

# **How Do You Make Yourself Become-Imperceptible**

**Wynter's Colonialism, Deleuze's (un)Learning and Taka Taka's  
Pedagogy**

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**With the Babies**

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## **Abstract**

Departing from a White Western perspective, this thesis' aim is to contribute to a global decolonial revolution. Following Sylvia Wynter's call for the invention of new kinds or "genres" of the human, this thesis will define the global decolonial revolution as the becoming-other of the world in its entirety. I will therefore begin with a discussion of Wynter's conception of the human as always being a genre, followed by an in-depth demonstration of our current genre of the human and its abject core, whereby the necessity for a new genre(s) of the human will become indisputable regarding the search of a world beyond inequality.

Following Wynter's theory of the human as essentially inessential besides the potentiality to become a genre(s) of the human, Chapter Two will, firstly, delineate Deleuze's preferred form of learning and teaching, and secondly, show how this conception of pedagogy meets all of Wynter's requirements for the invention of a new genre(s) of the human, by which learning corresponds with the invention of a new genre(s) of the human following critical unlearning movements on the part of the learner.

This thesis' last portion will discuss Taka Taka's drag experimentation-in-action pedagogy. First establishing a conception of drag that speaks in an manner equal to Wynter and Deleuze's decolonial revolutionary terms, this thesis will argue that Taka Taka's drag practice correlates with a Deleuzian conception of learning whereby a novel genre of the human as "becoming-imperceptible" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013) is invented. This will be followed by an in-depth investigation in Taka Taka's teaching practice, in which they do not illustrate the new genre of the human in their teaching but instead facilitate structures whereby the learner comes to be drawn into a mode of perpetual invention, far removed from the hegemonic abject defined genre of the human.

## **Introduction**

### **An Encounter with the Experimentation-in-Action Performance**

The year is 2010: I had been living in Tel Aviv for the past five years. Upon an inevitable realisation that the state of Israel is having a negative impact on my mental state, I decided to relocate to Amsterdam. In order to make the process of my relocation smoother, I sent an application the way of the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. The Gerrit Rietveld Academy is a honourable art and design academy in Amsterdam, The Netherlands founded in 1924.

My fellow student Panagiotis Panagiotakopoulos promptly caught my eye with his flamboyant style and demeanour. You see, I was raised in a religious Jewish family in Antwerp, Belgium, so I was not accustomed to eccentric characters. The Rietveld was full of eccentrics, to the point that eccentricity became the norm. Panagiotis though, embodied an unusual eccentricity, which drew me towards him. And slowly he and I became friends.

Back in 2010, gender was rarely mentioned at school compared to today where most class introductions open with pronoun-sharing. The current gender trend has acclimatised people, in nearly all Dutch art academies, to the idea of gender as a socially constructed, embodied identity marker. When Panagiotis and I met, both he and I performed and identified as a version of the White man (even though this fact was seldom raised) notwithstanding that he exhibited female characteristics.

Almost 5 years passed and Panagiotis and I were growing apart. Without being fully committed and convinced, I was on a path to becoming a commercial, contemporary artist, seeking success and acknowledgement from contemporary art galleries, art fairs, and esteemed art institutions. Panagiotis was embarking on a divergent path, one that was made up of a dissimilar sense of aesthetic and urgency. His path, at first, constituted an embodied experimentation in different forms of drag, a position as party organiser in a sex-positive gay club called Club Church, and an attachment to a self-organised queer family called The House of Hopelezz.

After several years of almost no contact with Panagiotis, I reached out to him upon learning about his involvement in teaching practices. At the same time, I also learned about their new assigned name Taka Taka and their new assigned pronoun. The reconnection was a happy one and afterwards I took the liberty of signing up for one of their drag workshops that was going to be held at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy.

Day 1 of the workshop: I arrive at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy grounds. A group of people attract my gaze. I presume this is the case on account of one individual that takes

up all my eyes' attention. I identify this person as Taka Taka. This process of identification does not materialise spontaneously as is the case when I recognise most of the people I know. Taka Taka is unrecognisable. I am unable to interpret that person and conclude thereafter that this person must be Taka Taka in drag. Taka Taka wave in my direction, and yell: "How are you, my friend?" The group engages in smalltalk after which Taka Taka invite us to proceed to the gym.

In the gym, Taka Taka present us with the order of the day: "We will start today with a round of introductions. We will then have a break and come back to a lecture." Having adopted some form of familiarisation with the group, I sit down on a chair facing Taka Taka and a screen which colourfully says *Mothers Mothering Mothers*. I stare at Taka Taka and find myself confronted with the following questions: Who is this Taka Taka? What do they represent? What do they perform? My memory of Taka Taka as Panagiotis is not sufficient to describe this phenomenon in front of me. A sense of confusion infiltrates my body. Please, try to empathise with my confusion, I see a person, who is about to plunge into a lecture, wearing big pink ears, a huge blue nose reminiscent of Pinocchio, exorbitant long eyelashes, a purple joker-esque mouth, and light blue skin with shades of purple and pink around the cheekbones and chin. A similar identifiable inconsistency with regards to common identity markers is performed throughout their body.

In a jolly fashion, we are being handed a paper document with the title *Non Universal Drag Tools*. Taka Taka encourage us to concurrently read out loud what in my opinion manifests itself as a drag mothering manifesto. These drag mothering values, the manifesto writes, have been personified within the context of Taka Taka's conjoined House of Hopelezz. "...Trust and doubt your drag mother....Eliminate your expectations....Drag is not a look nor a clear identity but rather a subjective, lived experience in constant transformation....Drag is breaking gendered rules, it's not making new ones...." (Taka Taka n.d.). The list of values continues on for four pages and clearly communicates a lifestyle/ attitude that lacks transcendental principles. In other words, the manifesto urges the adoption of a lifestyle of transformation and unfamiliarity. I wonder what is being taught here and can this even be considered a form of knowledge to begin with, considering doubt and transformation take the limelight? My distrust becomes amplified when Taka Taka, following the collective reading, ask us to crumple up the manifesto into a ball and toss it in their direction. Are they likewise distrusting their manifesto?

After having placed the club within the Amsterdam (queer) context, Taka Taka introduce their drag family. An abundance of photographs are being displayed to us, each presenting a singular family member. This showcasing on the projector screen in front of



**Figure 1:** Taka Taka in their 'biological' mother's Dimitra knitted clothing. Photo by Dim Balsem, 2020.



**Figure 2:** Portrait with family members of the House of Løstbois and the House of Hopelezz. Art direction, Taka Taka, photo by Stacey Yates, 2019.

us seems to take an eternity as a result of my inability to apprehend what I am witnessing. I catch myself repeating the same questions over and over again: Who are they and what are they representing? As with Taka Taka in front of me, the people in these photographs exhibit a world that condemns the natural and the normal, without offering us an alternative truth, that is to say that Taka Taka's family does not signify a deviation from the norm, but rather the expression of a reality beyond the limits of dichotomies that ground our current made up Western world. To put it differently, Taka Taka and the photographs show performativities that are not identifiable through gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation; for me, these performances present an embodiment unlike any existing discourse I know. This beyondness is emphasised when Taka Taka's introduction of their siblings and aunts takes another baffling turn: on top of every photograph, Taka Taka juxtapose an anecdote or a story, which clearly points out the nature of this family's embodied liaisons. With the passing of time, it is becoming clear to me that this family does not represent established social roles, inducing the realisation that clarity regarding who they are and what they represent will not be attained on my part. This brings me back to the manifesto: "A drag house is not a homogenous dance company" (Taka Taka n.d.).

Following the introduction of their family, the time has come for Taka Taka to introduce themselves. They do so with the aid of around 20 photographs, each depicting an entirely different Taka Taka, or, again, are Taka Taka an attitude? The photographs present absolutely no consistency or linearity in terms of a persona, but rather a continuous metamorphosis of a person that seems to lack any foundation besides a very committed attitude toward transformation. This lack of grounding comes to the fore in the manner in which Taka Taka continuously alter their stage performativity. They produce a manifesto whereupon they tell us to throw it at them; they embark on a jolly description of their family consisting of jokes and anecdotes; with what resembles an activist demeanour, they seriously discuss the issues and concerns surrounding queer oppressions and discriminations in and around the city of Amsterdam. A shift is always in action; a divergent persona is always being encountered; I am introduced to the idea that Taka Taka are an attitude that can best be described as consistently-being-inconsistent. I would like to give priority, however, to the nature of that shift, seeing as Taka Taka never embody a known, representative persona, conforming to actual identity markers. What contributes to the success of their performativity with regards to the new, is the manner in which components with known references grow into unknown individuals in reciprocal interactions. This aspect truly becomes detectable with the presentation of Taka Taka's 'biological' mother. The mother is partly responsible for Taka Taka's current developing aesthetic, considering

she is the one who designs and produces Taka Taka's recent knitted garments. In the selfies we can observe Taka Taka's mother wearing surreal garments, turning herself into an unidentifiable drag individual. Taka Taka attribute a 'biological' status to her, but she is the one who, partially, provokes Taka Taka's becomings. This relationship has tremendous ramifications for her own sense of self: they invent anew the mother-child relationship. So while Taka Taka still refers to her as their 'biological' mother, they have succeeded in inventing a relationship that does not mimic anything we know from mother-child relationships. 'Biological' family members and drag family members all become amalgamated into a reality that is occupied with invention and becoming.

Midway through Taka Taka's lecture (the second half will be discussed in Chapter three), the question of communication occurs to me: Are Taka Taka communicating to us? I contend that this is not the case. Communication requires a common language on the part of the lecturer and the audience. Are they engaged in the transmission of knowledge? I maintain they are not, since the knowledge does not seem to have a ground that can be transmitted. Thus, how are we to understand this pedagogical event? This thesis will argue that Taka Taka teach us a new "genre" (Wynter 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2015) or kind of the human by means of a different pedagogical approach that correlates with Gilles Deleuze's preferred understanding of the activities of learning and teaching put forward in his book *Difference and Repetition* (1994) wherein Deleuze describes learning as the search for the unknown through experimentation (Deleuze 1994). A Deleuzian form of pedagogy will prove to be a major asset in the fight against our current genre of the human and his abject and unjust manifestations.

In many of her works, Sylvia Wynter calls for the invention of new "genres" of the human that is not our current one: "Man" (Wynter 2000, 2003, 2006, 2015). The invention of new genres is of the essence, Wynter argues, if we ever wish to dispose of inequality (Wynter 2000, 2003, 2006, 2015). She contends that our current genre of the human, at its core, is built on inequality, hence her call for new genres of the human rather than a reparative approach towards our current genre. This thesis will argue that pedagogical practices can be a means for the invention of new genres of the human.

Consequently, my search for a world beyond inequality will try to answer the following question: What can a different pedagogy contribute to the invention of new genres of the human?

In order to answer this thesis' main question, a few subquestions will be introduced: What is meant by a genre of the human and why do we need this? How can a certain conception of pedagogy be instrumental in the invention of new genres of the human?

How does this conception perform in Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy? And how does Taka Taka's pedagogy pave the way for a new genre of the human in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-imperceptible?

An interwoven exploration in Wynter, Taka Taka and Deleuze's approaches to pedagogy will allow me to map this research.

### **Expressions of Man and his Conjoined Potentialities for (Re)invention**

The idea that I too could become a new genre of the human comes from various sources: first is my encounter with Édouard Glissant's description of the Caribbean creole culture (Glissant 1997); second is my encounter with Wynter's conception of the human as always being a genre or a kind; and third is my encounter with Taka Taka's actual expressions of a divergent genre of the human well beyond anything that concurs with my current reality dominated by Man's classified conceptions of the world. Three encounters in reciprocal growth; a tapestry of interconnected events, whereby one would not have transpired without the materialisation of the other(s).

My search for self-transformation starts from a Glissantian reading of my ancestor's past: my grandparents were brought up in a traditional Jewish religious family in Eastern Europe. Hearing them speak about their upbringing, one line kept lingering within me: "We were not only Jewish and religious but also fundamentally European". The shock of the Holocaust was partly attributed to the reality that most Jews in Europe were fully assimilated. I hear my grandparents and their siblings repeatedly say: "Many of us were first Polish and Czechoslovakian and then Jewish". This hierarchy was put forward, in my opinion, in the interest of showing how profoundly their assimilation extended. My grandparent's sense of belonging was not always plausible within the Jewish European context; extraordinary, discriminatory and persecutory events eventuated in Europe against Jews throughout history, for example: the 14th century Jewish persecutions in Spain and Portugal, or the Jewish pogroms in Kiev around the 1920's. Following their tremendous tendency towards attachment to a certain European culture, it comes, therefore, as no surprise that their sense of self was hugely shattered with the introduction of the Holocaust. A redefinition of their being was consequently required.

Fundamental to my current apprehension in the transformation of Jewish European culture(s) amid and subsequent to the Holocaust is my interpretation of Édouard Glissant's seminal book *Poetics of Relation* (1997), in which he attempts to capture the complex quality of diasporic African culture. The book explores Glissant's mother island of

Martinique and its neighbouring island of Guadeloupe as expressions of creolised cultures, that is to say, cultural formations that advance plurality instead of an understanding of cultural emergences as reductionist and essentialist (Glissant 1997). In his book's first segment, Glissant puts his audience inside the boat, the slave ship, the hatchery of Caribbean creole culture. Inseminated on the beaches of West Africa, the boat performed as the womb that accommodated the germinal becoming of its occupants. Glissant describes in a profoundly touching and poetic manner, how his culture creolised. It is worth quoting Glissant at length here:

“Imagine...falling into the belly of the boat. For, in your poetic vision, a boat has no belly; a boat does not swallow up, does not devour; a boat is steered by open skies. Yet, the belly of this boat dissolves you, precipitates you into a nonworld from which you cry out. This boat is a womb, a womb abyss. It generates the clamour of your protests; it also produces all the coming unanimity. Although you are alone in this suffering, you share in the unknown whom you have yet to know. This boat is your womb, a matrix, and yet it expels you. This boat: pregnant with as many dead as living under sentence of death” (Glissant 1997, 6).

In the above, Glissant describes the atrocious journey his ancestors had to undergo - also named as the Middle Passage whereby millions of enslaved Africans were forcibly transferred to the Americas and Europe as part of the slave trade. Deep in the abyss or the unknown, a new culture was forming. A culture that was organised on the ruins and remains of some and the unknown precipitation of others. He calls this the womb that would give birth to slavery, economic dependence, cultural domination, etc. but also to the new that would later be materialised into a creole culture. I would also call it, following Wynter, the potentiality for (re)invention that is inherent to the necessity for existence. What strikes me is the plurality of this experience: a fusion of death and birth. In *Black Metamorphosis* (n.d.), Sylvia Wynter takes a similar stance with regard to Black experiences in the Americas under systems of terrible oppression. Katherine McKittrick, following Wynter, writes, “oppression and resistance is not dichotomous but, rather, a question mark... (McKittrick 2021, 157). In other words, oppression, Glissant and Wynter argue, interweaves with the necessity for (re)invention, a need to exist, to be. Hope is what materialises this womb or the potentiality for (re)invention. Following this theory, can I conclude that my grandparents were, in a similar but essentially very different manner, deprived of their sense of being? Therefore, would I be in the wrong when adding a

productive potentiality for (re)invention to my grandparents' Holocaust experience? These questions hold further justification following Aimé Césaire's discussion on Nazism in *Discourse on Colonialism* (2001).

In his 1955 groundbreaking essay, Césaire identifies the colonial relationship between coloniser and colonised as one established on the construction of race, while drawing parallels between the colonies in Africa and his mother island of Martinique. Colonialism, he claims, is a form of dehumanisation that issues from Europe's racism and supremacy against Black communities in the Caribbean and Africa. From a European perspective, Césaire writes, Hitler and Nazism differed from the barbaric colonial projects abroad because Hitler "applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa" (Césaire 2001, 36). In other words, by oppressing (White) Europeans, Hitler caused cruelty most commonly directed at non-white people. What interests me with regards to the above question is the comparability Césaire draws between practices of dehumanisation outside of Europe caused by Europeans and Nazi persecution against White Europeans. As a consequence of that correspondence, my grandparents, in the midst of all the barbarism that was aimed at them, were bestowed with a productive, inventive potentiality for (re)invention: a womb. Let us now observe how these divergent wombs with a similar potentiality expressed themselves.

In *Poetics of Relation*, Glissant describes Caribbean culture as constituting various root components from divergent African ethnic populations, as well as European and Native American ethnic groups. This variety of roots, when combined, produces a multicultural unit. In opposition to the rest of the roots, Glissant values the African roots tremendously, considering they originate from the source: the proverbial motherland that was barbarically colonised. European and French roots typically enforced themselves through brutality and force. Nevertheless, the Caribbean creole culture, Glissant maintains, is the product of rhizomatic operations, whereby the growing process stems from parts that may send new "shoots upward, downward, or laterally (Adkins 2015, 23). For Glissant, a rhizomatic culture lacks an end and a beginning; it nourishes itself through growth by continuously desiring new connections. These cultures come about through what Glissant calls "relations" (Glissant 1997): instances in which certain cultures collide and the effect either changes their growth forever or engenders completely novel cultures. In the case of Martinican culture, relations arose while enslaved Black people were trying to exist.

My grandparents' womb or potentiality for (re)invention, however, produced a very different entity: a sibling to what caused the wombs in the first place. It goes today by the

name of Israel. Israel is everything Glissant and Césaire warned us about; it embodies a European single-root narrative entrenched in (settler) colonial activities and crime. This womb developed into the main justification for colonial perpetuation. In the words of Judith Butler: “[A]nti-Semitism is sometimes used as an instrument of censorship or a way of discounting legitimate Palestinian resistance to [Israeli] colonial subjugation” (Butler 2014). Without wanting to delve too deeply into the Israeli settler-colonial narrative,<sup>1</sup> my grandparents and fellow Holocaust survivors turned their back on that transformative potential and opted for the assimilationist approach, turning me and the rest of their offspring into the ‘norm’: an entity whose worldview is deeply based on discursive dichotomous foundations. Glissant’s culture, in contrast, performs a deeply relational nature without a sense of duality and Othering. In other words, I was dispossessed of a transformation, an entry towards a world beyond dichotomies. But why is that important? I believe it is imperative, seeing as I perpetuate this dangerous European single-root narrative: the current genre of the human.

However, with the theory of the potentiality for (re)invention and the rhizomatic creole way of being (a different relational human), Glissant and Wynter present to the world the potentiality of being otherwise regardless of the presence of a womb. In other words, if the potentiality to become otherwise exists, I, who lacks a womb, should still find the means of transforming into a new being, considering the human in all its expressions always performs in the absence of an essence. My grandparents might have eradicated the womb, but this does not necessarily mean that the people without a womb are denied entry to the paths of transformation. Divergent access points will have to be explored. Self-transformation will have to be initiated someplace/time else.

### **The Genre of the Human as Man and Its Inherent Inequalities**

Black radical anti-colonial thinker Sylvia Wynter’s late project asserts that the paramount contemporary struggle for humans is redefining fights in “terms of a politics of being: that is one waged over what is to be the descriptive statement of the human, about whose master code of symbolic life and death each human order organises itself” (Wynter 2003, 319). What Wynter argues in the above statement is that the power of the ruling people is so far-reaching, deep and all-pervasive that any total escape from this all-encompassing power demands fractures from the very essences of how we apprehend ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the Israeli settler colonial project, see: *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (Sayegh 1965), *Past is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine* (Salamanca, Qato, Rabie and Samour 2012), and *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (Wolfe 2016).

The human throughout time, Wynter argues, has performed as the White European single-root narrative, which she also calls the “genre” of the human as “Man”. Man, according to Wynter, is a volatile genre that has established itself, from “Man 1” (Wynter 2000, 2003, 2015) of the Enlightenment to “Man 2” (Wynter 2000, 2003, 2015) of the post-Darwinian age’s influence and surge of capitalism, as the absolute and only representation of the human, “as if [Man is] the human itself” (Wynter 2003, 260). By making use of the word genre, Wynter wishes to uncover that the human, at its foundation, is a “praxis” (Wynter 2003) that has acclaimed itself as the only truth. It is the issue of the genre of Man, Wynter claims, “that causes all the *-isms*” (Wynter 2006, 24). Consequently, to borrow Audrey Lorde’s vocabulary, the master’s tools - culture, nature, gender, race, etc. - will never be capable of dismantling the master’s house (the genre of the human as Man). Wynter and Glissant teach us again, however, that a divergent human, with a different order of truth, can be engendered and practiced, inasmuch as a genre is always deprived of a quintessence: a genre of the human will never perform as the essence of the human. Even Man’s embodied narrative must redefine itself repeatedly in order to rule as the only truth.

A problem regarding Man’s dismantlement will persist, however, provided that all our tools are derived from Man as a genre. Glissant and Wynter have identified the womb as the answer to this problem, but what about me and my siblings? In other words, what about the people who lack the womb and therefore lack the necessity for (re)invention? Apart from the womb, Sylvia Wynter, following Frantz Fanon, could not envisage a radical outside position to the human as Man seeded within the human body, following her belief that *mythoi* and *bios* are always imbricated. The only manner in which to pay attention to our absolute being-in-the-world, Wynter argues, is by identifying the intricate amalgamations between discursive registers, comprising languages, cultures, discourses, etc. (sociogeny) and the genetic facets of human operations (ontogeny) (Wynter & McKittrick 2015). To put it differently, Man’s tools are integral to the human’s biological and genetic formations. Thus, the only means for the ones (like myself) without a womb to cease perpetuating Man’s embodied narrative is to invent and materialise an entirely new genre of the human without that particular necessity for (re)invention. In the words of Fanon, “we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man [genre of the human]” (Fanon 1963, 316).

Over the course of time, many have attempted in the West to overcome Man: from the late twentieth-century commentary on Man’s metaphysical assumptions (Derrida 1984, Foucault 1994, Deleuze 1994), to early abolitionists’ and feminists’ assaults on Man’s

inaccurate universalism (Wollstonecraft 1992, Cugoano 1999), to more recent posthumanist theorists that have sought a shift beyond the all-encompassing barriers of Humanism through a reconceptualisation of our human position in the material world (Braidotti 2013). Often in line with new materialism, affect theory and feminist-queer studies, posthumanists experiment with the idea of the human as being volatile open assemblages entrenched in a lively material world characterised by perpetual alteration/ becoming and uncertain entangled arrangements (Barad 2007, Coole and Frost 2010, Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012). And while I utterly love the idea of the end of the human, I cannot but question the lack of human revolutionary power attached to these posthumanist ideas. In other words, why debunk “the human and human agency at a time when neocolonial and neoliberal capitalism have perhaps never been more destructive to the vast majority of the world’s inhabitants (human and non)” (Cornell and Seely 2016, 3). As Cornell and Seely argue, any attention placed on human agency, from a posthuman perspective, always risks a reintroduction of Man’s foundational subject, bringing back the evil that screwed everything up in the first instance (Cornell and Seely 2016, 3). In the meantime, the world and its inhabitants are rapidly and forcefully breaking down through the annihilation of the physical atmosphere, police cruelty, the stealing of resources from supposedly developing countries, the extraordinary pay chasm, the skyrocketing animal extinction rates, the huge amount of people that are casualties of forced labor, etc.

