early in the poem, Lucretius teaches his readers that matter, which is as small as particles, is analogous to Nature.⁵⁴ Nature and matter share a unique relationship in that these two stem from one another; they are not different elements, but are in fact the same. They both share in the relationship of being the very thing Lucretius is analyzing. The use of Nature as matter in Lucretius' poem helps readers see the links between existing elements. Lucretius uses the language of seed to help

⁵² Lucretius, 5.

⁵³ An example is Spinoza's *conatus* and Nietzsche's will, which will be covered in the next chapter.

⁵⁴ This term, Nature, is always capitalized in this version of Lucretius' poem.

illustrate how each element of life stems from the singularity of a seed, and as a result is tightly knit together with each other material element. Nature is a collection of atoms, or atoms materialize as a microcosm of nature. What is important in this discussion of seed and life is the reality of a material entanglement that is in dynamic motion, self-organizing, and materializing along a matrix of becoming; Nature is central to this matrix.

As the poem progresses, the language that is used continues to affirm the metaphors of movement, or of processes. I prefer the language of animation and becoming, because this syntax not only privileges motion and movement, but also signals organic life; and, it is clear that Lucretius has in mind that matter is vitally alive—moving, becoming, or animated. I prefer the language of animation and becoming, largely because I see these terms emerge in the work of Deleuze and the New Materialists. Also, I see this term part of the internal framework of Gloria Anzaldúa. There is a self-organizing element to matter, an autopoiesis, but this language is never used in the poem itself. I interpret Lucretius' poem in this way, and Books I and II clearly illustrate matter being vitally alive, and support a framework of becoming.

Lucretius expounds on elements existing in the world, born of Nature and material, and he also discusses what is visible and invisible, differing parts of Nature that are also material. For example, Lucretius outlines how wind is made of matter. He writes, “And so I say, again and again, that wind is made of matter, For though invisible, it acts

in the same way as water, Which clearly is a substance.”⁵⁵ Important to this quote is that, even for Lucretius, substance is material. In later philosophy, particularly Spinoza, Spinoza does not name substance material. In fact, in the Rationalists’ philosophy, you have a formula of logic that explains substance. Here, Lucretius helps today’s materialists develop a philosophy that becomes a material reality for theory and science to deploy in their own development of material becomings. This material framework is derived from the nature of his philosophy as material and animated by an internal and self-organizing feature beginning with something like substance. But, what is important, also, is that for Lucretius, there exists the *clinamen*—the swerve that has no beginning—so substance here is not the visible beginning. As the poem continues, matter becomes central to the body, organized by the body in many ways as the senses interpret the material they smell, see, or taste. Movement or process (becoming) remains central to the poem, and should not be diminished from Lucretius’ work. Noting the metaphor and imagery of movement or process helps better articulate matter as that which is becoming, a central component to Lucretius’ poem. Though, this self-organizing autopoietic feature is not called becoming in Lucretius’ work. I assign that term to his materialism.

Anzaldúa and “Tihueque”

In *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, AnaLouise Keating includes the first ever-published poem, titled, “Tihueque,” or “Now Let us Go.” I use this poem as a primary example to a material becoming, striving throughout history, and I begin that

⁵⁵ Lucretius, 12.

conversation in this initial chapter to help link together the study of ancient materialist to the contemporary materialism found in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa. While I have a chapter dedicated to contemporary materialism, it is important to show the relationship of Anzaldúa's materialism throughout the ancient, modern, and contemporary periods. I place the entirety of poem in this chapter, analyze it, and then return to it in subsequent chapters to show how even in Anzaldúa's work, there is a force or becoming, or animated materialism that contributes to the rest of her poetry and philosophy. The importance of including this poem is to show evidence of Anzaldúa as a materialist, and also to help put Lucretius in conversation with Anzaldúa—what is included in both Lucretius and Anzaldúa, and what Anzaldúa can show us in her version of materialism.

Tihueque⁵⁶

One year in a distant century during Teoteco,
The 12th month of the solar year Five Rabbit,
in the reign of the Four-Water Sun,,
I carved 12,000 hearts in honor
of Huitziltopochtli, God of War,
who made the sun rise each morning.
In each succeeding year thereafter
ceremonial drunkenness robbed me
as many hearts embraced the furnace sacrifice.
Only the hearts of the finest Náhuatl braves
and luckiest prisoners and warriors
at the sacred flesh.
Today I lie in a musty museum
and register 5.5 on the Mohs scale.
But my origin, my volcanic obsidian,
hard as granite
comes in good stead.
In my childhood I was a mirror.

⁵⁶ Gloria Anzaldúa, ed. AnaLouise Keating, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 19) 2009.

I threw a vitreous luster, dark-green.
But now the iron oxide running in my veins
dulls my edge
and the air bubbles trapped in me
reflect my age
Time passes.
I rest and await the flesh.

This poem, I argue, situates Anzaldúa as a materialist philosopher and also contributes to her ontology of becoming. The beginning of the poem charts a path of movement and becoming that I identify as material. Using language like “distant” and “reign” in the first three lines, Anzaldúa sets up a framework of time and movement that contributes to this poem being a foundation of her materialism. Likewise, Anzaldúa points to the Four-Water Sun as having a particular occupation in the work. Then, Anzaldúa writes that the object, the material, carved 12,000 hearts in honor of the God of War. The act of using material to carve 12,000 hearts corresponds to Huitziltopochtli making the sun rise each morning.⁵⁷

One year in a distant century during Teoteco,
The 12th month of the solar year Five Rabbit,
in the reign of the Four-Water Sun,
I carved 12,000 hearts in honor
of Huitziltopochtli, God of War,
who made the sun rise each morning.

In many ways, this poem charts a path of beginning where a mystical object begins to take shape in a distant century. It is as if Gloria Anzaldúa initiates a material time-image that becomes materially rich throughout this poem and her other writings. I see this as Anzaldúa’s writing-art-theory. This logic stabilizes Anzaldúa’s poetry in materialism,

⁵⁷ Important here is the mythohistorical background to this poem.

where becoming and moving in time throughout the past and the coming future further shapes and shift the objects she describes.

The end of the poem, Anzaldúa uses creative imagery to detail how this ceremonial knife has an inherent or native reality of becoming. Anzaldúa speaks about its origin, the ways that it has changed, and that this object is material awaiting another other—namely, a body of flesh to cut.

But my origin, my volcanic obsidian,
hard as granite
comes in good stead.
In my childhood I was a mirror.
I threw a vitreous luster, dark-green.
But now the iron oxide running in my veins
dulls my edge
and the air bubbles trapped in me
reflect my age
Time passes.
I rest and await the flesh.

The reality that this knife was once something else helps illustrate the becoming nature that objects / material has for Anzaldúa. It is important to note this in her first published poem, because doing so creates a precedence for her work to be read and understood in the materialist register, over against other discursive oriented registers. Interpreting this poem as materialist poetry not only situates Anzaldúa as a materialist thinker, but also helps shape Anzaldúa's poetry and other philosophical writing as being ontologically rich. One cannot read and interpret this poem as minimizing the ontology that exists in Anzaldúa's writing; it very much is part of the material analysis and the becoming nature of her ontological disposition.

The end of this poem suggests that the material object waits for another material object, identified as flesh. These material objects can be understood as bodies that are

becoming, awaiting their change that is internal to their object oriented nature. A collection of objects or units helps make up this material; we in turn ascribe names to them to further categorize them. Though necessary for our own practices, we cannot underestimate the materially rich register that these object occupy. Affirming the material register in this poem allows Anzaldúa's philosophy-poetry to assume a new position in the philosophy of materialism. When paired with Lucretius, Anzaldúa's *clinamen* (the never-beginning swerve) is located in the reality that this ceremonial knife was a mirror prior and is becoming something different. When scholars are able to articulate the internal movement found in both Lucretius and Anzaldúa, new contours of materialism take shape. Centrally, this initiates a type of vitalism that is native to both Lucretius and Anzaldúa, though this vitalism materializes differently in their work. For Lucretius, it is the structure of the atom that is always in relation and moving; for Anzaldúa, it is the mirror and knife that is becoming different to itself and materializing along a matrix of difference. Vitalism is central to both thinkers, and ignites a new contour of force and movement.

Connecting the “Vital Force” of Ancient Materialism (Lucretius) with the Idea of “Vital Becoming” in Modern and Contemporary Materialism

Lucretius is an important figure to have in place as the point of departure in thinking about materialism. Not only is he the father of modern physics, but his poem teaches readers how to understand reality as a material one, and undermines the thinking that language, alone, structures reality. The implications of his poem *On the Nature of Things* is far reaching and continues to enhance today's philosophies of materialism. Noting his importance, as the first philosophy to coherently explain materialism as a

reality, and highlight the movement or becoming that is internal to his materialism, helps connect with the “materialism” of the modern and contemporary periods. While I locate modern thinkers in the materialism camp, it is important to note that not everyone called themselves a materialist, especially Spinoza. In what follows in chapters two and three, I detail the “materialism” of Spinoza and Nietzsche who also have an internal movement or becoming native to their philosophies. While I cannot call Spinoza a materialist in the strict sense (like I can Lucretius), it is important to note that Spinoza is labeled as an “original vitalist” by the New Materialists.⁵⁸ Important here is that from Lucretius to today’s materialist’s thinkers, a notion of animated material or becoming is assigned to the philosophy that is being produced. It is called various names throughout the modern and contemporary periods, but the unifying principle of the philosophy of materialism is something akin to animation or becoming. I locate this, in principle, as an ontological feature to the philosophy of materialism, and I show how the New Materialists’ ‘brand’ of Deleuzian materialism can be placed in conversation with Gloria Anzaldúa. Before I launch into a contemporary discussion on the materialism of post-structuralists and queer thinkers, it is important to show the connection of Lucretius to that of Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Deleuze, and the New Materialists.

I have divided ancient materialism, modern materialism (chapter two), and contemporary materialism (chapter three) in an effort to show the three distinct periods of

⁵⁸ Jane Bennett and others have called Spinoza an ‘original vitalist.’ The New Materialists are notorious for calling Spinoza both a materialist and a vitalist. I hope to detail some of this in chapter two, though finding the precise language for Spinoza is primary to this project and illustrating how his *conatus* is a type of ‘force’ that animates matter.

the development of what I term becoming that is central to the philosophy of materialism. I take the movement or internal vitality of Lucretius' philosophy of materialism to be central to the development of a vital becoming in both the modern and contemporary periods. While Spinoza's substance monism has been interpreted as a more mechanistic and deterministic way of thinking and understanding reality, I do not focus on those elements, per se, but rather examine the internal 'force' that allows for Spinoza's 'materialism' to emerge as a becoming reality. Rather, what is important to me is Spinoza's *conatus* that scholars have identified as a type of force or becoming, and it largely has been interpreted as having a teleological end. While Lucretius used language and metaphor of movement, Spinoza used metaphor and language of causality or force, as identified in the work of today's scholars. While Spinoza revolutionized 17th century's thinking about dualism and departed from Cartesianism, his substance monism helps link back with Lucretius' eternal materialism. Likewise, Nietzsche develops the mechanism of will, particularly the will to power, and creates a materialist philosophy from that standpoint. Both of these modern philosophers are entangled with their ancient predecessor, Lucretius, and the reality of animated material takes shape. Connecting these three thinkers helps solidify the reality that our universal reality is material and it is being stirred by itself, or becoming.

The contemporary period functions a bit differently in that they combine Spinoza's substance monism with the previous philosophy that came from Lucretius. Doing this creates a more sustainable framework for materialism that is recognizably material, avoiding the structuralism that seeks to order reality through a process of language, symbols, and signs. Starting with Bergson, he links matter to memory, both

material, and ascribes *élan vital* (or vital energy, but translated in the English *Creative Evolution* as vital impetus) to that of materialism. This appears to be similar to Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, but Bergson never cites him. Instead, the French debated the reality of force or energy relative to material.

With a decidedly different focus on philosophy (that of intuition), Bergson's materialism develops with rapid interest. His *élan vital* (or vital impetus) not only links with Lucretius, Spinoza, and Nietzsche but also projects forward to new creative new ways in understanding evolution. A materialist framework, *élan vital* helps further motivate materialist philosophies and show the entangled reality that the ancient, modern, and contemporary periods have. This further unmasks the material relationship that each of these periods share, though not identical to each other.

Following Bergson, Deleuze and the New Materialists take shape in both the 20th and 21st centuries. Both Deleuze and the New Materialists borrow from ancient thinkers and develop their own 'brand' of materialism. Deleuze, particularly developed his materialist philosophy out of a post-marxian framework, but also utilized Nietzsche and Bergson. Perhaps Deleuze's books on Nietzsche and Bergson help solidify our understanding on how force and becoming dominate his philosophy and his collaborative work with Guattari. Again, the idea of force or becoming materialize as central to thinking materially in the philosophy of Deleuze and Deleuzian followers. Sharing together with current stands of materialism and former strands of materialism, the philosophy of materialism is best explained as a process of becoming. Movement or the process of becoming diffuses other arguments that suggest that reality is static or stable. The entangled reality of the philosophy of materialism continues to be developed by the

New Materialists: Braidotti, Bennett, Kirby, and Iris van der Tuin, among others. In fact, new series on New Materialisms are emerging from both North American and European publishing houses.⁵⁹

Contemporary New Materialism is still too new in its development to only use their version of the philosophy of materialism.⁶⁰ As such, I rely on the tentacles from ancient, modern, and contemporary thought to help make my argument that matter is animated and becoming. Using a stratified chronological approach that begins with Lucretius and traces materialism and vitality or becoming through the modern period and into the contemporary period helps not only to fill out the gaps of materialism, but also creates a new dimension in the New Materialist thought exercise. As such, I include one more materialist thinker to this contemporary list: Gloria Anzaldúa.⁶¹

Connecting Anzaldúa to that of Lucretius may seem out of balance, but it is really the materialism and feature of becoming that I see in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa that completes this material entanglement, which is not necessarily circular but rather an entangled web that continues to evolve. In some ways, I begin with Lucretius and end with Anzaldúa—these two thinkers help mobilize a new dimension in New Materialist

⁵⁹ Thomas Nail alerted me to this new series that will undoubtedly break open the field of New Materialist thinking. <http://www.euppublishing.com/series/nmat>

⁶⁰ When asked by Dr. Catherine Keller why I simply do not use the New Materialists, I argued that they are simply too new! She agreed and thought that my return to Lucretius was wise.

⁶¹ I know of no other scholar calling Anzaldúa a materialist philosopher. Conversations with AnaLouise Keating help me further understand how he is a materialist philosopher, but even calling Anzaldúa a philosopher is tricky. She writes poetry, creative fiction, and creative non-fiction. How can this be philosophy? Like Deleuze, Anzaldúa creates a new image of thought, and I find that Anzaldúa in conversation with Deleuze is most fruitful.

thinking that I will later outline as an ontology of becoming. Yet, it is not only the pair of Lucretius and Anzaldúa that I note as being important, but rather the intersection of Deleuze and Anzaldúa that help unmask this ontology of becoming that I will develop in chapter five.

Why This Material Cartography Is Important?

This connection for which I advocate between ancient, modern, and contemporary materialist philosophy is important because I claim that queer and indigenous thinkers, primarily Gloria Anzaldúa, are already articulating a philosophy of materialism that conforms to an ontology of becoming and philosophy of immanence. I make the claim that Anzaldúa does this through her philosophy-poetry, largely around her theory of bodies, and issues like movement, becoming, circulation, and process or event are central to the theoretical framework that Anzaldúa develops.

Anzaldúa's first published poem, Tihueque, translated "now let us go," not only positions her as a materialist thinker, but also highlights her ontology of becoming. So, having this material cartography in place to look back at what former materialist thinkers developed as their vitalism pulsated throughout philosophy becomes an important link to be able to intersect it with the work of Gloria Anzaldúa. I will argue in chapter four that Anzaldúa's materialist philosophy helps motivate her theory of the body, which I understand to be thoroughly materialist. Following chapter four's analysis of the materiality of bodies is chapter five's analysis on becoming. This material cartography reaches backward and forward toward an ontology of becoming and is thus important to have in place. Likewise, this material cartography, while detailing ancient, modern, and

contemporary thinkers helps further contextualized the intersection of Deleuze and Anzaldúa and the Anzaldeleuzian philosophy emerging in the gaps.

CHAPTER FOUR: MODERN MATTER AND ‘VITAL BECOMING’
IN SPINOZA AND NIETZSCHE

*The multiplicity of forces, connected by a common
mode of nutrition, we call “life.”*

—Nietzsche

Having a foundation of materialism in the work of Lucretius and citing his language of movement that I then translate into the language and concept of becoming, I turn to the work of modern scholars, particularly that of Baruch de Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche. This chapter will focus on one feature in each of their work. For Spinoza, I will trace the development of *conatus* and the ways in which it acts as a force, and in Nietzsche, I will trace his development of will. I understand both to be features of movement and becoming. Though, in order to get to the doctrine of *conatus* in Spinoza’s philosophy, I begin with his substance monism. I focus on one book in Spinoza’s work: *Ethics*, and likewise for Nietzsche, I consider *The Will To Power*. Both of these texts will help further shape the internal workings of material as having a native force or becoming functioning on an ontological level. While materialism is a misleading category for Spinoza, it works for my purposes as I detail the force and vital becoming that is central to Spinoza’s framework, elucidated in his doctrine of the *conatus*.

Important to note here is the rationalism of Spinoza and the genealogical form of Nietzsche. The rationalism of Spinoza is in direct opposition to some of the later

philosophies that develop along the materialist lineage (particularly Bergson). Yet, it is not Spinoza's rationalism or his determinism that interest me but rather the development of *conatus* that is later interpreted as force. As I have researched *conatus* from both primary and secondary sources, the plumb line of force from Lucretius to Spinoza is firm, not identical, but they share a relationship of a framework of movement or becoming that is important for this project. I detail this in this current chapter. Likewise, Nietzsche's development of his genealogical method is equally important. His deployment of will in *The Will to Power* shapes modern day materialism that unmasks a different type of material force.

The works of these two scholars appear in the New Materialists, and I use these thinkers to further illustrate the ways that this mobilizes the element of becoming in the modern period, though often not articulated as such. I argue that movement and becoming, elucidated in striving and will, is the central framework for materialism and should be utilized. These two features become the descriptive process of a robust theory of material and bodies that illumine the modern period of materialism, and utilize a framework of movement and becoming to mobilize bodies. The centrality of this project is the idea of matter becoming, or of a mattering becoming, and while I am tracing the element of process and becoming through the classical, modern, and contemporary periods, the modern period helps solidify my argument largely because contemporary

materialist scholars refer back to the modern period as their starting point.⁶² The New Materialists and philosophers of materialism root their philosophies in both of these thinkers; hence, they are central to my project, too. I find that exploring the modern “materialists” are not only helpful in understanding later developments in both Deleuze and the New Materialists, but also fortifying my claim that bodies are always materially becoming, and subject to a process of movement that extends beyond their particular containment of materiality.

Baruch de Spinoza as a Modern “Materialist”

“How many things are there in the world? Spinoza’s answer: one. What might seem to be other things are merely ways in which the one thing exists.”⁶³ Spinoza, a well-versed Cartesian scholar, sought to eliminate the Cartesian thinking that perpetuated the belief that there are multiple substances existing in the world. Monism, Spinoza’s theory of a single substance existing, for example, helps introduce a way of reconsidering reality stemming from the singular unity of substance, or what is later considered the univocity of being. Monism is particularly important for the discussion of materialism, because substance monism helps mobilize the thinking that substance is not a property or attribute of anything else; substance is what it is in itself.⁶⁴ Substance is permanently attached or

⁶² Though, some scholars, like Jane Bennett note Democritus and Lucretius as significant starting points. Important to note is that Nietzsche did extensive research on Lucretius, and his work shows up in Nietzsche’s research.

⁶³ Michael Della Rocca, *Spinoza*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

“inheres” to nothing else.⁶⁵ Another way that Spinoza imagines substance is that it is independent; this is similar to Descartes, too. But, for Spinoza, different from Descartes, he postulates that substance is independent in the sense that it is conceived through itself. This also points to a later development that Spinoza articulates: *conatus*. A striving through substance monism is key to articulating the movement and becoming that is native to Spinoza’s philosophy. Likewise, he also combatted Descartes’ method of doubt by utilizing the principle of sufficient reason. The Principle of Sufficient Reason, as explained by Michael de Rocca is the “principle that each truth has an explanation or that for each thing that exists there is an explanation of its existence.”⁶⁶ This is important for Spinoza, because he uses the PSR to further support his theory of *conatus*. The PSR is always at play for Spinoza, and should be considered one of the most important aspects of Spinoza’s framework. Though Spinoza was a philosopher in the tradition of rationalism and his philosophy interpreted as determinism, his philosophy concerning matter relative to Substance is key for this dissertation. While I cannot call Spinoza a materialist in the way that Lucretius is a materialist, his philosophy is deployed today *as* a materialist and vitalist. Though these terms are not native to Spinoza, the ways in which they are deployed in today’s New Materialism helps root Spinoza in the conversation of the philosophy of materialism, but only does so by highlighting a particular element of Spinoza’s philosophy, namely his substance monism and *conatus*. Both of these features

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 316.

are important to consider and to link with a philosophy of contemporary materialism. Likewise, the ways that Deleuze has used Spinoza further solidifies Spinoza as a modern day “materialist.” New Materialists utilize this term to signify Spinoza as a materialist, but are actually referring to Spinoza’s *conatus*. The internal striving and affective relationality that is apparent in today’s materialist discourse strategically refers back to Spinoza’s *conatus*.

The materiality of bodies (or mattering bodies) is my central focus in this dissertation, and finding support and evidence for this claim is seen most clearly in the philosophy of Spinoza, particularly his *conatus*, though I recognize there are limitations. I believe Spinoza creates a way to move beyond Cartesian dualism by his creation of what is often referred to as substance monism. In order to talk about Spinoza as a “materialist,” I must first begin with Spinoza’s substance monism. Following substance monism, I evaluate the doctrine of *conatus* as a central organizing feature of Spinoza’s “becoming.”

Substance Monism

To understand Spinoza’s ideas of a single substance, I will briefly sketch Descartes on substance. The relationship of ideas between these two philosophers is important. Similar to Spinoza, Descartes’ features of his metaphysics are substance, attribute, and mode. Rooted in the conception of Aristotelian substance, Descartes defines substance in this way:

Each thing is called a substance which something is in (*inest*) immediately as a subject or by means of which we perceive anything that exists, that is,

by means of which we perceive any property, quality, or attribute of which a real idea is in us.⁶⁷

For Descartes, finite things such as trees, tables, the human mind, human bodies are all substances. Descartes holds that finite things are substances and thus regards substance as not univocal. This is one of the significant differences between Spinoza and Descartes. Spinoza affirms the univocity of being, as do his followers like Deleuze. While Descartes argues for multiple substances, it is clear in his work that there are two fundamentally two types of substances. This sets up a framework of duality in the metaphysics of Descartes.

Descartes' substances are best understood as a dualism, or duality. And, while Descartes advocates for an independence of substance, there remains a plurality. Descartes definition of substance, as noted above, is that each thing is a substance. So, trees, tables, bricks are all substances and they also have multiple attributes. The independence for which Descartes advocates is an independence that is rooted in the notion of God. Finite things exist independently of God, like trees and tables. Carpenters bring these finite things into existence. They remain different substances than the substance of God. In fact, each finite substance is independent of any other finite substance. Yet, while carpenters bring finite things, like tables, into existence, this substance does rely on the existence of God, which is another substance. While finite things carry a notion of independence for Descartes, these finite things cannot be conceived without conceiving of God who brings these finite things into existence. In this

⁶⁷ Ibid., 34.

sense, then, while the carpenter brings these finite things (tables) into existence, it is the substance of God who enables the carpenter to bring the table into existence and also sustains its existence. In this sense, then, because finite things are substances and there is a dependency of such finite things as substances, Descartes argues that there is not a univocity of being. This is a significant departure from where Spinoza takes his idea of substance and univocal beings. In the *Principles*, Descartes offers the following explicitly regarding the definition of substance as not univocal:

There is only one substance which can be understood to depend on no other thing whatsoever, namely God. In the case of all other substances, we perceive that they can exist only with the help of God's occurrence. Hence the term "substance" does not apply univocally, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things; that is, there is no distinctly intelligible meaning of the term which is common to God and his creatures.⁶⁸

The issue with the univocity of being and substance is key to articulating a single-source materialism, which can be done by considering Spinoza. Not only is this a turn to the singularity of matter, but it also generates a perspective of movement and becoming that is self-contained. What I mean is that in its singularity, matter is not only self-conceived, but also autopoietic. Substance, as a singularity for Spinoza, helps initiate this perspective concerning matter.

Contrary to Descartes, Spinoza advances a theory of metaphysics that advances being as a singularity. Central to Spinoza's philosophy is the notion of an absolute and infinite substance—singular in both kind and number. The move to defining substance as

⁶⁸ René Descartes, *Principles*, 51.

univocal and a focus on singularity depends on Spinoza's defining substance as the One or God. This pure oneness mobilizes a rationalist philosophical theology that raises up this element of singularity as a way to consider reality. While there is independence within Spinoza's idea of singularity, there is also a sense of radical connectedness between mode and attribute that is interrelated with Spinoza's understanding of substance.

There is a conceptual barrier between the attributes that Spinoza discusses relative to substance. Michael Della Rocca suggests that this barrier is not immediately evident.⁶⁹ In preparation for discussing the conceptual barrier, I offer an explanation of attribute, then will offer an explanation of substance and then show their relation with the theory of *conatus*. An attribute is a relation to the one singular substance. Attributes enable us to understand and talk about an extended world and a thinking world in terms of which we understand bodies and minds. Furthermore, it is due to the relation of attributes to one another and to the one substance that a resolution to the Cartesian mind–body problem is possible. Attributes enable Spinoza's monism while preventing it from being an issue of a transcendent, homogenous totality. Attributes furnish Spinoza with a sense of radical immanence. “Each attribute of a substance must be conceived through itself.” (Ip10) The relation of attributes to substance is important and the self-conception is also key. A definition of substance will help further unpack the conceptual barrier that Della Rocca mentions.

⁶⁹ Michael Della Rocca “Spinoza's Substance Monism,” in *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, ed. Olli Koistinen and John Biro, (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002), 11.

Spinoza articulates that substance “is that which is in itself and is conceived through itself.”⁷⁰ (Id3) Substance is both self-generating and existing, and also able to have a features relationality and intersubjectivity with attributes. Substance, as a material reality that is self-organizing, is also generated from the force that produces material. Important to this is the ways in which substance illustrates a particular relationality where the force of becoming (or *telos* for Spinoza), creates the web of connection for attributes. For Spinoza, x is conceived through y, only if x is explained by, or in terms of y. In this sense, then, there are not multiple substances but rather a singularity of substances and both x and y share a fundamental essence. There is a relationship that x and y share, for Spinoza; this should not be undermined. Likewise, substance is infinite and indivisible and therefore cannot be identified with or reduced to finite substances or things. Secondly, substance is a totality, but not a homogenous totality. It initiates and also generates a sense of radical immanence.

For Spinoza, “substance must be conceived under one or more attributes (Ip10s), each of which something constitutes its essence” (Id4).⁷¹ The essence of an attribute is strategically related to the one substance and these relations are developed in a logical manner. Spinoza further articulates that x is conceived through y if and only if x is caused by y.⁷² This is important to note, in order to move toward the doctrine of *conatus*. While I do not wish to get into Spinoza’s theory of causality, it is helpful to see the relationship

⁷⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁷¹ Della Roca, 12.

⁷² Ibid., 12.

that x and y share and the ways that this reinforces Spinoza's substance monism. Given this, we can conclude that Spinoza says that a substance is self-conceived and is also singular. We can relate this conclusion to identifying matter as a single-source material reality. The self-conception of substance is important to connect later with his doctrine of *conatus*, the self-striving in itself toward a possible end, though I will not argue for any possible end or even a beginning, only a horizon of becoming.⁷³

As his substance monism develop, Spinoza introduces the concept of attributes that are conceived in and through substance. Spinoza mentions that thought and extension are two important attributes, but he actually goes on to mention that there are an infinite number of attributes. It is only humans who are aware of these two attributes: thought and extension.⁷⁴

The focus of including substance monism in this chapter is to use it to help connect Spinoza's substance monism with his doctrine of *conatus*. It is the notion of being conceived *through* itself, instead of the notion of being *in* itself, and *conatus* helps further mobilize Spinoza's "materialism" as something that is vitally becoming.⁷⁵

Contrary to Descartes, finite things are not substances but rather are modes of the one single substance. For Spinoza, there is only one substance, which is infinite, that materializes in itself and through itself. "...that is, that whose concept does not require

⁷³ The scholarship regarding a teleological end is questionable in Spinozist scholarship. I do not wish to tackle teleology, necessary. I want to argue that there is neither a beginning nor an end.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁵ Adapted from Della Rocca, 11.

the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed.”⁷⁶ And, following this logic, “By attribute, I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence.”⁷⁷ Quoting Elizabeth Grosz, a feminist philosopher, Spinoza’s theory of substance that is extended as a finite mode (for example, a materialized human) as an

individual entity (human or otherwise) is not self-subsistent but is a passing or provisional determination of the self-subsistent. Substance has potentially infinite attributes to express its nature. Each attribute adequately expresses substance insofar as it is infinite (the infinity of space, for example, expresses the attribute of extension), yet each attribute is also inadequate or incomplete insofar as it expresses substances only in one form. Extension and thought—body and mind—are two such attributes.⁷⁸

What Grosz captures in this quote from Spinoza is the manner in which each finite mode, extended from the infinite substance, relies on the relational tie to the one substance. The extended mode is not independent from the infinite substance. What Grosz also captures in this quote is that Spinoza theorized about the infinite number of possibilities an attribute could be.

