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**“Escaping the Neurotic-Couch”: A Schizoanalytic Reading of
Beckettian Characters in *Waiting for Godot***

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“Questions such as ‘Who do you think you are’, ‘Where do you come from?’, ‘Where are you going?’ These are totally useless questions [...] all imply a false conception of voyage and movement”

[Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 25]

“The modern world is one of simulacra. Man did not survive God, nor did the identity of the subject survive that of substance. All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect' by the more profound game of difference and repetition.”

[Deleuze, 1995, p. 15]

“To write is to become. Not to become a writer, but to become, intransitively”

[Tinh T. Minh-ha, p. 19]



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Abstract

Beckett's dramatic oeuvre has been popularly connected to the existential anguish and metaphysical despair traversing Continental philosophy in the second post-war era. The present paper intends to approach the Beckettian cosmology presented in *Waiting for Godot* from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's schizoanalysis and political ontology of the Body without Organs, so as to examine the desire's potentiality contained in the (absent) figure of Godot. By focusing on the deterritorializations that Godot's desiring-machine produces, Beckettian characters will be explored as inscriptions of the post-structuralist field of nomadic subjectivity. This will enable a productive reading of Beckettian realm of 'nothingness', not anymore as epitome of *crisis*, but as suggestion of a new plane of immanence from which to re-organise subjectivity.

Keywords: *Beckett, Waiting for Godot, Schizoanalysis, Nomadic subjectivity*

Resum

L'obra dramàtica beckettiana ha estat popularment associada a l'angoixa existencial i metafísica que travessa la filosofia continental de la segona post-guerra. El present estudi s'apropa a la cosmologia presentada a *Waiting for Godot* des de l'esquizoanàlisi i l'ontologia política del cos sense òrgans de Gilles Deleuze i Félix Guattari, a fi d'examinar la potencialitat del desig contingut en la figura (absent) de Godot. A partir de l'anàlisi de les desterritorialitzacions desencadenades per la màquina desitjant que Godot representa, s'exploraran els personatges beckettians com a inscripcions de la teoria post-estructuralista de la subjectivitat nomàdica. Aquest enfocament permetrà una lectura productiva del "no-res beckettian", entès ja no com a epítom de *crisi* sinó com a proposta d'un nou pla d'immanència de (re-)organització de subjectivitat.

Paraules clau: *Beckett, Waiting for Godot, esquizoanàlisi, subjectivitat nomàdica*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In *Beckett and poststructuralism* (1999), Anthony Uhlmann points at the irreducible multivocality of Beckett's criticism, and states that any interpretation of his work should address a particular aspect or facet in order to make him justice: "as a friend you are forced to recognize the impossibility of absolute possession" (p. 2). In narrowing down the critical endeavour to the particularity of "which Beckett?", the openness of his work is maintained and thoroughly rendered productive. Only by acknowledging the numerous disciplinary knots involved in signifying Beckett's work will this dissertation be able to attain its specific location within the critical field and become what is set out to be: a full molecular irruption into the Oedipal, molar discursive-machineries that approach Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as the epitome of the crisis of Western metaphysics'. This paper contests the aesthetics of postmodernism that have read Beckett's work as the end-date of metaphysical, modernist postulates (see Nealon, 1988), as well as the apocalyptic existentialist anguish which has celebrated Beckettian drama as the confirmation of human absurdity and Wittgensteinian silence (see Esslin, 1964). Therefore, the work that follows does not attempt to reduce *Waiting for Godot* to a self-explanatory transparent surface, but to establish a critical dialogue, a relation of dis-identification with the play's alterity in order to do justice to its infinity – that is: its irreducible difference. Structurally organised as a discursive assemblage operating in several critical strata, the paper hereby establishes multiple dialogues with the contemporary philosophical debate on the limits of humanness and the capitalistic production of subjectivity, as well as with the role of staged performance, as Laura Cull puts it, in shaping the ontology of becoming (2009, p.7). Theatre's bodies are not mediators embedded in broader systems of representation, but are subjected to the actualization of performance, and therefore "always differentiated in their own way of becoming" (Cull, 2009, p. 5). Deleuzoguattarian fluid ontology is crucial for the understanding of performance as an immanent *becoming*, for it points at the theatrical event's univocity of being.¹

Throughout the process of delimiting the object of study, several discussion lines have been discarded for the sake of the paper's adherence to the format-limitations and its internal coherence. Although suggested in the paper's orientation towards body politics and the genealogy of disciplinary discourses, the power-relation governing Pozzo

¹ Univocity is defined in Deleuze's philosophy of difference as the quality of "being univocal", or "being entirely one" by which reality is conceived as a continuous process (Cull, 2012).