In response to all the inequalities of the world, Wynter foregrounds the question of the human and regards it as the principal problem of our contemporary existence. Wynter clarifies the implications of the problem of the human in the following way:

“All our present struggles to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over the environment,... The sharply unequal distribution of the earth recurses....These are differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle” (Wynter 2003, 260-261).

The problem of the human connotes the actual overrepresentation of the human as Man. Man, Wynter argues, has failed to create an idea of the human that can be embodied by all equally. Instead, the West has engendered a monster that relies on the exclusion of others for the sake of its self-representation and preservation. As a consequence, a world beyond inequality will only be achieved through a radical abandonment of Man as a whole and the concurrent invention of a new embodied description of the human. Agency, experimentation and active participation is primordial for such a venture. Wynter believes

that the human has the capability as a semantic, biological entity to transform and reshape the entire world together. Have we not seen some signs of this already in the first part of the introduction with Taka Taka's initiation of their new world?

### **A White Western Decolonial Pedagogy**

Lacking the necessity/womb from a White Western perspective, a different solution to the problem of invention has to be adopted. At this juncture, I would like to remind the reader of the significance of White Western transformation for the decolonial project; it is the West, ultimately, which is in need of a womb and which causes people to (re)invent themselves, seeing as they are regarded by the West as non-beings ontologically. Following Wynter, this project of a world apt for all human and non-human organisms must be instigated via a transformation of all its inhabitants: only a true world-encompassing, inventive revolution will dissipate all the world's inequalities. With a different sense of teaching and learning, one that stems from my encounter with Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy and Deleuze's notion of learning and teaching, this thesis aims to contribute to this decolonial project departing from a White Western perspective. Therefore, attributing tremendous importance to a different pedagogy as a means for the invention of a different world and its inhabitants.

I think at this point it should come as no surprise that Wynter is immensely perturbed by the manner in which knowledge is produced and disseminated. For Wynter, the genre of the human as praxis encompasses curricula at both a shared and an individual level. In the words of Nathan Snaza and Aparna Mishra Tarc: "Curriculum, as the study, design and enactment of world knowledge, regulates, organises and sets the course of something called human beings" (Snaza and Tarc 2019, 1). In this regard, curriculum holds deep implications for the way humans consume knowledge - not as a passive set of facts, a subject to be learned, but as onto-epistemological. Following the above mentioned concept of sociogeny, knowledge and ideas shape us ontologically, in the way we feel, are and perform a kind of human (Wynter 2001, 2003). Knowledge is also what justifies Man's position as the only righteous human and relegates its Others to the rank of nonhumans.

Concurrently with the invention of Man 1, Wynter argues, the West has established new technologies - the ability to reason, analyse and reach resolutions about the world's unraveling phenomena without making allusions to theology. A novel order of truth was spawned with corresponding laws. Man 1's new ideals were treated as the only true knowledge, upon which they were enforced in educational establishments and

presupposed in the humanities and the sciences. These new ideals were, nevertheless, indistinctly united with the groundwork for contemporary European societies: colonialism.

Man 2 was, some centuries later, made possible through a resuscitation of Darwinian hypotheses regarding natural selection that support the idea of the “survival of the fittest” in which certain biological entities flourish whilst others perish (mind again the intimate link to ‘science’). Wynter asserts that Man 2 still dominates our contemporary political and economic institutions that function, in her words, via an authoritative “supraordinate telos of increasing capital accumulation...[and can]...be enacted only on the homogenised basis of the systemic repression of all other alternative modes of material provisioning” (Wynter & McKittrick 2015, 22). Man 2’s ideals perform via an exclusionary embodied rationale according to which certain bodies are manipulated, expandable and used in the interest of others blossoming indefinitely.

While Man 1 and Man 2 disagree with regards to the essence of the human, both get modulated by means of knowledge structures that are embedded in created origin stories. Katherine McKittrick delineates these stories as the following:

“These systems and stories produce the lived categories of the rational and irrational, the selected and the dysselected, the haves and the have-nots as asymmetrical naturalised racial-sexual human groupings that are specific to time, place, and personhood...” (McKittrick 2015, 10).

What McKittrick, echoing Wynter, makes visible is that origin stories and associated knowledges grasp the tremendous power to dictate who does not matter and does, who comes to be included in the classification of the human and who does not. Thus, if the only knowledge we possess is inherently oppressive to certain people and is subsequently transmitted in all Western education institutions, pedagogy, in essence, performs colonial Othering and oppression. Paolo Freire defines Western pedagogy as a “banking” (Freire, 1970) system where learning and teaching is understood as exclusively concerned with mechanisms of transmission, in which “students are regarded merely as passive consumers” (hooks 1994, 40), thereby keeping invention and creativity at bay. Inevitably, if pedagogy should be able to perform as a means to inventing new genres of the human, a radical redefinition of its practices must be endorsed and exercised. Furthermore, aside from radical inventive attributes (so as to invent new genres of the human), this new pedagogy must also hold a deep unlearning feature, otherwise, Man will still serve as the

ground where radical inventions will sprout from, inasmuch as I can only be, know and feel the genre of Man.

Many Western philosophers and thinkers throughout the years have critiqued the hegemonic form of education that rules our Western world for being repetitive, stagnant, and exclusive; they assert that education is stuck in an old-fashioned binary of knower and receiver. In this way, the student must always duplicate knowledge that already stands rather than forge something new.

In the interest of change, many of these philosophers have proposed a dissimilar approach to education. Henri Bergson, for one, maintains that education should integrate two fundamental facets: socialisation and antisocialisation. The first aspect would educate us in the sphere of “intelligence” (Bergson 2010), which focuses on practical facts and which represents the sciences. The second aspect behoves to teach us the realm of “intuition”, which concentrates on creativity and the unprecedented. The latter functions according to a “creative evolution” and a way of life Bergson names “sympathy” (Bergson 2010). In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991), Jacques Rancière proposes another relationship between the student and the master, whereby the two are conjoined in a reciprocal adventure of discovery. Unlike the hierarchical relationship, this egalitarian liaison promotes a “circle of emancipation” (Rancière 1991, 15-16) where the student, in relation, commences to think for herself. For Rancière, then, this new pedagogy would express a collective sense of discovery: a creative journey where teacher and student steer the same boat. Another philosopher who advances a rather constructive form of education is Michel Serres. Serres suggests that the learner should, in a manner, become self-alienated from recognisable environments in order to create novel knowledges. He asserts that:

“No learning can avoid the voyage. Under the supervision of a guide, education pushes one to the outside. Depart: go forth. Leave the womb of your mother, the crib, the shadow cast by your father’s house and the landscapes of your childhood.... The voyage of children, that is the naked meaning of the Greek word *pedagogy*. Learning launches wandering” (Serres 1997, 8).

The learner, for Serres, is one who travels from place to place. It is a nomad. Learning is analogous to taking a journey through mysterious waters.

In the same spirit, *Difference and Repetition* introduces a similar opposition between two forms of learning. One, Deleuze writes, is fundamentally related to the perpetuation of

the same, that is to say, one learns or acquires knowledge of procedures and facts correlated with true manoeuvres regarding those facts. Contrary to this form of learning whereby one learns through the repetition of the identical, Deleuze prioritises a learning and teaching that contains a search for the unknown through experimentation. In Deleuze's words, "To learn is to enter into the universal of the relations which constitute the Idea, and into their corresponding singularities" (Deleuze 1994, 165). To put it differently, one ought to immerse oneself in the unknown - a problem - with its arrangement of differential relations and their matching unique points.

Thus what distinguishes Deleuze's preferred form of pedagogy from the above mentioned Western pedagogical projects is twofold - these two divergences are also the reason why Deleuze's unique and novel pedagogical project is of assistance, most prominently, in the extraordinary Wynterian decolonial revolution. In his pedagogy, Deleuze puts an emphasis on two movements of unlearning prior to the act of invention. The first is conscious: forget all you know about yourself, your privileges, your habits and the world in its entirety. Deleuze also calls this first movement the second "principle" of becoming (Deleuze 1994). In other words, unlearning must precede invention/becoming on the part of the experimenter. The second movement, however, is unconscious and takes place during the first instances of an encounter. A close look at Deleuze's philosophy of time is required to apprehend these first moments of becoming. Upon an "encounter" (Deleuze 1994) with signs - unknown alien elements - Deleuze argues, a "third synthesis of time" propagates whereby a total dissolution of one sense of self comes to be. Signs engender "problems" via their disconcerting shock, obligating an individual to discard prior experiences. In this sense, Deleuze's pedagogy supports the eradication of an individual's sense of self; it allows the body to free itself from all it knows and is, at which point the possibility for a radical new invention gets presented to it, beyond its prior confinement (Deleuze 1994). As mentioned earlier, this prior dissolution/unlearning is of the utmost importance for our decolonial project, otherwise, inventive acts will remain trapped in Man's episteme.

A second reason for endorsing Deleuze's pedagogy concerning the Wynterian decolonial revolution is the requisite congruency between the creation of movements of becoming, ensuing a practice of learning and the invention of new genres of the human. This correspondence is rendered possible owing to Deleuze and Guattari's description of the "minor" in *Kafka: A Minor Literature* (1986) and *What is Philosophy* (1994) in which, for the philosophers, a minor practice calls forth "a new earth, a new people" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994, 99). It incorporates a resistance to the present and the past in its particular

orientation towards the future (the third synthesis of time is what causes, for Deleuze, this future orientation) whereby the invention of new modes of existence transpire. This invention of new modes of existence or movements of becoming always eventuates itself first in the becoming-of-a-new-human on the part of the practitioner in relation (Deleuze and Guattari 1986).

Deleuze's relation to the post/decolonial is not a given. Besides a few insights into the potential of this encounter (Glissant 1997, Patton & Bignall 2010, Burns & Kaiser 2012), many have stayed away from bringing these two. This thesis, however, intends to make this encounter between Deleuze and the post/decolonial productive from a White Western position, specifically the notion that Deleuze's understanding of learning and teaching assists in a global decolonial revolution, whereby, first, whiteness and Man must be unlearned, and second, new genres of the human must be invented. My intent, then, is to explore the ways in which Deleuze's philosophy can contribute to a decolonial project by way of reading him through and alongside a decolonial (Wynterian) lens.

### **Toward a New Genre of the Human: A Different Pedagogical Event**

My journey of self-transformation, following a theoretical understanding that the human always practices a genre, should accommodate an ensuing movement. In other words, an active inventive proceeding should be instigated on my part in the finalisation of this transformation. Up until now, I have briefly demonstrated the possibility and the necessity of a new genre of the human. I wish to advance at this point to the active inventive part of my transformation amid the movements of learning instituted by Taka Taka. This active part is of the essence for a decolonial revolution, since it requires the invention and participation of new genres of the human beyond the mere understanding that new genres of the human are attainable. My encounter with Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy engendered a double reciprocal manifestation, namely, an experience of a different genre of the human in action and my learning of a divergent genre of the human. Accordingly, the necessity for action is levelled with Erin Manning's understanding, following James Williams, of "pragmatics", which she interprets as a learning practice that is "absolutely engaged with what is in the world, right now, and speculative in the sense that it is open for transformation by the potentialising force of where study [learning] can take us" (Manning 2015). A pragmatic practice experiments in action, in the doing; it celebrates the fact that the new can continuously be invented. Action and doing is therefore fundamental for this thesis.

The pedagogical practice that will be explored in this thesis has been introduced by dragtivist, drag mother, bad performer, educator and curator Taka Taka. I will start my inquiry into Taka Taka's pedagogical practice by demonstrating how we can apprehend their drag practice as a form of learning. The drag context is usually characterised as a means to investigate the inner glamour or clownish side within oneself (Fleisher 1996). The glamour side encompasses a glamour meter which conforms to a certain high-feminine or high-masculine style in usual realist terms. The clownish style represents the over-the-top parody style (Muñoz 1997, 86). Since Taka Taka's infiltration into the drag context, they employed a method that pushed themselves to continuously experiment with performativities and aesthetics that engender novelties beyond the representations and restraints on the "social body" (Guattari 1996, 37). This continuous search of movements of becoming, or what I call an attitude of consistently-being-inconsistent, by means of perpetual experimentation with make-up, clothing, props, voice, text, performativity, gestures, etc. leads, I will argue, to the learning/inventing of a new genre of the human which I will call, following Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-imperceptible (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). A concept which they define, in short, as the merging of oneself with the web of non-human forces that compose the world. In the eloquent words of Rosi Braidotti following Deleuze and Guattari: "I think the becoming-imperceptible is the point of fusion between the self and his/her habitat, the cosmos as a whole" (Braidotti 2006, 154). It alludes to the total death of the subject, whereby the present is inundated with possible futures. This merging with the cosmos materialises amidst a complete separation from the past - habits, memory and identities - and throws the individual into the unpredictable unknown, "the impossible" (Braidotti 2006, 155). My exploration will further demonstrate how this new genre does not resonate with Wynter's analysis of our current genre's male-female gender spectrum of the existing drag practices as described above. As a matter of fact, becoming-imperceptible as a genre of the human eliminates all dichotomies which play a foundational role in Man's genre of the human, considering it always escapes a Self and Other (this characteristic has already been insinuated in the opening section of this introduction with Taka Taka and Glissant's creole culture). Taka Taka's invented genre of the human is also what they aspire to teach. I propose that Taka Taka's teaching method constitutes entirely of invented and metamorphosing structures that promote movements of becoming and continuous experimentation on the side of the learner and teacher reciprocally. Taka Taka do not illustrate the new genre of the human in their teaching but instead facilitate structures whereby the learner comes to be drawn into a mode of perpetual invention. Instigating a perpetual experimentation-in-action pedagogy.

Wynter and many other decolonial authors have probed into disciplines such as the visual arts, music, literature, poetry, film, etc. to satisfy their desire for divergent genres of the human. Similarly, Deleuze has philosophised with the arts, allocating to it tremendous potential for the invention of new worlds and pushing the philosophical thought into novel unexplored temporal pathways. Both of them argue for the ways art can alter the world. And while I endorse this claim, my interest tends more towards radical pedagogical means as defined by Deleuze. The reason for this, besides attributing to pedagogical means a decolonial potential, is that I believe pedagogical practices, in the way Taka Taka practice them, operate in an extraordinary necessity for the second principle of becoming - unlearn everything you are/know/feel. In a similar fashion to artists who invent new genres of the human partly through a total conscious unlearning of everything they are/know, Deleuze preferred pedagogical apprehension requires the same exploit from the learner, thereby potentially propagating this feature to a extremely large group of people (without overlooking the other principle of becoming - invention). In other words, Taka Taka's pedagogy assigns tremendous revolutionary decolonial agency to the learner. A radical pedagogy pushes, amongst others, conscious unlearning to an extreme limit. Imagine a world in which the whole North Western hemisphere becomes acclimated with such a form of learning/teaching. I propose, therefore, the tremendous potential such pedagogical understanding holds in the decolonial project.

The genre of the human Taka Taka are practicing cannot be construed in static concepts, as is the case with Man. Due to their constant becoming-other, the becoming-imperceptible that Taka Taka practice can only be characterised as an attitude in constantly becoming-imperceptible otherwise. The intentional decision to think and write-with a single pedagogical event stems from the fact that Taka Taka's attitude as a genre of the human potentially (virtually) holds endless genres of the human. The attitude merges with the forces that inspire the new in perpetually variable fashions. How the new will materialise is unforeseeable for us living organisms. The potential that is inherent to this attitude does not mean to say that this way is the best plan of attack; I am interested to write-with<sup>2</sup> Taka Taka's pedagogy for the reason that Taka Taka's attitude shows the endless potential that simmers underneath our actual, Western reality. Moreover, the

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<sup>2</sup> I have defined writing-with elsewhere as: "To write-with the nexus of events is to live the intensity of the present by acknowledging one's and the text's role in the event. Not telling/writing how things are in the world, the static state of things, but instead, as Bojana Kunst argues, it is to embody the event in writing, in which one becomes "marked by the intensity of the change itself." (Kunst 2007, 17) Writing-with co-composes with all the other elements of the assemblage, not knowing where the assemblage, which consists again of multiple assemblages, will lead to (Nestel 2019).

becoming-imperceptible as an attitude is singular with every materialisation, meaning that the attitude is similar in principle but will not at any time generate identical novelties. As a consequence, the essence of the attitude corresponds to boundless, unimaginable potential genres of the human. Every participant in Taka Taka's pedagogy holds, in a similar manner, the potential to invent a myriad of genres of the human, allowing all their learners to embody a becoming-imperceptible attitude with very different expressions and manifestations. Accordingly, following this thesis' aspiration for a world beyond inequalities, this thesis will not ask if Taka Taka's practiced genre of the human embodies a world without inequalities; the ultimate aim of the thesis is to show how and what Western pedagogical practices can contribute to a global decolonial revolution. What this thesis tries to avoid is a contribution to a decolonial revolution that foresees the ameliorative aspects of the future; we do not know what invention has in store for us. Only in the future, as radical new humans, will we (perhaps) be apt to reflect upon the new world(s) and all its radiation.

## **Methodology**

Different methods will be employed to answer this thesis' main question and subquestions. My first chapter will commence by conducting a close reading practice into Wynter's theoretical project, which includes a few essays and interviews. These works will help me and the reader gain insight into what a genre of the human entails, what our current genre of the human embodies, and what the necessity of a new genre holds regarding a decolonial revolution and a world beyond inequality. I will further contextualise our current genre of the human and the necessity of a new genre mainly through other Black, decolonial, radical thinkers such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Katherine McKittrick, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson and W. E. B. Dubois.

To provide an answer to how Western pedagogical practices can be instrumental in the invention of new genres of the human, this thesis will delineate Wynter's implicit requirements for the invention of new genres of the human in the West. This will be achieved by means of reviewing a few of her essays, whereupon, in chapter two, I will argue that Deleuze's concepts of learning and teaching, put forward in his books *Difference and Repetition* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989), meet Wynter's requirements for the invention of new genres of the human. In this chapter, I will turn to Deleuze's preferred pedagogy and demonstrate how Deleuze and Wynter can be read alongside each other for the purpose of a decolonial revolution through the invention of

new genres of the human. Furthermore, by means of a few correspondences between Wynter, Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari's works, I will demonstrate that Deleuze's preferred pedagogy holds the power to instigate new genres of the human.

In order to form an idea of how Western pedagogies can contribute to the invention of new genres of the human, my research intends to write-with Taka Taka's form of teaching and learning. I will demonstrate, in the first section of chapter three, how Taka Taka's drag practice can be read as a learning practice through a Deleuzian pedagogical model. I will scrutinise Taka Taka's new invented genre of the human via some theoretical papers about drag, Deleuze and Guattari's concept becoming-imperceptible, Taka Taka's drag shows, and the available documentation online. The initial material will allow me to set a context within which to interpret Taka Taka's practice. Deleuze and Guattari's concept will permit me to understand Taka Taka's new genre of the human. In addition, Taka Taka's new genre of the human will be read alongside our current genre's understanding of identity whereby I will make a distinction between our current genre's understanding of identity through identity markers such as gender, race, sexuality, etc. and Taka Taka's non-identity or becoming-imperceptible performances. This chapter's second section will interpret Taka Taka's teaching practice as a decolonial pedagogical practice whereby the teaching of an attitude of a new genre of the human is being performed. This interpretation will be rendered possible owing to the Deleuzian pedagogical model. In order to arrive at this interpretation, I will rely on my participation in one of Taka Taka's teaching events. An intensive participation in around 10 collective gatherings allowed me to apprehend the manner in which Taka Taka engage with the practice of teaching and what they use, materially, discursively, and physically, to teach this attitude of a new genre of the human as becoming-imperceptible.

In the conclusion, I will return to my White Western perspective, which is also the dominant perspective in modern times, and demonstrate how my participation in Taka Taka's pedagogical event enabled me to become-otherwise. Finally, the conclusion will also offer a summary of my principal claims and hypotheses, as well as their relevance for a revolutionary future-yet-to-come.

# CHAPTER 1. How to Combat the Overrepresentation of Man

## Introduction

With the aim of inventing new genres of the human through pedagogical means, this thesis must first and foremost establish a theoretical foundation with the interdisciplinary work of Sylvia Wynter as its bedrock. In order to attain this initial foundational manoeuvre within my overall endeavour, I will follow a number of crucial steps in this chapter. The first section will unpack Wynter's definition of the human as always being a genre or a mode of the human, laying out an alternative conception of the human as an essentially progressivist ideal. The second section will turn its attention to what Sylvia Wynter believes to be our current hegemonic genre of the human or, in her words, Man 2. I will delineate our current genre of the human by closely investigating its lineage as has been characterised by Wynter in a plurality of essays. A masterful apprehension of our current genre will also permit this thesis to fathom how divergently behaving, relating and thinking humans differ from Man 2's genre of the human. The third section will discuss the unattainability of a world beyond inequality within our current genre's embodied worldview. It is a consequence of this unattainability that Wynter makes a call for new genres of the human and as such, my thesis aims to respond to her urgent demand. In conclusion, section four will discuss Wynter's proposition of a new human, one that moves beyond our current Western obsessive episteme's absorption with Man 2 and towards a storytelling genre of the human. Wynter's immense realisation and proposition will be discussed through two additional concepts which were rendered possible owing to Aimé Césaire and Franz Fanon: the "science of the Word" and the "sociogenic principle" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015). It is Wynter's storytelling genre of the human that will burst Man 2's gates of sameness wide open.

## The Human as Praxis

In an interview with Proud flesh titled *Proud flesh Interviews: Sylvia Wynter* (2006), Wynter discusses her use of the word 'genre', which she coined, with regards to describing the human, because one of its significations is 'kind' (Wynter and Proud flesh 2006, 24). Wynter's intention when defining the human as always being a genre is to demonstrate how each and every genre of the human is embedded within certain articulations of truths and modes of sociality that comprise a culture's embodied worldview. The main issue with most genres of the human, Wynter argues, is that they contribute to the opaqueness of

what lies at the heart of human sociality and life, that is to say that the human is always a praxis (Wynter and McKittrick 2015).

Let me elaborate on the previous by introducing one of Wynter's favourite examples: that of the first encounter between the Christian Europeans and the Congolese Bantu people. As will become more apparent in the next section, upon arrival in Congo, the Christian Europeans were embodying a solely monotheistic conception of the world. Consequently, they could not apprehend an Other in regard to what they experienced as being human, and as a result a dissimilarity to their sole truth. The Christian Europeans could consequently perceive the Bantu people whom they encountered in Congo solely as the "pagan-idolators", as "Enemies-of-Christ", and as signifying the absence of their own worldview or truth (Wynter 2003, 291). Nonetheless, this encounter generated a completely divergent experience on the side of the Congolese, as Antonio de Teruel wrote, Wynter argues:

"The indigenous peoples of the Congo are all black in colour, some more so, some less so... Many are to be seen who are the colour of chestnut and some tend to be more olive-coloured. But the one who is of the deepest black in colour is held by them to be the most beautiful... There are some children who although their parents are black, are born white-skinned... And these are regarded by the Congolese as monsters... Given the fact that a black skin is so highly regarded among them, we Europeans appear ugly in their eyes...As a result, children in those areas, where a white has never seen before, would become terrified, fleeing in horror from us, no less than our children here are terrified by the sight of a black also fleeing in horror from them" ( Teruel 1662-1664, as cited in Wynter 2001, 45)

What emerges from this quote is that the Bantu people experienced the encounter, as did the White Christian Europeans, on completely opposite terms. While the Europeans were contemplating the Congolese in purely non-human terms, the Bantu people were attributing to the Europeans the liminally deviant monstrous categorisation, as was ascribed to the Albino from within the terms and truths of the Bantus' then still "autocentric traditional culture" (Wynter 2001, 52).