What Spinoza offers in contrast to Descartes is a way to consider that attributes are merely different aspects of one and the same substance, inseparable from each other. Descartes’ dualism renders two different and incompatible substances that are irreducible.

⁷⁶ Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. by Edwin Curley, 85.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 10-11.

Spinoza's theory of substance and matter, while much more mathematical and logical than dynamic, is a way to resolve the dualism existing in Cartesian thought. An example of this is found on the first page of Spinoza's *Ethics* in his definitions "Of God" and demonstrated in geometric order. He says, "By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed."⁷⁹ Spinoza referred to the Principle of Sufficient Reason that each fact and each thing that exists has an explanation.

This idea of singularity is a pure oneness, but later interpretations can see how Spinoza's substance monism is a network of singularity, implying a multiplicity.⁸⁰ This does not undermine monism; there is but one substance for Spinoza. Yet, this singular substance materializes as a network of multiplicities. Deleuze's rhizome is an example of this.⁸¹

Though logic and mechanics dominate Spinoza's "materialism," I find his doctrine of *conatus* to be the defining characteristic that helps mobilize Spinoza's "materialism" into something that is vitally becoming. Logically unfolding in geometric order, Spinoza's theory of substance is not energized with the evolving reality of nature, something that I think New Materialists read into Spinoza's work and is even developed in Herder's work. It is Spinoza's doctrine of *conatus* that helps mobilize his substance

⁷⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁰ Deleuze does this in *A Thousand Plateaus*, but continues to advance Spinoza's monism in doing so.

⁸¹ Deleuze & Guattari discuss the rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

monism as something that is dynamic, or striving toward an end, though, the feature of teleology is debated among Spinozist scholars. *Conatus* allows a type of affection or affect theory to take root in Spinoza's thought and creates an element of movement that is native in Spinoza's theories; I call it becoming. Some even consider *conatus* to be related to psychology. While I prefer the terms affection and affect theory, what is important to Spinoza's development of *conatus* is the self-generating movement or becoming; I detail this as part of Spinoza's 'vital becoming' in the next section. The important work of *conatus* is that Spinoza contributes a universal and singular self-preservation model that universally is applied to all things and, in turn, establishes a type of material movement or material becoming.

Because Spinoza attributes a self-striving or self-preservation to all things, both organic and inorganic things, it not only creates a new contour of natural science, but also provides his theory of natural science with a teleological explanation. The affection or theory of desire that is native to Spinoza's theory of *conatus* provides a unified source of motivational power, or self-generative power. Affection and desire should not be confused with colloquial understandings of affection and desire. These terms are technical terms that initiate a way of understanding Spinoza's theories in a psychic or psychological manner that is related to the theory of the mind. What *conatus* also establishes is the language of movement in Spinoza's 'materialism.' This activity, universal for Spinoza, outlines the natural rights for things and also contributes to a universal interconnectedness and interrelatedness between simple and complex bodies. This is the beginning of Spinoza's political theory, too, which should be noted. Spinoza's

doctrine of *conatus* begins in the *Ethics* with 3p4d, which establishes a framework that “nothing can be destroyed except by external cause.”

That nothing can be destroyed except by an external cause, found in 3p4d, 3p6 is the impetus for Spinoza’s development of his *conatus*: “Each thing, insofar as it is in itself, strives to persevere in its being.”⁸² Taking both of these together (3p4 and 3p6), Spinoza creates a theory that is in process for itself and persevering itself. Take a complex body, for example. A complex body for Spinoza is a collection of independently functioning organs that are all related to each other, or dependent on one another. The pancreas functions because the kidneys are also functioning, along with the liver and stomach. The complex body, in this case, the human body, has identifiable parts that are independent of one another but dependent on one another. They strive together to preserve the body. This is the matter of life and death, for Spinoza. *Conatus* manages to not only mobilize a theory of movement in Spinoza’s philosophy, but it also changes the ways in which these multiple relationships happen. They are persevered in themselves for themselves, avoiding the destruction of internal calamity. Only external forces/causes can eliminate an interrelated complex body.

While *conatus* is an important element to this project in that it gives Spinoza’s ‘materialism’ legs to become, it is also important to note that later interpreters of Spinoza have contributed to this style of utilizing Spinoza’s *conatus* as central to a theory of becoming and movement. Likewise, later interpretations of Spinoza suggest that the

⁸² Spinoza, *Ethics*, 3p6

infinite aspect of substance is an expression of matter as active in its becoming, and bodies (broadly construed) are material realities as a result of matter's becomingness.⁸³

While later interpreters of Spinoza's work, especially feminists, read Spinoza's "matter" as active, they do not discuss his doctrine of *conatus*. While Spinoza's substance monism is mechanistically deployed, what intrigues me about Spinoza's work is his development of the doctrine of *conatus* and the ways in which this doctrine can be deployed in this project as a significant factor in dynamizing Spinoza's logical mechanistic philosophy. This is what allows Spinoza's "materialism" to be read and understood as a dynamic flow of matter, a never-ending folding of the fold of matter. It is the internal striving of his doctrine of *conatus* that gives his "matter" dynamic "legs."

Spinoza's Modern "Vital Materialism" in the Doctrine of *Conatus*

The limitation I see in Spinoza's thought regarding a philosophy of materialism is that matter is mechanistic in his philosophy, not existing as dynamic. Important to point out is both efficient mechanical causality is similar to that of efficient causality and the Principle of Sufficient Reason is more rationalistic, which is Spinoza's classifications as a philosopher. Spinoza is a rationalist philosopher, which should not be undermined. I walk a thin line in developing Spinoza as a "materialist." Central to my project is an attempt to faithfully interpret and understand Spinoza, while also overdetermining him as an empiricist/materialist *a la* Deleuze and the New Materialists. One can say that matter

⁸³ Here I am thinking of the later feminist and queer interpretations of Spinoza who utilize the language of "expression" relative to substance. Likewise, the Cambridge Companion to Spinoza also utilizes the language of "expression" when talking about an extension or attribute.

in Spinoza unfolds logically, seen most clearly in the geometric order of his *Ethics*. This is important for my research as it allows bodies to be a unified reality, not existing as separate and unequal parts, but does not capture the dynamism of the materiality of bodies that later materialist philosophers, such as Deleuze and Anzaldúa, among the New Materialists, imbue in their analyses on bodies. Though Spinoza's philosophy does not exist along a dynamic matrix, I find value in his monism and philosophical thinking. Later philosophers and critical theorists take up Spinoza as an important figure for their philosophical practice. Among these are Moira Gatens, Elizabeth Grosz, Gilles Deleuze, and others.

While I cannot call Spinoza a materialist in the same way that Lucretius and Nietzsche are materialists, there is a way to interpret his rationalist philosophy as a type of materialism that is vitally becoming. Though this is not language native to Spinoza, I read this dynamism into his philosophy by using his doctrine of *conatus*. The following section lays a foundation to better understand Spinoza's philosophy as vitally becoming, but only through *conatus*.

Like substance monism, the doctrine of *conatus* is another central element to Spinoza's philosophy. "The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing."⁸⁴ *Conatus* suggests there to be an internal striving that becomes central to the rest of Spinoza's work, influencing his political

⁸⁴ Edwin Curley, 159.

thought.⁸⁵ Spinoza's doctrine of *conatus* as that which is related to striving and self-preservation, generating from internal relational qualities.⁸⁶ *Conatus* is found in the later part of the *Ethics* and gains significant traction in that book that then connects to Spinoza's political work.

Spinoza articulates his doctrine of *conatus* in the *Ethics* in 3p6: "Each thing, insofar as it is in itself, strives to persevere in its being."⁸⁷ The preceding propositions helps give greater context to *conatus*, particularly 3p4: "No thing can be destroyed except through an external cause." For Spinoza, there is no appeal to previous definitions or propositions; Spinoza considers this an axiomatic, self-evident truth. Though this doctrine does not emerge from nowhere (little of Spinoza's thought does), it is sufficient to say that the Principle of Sufficient Reason is at play. Della Rocca claims that 3p4 is the "most simplest and most powerful expression of Spinoza's rationalism."⁸⁸ Bridging together the importance of 3p4 and 3p5, I transition to 3p6 and Spinoza's *conatus*.

There are several examples that Spinoza uses to legitimate 3p6. I will list two examples here, then use a more nuanced example to prove that Spinoza's *conatus* is a significant aspect to rethinking materiality as vitally becoming. An example of the burning candle is used in the *Ethics*. If "nothing can be destroyed except through an external cause," then the candle burns until there is no more wick or wax. But, both the

⁸⁵ Della Rocca, 137.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 137.

⁸⁷ Edwin Curley, 159.

⁸⁸ Della Rocca 138.

wax and wick are internal to the burning of the candle, and therefore the candle destroys itself; there is no external cause that extinguishes the candle flame. An external cause would be if water extinguished the candle flame. The example of the candle helps readers further understand the doctrine of *conatus* and the centralizing feature of striving and persevering. If the candle strives to burn until it cannot burn, then it perseveres until it is destroyed by itself by the internality of the candle. However, if an external cause extinguishes the candle, then the external cause disrupts the candle's internalizing drive and preserving and the flame is extinguished.

Another example that Spinoza uses is that of suicide. In some cases, some, due to externally caused duress, are compelled to kill themselves. So, suicide is not internal to one's essence, but rather externally motivated and caused. Another example that is more nuanced is that of the time bomb, which Della Rocca discusses.⁸⁹ I find this example particularly compelling, because it further solidifies Spinoza's claim that nothing can be destroyed except by an external cause. In the case of the time-bomb, which will destroy itself and things outside of itself, it requires an external ignition or an external cause to be ignited. The axiom of Part IV in the *Ethics* might help clarify this example. "There is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger. Whatever one is given, there is another more powerful by which the first can be destroyed."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ibid., 1142-143.

⁹⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, Axiom IV.

Della Rocca suggests that this axiom is grounded in the Principle of Sufficient Reason. Finite things have a certain degree of limited power; Spinoza affirms this in 1p36. Spinoza's Principle of Sufficient Reason solidifies the legitimacy of the time-bomb's destruction by underwriting the existence of an external destroyer. Given that finite things have a limited amount of power, there can be things that possess a greater amount of power. The essence of the time bomb cannot be destroyed by itself. Rather, the time bomb and its essence are destroyed because there is the absence of an external sustainer.

Following 3p4, Spinoza says in 3p5 that "Things are of a contrary nature, that is, cannot be in the same subject, insofar as one can destroy the other."⁹¹ This is important because insofar that something cannot destroy another thing, these two things cannot be in the same thing. If that is the case, then 3p6 becomes the central proposition in the development of Spinoza's *conatus*. Della Rocca suggests that 3p6 is problematic, even if 3p4 and 3p5 are granted. I suggest, however, that Spinoza's introducing striving becomes the linchpin in developing Spinoza a modern day "materialist."

One question that is important to answer is what does Spinoza mean by strive (*conatur*)? Della Rocca suggests that Spinoza's notion of striving derives from Descartes use of the same word.⁹² But, Spinoza transforms this notion of striving in a rationalistic way. Noting that an external cause is always at play in Spinoza's philosophy, a thing

⁹¹ Ethics, 3p5.

⁹² Della Rocca 145.

strives unless or until an external cause prevents it from striving. In this sense, a thing is always striving, always becoming. While I suggest that *conatus* is the exact feature that enables Spinoza to be read as a vitally becoming “materialist,” dynamic in its own becoming, one should note, too, that a thing can strive for its own destruction. But, a thing cannot strive for self-destruction, insofar as the essence is concerned.

Spinoza uses bodies to talk about persistence and striving. Each body strives to persist, in Spinoza’s writing. They strive to remain in motion. Here we can substitute matter for bodies (they assume a certain identity in my project) and suggest that matter is always in motion; it is always striving. The internal striving native to matter, as developed by Spinoza’s doctrine of *conatus*, helps mobilize Spinoza as a “materialist” who puts in motion a theory of matter. It is a matter of essence for Spinoza that striving is deployed. The essence of matter strives toward self-preservation. It is unclear that there is an end, other than an end to avoid destruction. Given this, we can understand Spinoza’s *conatus* as putting in motion the essence of matter, striving toward a present future. This is a designation that I find in Deleuze and it is helpful in thinking about a becoming future that is materializing along a plane of immanence.

In the next section, I discuss Nietzsche’s develop of ‘will’ in his *Will to Power*. Will, as developed by Nietzsche completes my chapter of modern day ‘materialists,’ and further solidifies a notion of becoming or that which is vitally becoming existing from Lucretius to Nietzsche. Both classical and modern thinkers become of important value to the 20th century’s development of matter as a force and becoming, and particularly important to show the connection between Anzaldúa (who has her own theory of materialism), the New Materialists, and Deleuze.

Friedrich Nietzsche & *The Will to Power*

Published in the early 1900s, *The Will To Power* provides a compilation of Nietzsche's notebooks—work that he had been theorizing for some time. With help from his sister who managed his literary estate, following his mental break, *The Will To Power* develops as a significant publication that addresses aspects of metaphysics and religion, among other important issues that were affecting Nietzsche's day. I take this book of notes as important to both modern philosophies of materialism and contemporary philosophies of materialism. Read in close proximity with Spinoza, these two thinkers share a dynamism that is fruitful for re-thinking the relationship of bodily materiality and becoming. What is significant to exploring Nietzsche's will in the same chapter as that of Spinoza, is the shared momentum that both of these thinkers develop in relation to force. This shared momentum of force or of that which is vitally becoming shapes this project and further strengthens the foundation of my claim that matter is always becoming. Also, these two thinkers help create a new paradigm in thinking about "matter" that is not atomistic.

The Will to Power is not an atomistic philosophy, and should not be read as inserting atomism into the philosophy of the will. Will is a concept that materializes as a result of relations with other wills, and it is always, according to Nietzsche a will to power. The relationship of wills to each other and the conditions under which they materialize helps create a framework of becoming, I argue. While the struggle between different / multiple wills is the struggle for power, power becomes the activating force in Nietzsche's work. Foucault and others pick this up. Power then is intimately connected with other powers, or wills, and will is always battling in its force of becoming to achieve

another will, or power. In the same way that freedom is a false problem (there is no thing as (a) free will), will is always connected to the external and internal forces of becoming.

The Philosophy of the ‘Will’ as a Force Becoming

The philosophy of the will is part of the genealogical method that Nietzsche develops, largely because genealogy also evaluates. In *The Will To Power*, there is a large component of the book that develops along the basis of evaluation. Will participates in this evaluation and it also develops as a force within a thing. In *The Will To Power*, the object that is evaluated develops as a force, or an expression of a force.⁹³ The relationship between force and object are important, because the object continues to develop in relation to the force, or the multiplicity of forces. By object, I mean phenomenon, and the phenomenon develops as having a particular affinity with the forces. Nietzsche uses the language of object, so I retain it here but with explanation. There are multiple forces, related to other forces. The essence of being of force is plural; we cannot think about force in the singular, but this plurality does not indicate a plurality of substances, only forces.

Regarding mechanistically, the energy of the totality of becoming remains constant; regarded economically, it rises to a high point and sinks down again in an eternal circle. This “will to power” expresses itself in the interpretation, in the man in which force is used up; transformation of energy into life, and “life at its highest potency,” thus appears as the goal. The same quantum of energy means different things at different stages of evolution.⁹⁴

⁹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 6.

⁹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, 340.

The principle of Nietzsche's philosophy of nature is affirming the multiple forces existing and in relations with both force and object.

The multiplicity of forces, connected by a common mode of nutrition, we call "life." To this mode of nutrition, as a means of making it possible, belong all so-called feelings, ideas, thoughts; i.e., (1) a resistance to all other forces; (2) an adjustment of the same according to form and rhythm; (3) an estimate in regard to assimilation or excretion.⁹⁵

This becomes important when thinking about how materiality is always active, a phenomenon that is in motion due to force. We cannot build on the atomistic philosophy or theory of materialism that is developed by Lucretius and Democritus, because atoms are their own unique reality and they can only relate to themselves; they cannot impart to matter an essential plurality, only force is able to do this, according to Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche.⁹⁶ What allows for an essential plurality in the nature of atomism is when we think of force, instead of the singularity of atoms. Deleuze argues that the atom cannot contain in itself the difference necessary for affirming the relation of force and matter. Only force and the plurality of relations of force are able to do this. Recalling Spinoza, there is a type of striving (albeit a plurality of striving) that Nietzsche develops; he calls it force. Atomism cannot be the starting point for thinking about relationality and becoming relative to matter; atomism is but a "mask for an incipient dynamism."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., 341-342

⁹⁶ Deleuze, 6.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 6.

Noting this above, Nietzsche's concept of force is related to other forces and is thus rendered as 'will' (the will to power). The will for Nietzsche is a differential element of force that pluralizes as it relates to other forces. Will connects with other concepts of will, not to matter in general, like muscles or nerves. Will only operates on other concepts of will, not *on* matter, but the ways in which matter is affected is that will acts as a force that motivates matter's becoming. The element of relationality is an important development that appears in contemporary theories of matter, particularly Deleuze and the New Materialists.

"The sensation of force cannot proceed from motion: sensation in general cannot proceed from motion."⁹⁸ That will relates with will and force with force is an important distinction from the movement or process of atomism. Force should not be understood synonymously with atomism. Will functions by willing obedience—only will can obey commands. Deleuze says that because of this, then, pluralism finds "its immediate corroboration and its chosen ground in the philosophy of the will."⁹⁹ For Nietzsche, the pluralism that he affirms is rooted in the concept of multiple wills, not in multiple substances, like Descartes. This pluralism motivates materialist thinkers, like Deleuze, to theorize concepts of multiplicity because there is no unitary concept of the will, for will will have to be necessarily repudiated if there was.

⁹⁸ Nietzsche, 334.

⁹⁹ Deleuze, 7.

The inextricability of forces as relations in turn develops will as a network of possible wills, a pluralism that is rooted in a singularity, similar to a rhizome. When applied to matter, then, it is easy to see that matter has the potential to be vitally becoming due to force or a networked relation of will. Will is not a human will, but rather Nietzsche refers to the will to power as a vast, interlocking struggle of indefinite “power quanta” preserving and enhancing constantly changing power constellations.¹⁰⁰ This inextricability, then, of forces as relations of will becomes the foundation from which we understand matter as vitally becoming.

Will, or the multiplicity of forces, become a sort of power center to which matter adheres. The dynamism that motivates matter’s becoming is this “power quanta” that is both preserving its energy or force and also extending its force in reality. In turn, this mobilizes matter’s becoming reality. This structure of will penetrates all of existence, all reality, and puts in motion a material reality that is supported by the multiple potentialities of force and will.

There are different types of wills that Nietzsche explores. The primal will equals becoming. This is the dominant will that I believe is located in the center of the “power quanta.” This will allows for there to be a second will. The wills are interrelated, connected by the forces internal to them. Second, the will in the theory of *Will To Power* equals the dynamic unfolding of quantities of power under the conditions of preservation and enhancement. It is this will with which I am most interested. The dynamism that is

¹⁰⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. Walter Kaufman, *The Will To Power*, Books II and III.

native to Nietzsche's will helps the philosophy of materialism develop as an unfolding fold of matter, multiple in its becoming, but nonetheless singular in its essence.

Conclusion: The Making of 'Modern Matter'

Both Spinoza and Nietzsche provide a way to rethink materiality in the making of what I call 'modern matter' that is vitally becoming. Important to this project is the notion of becoming—not just a notion of cohesion, but of differential material becoming that is motivated by the internal striving of matter. Though both *conatus* and will function differently for Spinoza and Nietzsche, what is important is that these two thinkers, in particular, help mobilize a new wave of materialist theories that in turn shape the philosophy of materialism. While Lucretius is important to note, namely his theory of materialism and movement or process, Spinoza and Nietzsche reframe this theory of movement and allow for a more robust theory of process to develop. Spinoza ties his *conatus* to theories of causality and Nietzsche to notions of power, and both of these thinkers mobilize today's philosophy of materialism in a way that creates new contours and dimensions for the becoming of materiality.

In the next chapter, I will trace significant contributors of contemporary strands of materialism. I start with Bergson, then pick up the materialism of Deleuze, and then end with the New Materialist. Central to the following chapter, however, is the addition of Gloria Anzaldúa who I believe can be counted among the New Materialists. Her philosophy is strangely material, though this is only confirmed by visiting the archives to see the scholars she cited. Putting Gloria Anzaldúa in conversation with those who I call contemporary materialists re-imagines Anzaldúan scholarship beyond the horizon of

identity politics and helps new dimensions of materialism take root at the intersection of ontology, epistemology, and ethics.

Gloria Anzaldúa's Tihueque and Modern Matter

When reading Spinoza, the reader can identify the simple body as the ceremonial knife that is poetically constructed in Anzaldúa's poem, Tihueque. But, when thinking about the ceremonial knife through the lens of Anzaldúa, it is akin to a complex body, enfleshing both a will and part of a process. The last stanza of the poem illustrates the possibility of a materialist perspective on *conatus* and will, combining both Spinoza and Nietzsche with a standpoint on Anzaldúan materiality:

Today I lie in a musty museum
and register 5.5 on the Mohs scale.
But my origin, my volcanic obsidian,
hard as granite
comes in good stead.¹⁰¹

The self-preservation inherent in this poem relates to both *conatus* and will (Spinoza and Nietzsche, respectively). Considering the ceremonial knife as vitally becoming (alive in some sense) is key to understanding that the knife competes with itself to become and persevered because of the fight of many wills, and the process under which it went throughout its life. The competition of every will in the ceremonial knife is the fight for power, the fight to become, change, and process. The freedom of any will is never found in the will, because freedom is a false problem. What makes this last stanza important for

¹⁰¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, ed. AnaLouise Keating, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 19) 2009.

this project and tracing becoming is that it is not freedom after which the knife struggles;
it is the multiplicity of wills that encumber the knife, or mirror, however you consider it.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONTEMPORARY MATTER

The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow.

—Gloria Anzaldúa (Box 102, folder 2) 1999

This chapter surveys contemporary field of materialism, which builds on the two previous chapters, outlining a particular trajectory of movement and becoming, or animated lines of flight. While this chapter explores contemporary matter, this chapter also pays careful attention to the ways that modern matter (illustrated in the previous chapter) has influenced the contemporary contours of materialism and the schools of thought, namely the New Materialists. As such, this chapter will detail the materialism of the French philosopher, Henri Bergson, Deleuze, and the New Materialists. The development of contemporary matter continues today with scholars, such as Jane Bennett and Karen Barad, Vicky Kirby, among others.

In terms of development, I chart Bergson's *élan vital* and his emerging vitalism that is important for materialism. Likewise, I chart Deleuze's materialism by addressing his use of his theory of the fold that stems from Leibniz and is also used by Foucault to address the nature and contours of power. For Deleuze, matter is an unfolding folding that is always becoming; the *pli* is the enfolding of a material reality. I should note that unfolding is not the opposite of folding; rather, unfolding follows the fold up to another

fold. While I will explore this later, it is important to note that the issue or idea of folding is the very force of becoming that is central to Deleuze's materialism. Deleuze has also been called a vitalist by some, but this is controversial.¹⁰² Deleuze does recover Bergson's *élan vital*, though it is unclear whether this recovery 'makes' Deleuze a vitalist, or whether it is Deleuze's recovery of Spinoza's *conatus*. I mention it here, because Deleuze has become a central figure for the New Materialists and many New Materialists are also invested in vitalism. I focus on his use of Bergson and of matter-energy, and the fold. This then fuels my analysis of the New Materialists later, which highlight the recovery of Spinoza, a creative use of Deleuze, and the foreshadowing of an ontology of becoming, which is also material. Finally, I revisit Anzaldúa poem, "Now Let Us Go," and help illustrate her animated lines of flight and the emergence of a physiomateriality.

Overviewing the contemporary field of materialism and highlighting the ways in which New Materialism reaches back to earlier versions of materialism, not only shows that materialism is still very much alive today in the discourse concerning epistemology and ontology, but it also opens up doors for thinkers like Gloria Anzaldúa to be read alongside the New Materialists. Doing this helps mobilize my thinking about the ways which bodies are constructed as material reality and the intersection of epistemology and ontology. Noting the inherent vitalism that is found in Anzaldúa's theory of the universe

¹⁰² I had a conversation with Levi Paul Bryant recently in the fall 2014. He questioned the use of Deleuze as a vitalist. While I continue to trace this claim, I fall into the camp of affirming a particular type of Vitalism that Deleuze espoused and I think the section on the fold will help illustrate his particular style and kind of vitalism.

helps mobilize what I have come to call a physiomateriality that foreshadows an ontology of becoming that is particular to material bodies.¹⁰³

Henri Bergson (*élan vital*)

Henri Bergson is an important voice to the discussion of contemporary matter, and his work in both *Creative Evolution* and *Matter and Memory* serve as my primary point of departure. Examining these two texts helps elucidate the emerging materialism found in his *élan vital* and the materialism that emerges on the French scene. Bergson is important because not only does Deleuze pick up Bergsonian threads, but the New Materialists do, too, to illustrate a vitalist materialism by combining Bergson, Deleuze, and Spinoza. The vital impulse that Bergson theorizes in *Creative Evolution* is the key to understanding his version of materialism, and is important to put into conversation with the movement and becoming found in Lucretius, Spinoza, and Nietzsche. There remains an internal movement in Bergson's work, and noting this is important to show continuity with the other frameworks of materialism.

In Bergson's thought, the notion of life mixes together two opposite senses (mechanism and teleology), which must be differentiated and then led into a genuine unity. On the one hand, it is clear from Bergson's earlier works that life is the absolute temporal movement informed by duration and retained in memory; on the other hand, life (a vital awareness that Bergson calls life) becomes the mechanism by which difference, multiplicity, unity, and duration, along with memory, become the point of departure for

¹⁰³ While I will develop the ontology of becoming in a later chapter, it is important to say that I believe that both ontology and becoming are part of Anzaldúa's radical interconnectivity and relationality.

making sense of his materialism. Each of these parts, together, forms a unity in rethinking materialism.

In the first chapter of *Creative Evolution*, Bergson theorizes the evolution of life. He compares and contrasts both mechanism and teleology, and he accomplishes this by utilizing a theory of change, which is located in the simple acts of nature. It is exemplified in his creation of *élan vital*. “Change is far more radical than we are at first inclined to suppose.”¹⁰⁴ The reality is that change is the constant in Bergson’s work, and the element of change will fuel Bergson’s becoming, though it is called a “vital impulse” in his work. “The truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change.”¹⁰⁵ Whereas Lucretius’ materialism revolved around movement and becoming, and Spinoza’s and Nietzsche’s was a particular style of becoming, Bergson’s “becoming” is located in the element of change and its constancy. This is different in that Bergson held onto the feature of multiplicity, despite affirming monism. Life, for Bergson, is a dynamic feature to the element of becoming different and the process of differentiation. While Bergson theorized about “life,” it is important to note that this is his theory of materialism that emerged through the discourse of evolution, and in many ways, Bergson tackled Darwinian evolutionary theory in ways that have allowed for a different, albeit creative, evolution to emerge. This creative evolutionary theory has shaped the discourse concerning materialism in important ways. While Bergson’s theory

¹⁰⁴ Henri Bergson, trans. by Author Mitchell, *Creative Evolution*, (Meneola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998), 1

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 2.

of life was in part a response to that of Darwin's theories, it is clear that new contours of materialism emerge on the French scene with that of an internal impulse and the constancy of change.

The vital impulse, or *élan vital*, is one of Bergson's most lasting ideas, but *élan vital* cannot be separated from that of duration, memory, difference, and multiplicity, which, of course is picked up by scholars like Deleuze, among other feminist New Materialists. Several contemporary scholars utilize this theory in their own remapping and recasting of materialism, and by doing this, they show the lasting promise of contemporary materialism and its connection with philosophers, such as Lucretius and Spinoza. For Bergson, *élan vital* is the creativity that springs forth from matter's pulse, or its rhythm. Common impetuses or harmonies in matter do not exist; there are only differences in matter that coalesce to become one (Bergson is a monist, despite his advocating for difference and multiplicity in biology and matter).¹⁰⁶ In many ways, Bergson's monism is illustrated best in Deleuze's claim that monism = plurality.¹⁰⁷

With commonality being central to Bergson's thinking about creativity, it is important to show how commonality and difference, along with monism, interact with Bergson's theories that in turn help us acknowledge the creative impulse that is 'life' or material. "Thus the wind at a street-corner divides into diverging currents which are all

¹⁰⁶ Bergson, 51. See also Deleuze's *Bergsonism*. Deleuze perhaps picks up on the minutest detail of Bergson and analyzes it as if it is the most important element or feature to Bergson's theories. Difference for Bergson is important, but all comes together in his theory of duration, creative impulse, multiplicity, and his disavowal of radical finalism.