and Lucky will not be critically explored. Lucky's speech might be seen as pointing to the crisis of phallogocentrism and the consequent unfolding of critical devices tackling the White-male-rational-standard-speaking-subject; Pozzo's necropolitics – as Paul B. Preciado would put it – might open *Waiting for Godot* to Giorgio Agamben's notion of *zoe* as the human body's capacity to be reduced to non-human states by the intervention of sovereign power, and thus engage with a radical revision of the very notion of life. The whole investigation around the performative limits of the human body and its becoming-animal would be an interesting terrain to cover in a future dissertation, for Beckett's anti-representational theatre and his anti-humanist 'characters' nominalization has been linked to the animalization of the human body proposed by the "Theatre of Revulsion" (see Baudrillard, 1988), or to Agamben's notion of *bare life* – developed in his *Homo Sacer* (1995). Exploring Lucky's becoming-animal and masochist relation to Pozzo's necropolitical force, as I have suggested formerly, would draw *Waiting for Godot* into the contemporary performance practices of *butoh*, and thus a whole different theoretical framework would need to be implemented, – mainly: post-humanist political fictions, cyberpunk post-feminism, and the Italian materialist critical theory (Agamben, Rosi Braidotti and Antonio Negri).

Consequently, I have narrowed down the qualitative question of "which Beckett" to a post-structuralist reading of the 'characters' in *Waiting for Godot*. In order to draw a critical cartography of the dissertation's body, it might be useful to specify the different levels on which it operates. Firstly, at a macro-level, the paper engages with what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theorise as "philosophy of difference" (1972) in order to re-think the processes of subjectivation whereby Beckettian characters in *Waiting for Godot* are produced. The Deleuzian philosophy of difference foregrounds an affirmative thought that acknowledges multiplicity over linear, traditional noology. The notion of *difference* is ontologically opposed as that of identity or representation – the principle constituting the entire system of Western metaphysics. As Deleuze points out in *Difference and Repetition*, representation has been the form of mediation which reduces the multiplicity and heterogeneity of differences to oppositional, analogical relations. Braidotti (1994) argues that *difference* as disparagement has been the backbone of a philosophical tradition which defines the subject in terms of sameness and equates subjectivity with consciousness – *cotigo, ergo sum* – implying an asymmetrical dialectic tension between the "I"'s ipseity and the other – defined in terms of negative difference as counterpart of

the subject's sameness. It is therefore inevitable to re-inscribe the potentiality of *difference's* formulaic expression (...x + z + y ...) into the ontological system that interests me: Deleuze and Guattari's development of an immanent, molecular, and intensive ontology – the Body without Organs.

Secondly, at (a) micro-level(s), a dialogue is established with the critical inquiries pursued by Deleuze and Guattari themselves in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972) and its second part *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) to understand desire-production as a libidinal economy articulating the socius of the Vladimir-Estragon-Godot's society.² As side-effects of the desiring-machine, Vladimir and Estragon arise as dismembered, molecular bodies assembled to the broader, molar machine that Godot represents. If in *Anti-Oedipus* the deconstruction of subjectivity is expressed in terms of schizophrenia and desiring-production, in *A Thousand Plateaus* the notion of subjectivity is replaced by the plane of immanence or the body without organs.

Finally, the affective relationships drawn in the text will be explored to see whether Godot's operates as a molar, fascist institution – thus rendering the Real a bare, asymbolic desert, and the *waiting* unproductive– or whether it does in fact set in motion a series of deferrals that, along with a deconstructive reading, might suggest a new virtual plane for Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* to arise as a political fiction of nomadic subjectivity. This work is aimed, therefore, at exploring the ways in which Godot's functioning as a “desiring-machine” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009) may propel a radical re-organisation of the “full-bodied”³ character's immanence, and thus propose a de-centred, deterritorialized ontology of the subject.

In consistency with the purposes of schizoanalysis, the present paper attempts not to reduce *Waiting for Godot* to a univocal critical constellation, but to unfold the text's immanent polyvocality:

Reading a text is never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified [...] rather it is a productive use of the literary machine, a montage of desiring

² Deleuze and Guattari call the ‘socius’ the transcendental principles which subtend the constitution of the social order.

³ I am specifying the bodily materiality of the ‘character’ because Beckett's have been normally embodied by actors. It has not been until recently that the body has become central to performance and thus radically dismembered, dehumanized and freed from its “organicity”, radically re-organized in multiple becoming-woman, becoming-animal and becoming-minoritarian.

machines, a schizoid exercise that extracts from the text its revolutionary force (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 106)

2. TO SCHIZOPHRENIZE THE UNCONSCIOUS: *DESIRING-MACHINES AS SOCIAL-MACHINES*

The term “desiring-machine”, as Guattari explains, refers to the idea that desire is a machinic process invested in economic and social production:

Desire corresponds to a certain kind of production, and it is definitely not something undifferentiated. Desire is not an organic drive, or something that is operated by the second law of thermodynamics, dragged along inexorably by some kind of death drive. On the contrary, desire has infinite possibilities of assembly” (2007, p. 354)