This principle, according to Wynter, does not exclusively encompass Christian Europeans and the Bantu people. Wynter argues that all human groupings - societies of, for instance, the Romans, the Greeks, China, Egypt, etc. - have invented their truths, or what Wynter calls truths-for as they only apply to a certain society or human order, in

accordance with narratives that consequently perform/ed as an “objective set of facts” (Wynter 2003, 271) for the existence of the people of these societies. This is considering that such truths-for behave/d as the essential foundation of every society’s existence and as such of every genre of being a human. As a consequence, humans cannot escape such foundational meshes because it is the only world they know. These truths-for are not external operations in which humans are encircled; they are, as we will see in this chapter’s third and fourth section, the very texture of their consciousness, and as such they cannot consider that their thought might be wrong.

### **The Genre of the Human as Man**

In order to understand the genre more deeply and how it affects the world in its entirety, I will delve into Wynter’s description of our now globalised truth-for, which she also calls Man 2 or “homo oeconomicus” (Wynter 2003). A clear understanding of our current genre of the human, Wynter notes, requires an investigation in its genealogy, as homo oeconomicus is deeply invested in what rendered it possible. Following Wynter, I will, therefore, begin Man 2’s genealogy from the year 1492, when the human in Europe was solely defined according to the Christian theological tradition. I wish to remind the reader at this point that a close understanding of our current genre of the human will also allow us to consider the inequalities that lie at its foundation, which, as we have seen above, perform entirely as objective facts-for.

The year 1492 experienced the sowing of the seeds that would eventually result in the creation of the genre of the human as Man. We can also call the year 1492 the threshold of the era of Man. 1492 was the year Columbus arrived in the Americas; it was also the year of other voyages outside of Europe. It is, for many thinkers such as Sylvia Wynter (1995, 2003) and Katherine McKittrick (2006), an extremely important year as these ‘discoveries’/voyages led to the re-description of the embodied category of the human. Up until then, the human, from a European perspective, was entirely defined according to a Latin-Christian conception of the world in which the human would be measured in line with its accomplishments in spiritual perfection. This truth-for was, partly, a consequence of the medieval Latin-Christian subject’s “sensory perception of a motionless earth” (Wynter 2003, 274), an earth condemned to enslavement following “the negative Adamic legacy” (Wynter 2003, 274). In other words, Adam’s sin led mankind to its spiritual and motionless enslavement far-removed from the pure, vibrant, in motion heavens: the divine. Therefore, the Christian people of Europe experienced themselves as being sinful (“significant ill” (Wynter 2003)) by nature and were behaviourally urged to

pursue redemption via the rituals of the Church, including the adherence to the Church's forbiddances in order to earn its "otherworldly goal - that of Divine Election for eternal salvation in the Augustinian *civitas dei* (the city of god)" (Wynter 2003, 274).

However, the European embodied definition of the human took a radically different turn with the European voyages to the New World, which shattered, as Katherine McKittrick indicates, European conceptions of "physiology, religion, politics, and geography" (McKittrick 2006, 124). The then European's truth-for, during and prior to the 1492 encounters, was blown into pieces after they witnessed ungodly indigenous peoples and their territories. As 'explorers' and medieval Christian evangelists encountered other truths-for, they felt obliged to make sense of these other worlds, which they had hitherto considered absent. A partly new conception of the human was rendered possible thanks to, what was considered laic prior to these voyages, the fifteenth-century thesis by the Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola titled *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1965).

Partly based on Greco-Roman thought, Pico, in his thesis, reinvented the Christian origin story of Genesis. In opposition to the then Christian conception of Adam, in which Adam had fallen from the Garden of Eden onto the motionless ground of Earth, Pico shows that Adam had not fallen at all. Instead, Pico argues, Adam was created by God and was placed onto Earth so that he could admire God's works, as God wished for someone to marvel at His unique Creation. Due to this reason, God created Man and placed him at the heart of the hierarchy of this work, instructing him to "make of himself what he willed to be - to decide for himself whether to fall to the level of the beasts by giving into his passions, or, through the use of his reason, to rise to the level of the angels" (Wynter 2003, 277). Subsequent to His wish for an audience, God guaranteed that He would have to construct His world conforming to rational rules that could be conceivable by the human He had created it for. This new conception of the human also led to the physical sciences and to the Copernican theory. The unprecedented difficulties with religious foundations, following the encounters, and the physical sciences (moving planet, new heavens) engendered a "reasonable Man (Man1), located between "the lower natures of the brutes" and divine natures" (McKittrick 2006, 125).

Following the voyages to the New World, this re-description of the purely Christian human to a hybrid religious-secular "homo politicus" (Wynter 2003), induced Man to overrepresent his genre of the human as the human itself. A genre that originated from abject attitudes towards the Other, whereby the transported subjugated Black Africans and the indigenous peoples of the Americas were institutionalised and categorised as the "irrational/subrational Other" (Wynter 2003, 281-282) to Man's counter conception of the

Self as “civic-humanist and rational” (Wynter 2003, 282). Man 1 was, consequently, projected at the apex of the ladder of being, also called the Chain of Being, which constituted degrees of rationality between peoples, cultures, religions, forms of life. In other words, the White rational European semi-religious man represented the human in its entirety while his African and indigenous American counterpart did not hold the right attributes to be labeled in a similar fashion. It was from then on, Wynter argues, that the West would remain impotent in apprehension of an Other on divergent terms to what they define/d for themselves to be the essence of the human. She writes:

“All other modes of being human would instead have to be seen not as the alternative modes of being human that they are “out there”, but adaptively, as the lack of the West’s ontologically absolute self-description” (Wynter 2003, 282).

The continuous American conquest, the enslavement of Africans and the subjugation of Asia and its peoples, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, set in motion another interconnected fabrication of the human as Man. This new Man (Man 2), which still is being perpetuated currently as the only representation of the human, was developed greatly in the nineteenth century with the invention and rise of two interwoven new narratives: the by then still hybrid religio-secular human redescribed itself in purely biologically determined and economic terms. As with Man 1’s invention of the physical sciences, the European voyages in the name of ‘discovery’ rendered the natural sciences of the nineteenth century possible, thereby facilitating Darwin in the invention of a universal evolutionary theory which has been performing as the foundation for our current generic genre of the human.

Man 2, following Darwin, had redefined the human in entirely secular terms, the origin of which, analogous to all other beings and species, was set in Evolution, “with the human therefore existing in a line of pure continuity with all other organic forms of life” (Wynter 2003, 314). A genre-defining metamorphosis had thereby ensued by virtue of Darwin’s collapsing of the earlier differential and hierarchical ladder, which described the world by way of a divide between the rational human and the irrational animal. Instead, Evolution would give rise to a new hierarchical and embodied line, one that Wynter calls naturally

“selected” or naturally “dysselected” (Wynter 2003).<sup>3</sup> This line’s reaction could not be revealed in advance as it would only come to be confirmed following one’s or one’s community’s economic failure or success in life. As a result, Man 2’s new truth-for will be defined in abject accordance to this new descriptive Other, namely, that of the “underdeveloped” - the poor, the jobless, the homeless and the criminalised. Similar to Man 1’s abject defining principles in defining the human was Man 2’s definition of the human as “jobholder Breadwinner”, or even more ideally, as “successful master of Natural Scarcity (Investor, or capital accumulator)” (Wynter 2003, 321). This definition was placed in direct opposition to what was now his new, underdeveloped Other. Therefore, it is in the context of this new human that the selected-dysselected line corresponds to another embodied line, a line that W. E. B. Dubois was to determine as the “Color Line” (Dubois 1986): that is to say, “a line drawn between the lighter and the darker peoples of the earth, and enforced at the level of social reality by the lawlikely instituted relation of socioeconomic dominance/subordination between them” (Wynter 2003, 310).

This correspondence of the above two lines merged into one objective, natural, universal line which was to define our current genre of the human. The merging, however, was facilitated by what we call ‘race’. Aníbal Quijano insists that the purely constructed idea of race, an idea that was rendered possible due to Man 1’s voyages, was to be invented as the essential ground for modernity (Quijano 2013). Wynter identifies race as a story that dates back to Man 1 and which allowed a shift in the system of classification from the “Enemies-of-Christ/Christ Refusers” (Wynter 2003, 296) to a novel more justifying one. It was then that Man 2’s story of race, as a natural, objectively determined classificatory doctrine and “mechanism of domination” (Wynter 2003, 296), was first brought into existence, if still in Man 1’s hybrid religio-secular model. In section 4 of this chapter we will also see how this “status-ordering” (Wynter 2003, 316) standard established upon hierarchical degrees of “evolutionary selectedness/eugenicity and/or dysselected/dysgenecity” (Wynter 2003, 316) plays itself out - in positive and negative ways - on the level of all of our consciousnesses. But for now, what is essential to my endeavour is to understand how, from a Wynterian perspective, our current genre of the

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<sup>3</sup> Wynter has a rather traditional understanding of Darwin, one that many scholars have successfully and eloquently challenged. For a divergent perspective on Darwin, one that is both feminist and neo-materialist, see Grosz’s seminal book *The Nick of Time* (2004). I, nevertheless, am of the opinion that Wynter’s apprehension of Darwin is deliberately classical as she never intended to dispute Darwin’s theory from within. Instead, her understanding of Darwin derives, in my opinion, purely from an outside perspective, probing into Darwin’s significance for the invention of Man 2. We will see in this chapter’s fourth section how Wynter’s alternative to Man 2 has nothing to do with Darwin.

human thinks and behaves in order to address the deep underlying inequalities that perform at the heart of Man 2 and its genealogy.

### **The Need for the Invention of New Genres of the Human in the Pursuit of a World Beyond Inequality**

In this section I will argue for the necessity of new genres of the human in the pursuit of a world beyond inequality as our current genre of the human is fundamentally rooted in abject inequalities. The pursuit of new genres of the human results from the conviction that a world beyond inequality will never be achieved within our current genre's terms, language and structures. Therefore, this section aims to dismiss remedies, such as human recognition and inclusion within liberal humanism (Man 2), for our current genre's practices of inequality. With that said, I do not wish to completely dismiss the existing, current strategies of inclusion and recognition seeing that they often contribute to the amelioration of certain communities and people.

In order to inquire into Man 2's core positioning inequalities, an additional conjoined narrative to Darwin's biocentrism must be unpacked. This second conjoined narrative facilitated, as did Darwin's evolutionary thought, the transfiguration of Man's "descriptive statement" (Wynter 2003) from the human as essentially homo politicus to the human as essentially homo oeconomicus. This narrative was performed after Thomas Malthus 1798's *Essay on the Principle of Population*, in which Malthus delineates his revolutionary re-description through a new form of the "absence of order" (Malthus 2008). The absence of order, according to Malthus, portrays a fundamental contradiction rooted in the fact that, in Wynter's words, "men's increase in numbers is a geometric progression, whereas the increase in the quantity of food can only be an arithmetical progression" (Wynter 2003, 320). Consequently, given the growing chasm between the two progressions, "the law of self regulation" (Wynter 2003, 320) that ensues demands for the state's laissez-faire policy, considering the human is the effect of an extra-human governing principle: "the law of nature" (Wynter 2003). This principle, as we have seen above, calls for the category of the abjectly underdeveloped to be left poor so that the category's representatives can be expunged by "the iron laws of nature" (Wynter 2003, 320). Hence, enslavement was now regarded, post Malthus and Darwin, in terms of the naturally selected and the naturally dysselected or, in other words, the "ill of Natural Scarcity" (Wynter 2003, 320). The only "plan of salvation" (Wynter 2003, 320) for the underdeveloped would now be measured in economic expressions rather than the hitherto Christian spiritual path of escape.

If one wants to accept, even in part, Wynter's genealogy of Man and its overrepresentation, one cannot but come to the conclusion that a world beyond inequality is inconceivable within our current overrepresented genre of the human for the reason that Man 2's foundation is based on inequality. To put it differently, inequality makes Man possible. The reason for this is that Man defines himself in opposing terms whereby the opposing category will always be regarded as less than human. This practice is essential for Man to even arrive at a definition of the human. The human must, therefore, from Man's perspective, be defined in dichotomous terms. And, while Wynter powerfully explicates Man's transmutation from Man 1 to Man 2 in terms of a shift in genres, does she not permit us to see, also, that Man's transmutation never did away with the binary codes that lie at its foundation.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari take a similar stance regarding the impossibility of standing outside race from the vantage point of race - Man. The philosophers write: "From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 178). What they mean is that from the perspective of race all bodies are organised in connection to a standard, which endures owing to a dividing line that equates to the existence of the standard. This standard enhances itself not by (un)consciously recognising the deviant as other but by re-creating the norm, alluding to the necessity of the Other for the Self. Therefore, for Deleuze and Guattari, one can never escape race from the perspective of race, considering the "White Man" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 176) performs the only norm in relation to what He regards as the non-norm.

Thus, Let us suppose for a moment that the dysselected category of the underdeveloped (this example equally counts for Man 1's oppositional category) rises to the heights of the human, how will the human be defined then without its counterpart? An instant conclusion evolves from the previous supposition: Man's naturalised binary codes must lock themselves as the essence of the human, repudiating whatever shines through its cracks.

Moreover, inclusion and recognition cannot provoke a world beyond inequality considering all the world knows is the episteme of Man and, as we have seen above, Man's episteme is deeply rooted in inequalities. Allow me to clarify with an academic example. Many of the posthumanists have, as Wynter did, declared war on the overrepresentation of Man, on Man's outright conviction in "human agency" and on Man's "humanist arrogance". From the perspective of the posthumanists, this ongoing war is

being fought by means of a human disintegration into “nature”, “life itself”, or “the universe” (Colebrook 2014). In other words, the battle is being fought by way of an inclusion of the human into nature. However, Claire Colebrook warns the posthumanists that such a hasty manoeuvre will never accomplish the eradication of Man in all his facets seeing that our conceptions of nature, life itself, and the universe originate from within Man’s episteme (Colebrook 2014): an episteme deeply embedded in the annihilation, enslavement, and subjugation of all the colonised peoples. This obsession with collapsing the humanistic arrogance by way of a dissolution into nature is clearly being facilitated by an implicit avoidance of other creators of experience that has its origin in other structural oppressions (Wynter would say stories) such as colonialism, racism, phallocentrism and capitalism (Cornell and Seely 2016, 3).

In a similar vein, Wynter reproaches certain feminists and Western feminism more generally for only ruining a part of Western understandings of gender, considering that these feminist re-conceptualisations only allow for a shift in Man’s episteme and not for its overall abolishment. Wynter argues,

“in our order, which is a bourgeois order of kind, a bourgeois order of the human, the woman was supposed to be the housewife and the man was supposed to be the breadwinner. Each was locked into their roles. By making the feminist movement into a bourgeois movement, what they’ve done is to fight to be equal breadwinners. This means that the breadwinning man and the breadwinning woman become a new class, so that the woman who remains in her role becomes a part of a subordinated class (Wynter 2006, 24).”

An inclusion of the woman into Man’s definition of the human will only permit certain women to emancipate, and only according to Man’s existing episteme as gender is essentially an invention of Man. Consequently, Wynter rejects gender as a notion autonomous from other categories of subjugation. She aspires, instead, to a form of liberation from all “-isms” (Wynter 2006, 24) rather than some semi-liberation from one specific form of oppression such as sexism, racism, etc. It is in this regard that Alexander G. Weheliye, following Wynter, defines Man as an assemblage, constituting many relational forms of oppression (Weheliye 2014). Hence, Wynter calls for everyone to acknowledge that our common issue is not the issue of gender, race, or class. Our issue, she says, “is the issue of the genre of Man” (Wynter 2006, 24). And to be done with Man requires the invention of new genres of the human with divergent epistememes.

Wynter turns inclusive practices all the more futile in the search of a world beyond inequality with her groundbreaking introduction of the concept of the sociogenic principle. Following the philosophy of consciousness and contemporary observations in neuroscience, Wynter revamps Frantz Fanon's seminal assertion that "beside ontogeny and phylogeny stands sociogeny" (Wynter 2001, 46). What this portends is that modes of oppression are not solely sociological phenomena or erroneous ideologies that renounce the underlying truth of the human species, namely, the reality of the biological sameness, they also perform, according to Wynter, on a deeply affective level, by determining our affective engagements with others. Thus, if the limits of our encounters with others are shaped and restricted prior to conscious awareness by Man's oppressive and colonial episteme, we will never be able to feel and know in ways beyond these narratives of Man and, therefore, Man's episteme will, ultimately, be perpetuated and actualised ad infinitum. This theory carries deep consequences for inclusive theories, which I will delineate through Fanon's description of the embodied experience of the Black person in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2009). However, before Fanon's description can have any real impact on our discussion on inclusion, a more profound understanding of Wynter's sociogenic principle is recommended.

Wynter's sociogenic principle is based on a critique/alternative to the nature-culture divide. Sociogeny defies Man 2 origin stories by contesting biocentric theories whereby culture is what humans create. Wynter renders it reciprocal: culture is also what creates humans. Additionally, her radicality stems from, as shown above, an inclusion of human desire and affect in the concept of sociogeny. Zakkiyah Iman Jackson explains this inclusion, echoing Wynter, as follows:

"Wynter argues that a culturally imposed symbolic belief system serves as the internalised sanction system that motivates behaviour, biochemically affirming or negating in dynamic relation to societal norms and values prior to any reflective process" (Jackson 2020, 162).

Humans, Wynter explains, behave and react to what feels good and what feels bad. This behaviour is regulated and induced through a mediation of our opioid system - a system of reward and punishment. However, these visceral processes cannot be explained only from

the perspective of biology, as they also operate, in an “intra-active”<sup>4</sup> manner, with culture. To put it differently, our bodies, our psyches, our “nervous system’s biochemical dynamism prior to the reflectivity of consciousness” (Jackson 2020, 162), our neurons, flesh, bones, blood and muscles get altered by stories, such as, for example, the story of race. Wynter explains:

“[I]n the case of the human species, the sociogenic principle,...institute the human subjects as a culture-specific and thereby verbally defined, if physiologically implemented, mode of being and *sense of self*. One therefore, whose phenomenology (that is, the parameters of its qualitative mental states, order of consciousness and mode of subjective experience) is as objectively constructed as its physiology” (Wynter 2001, 54).

What this means for us is that due to our current Western planetary hegemony brought about by imperial oppression, all of us humans know ourselves in accordance with our current genre of the human. Man 2 has made sure that this truth-for remains globally intact owing to its tyrannous practices of world domination. As a consequence, even Man’s Others must know themselves only through Man’s truth-for; they cannot flee Man’s enslaving entanglements and must, therefore, act according to its opioid system, which in the genre of Man 2 is organised conforming to biological inferiority, the dark side of the Color Line: poverty.

Returning to Fanon, he writes: “But I too am guilty, here I am talking of Apollo! There is no help for it. I am a White man. For unconsciously I distrust what is black in me, that is the whole of my being...” (Fanon 2009, 148). What Fanon reveals in *Black Skin and White Masks* is that Black people can only know themselves according to “White masks”, and that, in order to avoid being considered a “nigger”, colonised people must assimilate to White Western bourgeois notions or to what is considered being human. But seeing that our opioid system is narratively imprinted in terms of Man’s symbolic codes, Fanon’s experience, as a partly assimilated Black person in France, will still reflexively respond to

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4 Karen Barad explain intra-action as follows: “[T]he notion of “intra-action” queers the familiar sense of causality (where one or more causal agents precede and produce an effect), and more generally unsettles the metaphysics of individualism (the belief that there are individually constituted agents or entities, as well as times and places). According to my agential realist ontology, or rather ethico-onto-epistemology (an entanglement of what is usually taken to be the separate considerations of ethics, ontology, and epistemology), “individuals” do not preexist as such but rather materialise in intra-action. That is, intra-action goes to the question of the making of differences, of “individuals,” rather than assuming their independent or prior existence. “Individuals” do not not exist, but are not individually determinate. Rather, “individuals” only exist within phenomena (particular materialised/materialising relations) in their ongoing iteratively intra-active reconfiguring” (Barad 2012, 77).

himself with aversion. No matter how many White masks Fanon succeeds in acquiring, within our current genre's truth-for, he will always find himself, reflexively, hating his Blackness (Du Bois calls this Black problem "double consciousness" (Du Bois 1986, 364-365)). Likewise, there exists, for those who are considered and experience themselves as racially White, a neurological/physiological aversion to the Black Other. As a consequence, total Black inclusion in the category of the human will never be achieved, considering Man's assemblage is always entirely felt by the matter that composes our bodies. In other words, a Black person might find assimilation in one out of many composites that make up the assemblage of Man, as Fanon did by learning to master Man's language. This, however, does not mean the achievement of a world beyond inequality, as Fanon is under duress regarding the aversion to his Blackness. It is with regard to this that I wish to bring in the following quote by the Combahee River Collective: "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression" (Combahee River Collective 1983, 215). Following Wynter, that can only be achieved with the invention of new genres of the human, as I have tried to demonstrate in the above section.

### **Good Riddance: Towards a New Genre of the Human**

At this point, one might think: How can one ever find a way out from Man's current genre of the human? We might all seem to be trapped inside our current episteme. Even more so, now that Wynter shows that Man's truth-for is much more than solely discursive. What appears at first to be our downfall - the sociogenic principle - on second thought, is also what renders our liberation possible. Once Fanon imbricated sociogeny with ontogeny, Man's episteme lost all its credibility. The sociogenic principle initiated the event of being human as a praxis. Consequently, it is no longer nature that determines us, but rather narratives/words/ideas. Most importantly, the sociogenic principle facilitates the invention and praxis of new genres of the human. The Fanonian/Wynterian innovation, nevertheless, has not yet been accomplished globally, as with other genres of the human in the past, due to Man 2's colonial domination over whatever is aberrant. Allow me to expand on this new genre of the human Wynter proposes by interpolating Césaire's concept of the science of the Word, a concept Wynter draws on in shaping this new storytelling genre of the human.

In his piece titled *Poetry and Knowledge* (1996), Césaire presents a radical proposition, something that the human had never seen before, namely, a hybrid science that relates to the conceptual breaks left by the natural sciences regarding our human

impasse. Why did the natural sciences fail to explain human behaviour in its entirety? Césaire's new proposition manages this impasse from outside the natural sciences by offering a new interdisciplinary order of knowledge that commences with the study of the Word (myths, narratives, poetry, etc.), which thereafter shapes the study of the natural. You will notice here how similar Césaire's approach is to Fanon's sociogeny. Similar to Wynter in her written correspondence with Mckittrick titled *Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species* (2015), I would like to quote Césaire at length here, just for the sheer revolutionary brilliance:

“Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge....A view of the world, yes; science affords a view of the world, but a summary and superficial view....

But it is not sufficient to state that scientific knowledge is summary. It is necessary to add that it is poor and half-starved....

And mankind has gradually become aware that side by side with this half-starved scientific knowledge there is another kind of knowledge. A fulfilling knowledge....

And it is on the word, a chip off the world, secret and chaste slice of the world, that he [the poet] gambles all our possibilities....Our first and last chance” (Césaire 1996, as cited in Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 64).