¹⁰⁷ See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*.

one and the same gust. Harmony, or rather “complementarity,” is revealed only in the mass, in the tendencies rather than in states.”¹⁰⁸ Like Lucretius’ *clinamen*, “the tendency to change, therefore, is not accidental.”¹⁰⁹ The wind, a dynamic feature of the world around us, divides, multiplies, and diverges from the single source of the gust. It does not become different in kind; it remains part of the same gust. This divergence, though part of a single source, participates in the process of multiplicity and becoming different while remaining one and the same gust.

Similar to the wind, Bergson also theorizes the ways that division happens in nature. This is important to affirming his single source reality (or material), while also recognizing the process of differentiation. Nature is one such process of differentiation in that

Nature’s simple act has divided itself automatically into an infinity of elements which are then found to be coordinated to one idea, just as the movement of my hand has dropped an infinity of points which are then found to satisfy one equation.¹¹⁰

Recognizing the act of nature is to also separate the reality of organization and manufacturing. Bergson says “manufacturing is peculiar to man,”¹¹¹ and

It consists in assembling parts of matter which we have cut out in such manner that we can fit them together and obtain from them a common action. The parts are arranged, so to speak, around the action as an ideal centre. To manufacture, therefore, is to work from the periphery to the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 85.

¹¹⁰ Bergson, 91.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 92

centre, or, as the philosophers say, from the many to the one. Organization, on the contrary works from the centre to the periphery. It begins in a point that is almost a mathematical point, and spreads around this point by concentric waves which go on enlarging. The work of manufacturing is the more effective, the greater quality of matter dealt with. It proceeds by the concentration and compression. The organizing act, on the contrary, has something explosive about it: it needs at the beginning the smallest possible place, a minimum of matter, as if the organizing forces only entered space reluctantly. The spermatozoon, which sets in motion the evolutionary process of the embryonic life, is one of the smallest cells of the organism; and it is only a small part of the spermatozoon which really takes part in the operation.¹¹²

Bergson's ability to delineate the differences between organization and manufacturing are important in nature and applying his concept of differentiation for the organism to further materialize. From the spermatozoon, Bergson transitions to the eye as a way to further illustrate the vital impulse of matter.

Bergson utilizes the structure of the eye and the development of the eye to show patterns of his creative impulse, and vision then functions as a virtuality that is being actualized, though also participating in the process of differentiation. He says it best in the following quote that Deleuze picks up from and adapts:

It is always a case of virtuality in the process of being actualized, a simplicity in the process of differentiating, a totality in the process of diving up: Proceeding "by dissociation and division," by "dichotomy," is the essence of life.¹¹³

Bergson creates a material flow in analyzing the development of the eye. In place of matter, the eye becomes the focal point in discussing materiality and the ways in which

¹¹² Ibid., 92.

¹¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, (New York: Zone Books). 94.

materiality is subject to a common force, or impetus, and is dichotomized, but never becomes a duality. Bergson's monism is one that not only addresses the day's Darwinism, but also the work of both biology and teleology. There is no radical finalist or mechanism in Bergson's materialism; it is a material flow that is differentiating through the process of duration and memory, a material process whereby the creative impulse sustains an impression of the past that helps shape the future present.

Gilles Deleuze (*pli*)

The fold (*pli*) in Deleuze's work can be seen throughout his writing, and should be considered central to his vitalism that is also his materialism; it is illustrated in his image of thought, becoming, nomadic war machine, plane of immanence, and rhizome. The fold is a particular type of force of becoming that is developed later in Deleuze's *The Fold*. The fold is equally an unfolding as it is an enfolding. The fold creates pleats and doubles, or multiplies; it becomes by and through the material force of the infinite streams of matter and material becomings.

It comes down to folds. Wave folding into particle, breath into body, hand into hand, melody into ear, seed into dirt, earth into human, violence into trauma, carbon into atmosphere, climate into climatology. Word into world, world into word. Outside in, inside out, the edge turns to layer, to tissue, complicating, pleating. The folding shapes, it limits, it may pleat sharply. We select, decided, make some cut between possibles, *decisare*; or else we dissolve into the manifold that we already are and "I" don't happen. But the cut is never clean. It only exposes more folds. All the way down and out. And the vertical axis is itself twisting, bending, into spirals diffractice by everything they transverse. The complication extends,

explicates. Each one of its folds does the world of the world. In word or body.¹¹⁴

Keller reads Deleuze with Whitehead to *explicate* the eternal material fold that is also in process, always pleating and always becoming, always becoming different in its repetitious folds. Keller's cloud becomes an infinite piece of integrated material for her planetary entanglement, one that is rooted in the relational ontology of her process oriented theology and a material reality that is always intra-acting, to utilize Barad's language.

Folds are also cuts, which create new pleats, new folds, multiplying doublings, as Deleuze theorizes. The material entanglement that is the fold and the enfolding helps further illustrate the reality of the force of becoming in Deleuze's work. Maintaining the plumb line of becoming, even in the fold (*pli*) of Deleuze's work, continues to push contemporary materialism into a conceptual register that destabilizes the linearity of traditional discourses of becoming and allows for becoming to be a (re)creation of difference and repetition whose relational contours further root its ontological folds.¹¹⁵

Deleuze's theory of the fold, illustrated below, is an important piece to the development of contemporary matter. Utilizing Foucault, Leibniz, and Bergson, Deleuze crafts a compelling feature to his materialism, that of the *pli*, a never-ending, enfolded, unfolded, fold. In the section below, I help illustrate the fold, the folding, and the

¹¹⁴ Catherine Keller, *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 158.

¹¹⁵ The Fold is best described as a Möbius strip and holds ontological import for Deleuze.

enfolded to discuss Deleuze's materialism. While Deleuze advocates for a monism that is a plurality in his other writings, his Leibniz book picks up the feature of the fold that then is later deployed by Foucault to rethink power. I use the Möbius strip as my metaphor to detail the material emergence of the fold, which is always becoming. Combined with Lucretius, Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze creates a mosaic of compelling features to rethink materialism with his use of *pli*. I suggest this helps mobilize the New Materialists' thinking about their own version of materiality that is motivating very compelling discussions concerning race, class, gender, and sexuality within that movement. While Deleuze does not pick up Leibniz's theory of the fold entirely (and adheres to a creative monism, instead), the *pli* becomes the axis point on which we understand Deleuzian materialism. What Deleuze's theory of the fold allows us to reimagine is the way material force emerges in the work of Deleuze, which should be partnered with Foucault's insistence that power is productive. It is an irruption. Reimagining materialism that has a material force that is akin to power remaps force as that which is not only internal and native to matter, itself, but also something that is being produced by the very folds of other beings. All material (subjects) become part of the topological surface that is becoming.

We must conceive of the world topologically—as a pure surface. This surface has only a single side, but is structured like a Möbius strip, where a torsion produces the optical effect of two or more heterogeneous and autonomous sides, thereby giving rise to multiple illusions. The single side is the outside; it is on this outside, and through its

torsions, that power relations play out their differential distributions; it is under the conditions of this outside that power relations undergo the integrations of knowledge.¹¹⁶ Deleuze claims that the “profound Nietzscheanism” of Michel Foucault lies in the fact that, in Foucault’s thought, power exists on, or is the immanent effect of, the topology of this surface. Power is not, therefore, repressive, but rather productive; power “is practiced before it is possessed,” and it “passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters.”¹¹⁷ Power is a relation between forces; it is not a form of exteriority or of interiority; it does not lie between forms (of knowledge), but rather, force “exists in relation with other forces, such that any force is already a relation, that is to say power: force has no other object or subject than force.”¹¹⁸ Power appears in various guises in Foucault— as a ‘microphysics,’ and as affectivity (“the power to be affected is like a matter of force, and the power to affect is like a function of force.”¹¹⁹); but most profoundly, the power manifests in the ‘diagram,’ of which the infamous Panopticon is perhaps the example par excellence. But the diagram is itself a pure, unformalized function that “must be ‘detached from any specific use,’ as from any specific substance.”¹²⁰ The diagram is not universal, since it is itself produced by the contingencies of the forces of the outside, but it is nevertheless co-extensive with the

¹¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988), 78.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 71.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 70.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 72.

¹²⁰ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 195-228. 37 Deleuze, Foucault, 72.

social field; it traverses and determines all of the forms of exteriority/knowledge. Hence, the heterogeneity of power and knowledge: whereas the latter concerns, and is constituted as, strata (substances and formalized functions, forms of exteriority, i.e. sayability and visibility), power is, on the other hand, diagrammatic and distributive; power relations are non-localizable and constitute “anonymous strategies” which, though they differ in kind from stratifications of knowledge, are primary in relation to the latter and constitute the latter, effecting thereby the general organization of the social field in which the forms of knowledge are located.¹²¹ This logical primacy of power over knowledge is crucial: “No doubt power, if we consider it in the abstract, neither sees nor speaks...But precisely because it does not itself speak and see, it makes us see and speak.”¹²² A ventriloquism of power. Or, as Deleuze suggests, a question of truth:

If power is not simply violence, this is not only because it passes in itself through categories that express the relation between two forces...but also because, in relation to knowledge, it produces truth, in so far as it makes us see and speak. It produces truth as a problem.¹²³

It is crucial to understand that when power is said to come from the ‘outside,’ this does not imply a beyond or a transcendent plane upon which power struggles play out, and of which our own knowledge and struggles are mere reflections or representations. Power is the formless form of the outside: “The relations between forces, which are mobile, faint and diffuse, do not lie outside strata but form the outside of strata...it is each

¹²¹ Ibid., 73.

¹²² Ibid., 82.

¹²³ Ibid., 83.

stratified historical formation which refers back to a diagram of forces as though it were its outside.”¹²⁴ Deleuze insists on this dimension of Foucault’s thought: force refers to an irreducible outside, “an outside which is farther away than any external world.” The two forms of exteriority (sayability and visibility) are external to one another and heterogeneous, which is to say that seeing and speaking do not converge on a given object (this is Foucault’s transformation of phenomenology into epistemology). There is necessarily a disjunction between speaking and seeing. Seeing and speaking are forms of knowledge, but “thinking addresses itself to an outside that has no form.”¹²⁵

Seeing is thinking, and speaking is thinking, but thinking occurs in the interstice, or the disjunction between seeing and speaking...thinking belongs to the outside in so far as the latter, an ‘abstract storm,’ is swallowed up by the interstice between seeing and speaking...thinking is not the innate exercise of a faculty, but must become thought. Thinking does not depend on a beautiful interiority that would reunite the visible and articulable elements, but is carried under the intrusion of an outside that eats into the interval and forces or dismembers the internal.¹²⁶

Thought always operates in relation to the outside, but the thought of the outside is doubly genitive: the thought of the outside. The thought of the outside is the unthought.

The question arises: there is an outside, there is power, there are sets of forces that act upon one another—but is there, therefore, an inside? An inside “deeper than any internal world, just as the outside is farther away than any external world?” Deleuze’s reply: “The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic

¹²⁴ Ibid., 84, my italics.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 87.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 87.

movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside.”¹²⁷ This inside of the outside is the subject: the subject is an effect of the folding of the outside. The subject is constituted as the ‘double’ of the outside, or rather the subject is the doubled-over-ness of the outside, as if a living torsion, or a vortex possessed by a duration. Deleuze notes that the theme or the concept that haunted Foucault was, in fact, the idea of the double. The passage is so profound that it is worth quoting Deleuze at length:

[T]he double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not the emanation of an ‘I,’ but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me.¹²⁸

Foucault’s brilliance lay in discovering a subjectivity that is derived from power and knowledge, but which is irreducible to them, which does not depend on them.¹²⁹ On the contrary, everything depends on the fold.¹³⁰ To think is to fold, “to double the outside with a coextensive inside,”¹³¹ but it is never the subject that folds; rather it is thought that folds—a fold is a differential relation of force to force.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 96-7.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 98, my italics.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 101.

¹³⁰ While Deleuze borrows this concept from Leibniz, Foucault incorporates it into his thinking, and we can trace this throughout Foucault’s work. But, it is Deleuze who develops this.

¹³¹ Ibid., 118.

Force is what belongs to the outside, since it is essentially a relation between other forces: it is inseparable in itself from the power to affect other forces (spontaneity) and to be affected by others (receptivity). But what comes about as a result [of the fold] *is a relation which force has with itself, a power to affect itself, an affect of self on self.*¹³²

The subject is not the founding, intentional subject of phenomenology; neither is the subject merely given as such, as if pre-determined by a transcendent power. The subject is constituted within the given:¹³³ subjectivity is a struggle, a psycho-bio-cosmic battle of forces, what Foucault calls “a politics of truth.”¹³⁴ “The struggle for subjectivity presents itself,” writes Deleuze, “as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis.”¹³⁵ Foucault himself asked the crucial question: “At what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves?”¹³⁶ What are the sets of forces that allow a truth to be produced? What or where is the fold from which one can speak truthfully about oneself? More profoundly: to what extent can such a ‘speaking truthfully about oneself’ be considered a form or a mode of resistance to power? A fold of the outside, folded back against itself—against power?

¹³² Ibid., 101.

¹³³ Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 107. And see also pages 112-13: “To the extent that principles sink their effect into the depths of the mind, the subject, which is this very effect, becomes more and more active and less and less passive. It was passive in the beginning, it is active in the end. This confirms the idea that subjectivity is in fact a process, and that an inventory must be made of the diverse moments of this process. To speak like Bergson, let us say that the subject is an imprint or an impression, left by principles, that it progressively turns into a machine capable of using this impression.”

¹³⁴ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (New York: Picador, 2007), 3.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 106.

¹³⁶ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, “Structuralism and Post-structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault” (New York: The New Press, 1999), 444.

Thinking topologically about the world as a pure surface and integrating the poetic rhythm of Deleuze into this project necessarily points to the proliferation of forces that are at play: reaching back to Lucretius, Spinoza, to then Nietzsche, Bergson, Foucault, and beyond. Folding the fold back against itself is necessarily folding against the multiplicity of forces that are at play, identified as power, in Deleuze and Foucault. The force of matter materializes in the language of power for Deleuze and Foucault, but should not be reduced to power that is merely imaginative; it is both productive and material. There are material forces, visible and invisible, that should be accounted for and woven into the discussion of a material duration. This braids together the vital impulse of Bergson with Deleuze and Foucault and captures a new theory of force, contained but not solidified in the fold.

Using the fold as not only an expression of force but also as the real material becoming in time helps further mobilize materiality in distinct ways. I think this is particularly important for my own work with bodies—they are material folds that are becoming and the force of the folding is precisely the material becoming that Deleuze excavates when speaking about the unfolding of reality, which is rooted in the fold of material becomings.

“New Materialists”

The New Materialists utilize such thinkers as those discussed above, in addition to the ones discussed in chapters one and two. While the New Materialist movement has been an important theoretical enterprise (and has provided the resources for this dissertation), it is important to note that there was scholarship penned prior to this ‘school’s’ thinking and we should be critical to interrogate the modifier ‘new’ relative to

New Materialism. The scholarship that is now part of the New Materialists is a recovery of materialism that seeks to address race, class, gender, sexuality, and the overwhelming reality of the anthropocene. In many ways, New Materialism has taken the overwhelming humanist and science studies work and theorized the posthumanist orientation relative to matter. It is not a denial of the human, but an intentional decentering of the human (the Man) and a consideration that matter is vitally alive and enchanted. I have positioned my own thinking and analysis of Gloria Anzaldúa as part of the New Materialist enterprise, addressing similar issues that scholars as that of Rosi Braidotti and others. Rosi Braidotti and other feminists have charted a new contour of the new materialist enterprise. It has been coined ‘feminist new materialism.’ Feminist new materialism advocates for a new turn in the concepts of agency and biology that further entangles ontology, epistemology, and ethics. Taken from her article, “The Implications of the New Materialisms for Feminist Epistemology,” Samantha Frost writes the following

Feminists drawing on the physical and biological sciences increasingly repudiate the notion that biology and matter are passive or inert and instead recognize the agency of biology or matter in worldly phenomena and social and political behavior. Such ‘new materialist’ work challenges the linear models of causation that underlie constructivist analyses of the ways power shapes the subjects and objects of knowledge. It provokes feminist epistemologists to develop models of causation and explanation that can account for the complex interactions through which the social, the biological, and the physical emerge, persist, and transform.¹³⁷

New Materialism refers to the material turn, a theoretical and pragmatic turn away from language and the overwhelming linguistic turn that is advanced by post-

¹³⁷ Samanta Frost, “The Implications of the New Materialisms for Feminist Epistemology.”

structuralism, post-modernisms and the deconstruction of French theory. New Materialism is a category of theories that were generated as a response to the linguistic turn that seeks to destabilize language as the priority for what constructs reality. Infused with commitments to specific knowledge-becoming practices and a history linked to feminisms, new materialism attempts to offer a different perspective to signification, materiality, and methodologies of crafting knowledge.

Knowledge-becoming practices refers to the way that new materialists think about things in the world and what we know about them. Historically, with theories attached to the Enlightenment, ontology (what is in the world) and epistemology (what we know about what is in the world) were considered to be separate and not affecting one another. What new materialists point out is that what is in the world and what we know about things in the world cannot be considered as different things. What is in the world and what we know about things in the world are constantly shaping one another. While post-structuralists explain that words are fluid (focusing on language), new materialists point out that materiality, too, is not stable, and also not passive. For some, it could be argued that new materialism is also an expression of poststructuralism.

When describing the term new materialisms in their now published book, *New Materialism*, Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn explain,

New materialism is then “new” in the sense that it is an attempt to ‘leap into the future without adequate preparation in the present, through becoming, a movement of becoming-more and becoming-other, which involves the orientation to the creation of the new, to an unknown future,

what is no longer recognizable in terms of the present.’ In art this analysis could be the study of matter and meaning.¹³⁸

Similar to poststructuralism, new materialism considers the future as open to countless possibilities that promises no salvation.

Rosi Braidotti

Rosi Braidotti coined the term ‘New Materialism.’¹³⁹ In Braidotti’s contribution to Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook’s *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* she coined the term “neo-materialism” and provided a genealogy of it. Focusing on theories of the subject, one of the red threads running through her work, her genealogy “Descartes’ nightmare, Spinoza’s hope, Nietzsche’s complaint, Freud’s obsession, Lacan’s favorite fantasy”¹⁴⁰ is followed by a definition of the subject, the “I think” as the body of which it is an idea, which we see as the emblem of the new materialism:

A piece of meat activated by electric waves of desire, a text written by the unfolding of genetic encoding. Neither a sacralised inner sanctum, nor a pure socially shaped entity, the enfleshed Deleuzian subject is rather an ‘in-between’: it is a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects. A mobile entity, an enfleshed sort of memory that repeats and is capable of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations, while remaining faithful to itself. The Deleuzian body is ultimately an embodied memory.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn, *New Materialism*, 7.

¹³⁹ Evidence of this is Rosi Braidotti’s article in *Gilles Deleuze and Feminist Theory*.

¹⁴⁰ Braidotti 2000, 159

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 159.

In this text Braidotti remains close to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze when developing the new materialism. The term, however, can already be found in *Patterns of Dissonance*, where she states

a general direction of thought is emerging in feminist theory that situates the embodied nature of the subject, and consequently the question of alternatively sexual difference or gender, at the heart of matter. [...] This leads to a radical re-reading of materialism, away from its strictly Marxist definition. [...] The neo-materialism of Foucault, the new materiality proposed by Deleuze are [...] a point of no return for feminist theory,¹⁴²

and in *Nomadic Subjects* where it is stated that “What emerges in poststructuralist feminist reaffirmations of difference is [...] a new materialist theory of the text and of textual practice.”¹⁴³ Braidotti writes about the importance of “genealogy,” and how is it that the full-fledged conceptualization of the new materialism came about in a text that focused on the philosophy of Deleuze.

Particular to Braidotti’s materialism is not only a close affiliation with Deleuzian philosophy but also a commitment to feminism. Braidotti’s theories become a dominant voice in European feminist theorizing, and her theories are rooted in the materialism of Deleuze and Althusser. Rosi Braidotti examines genealogy and the conceptualizing of new materialism in the following interview:

You’re right in pointing out the progressive development of and identification with the label “neo-materialism” within the corpus of my nomadic thought. *Patterns of Dissonance* announces my general project outline in theoretical terms, which are expressed in the mainstream language that is typical of book versions of former PhD dissertations.

¹⁴² Braidotti 1991, 263–6.

¹⁴³ Braidotti 1994, 154.

Then there follows a trilogy, composed by *Nomadic Subjects*, *Metamorphoses* and *Transpositions*. *Nomadic Subjects*—which incidentally has just been re-issued by Columbia University Press in a totally revised second edition seventeen years after its original publication (Braidotti 2011b)—already has a more controversial message and a more upbeat style. *Metamorphoses* and *Transpositions* pursue the experiment in a conceptual structure that has grown more complex and rhizomatic and a style that attempts to do justice to this complexity, while not losing touch with the readers altogether.

More theoretically, I would argue that, throughout the 1980's, a text such as Althusser's "Pour un matérialisme aléatoire" had established a consensus across the whole spectrum of his students—Foucault, Deleuze, Balibar. It was clear that contemporary materialism had to be redefined in the light of recent scientific insights, notably psychoanalysis, but also in terms of the critical enquiry into the mutations of advanced capitalism. It was understood that the post-'68 thinkers had to be simultaneously loyal to the Marxist legacy, but also critical and creative in adapting it to the fast-changing conditions of their historicity. That theoretico-political consensus made the term "materialist" both a necessity and a banality for some poststructuralists. Leading figures in the linguistic turn, such as Barthes and Lacan, wrote extensively and frequently about "the materiality of the sign." In a way there was no real need to add the prefix "neo-" to the new materialist consensus at that point in time. That, however, will change.¹⁴⁴

Here, it is clear that today's "New Materialism" is mobilized because of ancient philosophy, post-structuralism, and leading feminist and gender/sex theories. There are also different 'strands' in today's New Materialism that takes science and technology seriously, the study of post-humanism, queer materiality, assemblages, and authors seeking to establish a more robust theory concerning race and materialism. In the same interview, Braidotti continues:

What is clear is that by the mid-1990's the differences among the various strands and branches of the post-structuralist project were becoming more

¹⁴⁴ New Materialism, Interviews w/ Braidotti.

explicit. The hegemonic position acquired by the linguistic branch—developed via psychoanalysis and semiotics into a fully-fledged deconstructive project that simply conquered intellectually the United States—intensified the need for clearer terms of demarcation and of theoretical definition. Thus “neo-materialism” emerges as a method, a conceptual frame and a political stand, which refuses the linguistic paradigm, stressing instead the concrete yet complex materiality of bodies immersed in social relations of power.

At that point, it became clear to me that the genealogical line that connected me to Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze also marked a distinctive tradition of thought on issues of embodiment and political subjectivity. The terminological differences between this branch and the deconstructive one also became sharper, as did the political priorities. Accordingly, “nomadic subjects” is neither about representation nor about recognition but rather about expression and actualization of practical alternatives. Gilles Deleuze—from his (smoky) seminar room at Vincennes—provided lucid and illuminating guidance to those involved in the project of redefining what exactly is the “matter” that neo-materialism is made of. Things get more conceptually rigorous from that moment on.¹⁴⁵

New Materialism grew from the catacombs of Althusser and Deleuze (and Foucault) to be a full-fledged discourse that takes feminist theorizing to new, profound levels, queer theory beyond identity politics, and theories of being and humanity that transcend stabilized notions of ontology. It is here in New Materialist discourse that a different ontology emerges, that of becoming. Important to the New Materialist discourse is the ways in which they utilize varying components of force and matter to make their own distinction regarding materiality. In many ways, it is a recovery of both Deleuze and Althusser, which utilize Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Foucault. The force of materiality for New Materialists lie in the careful negotiation of the insistence on language in post-

¹⁴⁵ New Materialist Interviews, Braidotti.

structuralist's thought and a move to a more material orientation of all things. In this sense, then, their ontology is loaded with contours of becoming, and can only be analyzed through the lenses of becoming different, which is the acknowledgement of the positivity of difference becoming material.

Notable New Materialist thinkers that recover Lucretius, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Deleuze, among others, are Rosi Braidotti, Jane Bennett, Vicky Kirby, Karen Barad, and Mel Chen. I mention these thinkers, because I believe they are making important contributions to the discourse of New Materialism. They are, in many ways, in line with the quality and kind of thinking that I am attempting to produce around materiality and bodies.

Rosi Braidotti's work has been a leading feature in New Materialism. It is how I came to the discourse, myself. Braidotti's work, as a New Materialist, started with *Patterns of Dissonance*. As a reworked dissertation, this book pulls together issues of gender with philosophy in material ways. The trilogy, which followed, expanded upon her material philosophy and developed a substantive methodology, that of nomadism, which directly points to her own life and also the work of Gilles Deleuze. Braidotti has continued to write and publish in the field of New Materialism, and she is a leading figuring now with those thinkers who are using New Materialism to think and analyze post-humanism. I continue to follow her work, but am aware that she is deeply Euro-centric and attention to indigeneity and other differences are not central to her work. While she has written on issues of cosmopolitanism, I think she does not adequately underscore the radical differences that irrupt the cosmos.

Braidotti's materialism is a materialism that privileges matter over language.¹⁴⁶ Material is prior to language for Braidotti, which makes Braidotti an interesting post-structuralist. Yet, we see in Braidotti's work a new style and grammar of materialism that brings bodies into the fore, and her theorizing matter and bodies foregrounds the work that I am attempting in this dissertation by addressing the materiality of bodies. Braidotti, also, should be read in contrast to Judith Butler's work, who places language prior to matter, though seeks to develop a co-constitutive framework where matter and bodies co-exist.

Jane Bennett

Another thinker central to New Material debates is Jane Bennett. In Bennett's 2001 text, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, she develops her own account of materialism with the emphasis on enchantment.¹⁴⁷ In this book, Bennett begins to generate a new materialist account and does so by placing philosophy in conversation with ethical practices.¹⁴⁸ Believing that theory matters, Bennett fashions a text out of complex philosophical ideas, materializing them into creative attachments (with other theories and between theories) and then finds the place of enchantment, the place where matter emerges as alive and living, or is in a "state of wonder, and one of the distinctions of this state is the temporary suspension of

¹⁴⁶ While this may indicate binary thinking, what I mean by the privileging of matter over language is in direct opposition to Butler's privilege language over matter in *Bodies That Matter*, page 69.

¹⁴⁷ Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁸ I found this a helpful way of thinking about ethics (in terms of practices) that stem from theorizing philosophical themes and ideas.

chronological time and bodily movement.”¹⁴⁹ The rehabilitation of enchantment does not spiritualize matter, but rather challenges this view, and establishes a theory where matter can be full of genuine wonder, and this wonder is crucial to motivating ethical behaviors. I find Bennett important to mention, because in many ways Anzaldúa develops her understanding of the world/universe in similar ways. The difference between the two is that in many ways Bennett’s materiality is spirit phobic, and Anzaldúa generates a materialism that is certainly alive and animated, but is also likely alive with spirits.

In her other materialist book, Bennett, for example, writes an entire manuscript on material entanglements and considers everything from trash to bacteria and analyzes the ways in which these features of our material world are in fact, material. In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, she details issues of the force of matter and lifts up Bergson as the philosopher to whom we should pay careful attention, spending a significant time on the history of vital materialism: from Spinoza, Nietzsche, Thoreau, Darwin, Adorno, and Deleuze, along with Bergson. In *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett shifts her focus on people and humanity’s experience of things to an analysis of things themselves and discusses the materiality of things as having a particular force of life, or vitalism. This book is a book in political theory and is an attempt to reshape political theory for it to do a better job of recognizing and evaluating the active participating of nonhuman forces in events. Things have a material force, argues Bennett, and recognizing this force is important to developing a robust political theory.

¹⁴⁹ Bennett, 5.

Bennett's materialism from her *Enchantment* book to *Vibrant Matter* details not only the material turn but also the radical aliveness that matter embodies. Also, the aliveness central to Bennett's work mobilizes a grammar of becoming for materialism that brings together biology, politics, philosophy, and other social theories. The New Materialists continue the effort in illustrating the force of becoming as something central in materialism. I find Bennett's work important to mention as I discern the becoming reality of the materiality of bodies, something Bennett alludes to in *Vibrant Matter*.

Important, too, is Bennett's language of attachment, which highlights the reality of an entanglement of matter and material reality. Her materialism is one that is radically connected throughout time and history—a vibrancy that has cosmic implications. The material attachments of Bennett's work reinvigorates new contours of becoming and allow for new folds, new pleats, that embody the cosmic vibrations of materialism.

Vicki Kirby

Kirby, in *Telling Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal*,¹⁵⁰ develops a theory of corporeality by analyzing several feminist theorists: Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell. This book is an analysis of post-structuralist feminism that seeks to establish a new 'turn' in analyzing bodies, specifically corporeality. This analysis of representation is recognition of the power of representation and the politics of representation and the ways in which matter is mutually imbricated in the politics of representation. This book is also a critique of the culture that stems from feminist theory that focuses on the politics of

¹⁵⁰ Vicki Kirby, *Telling Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal*, (New York: Routledge, 1997).

language, instead of matter. *Telling Flesh* is an important text when thinking about the matter of bodies and corporeality, ways that the politics and philosophies of representation cannot solidify material bodies. In a later book, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*,¹⁵¹ this text illustrates an engagement with aspects of deconstruction that have yet to be explored by feminist theory. Particularly, Kirby illustrates that deconstruction's implications have been curtailed by the assumption that issues of textuality and representation are specific to the domain of culture. While Kirby recognizes the importance of Derrida's claim "there is no outside of text," she argues that theories of cultural construction developed since the linguistic turn have inadvertently reproduced the very binaries they intended to question, such as those between nature and culture, matter and ideation, and fact and value. What this book accomplishes is reconceptualizing deconstruction and deconstructive terms by looking into cybernetics, biology, forensics, mathematics, and physics. Doing this, Kirby fundamentally rethinks deconstruction and its relevance to nature, embodiment, materialism, and science.

Karen Barad

Karen Barad's work, stemming from theoretical physics, seeks to make matter (opposed to language) matter again. She does this by using Niels Bohr's experiments and the quantum cuts to show how materiality performs a particular style of mattering in the world.

¹⁵¹ Vicki Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

In *Meeting the Universe Half-way: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Barad establishes herself as part of the New Materialism movement. Though several of the chapters were published as articles, this book (at nearly 600 pages) has become an important resource for New Materialists.¹⁵² Using Niels Bohr's philosophy-physics, she proposes an account of material-discursive practices. She argues that every entity is an entity that is becoming, intra-actively. Material, observations, and agencies are not independent of one another; they are all intra-actively becoming material-discursive. This book also focuses on ethical practices and details the ways that ethical practices and consequences are intrinsic to the web of becoming.

In one of the more important chapters (and article that was published several years before the book was published), Barad discusses how matter comes to matter. In the essay, Barad begins by illustrating the ways in which language has been given too much power, which I think is important in rethinking why materialism is so acutely important today:

Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every "thing"—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation. The ubiquitous puns on "matter" do not, alas, mark a rethinking of the key concepts (materiality and signification) and the relationship between them. Rather, it seems to be symptomatic of the extent to which matters of "fact" (so to speak) have been replaced with matters of signification (no scare quotes here). Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an

¹⁵² Barad was featured at the 2014 Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium at Drew Theological School, convened by Catherine Keller and Elías Ortega-Aponté. I presented a paper on intra-active ontologies of becoming there and experienced the weight of Barad's work among theologians, ethicists, and other religion scholars.

important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter.

What compels the belief that we have a direct access to cultural representations and their content that we lack toward the things represented? How did language come to be more trustworthy than matter? Why are language and culture granted their own agency and historicity while matter is figured as passive and immutable, or at best inherits a potential for change derivatively from language and culture? How does one even go about inquiring after the material conditions that have led us to such a brute reversal of naturalist beliefs when materiality itself is always already figured within a linguistic domain as its condition of possibility?¹⁵³

Here, Barad criticizes the ways that language has been elevated in indicting post-structuralists and post-modernists that we've given it far too great a power. What Barad offers is a performative standpoint or positionally that is different from that of Butler's theory of performativity. She says:

A performative understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things. Performativity, properly construed, is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real. Hence, in ironic contrast to the misconception that would equate performativity with a form of linguistic monism that takes language to be the stuff of reality, performativity is actually a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve.¹⁵⁴

Here, Barad offers us a way of moving through the tradition of the linguistic turn to something more material by recognizing the representationalism of language, the

¹⁵³ Barad, 614.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 614.

power we have endowed language, and a chance to reposition ourselves relative to the power that has been given to disciplines like ontology and epistemology. Doing this and re-imagining a new material performativity that in effect moves,

toward performative alternatives to representationalism shifts the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g., do they mirror nature or culture?) to matters of practices/ doings/actions. I would argue that these approaches also bring to the forefront important questions of ontology, materiality, and agency, while social constructivist approaches get caught up in the geometrical optics of reflection where, much like the infinite play of images between two facing mirrors, the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen. Moving away from the representationalist trap of geometrical optics, I shift the focus to physical optics, to questions of diffraction rather than reflection. Diffractively reading the insights of feminist and queer theory and science studies approaches through one another entails thinking the “social” and the “scientific” together in an illuminating way. What often appears as separate entities (and separate sets of concerns) with sharp edges does not actually entail a relation of absolute exteriority at all. Like the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries—displaying shadows in “light” regions and bright spots in “dark” regions—the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of “exteriority within.” This is not a static relationality but a doing—the en- actment of boundaries—that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability. My aim is to contribute to efforts to sharpen the theoretical tool of performativity for science studies and feminist and queer theory endeavors alike, and to promote their mutual consideration. In this article, I offer an elaboration of performativity—a materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration—that allows matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its ongoing “intra-activity.” It is vitally important that we understand how matter matters.¹⁵⁵

The materiality that Barad develops in this essay is important and brings together ancient, modern, and contemporary forms of understanding matter. It is an important move in destabilizing the solidity of language in favor of the becoming nature of matter. What this

¹⁵⁵ Barad, 617.

does is position politics as an effort to destabilize the representationalism of language and in turn privileges a reality that is materially becoming that also impacts our production of knowledge making practices and our actions in the world. Herein lies Barad's ethico-onto-epistemological frame.

Mel Chen

The last New Materialist that I want to mention is Mel Chen because of Chen's ability to bridge together queer theory, racial mattering, and affect. In their¹⁵⁶ book, *Animacies*, Chen draws on recent debates about sexuality, race, and affect to examine how matter that is considered insensate, immobile, or deathly animates cultural lives. Chen investigates the blurry division between the living and the dead, or that which is beyond the human or animal, a binary that Chen disrupts throughout the book. Within the field of linguistics, animacy has been described variously as a quality of agency, awareness, mobility, sentience, or aliveness. Chen turns to cognitive linguistics to stress how language habitually differentiates the animate and the inanimate. Expanding this construct, Chen argues that animacy undergirds much that is pressing and indeed volatile in contemporary culture, from animal rights debates to biosecurity concerns.

Despite Chen's use of cognitive linguistics, Chen does not modify their arguments in the discursivity of language, but rather focuses on the materiality of language and what stems from material cultural to help further disrupt the habits of animation and inanimate

¹⁵⁶ Mel Chen uses the gender pronouns "they, them, their," which is a move outside of the traditional gender binary that privileges normalizes he and she.

realities. One of the few books that uses race, queer theory, and affect in the discussion of materialism, Chen's book is an important one to name in this project.

It is part of the New Materialist account in that Chen seeks to theorize the space between animation and in-animation—between organic and inorganic. There is still a material reality in the gap, and it is the gap where the force of becoming settles and erupts. I do not suggest that the gap is stable, no; it is a site of radical becoming, an animacy that brings together both language and material in critical ways that disrupts the privileging of language over matter and instead allows for matter to become.

Anzaldúa as a Materialist

Addressing Gloria Anzaldúa as a materialist, as I do in this dissertation, is to situate her materialism as something that is inherent to her work; I do not read materialism into her work, but rather recognize the material contours within her theory-writing-art. In this project, Anzaldúan materiality resides at the intersection of Deleuze and New Materialisms, to expose her animated lines of flight, and to further illustrate the emergence of a queer materialism that takes all forms of matter seriously to include the feature of her ontology of becoming. Anzaldúa defines the universe in this way, which she identifies as material: "The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow."¹⁵⁷ Contained within Anzaldúa's very definition is the element of force or becoming, something that I have traced through each of the periods of matter

¹⁵⁷ The Gloria E. Anzaldúa Archives, (Box 102, folder 2) 1999.

discussed previously. What is different in Anzaldúa's definition of materiality, or new, is the language of 'animated lines of flight.' To the Deleuzian reader, they will recognize this phrase as being part of his work. It is unclear whether Anzaldúa read Gilles Deleuze; I was unable to unearth any evidence at the Archives when I visited in 2012. However, Anzaldúa did read Bergson, and made this claim:

Henri Bergson proposed the idea of panpsychism, attributing 'consciousness-like properties to all entities from atoms to microorganisms to animals.' Panpsychism means mind everywhere, what indigenous people believed—that everything is full of spirits. David Chalmers believes that consciousness is an irreducible thing-in-itself, along with matter, energy, space and time.¹⁵⁸

Anzaldúa, however, incorporated Bergson into her thinking and posited the above remark leading readers to believe that she did believe this element of animation is related to all living things—is full of spirits and is materializing. In this sense, then, one could argue that Anzaldúa's materiality is a spirited materialism, animating all that is living in the world. In my study, I would like to call this *physiomateriality*,¹⁵⁹ an intersection of the radical vitalism of life with the animated lines of flight that is materialism. "Radical vitalism" in the sense that Anzaldúa's animated lines of flight are rooted in a generative becoming. *Physiomateriality* brings together the strands of contemporary matter with the materialism that Anzaldúa advocates.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1999.

¹⁵⁹ *Physiomateriality* is my attempt to privilege the reality of movement and becoming that is central to matter, and this language of physicality points to what I am referring to as a generative materiality.

The intersection of the philosophy-poetry of Gloria Anzaldúa and the new metaphysics of Henri Bergson is found also in Anzaldúa's claim concerning David Chalmers who "believes that consciousness is an irreducible thing-in-itself, along with matter, energy, space and time."¹⁶⁰ The convergence of mind and matter in the work of Anzaldúa intersects with Bergson's theories, which privilege elements of memory. Memory lies at the intersection of matter and mind. A recurring theme in the work of Anzaldúa is the issue of becoming, which I interpret in ontological terms, and tied specifically to time, not space. The themes which reoccur in Anzaldúa must not be analyzed in a linear fashion or interpreted within a stable matrix of linearity; time for Anzaldúa is the materialization of differentiation that is imbued with a form of aliveness, an ever-widening reality of potential, but this acknowledgement should not undermine Anzaldúa's own commitment to a Taoist / mystical sense of time. This is the creatively vital impulse (*élan vital*) that Anzaldúa deploys that is yoked with a spirit of indigeneity, and there is also a physical material reality to Anzaldúa's vitalism.

Noting the aliveness that is part of both Bergson and Anzaldúa, it is important to connect Anzaldúa's philosophy of materiality with Bergson's vitalism to illustrate the ways in which Anzaldúa's writing-theory-art materiality is also framed by a vital becoming. Again in the archives, Anzaldúa notes the following: "The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow." (Box 102, folder 2) 1999. The

¹⁶⁰ Kelli Zaytoun, when visiting the Anzaldúa archives, shared this with me.

flows that are central to both Bergson and Anzaldúa's thinking are forms of vitality that spark an internal movement of differentiation. This is seen in the poetry of Anzaldúa, especially in the early writing of her poem, *Tihueque*. Using Anzaldúa's first publication, *Tihueque*, I draw connections to the Anzaldúa rhythms of material vitalism that recur throughout her writing, and intersect with Bergson's development of vitalism that is seen in *Creative Evolution*. The recurrence of vitalistic themes in Anzaldúa's philosophy-poetry create new contours for Anzaldúa to be read and interpreted as a significant contributor to today's social and political philosophy, and especially New Materialism. Noting the ontology, epistemology, and ethics that motivate Anzaldúa's theories and pairing her with Bergson, not only helps buttress Anzaldúa as a metaphysical philosopher, but also mobilizes Anzaldúa's philosophy-poetry as part of the queer philosophical enterprise.

Not only do I think that physiomateriality is an important term to frame Anzaldúa's materiality, but it also captures the queer contours that are apparent in Anzaldúa's work. By this I mean that the emergence of something akin to "queer matter" is inherent to my thinking and framing of physiomateriality. The excess of movement and becoming is one such way that queerness destabilizes the already active material reality. In this sense, then, one can characterize Anzaldúa's materiality as a queer materiality that sits at the intersection of theorists like Deleuze, Braidotti, Bennett, Barad, and Chen. The queer contours of Anzaldúa's materiality cut across stable human experience and incorporate a planetary opening that becomes in my thinking a physiomateriality. The excess of movement and becoming further destabilizes matter. The reality of becoming that is central to the agential movement of matter helps further illustrate queer contours of

becoming different. The acknowledgement of ‘becoming different’ is a process, a becoming, a change of the internal networking and self-organizing reality of matter. The acknowledgement that matter is changing, active in its nature of becoming, signals the potential to recognize this becoming different as a queer moment of materialization. To suggest that queer matter is simply the acknowledgement of active matter, in opposition to passive matter, is not enough for this project. I suggest queer matter as the process of becoming different, an ever-repeating cycle of difference and repetition that materializes outside of a norm existing. Anzaldúa’s animated lines of flight that are material become a queer materialism.

Tihueque¹⁶¹

One year in a distant century during Teoteco,
The 12th month of the solar year Five Rabbit,
in the reign of the Four-Water Sun,,
I carved 12,000 hearts in honor
of Huitziltopochtli, God of War,
who made the sun rise each morning.
In each succeeding year thereafter
ceremonial drunkenness robbed me
as many hearts embraced the furnace sacrifice.
Only the hearts of the finest Náhuatl braves
and luckiest prisoners and warriors
at the sacred flesh.
Today I lie in a musty museum
and register 5.5 on the Mohs scale.
But my origin, my volcanic obsidian,
hard as granite
comes in good stead.
In my childhood I was a mirror.
I threw a vitreous luster, dark-green.
But now the iron oxide running in my veins
dulls my edge

¹⁶¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*.

and the air bubbles trapped in me
reflect my age
Time passes.
I rest and await the flesh.

Noting that Anzaldúa advocated for a material universe that was alive or motivated by a generative force and animated lines of flight, a *physiomateriality*, it is sufficient to argue that her materialism can be seen in this poem. Though I've analyzed this poem in the first two chapters, I have focused on the element of becoming, or force, that is inherent in this poem. An important thought in this chapter is the recognition of utilizing the tools of contemporary matter, and the integrated analysis that a stone knife is a deterritorialized boulder, rough strata sharpened to a cutting edge. That is the *physiomateriality* that is becoming in this poem, whose queer contours shape and shift throughout Anzaldúa's work, and is present when thinking about the ways in which this recognition of materialism is a becoming materiality.

While Anzaldúa theorizes a type of flow of becoming, situated in time, not space, Anzaldúa's poem also points toward a never-ending fold (*pli*) that is both material and discursive. While there is an internal movement native to Anzaldúa's poetry, the *pli* and flow become another kind of force that ushers in new contours of becoming. I utilize Barad's 'material-discursive' formula to accentuate the *physiomateriality* emerging in Anzaldúa's poetry. It is a material corporeality of becoming that then gives shape to the bodily contours of epistemology and ontology in her later work. Here, in this first published poem, there is a material shape of a body, deterritorialized as a knife, but always becoming. It is here that we begin to have an awareness of the nature of becoming

for Anzaldúa's work and the ways that her thought is aligned with New Materialists. It is not a co-constitutive network of language and material, it is matter becoming bodily.

Also central to this poem and the native materialism of it is that the knife, a material body, reshapes our thinking concerning bodies. This poem resituates bodies as having a robust materiality that is prior to language, something that Butler will contest. Framing the force of becoming in material as a central element in a materialist philosophy also helps foreground the terms under which bodies will emerge. In the following two chapters, I outline bodies as they have emerged throughout philosophy and feminist theory. I utilize these two chapters to help reshape and recast our thinking around bodies, and uprooting bodies from the particularity of human bodies. This is a move beyond the anthropocene and an attempt to show the becoming nature of the materiality of bodies. I believe Anzaldúa's work does this for us and when paired with the philosophy of materialism and other thinkers, a new robust framework concerning bodies irrupts the landscape. In many ways, this irruption is the interrelatedness of ontology-epistemology-ethics, and we begin to see traces of an ethics of interrelatedness when we cast bodies in material terms. There is a sense of radical interconnection (or a physics of non-reparability) that is central to these material contours. Becoming is central to this ethics of interrelatedness and its particular force, though a non-locality, is material in nature.

CHAPTER SIX: THE LOGIC OF THE BODY:

A GENEALOGY OF A MATERIAL SOCIO-SENSORY REALITY

We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass. Arrive at the magic formula we all seek—PLURALISM = MONISM—via all the dualisms that are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever arranging.

—Gilles Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*¹⁶²

The account of matter and bodies in the 17th century does not render materiality or bodies as dynamic becoming features in the world. I take up the issue of materiality and bodies, and the 17th-century thinkers I utilize (DesCartes and Spinoza) provide for me a way to invigorate bodies with a type of dynamism, and I do this by looking at the work of Gilles Deleuze and Maurice Merleau-Ponty on bodies. Having laid the foundation of force or becoming in previous chapters helps frame the discussion of dynamism in matter and bodies for this chapter. The plumb line throughout this dissertation is the philosophy-poetry of Gloria Anzaldúa, her theory of a vibrant materiality and speculative approach to theorizing. I utilize the term “speculative” as a way to suggest that Anzaldúa’s work takes up the issue of correlationalism in that she theorizes beyond the bounds of human finitude

¹⁶² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 20-21.

by initiating the posthumanist turn before it was popular.¹⁶³ I mention this to suggest that both matter and bodies in Anzaldúa should not be stabilized as human matter, necessarily, nor should bodies be solidified as human bodies. Arguably, her move in opposition to Spinoza's principle of sufficient reason and Kantian correlationalism is seen throughout her work, but especially in her definition of things and matter. Anzaldúa's vibrancy locates materiality along the matrix of becoming, and here there are traces of Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in Anzaldúa's work, I suggest.

As a point of departure, this chapter functions as a history or genealogy of the body that traces four philosophers' understanding of the body: René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Gilles Deleuze. I begin with these four thinkers, because each of them details the body in specific ways that are useful signposts for my own research as I build upon the materiality of the body that is developed in the New Materialisms tradition and intersects with the work of Gloria Anzaldúa. I also suggest there are traces of Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty's philosophy that function as more than an additive to Anzaldúa's philosophy-poetry. Tracing Descartes, Spinoza, Deleuze, and Merleau-Ponty will lay a key foundation on which I can then introduce the thought and theory of Gloria Anzaldúa and how I think her understanding of the body is a type of

¹⁶³ I borrow correlationism from Meillessoux, who developed it as part of the speculative realist movement.

relational material and fiercely networked body, that I argue borrows from the philosophical tradition.¹⁶⁴

In this chapter, I argue that bodies are spirited material; they are ‘called’ into being/becoming both by their material reality and their material relational processes, networked across multiple differences (bear with me, I will address this later on), but before I can detail ‘this’ kind of body, I must survey the body that is found throughout the particular history of philosophy of four specific thinkers.¹⁶⁵ Bodies are complicated, and a turn to Descartes, Spinoza, Merleau-Ponty, and Deleuze helps elucidate these complications and further helps mobilize my thinking toward a more material body that I see in the work of Anzaldúa. Prior to discussing Anzaldúan materiality and borderland bodies, I provide a brief, but detailed section on Cartesian dualism and Spinoza’s *Ethics* and his attention to materiality. Further, I look to Maurice Merleau-Ponty to help give form and shape to the materialization of the body in queer phenomenological terms, along with scholars who deal with corporeality, like Elizabeth Grosz and Vicky Kirby.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ When I visited the Gloria E. Anzaldúa archives in August of 2012, I discovered that Anzaldúa drafted considerable notes and even mentioned Western philosophers by whom she was either influenced, or was critiquing. Much of her written work is so nuanced, that it demands a careful reader of both the Western philosophical tradition and the thought and theory of Gloria Anzaldúa.

¹⁶⁵ There are two “Body Readers” that take up a serious investigation of the body throughout philosophy and other critical theories. I intentionally do not survey Lacan, Husserl, Irigaray, or Kristeva, and instead begin with Descartes’ dualism, Spinoza’s monism, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, and Deleuze’s poststructuralism/postmodernism.

¹⁶⁶ Kirby is important because she shows the failed materiality of Judith Butler.

Then, the Deleuzian body is that last theoretical stop fortifying my later move to Anzaldúan bodies that are fiercely networked in a relational becoming process.¹⁶⁷

René Descartes

Philosophy and the Western world have continued to eclipse the mattering¹⁶⁸ body, or what is often cited as the materiality of the body. In fact, the somatophobic lineage of Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes continues to shape philosophical positions concerning the body.¹⁶⁹ This somatophobia, as Grosz names it, privileges reason and the production of mind, over against the production of the body. Not even the twenty-first century can overcome the mind/body problem, or what is commonly referred to as (Cartesian) dualism. Feminist theory and feminist philosophy have both set out to challenge the existing dualism of the mind/body split, and the exclusion of bodies as a legitimate site of the production of knowledge.

What emerges with Descartes's dualism is the perpetuation of the conclusion that the nature of the mind (that is, a thinking, non-extended thing) is completely different from that of the body (that is, an extended, non-thinking thing). Therefore, it is possible

¹⁶⁷ While my focus is on the human body, I want to point out that Anzaldúa's theory of the body transcends the anthropocene and transgresses the strict humanism of feminist theory. I begin with a humanistic account of the body, so that I can migrate to a more posthumanist account of materiality and bodies.

¹⁶⁸ I use this phrase as a way to talk about the 'becoming body.' I argue that Anzaldúan bodies are a material reality, mattering and becoming, fiercely networked throughout the universe and beyond. I arrive at this critical awareness after reading Anzaldúa's work and identifying that she wrote about bodies, knowledge, and reality as a framework that is connected throughout the university.

¹⁶⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 5. This text presents a philosophy of the body from dualism forward and seeks to contextualized the female sexed body and uses corporeality as the means to theorize this type of "feminism."

for one to exist without the other. The mind is not material and is radically separate from the body. Descartes unassailable axiom was “cogito ergo sum,” which pointed toward an ontology having a particular *telos*. That, because the mind and body were two distinct substances and not one unified ‘thing’ or ‘object,’ the act of thinking does not interact with the substance that is a body, this reality points to multiple substances existing. Evident in the work of Descartes is the separation of the mind and the body, the strict dichotomy of mind and extension.¹⁷⁰ The body as a form of materiality for dualism is perhaps denigrated as being associated with the female, whereas the mind is male and rational.¹⁷¹ It has been, in many ways, a continuation of Plato’s *soma*: “that man (*sic*), a non-corporeal being, is trapped in the body, which is a dungeon (*sēma*).”¹⁷² The continuation of the mind/body split maps other binaries that proliferate throughout history: “mother (woman) and father (man), matter and form, mortal and immortal.”¹⁷³ These dualisms correspond to the body/mind split in that the second part of the binary (in this case, mind) is positive and the first part of the binary (body, for example) is negative.

¹⁷⁰ Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 311.

¹⁷¹ An example of the gendered nature of (in this case) body and mind can be found in Sheila Briggs, “A History of Our Own: What Would A Feminist History of Theology Look Like?” in *Horizons of Feminist Theology: Identity Tradition and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). In this article, Briggs details the emergence of a theory of gender in late antiquity by examining the 451 Council of Chalcedon. Briggs argues that one cannot accurately theorize the two natures of Christ without thinking about the role of gender. When one analyzes the Christological formulations of the two natures of Christ, one necessarily sees the role of gender enacted in forms of masculinity and femininity. Briggs argues that this has far reaching consequences for the Council (ecclesiastical, politics, etc).

¹⁷² Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco, eds, *The Body: A Reader*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 47-48.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 43.

The body for Descartes was not an expression of substance, or material. In his second meditation concerning the nature of the human mind, Descartes theorizes the body as a chimera.¹⁷⁴ “Body, shape, extension, movement, and place are all chimeras.”¹⁷⁵ The body, cited as a chimera, suggests that it is a mythical creature, and a useless theoretical concept that helped unify matter and things. The self or man was not finite material for Descartes, only a thinking thing.

The first is that, from the fact that the human mind, when turned in on itself, does not perceive itself to be anything other than a thinking thing, it does not follow that its nature or *essence* consists only in its being a thinking thing, such that the word only excludes everything else that also could perhaps be said to belong to the nature of the soul.¹⁷⁶

The mind, as a thinking thing, was the only certainty that Descartes was able to resolve, along with the certainty that God exists as a supremely good being. The thinking thing does not point toward the materiality of the thinking thing. Descartes omission that thought is also material and contributes to the cosmic vibrations of the material body that is becoming is what also perpetuates the body/mind split. Descartes denies that humans are an essential vibrant material body, elevating the mind and his ability to put thought in motion (or imagine), and resolves himself to be at least a “something.”¹⁷⁷

Am I not at least a something? But I have already denied that I have any senses and any body. Still I hesitate; for what follows from this? Am I so

¹⁷⁴ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3rd edition, translated by Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company), 1993,17.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁶ René Descartes, 7. This is from the Preface to the Reader.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 18.

tied to a body and to senses that I cannot exist without them? But I have persuaded myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world: no sky, no earth, no minds, no bodies.¹⁷⁸

Dualism, as the separation of the mind and body from the world (or nature) further established a scientific discourse that perpetuated the terms of objectivity. This has further implications for epistemology in that objective knowing practices were not connected to the material body and therefore cannot emerge as material knowledge or bodily knowledge. Cartesianism displaced the material body as impossible substances, separate, distinct, and not equal, for Descartes. Following Descartes immaterial thought is the reality that dualism creates a hierarchy. Our world today has followed this hierarchy where the mind is ‘higher’ than the body, most commonly understood today as the brain.¹⁷⁹ Cartesianism and its heirs do not deal adequately with the material body, and continually displace corporeality.¹⁸⁰ This is important to highlight because a mattering body as I theorize it and construct it provides the basis for becoming bodily. A mattering body reinscribes a corporeality that is thoroughly material, having the capacity to produce knowledge in its force of becoming bodily. Dualists can never produce this quality or kind of body. A mattering body is not only part of a relational ontology but also knit together with epistemic qualities that affirm the becoming reality

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹⁷⁹ I should mention Catherine Malabou’s work on *Becoming Brain*. She is located in the New Materialist camp and provides a materialist account for the brain.

¹⁸⁰ Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco, 43.

of becoming bodily. Anzaldúa's epistemology and ontology both support the material becoming bodily that displaces the binarism of dualism.

Descartes epistemology defines knowledge by using a method of doubt. In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*,¹⁸¹ Descartes theorizes about knowledge, existence, God, the body, and mind. This text frames his rationalist epistemology in terms of what can be known in reality and by certainty. Descartes insisted that we should doubt all that can be doubted, to find only that which is certain (knowledge should be built with/on a firm foundation). With a focus on certainty, Descartes mentions what forms of knowledge can come from senses. He writes how senses can deceive us, but perhaps some sensory knowledge is certain? In dreams there are clearly no senses that are certain. Everything is possible except math, because math is both predictable and certain. Even in dreams, math is certain, because there are no five-sided squares. Descartes' epistemology hinges on the value-form of certainty and rationalist foundationalism.¹⁸²

As Elizabeth Grosz explains, Cartesian dualism “establishes a gulf between mind and matter.”¹⁸³ She further indicates that reductionism can disavow the gulf, though problematically. Reducing either the mind to the body or the body to the mind is to in effect leave the dualism or interaction unexplained.¹⁸⁴ The body, as a complex system, is

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 5-16.

¹⁸² Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple*, 2nd edition, (New York: Doubleday, 1993). 181-202.

¹⁸³ Grosz, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Grosz, 7.

reduced to the sum of its parts. As a symptom of dualism, reductionism leaves the binary intact by denying any interaction between the mind and the body. The binary remains unexplained and therefore impossible to relate any sort of interaction between mind and body. What results in following dualism is the trajectory that reduces the connection to the evolving reality of nature.

Rationalism and idealism are the results of the attempt to explain the body and matter in terms of mind, ideas, or reason; empiricism and materialism are the results of attempts to explain the mind in terms of bodily experiences or matter.¹⁸⁵

Evident here is the rejection of reductionism as a sufficient means at solving the dualism dilemma. This, perhaps, is the limitation I see in all forms of dualism: that dualism ends in reductionism. This further displaces the material body and elevates the mind as the exemplary modality of being in the world. Spinoza responds to Cartesian dualism in his creation of a monist framework. Seen most clearly in the refusal to perpetuate the mind/body split and advocating for the mind being an object of the body, Spinoza's theory unifies the mind and body as compatible modes of being in the world. What I also find helpful about Spinoza is his turn to unifying Nature and finite extensions where humans enflesh parts of Spinoza's infinite Substance, or God. It is to his theory I now turn.