It is owing to Fanon's sociogeny and Césaire science of the Word that Wynter realises that everything that is known to us as humans is conditioned by stories. She establishes, therefore, the Word or narration as the foundation for a substitute, non-Western genre of the human. A genre, which she also calls “homo narrans” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 44), that permits a myriad of divergent genres, seeing how human essence lies now in the potentiality of becoming. With the science of the Word, therefore, we travelled from a human that is transcendently determined, in a predetermined, essential fashion, to a human that can embody unknown different forms and shapes. This is the reason why Wynter explores creative and inventive practices as they can, through different narrations and imaginings, open up divergent praxes of being human. She demands we learn from the ways in which practices such as art, poetry, dance, music, mythology, and literature (of Man's Others) may generate new collective “ceremonies” (Wynter 2007) that would permit us to jointly start relating differently to one another in new praxes of being (Wynter 2007).

Now that we have established, following Wynter, that new genres of the human are deemed attainable and necessary for a world beyond inequality, one question, for me, still lingers: How are we to invent new genres? In other words, what makes it possible for practices such as art, poetry, dance, music, mythology, and literature to invent new genres of the human, in light of our earlier assertion that humans are trapped in Man's current mode of existence? Wynter's answer to the above is the following: These inventive practices portray a "sustained and prolonged attempt to reinvent the Black as human" (Wynter n.d., as cited in McKittrick 2021, 158). I will explain what she means through an inquiry into Katherine McKittrick's essay titled *I got Life / Rebellion Invention Groove* (2021), wherein McKittrick explores Wynter's unpublished manuscript *Black Metamorphosis* (n.d.).

The manuscript uses a myriad of fields to describe Black experiences in the Americas. What concerns McKittrick most in her essay is the relationship between Black oppression in the Americas and Black affirmative, rebellious ceremonies. She writes: "Wynter's reading of oppression and resistance is therefore not dichotomous but, rather, a 'question mark...a dynamic dialectic of terror and hope'" (McKittrick 2021, 157). In *Black Metamorphosis*, McKittrick argues, Wynter reflects on the manners in which Black experiences in the Americas under systems of oppression - plantation practices and the Middle Passage - engendered the conditions for a plurality of Black revolts. This diversity of rebellious practices were originated by Black people that "reinvented and affirmed Black humanity and Black life and engendered New World cultural inventions" (McKittrick 2021, 153). In accordance with Man 2's truth-for, Wynter's shows in *Black Metamorphosis* how the slavery system and its subsequent reverberations generated the omission of Black people from the category of the human/being. These were/are the conditions that drove Black people to radical ceremonies of Black humanisation. What Wynter shows, according to McKittrick, is how these rebellious inventive ceremonies - funerals, mutinies, marriages, dramas, carnivals, visual arts, fictions, poems, dances, fights, jazz, the blues, revolts -, in other words: "Black culture" (McKittrick 2021, 158), "reinvents (Black) humanity and life" (McKittrick 2021, 158). Hence, in furtherance of answering the above question, what leads people to invent new genres of the human is the absolute necessity of discovering the "potentiality of dehumanised liberation and joy" (McKittrick 2021, 160). To put it differently, the invention of a divergent culture emanates from a necessity to be, to exist.

And while this thesis fully endorses with open arms all the inventive cultures that are being originated from a necessity to be, I want to explore in depth another possible alternative for the creation of new genres of the human that has its origin elsewhere. Let me turn the above into an additional question: How can the ones who (partly) embody Man

2's definition of the human invent new genres of the human inasmuch as the necessity of being is absent? Chapter 2 will make an attempt at answering this question by drawing upon Deleuze's redefinition of the practices of teaching and learning, whereby the invention of a new world ensues following two connected outright dissolutions of one's sense of self.

## CHAPTER 2. A Deleuzian Pedagogical Definition: Forget and Connect

### Introduction

I hope to have sufficiently demonstrated the necessity of new genres of the human in pursuit of a world beyond inequality. In line with this necessity, this chapter will argue that a Deleuzian form of pedagogy meets Wynter's requirements with regards to the invention of new genres of the human. Some of you, I imagine, might be surprised by my recourse to Deleuze as Deleuze is particularly known for his philosophy of becoming: a world in becoming where identities and the Self/Other complex is but a mere illusion (Deleuze 1994). A thought that fails, at first appearance, to make a deep association with a Wynterian understanding of our current world where Man's apprehension of the Self and the Other has set us/them in stone. In other words, Wynter's current world has been determined by Man's Self/Other complex ontologically. It is for this reason that Gayatri Spivak has demanded from Western intellectuals to forget the Enlightenment-rationalist project with its essential abject dialectics of self versus other. In an interview titled *The Post-Modern Condition: The End of Politics* (1990) Spivak says:

"I think first of all that the Western theoretical establishment should take a moratorium on producing a local solution... - and this is why the critique of Western metaphysics is so important, as a critique of Western metaphysics in the post-structuralists. I think in the language of commercials, one would say: Try it, you might like it. Try to behave as if you are part of the margin, try to unlearn your privilege. This, I think, would be a lesson that one could draw, in a very crude way, from the post-structuralist enterprise" (Spivak 1990, 30).

What Spivak asks the West is abundantly clear: unlearn everything you know/are. And while Wynter has never made a similar request (not explicitly at least), I cannot but conclude from her work that the act of unlearning is an essential undertaking before the West starts applying itself in the creation of new genres of the human. Seeing that the West is trapped in sameness - in our current genre of the human - due to a non-existent necessity of reinvention in the name of being, an unlearning must precede the invention of new genres of the human, otherwise invention, in the West, will lead ultimately to the perpetuation of Man and the same (remember Wynter's claim: Man is all we know). Consequently, in line with Wynter, the invention of new genres of the human in the West must always comprise a prior dissolution or act(s) of unlearning.

In the context of the West, where a prior dissolution of Man is vital in the search for new genres of the human, Deleuze's preferred form of pedagogy will prove advantageous. This will only be so if we emphasise Deleuze's conjoined aspect of unlearning or unbecoming with all movements of becoming, an aspect Kathrin Thiele in her essay *The World with(out) Others, or How to Unlearn the Desire for the Other* (2012) notes "Deleuze himself did not make explicit enough" (Thiele 2012, 57). This aspect, however, can be detected all over Deleuze's seminal work *Difference and Repetition*. In the later pages of his monograph, Deleuze makes a distinction between two forms of death: an actual death, which implies the termination of activity in the brain or of the heartbeat, and a virtual death. Unlike the first form of death, Deleuze tells us that the second form of death can also be interpreted as a rebirth. The virtual death materialises through a dissolution of the self and results in novel expressions of becoming-other (Deleuze 1994, 292-294) (Notice the connection with Gissant's definition of the womb).

Philosopher James Williams reads *Difference and Repetition* through a set of questions that Deleuze seeks to answer: "How do we move forward best?; How do we learn best?; What is critique and what should be criticised"; and How should we give structure to our thoughts and acts?" (Williams 2013, 4). Principles instead of laws, Williams observes, advance answers to the aforementioned questions, considering laws in philosophy are universal and should perpetually be followed. Deleuze opts for principles because principles can be contradictory and still yield answers. Two principles overshadow *Difference and Repetition*, namely, "Connect with everything" and "Forget everything" (Williams 2013, 5). These two principles perform conjointly: one will never reach fulfilment in the absence of the other. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, Deleuze convinces himself and others to engage in the search for virtual deaths. The first principle directs us towards the invention of novel expressions within the restraints of our actual minds and bodies. In order to carry out the connective principle, "we must pay heed to the second principle and learn to forget our attachments to any particular self and body" (Williams 2013, 10). What Deleuze is saying, in other words, is experiment, vary your life for the sake of new expressions of becoming, and do that by embodying the second principle of leaving all actual things behind: representation, habit and memory (Deleuze 1994). So, in correspondence with my above conclusion with regards the necessities for the invention of new genres of the human in the West, Deleuze's connective principle - the becoming-other - never comes into existence by opposition (Self/Other) as a second principle always precedes it and which requires the forgetting or unlearning of one's entire being.

This chapter will demonstrate how Deleuze's two principles correlate with Deleuze's concept of learning. I will furthermore show how a second dissolution or unlearning occurs in the process of the first principle of becoming through Deleuze's three passive syntheses, whereby a third synthesis of reciprocal determinations of the actual and the virtual surmount the tendency of the first two syntheses - habit and memory - to stasis. We will see how this third synthesis happens to us following an actual desire to liberate ourselves from our categorisations, identities and senses of self. How the third synthesis unfolds following an encounter remains unknown as this process transpires in our unconscious. I will further explain the workings of the third synthesis by means of Deleuze's concept of the "caesura" and Deleuze's concept of the "virtual" (Deleuze 1994): two concepts that are essential in Deleuze's understanding of movements of becoming and the creation of new worlds. In order to develop a full Deleuzian pedagogical structure as a means to invent new genres of the human, I will show how Deleuze's concept of teaching pursues learning processes given that for Deleuze, teaching must always scour the unexhausted potential of the virtual for further becomings. I will end this chapter with an inevitable correspondence between Deleuze's first principle - connect - and the creation of new genres of the human. This correspondence will be rendered possible through Deleuze and Guattari's description of the "minor" in *Kafka: A Minor Literature* (1986) and *What is Philosophy* (1994) whereby, according to the philosophers, a minor practice calls forth "a new earth, a new people" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994, 99). It incorporates a resistance to the present in its particular orientation in favour of a future whereby the invention of new modes of existence transpire. This invention of new modes of existence or new worlds always eventuates itself first in the becoming-of-a-new-human on the part of the practitioner (Deleuze 1986) as in Deleuze's third synthesis of time.

### **Learning through Forgetting**

To properly understand what Deleuze refers to when he writes about his preferred definition of learning, I deem it crucial to introduce the actual and the virtual and their reciprocal determinations. The actual and the virtual are Deleuze's ways of accounting for reality and what exists. The actual, for Deleuze, is associated with one thing alone: the object. It relies on two dimensions for its actual being: it embodies a spatial extension and it carries a quality. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze defines the object as a "perceptual world" occupied by "developed qualities and extensities" (Deleuze 1994, 281). These two aspects of the object comprise the basis of every identity. The object is what consciousness knows, according to Deleuze. This definition of the object as the actual poses absolutely no problem to our common sense seeing that these two elements

are what have constituted the object since at least Aristotle. Deleuze, however, warns his reader against an understanding of reality that considers only the actual, since the actual deals only with representation. Another word Deleuze uses to describe representation is “generality” (Deleuze 1994).

In the introduction of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze defines generality as the following: “Generality presents two major orders: the qualitative order of resemblances and the quantitative order of equivalences” (Deleuze 1994, 1). Consciousness - or our understanding - captures the object on the grounds of equivalences and resemblances. Provided that an object possesses a quality, it can bear a resemblance to another object. Provided that an object has a quantitative extensity, it can correspond to other objects. What interests Deleuze most, however, is the cause of our representations. In an unusual sense, he will call this cause ‘repetition’. This is unusual because repetition, in the ordinary use of the term, construes exactly what Deleuze defines as an object: an equivalence or a resemblance between two or more objects divided by time. He will introduce another sort of repetition, one that is more difficult to apprehend, and that will be the cause for the former. In his own words:

“The two repetitions are not independent. One is the singular subject, the interiority and the heart of the other, the depths of the other. The other is only the external envelope, the abstract effect” (Deleuze 1994, 24).

Deleuze’s repetition speaks about a realm which performs prior to the actual or the represented world and which is constitutive of this world. In other words, the actual is generated through repetition. This is important for Deleuze’s concept of learning because, as I will show, repetition is, likewise, the cause for learning. To be more precise, it is the third repetition, or the third synthesis of time, which will produce the virtual and which will, in turn, be responsible for the process of learning (The connection between repetition and the virtual will be further delineated below).

Before I write in detail about the virtual, what is for now important to understand about the virtual is that the virtual causes actual difference and actual becoming. It is a field that cannot be contained by our understanding. This, however, does not mean that it is not real, it is real but not yet actualised. More so, the virtual becomes only actualised in parts and will always cause new actualisations. In other words, the virtual is the realm of the undifferentiated waiting to be actualised in actual difference. The virtual, or preferably actual manifestations of the virtual, is therefore to be considered as the creative act or, as we have defined it earlier, an expression of becoming - in Simon O’Sullivan words:

“precisely the production, or actualisation, of difference and thus diversity from a pre-existing field of potentialities” (O’Sullivan 2006, 103).

To go back to the aforementioned principles, when Deleuze writes ‘connect’, he means make to new connections in the virtual: learn to become an actual other; try to cause the virtual to ‘differentiate’ itself into new ‘differenciations’ (mind the spelling) or actualisations. Following the above, an immediate paradox comes knocking: If the virtual is beyond our understanding or human consciousness, how can we cause the virtual to differentiate itself? A simple answer to this question is: forget (the second principle). In order to engender new connections in the virtual we must forget our sense of self, our categorisations and our identities; in other words, experiment with your body and thus your mind by discovering novel ways of relating to the matter that makes up the world. Hence, Deleuze’s war cry that he adopts from Spinoza states: “We do not know what our bodies are capable of” (Deleuze 1992, 226). A will to forget predominantly precedes connections in the virtual whereupon we experience the effects of the virtual. How part of the virtual will become actualised cannot be apprehended by our consciousness. This is the reason why Deleuze describes virtual operations, following experiments in forgetting, as a “dice throw” (Deleuze 1994), a dangerous, experimental and creative act with unpredictable consequences.

At this point, allow me to define the Deleuzian form of learning: A conscious desire to forget everything you think to know about the world, experimenting with what your body/mind is capable of and let the effects of virtual becomings happen to you. In *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text* (2003) Deleuze defines learning as the interpretation of “signs”. He writes: “Everything that teaches us something emit signs; every act of learning is an interpretation of signs or hieroglyphs” (Deleuze, 2003, 4). Signs are committed to the virtual, they are what cause the virtual to connect anew; they are “Ideas” (Deleuze 1994) and Ideas are what constitute the virtual (more on that below). Before I move on to Deleuze’s three passive syntheses and their concatenation with the virtual, it is imperative, at this point, to recognise the vast variety of concepts Deleuze employs for his definition of learning as they will all play a part in the unfolding of this chapter.

### **The Three Passive Syntheses: A Deeper Forgetting/Unlearning and the Virtual**

The following section will describe a second form of forgetting that is initiated with the introduction of the third passive synthesis. Moreover, a complex consideration of the passive third synthesis and its inherent potentiality for the new will be discussed in light of Deleuze’s concepts of the caesura and the virtual. This, however, requires a prior understanding of the first two syntheses as they make up the grounds for the constitution

of the subject, which will become dismantled with the influx of the third passive synthesis. It is essential to note, however, that for Deleuze, the passive syntheses do not take place within a subject, but rather they are integral to subjectivity itself. This means that only under the condition of passive syntheses are identities embedded in actual memory and understanding possible. To be more precise, passive syntheses are constitutive repetitions that engender generality or the actual.

Deleuze's first synthesis of time is mostly based on David Hume's investigations into the ideas of custom and habit. According to Hume, repetition is a subjective operation that links independent and distinct performances of matter together as a repetition of the old. Imagine the pair AB: the more our imagination experiences the pair in conjunction, the more our imagination will be inclined to associate A with B. Hume calls this predictive process "habit" (Hume 2004). In his words: "After a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant" (Hume 2004, 75). So expectancy, for Hume, does not reside in AB but within the mind that experiences AB. When the mind experiences the pair on multiple occasions it will automatically change/transform and expect B to be always in conjunction with A.

Hume reminds us on several occasions that the acquisitions of habits are not cognitive operations, but rather reside in the apprehensions of our sensory processes. The sensible/mind - or, in Deleuze's term, our imagination - "contracts" current and past occurrences and launches them into the near future, generating what Deleuze calls an "expectation" (Deleuze 1994). Deleuze defines this process as the first synthesis of time (Deleuze 1994, 70-97). Deleuze calls it such because the present time is constituted and assembled through the contraction of material instances. To put it differently, the present is shaped by virtue of our bodily contractions. For Deleuze, as Daniela Voss puts it, "this fusion or contraction of (past, present and future) instants forms the passive synthesis of the living present" (Voss 2013, 220). "Passive", again, since it occurs outside human consciousness.

The first synthesis of time, however, faces one remaining hurdle in its description: If the first synthesis of time constructs the present time, how does the living present pass? This is the reason why Deleuze must come up with a second synthesis of time, one in which the living present performs. The inevitability of a second passive synthesis of time brings Deleuze to designate a ground for time: a presupposition for the living present, which Deleuze defines as the "pure past" (Deleuze 1994).

Deleuze's second passive synthesis is purely based on the philosophy of time of Henri Bergson. The pure past, for both Deleuze and Bergson, is not a mental or

psychological image of a prior present. The pure past exists beyond, or outside, human consciousness; it is time-in-itself. Time-in-itself, for Bergson, is not accessible to human experience, it can only be felt when the pure past materialises part of itself into a recollection-image of the living present (In *Matter and Memory* (1990), Bergson describes this process of materialisation as the actualisation of the pure past). According to Bergson, the pure past conditions or grounds the flow of time, presupposing the living present and all our recollection-images throughout the entirety of time. Consequently, against what we naturally tend to think, Bergson concludes: the pure past coexists with the present (Bergson 1990). Regarding Bergson's 'paradoxical' conclusion, Deleuze writes in *Bergsonism* (1991):

“The past and the present do not denote two successive moments, but two elements which coexist: One is the present, which does not cease to pass, and the other is the past, which does not cease to be but through which all presents pass. It is in this sense that there is a pure past, a kind of ‘past in general’: The past does not follow the present, but on the contrary, is presupposed by it as the pure condition without which it would not pass” (Deleuze 1991, 59).

Bergson argues, Deleuze writes, that time can be defined by the coexistence of divergent layers of time. In other words, our experience of time as sequential is only because of its virtual concurrence with the whole of the past (mind that the virtual in this context takes a different definition from the one above). This means, in short, that every living present is both coexistent with its corresponding past, and the whole of the past.<sup>5</sup>

Before we proceed with the third passive synthesis or the third synthesis of time, we can conclude that for Deleuze time always presupposes consciousness. Consequently, Deleuze, following Bergson, diagnoses time as the true agent in the formation of our subjects: time is the true ground where our subjectivities are being formed. He notes: “[T]he only subjectivity is time, non-chronological time grasped in its formation, and it is we who are internal to time, not the other way around” (Deleuze 1989, 82). This leaves us with a question: If time is grounded in the past how can one invent the new? Or, in other words: Can time be ungrounded from its base as the pure past? We will have to look at Deleuze's third passive synthesis for an appropriate answer.

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<sup>5</sup> For more on this coexistence, see Bergson's cone of memory in *Matter and Memory* (1990).

In a similar vein, Wynter contends in *Africa, the West and the Analogy of Culture: The Cinematic Text after Man* (2000), that memory performs as a ground for human consciousness. This memory, she writes, is the memory of Man and of a specific idea of the human, as was discussed in the previous chapter. What this means is that binaries of coloniser/colonised or Self/Other rule human consciousness and perform, following Wynter's concept of the sociogenic principle, on a level prior to consciousness, yielding humanity's empirical reality. Man, therefore, is principally a memory that operates as a foundation for humanity's sense of self, for its being/knowing/feeling. Hence, the search for new genres of the human - new memories - is necessary.

With the first two passive syntheses, Deleuze pursues an explanation for the processes of subjectification, mainly through processes of habituation and the pure past as the "ground" (Deleuze 1994) for recollections and the living present. The ground, however, Deleuze states, cannot explain for aberrant movements and becoming; it cannot explain the emergence of creative acts and new worlds. It is at the face of this conundrum that Deleuze introduces a third passive synthesis that accounts for the "ungrounding" (Deleuze 1994) of time.

The third passive synthesis will prove to be our way out in the West; it will perform as the initiator of something radically new, something detached from the past, but not prior to an essential second, deeper, unconscious dissolution of the self. At this point I want to remind the reader that a will to forget - Deleuze's second principle - precedes the encounter with the third passive synthesis of time. In other words, it acts as a hunt for the third passive synthesis. Of essential importance in this encounter, and which is constitutive of the third passive synthesis, is the concept of the cut or the "caesura" (Deleuze 1994).

The caesura is defined by Deleuze as the un-curving of time into a straight line, whereupon the line is cut into a before and an after which cease to be in harmony (Deleuze 1994, 89). This cut is caused by an attack on our human faculties - imagination, sensibility, memory and thought/understanding. The violence that occurs in the encounter, and that must pass through our sensibility first, causes a split in one's sense of self (Deleuze also describes this encounter as an encounter with signs). All the subject's personal memories in which she has relied upon for her sense of self, together with all her future expectations (habits), are smashed with a single jab. The subject becomes disintegrated and loses consistency with its prior self(ves). As Voss writes about this process in reference to Oedipus: "He (Oedipus) experiences this internal difference in the pure present, the 'pureness' of which signifies that it occurs like a cut" (Voss 2013, 234). The caesura can only be apprehended, according to Deleuze, as "the image of a unique

and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole” (Deleuze 1994, 89). This tremendous event, the encounter, initiates a total dissolution of the self, the complete loss of any ground. Sameness, or identities, from the present and the past, perish permanently, metamorphosed by a repetition that renders them variable - Deleuze’s repetition as “difference in itself” (Deleuze 1994). The unconscious enters a crisis whereby a total forgetting is initiated. Memory clears out for the undifferentiated field of pure chance that is the virtual. Thus, the third passive synthesis gives rise to two concatenated movements: the caesura, or the ungrounding of time, and the virtual.

The virtual, Deleuze explains, is a field in which “Ideas” (Deleuze 1994) are consecutively determined. It is the Idea - Deleuze also describes the Idea as a problem - that forces us to think. Problems, however, do not get initiated in the virtual, they are rather being passed on from sensibility to thought. In other words, the encounters with the materiality of the world - sensibility - instigate a problem. Deleuze tells us that from this point of view, problems or Ideas perform in every faculty. Nevertheless, it is in the virtual that confused problems - what was sensed - become determined. The virtual holds the conditions which facilitate the mind in gradually determining problems and consequently finding an answer to a confused problem (Deleuze 1994, 194). In this sense, it is the virtual that carries all the potential for the new seeing that the virtual performs as the origin of the actual.

The conditions of the virtual that bring about thought, Deleuze argues, are not defined by an obedience to predetermined rules but “by a ‘throw of the dice’ which affirms all of chance” (Hughes 2009, 132). To be more precise, rules are not absent from the virtual, they are, however, never given in advance. The virtual continuously “invents its own rules” (Deleuze 1994, 283). This aspect is essential if we want to elucidate invention, creation and the new. With regard to rules and the virtual, Joe Hughes writes:

“From this point of view...the Idea still has a fundamental relationship to the constitution of objects. Its systematic function is nothing other than to produce rules for the constitution of objects in the absence of any pre-existing rule” (Hughes 2009, 132).

Ideas are the set of rules which determine the actual and real experience; they are the reciprocal relations between Ideas in the virtual for the constitution of conscious experience. This appears only in the third synthesis of time, in a sort of game which eclipses our understanding. In relation to this game, Deleuze writes:

“The system of the future, by contrast, must be called a divine game, since there is no pre-existing rule, since the game bears already upon its own rules, and since the child-player can only win, all of chance being affirmed each time and for all times” (Deleuze 1994, 116).