Benedict de Spinoza

Spinoza, a well-versed Cartesian scholar, argued against the scholarship that perpetuating the belief that there are multiple substances existing in the world; he also

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 7.

combated Descartes' method of doubt by utilizing the principle of sufficient reason. Though Spinoza was a determinist, it is his philosophy concerning matter relative to Substance that is key for this dissertation. Combatting the Cartesian dualism, which was hugely influential for many years, Spinoza questioned the terms within which Cartesianism is framed. The materiality of the body is my central focus in this dissertation, and finding support and evidence for this focus is seen most clearly in the philosophy of Spinoza, though I recognize there are limitations. I believe Spinoza creates a way to move beyond Cartesian dualism by his creation of what is often referred to as substance monism. Central to Spinoza's philosophy is the notion of an absolute and infinite substance—singular in both kind and number. Substance is infinite and nondivisible and therefore cannot be identified with or reduced to finite substances or things. Finite things are not substances but rather are modes of the one single substance. Elizabeth Grosz enumerates Spinoza's theory of substance that is extended as a finite mode (materialized human) is an individual entity (human or otherwise) and

is not self-subsistent but is a passing or provisional determination of the self-subsistent. Substance has potentially infinite attributes to express its nature. Each attribute adequately expresses substance insofar as it is infinite (the infinity of space, for example, expresses the attribute of extension), yet each attribute is also inadequate or incomplete insofar as it expresses substances only in one form. Extension and thought—body and mind—are two such attributes.¹⁸⁶

What Grosz captures in this quote from Spinoza is the manner in which each finite mode, extended from the infinite substance, relies on the relationality and intersubjectivity to the

¹⁸⁶ Grosz, 10-11.

one substance. The extended mode is not independent from the infinite substance. What Grosz also captures in this quote is that Spinoza theorized about the infinite number of possibilities an attribute could be.

What Spinoza offers in contrast to Descartes is a way to consider that attributes are merely different aspects of one and the same substance, inseparable from each other. Descartes' dualism renders two different and incompatible substances that are irreducible.

Matter and form are important for Spinoza, as is material and immaterial. For Spinoza, bodies are extensions of being or a finite expression, and any finite thing is matter. Bodies are finite material in Spinoza's reasoning.¹⁸⁷ The second part of Spinoza's *Ethics*, "Of Nature and Origin of the Mind," Spinoza details his the body in this way: (D1) "By body I understand a mode that in a certain and determinate way expresses God's essence insofar as he is considered as an extended thing" (See IP25C).¹⁸⁸ This definition of the body, formulated in the language of materiality as an 'extended thing' unifies the Cartesian split of mind/body dualism. Spinoza's definition of the body suggests that a part of God's essence is in the extended thing he calls a body. This mode for Spinoza is a material extension of God's essence.

His first axiom in the second part of his *Ethics* states that "The essence of man does not involve necessary existence, that is, from the order of Nature it can happen

¹⁸⁷ Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning*, Volume 2, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 33-35.

¹⁸⁸ Edwin Curley edited and trans., *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works: Benedict de Spinoza*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 115.

equally that this or that man does exist, or that he does not exist.”¹⁸⁹ Noting this and recalling the quote from Grosz, human existence relies on the relationship with substance. This is important later as I detail that there is a radical interconnectedness to all things. Noting this interrelatedness runs throughout the dissertation, and while Anzaldúa does not call this interrelatedness to all persons and things, “God,” she does invoke the language of Spirits. I believe this might point to a type of Animist thinking in Anzaldúa. Important here is noting the radical interconnectedness.

Following the relationship between the finite modes and the one substance, Spinoza continues with “P10: The being of substance does not pertain to the essence of man, or substance does not constitute the form of man.”¹⁹⁰ Man, according to Spinoza, is a finite ‘thing’ and an extension of the one substance.

Dem.: For the being of substance involves necessary existence (by IP7). Therefore, if the being of substance pertained to the essence of man, then substance being given, man would necessarily be given (by D2), and consequently man would exist necessarily, which (by A1) is absurd.¹⁹¹

Spinoza theorized about extended substance. There is just one extended substance, “not the totality of matter, but the totality of everything that is extended.”¹⁹² If what lies beyond the edges of the material world is something, then it is part of extended substance. Space is an example of this.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 116.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 115.

¹⁹¹ Edwin Curly, 121.

¹⁹² Jonathan Bennett, “Spinoza’s Metaphysics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 66.

Spinoza's theory of substance and matter is much more mathematical and logical than dynamic. An example of this is found on the first page of Spinoza's *Ethics* in his definitions "Of God" and demonstrated in geometric order. He says, "By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed."¹⁹³ Spinoza referred to the Principle of Sufficient Reason that each fact and each thing that exists has an explanation.¹⁹⁴ Logically unfolding in geometric order, Spinoza's theory of substance is not energized with the evolving reality of nature, something that I think New Materialists read into Spinoza's work. Later interpretations of Spinoza suggest that the infinite aspect of substance is an expression of matter as active in its becoming, and bodies are material reality as a result of matter's becomingness.¹⁹⁵

Spinoza uses the term "man" to build his theory of the body; this should not be confused with the more modernized "self" or "selfhood." "Man" for Spinoza is both mind and body, and is an extension of Spinoza's indeterminate being, and part of the sum; man or body is material. A body is similar in material quality as a pebble, for example, in that pebbles and bodies are comprised of the same material. "Matter is everywhere the same, and parts are distinguishable in it only insofar as we conceive matter to be qualitatively

¹⁹³ Ibid., 85.

¹⁹⁴ Michale della Rocca, *Spinoza*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.

¹⁹⁵ Here I am thinking of the later feminist and queer interpretations of Spinoza who utilize the language of "expression" relative to substance. Likewise, the *Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* also utilizes the language of "expression" when talking about an extension or attribute.

various, so that its parts are distinguished only modally, not really.”¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, expressions or attributes exist *in* substance as “particulars in the universe,” and are conceived or constituted through the substance. Axiom number seven illustrates this. “A7: If a thing can be conceived as not existing, its essence does not involve existence.”¹⁹⁷ Substance for Spinoza is God (or an indeterminate being), because substance is conceived through itself and should not be considered an expression. “One substance cannot be produced by another substance.”¹⁹⁸

The limitation I see in Spinozist thought is that matter is mechanistic in his philosophy, not existing as dynamic. Matter in Spinoza unfolds logically and mechanically, seen most clearly in the geometric order of his *Ethics*. This is important for my research as it allows the body to be a unified reality, not existing as separate and unequal parts. Though Spinoza’s philosophy does not exist along a dynamic matrix, I find value in his monism and philosophical thinking. Later philosophers and critical theorists take up Spinoza as an important figure for their philosophical practice. Among these are Moira Gatens, Elizabeth Grosz, Gilles Deleuze, and others.

The dynamism that is important to me allows for the animated reality of matter, which is always becoming. Spinoza’s mechanistic philosophy does not incorporate the vital becoming of *conatus* that is discussed earlier. Though *conatus* has a particular *telos* for Spinoza, *conatus* allows for a dynamic reality of becoming. If we can insert

¹⁹⁶ Don Garrett, ed., 71.

¹⁹⁷ Edwin Curley, 86.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 87.

dynamism into Spinoza's thought by way of feminist theory or queer theory, though thoroughly material, the body that then is seen is a dynamic body existing along a matrix of becomingness.

With the body in Spinozist thought being an important element to understanding materiality, I now wish to attend to a more phenomenological account of the body that gives weight to my intuition of Anzaldúa's work being the work of material phenomenology; hence, I turn to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work in *Phenomenology of Perception*¹⁹⁹ and *The Visible and the Invisible*.²⁰⁰

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Husserl and Heidegger largely influenced Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a 20th-century phenomenologist. The discipline of phenomenology is most often defined as the study of the structures of experience, or consciousness. Literally, phenomenology is the study of "phenomena" (in opposition to the Kantian noumena). These phenomena are appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience; another way to say this is that the phenomena are the perceptions we have of things/objects. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view, and this is highlighted in Merleau-Ponty's work. This field of philosophy distinguished from, and related to, the other main fields of philosophy, which are important to this

¹⁹⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Translated by Colin Smith, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).

²⁰⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Claude Lefort, ed, Translated by Alphonso Lingis, *The Visible and the Invisible*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

dissertation: ontology (the study of being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), and ethics (the study of actions in the world).

Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, among others, launched the historical movement of phenomenology as a philosophical tradition in the first half of the 20th century. In that movement, the discipline of phenomenology was well respected as the “proper foundation of all philosophy.”²⁰¹ In this study of phenomenology, I take Merleau-Ponty’s work to be the overwhelming example of a phenomenological accounting of the body. His work skillfully combines ontology, epistemology, and ethical frameworks; this solidifies his phenomenology.

Merleau-Ponty is important to understanding the body in materially phenomenological terms. In his work, he neither seeks to privilege a body over mind, nor theorizes either of them into a unified theory, as is seen in Spinoza. Instead, it is evident that he “exploits the concepts of experience and perception in order to illustrate that the body is never either a subject or an object, mind or body, transcendental or immanent.”²⁰² Furthermore, the production of knowledge that is located in the body and experienced through the world is accessed through the relational forces that could be called the accumulation of material (body) for Merleau-Ponty. He seeks to address the experience of the body and the way that the body shapes experience. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty writes about a unique relationship that body shares with the world and

²⁰¹ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/#1>, accessed on 04 March 2014.

²⁰² Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco, 43.

other things by using the language of perception and appearance. When the body, which is decidedly singular for Merleau-Ponty, looks out to the world, there is an awakening to the world, where the body and the world congeal in perception.

We can effect the passage by looking, by awakening to the world; we cannot witness it as spectators. It is not a synthesis; it is a metamorphosis by which the appearances are instantaneously stripped of a value they owed merely to the absence of a true perception. Thus in perception we witness the miracle of a totality that surpasses what one thinks to be its conditions or its parts, that from afar holds them under its power, as if they existed only on its threshold and were destined to lose themselves in it. But if it is to displace them as it does, it is necessary that perception maintain in its depth all their corporeal ties: it is by looking, it is still with my eyes that I arrive at the true things, with these same eyes that a moment ago gave me nonocular images—now they simply function together and as though for good. Thus the relation between the things and my body is decidedly singular: it is what makes me sometimes remain in appearances, and it is also what sometimes brings me to the things themselves; it is what produces the buzzing of appearances, it is also what silences them and casts me fully into the world.²⁰³

For Merleau-Ponty, *flesh* becomes the category by which a phenomenological account of the body emerges. I suggest that flesh is tied to the ontological category of Being and is decidedly relational. I pick up this ontological thread later, but I mention it here to establish the inter-weaving categories of epistemology and ontology that are central for Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body suggests that the body is the primary site of knowing the world, which is a corrective to the philosophical tradition of placing consciousness as the source of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty situates the body as the primary site of knowledge that is connected to the body's 'being' in the world. This is important to note, since the idea of bodily knowing is primary for Anzaldúa, and her

²⁰³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 8.

epistemology privileges the body as both a site for knowledge production and an epistemic mode. Merleau-Ponty furthermore writes that the body and that which it perceives cannot be disentangled from each other. In this way, both flesh and body (connective materials) become a type of ‘indirect’ ontology for Merleau-Ponty that is tied to the category of Being. The body becomes the flesh of the world for Merleau-Ponty.²⁰⁴ I argue that this entanglement elucidates a type of stratified relationality between bodies, materiality, and the world. As such, I argue that Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological account of the body creates an opening for a “material phenomenology.” The creative opening that I see in Merleau-Ponty’s work is that he does not pursue the body as an object like other things, but rather the body is the condition through which it is possible to have relations *with* objects, which Merleau-Ponty indicates is the world.²⁰⁵ While medical anatomy exists for the training of future doctors, for Merleau-Ponty, the body is not a potential object for the study of science, but rather a permanent condition of experience, a constituent of perpetual openness to the world. This changes the way in which we understand the world. The world is no longer a collection of determinate things; the world is a ‘horizon’ that is “latent in all of our experiences.”²⁰⁶ The body’s relation(s) with the world is not the result of cause and effect, but rather the result of meaning(s). This cannot be adequately explained by either psychology or physiology. This apparent relationship of body with world further unmasks the inherent relationality

²⁰⁴ This is written about in *The Visible and Invisible* and his last published essay, “Eye and Mind.”

²⁰⁵ Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco, 44.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 44.

in Merleau-Ponty's writing that cannot be paired with brute matter, but rather with the becomingness of a material reality that is both body *and* world. What this translates into is that the body's relations is not the result of cause and effect, but is the result of meanings—meanings that cannot be explained by either psychology or physiology.²⁰⁷ A key implication is that the individual body cannot be conceived in terms of atomistic and bounded entity, meaning that Merleau-Ponty's body may be more than a corporeal being, an objective thing existing in the world. Merleau-Ponty's body is not neatly divided off from the world. One cannot stand outside of one's body; the body is the vehicle through which one's experiences come into being. "Our relationships with objects, and with our own bodies, are always partial; we cannot know them absolutely."²⁰⁸

Merleau-Ponty's work, though unfinished due to his sudden death, provides for scholars a creative opening to consider the body, particularly its materiality, from a phenomenological perspective. I make this claim, because the body for Merleau-Ponty is a material becoming, perceiving and perceived. It is not an object that perceives, but rather it is a perceiving perception in opposition to a thing or object that perceives. While materiality studies focuses primarily on the thing-ness of matter and things, a Merleau-Pontian strategy concerning materiality, on one level, transcends this perspective and offers us a 'different' way to engage materiality—by considering the phenomena of relationality. It is important to quickly mention Deleuze to help illustrate difference. I

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 44.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 44.

suggest Merleau-Ponty's difference is in this sense a reference to Deleuze's use of difference, which is not diversity:

Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given.... Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon...Every phenomenon refers to an inequality by which it is conditioned....Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity.²⁰⁹

This quote shows that far from focusing on the phenomena, the appearances given in human experience, Deleuze creates an ontology that reaches out to the mind-independent processes (noumena), giving rise to these appearances in the first place. This concept of difference being associated with Phenomenology is important as my argument develops along the lines of an expressed difference at the intersection of Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, and Anzaldúa. I reference the word difference here to bring attention to the complexity of the ways materiality can be interpreted and understood.²¹⁰ What Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body/phenomenology of the body does is create a network-like organ that is fundamentally relational.

A phenomenological account of the body, as I understand it, is the ability to recognize the relational networks (or inherent inter-relatedness) that help constitute the

²⁰⁹ Gilles Deleuze, trans. Paul Patton, *Difference and Repetition*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 222.

²¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Gloria Anzaldúa largely influence me, when considering difference as a marker for the body. I think Maurice Merleau-Ponty helps further the conversation between Deleuze and Anzaldúa by overlaying a material phenomenology relative to difference.

body, or what I am calling “an enfleshed reality.”²¹¹ It is also the ability to recognize the depth of one’s experience that is relative to the body as a material thing in and of itself. The body, constitutive of material, is not an object, but rather is the condition by which it is able to perceive and a subject that is perceived; the body creates the context for a relationship with other objects, visible and invisible. Said differently, this phenomenological accounting of (a) body is both immanent and transcendent, visible and invisible, and is networked within a relational context. Immanence in Merleau-Ponty refers to the reality that the body exists in every part of the universe but is also different (not detached) from the universe. Likewise, visible and invisible are synonyms for transcendence and immanence, sometimes intertwining at the same time. At the end of the chapter on “The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility” in the *Primacy of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty writes,

Bodily experience forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning, which is not the work of a universal-constituting consciousness, a meaning which clings to certain contents. My body is the meaningful core which behaves like a general function, and which, nevertheless, exists and is susceptible to disease.²¹²

The body is not substance material; it is material and inter-related with all ‘things,’ and a material becoming. Spinoza would liken this to the difference between a pebble and a body; they are comprised of the same substance, but different finite modes of the same single-matter substance. The body is different from the ground on which it stands, while

²¹¹ Enfleshed reality and its relatedness to networks helps further understand the logic of the body as a socio-sensory reality. Enfleshment gets at a more material phenomenological account that serves as a linking mechanism to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa.

²¹² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, 46.

it is of this composite material of the ground. Being different from the ground on which it stands does not negate the relationship the body has with the ground; it simply indicates that the body is a different composite material than what the ground's composite material is, while also derived from the same single matter substance. This is not to suggest that the human body transcends the ground; rather, the point here is that the body enfleshes a particular experience that is relative to relational networking over against a body being consumed by the language and discourse that supports it.. The body is connected to the ground's composite material, since the body and the ground come from the same single matter substance. It is in this sense that the body is a subject that connects to and with the ground on which it stands and experiences knowledge by living in one's body.

An example of this is when Merleau-Ponty writes about a hand being touched and touching. The hand is simultaneously touching and being touched. He writes,

My left hand is always on the verge of touching my hand touching the things, but I never reach coincident; the coincidence eclipses at the moment of realization, and one of two things always occurs: either my right hand really passes over tho the rank of touched, but then its hold on the world is interrupted: or it retains its hold on the world, but then I do not really touch it—my right hand touching, I palpate with my left hand only its outer covering.²¹³

This, I think, serves as an example of how the body is both subject and object, perceiver and that which is perceived. The act of being touched and touching exists on the same axis of being, relying on the relationship of both subject and object and the material body that is both perceiving and is perceived by itself or an other. This example elucidates the

²¹³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and Invisible*, 148.

phenomenon of materiality in Merleau-Ponty. He continues to show what I think is a materially inflected body by writing about his voice and his hand, all in relationship with one another, including the world. He writes,

Likewise, I do not hear myself as I hear the others, the sonorous existence of my voice is for me as it were poorly exhibited; I have rather an echo of its articulated existence, it vibrates through my head rather than outside. I am always on the same side of my body; it presents itself to me in one invariable perspective. But this incessant escaping, this impotency to superpose exactly upon one another the touching of the things by my right hand and the touching of this same right hand by my left hand, or to superpose, in the exploratory movements of the hand, the tactile experience of a point and that of the “same” point a moment later, or the auditory experience of my own voice and that of other voices—this is not a failure. For if these experiences never exactly overlap, if they slip away at the very moment they are about to rejoin, if there is always a “shift,” a “spread,” between them, this is precisely because my two hands are part of the same body, because it moves itself in the world, because I hear myself both from within and from without.²¹⁴

Merleau-Ponty does not develop an immaterial body; it is a lived body and one that I consider enfleshed (or corporeal in his language). I utilize the language of enfleshment as a way to talk about the relationality that is inherent with the material body, knowledge production, and nature.

The perceiving mind is an incarnated body. I have tried....to re-establish the roots of the mind in its body and in its world, going against the doctrine which treats perception as a simple result of the action of external things on our body as well as against those which insist on the autonomy of consciousness. These philosophies commonly forget—in favor of a pure exteriority or of a pure interiority—the insertion of the mind in corporeality, the ambiguous relation with our body, and correlatively, with perceived things....And it is equally clear that one does not account for the facts by superimposing a pure contemplative consciousness on a thing-like body....Perceptual behavior emerges....from relations to a situation and to

²¹⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and Invisible*, 148.

an environment which are not merely the working of a pure, knowing subject....²¹⁵

While Merleau-Ponty develops a phenomenology of the body as something that is not merely object or subject, but rather an object to others and a subject in relation to other objects, this body is

my being-to-the-world and as such is the instrument by which all information and knowledge is received and meaning is generated. It is through the body that the world of objects appears to me; it is in virtue of having/being a body that there are objects for me.²¹⁶

Merleau-Ponty reflects from classical psychology an accounting of the body as something distinct from what is defined as an object—an argument that supports his negative claim that the body is *not* an object:

Classical Psychology stated that my body is distinguishable from the table or the lamp in that I can turn away from the latter whereas my body is constantly perceived. It is therefore an object which does not leave me. But in this case is it still an object?....An object is an object only insofar as it can be moved away from me, and ultimately disappear from my field of vision. Its presence is such that it entails a possible absence. Now the permanence of my body is entirely different in kind....It defies exploration and is always presented to me from the same angle. Its permanence is not the permanence in the world, but a permanence from my point of view....Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched. What prevents it ever being an object, ever being “completely constituted,” is that it is that by which there are objects. It is neither tangible nor visible insofar as it is that which sees and touches.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 3-4.

²¹⁶ Elizabeth A. Grosz, 87.

²¹⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 90-92.

Merleau-Ponty distinctly situates the body in time and space, but outside objective elements in stating that the body is “distinguishable” from objects. In situating the body in time and space, Merleau-Ponty elucidates the ways in which the body has relations in time and space and makes the case for the way in which the body has relations with objects, but is, in fact, not an object:

Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments as if by magic, since it is ours and because, through it, we have access to space. For us the body is much more than an instrument or a means; it is our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions²¹⁸

What this tells us is that we inherit or engage (perhaps grasp and touch) other things, like space, through our enfleshed reality, or ‘bodily situation.’²¹⁹ What a relationship to space does for our enfleshed situation/reality is highlight the interconnectedness of a bodily perception, our experience of the world. This experience or phenomenon is, for Merleau-Ponty, strictly located in the body.²²⁰ It could be said that the body is an expansive space. Not in the sense of space being something that is neutral or the flattening out of relations,

²¹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, 5.

²¹⁹ Grosz, 90.

²²⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception*, 5-6. He continues along these lines and says “...these relations are different ways for external stimuli to test, to solicit, and to vary our grasp on the world, our horizontal and vertical anchorage in a place and in a here-and-now. We find that perceived things, unlike geometrical objects, are not bounded entities whose laws of construction we possess a priori, but that they are open, inexhaustible systems which we recognize through a certain style of development, although we are never able, in principle, to explore them entirely, even though they never give us more than profiles and perspectival views of themselves.”

but an ever expanding and contracting bodily reality, that is fleshy, visible and invisible in and through the world, that which is both (a) perception and perceived.

What Merleau-Ponty provides us in *Phenomenology of Perception*, *The Primacy of Perception*, and then also in *The Visible and the Invisible* is a detailed analysis of the body in phenomenological terms. A strength I see in Merleau-Ponty's theory of the body is how tightly related the body is with the horizon of the world, an experience that is latent in each body. This experience, latent in each body, is also a material reality that finds alliances with material elements: bodies and other material things. A possible limitation with Merleau-Ponty's body is not material enough and reduced to perception—that to have a body is to perceive and to experience, not to materially become simultaneously with materiality. With the body being materially rich in phenomenological terms, it is important to consider one more philosophical understanding of bodies, and I do that by considering the work of Gilles Deleuze.

Gilles Deleuze

Deleuze's body is an accounting of the body as different-in-itself, and he invokes the speciated divide—that bodies are not limited to the humanist orientation or definition of body. He talks about animal bodies on the same plane as human bodies. I suggest that Deleuze ascribes the body as difference-in-itself. "Difference in itself" is the difference freed from identities seen as metaphysically primary. Throughout philosophy, difference is conceived of as an empirical relation between two terms each of which has a prior identity of its own (an example of this is "x is different from y"). This Deleuzian designation (difference-in-itself) helps further locate the body in a materially rich phenomenology without reducing it to mere perception, a limitation I see in the work of

Merleau-Ponty. The Deleuzian interrogation of the separation of form and matter (a critique of Plato and Platonic ideals) casts a particular light onto the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty; it necessarily portrays a body that is rooted in its own visibility of difference. It is this body—a body enfleshed in difference-in-itself—that connects with what I reference as Anzaldeleuzian bodies (to be discussed later).

Deleuze challenges all that has been mentioned previously, and especially challenges any notion of the body as a bounded corporeality “endowed with an origin, interiority and death,”²²¹ which is often how feminist philosophy refers to bodies. Deleuze also challenges Merleau-Ponty’s theory that the body is reduced to mere perception. The body, for Deleuze, is not a unified entity, nor is it organized around a central governor. The body is not simply a Cartesian ‘thinking thing’ nor is it simply a brain. It is not defined by intentionality, biology or by a psyche. With regard to the ways in which the body is theorized and especially in contrast to Merleau-Ponty who wrote that the world is the perception of the body, he also indicates that the world is a collection of meaning; however, the body for Deleuze,

is not a property of the subject, nor is it an expression of subjectivity. It is not a locus of meaning. Indeed, a body is not to be deciphered or interpreted at all. Instead, the convergences between bodies (whether they be human or non-human, organic or not, natural or artificial) are there to be made and surveyed: mapped. For Deleuze is a cartographer, who situates all bodies on the same, flat, ontological plane (the plane of immanence), and defines them by what he calls longitude and latitude.²²²

²²¹ Miriam Fraser and Monica Greco, 44.

²²² Ibid., 45.

Deleuze draws on Spinoza but recalculates Spinoza's understanding of the body by using Henri Bergson and his reformulation of time and duration. Deleuze and argues that a body must be understood not in terms of a form or function, but with reference instead to its relations of speed and slowness (longitude), and to what it can do, by its capacity to affect and to be affected (latitude).

A body is not defined by the form that determines it nor as a determinate substance or subject nor by the organs it possesses or the functions it fulfills. On the plane of consistency, a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude: in other words the sub total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude). Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds. The credit goes to Spinoza for calling attention to these two dimensions of the Body, and for having defined the plane of Nature as pure longitude and latitude. Latitude and longitude are the two elements of a cartography.²²³

The body for Deleuze, is determined by the longitudinal and latitude, only. The relationship of move and rest, speed and slowness and its affective capability make up the body for Deleuze. Furthermore, the body becomes on a plan of Nature for Deleuze; it is a cartography. Deleuze understands bodies in terms of process, and the body's process of materialization is not highly constrained by language, as it is in Butler's work (to be discussed in the next chapter). "A body is not a 'thing,' but a becoming, a series of processes, movements, intensities and flows. It is a mobile assemblage²²⁴ of connections

²²³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 260-261.

²²⁴ "An assemblage is any number of "things" or pieces of "things" gathered into a single context. An assemblage can bring about any number of "effects"—aesthetic, machinic, productive, destructive, consumptive, informatic, etc. Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the book provides a number of insights into this loosely defined term: "In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity,

which might be extended, but which might equally be severed.”²²⁵ I find this to be an exciting aspect of Deleuze’s ethology.²²⁶ I borrow the term “ethology” from Deleuze to highlight the speciated divine inherent in Deleuze’s thinking about bodies and their materialization. Noting this as important and exciting, identifiable in this posthumanist sense, Deleuze’s use of ethology recalculates our norms regarding bodies. In Deleuze’s thinking, using Spinoza, ethology also defines bodies by their longitude: the total sum of extensive qualities or molecular kinetics, relations of motion and rest, speed and slowness. Because to define a body by its affective capacities means that ‘you do not know beforehand of what good or bad you are capable; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter.’²²⁷ The phrase “in a given encounter” is important here in understanding Deleuze’s body, because what the body

strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds constitutes an *assemblage*. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity—but we don’t know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of the substantive. On one side of a machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side facing a *body without organs*, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects what it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity... Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology. There is no ideology and never has been,” (3-4). The book, as described above, is a jumbling together of discrete parts or pieces that is capable of producing any number of effects, rather than a tightly organized and coherent whole producing one dominant reading. The beauty of the assemblage is that, since it lacks organization, it can draw into its body any number of disparate elements. The book itself can be an assemblage, but its status as an assemblage does not prevent it from containing assemblages within itself or entering into new assemblages with readers, libraries, bonfires, bookstores, etc.” Taken from <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue5/poke/glossary.html>, accessed on February 13, 2014.

²²⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, 45.

²²⁶ Ethology is the study of animal behavior. Ethology, as defined by Deleuze in his interpretation of Spinoza’s Ethics, is the study of “bodies, animals, and humans by the affects they are capable of.”

²²⁷ Ibid., 45.

does and when the body acts will always depend upon its relations with the world, which means the interactions with other boundaries of bodies. These actions and encounters are necessarily contingent.²²⁸ A key understanding of Deleuze's body that differs from Merleau-Ponty is the language of boundaries relative to bodies. Boundaries (here, I understand boundary to be part of a deterritorialized material body) are part of the ways in which bodies continue to materialize along an axis or plane of consistency.

What these thinkers help do is illustrate the body as a material reality, and it is Anzaldúa who creates the path for these bodies to be dynamic and exist along a matrix of becomings. The materiality of bodies is central to reframing bodies in an age of machines and technology. We must work to reclaim the materiality of bodies and their dynamism to help ensure new modes of theorizing and ethical practices, those modes of being and becoming, become part of our commitments.

The Body as Material Reality

The body, as I understand it, is composite material, an amalgamation of material and relations that allow it to become. From a scientific perspective, combining two or more materials, often ones that have very different properties, makes a composite material. The two materials work together to give the composite unique properties. However, within the composite you can easily tell the different materials apart as they do not dissolve or blend into each other; relations of materials exist and evolve into a new

²²⁸ It is important to note that while I call attention to "Deleuze's body," this must also necessarily include Félix Guattari and their collaboration as a particular body whose becoming produces ideas and political resistance.

material being or reality. Natural composites exist in both animals and plants. Wood is a composite and is made from long cellulose fibers (a polymer) held together by a much weaker substance called lignin, though I do not suggest that there are two substances that are weak and strong. The classification of “weaker substance” is part of the Cartesian influence in the natural sciences. Another example is that cellulose is also found in cotton, but without the lignin to bind it together it is much weaker—a different type of material. The two weak “substances” – lignin and cellulose – together form a much stronger one, perhaps unifying the two “weaker substances” into one unified and single matter substance. The bone in the human body is also a composite. It is made from a hard but brittle material called hydroxyapatite (which is mainly calcium phosphate) and a soft and flexible material called collagen (which is a protein). Collagen is also found in hair and fingernails. On its own it would not be much use in the skeleton but it can combine with hydroxyapatite to give bone the properties that are needed to support the body.²²⁹ I suggest the body is composite material by reflecting on Spinoza as with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. This composite material is visible to the body, itself, and also invisible because of the relationship of transcendence and immanence the body shares with Nature. The visibility of the body and the innate or inherent capacity for experience helps further materiality in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body.

²²⁹ I researched composite material and discovered a short pamphlet that is used to advance scientific knowledge by detailing the chemical sciences. While this pamphlet used the language of “weak substance,” this pamphlet helps detail the definition of composite, especially as it relates to the human body. Human bodies are composite material, according to this pamphlet, yet I disagree with their advancement of the two substances theory.

The body, comprised of matter, is a relational composite becoming material, an amalgamation of “lines of forces” interacting with energy and matter all becoming parts of relational processes. The body is situated as a very peculiar type of relationally composite material in a world where there are many expressions of either one substance or expressions of multiple substances. For the purposes of this project, I will take a modified monist approach, influenced largely by Rosi Braidotti, a feminist Deleuzian scholar. The reclamation of Spinoza to think of the mind-body parallelism in contradistinction to the overwhelming influence of Cartesian dualism is the trajectory of this project. The materiality of the body as seen in what I name as the spirit-inflected materiality of Gloria Anzaldúa is the body as material reality.

The body as a material reality is a becoming relationality that is a becoming material reality. It is a particular phenomenon that resides along a plane of becomingness. A relational material phenomenological accounting of the body corresponds to Anzaldúa’s theory of the body, and particularly its mestizaje-ness and the new mestiza consciousness. A material phenomenology is located primarily in the body, an enfleshed human subject who perceives and is perceived, and whose condition of possibility is her networked-ness or inter-relatedness to and with other objects. This body, understood in an Anzaldúan framework, is a body that is connected to the multiple locations within el fronterizo, a landscape that continuously alters her subjectivity and connections. Anzaldúan bodies are materially networked within the borderlands as a result of these

bodies' struggles, and meet in the juncture of nepantla.²³⁰ I identify these bodily experiences as being akin to nepantlism. This nepantlism²³¹ conforms to ever challenging and changing essence of one's subjectivity, identified as the new mestiza, for Anzaldúa. The relational networks or borderlands are linked to the body's composite material; the body transcends these borderlands, but the body is also linked to and with these borderlands in a materially phenomenological manner.²³²

Conclusion: Bodies that Matter²³³

The four thinkers that were explored in this chapter have laid the foundation for bodies to be thought of in terms of materiality, but not the dead matter that they often ascribed to their understanding of materiality. Noting Anzaldúa's definition of the material universe as "not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow." This form of materiality energizes matter with a type of vibrancy and spirited life. Anzaldúa's materiality is what I term spirit-inflected materialism that exists along lines of force. This is similar to Deleuze's form of the body and the phenomenological imprint of Merleau-

²³⁰ Nepantla is a Nahuatl term meaning "middle" or "torn between ways." Lara Medina translates this term as "middle," and Anzaldúa translates this term as "torn between ways." I prefer a third way to translate this term, and suggest "dismemberment" to highlight the materiality of the body.

²³¹ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 231.

²³² Borderlands should be interpreted in a robust way and expand beyond the US/Texas/Mexico border, which is what often Anzaldúa mentioned. Yet, borderlands, according to Anzaldúa, were psychic, spiritual, sexual, and cultural. Borderlands must be more than nation/state borders and expand toward a more universal borderland phenomena.

²³³ Here I am making a value statement concerning bodies; that they do, in fact, matter and have importance. I am also, however, making a statement about their reality, or their situatedness being of matter or material.

Ponty. As a way of further explaining bodies that matter in Anzaldúa's terms and showing the inherent relationship of the materiality of the body and interrelatedness of all things, I quote, at length, part of a 2001 interview with Irene Lara in *EntreMundos*, a book exploring new trajectories of the thought of Gloria Anzaldúa. This interview is pertinent to this study of bodies and materiality, because it provides greater insight into Anzaldúa's interrelated thinking that exists as lines of forces throughout the world, and this also speaks to Anzaldúa's later thought. In the following quote, Irene Lara interviews Anzaldúa, and asks her the following question:

How is the story where Prietita has an orgasm on the horse connected to the spiritual?

GEA: It's connected to energy, and energy is spiritual.

IL: How do you connect spirituality and sexuality with health? You also talk about remembering Coyolxauqui in terms of health and holism. Do you connect all of these?

Anzaldúa continues in the interview:

To me sexuality is creativity, symbolized by the kundalini serpent, when energy rises through your energetic body in terms of the chakras and you get this rush of feeling, eroticism, sexuality. For me, this is connected to creativity, writing, making art, and also to sexuality, the needs of your body, in terms of release. With an orgasm you release energy, you enable energy to flow through your body rather than being blocked, and creativity does that when you write a story or a book or whatever. It releases that energy to flow; it flows out to your life. Spirituality does the same thing. When I meditate, go for a walk, I can feel that energy. Creativity, sexuality, and spirituality are all rooted in the body, so it comes down to the body. The body grounds us to the earth. Everything goes through the body—ideas, feelings, energy. I don't know why people always separate them out, but to me, they're together. It's part of *nagualismo* where, when you dream, have an out-of-body experience, or your soul leaves your body, your physical body *se queda* but then this other body pulls up through the skin. In both the Prieta stories and the *conocimiento* essay I talk about out-of-body or near-death experiences. The body is not just minerals, chemicals, bones, and skin; you also have the dream body. My concept of consciousness, my sense of myself, *no se para* at my skin; it extends outward, and if it extends then it also mingles with your

consciousness, las de las flores, la del mar, la de los animales . . .
Consciousness is not local.

This is not just my idea although I've had this idea for a long time. Modern science is only beginning to investigate consciousness, hope, prayer, intention, y todas esas cosas. Consciousness is in everything even though the level of consciousness varies. The consciousness of a flower is not like my consciousness or the consciousness of a dog, yet chimpanzees, monkeys, dogs, have a personal consciousness, an autobiographical consciousness. I took this term from Antonio Damasio's discussions of "core consciousness," "autobiographical consciousness," and "extended consciousness." To me, extended consciousness is *conocimiento*, but I didn't know these guys were working on the same ideas.²³⁴

I insert part of this interview as a way to show the overwhelming connectedness of materiality with bodies, for Anzaldúa. In many ways, this quote elucidates the manner in which the body bodies itself, and ways that matter matters itself. This, I think is part of a material phenomenological accounting of the body at the intersection of Deleuze, Anzaldúa, and Merleau-Ponty. Each of these theories help negotiate the ongoing dialectic of transcendence and immanence, fortifying a decidedly relationally material body whose becoming is dependent on the ever-evolving reality of Nature.

In the next chapter I devote attention to three feminist thinkers' accounting of the body. I detail these thinkers' theories in conversation with Anzaldúa and the New Materialisms movement, a theory that has provided a substantial paradigm to think about the materiality of bodies.

²³⁴ Irene Lara, "Daughter of Coatlicue: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa, AnaLouise Keating, ed, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 53-54.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECONFIGURING & REIMAGINING BODIES:
MATERIAL, DISCURSIVE, & DREAMBODIES

[A]ny identity is always riven with forces, with processes, connections, movements that exceed and transform identity and that connect individuals (human and nonhuman) to each other and to worlds, in ways unforeseen by consciousness and unconnected to identity.

—Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*²³⁵

An integration. And the body is the bridge. That's what I haven't seen. People don't deal with the body, and yet they don't deal with the spirit. They deal with the head. The mind. [...] What I'd like to do is talk from the body and also from these other realms.

—Interviews / Entrevistas²³⁶

The body has been theorized by many different feminist poststructuralist theorists as a discursive reality. I wish to interrupt these theories and interpretations by rethinking the body in material terms. In thinking about the materiality of the body and mattering bodies (both of which I develop in this project and are interchangeable), the four thinkers discussed in chapter five generate new theoretical openings to further consider the work of the feminist theorists that are also a part of the New Materialist movement in some

²³⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, (Boston: MIT Press 2001), 94.

²³⁶ Gloria Anzaldúa, ed. AnaLouise Keating, *Interviews/Entrevistas*, (New York: Routledge), 64.

way.²³⁷ Not each of the thinkers I mention in this chapter is part of the New Materialist movement, but I bridge together the feminism that has charted the path for feminist new materialists and their movement, while also pointing beyond the New Materialist movement to bodies that materialize in Anzaldúa.

I begin this chapter by situating a discussion on the body and the way that the body has been theorized in the work of various feminists; namely, Judith Butler, Susan Bordo, and Rosi Braidotti. I end with a section on Anzaldúan bodies as a move to reclaim that bodies matter and mattering bodies that are becoming. As a way through the varying ways that materiality has been deployed, I bridge together Anzaldúa and Bennett's vibrant matter. Noting the theoretical framework of the New Materialists, I mention, again, the work of Jane Bennett.²³⁸ While Bennett might very well be spirit-phobic and her materiality something akin to *entelechy* or *élan vital*,²³⁹ Anzaldúa was an animist emphasizing the plurality of realities; her materiality is spirit-inflected. This becomes important as the dissertation develops around the idea of Anzaldúan materiality and interrelatedness that recalculates the ways in which knowledge is produced and accessed

²³⁷ The phrase "new materialism" was first used by Rosi Braidotti in *Deleuze and the Body*. It has since become a movement of diverse materialist thinkers. I follow Braidotti's use of new materialism and Jane Bennett as I construct Anzaldeleuzian materiality.

²³⁸ Both of Jane Bennett's books, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010) and *The Enchantment of Modernity: Crossings, Energetics, and Ethics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) have been meaningful books as I have read the New Materialism movement. Bennett explicitly showed me the genealogical trail for the New Materials movement, and I have followed this materialist genealogy throughout my research and while reading Anzaldúa. Also, the use of reality here should not be confused with Realism or Anti-Realism. I much more prefer a more speculative realism, which opens up possibilities for a multiverse, or mutli-realities.

²³⁹ Entelechy is drawn from Hans Dreish and Élan vital from Bergson.

within a materially rich register, such as the body. A spirit-inflected materiality is also important, because the bodily materiality for which I advocate matters, has meaning; hence, bodies that matter are engaged in the entanglement of bodily knowing and bodily mattering in this world. Spirit relative to matter, as it applies to Anzaldúa, helps illustrate the plurality of life that is generated and generating with matter in its becoming material. This should signal a turn away from the body being an apparatus for scientific knowledge only or reducing bodies to discursive norms, only.

Noting the use of certain terms and theoretical ‘camps’ I follow, I draw a deeper attention to the New Materialism movement as the source of my thinking about both materiality and bodies. Certainly, Lucretius and Spinoza are important interlocutors, but the New Materialist thinkers provide an opening to re-enter the discussion of feminism that supersedes the theory that has proliferated among white feminists. Sure, the New Materialists engage the question of race explicitly, but their discourse has included people of color from the start of the movement, so this discourse is not, as I see it, a particularly whitening of matter or materiality studies, but an ever-widening attempt to de-biologize race in material terms. To tie together the philosophy and history from the previous chapter to this chapter, I start with Bennett as a way to keep materialism at the fore and bodies in close proximity to the material becoming that is bodily.

Where Spinoza details a theory that elucidates a purposeful being (or God) as the “force” of the substance, Bennett uses the term *entelechy* to account or “name a force or

an agency that is naturalistic but never fully spatialized, actualized, or calculable.”²⁴⁰ I mention this now because the materialism that Bennett seeks, which “eschews the life-matter binary and does not believe in God or spiritual forces, nevertheless also acknowledges the presences of an indeterminate vitality.”²⁴¹ While important in my own formation, this intentional obfuscation of a spiritual reality is not parallel with Anzaldúa’s bodies. This *entelechy* is an animated force for Bennett, but Anzaldúa prefers a much more spirit-inflected materiality, which ties together her being in the world, knowing in the world, and acting in the world to and with material bodies that are on a planetary scale. This fiercely networked system of bodies and becoming create a path of understanding the body akin to Karen Barad’s terms of ‘intra-active’ and becoming. It is because of this fiercely networked relational and spirit-inflected materiality that bodies matter in the world, create meaning, and are interrelated with all matter and things. A fiercely networked system of bodies is the proliferation of matter becoming different in the world, a becoming that is transformative.²⁴² Take, for example, the human body. The human body contains many other bodies inside of it, matter that is woven together to make different systems, all networked together to create the human body. I suggest

²⁴⁰ Jane Bennett, “Vitalist Stopover,” in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 63.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 63.

²⁴² In Clayton Crocket and Jeffrey Robbins’ recent book *Religion, Politics and the Earth: The New Materialism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, they discuss energy as becoming transformation. I reformulate that syntax or grammar and suggest that mattering bodies are becoming and becoming is a transformation. Crocket and Robbins’ becoming analysis can be found in chapter 8 of their book.

matter and bodies are networked together in a relationality that illustrates a network of togetherness, a becoming.

The materiality of the body, following the pattern that was explored in the previous chapter, creates a framework for considering the ways in which relationality and material bodies exist, and are intertwined with one another. This entanglement of bodily relational material creates a larger framework for bodies to contribute meaning in the world, not be reduced to mere perception of the world. The relationality that is inherent in the work of Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty gives greater support for my own impulse to read a type of dynamism into the work of Spinoza. I recognize this is a later interpretation of Spinoza's work, but it nonetheless is present, especially in the work of the New Materialists, particularly in Braidotti's work, among others. I believe Deleuze follows a certain reading of Spinoza that may reach back to Herder.²⁴³

Given that I support a type of material reality that is motivated by a relational composite framework, I think it is important to note that this "body" becomes a body through its relational processes, which are networked with the "lines of forces" existing within and on an axis of becoming. The material reality of the body, comprised of a single matter substance, further becomes a material reality due to the connections with other bodies residing on the plane of Nature.

This chapter details feminist theorists' use of the body. In a similar way to the previous chapter, I trace three feminist thinkers in order to show the resonances and

²⁴³ Herder, *God: Some Conversations*. This is also seen in Deleuze's *Expressionism* book and *The Fold*.

disconnections of material bodies. I conclude by critically and constructively moving beyond these feminists toward a more plural reality seen in Anzaldúa's work. To recap, the first three chapters seek to fortify my position on materialism, then I bridge together the materiality of the body by showing the historical philosophy from which contemporary philosophers borrow and ways that this history points to the monism that is under-recognized in Anzaldúa. These chapters also provide a path of understanding that materiality is dynamic, not embedded with language, or co-constituted with language, as we will see in Butler. The fifth chapter provides a genealogy of the body through the lenses of philosophy, in particular that complicated work of Spinoza's deterministic and mechanistic philosophy and the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I make an additional move to include Deleuze, though I recognize the baggage of phenomenology that he and his followers discuss and the complications of these intersections, but I think these intersections are rich with a dynamic expression of bodies that later influence feminist writing. This present chapter shows the failed materiality of Judith Butler and her reliance on a type of performative materiality that is discursively constituted from iterative practices through / by privileging language over materiality.

An accounting of the body through the previous four thinkers clarifies bodies as material, relationally intertwined, and material that perpetually is in process with other material realities.²⁴⁴ I suggest working in the intersection of Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze to arrive at borderland bodies, an account that points toward Anzaldúan bodies as plural

²⁴⁴ Realities, here, are plural not suggesting that there are multiple ontological realities or that beings are multiple or plural, but to follow the formula from Deleuze that monism = plurality.

material subjects, animated by material “lines of forces.” A Deleuzian material phenomenological accounting of the body corresponds to Anzaldúa’s theory of the body, and particularly its mestizaje-ness and the new mestiza consciousness. Anzaldúa defines matter in this way in her notes from 1999: “The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow.”²⁴⁵ Noting this definition of Anzaldúa’s materiality fortifies my own impulses to bridge together Deleuze with Anzaldúa, a rhizomatic becoming where their differences create a new material reality. I see Merleau-Ponty as being particularly important, too, since his body is not an object in the world, but rather a perspectival experience that materially negotiates other lines of forces. I see this as an Anzaldeleuzian²⁴⁶ material phenomenology.

An Anzaldeleuzian material phenomenology elucidates²⁴⁷ an understanding of the body, an enfleshed plural mobile subject who perceives and is perceived, and whose condition of possibility is her networked-ness or inter-relatedness to and with other subjects and objects,²⁴⁸ residing on flat ontological terrain that is always becoming.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Gloria E. Anzaldúa Archives, The University of Texas at Austin, Benson Library, Box 102, folder 2 1999.

²⁴⁶ In an effort to exist between theories and discourses, I re-imagine these two thinkers and create a mash-up of their names in Anzaldeleuzian. The mash-up should signal the dynamism that one can endeavor to have with the matter of thinkers’ ideas that remain. I have attempted this in this particular mash-up.

²⁴⁷ I use elucidate as a way of illustrating that bodies body themselves, like Heidegger’s truth truths itself.

²⁴⁸ It is important to note that Anzaldúa did have relationships with nonhuman objects. For example, she once talked about making love with / to a tree, and apologizing if she bumped into a piece of her furniture.

The idea of becoming for both Anzaldúa and Deleuze is a turn to the futurity of an interrelated universe. Instead of a focus on the static ontological idea of being, Anzaldúa's idea of becoming is an ontological turn and connected with bodies as that which are becoming. This body, understood in this modified phenomenological framework, is a body that is connected to the multiple locations within el fronterizo, a mosaic horizon that continuously alters her subjectivity and connections, and does so relationally. Anzaldeleuzian bodies are fiercely networked within the borderlands as a result of these bodies' struggles, and meet in the juncture of nepantla.²⁵⁰ I mention nepantla as a way to illustrate the space of becoming, which I will outline in my conclusion. But, nepantla is the space of neither/nor and both/and, and the space of always shifting and becoming, simultaneously. This is a material space of becoming which is transformative. I identify these bodily experiences as being akin to material nepantlism. This material nepantlism²⁵¹ conforms to ever challenging and changing essence of one's subjectivity, identified as the new mestiza, for Anzaldúa. This form of

²⁴⁹ Here, flat refers to being radically immanent. Gloria Anzaldúa held distinct beliefs in aliens, spirits, yumaja, and multiple realities. I do not see this as a belief in the transcendent, necessarily, but rather the invocation of fused realities that do not exist along the binary of transcendence and immanence. I see this flat ontological plane of becoming as radically immanent that energizes material lines of forces that are spirit-inflected.

²⁵⁰ Nepantla is a Nahuatl term meaning "middle" or "torn between ways." Lara Medina translates this term as "middle," and Anzaldúa translates this term as "torn between ways." Another way to translate this term is to suggest "dismemberment" to highlight the materiality of the body, but "dismemberment" does not keep the materiality of the body together as a networked becoming machine. Nepantla might better be defined as "becoming in/between," neither in the middle or the outside, but becoming in the Mestizaje space of in/betweenness. This "new" middle or in/between space is designed to resist the colonial occupation that perpetuates and 'heal the open wound.'

²⁵¹ Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Bordlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987). Anzaldúa refers to a "mental nepantlism," but instead of reducing the body to a mind or extensions of thought, I replace "mental nepantlism" with "material nepantlism."

subjectivity holds the tolerance for ambiguity and compensates for the cycle of difference and repetition that is inherent to nepantla. The relational networks or borderlands are linked to the body's composite material; the body transcends these borderlands, but the body is also linked to and with these borderlands in a materially phenomenological manner.²⁵² The Anzaldúan body is an entanglement of materiality that spans ontology, epistemology, and ethics negotiating 'lines of forces' in its own relational networked becoming.²⁵³

Understanding the Body

As noted in the previous chapter, there are several other ways one can understand the body stemming from philosophy. Psychoanalysis is yet another example of the ways that the body is constituted by language and consciousness. For example, in the Mirror Stage of Jacques Lacan, the body is in bits, until one looks at his/her image in the mirror. At this moment, the body comes together becoming a unified mattering reality, affected by relational processes. The body's affect is its capacity to relate and change. The postmodern epoch purported the body as (a) fragmented reality, and has rendered this body unstable. This might be entirely the case that the body is unstable material and only bits and pieces, but I shall argue for a mattering reality that is not a unified self, *per se*,

²⁵² Borderlands should be interpreted in a robust way and expand beyond the US/Texas/Mexico border, which is what often Anzaldúa mentioned. Yet, borderlands, according to Anzaldúa, were psychic, spiritual, sexual, and cultural. Borderlands must be more than nation/state borders and expand toward a more universal borderland phenomena.

²⁵³ My hope in this project is to develop an ontology of becoming by using matter and bodies. I think the materiality of bodies are always becoming, so I mention becoming here as the frame and network of how to understand my orientation relative to matter and bodies.

but a self-organizing and self-transformative material reality that is dynamic in its becoming. This argument has looked to Spinoza and Deleuze for a way to consider materiality and also at Merleau-Ponty for a way in which a phenomenological approach can be valuable. I have also leveraged the material relationality that I argue is seen in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, and when these four thinkers are braided together a different contour of materiality emerges, and bodies literally become and become different in the borderlands of thinking and thought. These bodies are becoming (an onto-phenomenological turn), as this dissertation is comprised of the method of diffractive thinking that resides along a “moving horizon, always from a decentered center, & from an always displaced periphery.”²⁵⁴ Together, these thinkers help elucidate Anzaldúan bodies that are plural, multiple, and different. I use Anzaldúa’s own body as a way to illustrate this.

Moving through the above information helps further situate this chapter as the one chapter where I bring together a materialist framework with varying theories of bodies. This chapter holds the materiality of the body as primary point of departure and looks at three feminist thinkers using philosophy in a manner that has constructed popular theories of the body, though I will argue that two of these thinkers’ attempt to use materiality is actually a failed materiality. The three thinkers are: Judith Butler, Susan Bordo, and Rosi Braidotti.

²⁵⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. By Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), Preface, xxi.

It is important to note that Butler is influenced by Foucault's work, particularly from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) to *The History of Sexuality Volume I* (1976). It is namely Foucault's work on the relationship between knowledge, discourse, and power that has influenced Butler, but Butler ignores central features of the Foucaultian project, such as genealogy, concepts of technology, and strategy.²⁵⁵ Foucault's project helps solidify Butler's own work on performativity and analyzing the body through terms of social norms and repression; I believe this is how she is able to construct a discursive body against the more material body that is seen in feminist theory of sexual difference. Furthermore, Butler utilizes a Hegelian framework to do this work and draws on a particular definition of becoming that is not associated with the definition of becoming in feminist theory of sexual difference or Deleuzian feminism. This definition of becoming (German: *Werden*), as described in Mikko Tuhkanen's essay "Queer Hybridity,"²⁵⁶ is the term on which her theory of performativity is built. This, he says, is "perhaps the single most important concept for the institutional recognition of queer thinking."²⁵⁷ Her later work is a turn to what I term metaethics that engages the intersection of religion and

²⁵⁵ Kathleen Ennis, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Troubling Butler's Appropriation of Foucault's Work, A Dissertation, University of Warwick, 2008.

²⁵⁶ Mikko Tuhkanen "Queer Hybridity," in *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, eds. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, 92.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 92. I don't know if I agree that this theory is the single most recognizable and institutional aspect of Butler's queer thinking/theorizing. That seems to place a lot of stock on the theory of performativity. While I know it has been important for queer thinking, I don't know that performativity is the single most recognizable institution of queer thinking. What is queer about Butler's work is her unearthing of a discourse of "sex" that has solidified heteronormativity. I think her work has dislodged this style or manner of thinking to allow for other forms of thinking and production of knowledge to emerge. I also am aware that my genealogy for queer theory does not begin in the traditional starting place of Sedgwick, Foucault, and Butler. Rather, I look to queers of colors, namely Gloria Anzaldúa.

politics in compelling ways. Butler's work has dominated some segments of the fields of feminist and queer theory for years, instituting performativity as the primary means through which bodies become.

The work of Bordo, likewise, has significantly dominated some of field within feminist theory, and with Butler, has made a considerable impact on the ways in which bodies relate with food.²⁵⁸ Bordo's work, however, displaces materiality for the more popular linguistic turn in feminist studies, and her materiality is only materiality in name. I think these two theorists elucidate a failed materiality relative to feminism and bodies. As a way of showing a more productive materiality that is activated along an ontological plane, I introduce Rosi Braidotti's work. I find her feminist commitments and philosophical expertise helpful when thinking about transcontextual and transdisciplinary ways of doing scholarship. It is her materiality to which I pay careful attention, because she reimagines Deleuze from a nomadic feminist standpoint. I also recognize there are limitations in using Braidotti's work. Namely, she writes from the Eurocentric center and does not pay attention to issues of race (or other women of color who have theorized in a similar manner). Though I recognize these limitations, I include Braidotti, nevertheless, because of her insightful and skillful way of weaving together multiple disciplines with strategic philosophical importance. I end with a section on Gloria Anzaldúa. Her theories, which masterfully create plural realities recalculate both margin and center, and likewise reimagine bodies along a moving horizon where "lines of forces" constitute their being

²⁵⁸ Jane Bennett writes a book on the materiality of bodies, food, and trash. It would be interesting if Bordo activates her version of materiality to see both Bennett and Bordo in a deeper conversation.

and becoming. She poetically and philosophically writes from the displaced center, or borderlands. As my primary interlocutor, Anzaldúa creates a way for her readers to further engage the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. I see this in her last published essay, “Now Let Us Shift,” and argue that Anzaldúan materiality is the entanglement of these three philosophical domains.²⁵⁹ Following the section detailing feminist theory, I investigate difference at the intersection of Gilles Deleuze and Gloria Anzaldúa. I utilize this thread of thinking to further push Anzaldúa’s thought and theory regarding bodies and materiality beyond its logical end that helps further illustrate the plurality and difference inherent in Anzaldúan bodies.

Sexual Difference as a Critique of Essentialism & Social Constructionism

The human body is comprised of material that indeed matters.²⁶⁰ Large segments of feminist theory have battled this line of thinking throughout its history when it comes to making sense of the body.²⁶¹ Recently, some white feminist theorists have managed to bring a mattering body to the fore, but women of color feminism have privileged bodies in their analytic frameworks and theories since, some might argue, the beginning of their development. With feminism theorizing against the overwhelming realities of misogyny

²⁵⁹ Gloria Anzaldúa, “Now Let Us Shift...the path of conocimiento...inner work, public acts, in Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, eds. *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 540-578.

²⁶⁰ Material bodies have ethical import, and a sustained focus on the materiality of the body will help unmask this importance for studies in race, sexuality, and theories of the body. I see this importance being particular to my own field, Ethics, but also to other marginalized discourses like queer studies and sexuality studies.

²⁶¹ Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

and the oppressions of patriarchy, feminist theory (in some ways) lost the material body as a doing and becoming in the world. The material body that feminist theory created was a body that was an object in the world, inactive and largely discursively constituted. To consider the mattering body in feminist theory, I suggest the theory of sexual difference that is popular among European feminists. The feminist theory that is found in the theories of sexual difference is an important theoretical move in the scope of burgeoning feminist theory. There are several ‘feminist’ theorists one can consider when exploring sexual difference: Luce Irigaray, Claire Colebrook, Rosi Braidotti, among others.²⁶² I suggest Rosi Braidotti as an important figure to consider when thinking about sexual difference and the body. This ‘camp’ largely came from feminist theory influenced by French Social Thought after May 1968.²⁶³ Braidotti’s work on sexual difference stems from a Deleuzian sensibility of feminist theory. What this means is that feminist theory is a theory of difference that is influenced by Deleuze’s recovery of Spinoza that includes a notion of single matter substance.²⁶⁴

Sexual difference departs from both essentialism and social constructionism by positively highlighting ‘difference’ as a way to reimage the materiality of the body, and to be part of the feminist theorizing. For those who follow both sexual difference and

²⁶² I am not trying to oversimplify what others have also suggested. For example, see Emma Perez’s work in *Chicana Lesbians* and her first book on theory.

²⁶³ This refers to the student riots that took place across France. The New York Times has an article that explains this time as the ‘revolt that never took place.’ See the article here: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/11/world/europe/11iht-paris.4.12777919.html?_r=0. Accessed on February 14, 2014.

²⁶⁴ Deleuze’s work recovers Spinoza and Nietzsche, among others, like Hume and Bergson. Braidotti’s work is largely informed by Deleuze’s recovery and interrogation of Spinoza.