The actual becomes determined as a result of a virtual divine game in which only the child-player can win. In *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation* (2002) Deleuze contrasts two forms of play: chess and roulette. The former is a human game as it is combinatorial and is played in accordance with a predetermined ground, whereas the latter, like the throw of the dice or the divine game, is pure chance and transcends our humanness (Deleuze 2002, 77). But who is the child-player in this story? The child-player, I argue, is the Deleuzian thinker who is continuously in search of new virtual connections. It is like the child who experiences no pre-established rules or values. In short, it is the learner who forgets everything and connects anew. What is missing from my story is the way Ideas relate to each other, or to use my previous vocabulary: How do connections transpire in the virtual?

Ideas, Deleuze writes, are defined by three essential characteristics, that is, “n-dimensional, continuous, defined multiplicities” (Deleuze 1994, 182). First, against a usual interpretation of the concept of multiplicity whereby a multiplicity is defined through the opposition of the multiple and the singular, Deleuze encourages us instead to apprehend the concept of a multiplicity as a heterogeneous variety, an arrangement of differential elements, by stating that “a multiplicity is not an identifiable unity, nor is it a number of such unities, even infinite” (Williams 2013, 156). The differential elements withstand a sensible form, a function, or conceptual signification. Secondly, the elements that are undetermined prior to this point enter into a reciprocal relation of determination. To put it differently, one cannot identify an element in a multiplicity other than through the means in which an alteration in one element can be connected to an alteration in another element. In the third and final move, a distinct multiplicity - a set of reciprocal relations - must get actualised in spatio-temporal relations. In Williams’ words: “The elements of that multiplicity must be actually incarnated in varying terms and forms” (Williams 2013, 157).

In order to put further emphasis on the hands on approach with regards to the first principle - connect with everything - I wish to briefly look at a corresponding definition to this first principle through a Deleuzio-Bergsonian lens, that is, to create problems that advance an intuitive process (Bergson 2010). When Deleuze writes about problems in *Difference and Repetition*, I believe he alludes to Bergson’s philosophical method:

“intuition” (Bergson 2010). In *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (2010) Bergson distinguishes between two problems: a solvable problem which insinuates a predetermined solution - I call this sort of problem also a problem directed to consciousness as consciousness interprets the world in terms of pre-existing answers and ready-made questions - and a real, open and unconscious problem which is formed and apprehended in the process (the second type of problem gets instigated by the intuitive mode). Bergson argues:

“It is the clarity of the radically new and absolutely simple idea, which catches as it were, an intuition. As we cannot reconstruct it with pre-existing elements, since it has no elements, and as on the other hand, to understand without effort consists in recomposing the new from what is old, our first impulse is to say it is incomprehensible...One must...distinguish between the ideas which keep their light for themselves, making it penetrate immediately into their slightest recesses, and those whose radiation is exterior, illuminating a whole region of thought” (Bergson 2010, 23).

What Bergson calls for is a refrainment from problems directed towards consciousness as they are always recognisable and obtainable. These problems usually follow rigid general methods and maintain the status quo. Instead, he urges us to invent new problems by an infiltration into the unknown: a domain that is alien to consciousness. This act of searching for open problems, I maintain, is the Deleuzian hunt for divergent virtual connections, which, in a Deleuzian sense, forms the origin of the new. Thus, to conclude, creating problems, the search of the third synthesis of time, or learning following an unlearning always requires a sometimes risky active mode of passing through the domain of the absolute unknown, far away from the consciousness' tendencies towards the recognisable and the repeatable. In other words, learning involves an absolute commitment to becoming on the part of the learner: immerse yourself in the unknown and let the unconscious in relation metamorphose you. A commitment to the problem is the full focus, since, as Deleuze describes, this dedication “demand[s] the very transformation of our body and our language” (Deleuze 1994, 192); in my words, following Deleuze, kill yourself virtually or make yourself a womb.

## Teaching

At this point, what keeps us from a full apprehension of a Deleuzian form of pedagogy is his view on the activity of teaching. Following his idea about learning, we might be tempted to omit any form of teaching, seeing that learning never presupposes knowledge. To be more precise: What could possibly be taught in a process in which the unpredictable (new virtual connections) must occur following a moment of absolute dissolution? Does dissolution not imply the absolute forgetting of everything we know whereby nothing rests to be taught in the first place? A contradiction threatens to penetrate our discussion. As one might expect, Deleuze will come up with a very different definition regarding the activity of teaching. He will do so in *Difference and Repetition* by first impugning a common sense approach to teaching.

Deleuze says that we have been convinced that teaching amounts to the acquiring of knowledge of procedures and facts correlating to with true manoeuvres regarding those facts. He writes: “We learn nothing from those who say: ‘Do as I do’” (Deleuze 1994, 23). Such an approach to teaching belongs to what Deleuze calls “the image of thought” (Deleuze 1994) - namely, a distinct collection of presuppositions about the shape thought ought to take. Inherent to the image of thought is the notion of ‘common sense’ whereby the mental processes and the senses are matched in their shared apprehensions. Attached to this idea of common sense is a kind of thought as a mode of recognition. This mode is defined by Deleuze through “the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object” (Deleuze 1994, 133). So when, for instance, the sight, sound, touch, memory, and understanding of an actual experience affirms that all these faculties are connected to a same and single actual object of experience. Thought’s aim, in line with a world of recognition, is to deal with conscious problems only: with an actual knowledge that is perpetually repeatable. Teaching, following this mindset, is simply the transition from a being with no knowledge to a being with knowledge, a linear process with a clear start and completion. An obedient learner in this world reacts to pre-codified questions to finally arrive at already-existing-answers. The perpetuation of the same is in place.

This mode of teaching is hegemonic. Since the invention of Man, Wynter argues, humanist ideals were put into action in school educational programs and disseminated philosophically (Wynter 1984). What this means for our endeavour is abundantly clear: Man’s way of teaching, which Deleuze defines also as the transmission of knowledge (“Do as I do” (Deleuze 1994, 23)), will perpetually contain us in our current genre of the human, seeing as only one truth is righteous and available within our Western pedagogical

institutions. This holds tremendous consequences regarding my search for a world beyond inequality, as some people will benefit highly from this system to the detriment of others.

Inspired by Claude Steele and Carter Godwin Woodson, Wynter arrives at the conclusion that the entire educational system will always be detrimental to black people. She starts by asking the same questions as Steele did: “Why did these middle-class, upper-class Black students begin to do so badly at Stanford?” (Wynter 2006, 10). What Steele found out, she says, is that whenever he would present tests to black students that pertained to their “intelligence” (Wynter 2006, 10), they would achieve bad results. However, whenever the tests were focused on something that did not mirror their intelligence, like an abstract test, then results were about equal between black students and white students. In opposition to Steele, Wynter calls on Woodson for answers. In 1935, Woodson had argued, she says, that the entire educational system in the United States is established in such a fashion “as to motivate White students by telling them that they had done everything and to de-motivate Black students by telling them they had done nothing” (Wynter 2005, 365). This hints at the issue of our opioid system which was discussed above. The discrepancy between White and Black students does not derive from an extraneous factor, but rather from Man’s history/story which plays out on an affective and material level and which intra-actively constitutes consciousness (consciousness in a Wynterian sense). Black history is not represented; White history is being regarded as the only truth; consequently, Black people will underachieve in the White hegemonic enterprise. To go back to Deleuze, Man’s method of teaching - “Do as I do” (Deleuze 1994, 23) - will only reinforce Man and his singular agenda. As a consequence, this method will never generate the new, let alone a new genre of the human.

In line with Deleuze’s worldmaking definition of learning, he will reconceptualise the act of teaching by hinting at a form of education by which the real teachers are the ones who “are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce” (Deleuze 1994, 23). Deleuze never developed his teaching vision any further in *Difference and Repetition*, but thanks to philosopher Ronald Bogue we might find an answer to what a Deleuzian form of teaching might encompass. Similar to this chapter, in *Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (2007) Bogue attempts to lay out a full and precise interpretation of a Deleuzian preferred form of pedagogy. He writes, and fittingly, that besides a very suggestive definition of learning, Deleuze left the question of teaching predominantly unexamined. In his quest for a delineation of a pedagogy of “sign emission” (Bogue 2007, 64), Bogue discovered a correlation in

Deleuze's analysis of modern cinema in his book *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989). And while I do not fully agree with Bogue's reading of a Deleuzian form of learning, as the emphasis on forgetting is largely nonexistent in Bogue's interpretation, his manoeuvre in the search of a definition for a Deleuzian form of teaching is tremendously constructive.

In his two books on cinema, Deleuze distinguishes between two phases in the history of film: the early classic cinema and the later modern cinema. According to Deleuze, classic cinema is dictated by an arrangement of time and space in line with a commonsense, conscious (rational), "sensory-motor schema" (Deleuze 1989, 26). In opposition to classic cinema, modern cinema is characterised by the collapse of the sensory-motor schema and the production of images that defy a lone united spatio-temporal makeup. Ronald Bogue, following Deleuze, writes:

"In the classic cinema, images are linked through their ordinary, 'natural' connections with one another, 'according to laws of association, of continuity, resemblance, contrast or opposition', whereas in the modern cinema images are juxtaposed in such a way that the gap between images becomes primary, 'the interval is set free, the interstice becomes irreducible and stands on its own'" (Bogue 2007, 64).

Modern cinema, Deleuze further argues, does not only uncouple images from their traditional, commonsense series of association; it also establishes new links between images in such a manner that a creative difference materialises between different images. An illustrative director in this respect, for Deleuze, is Jean-Luc Godard:

"For in Godard's method, it is not a question of association. Given one image, another image has to be chosen which will induce an interstice between the two. This is not an operation of association, but of differentiation, as mathematicians say, or of desperation, as physicists say: given one potential, another one has to be chosen, not any whatever, but in such a way that a difference of potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third of something new" (Deleuze 1989, 179-80).

The activity of producing new links between images in modern cinema is not random, but directed by an abundance of interaction. In this activity the interstice between modern cinema's images is accentuated while simultaneously the connected images are themselves transformed and a becoming arises in every "image-interstice-image" (Deleuze

1989) component. For spectators of these differentially connected sequences of images, Deleuze argues, problems are being posed, seeing as the sequences of images are not effortlessly apprehended according to common interpretative patterns. As a result, Deleuze writes, “a whole pedagogy is required here, because we have to read the visual image in a new way” (Deleuze 1989, 247).

What these reflections on cinema teach us with regard to Deleuze’s previous definition of teaching as a pedagogy of sign emission is that teaching must evoke problems. In other words, teaching teaches the learner to learn, to become. And this can never occur through predetermined ideas, vocabularies and practices. We might conclude therefore that teaching always involves a learning process on the teacher’s side; the teacher must always learn prior or during the activity of teaching. Another crucial conclusion can be made from the above: signs teach us and not, what is generally perceived to be, a well-constituted subject who holds tremendous knowledge. So teaching, as with learning, always involves experimentation and novelty, since it provokes movements of becoming and forgetting/unlearning.

### **Learning and the Invention of New Genres of the Human: A Correspondence**

In my search of a pedagogy that boosts the invention of new genres of the human in a White Western context, an inevitable theoretical step is lacking: a congruity between Deleuze’s first principle - the becoming-other via experimentation - and Wynter’s idea of a genre of the human. In other words: Can we make a correspondence between the first principle of learning and the invention of new genres of the human? Is the becoming-other, or new expressions of becoming, the invention of new genres of the human? Put simply: yes. However, in order to make the correlation attainable a little detour is vital. This will be achieved by putting together another correspondence, that is, an agreement between Deleuze’s first principle in *Difference and Repetition* and Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the “minor” as delineated predominantly in the philosophers’ collaborative work *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986). Logically, you might be asking yourself why I require the minor considering all three correspond: Wouldn’t that be unnecessary for my endeavour? What I will try to demonstrate is that the minor explicitly brings to the surface certain ideas that remain latent in *Difference and Repetition*, ideas that will facilitate a smooth bridge-making process between Deleuze and Wynter. These ideas concern the political and the utopian aspects of the practice of learning. I will start this specific stage with a concise description of the minor.

In Deleuze and Guattari's book on the literature of Franz Kafka, they present three features of a minor literature:

1. A minor literature always includes the "deterritorialisation" of the language of the major (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16). What this deterritorialisation involves can be considered to be the dissolution of signifying facets of language in favour of the intensive, asignifying virtual aspects. In other words, the aspects that give rise to the actual. For Deleuze and Guattari, this implicates a becoming-other in one's own language. For clarity's sake, Deleuze defines the major as the following:

"[T]he difference between minorities [the minor] and majorities [the major] isn't their size. A minority may be bigger than a majority. What defines majority is a model you have to conform to... A minority, on the other hand, has no model, it's a becoming, a process" (Deleuze 1995, 173).

So to illustrate the major with the help of a previously used Deleuzian vocabulary, the major, in the West, operates conforming to, amongst other things, what Deleuze calls the image of thought: a model which pushes forward presuppositions towards sameness and recognition. I hereby want to make an allusion to the grandeur of the concept of the major and the minor: they hold the potential to describe every dominant structure as the major and every aberrant line of becoming as the minor. This applies also, as I have shown above, to language. Such a conclusion can be reached since the actual - an organism, language, a painting, a city, a concept, etc. - always presupposes virtual problems. Consequently, a minor practice can describe every movement of becoming regardless of the actual form it embodies.

2. A minor literature is always entirely political (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 17). In order to make sense of this second feature, Deleuze and Guattari will tell us to rethink the political (at this point we ought to expect a divergence of signification with every concept Deleuze engages with). Thus, the political in this context signifies a concatenation between individual characters in a minor literature and the larger social, and asocial, environment. In view of this, every becoming-other on the part of an individual involves a political act, a movement of escape from the major. The minor in the minor literature acquires a political function because of its obsession with the asignifying; it disorganises major systems of representations and signification. To be more precise, a minor practice does not perform

the political in the way that Politics does. It does not participate necessarily in political events or organisations, rather it experiments in the interest of producing new lines of causality - or what I called before new virtual connections. As Simon O'Sullivan writes about the minor: "If a minor practice is always political then it is because it is always opening itself up to an outside in this sense" (O'Sullivan 2006, 74).

3. A minor literature always embodies a collective value (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 17). The collective facet of a minor literature answers to the collective enunciation a minor literature performs. In a minor literature, there is barely any insistence on singular authors and creatives and more on the collective creation of the new. It is in this regard that we can apprehend the production of the minor as a type of forerunner of a sociality still in development. This characteristic introduces the utopian capacity of a minor literature. As with the previous two characteristics, the utopian facet involves all minor practices, all movements of becoming-other, seeing they all actualise something radically different. So a minor practice always performs a resistance to the major owing to the invention of a new mode(s) of being.

At this point it would be interesting to digress to Deleuze's *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, to show the diverse forms of actualisation a minor practice can take. With regards to this utopian, future orienting, people-yet-to-come facet of a minor practice, Deleuze writes about modern political cinema as the following:

"Art, and especially cinematographic art must take part in this task: not that of addressing a people, which is presupposed already there, but of contributing to the invention of a people" (Deleuze 1989, 217).

In the above quote, Deleuze makes it abundantly clear that art should not contribute to a people or a way of relation that is already existent, but rather to the invention of a new people. He also calls this people a "missing" people (Deleuze 1989). Nevertheless, this missing people Deleuze writes about is not exclusively external, as an external audience or someone else, but us too, "for if the people are missing, if they are breaking up into minorities, it is I who am first of all people, the people of my atoms" (Deleuze 1989, 220). The new people gets initiated with the becoming-other of oneself whereby it is up to this new people to call her, his or their public into being. Deleuze writes that the minor filmmaker must do exactly as such through her, his or their films.

Now that sufficient information has been gathered about the minor, let me develop the first correspondence, that is, between the first principle of learning - to make new virtual connections - and the minor. I will proceed by showing a relation between the minor's three characteristics and the first principle of learning. The first principle occurs in the third synthesis of time through a dissolution of one's sense of self - memory, identity, perception etc. In the above, I have showed that an individual is never detached from the social, consequently, we can assume that the dissolution of the self equals the dissolution of the major embedded in one self: an identity is static and belongs to the major whereas the minor is in the process of becoming. The dissolution, therefore, abandons the major and always awaits new virtual connections. The minor is invested in what lies underneath the major, the asignifying realm that give rise to the major in the interest of a becoming-other: a different world. That asignifying realm that produces the minor and the major, in other words, is the virtual as the undifferentiated dimension that give rise to the actual, also known as signification.

Some have criticised Deleuze's ontology, as described in *Difference and Repetition*, for being apolitical. One of them has been Peter Hallward. Hallward's critique derives from a belief that Deleuze's virtual philosophy continuously tries to escape our world, whereas Hallward's political aspiration is to engage with the world and consequently transform it for the sake of all its inhabitants (Hallward 2006). In my opinion, Hallward's reading of Deleuze does not go far enough. It is true that, Deleuze remains implicit about his political intentions in *Difference and Repetition*, nevertheless, when combining *Difference and Repetition* with the minor a true political project emerges. *Difference and Repetition* is in the first place a critique, a call to arms against the image of thought (the major in this book), whereupon Deleuze continuously asks himself and his readers how to act. *Difference and Repetition* is deeply concerned with ethics, with the creation of a new image of thought, one in which experimentation and invention stand at the centre. This creation, as Deleuze demonstrates in *Kafka: A Minor Literature*, is deeply political. Furthermore, has Wynter not shown us that a world beyond inequality can only emerge with the creation of something entirely new? Deleuze shows us in *Difference and Repetition* that he is so invested in this world that he aspires towards new worlds-yet-to-come. He concludes with Guattari, following his earlier statement of 'make yourself become', that the political can only be situated in what is yet uninvented: in this virtual real world but not yet actualised. And this political endeavour must start with yourself, with a transformation on the part of the individual(s).

To conclude this correspondence I wish to look at the utopian character of the first principle of learning. As with the second facet of the minor, the third facet is not explicitly entangled with Deleuze's concept of learning. Philosophers Joe Hughes and Ian Buchanan are convinced about the utopian dimension of Deleuze's early philosophical undertaking. Hughes writes that Ian Buchanan's quote on the utopian aspect of *Anti-Oedipus* (2013) can easily be applied to *Difference and Repetition* as well (Hughes 2009, 186). To quote Buchanan:

"It is a utopian book in the strictest sense: it offers a blueprint for a different world, not by describing that world in fantastic terms, but by showing the way out of this one. And that remains a worthwhile but incomplete project" (Buchanan 2008, 139).

The utopian blueprint Buchanan recognises in Deleuze's work is not an actualised utopia yet, it has to be invented. This, nevertheless, does not mean Deleuze's work is not utopian, seeing as he encourages everyone to make new virtual connections, to become and realise a people-yet-to-come. At its foundation, the concept of learning aspires to leave behind the major for a world that is unpredictable, yet inventible. The utopian Deleuzian blueprint that Buchanan verbalises is, in my opinion, forget and connect. Peoples-yet-to-come will always follow learning practices, whereby teaching, as with film-making, will call their public into being. The Deleuzian teacher is capable of bringing her, his or their public (learners) into being exactly through her, his or their teaching practice.

For the last part of this chapter - the second correspondence - let me refresh Wynter's genre of the human in your mind. A genre of the human is a truth-for, a story, a form of relation that performs as the only truth. It performs as our memory, our consciousness, our affective lives, our being. It is who we are: our deep sense of self. She writes that without our genre of the human, we are nothing, until a new genre of the human is created, whereby a transformation of our entire being transpires. Inherent to the genre of the human is a political dimension that determines who matters and who does not matter, who is and who is not (in our contemporary situation the condition of being is ruled by Man 2). Wynter eloquently discusses the political aspect of our current genre of the human through, amongst others, the problem of inequality. The issue of inequality in our era, she writes, cannot be solved as all we know and are is based on unequal principles. Consequently, Wynter concludes that the political should become an inventive domain composed of creative practices. In other words, the political, for Wynter, ought to be involved with the invention of new genres of the human. Only through new genres of the

human will we solve the problem of inequality. This, however, portends that the future is unpredictable: we lack the capacity to foresee the embodiment of a new genre of the human. It has, first and foremost, to be invented, thereby always holding a future orientation of a different people.

Deleuze's form of learning forgets and invents. It forgets all the major that is situated within an individual, namely identity, memory, perception, etc., in other words, all we know and are, or, to put it differently: the current genre of the human as Man. Additionally, besides forgetting, learning can never materialise without an inventive aspect. An invention, as we have seen, that is radically different than the actual. The political dimension of the act of learning, as with Wynter, does not lie in a discussion of actual politics, but rather, in the invention of a missing people. In a similar fashion to the political side of learning, the utopian aspect parallels Wynter's: they both situate the utopian future in a people or a genre of the human yet-to-come. The utopian is genetic to the political side of radical inventiveness, in other words, the becoming-other or the invention of a new genre of the human.

I wish to conclude this chapter with a very concise definition of learning and teaching, in a Deleuzian sense, one which is aligned with Wynter's idea of the creation of new genres of the human: forget and connect so as to become a future people-yet-to-come.

## **CHAPTER 3. Learning To Become-Imperceptible Through a Radical Drag Pedagogy**

### **Introduction**

The following chapter will scrutinise an artistic pedagogical practice. This chapter's main focus is dragtivist, drag mother, bad performer, educator and curator Taka Taka's artistic pedagogical drag practice. I will start my inquiry into their practice by presenting an extended discussion on the practice of drag. In an academic context, drag has, for the most part, been discussed and treated as a marker for cross-dressing. Unfortunately, little can be found about this practice within a framework of queer-theory. This chapter's first section will travel through existing drag queer-theoretical reflections. I will present these theories abreast Wynter's requirements for the invention of a new genre of the human. A rigorous analysis into most of the current drag queer debates will prove to fall short with regard to Wynter's approach to the political as an intersectional operation (remember the human is being defined as an assemblage, constituting many relational forms of oppression). This is because many drag queer theories still understand drag as, exclusively, a (transgressive) gender performance. They typically abide by an understanding of gender, and consequently the human, that holds its bedrock in the human as Man. Consequently, these theories will prove to be disadvantageous when interpreting Taka Taka's drag practice inasmuch as I suggest that Taka Taka's drag proposes and embodies a novel genre of the human. Section two will advance, therefore, a different understanding of drag: one which heavily relies on the artist and theorist Renate Lorenz's aberrant reading of a certain mode of drag which she conceptualises as "radical drag" (Lorenz 2012). Fitting to my endeavour, Lorenz describes this drag as a becoming within and away from all experiences of hierarchy and dichotomy: a practice of drag that is other "without it being possible to say other than what" (Lorenz 2012, 56). I will present Lorenz's theory in detail and link it to Deleuze's form of learning and Wynter's prerequisites for the invention of a new genre of the human. Section three will inject further impetus into the concept of radical drag by weaving it with Taka Taka's drag practice; I will demonstrate that Taka Taka perform a form of drag that speaks directly to Lorenz's concept. Additionally, this section will probe more into Taka Taka's drag practice in furtherance of developing a portrayal of Taka Taka's newly created genre of the human. Subsequent to their infiltration into the drag subculture of Amsterdam, Taka Taka exercised a mode of drag that pushed themselves to continuously experiment with performativities and aesthetics that meander from the representations and restraints on the "social

body” (Guattari 1996, 37). This continuous experimentation with make-up, clothing, voice, text, performativity, gestures, etc. leads, I will argue, to the invention of a new genre of the human which I will call, following Deleuze and Guattari, “becoming-imperceptible” (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). This is a philosophical concept which they define as the merging of oneself with the web of non-human forces that compose the world. This new genre of the human will be assigned extra merit through a demonstration of the ways in which it performs incongruously to Wynter’s description of our current genre of the human. This chapter’s last section will assert that becoming-imperceptible is also what Taka Taka aspire to teach by virtue of a method that is constituted entirely of invented and metamorphosing structures. They do not illustrate the new genre of the human in their teaching, I will maintain, but instead facilitate structures whereby the students/learners come to be drawn into a mode of continuous (self-) invention.<sup>6</sup>

### **Drag as Insufficiently Intersectional<sup>7</sup>**

In the academic context and beyond, drag has primarily been defined as performances of gender by female impersonators who develop a mastery of the image of particular feminine characteristics that predominantly focus attention on external aesthetics, such as clothing, gestures, make-up and hair, in place of socially embodied constructions of reproduction or family (Coles 2007). As a consequence of such an understanding of drag, many feminists have criticised drag performances for maintaining modes of femininity that predominantly aid patriarchy’s well-being (Dolan 1985, Gagné and Tewksbury 1996, Schacht 1998, 2000, 2002). Others, working mainly from a queer perspective, assert that drag performances damage certain identity components - gender and sexuality - by shining light on the socially constructed ground upon which masculinity and femininity, homosexuality and heterosexuality, are placed. These theorists characterise drag performances as transgressive acts, seeing as they incorporate minority and hybrid sexualities and genders (Butler 1990, Garber 1992, Lorber 1994, Muñoz 1999, Rupp and Taylor 2004). One queer scholar who sees revolutionary potential in drag is Judith Butler. I will, therefore, concentrate for now on Butler’s drag theory, since the revolutionary aspect of drag is what my overarching endeavour strives for. However, upon closer reading, Butler’s drag theory will prove to be insufficiently revolutionary when placing it alongside Wynter’s requirements for the invention of a new genre of the human (an act that I believe,

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<sup>6</sup> Self-invention, in this thesis, requires a milieu, considering that self-invention always takes place outside the subject and within a relational temporal dimension.

<sup>7</sup> “Intersectionality” is a term that has been introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw to insist on the copresence of race, sexuality, gender, class, and other identity components that exist in a constant simultaneous manner with each other (Crenshaw 1993).

following Wynter, is truly revolutionary). This incompatibility between the two revolutionary strands however, does not mean that plenty cannot be learned from Butler's account on drag.

In her book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler employs the practice of drag to problematise general essentialist truths surrounding gender and sex. Drag, in Butler's opinion, contributes to a transgressive alternative regarding sex/gender binaries and gender categories. Butler's argument proceeds as follows: gender, she asserts, is established via a "stylised repetition of acts" which "founds and consolidates the subject" (Butler 1990, 140). The subject exists owing to this repetition of acts, disqualifying the idea that an assumptive 'I' creates its gender. To put it differently, in Butler's view, an original 'I' that causes gender expressions is an illusion: as no performer exists behind our actual gender performances, the subject only takes form through relational gender performances (Butler 2004, 338). Drag "mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" by producing a hodgepodge of gender expressions (Butler 1990, 137). Drag brings to the fore the idea that foundational hypotheses about authentic or true genders can be altered; the experience of a drag performer with a penis performing femininity makes explicit the social structures of gender injustices. By imitating a certain gender performance that conflicts with the supposedly original sex, drag problematises the "ontological integrity of the subject" as essential and authentic (Butler 1990, 325). Therefore, if the subject is composed through binding repetitive performances, then drag as a practice possesses the quality to transgress certain identity formations by bringing about "the possibility of a variation on that repetition" (Butler 1990, 145). For this reason, Butler writes, drag can be interpreted as transgressive in terms of conventional gender performances, thereby renouncing advancements regarding the foundational nature of gender.

In order to make her drag theory more palpable, Butler alludes to the documentary *Paris is Burning* (1990) which shows the lives of many actors of the underground Drag Ball scene in New York in the 1980's. For Butler, The documentary is an ideal site where gender performances are being transcended in relation to essential gender norms. She discusses, amongst others, Venus Xtravaganza, for her (physical) ability to pass as a young White woman. The film shows her performance of ultra realness femininity (ultra realness is a term used within the film's drag ball sociality to indicate the capability of very strongly imitating a distinct gender performance) and yet Venus does not carry female genitals, thereby upsetting the idea of an authentic or correct sex. Venus' performance pulls away from allocated gender norms and instead shows that gender in relation to sex can take different actualisations. Thus, according to Butler, Venus' performance holds

revolutionary means as it transgresses from and shows the workings of oppressive gender norms. But is it also truly revolutionary from a Wynterian perspective? I will answer this question through bell hooks' nuanced critique of Butler's thesis that drag can upset gender domination and oppression. hooks follows Butler in analysing *Paris is Burning* but for obviously different reasons.

hooks understands the drag performances in the movie as maintaining gender and other oppressions (such as racial oppression) through the drag queens' aspiration to become, in what in their eyes is the holy grail of femininity, namely, the White woman. For hooks, the femininity most desired and idolised by the drag queens in the film is an embodied form owned, exclusively, by the White woman. As hooks eloquently writes:

“This combination of class and race longing that privileges the “femininity” of the ruling-class white woman, adored and kept shrouded in luxury, does not imply a critique of patriarchy” (hooks 2014, 148).

The drag queens' obsession of turning into a powerful, successful, beautiful and rich woman implicitly elicits a fundamental relationship to a body visually absent from the film: that of the infamous White male. Therefore, due to the drag queens longing to be in the situation of the ruling-class White woman, an alliance with the ruling-class White man is inevitably established. Moreover, this longing demands that the drag queens perpetually self-erase their Blackness, and any beauty that is associated with Blackness, for the sake of a life of self-hate, lying, stealing, going hungry, and even dying. hooks writes:

“The whiteness celebrated in *Paris is Burning* is not just any old brand of whiteness but rather that brutal imperial ruling-class capitalist patriarchal whiteness that presents itself - its way of life - as the only meaningful life there is” (hooks 2014, 149).

And while, following Butler, drag possesses the capacity to show that there is nothing essential or natural about gender manifestations, as is the case with the drag queens in the film *Paris is Burning*, Butler's form of drag unitedly performs both the volatility of gender categories and the suffering at the hands of patriarchal White culture. The drag queens' performances show that gender rules can be disobeyed, but the way in which the performances challenge gender is insufficiently revolutionary, considering all (other) oppressive forms remain intact. hooks, therefore, challenges this understanding of drag as revolutionary.

Listening to hooks, one cannot deny her extraordinarily close proximity to Wynter's requirements for a true revolution. Only a deeply intersectional approach can bring about a revolution that spans over an entire genre of the human. I will consequently have to search for a definition of drag that is intersectional in nature if I wish to link the practice of drag with Wynter's revolutionary conditions. This, however, does not necessarily mean that exploring Butler's theory is fruitless for this thesis' endeavour. What would ensue if we would push her theory to an extreme and ask ourselves the following: What if we can invent a performance that would succeed in not performing any gender?

### **A Radical Drag**

Intersectionality teaches us that a performance of an identity component always involves all of the other segments around which our identities are structured. This also regards the (re)invention of an identity component. Thereby, identities are always an aggregate of different components, meaning that every identity component requires the others for its signification. Therefore, with regard to drag, a gendered performance can be interpreted only through the inclusion of other identity components, and, consequently, gender performances embody very divergent significations from various positions. In sum, as Regan Rhyne notes: "Gender cannot exist without race and class and sexuality, a gender performance is simultaneously a performance of these other categories" (Rhyne 2004, 187).

In defining the genre of the human as Man, Wynter is well aware of all these concatenations, thereby positing the genre of the human as our common enemy (remember, Man is an assemblage of all these components). Echoing Wynter, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson cannot emphasise enough the manner in which the feminine-masculine binary is racialised. One of the examples Jackson utilises to arrive at a materialisation of the gender-race imbrication is the way Sara Baartman, the so-called 'Hottentot Venus', was presented to the French and British audience as both a scientific specimen and a pornographic exhibition (Jackson 2020, 8). Jackson writes:

"Her [Baartman's] physiognomic characteristics - posterior and genitals - were presumed to signal a difference in sexuality that was pronounced enough to further divide the categories of "female" and "woman": an idealised white femininity became paradigmatic of "woman" through the abjection of the perceived African "female"" (Jackson 2020, 8).

In the construction of an appropriate definition of the woman, the genre of the human as Man has placed African femaleness under the signature of pathology, absence and a lack of femininity in order to arrive at an idealised Western European femininity as the only and normative expression of womanhood. Reminiscent of Wynter's current European definition of the human, the description of the woman, as with the man's, is a product of fifteenth century voyages, whereby all the identity components, in reciprocity, were brought into existence.

To allude to my previous question, what if drag succeeds in inventing a performance that does not speak to the gender construction of Man and its abject ways of handling? Shouldn't such a performance be regarded as the end of gender, race, class and sexuality (considering the intersectional argument)? Or more precisely, isn't such a performance the invention of an entirely new body, an entirely new assemblage of the human? Would that not catalyse the creation of a new genre of the human (a true intersectional revolution)? Renate Lorenz's concept of radical drag will come in handy now.

As will become clear below, Lorenz's concept should allow me to abandon the genre of the human as Man from within the actual. Meaning, the demand for the invention of a new genre of the human does not require an outside position prior to the invention. Instead, the outside will be initiated in the process of becoming (remember the Deleuzian principles: forget in order to connect anew). In the same vein, Lorenz's definition of radical drag issues from a desire to forget dichotomies such as White/Black, able/non-able, man/women. And while radical drag thematises these dichotomies, it denies conforming to them by way of experimenting with bodies that cannot be inscribed within such binaries (Lorenz 2012, 54).

Allow me to quote Lorenz extensively in order to arrive at her definition of radical drag. She writes:

“[D]rag may refer to the productive connections of natural and artificial, animate and inanimate, to clothes, radios, hair, legs, all that which tends more to produce *connections* to others and other things than to represent them. What becomes visible in this drag is not people, individuals, subjects, or identities, but rather assemblages; indeed those that do not work at any “doing gender/sexuality/race,” but instead at an undoing” (Lorenz 2012, 21).

What Lorenz hints at, in my opinion, is a practice of becoming that throws all identity markers overboard. That is, not exclusively the transgression of gender, but a becoming that has no precedent, thereby averting all senses of passing for an identity, even if they

suggest a transgression. Furthermore, Lorenz's unequivocal distinction between producing "connections to others and other things" and representing things, insinuates that drag experiments with things and others in a reciprocal manner in order to arrive at certain novelties that cannot be elucidated in an existing language. A connective and productive practice concomitantly requires a mode of unlearning, considering connecting must avoid the act of representing (repetition and mimicking) at all times. This interpretation of Lorenz's drag, unavoidably brings me in close proximity to Deleuze's preferred form of learning.

However, one important and additional characteristic of Lorenz's drag is implied in the above portrayal. She expands further:

"The name "drag" is meant to address the fact that the photographs, films, and installations being discussed here do not represent "deviant bodies," but instead they show or refer to bodies that are always "other" (not "other than normal" but "beyond") - in "another time" and "elsewhere"" (Lorenz 2012, 22).

The quote states: "not other than normal", as normal is not defined in this world. Other than the world created by Man, but not other within this new world. In this new world, created through the practice of drag, Self and Other do not exist. No abject practices have been instituted. As a consequence, how does one define the woman, the poor, the Black body in this world? Man's categories have no function in this new world, and only the unknown within the world of Man prevails. Such a world or genre of the human is utopian in essence. As Lorenz shows, it performs in "another time" and "elsewhere". Such a world, as with Deleuze's minor practice and Wynter's genre of the human, has to be invented, following what Deleuze would call a "belief in this world, as it is" (Deleuze 1989, 172): a belief in the potentiality of this world to take different actualisations, far removed from Man's hegemonic rule.

### **The Radicality of Taka Taka's Performances**

This Thursday night is still young; it is approximately 23.30. Every Thursday of the week, the notorious queer, gay and sex-positive Amsterdam-based Club Church organises drag shows and queer parties that go by the name *Blue: You Are Born in Drag and the Rest is Naked*.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the other nights at the club, Thursdays are open to all genders and sexes. Throughout the years, as the organiser of these odd and wacky nights, Taka Taka have

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<sup>8</sup> This name makes an allusion to RuPaul's legendary saying: "You are born naked and the rest is drag." (Rupaul 1998).

taken the main stage time and time again, in addition to providing a stage for an abundance of atypical forms of drag.

I find myself amongst a diverse and mostly dressed up crowd, waiting for Taka Taka to take the stage. While waiting, one is clearly able to distinguish certain objects on stage that will, most likely, be activated by Taka Taka. A white baby crib aptly containing a little blue mattress takes my full attention, but upon further inspection, I see curtain drapes hanging from the ceiling on each side of the centrally-positioned crib. The curtains are drawn and show a square red and white pattern reminiscent of country lifestyle or a picnic cloth. The back wall of the stage is black but turns colourful due to the many kids' pyjama clothes that are attached to it. The pyjama garments are of light colours such as white, pink and yellow, and on them female Disney characters' faces can be distinguished. The set clearly portrays a gendered aesthetic, alluding to a little baby girl's harmless bedroom.

In Western society, people often address babies and young children as pure organisms, devoid of any evilness. Babies, I often hear, are matter awaiting form. Or, pure instinctual entities lacking any complex feelings and thoughts. In other words, they are considered to be undeveloped awaiting to become properly human. Following Wynter, what renders this becoming-human possible is genetic, via a selection motivated by natural evolution. Jackson reminds us, however, that not every baby/child has had the privilege, in the eyes of Man, to develop into a rational human. Black people have been regarded by Man as deficient of that evolutionary quality, resulting in Black people being deprived of the title of human (Jackson 2020). As a consequence, this makes me wonder which children are considered pure: Is the purity of the undeveloped child only embraced when the potential of becoming-human is present?

Watching all these girl-related artefacts, leads to a contextually obvious question: Will Taka Taka pass tonight as a baby girl? This question arose in me automatically with no prior thought. Upon entering the stage, Taka Taka instantly proves my question wrong, eventuating in an awareness of my intellect's tendency to think only in predictable ways. My human training demands (unconsciously) from my body to look at Taka Taka's face first, whereupon an immediate futility crops up, considering Taka Taka carry no discernible face whatsoever.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (2013), Deleuze and Guattari describe the face as the product of an "abstract machine" called "faciality" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). Two aspects are adhered to regarding the way that the abstract machine of faciality systematises: normality and abnormality. The abstract machine, according to Deleuze and Guattari, normalises by means of exclusive differentiations: this face in front of me is a woman or a man; this face is a child or an adult; this same face is also rich or poor, Black

or White, etc. Faciality's abstract machine organises the distinct components with which any actual face may be arranged. In a manner that disrupts our general conceptions of the face, Deleuze and Guattari tell us that faces are not so much concrete, actual entities, as much as they perform "facial units" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013) that a certain face embodies at any given moment. "You don't so much have a face as slide into one" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 177). To put it differently, faciality's abstract machine produces a framework of facial components that comprise normality or abnormality and that a certain face embodies to a specific degree.

Looking at Taka Taka's face attentively, the abstract machine of faciality fails to determine any given facial units, resulting in an individual that circumvents all facial identity markers. I ask myself, consciously and unconsciously: Is this the face of a woman or a man? Is this the face of a man passing as a woman? Is this the face of an adult or a child? what's this face colour? Is this the face of a human or an alien/monster/animal? Taka Taka's face that is not a face, institutes an element of unrecognisability into my experiential dimension. The unrecognisable or unknown head (as face units are obliterated), is established owing to six reciprocal temporal movements: the make-up, the costume, the performativity of the head, the performativity of the body, the voice, and the environment (this includes the stage setting, the music, the lighting, etc.). Each of these components that comprise the assemblage of Taka Taka's performance, contribute to Taka Taka's becoming.

Taka Taka's head is a play of shapes, forms, colours, props and meanings. The unrecognisableness of their head does not insinuate an abandonment of all 'biological' characteristics, such as eyes, lips, teeth, hair, ears, skin, etc., but rather, a transformation of all elements into a novel set of interwoven relations. In other words, biological characteristics enter into different relations with each other, transgressing and creating new actualisations. Thus, Taka Taka's head is not created from some other-worldly place; it is in fact, partly, produced from the same individual components as faces. The nose Taka Taka is wearing is mostly painted white while golden shaped ovals in red contouring can be detected on both sides of the bridge of the nose. A little black cross with a circle in the middle is painted on top of the nose. The eyes form part of a shape that performs three triangles: a black triangle placed on top of the eye, the black contouring eye as a triangle with red irises, and a black contouring triangle filled with golden glitter situated underneath the eye. A few other triangles can be spotted on the remainder of the head, instigating divergent combinations and relationships between all parts of the head. The hair, for example, is shaped in a triangle and speaks in alternative ways with the triangle shaped eyes. So not only can I not tell what kind of nose Taka Taka is wearing, as in the meaning it

evokes, it creates different relations to the rest of the head through the application of colours, shapes and lines. In a similar logic, red paint/make-up is dripping from Taka Taka's skull. Are they injured? Do they wish to express injury? Or is it someone else's blood? These questions do not lead to answers. In my opinion, the red drippings are an aesthetic and affective instrument in the interest of transforming the head; they talk directly to the mouth which is embodying the same colour, turning the head into an aesthetic exploration. Thus, make-up, in Taka Taka's world, is employed as a tool for becoming and learning by means of experimenting with what a head can do rather than passing as an (divergent) identity marker. Moreover, this total renovation of the head contributes to the failure of a practice of allocation in terms of facial units.

Something similar is occurring with Taka Taka's costume. No 'natural' skin is showing. Instead, Taka Taka is wearing a full leopard patterned body suit. Hanging from the neck, a huge ornamental golden necklace reminiscent of religious ritualistic costumes reaches the lower abdomen. The necklace's performativity, however, does not perform religion at all. In lieu, the necklace performs a manoeuvre the frilled lizard knows too well. Frilled lizards or frilled dragons are known for raising their neck frill, or the huge apron of skin around their necks, in an attempt to intimidate their would-be predators. Usually, the animal's frills lay flat on its body. Nonetheless, when it feels threatened, the lizard raises its extra skin, expands its mouth wide open, and hisses. Taka Taka applies a similar expansion technique in an effort, I believe, to transform their physical dimensions. The effect, as with the lizard, is frightening and surprising.

Music plays in the background: a song identifiable by most of us in this queer context, namely, *Sweet Dreams* by the duo band Eurythmics. However, this song is not the original one but rather a heavy instrumental rock version of it. The first part of the song is sung by Taka Taka through nasal singing, a style of singing that is usually considered unpleasant, ugly and satirical. They do not aspire to an aesthetic beauty in their singing in any regard. What the nasal singing does achieve in this case, however, is non-identification; it brings the voice to an unknown realm with regard to gender and other identity markers. In addition, it disassociates the masculinity that is usually attached to the world of heavy rock. Up until this point, Taka Taka's performativity is calm and restrained. They head slowly towards the crib and reach it by the time the chorus kicks in. At this point, a shift in performativity occurs: they enter the crib singing and lean over facing the audience. Their height has increased significantly. The necklace is now hanging in the air which is caused by the forward leaning movement of Taka Taka's body. With this significant shift, I experience the creature that is Taka Taka on stage as bigger, larger, scarier. Comparable to the lizard, Taka Taka's head and consequently entire body have transformed into a new

actualisation. Necklace stops being a necklace and turns into a transformative power of becoming (as with the skin of the lizard): synchronous to Taka Taka's body expansion, they produce two appalling screams, mouth wide open. The monstrous physicality is partly facilitated by what initially appeared to be an innocent object: the curtain. With the curtain held in the grip of Taka Taka's right hand, they pull at it as if their entire being depends on it. As with the necklace, the curtain enters into the expandable assemblage that at this point consists of a body, a head, a scream, a song, curtains, a crib, objects and the environment.

An additional apparent fluctuation in Taka Taka's embodied physicality is now creeping in. Still in the crib, Taka Taka divest themselves of their poison green feathery jacket and black tutu skirt. They stand up straight and with their hands, reach over to a zipped pocket placed right where their sex is arranged. They unzip the leopard patterned pocket and pull out what appears to be a penis. The penis does not mark an apparition intended to expose their true identity: "Look I'm a White man!". Instead, Taka Taka start pulling at their sex organ in search of a formal transformation. The pulling instantly hints at the tucking technique (famous amongst drag queens), whereby an individual conceals the crotch bulge of the testicles and penis so that they are not discernible through garments. But to regard these pulling and stirring movements as merely the reversal of the tuck, thereby alluding to the opposite of passing as female, would be redundant. Consistent with the rest of the performance, in my opinion, Taka Taka's pulling and stirring activity performs play. In a similar vein to their use of the voice, Taka Taka shows that attributes are transformable: a penis can achieve different relations with the rest of the body and the world than the predominantly actual masculine and sexual ones. To use Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, Taka Taka "deterritorialises" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013) their actual sexual organ in the hunt for new connections and assemblages. In other words, the penis, in reciprocal relation with all the other elements of the assemblage, performs beyond known identity markers, and that attainment must be attributed to the penis' (as with all the other elements) relational nature.

In sum, this body that Taka Taka is performing carries only possibilities. It is a body as an assemblage that cannot be restricted by any limitation or norm. And while certain elements in the assemblage do invoke and remind us of forms of power, such as the necklace and the girls' clothing, they simultaneously reject the mere repetition of these forms. More precisely, the components in the performance remain unaffected by all the actual thoughts, sensations, or meanings that we, as the products of Man's genre of the human, might ascribe to them. Knowing or understanding the occurrence within Man's abject existing language is out of the question. Taka Taka forget their body, they forget

their attributes, the habitual meaning(s) behind every element in the purpose of becoming. With this performance they produce novel meanings, bodies, and objects which are “other without it being possible to say other than what” (Lorenz 2016, 56). They embody monster, child and animal, not as forms of representation but rather as powers of becoming, meaning, the pulling and stirring of the penis, does not represent a certain child, or Taka Taka as a child or the child of their past. Instead, they embody the power of the child-player, this power that seeks connections and relations devoid of any actual preconceived meanings and norms. In relation to the child, Erin Manning writes: “In the early period of the child’s life, relational potential is at its most extreme” (Manning 2013, 8). This extremity is due to the fact that the child has not yet been moulded entirely in compliance with certain individualisations. It is a relationality that explores, at its most “intensive” (Manning 2013, 8), the unpredictable potentiality inherent in the virtual as hitherto undifferentiated. Here radical drag and Deleuze’s form of learning congregate, leading, I propose, to a Wynterian drag revolution.

Oftentimes, embodiments of drag are discussed as the uncovering of multiple senses of self or the discovery or embodiment of novel characters/identities. A question that goes the way of drag queens/kings repeatedly is: “Who is your drag character?” Or, more precisely: “What story does your drag tell?” How Taka Taka would approach this question is what sets me in motion.

Taka Taka’s above performativity tells a disjointed story. A character in compliance with existing descriptive tools cannot be discerned from the above embodiment. It is aberrant, formless with regards to our understanding, unruly and generative. Thus in my reading of the above performativity, a more suitable question to Taka Taka would be: “What attitude is characteristic of your drag?”