Deleuzian feminism, this project argues, “that the political ontology of monism, which Deleuze adapts from Spinoza, offers some relevant opportunities for feminist theory.”²⁶⁵ What the feminist theory of sexual difference focuses upon is not the Cartesian dualism, but the mind-body parallelism, and an interrogation of the one substance: “an intelligent flesh-mind-matter compound.”²⁶⁶ What this ‘one substance’ reveals is the process of differentiation, in Deleuzian terms. Differentiation is the inevitable force and elaboration of difference. Another way to say this is that the ‘one substance’ reveals the process of becoming. Difference, the concept theorized by Henri Bergson and later picked up by Gilles Deleuze, should be understood as having four primary facets:

1. difference presents itself as differences of nature; as such it is the object of empirical intuition, the investigation of specific and irreducible differences, natural articulations of the real, the ways in which the real divides itself (rather than is divided by us) in its elaboration;
2. it functions through a force of internal difference; as such it in the internal dynamic of open-endedness, ensuring that not only does it differ from itself, or become, it also differs from everything ‘like’ it, everything with which it shares a species or category, a resemblance. Thus species, or categories, modes of resemblance, have their own inner dynamic, or ‘tendency’, a difference in nature;

²⁶⁵ Rosi Bradotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Bradotti*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 143-144.

²⁶⁶ Rosi Bradotti, 144.

3. it operates or acts through degrees of difference; which entails that not only are terms differentiated, but they are also linked through their different degrees of actualization to tendencies and processes that are present everywhere but expressed or actualized only in particular degrees (of contraction/dilation);
4. and its movement must always be understood as a process of differentiation, division or bifurcation.²⁶⁷

The last of this list elucidates a movement that is always a process of differentiation, division, or bifurcation.²⁶⁸ “Bodily differences are both a banality and a cornerstone in the process of differentiation of variation.”²⁶⁹ This project highlights Spinoza’s idea of the body, and its focus on the body as “intelligent matter.” The mind for Spinoza is “embodied sensibility” and an object of the body. These are understood as mind-body parallelism, and the feminist project of sexual difference bypasses the hazards of essentialism altogether.²⁷⁰

The relational materiality of Spinoza-Deleuze-Merleau-Ponty creates a plane of consistency when detailing the body as material reality, and one that matters. What is oftentimes articulated in white feminist theory projects is not a material body, but a

²⁶⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands, and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2002), 45–47.

²⁶⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, “Bergson, Deleuze, and the Becoming of Unbecoming,” *Parallax*, 11, 2, (2005): 4-13.

²⁶⁹ Rosi Braidotti, 144.

²⁷⁰ While it seems as though I am making a political statement concerning the production of an essentialist feminist theory, I am not. I am rather attempting to highlight the distinction of sexual difference and the ways in which this project avoids the biologism of other feminist projects (largely the essentialism camp).

discursive body. I believe many feminist theorists draw on the discursive strategies of poststructuralist thinking, in particular Foucault and Butler, when theorizing the discursive body. Defining discourse in this way suggests that discourse is a way

of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern.²⁷¹

And secondly, discourse is “... a form of power that circulates in the social field and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance.”²⁷² Recognizing these definitions, it should be noted that discourse is a rather slippery notion in Foucault’s work but at the most basic level he uses the term to refer to the material verbal traces left by history. These traces that are left by history are not only discursive or reduced to language, or linguistic patterns. These traces embody a level of materiality that has the power to effect history. He also uses it to describe ‘a certain “way of speaking.”’²⁷³

Discourse in the Foucauldian sense dominated feminist theory, and a discursive body emerged as the overwhelming understanding of bodies. In Butler’s 1993 *Bodies That Matter*, she advances the discursive construction of the social field as a process of

²⁷¹ Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1987), 108.

²⁷² Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 185.

²⁷³ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Tr. A. M. Sheridan Smith. (London: Tavistock, 1972), 193. I should also note that discursive markings on material bodies are a real thing. Consider the recent police violence in the United States of America that disproportionately affect black and brown bodies. In many ways, these are material violences that stem from the discursive markings of state violence.

materialization of social norms through processes of repetitive citation of performative actions; the reality that the repression and iteration of social norms constructed Butler's body (or materialized in her language). Here, the use of discourse is different from Foucault's historical composition, but nonetheless important to showing Butler's focus on the discursive construction of bodies, delimiting the active materiality and ongoing materialization that foreground the linguistic turn.

Discursive strategies may be reduced to mere language, or discursive strategies may, in fact, be the traces of history that affect the material bodies through relational processes. I consider this latter way of reading Foucault as a material-discursive thinker who contributes to the thinking that bodies matter in their historical composition. I consider Foucault's work on prisons and the ways that power shapes and forms the material body by not only the power of language but also the institutionalized power of policies, laws, and governmentality, to be important to his material-discursive work.

What has been significant for research on the body in feminist and queer circles is the discursive turn, and its inadequacy; this style of research has dominated theories and philosophies of the body which privilege language over bodily materiality and active materialization.

To describe the materiality of the body as a construction in Butler's theorizing, then, is not to resort to linguistic determinism or cultural constructivism. We take it for granted, she notes, that somebody, or in more recent formulations, something, (e.g. Culture, Discourse or Power), does the act of constructing.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/odin/odin2.html>, accessed March 6, 2014.

This is a perfect example of the ways in which the discursive body emerges in Butler's work; I call this a failed materiality. This author suggests that a 'something' formulates the body, but these 'somethings' (culture, discourse, or power) are all rooted in language. I wish to reimagine bodies in material terms and do this by showing the raw material that is seen and developed by a variety of scholars (Barad, Braidotti, the new Materialism movement, and Bennett).²⁷⁵ I argue that Gloria Anzaldúa advocates for a return to radical material bodies, bodies that are human and more than human, materially connected in the world, plural, and otherwise, and this 'turn' to materiality and bodies provides a significant resource in analyzing bodies.²⁷⁶

As a way of illustrating the discursive turn, I begin by articulating bodies as seen in the work of Susan Bordo and Judith Butler. I then detail bodies as seen in the work of Rosi Braidotti, a Deleuzian feminist who incorporates the work of Gilles Deleuze and Spinoza's materiality into her work; this 'turn' yields a new material 'turn' in studies of bodies. I believe there are parallels to Spinoza's single substance monism and the radical materiality that is seen in Anzaldúa, and therefore I situate Deleuze and Anzaldúa in conversation with one another to expose the difference and differentiation in the dynamic becoming material bodies that explores radical self-organizing and self-transformation as

²⁷⁵ I should note that in Butler's later work, especially her work on assembly, there is more of a nuanced version of materiality, though I still think it is rooted in Hegelian notions of becoming that stem from language, not the philosophy of matter. And, so, at root, Butler's philosophy is not as materialist as what I would hope it would become.

²⁷⁶ The use of the term 'radical' references the ways in which Anzaldúan materiality is rooted in her version of monism, which I believe can be parallel to Spinoza's single matter substance.

a result of becoming nepantler@.²⁷⁷ Anzaldúa has largely been understood as a literary scholar, and her books are categorized as creative fiction in big box stores, like Barnes and Noble.²⁷⁸ I believe that we should rethink our understanding of Anzaldúa as mobilizing a particular style of philosophy whose roots are material. Exposing materiality in this manner helps illustrate the deep philosophical commitments that Anzaldúa had that have thus far been ignored in scholarly writing.²⁷⁹ I am hoping to reclaim the philosophy of Anzaldúa in a way to further mobilize her thought and theory for enacting radical social change and also to help develop the language of becoming and interrelatedness that is already native to her work, which I believe is central to the task of becoming as transformation.

Bodies in Bordo, Bulter, & Braidotti

There is an obvious split when one considers how the body is interpreted. That “split,” though perhaps more apparent when engaging in the theories of Susan Bordo and Judith Butler, is one that I want to mention as a way to navigate my interest in the ‘mattering’ body. In short, the split, which is highlighted in Bordo’s book *Unbearable Weight* and Butler’s book *Bodies that Matter*, hinges on the ways in which these two theorists understand women and the body, and their theories perpetuate their differences,

²⁷⁷ I use this term to illustrate the becoming nature of matter and the ways that matter and material bodies are always negotiating thresholds of power in their becoming and thresholds of categories.

²⁷⁸ While I argue that Anzaldúa is a philosopher, her books are categorized as fiction and therefore not used in philosophy departments as “real theory.” I find this unfortunate.

²⁷⁹ Much of the recent work on Anzaldúa explores her poetry and creative writing. Few scholars are using Anzaldúa as a philosopher who works at the intersection of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. I am in this latter group of scholars who seeks great potential in reading Anzaldúa as a philosopher.

and the differences are seen throughout feminist theory and feminist philosophy. This well-known split has influenced the ways in which feminist theory has theorized about bodies and has managed to avoid materializing bodies in their theories.²⁸⁰ Materiality has functioned in particular ways in the theories of Bordo and Butler. Materiality has been not an agential force of materialization but rather materiality has stemmed from Foucault and Althusser, functioning as a historical composition where language and materiality are embedded with one another. In this latter interpretation of materiality, bodies are fixed categories where inscriptions of power and discourse are embedded; language and materiality are intertwined, therefore not allowing materiality to be a dynamic relational process. While I will detail this split to help move toward bodies as material reality, an important addition must be noted: Gloria Anzaldúa. Following the short analysis detailing Bordo and Butler's differences and exploring the body relative to Rosi Braidotti, I will point out the ways in which the body is materialized in Anzaldúa's work, and how Anzaldúa, herself, theorizes a material body, especially notable in her early work.²⁸¹

I argue that Butler and Bordo purport to use a materially rich philosophy, but its materialization is highly constrained by poststructuralist thought and language, and both of these thinkers' point of departure relative to materiality is the interdependence of materiality and language; I think this highlights a failed materiality in both thinkers that in turn fortifies discursive bodies. Braidotti brings together Spinozist single matter

²⁸⁰ Hird is useful in thinking about this split.

²⁸¹ It is sufficient to note that in Anzaldúa's corpus, she points toward a posthumanist body. While I focus primarily on a humanistic body, I will draw out this distinction only to a point, because my interest is in the material body that is seen throughout Anzaldúa's early and middle writings.

substance and a theory of sexual difference that bridges together a type of dynamic materialization that results in a body that is dynamically becoming where matter precedes language; she roots her theory of becoming in a life that she calls *Zoe*.²⁸² The dynamism of *Zoe* privileges a theory of materiality as an active reality or active force in the world. It is important to note that for Braidotti, materiality precedes language, but not in the same way that materiality and language are embedded for Butler. I see materiality privileged in the work of Braidotti, because this New Materialism is tied to ontology, whereas materiality and language for Butler is part of the social construction of reality, not an ontological reality. The work of Gloria Anzaldúa in conversation with Braidotti and Deleuze bridges a type of assemblage thinking together on bodies and difference, a materially structured ‘junction’ or intersection that puts difference-in-action together with material bodies.

Judith Butler

Perhaps it is Judith Butler who is famous for the phrase “bodies that matter.” She did write an entire book on the “discursive limits of sex.” What is important in noting Butler is her positioning the body as a ‘thing.’ She also seeks to show her readers that the lived human body is comprised of material or matter, and she does this by deploying a complex notion of bodies that are performatively constituted as matter. She argues bodies matter, or count, for something, but her theory of materiality is highly constrained by her use of language and poststructuralism (and the centering of the Subject). I argue that

²⁸² Braidotti’s article in the *New Materialisms* book is helpful for understanding this further.

bodies do indeed matter in a decidedly materialistic way motivated by ongoing-networked relational processes. I further suggest that bodies are texturized by discursive markings, or moments when the body is ‘visited’ by discursivity. This might be similar to Michel Foucault’s positing bodily inscriptions.²⁸³

Judith Butler writes in a decidedly poststructuralist and critical theory genre as a feminist philosopher, and contributes to the burgeoning of feminist theory and feminist philosophy. Butler’s work, like Bordo’s, is a cornerstone in feminist theory. What Butler theorizes relative to bodies is focus on the construction of power relations and ways that bodies (particularly, women’s bodies) have been exposed to relations that have been detrimental to their flourishing. Butler’s work combines the critical analysis of philosophy, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and critical theory. She is often cited as an initial contributor to the ever-evolving anti-disciplinary discipline of queer theory.²⁸⁴ Butler works at these critical intersections to contribute to the discourse concerning women, largely conceived. Her theories of the body, however, yield a much more discursive reality, than that of Bordo’s more “materialist” turn. Unlike Bordo’s use of food relative to women’s bodies, Butler does not use any tangible elements when theorizing the body. For example, *Bodies that Matter* suggests that there is nothing outside language, and the hierarchy of materiality and language is a false hierarchy,

²⁸³ Judith Butler, “Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions,” *The Journal of Philosophy*. Eighty-Sixth Annual Meeting American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division. Vol. 86, No. 11, pp. 601-607, November 1989.

²⁸⁴ “Anti-disciplinary” is my designation in speaking about queer theory. It seems to me that this “discipline” is constructed (methodologically and theoretically) to be anti-normative and thus anti-discipline.

because it is language that only exists. Judith Butler has shown the materiality of the body is a construction that emerges out of a field of power that shapes its contours, marking it with sex and gender, but this ‘marking’ or bodily texturizing is discursive, which ultimately yields the body a passive site of materiality. She says,

the process of that sedimentation or what we might call *materialization* will be a kind of citationality, the acquisition of being through the citing of power, a citing that establishes an originary complicity with power in the formation of the “I.”²⁸⁵

Butler points out that we need to rethink the very meaning of construction and the grammatical structures that we use when we talk about construction. For her, it is “neither a single act nor a causal process initiated by a subject and culminating in a set of fixed effects. Construction takes place not only in time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms.”²⁸⁶ To describe the materiality of the body as a construction in Butler's theorizing, then, is not to resort to linguistic determinism or cultural constructivism, or even essentialism or social constructivism. We take it for granted, she notes, that somebody, or in more recent formulations, something, (culture, discourse, or power), does the act of constructing. This illustrates what I consider to be Butler's failed materiality, hinging on a discursive construction of the body that is constituted by outside affects (culture, discourse, or power), instead of finite materiality extending from single matter substance.

²⁸⁵ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 15.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

This radical difference between referent and signified is the site where the materiality of language and that of the world which it seeks to signify are perpetually negotiated. This might usefully be compared with Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh of the world. Although the referent cannot be said to exist apart from the signified, it nevertheless cannot be reduced to it. That referent, that abiding function of the world, is to persist as the horizon and the "that which" which makes its demand in and to language. Language and materiality are fully embedded in each other, chiasmic in their interdependency, but never fully collapsed into one another, i.e., reduced to one another, and yet neither fully ever exceeds the other. Always already implicated in each other, always already exceeding one another, language and materiality are never fully identical nor fully different.²⁸⁷

This is again part of her failed materiality. It is failed because Butler constructs a framework where language and matter are co-constitutive with one another and in this framework, language precedes matter. Language is always before what is in the world; this solidifies a failed materiality in my thinking. This is the case because I do not think that Butler advocates for language as material, but rather that language precedes matter. If language is material, then language is everything and this would conform to a monist reality. While Butler ostensibly wrote a book concerning the material body in *Bodies That Matter*, what is often reported about this text is that bodies are eclipsed by the discursivity of her own work and her emphasis on the performative turn that is her reformulation of Hegel's *Werden*.²⁸⁸ To highlight yet another example of Butler's failed materiality that is found in *Bodies That Matter* is when she writes of the quality of materiality. She writes about materiality as a particular type of quality and kind, but this

²⁸⁷ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 69.

²⁸⁸ Though Butler never calls the body she theorizes a "discursive body," I find that it is, indeed, a discursive body that is performatively constituted.

qualitative statement concerning matter elucidates her emphasis on language and linguistic dynamics that call matter into being.

But what then do we make of the kind of materiality that is associated with the body, its physicality as well as its location, including its social and political locatedness, and that materiality that characterizes language? Do we mean “materiality” in a common sense, or are these usages examples of what Althusser refers to as modalities of matter?²⁸⁹

It is clear in this quote and the above quote that Butler does not theorize around a materiality with agential force, but rather a performative becoming that is rooted in the intersection of language and materiality, an interdependence that subordinates materiality and privileges language.

Susan Bordo

Close to the same time that *Gender Trouble* was published, Susan Bordo published *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*.²⁹⁰ In this text, Bordo seeks to formulate a theory concerning bodies and does so from the perspective of feminist theory and Western thought, all relative to women and what she considers to be contemporary issues, namely eating disorders. This text gives readers an opportunity to articulate a theory of the body; in fact, the body is a fleshy material reality, argues Bordo.

The book conforms to the subtitle of the book: *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. What interests me most in this text is the way that Bordo deals with ‘real,’ not imagined, bodies. From asking the question “Whose body is this?” to exploring whether

²⁸⁹ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 69.

²⁹⁰ Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2004.

hunger is ideology, the body that is unmasked and interrogated is a real body relative to women (an unambiguous category for Bordo) and the issues or stereotypes of Western culture.

Aside from the ways in which Bordo's text deals with women and bodies, it also functions on a theoretical level within the field of feminist philosophy and feminist critical methodologies. It seems that portions of this text are written as a response to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*.²⁹¹ In *Unbearable Weight*, Bordo includes a chapter that was previously published in *Feminist Studies*²⁹² that reads like a response or critique of *Gender Trouble*. Perhaps what Bordo's text gives us is a way to deal with the impending postmodern reality that is ever fragmenting real bodies and perpetuating the imagined body, which is largely discursive. While the critique or response is valuable, what is important is the visibility of bodies, fleshy bodies, in Bordo's work.

In Bordo's *Unbearable Weight*, she theorizes the activity, passivity, and gender of women and the ways that "The Heavy Bear" perpetuates the reality of women's bodies being passive material.

In "The Heavy Bear" the body is presented as hunting us with its passive materiality, its lack of agency, art, or even consciousness. Insofar as the "spirit's motive" is the guiding force, clarity and will dominate; the body, by contrast, simply receives and darkly, dumbly responds to impressions, emotions, passions. This duality of active spirit/passive body is also gendered, and it has been one of the most historically powerful of the dualities that inform Western ideologies of gender. First philosophically

²⁹¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminist and the Subversion of Identity*, 2nd edition, (New York: Routledge,) 1990.

²⁹² Susan Bordo, "Postmodern Subjects, Postmodern Bodies" in *Feminist Studies*, 18, no. 1 1992, 159-175.

articulated by Aristotle (although embodied in many creation myths and associative schemes before him), it still informs contemporary images and ideology concerning reproduction. According to the Aristotelian version, the conception of a living being involves the vitalization of the purely material contribution of the female by the “effective and active” element, the male sperm.²⁹³

This paragraph reminds us that the dualism of gender pairs with bodies and locates (or stabilizes) women’s bodies as passive material. What is missing, however, is an active materiality for women. Bordo refuses the passivity of dualism, but does not lift up an active alternative for women’s bodies being actively material or mattering. I call this another failed attempt at claiming bodies material. The other importance of the above lengthy quote is that Bordo situates the active and passive materiality with biology, the sperm and fertilization, to be precise. I think this limits my own attempt to privilege a robust theory of materialism that is active, becoming, and transformative. For this reason, I claim that Bordo’s materialism is a failed materialism.

Rosi Braidotti

While Bordo and Butler are helpful in identifying differences within US feminist theory, especially with regard to the ways in which they construct their body, it is Rosi Braidotti, a transnational feminist resource, who speaks of a materialist theory of becoming, and whose work on bodies and subjectivity has revolutionized feminist theory, especially theories of difference. Rosi Braidotti, a feminist Deleuzian scholar, has been committed to the intersection of feminist philosophy and critical social theory. Given this, her work for me meets at critical intersections: Deleuze and feminist theory, which is

²⁹³ Susan Bordo, 11-12.

shaping the ways in which I am able to continue to trace the materiality of the body—
from Braidotti to Anzaldúa. Rosi Braidotti argues that the

body is an inter-face, a threshold, a field of intersecting material and symbolic forces, it is a surface where multiple codes (race, sex, class, age, etc.) are inscribed; it's a cultural construction that capitalizes on energies of a heterogeneous, discontinuous and affective or unconscious nature. This vision of the body contains sexuality as a process and as a constitutive element. Embodiment provides a common but at best very complex ground on which to postulate the feminist project. On the luna-park that marks the website of this conference, the body would definitely be on the roller-coaster.²⁹⁴

Braidotti theorizes a way to consider bodies as multiply constitutive of differing and competing 'matter,' perhaps best understood as elements or moments of discursivity.²⁹⁵ While she maintains a materialist theory of the body, she leaves openings for discursive realities to intersect with the materiality of the body. Braidotti, affirming the cosmopolitanism of material effects that manifest in things like race, ethnicity, and sexuality, among others texturize the body, but in material ways; these each mentioned above are material realities and should not be reduced to discursive realities in an attempt to manage bodies. Certainly, the scripts of race and class have material effects on bodies. We see this in the #blacklivesmatter movement here in the United States.²⁹⁶ Race and class, though socially constructed, have managed to surveil bodies in ways that have had

²⁹⁴ Rosi Braidotti, "Between the No Longer and the Not Yet: Nomadic Variations on the Body," n.d. Accessed on July 1, 2012 <http://www.women.it/cyberarchive/files/braidotti.htm>

²⁹⁵ I will touch on this idea of a 'moment of discursivity' later when I address how the body is "texturized by discursive markings."

²⁹⁶ #blacklivesmatter started as a social media campaign to address the overwhelming disparity of attentiveness to black and brown bodies, following the killings of Eric Garner and Michael Brown, among others.

lasting material effects. It is important to recognize the scripts that have been deployed against bodies of color and name their material effects, and these scripts have also helped to shape these bodies. What Braidotti generates in her work is an enfleshed materiality or an embodied materiality; she uses these terms interchangeable. Concerning bodies and matter—a key composition to Braidotti’s argument regarding embodiment and sexuality, both matters of feminist struggle:

Being embodied means being in and of sexualized matter. This sexual fibre is intrinsically and multiply connected to social and political relations; it is anything but an individualistic entity. Sexuality is simultaneously the most intimate and the most external, socially-driven, power-drenched practice of the self. As a social and symbolic, material and semiotic institution, sexuality is singled out by feminism as the primary location of power, in a complex manner which encompasses both macro and micro relations. Sexual difference - the sexualized bi-polarity, is another word for power in both the negative or repressive (potestas) and the positive or empowering (potentia) meaning of the term.²⁹⁷

Braidotti skillfully illustrates bodies as networked processes, which are materializing along a plane of difference. In this quote, Braidotti claims sexuality is matter, or a material reality, even calls it a fiber. Sexuality participates in the materializing of experiences within relationships. Bodies are sexualized matter, different in their becoming, but already existing on a plane of becomingness. In this way, bodies are networked realities and matter exists on an ontological plane, multiply connected and always becoming, as a result of the body’s politically networked relations. Braidotti, a theorist whose multiplicity and plurality of identities, and interculturality, speaks into the existing discourse concerning bodies, helps re-imagine embodied (nomadic) subjects that

²⁹⁷ Braidotti, “Between the No Longer and the Not Yet: Nomadic Variations on the Body.”

are affected by what is often cited as the post-modern reality. Likewise, Anzaldúa theorizes about plural identities, plural bodies, and Mestizaje, which is parallel to Braidotti's work in many ways. Braidotti theorizes in the above quote a way to consider the dynamics of power relations relative to embodiment. That, embodiment and enfleshment are interchangeable and contribute to a robust understanding of becoming as transformation. For Braidotti, it is matter *qua* becoming and bodies *qua* becoming. This syntax contributes to the interrelatedness of being a networked ontology that contributes to knowledge production and action in the world. It is because of this networked ontology that the idea of mattering bodies becoming are part of the active and enfleshed materialism. Further in her lecture, she correlates bodies and embodiment:

The sort of 'figurations' of alternative subjectivity, which feminism has invented, like the womanist/ the lesbian/ the cyborg/ the inappropriate(d) other/ the nomadic feminist etc. differ from classical 'metaphors' in calling into play a sense of accountability for one's locations. They express materially embedded cartographies and as such are self-reflexive and not parasitic upon a process of metaphorization of 'others.' They provide, on the critical level, materially embedded and embodied accounts of one's power-relations.²⁹⁸

A materially embedded cartography as a metaphor for 'figuration' speaks to a Deleuzian technology for plurality and multiplicity that the subject enfleshes. This plurality further materializes along the matrix of becoming.

It expresses the subject's capacity for multiple, non-linear and outward-bound inter-connections with a number of external forces and others. This model of inter-relations works as well in Deleuze and Guattari's many

²⁹⁸ Braidotti, "Between the No Longer and the Not Yet: Nomadic Variations on the Body."

references to animals, plants, viruses, and to the chaosmos as a whole. It is about multiple alliances, symbiotic connections and fusions.²⁹⁹

Braidotti's work, from the three-volume series on Deleuzian manifestations in feminist thought³⁰⁰ to her very insightful work on ethics and ontology, theorizes and invites her readers to engage critically with issues important to the feminist struggle and bodies. In fact, the body that she creates in her 'materialist theory of becoming' is a body that resides in the interstices of thought—in between the 'no longer and not yet,' as does her feminist theory; this, in many ways, is similar to the Anzaldúan body which is always residing in the borderlands or in nepantla—an already and not yet reality. This standpoint where the body is constituted further roots bodies in a materiality that is becoming. Braidotti's feminist thinking and theorizing is analogous to Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, where blurring the boundaries and always becoming multiple due to transformation, speaks to a new kind of feminism. She says,

Feminist thinking takes place between the no longer and the not yet, in the in-between zone between willful, conscious political practice and the not-necessarily conscious yearning for transformation and change. I see feminist theory as the activity aimed at articulating the questions of individual gendered identity with issues related to political subjectivity,

²⁹⁹ Rosi Braidotti, "Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity," *Rhizomes*, Issues 11/12, 2005/2006.

³⁰⁰ Here I am referencing Braidotti's work in *Nomadic Subjects*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Transpositions*. These three books help shape my own positions concerning bodies and materiality. The text that preceded this trilogy (*Patterns of Dissonance*) is also incredibly helpful. What Braidotti offers her readers is an interdisciplinary way of engaging philosophy and social theory. She also has what I consider to be a 'feminist' commitment, and her feminism is structured as a transnational feminism. Because of her interdisciplinary work, then, her construction of bodies is an ever-complicated notion of materiality, illustrative of Spinoza and Deleuze and Queer Theory.

the production of knowledge, diversity, and epistemological
legitimation.³⁰¹

What Braidotti's feminist theory does for those of us who engage in the act of theorizing across genres is enable us to have tools that address the intersecting realities of materiality and discursivity alongside three philosophical domains: ethics, ontology, and epistemology. This web of philosophical domains is a hallmark of the New Materialist movement. They theorize at the entanglement of ontology, epistmeology, and ethics. I find that Anzaldúa's work also intersects with these three philosophical domains. These elements become part and parcel of the bodies we investigate, engage, and ultimately enflesh. Feminist theories and feminist activities, *a la* Braidotti, enflesh a struggle to re-materialize not only the body but also the subject's capacity to know, as well as the body's production of knowledge, and reality / one's being and becoming in the world. "In the end—Feminists are proud to be flesh."³⁰²

Bodies materialize in a particularly dynamic way in Braidotti's work. "I prefer a deeply embedded vision of the embodied subject. In the light of contemporary genetics and molecular biology, it is more than feasible to speak of the body as a complex system of self-sustaining forces."³⁰³ For Braidotti, the body remains a "bundle of contradictions" as it is a related animal entity, a composition of genes comprised into a genetic data-bank,

³⁰¹ Braidotti, "Between the No Longer and the Not Yet: Nomadic Variations on the Body."

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid. This statement points toward a Deleuzian notion of the body that he recovers from Nietzsche. These are important points along the way to highlight to show the assemblage of thinking and their constructive moves.

while also remaining a “bio-social entity.” The body is a *socio-sensory reality*³⁰⁴ that is always being re-materialized in its own becoming. This material socio-sensory reality is a self-organizing and self-transformative single matter substance that relies on its relational processes that are fiercely network in this world. That is to say that the body is a set of a systematized and personalized inscriptions or memories that is bundled together into a ‘thing,’ but is not a passive site of citation, as Butler argues in *Bodies That Matter*.³⁰⁵ As such, Braidotti articulates the body as it has materialized in postmodernity: “it is part animal, part machine but the dualistic opposition of the two, which our culture has adopted since the 18th century as the dominant model, is inadequate today.”³⁰⁶ She concludes, “This means that we can now think of the body as an entity that inhabits different time-zones simultaneously, and is animated by different speeds and a variety of internal and external clocks which do not necessarily coincide.”³⁰⁷ By this assertion, the materiality of the body is more than what is contained *in* the body. Materiality is ever expansive extending beyond the contact zones of my own bones and muscles that constitute my “body.” Bodies, especially in an age where virtuality dominates our means of communication, stipulate an ever-growing reality of materiality, and we should recognize this as a new material turn in understanding bodies.

³⁰⁴ *Socio-sensory reality* is my way of naming the materiality of the body. Much like Braidotti uses “intelligent-flesh-matter compound,” I think of the body being constituted by the socio and fleshy senses to yield a composite material that we call the body.