Since Taka Taka’s penetration into the Amsterdam drag culture, they have perpetually been experimenting with the uncategorisable and the realm of the undifferentiated. This attitude has resulted in Taka Taka’s status as a nobody: an impersonal body that cannot be fixed to certain social bodies (the becoming of this status, though, must be apprehended as a privilege as certain people have been ascribed this status for the sake of others to flourish (Wynter 2003). I write, for this reason, from a White Western perspective, seeing as the West should, in my opinion, become-nobody for Man to perish). Consequently, Taka Taka’s drag attitude can best be described, I maintain, as consistently-being-inconsistent: an attitude of drag that consistently endures novel actualisations by way of experimenting with the involuntary virtual powers of becoming.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define the end of all becomings as the becoming-imperceptible. A desire to be cut down to a single abstract line without any

subjectivity, a becoming that is one with the undifferentiated world: becoming-world (Deleuze and Guattari 2013). To blend with the world is the apotheosis of relationality; it calls for a body to continuously permeate new assemblages. To revisit this thesis' earlier Deleuzian vocabulary, the becoming-imperceptible is death, not the actual death of an individual, but the death of an individual's whole subjectivity (the virtual death). This moment can best be described as the dissolution of the I (as with the third synthesis of time): "the moment of its [a body's] merging with the web of non-human forces [the virtual] that frame her/him/[them]" (Braidotti 2006, 154). But is the becoming-imperceptible reachable? How can a body realise such an unbelievable mode of interconnectedness?

Taka Taka's above performativity is an embodiment of what the becoming-imperceptible can do. Everything in this embodiment is the fruit of learning's double articulation: forget and connect. So to answer the preceding question: yes, the becoming-imperceptible is attainable. However, what worries me most is if the becoming-imperceptible can be maintained, seeing as Man demands a perpetual return to some sort of normalcy for reasons of survival. Taka Taka's reply to my concern of sustainability is uncomplicated theoretically: keep on becoming-imperceptible anew. The images below perfectly show how Taka Taka continually pursue the becoming-imperceptible across a temporal dimension of endless possibilities. In other words, Taka Taka understood that the maintenance of the becoming-imperceptible requires them to become-nobody via the perpetual learning of different forms of nobody.

As a consequence of the above observations, Taka Taka's proposed and embodied new genre of the human can only be characterised then as an attitude, a temporal movement in continuous transformation. Unlike the genre of Man, that performs due to its abject foundation - an embodied story established on norms and omissions - Taka Taka's continuous learning practice, as their novel genre of the human, escapes any sort of foundation, which turns it into a liminal, unruly mode of being as becoming. I am bound, therefore, to define Taka Taka's new genre of the human as an attitude, undefinable in terms of what it is and can do. A problem within the multiplicity, nonetheless, incites Taka Taka to continuously embody the future.

Since their infiltration into a drag context, Taka Taka have been questioning their assigned gender as most drag queens do. But with time and experimentation, they were given an Idea of gender which seemed unthinkable and paradoxical from the standpoint of their drag experience. To be more precise, this designated Idea (remember Deleuze's depiction of an Idea in chapter two) could not be demonstrated in a representation of a character or a performativity of some sort of gender performance. It, nevertheless, gave form to a certain question: How to perform beyond the binary system of gender? This

question which imposed itself on Taka Taka as a problem is embroiled in a set of differential components and connections between these components. The problem, therefore, demanded an ungrounding of Taka Taka's drag practice by appointing from and unlearning a plurality of habitual identity elements: gestures, history, performativities, ideas, action-reaction patterns (what constitutes the intersectional ground of any identity). Furthermore, the problem did lead also to the affirmation of a non-identity, and to the incapacity to interpret Taka Taka's performances according to a logic of transcendental random openness. Thus, Taka Taka's performances do not represent a deliberate expression of a problem, but a novel actualisation that was generated by the Idea during the process of experimentation. One issue prevails though with regards to Deleuze's definition of a problem, he writes: "[The problem] is solved once it is posited and determined, but still objectively persists in the solutions to which it gives rise and from which it differs in kind" (Deleuze 1994, 280). For Deleuze, a problem stops performing as one once a repeated style of particular gestures, actions, and performativities set in, once the same solution to the problem keeps on manifesting itself. As a reaction to this issue, Taka Taka make absolutely sure that they persevere in experimenting with the divergent potentialities of the problem, pursuing a very different solution with each public presentation. For clarification purposes: Taka Taka persevere in the becoming-imperceptible by almost never performing the same act twice. This, however, does not mean that Taka Taka is always successful in their endeavour (though I maintain that they are most of the time), considering the body is most comfortable when it can rely on acquired mannerisms and patterns (a problem, I would say, that was developed during the creation of certain cultures and that is in no way essential to who we are as humans). It is for this reason that I would like to emphasise, again, that Taka Taka's novel genre of the human is an attitude, in quest for continuous new actualisations to the same problem.



**Figure 3:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



**Figure 4:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



Figure 5: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



**Figure 6:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2018.



**Figure 7:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2021.



**Figure 8:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2021.



**Figure 9:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2018.



Figure 10: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka 2018.



Figure 11: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



**Picture 12:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



**Figure 13:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



Figure 14: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2020.



Figure 15: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



**Figure 16:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2017.



**Figure 17:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2017.



**Figure 18:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.



Figure 19: a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2020.



**Figure 20:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka's drag aunt Vicky Leaks, 2015.



**Figure 21:** a picture of Taka Taka. Photo by Taka Taka, 2019.

## **Taka Taka's Experimentation-in-Action Pedagogy**

Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy takes two companion arrangements of teaching. One is concerned with the emission of signs following learning movements on the part of Taka Taka. The other constructs structures that enable the learner in Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy to encounter signs that have not been initiated by Taka Taka's attitude. The second arrangement is also, for the most part, responsible for the learner's movements towards becoming-imperceptible. Moreover, the second arrangement facilitates a continuous learning experience, whereby the learner on their own turn, in action, emit signs. In short, the second arrangement calls for the learner to continuously unlearn and learn in the hunt of becoming-imperceptible otherwise. I will start this section with Taka Taka's first arrangement of teaching. At this point, it is important to remember that these two teaching arrangements are not isolated from one another, they each make appearances amid the manifestations of the other. Thus, even though the first teaching arrangement does not directly contribute to the becoming-imperceptible of the learner, it plays an essential function in the second teaching arrangement.

Chapter two has taught us that signs pose problems and problems instigate new actualisations, such as new thoughts. Chapter two also taught us that, for Deleuze, teaching must always evoke problems which can never be determined by way of predetermined ideas, vocabularies and practices. The encounter with modern cinema represents such a teaching through problems, seeing that the audience are forced to read/think the image-interstice-image sequences in a completely new way. This forceful act, in the encounter, Deleuze tell us, is inevitable since the sequences are not effortlessly digestible within common interpretative formations. A similar occurrence took place in my two previously described encounters with Taka Taka.

I have attempted to expose the impossibility of reading Taka Taka's performances - be it a lecture at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy or a performance at the Church Club - within Man's pre-established ideas. Their appearances, performativities, narratives, inconsistencies, all point to a world outside the dominant genre of Man. What Taka Taka's performances engender are questions that each learner must ask: What connections are being made? What novel movement is produced through these connections? How do certain connections interact with prior and future connections on the whole? etc. These and other questions are required because the learner has to read the performances in an entirely new way. As a result, Deleuze writes, concerning the encounter with modern cinema, "a whole new pedagogy is required here" (Deleuze 1989, 322). In other words, whole new ideas and movements of becoming are required to read Taka Taka's pedagogical events. These performances provoke complex alterations in the learner's

thinking systems in at least two ways. First it expresses a complication regarding Man's categories and narratives, furthering ideas that Man's classifications are weak and imperfect. Accordingly, Taka Taka's performances clearly provoke ideas of a lack of essentialism with regard to the genre of the human as Man. Furthermore, it raises concerns apropos the learner's sense of self, namely, if Taka Taka's performances engineer a beyondness regarding Man, my identity becomes remodelled into a shaky ground in danger of collapsing, because it proves that my identity is just as alterable. Secondly, the aforementioned encounters also produce new ideas and concepts about the world and its inhabitants; they produce thoughts and ideas that grasp at a reality outside the limits of Man. Thoughts and ideas that emerge from these types of encounters are, therefore, not universal and transcendental but always singular in their expressions. In the process of learning, ideas will never actualise in the exact same way twice. For this exact same reason, Deleuze describes the activity of thinking as rare. According to him, thinking can only occur following an encounter with what is not itself, with powers that are external to our own, thereby dismissing the idea that thinking starts with an individual (Descartes' *cognito*). Hence, the human brain only succeeds to engender thoughts when it is confronted with the "unthought", "the unthinking" and the "accidental" (Deleuze 1994). To think, then, entails "a shock to thought" (Massumi 2002), or a shock to our bodies as bios-mythoi. Thinking, therefore, can be equated, in this context, with movements of becoming/learning. In Deleuze's words:

"[T]he problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which preexists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist (there is no other work, all the rest is arbitrary, mere decoration.) To think is to create - there is no other creation" (Deleuze 1994, 147).

Thinking epitomises, in this regard, the process of actualisation from the undifferentiated.

Comparable encounters occur continuously amid Taka Taka's second arrangement of teaching. They produce lecture performances as described in the introduction; throughout the second arrangement of teaching, they predominantly teach adhering to their attitude of continuously becoming-imperceptible otherwise. What this means is that Taka Taka, with every assembly, introduce themselves as another inconsistent nobody, forging the first arrangement of teaching an essential technique in the teaching structures of the second arrangement of teaching. Owing to their attitude, Taka Taka continuously produce divergent encounters for the learners amid the second arrangement of teaching, denying the learners an interpretative pattern whereby we (learners) could interpret Taka Taka's

actualisations. To put it differently, Learners in the second arrangement of teaching are constantly being asked to think anew with Taka Taka's expressions. This is tremendously intriguing because one can never discern the teacher that is Taka Taka due to their consistently-being-inconsistent attitude. I maintain, consequently, that the first teaching arrangement gets manifested in the midst of the second teaching arrangement as a technique for furthering the success of the learners' process of becoming-imperceptible: a technique within a bigger teaching structure (more on the bigger structure below).

When encountering Taka Taka's first teaching arrangement as a technique throughout the second teaching arrangement, what the technique does is that it produces ideas or inspiration in the learner that drives the learner to actively explore further or other paths of experimentation. These encounters, therefore, are contagious in the manner that they push the learner towards new movements of becoming. They encourage the learner's process of becoming-imperceptible. Contagion, Deleuze and Guattari argue, best describes the relation that stands in for filiation:

"We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production. Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields and catastrophes. Like hybrids, which are in themselves sterile, born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself, but which begins over again ever time, gaining that much more ground" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 265-66).

Thus the connection that arises in the encounter between the learner and Taka Taka's attitude sets unpredictable and uncontrollable motions in place. Connections, in this sense, can be produced and entered into that instigate movements of self-fashioning and self-transformation. Contagion therefore covers the idea of recognition, which is a vital component of the image of thought, by constructing regulations common for subjects. Connection, for Deleuze and Guattari, is constructive, and has nothing to do with transmission, imitation or sameness. To give an instance, when I encountered Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action performance amid the lecture-performance, what struck me most is that the event infected me in a way that did not comply with my existing knowledge. Instead, I felt urged to think about different forms my relations with others could materialise - human and non-human. The encounter engendered ideas for differential experimental pathways beyond the mere desire to simulate Taka Taka's way of action. In sum, the first teaching arrangement performs a vital part in the realisation of the

second teaching arrangement; the second would not exist without the first.<sup>9</sup> At this point, I deem we are sufficiently equipped to push on with Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement.

The second part of Taka Taka's lecture ends with the presentation of another manifesto: *Taka Tools That Roolles For Takacademies*. In a similar way to the first manifesto, Taka Taka encourage us to concurrently read out loud their composed manifesto that describes their teaching tools, techniques and positionality. A transparent approach to teaching can only be concluded from this collective action, thereby making it absolutely clear, from the start, that the activity of teaching from the perspective of Taka Taka embodies a different performance. I will aim attention at a few points from the manifesto and discuss how these points get actualised in Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement. My selection is established on what my embodied learning participation considers to be the greatest agitators in the learners' movements of becoming-imperceptible. Moreover, I will base the proceeding order of discussion on the succession of my learning experience amidst Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement.

"Always come and teach as a complete Taka Taka character, if the workshop is more than one day, appear every day as a different character" (Taka Taka n.d.). This first point does not require an explanation seeing I explained above how Taka Taka always appears as a problem throughout the second teaching arrangement (the first teaching arrangement is employed as a technique in the second teaching arrangement). My wish for starting this discussion with this point is to show the value and necessity of the first teaching arrangement for the second one. This technique starts Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement and appears throughout as the above quote suggests.

"Construct some lessons where my Hopelezz sisters can teach performance physicality" (Taka Taka n.d.). Subsequent to Taka Taka's two sign-emission-lecture-performances - one of which was described in the introduction - session three and four were each devoted to a single of Taka Taka sisters' developed physical techniques. Session three, for example, brought Lady Bag's pelvic freestyle movement technique before us. The technique required that each one of us bring a bag of our choice to 'class', upon which we were adjured to aerobically exercise with the help of our bag. The technique's intent is to decondition pelvic movement, a deconditioning path Lady Bag has been on since her entry into the drag context. And whilst these "lessons" do not necessarily emit signs, inasmuch as they follow a relatively traditional transmission based

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<sup>9</sup> The first teaching arrangement performs a recurrent role in Deleuze's philosophy. He describes this teaching arrangement as an encounter with art (Deleuze 1989, 2002, 2003).

method, they each perform within the overall learning course towards becoming-imperceptible. I will delineate with the help of another manifesto point.

“Provide drag tools for subverting gender characteristics, like face (eyebrows - eyes - lips) makeup techniques and the power of the line for creating emotions” (Taka Taka n.d.). Session five was dedicated to makeup techniques. Make-up, as Taka Taka explained during the session, holds the power to modify what is considered natural about the face - gender, emotion, age, etc. With a demonstration of different lines, contours and colours on their face, Taka Taka managed to place in doubt all our natural normative conceptions with regard to the above categories. A black line upwards near the eyes instantly alters my perception of Taka Taka’s emotional state. An uplifting contrasted eyebrow paired with triangular eyeliner and high cheekbones turn Taka Taka’s face into a feminine rendition. Alternative makeup techniques were further adopted by Taka Taka to convey additional portrayals, such as that of the masculine, the androgynous, the animalistic, and the monstrous. An immediate unspoken conclusion is created, that is, that natural normative categories of the face are but a mere habitual illusion.

Within the overall pedagogical structure, session three, four and five perform, I propose, in a similar fashion: they provide departure points or techniques for experimental departures. As noted before, these sessions do not necessarily emit signs; they do, however, hold the capability to propel the learner/experimenter into an unknown world overflowing with signs. In *Always More Than One* (2013) Erin Manning discusses the relationship between “technique” and “technicity”, she writes:

“Technique and technicity coexist. Where technique engages the repetitive practices that form a composing body - be it organic or inorganic - technicity is a set of enabling conditions that exact from technique the potential of the new for co-composition” (Manning 2013, 32-33).

Technique is that which is repeatable and able to be reiterated. But, as Manning argues, beyond the technique something very different can occur. We can think of technicity as that which plays in the background, ready to erupt from the event amid the performance of the technique. Technicity is thus that which operates underneath the actual; it is the virtual to the actual. Taka Taka’s pedagogy understands that techniques function as a departing performance for future-orientated expressions. In other words, technicity requires techniques and vice versa. Accordingly, Taka Taka dawns their pedagogy with the teaching of a few techniques that can potentially be brought into play when experimentation takes the foreground. The emphasis on techniques in the first few sessions is not essential to

these presented techniques; Taka Taka keep reminding us through the whole of the pedagogical event that techniques are omnipresent: “Experiment with your performative techniques.” “Experiment with your filmmaking techniques.” “Experiment with your being at home techniques.” An insinuation eventuates: Aren’t we composed of an abundance of techniques - consciously and unconsciously? Taka Taka’s decision to present us with these techniques is attuned to an introduction to the context of drag and its ingrained techniques. We will see, however, how the ensuing sessions would accentuate the realm where technique and technicity meet. That is, depart from technique at which point, forget and connect anew.

“It’s not a classroom, it’s a playground of facilities. Facilitate not guide” (Taka Taka n.d). At this point in the pedagogical event a major shift is about to occur, but not with an uncoupling of that which preceded it. The first five sessions laid the groundwork for what was about to come. The first two sessions were a theatre for Taka Taka’s experimentation-in-action attitude, a manifestation in the potentiality of Taka Taka’s first teaching arrangement. During these two sessions, thinking was effected, ideas were created, and senses of self were hurt. Sessions three, four and five were mostly about the exercising of techniques. However, as early as the first session, Taka Taka was already encouraging us to experiment with ideas that were initiated in the event. They kept on saying throughout: “Try to experiment everyday for as long as your life allows you to”. Many of us picked up on that and initial experimental actualisations were appearing in the form of little performances. From the outset, Taka Taka made it apparent that the endings of the first five sessions were dedicated to wherever our experimental desires wished to direct us. This announcement came conjointly with encouragements, such as: “Let go of your fear of embarrassment.” “Don’t take who you are too seriously.” “Laugh with yourself.” The expression was embraced by a few of us and led to a few compelling and disorientating performances. I believe that the above sentences introduced, in words, what the entire pedagogy was going to be about: become-imperceptible. This is the case inasmuch as the process of becoming-imperceptible must never fall victim to a certain performance of an identity; Taka Taka, in other words, presented us with the first symptoms of self-erasure that constitute the route towards becoming-imperceptible.

Session six was tremendously open in structure, it was our time to go all in with the experimentation-in-action attitude. Upon Taka Taka’s request, we each carried our different materials and ideas to ‘class’. The space was open and big enough to accommodate all our experimentation-in-action processes. One person was working on a movement piece in a corner, another was trying out different combinations of colours and forms on their face, with the help of Taka Taka, a third person was attempting to glue pink wrinkled latex

pieces to their face and torso, I was experimenting with the ways a resistance band can metamorphose my jumpy gait while blowing and inhaling on a harmonica, a fifth person was rolling in and out a large piece of rubber fabric, etc. Each one of us - eight in total - was playing and experimenting inside our self-determined little architectural domain, but never without the frequent spillage that came to be with short sporadic feedback sessions, communal outbursts of laughter, shared tryouts, and explorative connections. An additional manifesto point ensured that travelling (explorative connections) was conjured:

“Bring as many of my costumes and props from my collection as I can into the classroom, so students can play and change quickly by wearing them - not stylistically interpret their choices, but rather use anecdotes about my personal connection-gifts and history with my objects on their bodies” (Taka Taka n.d.).

Thus, amid my exploration, Taka Taka guaranteed that further connections with props, garments, makeup, etc. were unceasingly approachable, instituting an extraneous unpredictable facet within my already unpredictable playful process. Session six drove all of us into a different world, seeing we were relating to each other in unknown ways, in ways our senses of experimentation were leading us. I allowed my simultaneous and different playful experimentations in the possibilities of walking otherwise with the resistant band; in breathing and making sounds otherwise with the help of a harmonica in my mouth; in wearing a face that was expressing difference through makeup related explorations of lines, shades and masks, etc. to show me how relating otherwise can seize different actualisations. Every person in the space, including Taka Taka, was unfamiliar with the ways relation was taking form. What this means is that signs were met everywhere and constantly: people were being confronted with signs amid their experimentations with materials and we were being confronted with signs amid our encounters with other people’s experimentations. The individual learner/teacher was becoming a reciprocal part of a bigger affective unpredictable pool: teaching and learning was transpiring everywhere; senses of self and senses of other were evaporating. Consequently, we all turned into teachers and learners: we all emitted signs and encountered signs. Taka Taka was no longer guiding at this point, they were mainly facilitating becoming. Crucial to my understanding of this pool of relations in continuous transformation is Deleuze’s concept of assemblage (*agencement* in French).

Let me quote Deleuze extensively:

“What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous

terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes, and reigns - different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind" (Deleuze and Parnet 1977, 69).

Deleuze emphasises in the above definition the types of relations that connect these components together into a whole or assemblage. Only through connections (remember how we define that above) can parts hold together. The chasm between filiation and alliance has played a major role in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 2015). Filiation is described as arborescent and genealogical, governed by "the unity of an ancestor" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 241). For example, the relation between a mother and a daughter can only participate in a relation through filiation since one can only be a daughter if one is genealogically related to a father. The identity of the mother or the daughter can only stand from their conjoint relationship (obviously Taka Taka have shown us that mothering can take on other kinds of relationships). Filiation also resembles the relation between the coloniser and the colonised, considering the coloniser is defined through the Other or the colonised. Differently, whenever two or more parts enter into a connection or alliance, as with an encounter, this liaison does not define their identity. Another crucial facet emphasised in Deleuze's definition is the nature of the components that make up the assemblage. The parts of an assemblage must differ in origin or nature: that is they must be heterogenous. Heterogenous components are autonomous and independent from the pool that constitute them. Meaning, heterogeneous components can be delinked from one assemblage and placed into another assemblage. In other words, connections are never essentialist. In contrast, filiations cannot exist independently from the relationships that establish them (Deleuze and Guattari 2015).

Session six turned us into an assemblage constituting of many assemblages. My body, the makeup, the resistant band, the harmonica, etc. were all part of an assemblage, or a pool within a greater pool: the assemblage that constituted all our experimentations. Objects and humans alike were all performing a heterogenous role, anticipating continuous becoming. What defined us there and then, I maintain, was the potentiality for change and the attitude/desire to enter continuous new assemblages resulting in a corresponding but new definition of the attitude of becoming-imperceptible: continuously enter new assemblages.

"Ideally students should create characters which I do not know and challenge their own understanding of character expression from the last session" (Taka Taka n.d.).

Session 6 erected our processes of becoming-imperceptible. Nonetheless, critical to practicing the attitude of becoming-imperceptible is a continuous movement towards the novel and the unpredictable. With the intention of avoiding the replacement of one identity for another, in the way an invented character can take up the role of an alter-ego, Taka Taka stimulated us to experiment with ideas, materials, and movements anew every session. That is, do not stay and perform with a singular new character. “Try to continuously initiate new movements of becoming”, Taka Taka would say. “Forget who you perform, forget who you performed last week”, to use Taka Taka’s actual words. And whilst a few were determined to develop a singular perfected character performance, the rest of us, including me, decided to exchange judgement and consistency for inconsistency, fragmentation and confusion. Different methods and techniques were used by the becoming-inconsistent bodies for realising such a state of radical relationality.

My approach from the outset was to become with my room otherwise: inasmuch as the materials in my room directly inform my consistent habitual identity, on a daily basis, why not become through a reconfiguration of my relations with the materials that are in very close proximity to me. Knowing, also, that further connections will be provoked in the encounters with my fellow learners. Of real eminence, at this juncture in my process, was this double articulation of becoming-room-otherwise and becoming-room-otherwise with others. I uncovered two reasons for the prominence of the second articulation to my process of learning. To start, my White masculine European identity performs with objects and spaces but it also performs with other people in abject ways; I am able to be, due to the fact that I am not an Other, not an object and not an animal. Crucial for my embodied performativity, therefore, are my relationships to the Other and the object. Thus, my becoming-otherwise feeds, reciprocally, from the becoming-otherwise of the others. To put it differently, the becoming-room-otherwise stimulates a different embodied relational performativity with my fellow learners, it creates a further encounter that is essential to my overall becoming. Reason number two pertains to Deleuze’s first synthesis of time, namely, that repetition and habit is a subjective operation that links independent and distinct performances of matter together as a repetition of the old. My room experimentation drove my body to synthesise anew. This renegotiation of my body with its environment does not imply that my body disposed of my body’s processes of pattern-making, rather, patterns have simply been recomposed.

Performing with my room otherwise emerged from a Deleuzian problem: Departing from a bedroom performance, how to perform something beyond my White European sense of self? The becoming-room-otherwise required first and foremost the unlearning of my habitual ways of performing with objects. This unlearning also includes my ideas

about these objects. From the moment of acquiring room-objects, my room performance habituated into a conformed utilisation of them, that is, a performance that fits the object's patterns and narratives. Consequently, any actualisation that emerges from the above problem must primarily unlearn the habits of a range of techniques my body has been disciplined in for years; my body has to unlearn its 'natural' room movement's spontaneous tendencies. The prerequisite for unlearning must likewise take the room as an architectural entity into consideration. Thus, concurrent to the unlearning of my body's relations to room-objects, it requires an additional architectural unlearning. In a similar fashion to room-objects, architecture and spacial design conform to a set of narratives. Just think about the relation between table, chairs, food and body. My process of becoming-room-otherwise led me to renegotiate my relations with room-objects and room-space otherwise. For example, my dining table was put on its side and pushed away from the window; the chairs were displaced and took a more central position in the room; with the use of the hiking sticks' wrist straps, the sticks were attached to my naked ankles; the other ends of the hiking sticks were placed in boxing gloves; naked from my waist down, my body was bouncing on a yoga ball amid all the differently positioned chairs; biting on a harmonica, in order to prevent it from falling from my mouth, irritating sounds were roving around the entire space. This explorative performance didn't have an instant task orientated goal, its ambition was to become through unlearning and learning.

To go back to the second articulation's significance - namely, the importance of becoming-room-otherwise with others - a new habitual pattern was becoming distinguishable. Without my instant awareness, I was warned by Taka Taka about my newly learned, embodied pattern. After watching a few of my performances, Taka Taka was reading a pattern in my novel use of objects, and therefore resisting my initial desire of becoming-imperceptible. They said: "your relation to objects are extremely unpredictable, however, they always perform two different roles." To my surprise, my novel relations with room-objects always embodied a shift in relations midway through the performance, thus advancing a doubt towards the dramaturgical component of my relational learning performances. The significance of others was in the manner in which Taka Taka urged me to experiment, as well as with someone else's room in order to disentangle myself from that pattern.

"Ideally students should create characters which I do not know and challenge their own understanding of character expression from the last session" (Taka Taka n.d.). Repeating this manifesto point highlights that an additional manifestation related to this point requires discussion, that is, the absence of rehearsals. Taka Taka continuously encouraged us not to rehearse our performances, precisely, for the benefit of avoiding a

new patterned 'natural'. Rehearsals generally lead to an empirical repetition, namely, improving the same over and over again. In Bojana Cvejić words, "*Répétition* is the French word for "rehearsal", and denotes the preparation prior to performance, in which certain, if not all, elements of a performance are defined, planned, or "blocked" (i.e., fixed in space and duration, and perfected as to their way of execution)" (Cvejić 2015, 156). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze proposes a different, metaphysical register for the understanding of repetition, one that performs prior to the actual and which instigates the new (see chapter two). Whilst these two registers are closely connected (the relation between the virtual and the actual), Taka Taka tries to put the emphasis on the metaphysical one: become through a "repetition for itself" (Deleuze 1994). As a consequence, I maintain that Taka Taka is not interested in the quality of the final performative product per se, but in the learner's processual hunt of what I have called the attitude of consistently-being-inconsistent. An attitude deeply invested in the metaphysical register of repetition.

"End presentations are just a moment in the learner's process" (Taka Taka n.d.). The end of our learning/teaching event was organised around a final presentation with the presence of an audience. The audience was not there for the purpose of praising our learned artistic drag qualities. Additionally, we did not aspire to please an audience or to pursue certain trends so as to secure additional gigs. The presence of the audience particularly held teaching and learning purposes. Taka Taka's teaching encouragements to always perform the new were not exempt with regard to the end presentation; they continuously emphasised the divergence of our learning process to common pedagogical evaluations, whereby certain expected results consistent with predetermined standards of good or bad must be fulfilled. This implies an evaluation grounded in judgement, if you like, which requires, as David Lapoujade writes, a "transcendental ground" (Lapoujade 2014, 54) from which a judgement is directed at (mind that the activity of judgement conforms to Deleuze's image of thought from earlier). On that final day, a group of us were presenting a piece that was never rehearsed. As with many other learning encounters amid the pedagogical event, the moment of the end presentation was a course of action that addressed the desire to enter new assemblages. That is, learn and teach in the presence of surprising and unfamiliar bodies. At this point in the pedagogical event, most of us were not concerned anymore with pleasing an audience for the purpose of self celebration. Self-centred actions and actions motivated by ego were becoming a rarity amongst our group. Our performances prompted dynamism owing to extraordinary learning and teaching desires. This instant reminded me of Taka Taka's earlier comments: "Let go of your fear of embarrassment." "Don't take who you are too seriously." "Laugh with

yourself.” I can say with great pride, many of us were able to detach ourselves from recognisable identity patterns.

“Students always perform in a block without interruption and with the expectation to produce and help each other before and after their show” (Taka Taka n.d.). I wish to conclude my discussion of Taka Taka’s pedagogical event with a description of our group’s adopted collective performance arrangement. The reason for concluding with this performance arrangement is that I deem it to be a great expression of our new learned genre of the human.

On the end presentation day, every singularity of the group performed a world in relation with others. Meaning, we each performed a heterogeneous piece within a bigger collection of heterogeneous pieces. Boundaries between pieces were eliminated. Allocated bodies to specific pieces were deserted. Individuality and identity were notions of the past. Singular performances were regarded as relational pedagogical events within the purpose of becoming. Teaching and learning were transpiring simultaneously and embodied by everyone. Therefore, abject manifestations of Man were supplanted with a new groundless genre of the human, whereby subjects and objects transformed into differential teaching and learning experiences. In consequence, my body was not separated from the others, considering that they held the potentiality for my and our assemblage’s further becomings. A new “poetics of relation” (Glissant 1997) had become actualised.

Taka Taka ended the lecture on day one with the following request: “Crumple the teaching manifesto into a ball and toss it in my direction.” As with the *Non Universal Drag Tools* manifesto, Taka Taka are telling us to digest this carefully but remember other practices of raising problems are possible. Perhaps, do it in-action, throw it, and institute your own pedagogies of becoming.

## Conclusion

I commenced this thesis by demonstrating the necessity of my and the White West's becoming a new genre of the human, following Wynter's call for the invention of new genres of the human, rather than a reparative approach involving our current genre of the human as Man. My and the White West's necessity of becoming encompasses a much larger project which I have also called the global decolonial revolution. Seeing our current embodied conception of the human's irredeemability in terms of a world beyond inequality, Wynter deems a new world with a different embodied reality has to be created. The inclusion of the described inferiors or nonhumans ("les damnés de la terre" (Fanon 1963)) into the category of the human as Man must be regarded as untenable considering Man without his Others would not prevail. Wynter shows us that at the core of the category of Man, in all its iterations, exists a dangerous binary of Self and Other. She demonstrates this abject core through a superb historical analysis in which she delineates the engendering and perpetuation of the genre of the human as Man.

In order to fathom this core, and consequently disqualify the reparative approach as a reliable option in the fight for a world beyond inequality, I have traced and exposed Wynter's complex and abject Western historical account through a delineation of the genre of the human as Man. Man, as Wynter argues, emerged in the year 1492 when the voyages outside of Europe was launched. These voyages in the name of discovery were regarded by Wynter and many other decolonial thinkers as the starting blocks which led to the redescription of the embodied category of the human in hybrid religious-secular terms also known as Man 1 or homo politicus. Following these voyages, Man began to overrepresent his genre of the human as the human itself, conquering physically, affectively and discursively all that deviates from his embodied definition of the human. This genre as Man originated from abject attitudes towards the Other, whereby the transported subjugated Black African and the indigenous people of the Americas were institutionalised and categorised as the "irrational/subrational Other" (Wynter 2003, 281-282) to Man's counter conception of the Self as "civic-humanist and rational" (Wynter 2003, 282). Owing to Wynter's historical account I have shown that this practice of Othering is still being naturalised today, and deployed for the realisation of our contemporary senses of self.

Our contemporary iteration of Man was developed in the nineteenth century with the rise and invention of two interwoven narratives: the by then still hybrid religio-secular human redescriptioned itself in purely biologically determined and economical terms. As with the invention of Man 1, Man 2 was rendered possible by virtue of European scientific

voyages, which facilitated Darwin in the invention of a universal evolutionary theory. Evolution would give rise to a new hierarchical and abject line, one that Wynter calls naturally “selected” or naturally “dysselected”. The reaction to Man 2’s line of division could not be revealed in advance as it would only be confirmed following a community’s or one’s economic failure or success in life. As a result, Man 2’s new genre of the human, as I have argued in Chapter One echoing Wynter, will be defined in abject accordance to this new descriptive Other, namely, that of the “underdeveloped” - the poor, the jobless, the homeless, the criminalised - the racialised - Black people, colonial Natives - and the homosexual. Wynter’s historical analysis, therefore, must direct us towards the invention of new genres of the human, since the inclusion of all the damnés of the earth in the category of the human as Man holds insurmountable obstacles; all our contemporary issues, Wynter asserts, are interlinked and sourced from a single genre of the human as Man.

Laying this highly worthy examination as my thesis’ groundwork, I proceeded with an obviously implicit follow-up endeavour: How can we invent new genres of the human? A supplementary Wynterian theory has informed this thesis when answering this question, namely, the idea that “besides ontogeny and phylogeny stands sociogeny” (Wynter 2001). What this portends, according to Wynter, is that modes of oppression are not solely sociological phenomena or erroneous ideologies that renounce the underlying truth of the human species, that is, the reality of biological sameness. These modes of oppression also perform on a deeply affective level: they determine our affective engagements with others thereby complicating our ways out of Man but also rendering our liberation of Man possible. Once Wynter, following Fanon, imbricated sociogeny with ontogeny, Man’s genre of the human and its essentialist episteme lost all its credibility. The sociogenic initiated the event of being human as praxis. Consequently, nature and evolution do not determine us anymore, but rather narratives, words and ideas. With the sociogenic principle, Wynter allows us to travel from a human that is transcendently determined, in a predetermined essential fashion, to a human that can embody unknown different forms and shapes. Chapter One concludes with the motion of a potential liberation to an actual one. This motion also proved to be an obstacle for our global decolonial revolution, which I have defined in the introduction as the becoming of the world’s entire human population into new genre(s) of the human.

In search of new embodied genres of the human, Wynter reflects on the manners in which Black experiences in the Americas under systems of oppression engendered the conditions for a plurality of Black revolts. Via Man’s omission of Black people from the category of the human, conditions were engendered that drove Black people to radical ceremonies of Black humanisations. Thus, as I delineated in Chapter One, what renders

people to invent new genres of the human is the absolute necessity of discovering the “potentiality of dehumanised liberation and joy” (McKittrick 2021, 160). This necessity was also defined in the introduction, echoing Glissant, as the womb. Nonetheless, Wynter’s explanation for the invention of new genres of the human remains an obstacle for the ones, like myself, who exist in absence of a necessity or a womb. An additional endeavour became eminent for this thesis’ continuation: How can people with Western and White privileges invent new genres of the human knowing that the human always performs a genre? I have argued that a certain pedagogical conception can achieve this responsibility.

Chapter two delved into this option by closely examining Deleuze’s preferred conception of learning and teaching from a philosophical point of view. Arising from of an in depth reading of Wynter’s necessity for the invention of a new genre of the human, I have determined an implicit requirement for us, in the West, prior to movements of becoming, namely, a radical unlearning of all that one is/thinks/feels. Deleuze’s pedagogy performs just that in the way that Deleuze’s sense of learning and teaching always emerges conforming to two principles: forget and connect. As I have demonstrated, Deleuze’s two pedagogical principles are entwined. Connect, which causes the new to emerge, following a radical unlearning of one’s sense of self, categories and identities. A will to unlearn during learning will instigate novel expressions, which I have called, following Deleuze, new actualisations. Moreover, a will to unlearn might inaugurate a second movement of unlearning, that is, an unconscious dissolution of the self. Therefore, learning always holds a double unlearning operation in advance of any new actualisation. By probing into Deleuze’s philosophy of time - especially, the third future-orientated synthesis of time - I have identified and situated this second movement of unlearning in the encounter with a tremendous alien event - signs. In the encounter with signs, following conscious movements of unlearning, a tremendous event emerges that unconsciously initiates a total dissolution of the self, the complete loss of any ground. Sameness or identities from the present and the past, perish permanently, metamorphosed by a repetition of that which renders them to vary - Deleuze’s repetition as “difference in itself” (Deleuze 1994). The unconscious enters a crisis whereby a total forgetting/unlearning gets initiated. Memory clears out for an undifferentiated field of pure chance, that is the virtual. So when Deleuze writes connect, he means connect anew in the virtual.

Deleuze’s pedagogy matches Wynter’s requirements for the invention of new genres of the human perfectly for one additional and imperative reason: the movements of becoming or novel actualisations following new virtual connections correspond with Wynter’s idea of the invention of new genres of the human. In Chapter Two, I have defined the virtual as a field in which Ideas are consecutively determined. It is the Idea that forces

new actualisations or a change in consciousness. In this sense, according to Deleuze, it is the virtual that carries all the potential for the new, seeing as that the virtual performs as the origin for the actual. In other words, the virtual is responsible for the inventive part of the activity of learning subsequent to two forms of unlearning. The imperative correspondence between Deleuze and Wynter, occurs in the manner both describe the political dimension of radical new creations - learning and inventing new genres of the human. Equivalent to Wynter's idea of politics, Deleuze (and Guattari) defines the political in the act of learning as the invention of a missing people; learning, Deleuze writes, invents a people-yet-to-come. We can, therefore, attribute an identical political and utopian formation in both the act of learning and the act of inventing new genres of the human. Provided with all the necessities and correspondences a Deleuzian form of pedagogy must carry in pursuance of a pedagogical idea harmonious with this thesis' aspiration - that of a global decolonial revolution - I concluded Chapter Two with a short definition of learning/teaching: unlearn and connect into a future people-yet-to-come.

A philosophical account of a different Wynterian and Deleuzian form of pedagogy is never sufficient, the authors tell us; in the search of a new world, action must take centre stage. I have mentioned on multiple occasions that learning and teaching can never be predicted, only in action, and the encounter with alien signs, can a new world be established. Therefore, human agency is a reality but only in relation. For this reason, Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy performs an essential role in this thesis' endeavour, it acts a different genre of the human. Moreover, an encounter with Taka Taka's pedagogy sets out new concepts and understandings of the potentiality for human becomings. Thus, Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy does not perform exclusively as a case study object but also as an event that pushes our understanding of the human forward. That is, it tells us a new story. Consequently, I have discussed in Chapter Three the depth of Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy.

Crucial for my discussion of Taka Taka's learning and teaching practice, was to launch my analysis from a position of drag that establishes a revolution equal to Wynter's and Deleuze's. This appeared to be an arduous exercise inasmuch as most queer drag discourses discuss drag performances from a sole perspective. A drag revolution that can reach the height of a global decolonial revolution, as discussed in Chapter Three, must perform on a deeply intersectional sphere: that of the learning of a new genre of the human. In Renate Lorenz's radical drag, I discovered a drag discourse that does just that, namely, a drag becoming that throws overboard all identity markers. Thus, not exclusively the transgression of gender, but a becoming that has no precedent, equivalent to a Wynterian and Deleuzian radical creation of a new world. Lorenz's discussion of a certain

drag demonstrates that a radical drag performance initiates a world where Man's abject ground of Self and Other has no endowing role; the new invented world, as with Deleuze and Wynter, performs in "another time" and "elsewhere" (Lorenz 2012, 22).

Carrying a conception of drag that co-steers the fleet of a global decolonial revolution, I proceeded to consider Taka Taka's learning practice within Lorenz's definition of radical drag. Taka Taka, I argued, is in a continuous search of new connections, thereby transforming normative and naturalised human characteristics into alien signs. For instance, Taka Taka's face fails to determine any given "facial units" or the performance of known facial identities, resulting in an individual that circumvents all facial identity markers. Through a constant experimentation with the possibilities of make-up and props in connection with their 'biologically' existent facial shapes and forms, Taka Taka constantly institutes elements of unrecognisableness. This face turned into a head owes its overall unrecognisableness to six reciprocal temporal movements in constant experimentation: the make-up, the costume, the performativity of the head, the performativity of the body, the voice, and the environment. All these elements relate anew and contribute to the alien becoming that is Taka Taka. Through an exploration in one of Taka Taka's many performances, I have showed that Taka Taka's body carries only possibilities; the body they perform cannot be limited by any limitation or norm. They simultaneously perform monster, child, animal, not as forms of representation but rather as powers of becoming.

I have argued that Taka Taka have continuously been experimenting with the potentiality of their body's becoming. This radical explorative attitude has resulted in Taka Taka's status of a nobody: an impersonal body that cannot be fixed to certain social bodies. Consequently, I have defined their attitude as the creation of a new genre of the human as becoming-imperceptible. Following Deleuze and Guattari, this genre of the human can best be described as the cutting down to a single abstract line without any subjectivity, a becoming that is one with the undifferentiated world. A novel world that embodies the potentiality of extreme interconnectedness. So, unlike the genre of Man, which performs due to its abject foundation - an embodied story established on norms and omissions - Taka Taka's continuous learning practice, as their novel genre of the human, escapes any sort of foundation, which turns it into a liminal, unruly, mode of being as becoming. A genre of the human that performs a continuous search for new learning connections.

As an active participant in one of Taka Taka's pedagogical experimentation-in-action events, I followed up on Taka Taka's learning practice with their teaching practice through an embodied interpretation of my relational in-action process of becoming. On account of my initial search of self-transformation into a new genre of the human, I deemed it

essential to demonstrate how my becoming-in-relation took place owing to Taka Taka's teaching event. Keep in mind that this thesis is not solely about my becoming-in-relation, it is about the global decolonial revolution and our White Western role and responsibility towards it.

I delineated Taka Taka's teaching event in terms of two companion arrangements of teaching. One is concerned with the emission of signs following learning movements on the part of Taka Taka. The other constructs structures that enable the learner in Taka Taka's experimentation-in-action pedagogy to encounter signs that have not been initiated by Taka Taka's attitude. The first teaching arrangement turns up whenever one encounters Taka Taka. I have considered Taka Taka's performances in the club, inside the teaching space, and elsewhere as a learning experience, whereby the learner is provoked to read Taka Taka's performances and consequently the world in an entirely new way. These encounters with Taka Taka, I have argued, present tremendous ramifications for the learner's sense of self, as the learner is boosted to think the unknown, the unthought, putting Man's abject and essentialist ideas into tremendous doubt. Furthermore, I have described these encounters with Taka Taka's performances as tools or techniques amid Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement.

The second teaching arrangement, I argued, is responsible for the becoming-imperceptible of the learners. I have departed from Taka Taka's teaching manifesto as a means to expose the structures and practices that have been put into place amid the performance of the second teaching arrangement. This teaching arrangement begins with strong encounters. Taka Taka start the first and second session with a lecture/performance that raises problems for the learner, thereby stimulating the learner into thinking about new possible forms of relation; in other words, the technique produces ideas or inspirations in the learner that drive them to actively explore further or other paths of experimentation. The emission of signs that stems from Taka Taka's performances is a reoccurring event throughout the whole of Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement.

They press on with a few sessions on the importance of techniques as departure points or techniques for experimental wanderings. These sessions, wherein the learners get acquainted with drag makeup, deconditioning pelvic movements, etc., do not necessarily emit signs. However, I argued that they do hold the capacity to propel the learner into an unknown world overflowing with signs. During these sessions, Taka Taka kept reminding the learners that techniques are essential for the practice of experimentation, as without techniques one cannot learn.

Subsequent to the technique sessions, a major transformation in Taka Taka's manner of teaching transpired. This time, experimentation-in-action was expected from the

learners. Experimentation was occurring everywhere, and drove all of us into a different world, seeing that we were engaged in different forms of relation in search of the unknown. We were all unfamiliar with the ways in which relations were taking shape. What that means, I argued, is that signs were met everywhere and constantly: people were being confronted with signs amid their experimentations with materials and we were confronted with signs amid our encounters with other people's experimentations. The individual learner/teacher was becoming a reciprocal part of a bigger unpredictable assemblage. Consequently, from session six onwards, all learners turned into teachers and learners: we were all emitting signs and encountering signs. The second teaching arrangement, I argued, then, should be considered as a pedagogical event where guidance does not steal the limelight, but rather as an event where movements of becoming come to be facilitated.

Upon Taka Taka's encouragements to always become-otherwise otherwise, my approach in the search of becoming-imperceptible was to become with my room otherwise, inasmuch as the materials in my room directly informed my consistent habitual identity on a daily basis. Owing to the fact that I was a teacher and a learner for the others, I regarded my self transformation an essential feature in the advancement of Taka Taka's second teaching arrangement. The becoming-room-otherwise was my singular approach to the becoming assemblage of the group. The becoming-room-otherwise, I argued, first instigated a total unlearning of my habitual ways of performing with room-objects and room-space, and second a renegotiation of my relations with room-objects and room-space.

To go back to my initial research question - What can a different pedagogy contribute to the invention of a new genre of the human? - I have demonstrated that Taka Taka's pedagogical approach correlates with a Wynterian and a Deleuzian idea of a decolonial form of learning and teaching, whereby learning and teaching always embodies two imbricated movements: forget and connect (an answer to the instrumentality of a certain pedagogical conception in the invention of new genres of the human). Taka Taka's radical drag practice continuously (un)learns to become-otherwise and their teaching practice adheres to a pedagogy that emits signs by constantly producing problems directly and indirectly for their learners. Furthermore, I have argued that Taka Taka's pedagogy paved the way for a new genre of the human in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-imperceptible (my fourth and last subquestion) through the creation of pedagogical structures that facilitate a deep unlearning and a learning/teaching in radical relation. Learners turned into an open assemblage where who and what our assemblage signified remained undetermined, always in a state of becoming-otherwise reciprocally.

I was not I; we were “always more than one” (Manning 2013) in perpetual movement. We were living a new genre of the human, with different ideas and forms of relation well beyond Man’s abject foundation. We turned into a learning/teaching open assemblage, thereby contributing to the global decolonial revolution. I encourage my reader without a womb: invent yourself anew in relation. Let us build together an ‘other’ global future that has its seeds planted in all the socialities which perform an already different genre of the human.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise an aspect that was addressed very minimally during the whole of the thesis: How does the becoming-imperceptible manage Man’s constant rebounds? How does the becoming-imperceptible manage Man’s constant appropriations? Man’s demands for survival? These are worries that require another thesis. In the meantime, Taka Taka and our drag group are determined to persist in this global decolonial revolution by way of carrying on with our processes of becoming-imperceptible.

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