³⁰⁵ Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 15.

³⁰⁶ Braidotti, “Between the No Longer and the Not Yet: Nomadic Variations on the Body.”

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion: Anzaldúan Bodies that Matter

This chapter traced three mainstream feminist thinkers' theories of bodies. While Braidotti's theory of the body is the theory I find most compelling, it is not without critique. Braidotti, a thoroughly embedded European scholar, fails to articulate the materiality of the marginalized body, or the body that is perpetually displaced by the ideological center. This is where Anzaldúa's theorizing multiple realities and a formative theory of the material universe intersects with Braidotti's Deleuzian feminism.

Anzaldúan materiality is a materiality that is fiercely networked, participating in the process of materialization and related to all persons and things and participates in ongoing cycles of difference and repetition that is often articulated as cycles of *nepantla*.

While noting the failed materiality of Butler and Bordo, Braidotti offers Anzaldúan scholars a way to reimagine materiality existing along the plane of becoming. This necessarily means the inclusion of Gilles Deleuze with Anzaldúa's theories. But, this intersection is not without differences or uncomplicated. Given the subordination of matter to language in the work of Butler, it is important to utilize thinkers who privilege matter in their theorizing to help bring material bodies into clearer view. I think Braidotti does this and Anzaldúa certainly does this. Though many argue that Butler creates a mutually constitutive dynamic of matter and language, I disagree with this read of her and rather look to the New Materialists who help bring bodies into a more material reality; this motivates my own thinking concerning the materiality of bodies which are becoming.

CHAPTER EIGHT: A CONCLUSION

*“Becoming-” is a process of change, flight, or movement within an assemblage. Rather than conceive of the pieces of an assemblage as an organic whole, within which the specific elements are held in place by the organization of a unity, the process of “becoming-” serves to account for relationships between the “discrete” elements of the assemblage. In “becoming-” one piece of the assemblage is drawn into the territory of another piece, changing its value as an element and bringing about a new unity. An example of this principle might be best illustrated in the way in which atoms are drawn into an assemblage with nearby atoms through affinities rather than an organizational purpose. The process is one of deterritorialization in which the properties of the constituent element disappear and are replaced by the new properties of the assemblage—
“becomings-molecular of all kinds, becomings-particles”*

—Deleuze & Guattari

Mattering Bodies and Queer(y)ing Bodily Materiality: Toward an ‘Intra-Active’

Ontology of Becoming and the Replacement of Interrelatedness

I have come to this work from multiple angles: philosophy, critical theory, feminist studies, and women of colors theorizing. I see these particular interconnections or angles as exacerbating the entanglement of materiality and bodies, exposing the dichotomy between matter and discourse. I have sought to privilege materialism over language, not advance a mutually constitutive dynamic of interplay between them. While I have used language to communicate these ideas, I maintain that the ideas, themselves, are material, as is language. It is perhaps contemporary materialism and the work of Deleuze and Barad through the lens of Anzaldúa who illustrate a way to mobilize the materiality of ideas and the agential cuts that create quantum realities for matter to

become and for bodies to equally become mattering. Notably, I have used Gloria Anzaldúa as my primary interlocutor, deploying her first published poem as a way to rethink matter and bodies, and have sought to privilege her theories and thought (her writing-art-theory) as I reread materiality in the works of Gilles Deleuze, Rosi Braidotti, Spinoza, and others. What Anzaldúa has done is re-center and re-politicize the account of materiality, essentially subverting the existing reigning norms concerning materiality by using image, theory, poetry, and multiple languages to disrupt discursive norms. Like the New Materialisms movement that seeks to respond to the linguistic turn by showing the linkages of epistemology and ontology, Anzaldúa's work shows the radical interrelatedness of epistemology (what we know of the world) and ontology (what is in the world) and the ways in which we act (ethics). Though Anzaldúa never formally made this link in her work in these precise words, her last essay which was published in the last years of her life, "Now Let us Shift," illustrates this interrelated commitment to an ethico-onto-epistemology. While Anzaldúa's work is non-traditional from an analytic perspective and also under-recognized as a contribution to critical theory, that is not sufficient reason to disregard the complexity of what she is doing in her theories and poetry. Granted, when she mentions that she apologizes to a chair after bumping into it, or when she recounts a story of when her body expanded beyond her container of a body attached to muscle and fat to reach fruit, I find it odd. But, I am aware that Anzaldúa has access to a shape and form of consciousness that had radically shaped her identity and way of being in the world; her material consciousness has become her in radical ways. Henceforth, it has also shaped her epistemologies and ontologies. Using Anzaldúa means that I am further destabilizing the landscape of materialism by placing Anzaldúa's

thought and theories not only in conversation with New Materialisms, but as a proto-New materialist thinker.

This dissertation has privileged Anzaldúa as a primary interlocutor in detailing the materiality of the body, and has done so by utilizing the language of entanglement and interrelatedness. There are entanglements of theories existing in this dissertation that create new modes of traction in theorizing about matter and discourse, bodies and sites. I read Anzaldúa as a materialist philosopher³⁰⁸ whose thinking has shaped feminist theorizing and women of colors theorizing, though this largely goes unnoticed in the New Materialisms movement. I wish to raise up Anzaldúa as a significant theorist whose thinking and theorizing is parallel to the strands of Spinoza we find in Deleuze, Guattari, and Braidotti. In so doing, I call her a philosopher. Recognizing and reconfiguring this not only dispels Anzaldúa's critics that she is only a creative fiction writer, but also helps incorporate women of colors' theories into the larger philosophical discourse.

I have read Anzaldúa with Deleuzian, Spinozist, Merleau-Pontian, and Braidottian lenses. Likewise, I have read Deleuze, Spinoza, Merleau-Ponty, and Braidotti with Anzaldúan lenses and have crafted theorizing at the intersections of multiple theories. This was the deployment of Barad's diffractive methodology, something that she borrows from Donna Haraway.³⁰⁹ Utilizing diffraction as the key element in theorizing across

³⁰⁸ I use this phrase to detail a type of thinker who privileges materiality over the contours of idealism that has privileged language.

³⁰⁹ There is a long history of using optical metaphors for thinking. Haraway uses reflection, but replaces it with diffraction. Barad borrows this term, diffraction, and generates a whole methodology. I use this methodology throughout the dissertation.

multiple theories that have produced radical differences helps further elucidate the ‘replacement of interrelatedness.’ Diffraction not only increases one’s awareness to multiple theories existing together, but also situates these theories in conversation with one another. At times there is tension existing in between these theories, and at other times there is fluidity. Diffraction subverts the reigning norm of the singular monolith interpretation and allows for multiplicity to emerge and is situated as the norm.

Difference, then, takes root during the process of diffraction that displaces norms and values that would otherwise displace the intersections of theories existing together. What results is a harmony of difference that attracts further theorizing in the borderlands, or thresholds, where tension of differences stimulates ongoing discussion. Diffraction is more than an additive; it is the very modality that stimulates difference and multiplicity, materializing along a plane of becomingness that displaces norms and hierarchies and invites a radical interconnectedness.

As a way of concluding, I give an account of materiality as I have used it in this dissertation. I mobilize this account of materiality to point toward an ‘intra-active’ ontology of becoming, and use the ontology of becoming that I find inherent in the work of Deleuze and Barad central to the reality or ontology of becoming and interrelatedness that emerges in Anzaldúa’s work. Deleuze and Barad are not the only ones who deploy an ontology of becoming, and I equally fuse together Catherine Keller’s theorizing becoming with these thinkers. The plumb line that holds these thinkers together is Anzaldúa herself; she is the material becoming whose body of work re-materializes thought and theory. I combine an active orientation to queer theory to re-imagine materiality as intra-activeness, then look to the intra-active ontology of becoming

residing at the intersection of Barad and Anzaldúa. I conclude this dissertation as an act of queer(y)ing bodily materiality and the ‘replacement of interrelatedness.’ It is in this chapter that the intersection of matter, meaning, and interrelatedness become clearer and an *ethico-onto-epistemology* can begin to take shape. It is because of redressing matter as a formative site for theorizing that this can take root.

Accounting Materiality, or a Material Account

The account of materiality spanning from the New Materialisms movement, Deleuze, Foucault, Jane Bennett, and Vicky Kirby all have a type of vibrancy or vitalism attached to their theories. While I take this idea of ‘vibrant matter’ to be important to the study of materiality and bodies, I wish to talk about vibrant bodies, materializing along the matrix of becomingness, and I do this by attaching Gloria Anzaldúa’s theories of both materiality and bodies. This creates a mosaic horizon when thinking the connection of bodies and materiality. Bodily materiality, as I call it in this project, is a materiality of doing and becoming that shapes and forms bodies, broadly construed throughout this project. That which shapes and forms (for Jane Bennett) stems from either *élan vital* (taken from Bergson) or entelechy (taken from Hans Dreisch).³¹⁰ Another way to consider matter and the process of materialization, one that I take to be significant for this research, is that matter “does not refer to a fixed substance; rather, matter is substance in

³¹⁰ See Jane Bennet’s *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

its intra-active becoming—not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency.”³¹¹ For Butler, the process of materialization is highly constrained by her discursive strategies, largely due from her ‘linguistic turn’ and investment in placing language prior to materiality and further by subordinating matter to language.³¹² Matter, however, is both a “stabilizing and destabilizing process of iterative intra-activity” that creates the process of what I am calling the ‘replacement of interrelatedness.’ It is not that matter and language intersect. It is not that language is prior to matter. I privilege matter as the becoming component in reality that shapes language, so it must be prior to language in radical ways, rooted in its own becoming different. To take this further, language cannot be prior to matter because language is material. This ‘replacement of interrelatedness’ helps shore up matter as the vital impetus for a radical becoming and for mattering bodies to take shape in the world.

Given that I consider materiality a relational phenomena and bodies (both human and nonhuman animal) are also material realities and relational, it is important to note that matter comes to matter through the process of ongoing ‘intra-activity,’ a particular phenomenon of interrelatedness that is meaning making; this is key to understanding an ontology of becoming. Intra-activity refers to a type of agency, and is not something that

³¹¹ Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2003, vol. 28 no 3, 822. Karen Barad uses this type of language to talk about matter as a material becoming, a particular phenomenon occurring in the world.

³¹² See *Bodies That Matter*.

someone has. Rather, it is an enactment of “iterative changes to particular practices.”³¹³ This agential doing (or intra-active becoming) is a reconfiguring existing along the relational matrix of a dynamic intra-activity. Likewise, both matter and bodies come to matter not by the kind of citaitonality for which Butler advocates, but rather *in* the phenomena of ongoing relational materialization. Both bodies and matter become a material reality not by linguistic constructions but by discursive productions “in the posthumanist sense that discursive practices are themselves material (re)configurings of the world through which the determination of boundaries, properties, and meanings is differentially enacted.”³¹⁴ Discursive practices are “boundary-making practices (that) are fully implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity through which phenomena come to matter.”³¹⁵ This further elucidates matter as an active agent in the process of materialization. Bodies, too, congeal as matter in an active state or phenomenon, and materialize along the borderland axis of becoming. The process of materialization, while highly relational, is also a dynamic process, a participatory flow. So, where Bergson and Dreisch ascribed a type of vitalism to matter, I much prefer Barad’s material orientation in that “mater is a dynamic intra-active becoming that is implicated and enfolded in its iterative becoming.”³¹⁶ The folding of matter and the enfolding of matter is the becoming

³¹³ Karen Barad, “How Matter Comes to Matter,” 827.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 821.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 821.

³¹⁶ Karen Barad: *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 151.

and also the becoming different. Bodies here reside in the fold; they are becoming.

Likewise, Gloria Anzaldúa defined materiality in this way: “The material universe is not made up of things—it is only energy and lines of force continuing to produce temporary forms that are in a state of continuous flow.”³¹⁷ Together, in conversation, Barad and Anzaldúa clearly articulate bodily materiality as not things-in-themselves, but rather a type of mattering that is “in a state of continuous flow,” dynamic and intra-active in their becoming. Bodily materiality, or bodily mattering, then, is a “dynamic articulation or configuration of the world,” relying on single matter substance.³¹⁸

Bodily materiality emerges as a particular material phenomenon in tandem with the relational processes of materialization, and these bodies (both human and nonhuman) are marked by material-discursive practices thereby constituting their differential realities. This happens, matter becomes or materializes, when difference takes shape outside of a norm existing. Materiality becomes because matter is difference-in-itself, not a thing that exists without sufficient agency. Situating matter as that which is difference-in-itself reformulates the manner in which tokens and signs function beyond the traditional representationalist account. Matter, in its dynamism, becomes the locutionary act to create the ontological inseparability of words and things. Therefore, a critical turn toward bodily materiality (or bodily mattering) dislodges traditional representationalism that separates the “world into the ontologically disjointed domains of words and

³¹⁷ Gloria Anzaldúa’s notes in the Benson Library, (Box 102, folder 2) 1999.

³¹⁸ This phrase is borrowed from Braidotti who re-articulates monism as single-matter substance.

things.”³¹⁹ What emerges during the process of materialization is a performative metaphysics and a new ontology emerges; I call this an ontology of becoming.

No longer can bodily materiality be a passive site for the inscriptions of signs. Locutions also must be recalculated in order to give a more robust account of materialization. Having a different metaphysical point of departure relieves this problem of materiality being a non-active force. Recalculating our ontology into one that is relational in turn enlivens bodies, materiality, and nature into their fullness of becoming; a new metaphysical point of departure is established in this recalculation. Matter and things no longer reside as “dead things;” they are alive and acting in today’s world—they become part of the relationship that bodies share in the world. This initiates the ontological inseparability of ‘intra-active’ material elements.

While matter is able to become part of a relational process and the ontological inseparability of material components are active, bodies materialize as an ‘intra-active’ force that are always becoming different-in-themselves. To further materialize bodies, I suggest the intersection of queer theory with bodily materiality. This further mobilizes materiality toward an ‘intra-active’ ontology of becoming, reliant on diffractive readings of both queerness and materiality. Suggesting a turn to queer theory intentionally dislodges the discursive body by initiating a horizon of materialization that gestures to an ever-widening reality of excess of matter becoming.

³¹⁹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe*, 137.

Queer theory has a history of leveraging language against the body, resulting in the formation of what is often termed a discursive body. In most cases, the body disappears in the discursive horizon of difference, and differences never materialize as things-in-themselves; they are fragments of language measuring discursive forms. The eternal question that I have is what happens when the body is thought of in material terms, following in the genealogy of Democritus-Epicurus-Spinoza-Diderot-Deleuze with a sprinkling of Merleau-Ponty, over against the more common feminist tradition that traces materiality from Hegel-Marx-Adorno and Historical Materialism. If this genealogy is my point of departure relative to matter, what happens to bodily materiality when the works of Karen Barad and Gloria Anzaldúa intersect it as new theoretical turns in queer theory? Secondly, what happens when Catherine Keller's commitment to a philosophy of becoming and planetary entanglements meet with my own theorizing matter and bodies? A matrix of borderlands as material agency initiates a new contour in understanding queer theory with materiality. Furthermore, queer theory, in this sense, surfaces as a material phenomenon, and the discursive horizon is shaped by the real material reality of bodies (or by bodily materiality). What this evokes, then, (in Barad's language) is an 'intra-active' ontology of becoming. The beingness of bodily materiality is no longer a stable site for socio-analytic mediation; it is a de-stabilized site of ongoing material becomingness that initiates a bodily and material reality that is always traversing the domains of ethics, ontology, and epistemology and is always corresponding to its relational processes. The becomingness of bodily materiality signals a new material turn for the study of bodies in the humanities that braids together the entangled fruits of science, philosophy, theology and religion in compelling ways. Likewise, the production

of knowledge stems from materiality, and bodily ways of knowing are thereby initiated. This further deepens the entanglement of ethics, ontology, and epistemology.³²⁰

An Intersecting Juncture of Queer Theory, Materiality, and Intra-Activeness

I conceive of matter in part in Deleuzian phenomenological terms—that single matter substance and perception with experience help us relate to objects, or with other material things, and this perception initiates a dynamic relationship yielding a particular type of experience with the world (an entanglement, which is part of our materiality). In addition, I think of matter in Deleuzian and Braidottian terms who both enliven Spinoza's theory of the body and theorize around an ontological plane of consistency and advocate for the non-separability and non-locality of matter that is becoming. The body exists on a plane of consistency and is managed by longitude and latitude—speed and consistency. The material body is an extension of the infinite substance for Spinoza, and Deleuze captures this type of body as that which is dynamic and existing in a matrix of becomingness, folding and unfolding in the interstices of infinite folds; it is in fact a mobile assemblage.³²¹ Deleuze's reliance on the relational processes that initiate the body's materiality are important here, for matter that is passive or a stable site can not exist on the ontological plane of becoming. Bodily materiality, conceived of in queer terms, initiates the ongoing *retorcer* of matter. It is a twisting and turning process that

³²⁰ I initially discovered this entanglement when I read Karen Barad and I see this entanglement in the work and theory of Gloria Anzaldú.

³²¹ This is discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and generates or stimulates new language in talking about the materiality of the body. I follow Deleuze's logic in thinking the body is a mobile assemblage, an entangled material reality existing in the world.

exists between bodies and in bodies and is fundamentally relational. Think here of the ‘amazing double helix.’ Its strategic internal movement, a movement that places materiality within the matrix of the borderlands and creates new modalities of agency, destabilizes bodily materiality. Barad theorizes about meaning and matter as an opposition to a static or stable reality. She writes,

Matter, like meaning, is not an individually articulated or static entity. Matter is not little bits of nature, or a blank slate, surface, or site passively awaiting signification; nor is it an uncontested ground for scientific, feminist, or Marxist theories. Matter is not a support, location, referent, or source of sustainability for discourse. Matter is not immutable or passive. It does not require the mark of an external force like culture or history to complete it. Matter is always already an ongoing historicity.³²²

Materiality means something for Barad and matter *is* more than something; it is a doing.

Matter is not a dead element in this world; it is a becoming reality that emerges in the material interstices of bodies. When this happens, a new form of relationality and agency is initiated and an ‘intra-active’ ontology of becoming commences.

Because matter is an “already ongoing historicity,” matter continues to revolve in the matrix of becoming; this is a dynamic intersection of being and becoming that relies on the connectionist framework of ontology and epistemology that has implications for ethics and meaning in today’s world. Matter is both an ontological possibility and epistemological rupture, opening up new contours of being and becoming that further initiate material ways of knowing. Anzaldúa illustrated this by theorizing about *mestizaje* bodies that are part of the borderlands and impacted by the politics of the nation-state.

³²² Karen Barad, “How Matter Comes to Matter,” 821.

These material-discursive realities always impact the existing intersections of bodies and the state, a particular apparatus that governs borderland bodies into new forms of being and becoming. Bodily materiality, then, negotiates the intersections, thresholds, or borderlands of bodies, the chasm existing between material bodies that are related because of the process of materialization. These thresholds also materialize along the plane of becoming. The chasm, or threshold, plays a careful role in connecting bodies together with other matter, and play a significant role in becoming; herein lies a collective relationality of bodies and matter and becoming.

Bodily materiality, while fiercely networked and existing in the borderlands of becoming, negotiates these in-between spaces between bodies and nature. Queer(y)ing materiality, or matter itself, necessarily means that this theory materializes over against discursive strategies that have called bodies into being through the process of iterative citation.³²³ The discursive horizon of difference becomes a material reality because difference emerges outside the reality of a norm existing and bodies, therefore, become different-in-themselves during the process of materialization, a relational and ontological material reality that is always multiplying, as a result of this process.

Language is displaced as the overarching strategy that “materializes” and localizes bodies, and matter is given the space and time to ‘intra-act’ with bodies (though here there is the reality of the non-separability of matter and bodies), a new form of agency that is not reliant on normative or stable theories of causality; this demands an

³²³ This is Butler’s primary orientation to bodies—that bodies are iterative performances that are governed by language / discourse. Only then do these bodies materialize.

entanglement of agencies. This move exists on an ontological plane whereby bodily materiality cycles through the difference and repetition of becoming and being. Quoting Barad, she says:

The notion of intra-action is a key element of my agential realist framework. The neologism “intra-action” signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual “interaction,” which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. It is important to note that the “distinct” agencies are only distinct in a relational, not an absolute, sense, that is, agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements.³²⁴

Barad further explains in chapter four of *Meeting the University Halfway*, “the notion of intra-action constitutes a radical reworking of the traditional notion of causality.”³²⁵ What results, she suggests, is a lively new ontology, motivated by dynamic relational process that I believe is radically material. This entanglement is the world for Barad, which is decidedly materialistic, and “the world’s radical aliveness comes to light in an entirely nontraditional way that reworks the nature of both relationality and aliveness.”³²⁶ Here the world is used in place for bodies. The world, too, for Barad, is a body that is participating or implicated in an ongoing materialization that is becoming. This reimagines “vitality, dynamism, and agency.” This is the ontological plane that emerges, dynamic, vital, and existing on the plane of becoming, a matrix of intersections or borders that do not close off relational material, but rather motivate the *entelechy* and

³²⁴ Karen Barad, *Meeting the University Halfway*, 33.

³²⁵ Ibid., 33.

³²⁶ Ibid., 33.

dynamic process of an intra-active agency that is ontological by nature. The matrix of thresholds that coalesce material bodies generate a new and lively materialism that I have traced in Anzaldúa's writing-art-theories. Her theories of the imaginal helps situate bodies and becoming along an intra-active ontological frame. Bodily materiality is the agent in this new intra-active ontology, and resides in the borderlands of becoming, an ontological plane whose agency (or agential realism) is one of radical material becoming.

Negotiating an 'Intra-Active' Ontology of Becoming with Material Bodies

I borrow this term "becoming" from Deleuze and Guattari who define becoming "as a process of change, flight, or movement within an assemblage."³²⁷ "A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or at the limit, an identification."³²⁸ It is neither filiation. It is sufficient to say that bodily materiality is a mobile assemblage that becomes-bodily, through its relational processes that are rooted in matter becoming material, to this larger ontological framework of becoming, motivated by new forms of agency existing in today's entangled world. The becoming-bodily is partly due to the physiomateriality that is advanced by Anzaldúa in conversation with the vitalism of Deleuze and Barad's intra-activity. Becoming bodily does not re-inscribe particular boundaries; becoming stimulates a reworlding of bodies' materialization as becoming-bodily. These relational processes are not correspondences with one another but rather a moment when bodies become nothing other than

³²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari continued to develop this thought around assemblage in many of their books.

³²⁸ This quote is taken from the Deleuze and Guattari online dictionary.

themselves; there is no subject that is becoming, only matter materializing along the thresholds that are always in the process of becoming. “This is the point to clarify: that a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first.”³²⁹ Bodily materiality in this sense is deterritorialized. The body, as a mobile assemblage, is not an organic whole, where specific elements are held in place by the organization of a unity, the process of “becoming.” In becoming, “one piece of the assemblage is drawn into the territory of another piece, changing its value as an element and bringing about a new unity.”³³⁰ An example of this principle for Deleuze and Guattari is best illustrated by atoms, which are drawn into an assemblage with nearby atoms through affinities rather than an organizational purpose. This is the process of deterritorialization whereby properties of the constituent element disappear and are replaced by the new properties of the assemblage. This is bodily materiality existing on an ontological plane of intra-active becomingness that is radically deterritorialized.

Recalling the ways in which the body is a mosaic existence living in the borderlands of becoming, bodily materiality is on an ontological plane of an indefinite becoming and multiplicity. The borderlands, then, a type of “mosaic territory” challenges the normative horizon of homogeneity, because borderlands, as plural material (that are

³²⁹ See the online Deleuze and Guattari dictionary.

³³⁰ See the online Deleuze and Guattari dictionary.

always materializing), are marked by multiplicity and congeal with an ‘intra-active’ ontology of becoming. Bodies are always in relationship with these borderlands.

As Deleuze and Guattari explain,

the process of becoming is not one of imitation or analogy; it is generative of a new way of being that is a function of influences rather than resemblances. The process is one of removing the element from its original functions and bringing about new ones.³³¹

Becoming then, seen as the ontological inseparability of multiplying the materiality of bodies and existing on the ontological plane of difference and multiplicity, marks bodily materiality as differential material and that which is becoming in the world “as an endless process of self-transformation” and self-organizing material. The process of materialization in relationship to the process of becoming-bodily relies on the duration of their communication; hence, the ongoing relational processes take place in the matrix of the borderlands. The ‘event’ or ‘intra-active’ becoming, though in relationship with other matters that are becoming, is not an evolution of materiality or agential bodily materiality. “Becoming produces nothing by filiation; all filiation is imaginary.”³³² The ‘intra-active’ becoming produces differential material that is an alliance with bodies. Said differently, ‘intra-active’ becomings produce bodily materiality as difference-in-itself that further materializes along (or in) the matrix of borderlands. An ontology of ‘intra-active’ becoming produces radically different bodily material that are in alliance with other bodily materials. These bodily materials invoke the speciated divide of human and non-

³³¹ Deleuze and Guattari online dictionary.

³³² This is Deleuze and Guattari as explained through the dictionary of Deleuze and Guattari.

human. These alliances, emerging as bodily materiality participates in the material-becoming-different process, thereby supporting difference as becoming, and an ‘intra-active’ reality further materializes on an ontological plane of difference as consistency. This ontology of ‘intra-active’ becoming is always involving bodily materiality as difference and multiplicity.

Concluding and Looking Ahead: On Queer(y)ing Bodily Materiality and the ‘Replacement of Interrelatedness’

The act in recognizing the entanglement of queer(y)ing bodily materiality signifies the onto-epistemological designation that bodies are more than the flesh, fat, muscles, and bones that make up the humanist definition of a body. Queer(y)ing bodily materiality is the recognition that bodily materiality is the finite mode extended from the infinite substance, as detailed in Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Bodily materiality is the material-discursive signifier that negotiates the posthumanist turn in the study of bodies. This finite mode of infinite substance that I term bodily materiality is difference becoming multiple, a process of materialization that participates in the entanglement of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. This process of materialization does not rely on language or discursive practices for matter to become, or an ‘intra-active’ ontology to exist; rather, language is displaced by the process of materialization in relationship with the ontology of ‘intra-active’ becoming. Language is displaced in terms of it being or having priority or preceding matter. In this we show that matter precedes language, yes, but is ontologically prior to language. Queer(y)ing bodily materiality, then, initiates a type of difference in action whereby materialization is not blocked by filiation and linguistic structures but rather transcends these humanist designations (en)abling bodily materiality

to multiply along the matrix of borderlands that are becoming different in themselves. Bodily materiality, as difference in action, compels us to rethink existing ontologies and epistemologies that do not privilege relationality. Anzaldúa's work does this certainly, as does Karen Barad's work. Likewise, thinking along a "moving horizon, always from a decentered center, & from an always displaced periphery"³³³ (like Anzaldúa's borderlands) helps us to reimagine bodies and materiality as 'intra-active' becomings.

The dissertation reestablishes Anzaldúa as a philosopher and critical theorist whose work falls outside the traditional domains of academic disciplines. The future of this work stimulates new critical turns in the thought and theory of Gloria Anzaldúa and material contours in Anzaldúa's writing-art-theory. Positioning Anzaldúa as a significant contributor to critical theory helps shape the content and form of a metaphysics of interrelatedness and establishes the 'replacement of interrelatedness.' By this, I mean that both ontology and epistemology become significant features to theorizing that are seen in Anzaldúa's work, but have not fully been explored as theories in and of themselves. In many ways, theorists have used Anzaldúa as supporting material, not as the core of their thinking. What this dissertation project establishes is the ability to use Anzaldúa as the primary source in thinking about ontology, epistemology, and ethics. Establishing the importance of Anzaldúa's epistemology and ontology in conversation with other feminist theorists and philosophers, including critical theorists and queer theorists, further initiates thresholds of theories as enactments of diffraction.

³³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota: 1988), 57.

The “replacement of interrelatedness’ as the entanglement of bodily knowing produces new meaning in the world, establishes not a geometrical model of ethics, but rather a model that privileges relationality. Matter, meaning, and interrelatedness all relate to one another in the entanglement of bodily knowing. The productions of epistemological contours that stem from an ontological awareness help futures replace the reality of interrelatedness. Anzaldúa’s work accomplishes this throughout her corpus; Barad explores this in *Meeting the University Halfway*; Braidotti enlivens Spinoza and Deleuze. Existing here are strands of both difference and multiplicity that further generate the mode of interrelatedness as an entanglement in the world.

Interrelatedness is a particular material phenomenon that privileges the ontological and epistemological inseparability of matter and meaning. Anzaldúa is a perfect example of this, and her work pushes the boundaries of interrelatedness into a horizon that continues to materialize beyond what we are able to comprehend and into the shape-shifting consciousness of la naguala. Privileging the entanglement of Anzaldúan materiality as bodily knowing further roots matter, meaning, and interrelatedness as the primary means of understanding what is in the world, producing knowledge, and enacting difference. This is the work of transformation and using theory as the political basis for radical social change and the politics of radical difference.

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