In conceiving the machinic nature of desire, desiring-production becomes a process of constant assembling and re-assembling with infinite semiotic creativity. To understand desiring-production as a machine immanent to flows of capital and the socio-economic structuring of life, it is necessary to account for the critique that Deleuze and Guattari address to psychoanalysis’ Oedipal complex and the production of the unconscious as the factory of a molar-oedipalized subjectivity – which Beckett sets out to contest. Similar to the way Deleuze and Guattari theorize the production of subjectivity as side-effect of the connection between a machinic assemblage of enunciation and social machines elsewhere that presuppose it, desiring-machines are theorized in *Anti-Oedipus* as inextricable from social machines: “desiring-machines don’t exist outside the social machines that they form on a larger scale; and no social machines without the desiring-machines that inhabit them on a small scale” (2004a, p. 340).

Desire, conceived of as production, solely the production of fantasies, is articulated by psychoanalytic theory as a fundamental, ontological lack, “related to an extrinsic natural or social production [...] but producing an imaginary object that functions as a double of reality” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 25), and thus linked to a world external to reality itself: the imaginary realm. By setting the unconscious and the Oedipal-holy family as central vectors of desire-production, psychoanalysis “personologised, imaginarised, structuralised” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 55) its productive and social force, and consequently incarcerated into an economy of expression. Desire’s object is repressed within the nuclear family through the castration-

complex and henceforward repeated in morbid forms. The *Ur-castration* which enables the subject's entering the symbolic realm underpins a libidinal economy founded on a formal fissure, an ontological unviability. In contrast to the psychoanalytic move of tracing every desire's symptomatic deviation back to the "family romance" or the oedipal-triangle "mommy-daddy-me", Deleuze states in *Difference and Repetition*: "I do not repeat because I repress; I repress because I repeat" (1968, p. 20). He thus first foregrounds the schizo-entity that he will later put forward in *Anti-Oedipus*: a molecular being stripped off the Oedipal-complex and freed from the molar discourses that produce its subjectivity in terms of being and sameness.

Freud presented three processes whereby desire was codified and individualized: first, the revolutionary element whereby desiring-production was discovered; second, the cultural element which reduced everything to Oedipal theatrical representation (the return to *myth*); and the third element, "a formidable enterprise of absorption of surplus value" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 118). These syntheses territorialized desire in the domain of the unconscious imaginary and segregated it from social production. Deleuzoguattarian desiring-machines, however, are concerned with the *real* production of affective connections and flows of intensity: "The real is not impossible; on the contrary, within the real everything is possible, everything becomes possible. Desire does not express a molar lack within the subject; rather, the molar organization deprives desire of its objective being" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 27). Desire is, in this way, not to be found in its oedipal repression within the nuclear family – the Oedipal complex – but rather present everywhere in the form of productive processes connected with everything else: in the very socius of the capitalist-machine. Desire-production and social-machines are phenomenologically connected: desire's products, effects, intensities, produce reality. Desiring-production arises, then, as a machine immanent to flows of capital and the socio-economic structuring of our lives: "only fantasies are truly desired? What a perverse, human, all-too-human idea!" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 295). Thereby, a new radical politics of desire arises as foundational of the schizo-subject, opposing the neurotic prototype theorised in Freudian psychoanalysis. The operativity of the schizo-flows is to be found in their "deterritorialization of flows of desire in the molecular elements of desiring-production" (p. 314). Only through escaping the familial-Oedipal-machine as producer of subjectivity can we identify the radical politics of the Body without Organs,

and thus read Beckettian ‘characters’ as schizo-entities escaping the *neurotic-couch* of psychoanalysis.

2.1. De-coded flows: escaping the neurotic-couch.

Following the machinic indices of deterritorialization, the first *negative* task of schizoanalysis must be that of de-oedipalization and de-castration. If desire is found to be operating outside the Law-of-the-father, outside the Nation-State binary, and outside any transcendental, molar belief, the schizo-subject is that which, in his/her *nomad, orphan,* and atheist position, can effectively overcome the tyranny of the Oedipal configuration and its ideological implications. Namely, the ideological link between psychoanalysis and capitalism as “the mechanism for the absorption of surplus value” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 313). It is fundamental to understand Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of the social-machine as working alongside the oedipalizing-machine of psychoanalysis. They argue that, through the development of industrial society and the establishment of the capitalist system, the potentiality of desire has been invested in producing the socius and its molar aggregate(s): the capitalist-machine and the holy family. The task of schizoanalysis is that of discovering “the entire interplay of the desiring-machines and the repression of desire” (pp. 381-382), and to find desire’s molecular lines of escape. The economy of desire they present in *Anti-Oedipus* has as ultimate aim the production of a deterritorialized subject:

Desiring-production is first and foremost social in nature. The body without organs is not an original primordial entity that later projects itself into different sorts of socius [...] on the contrary: the body without organs is the ultimate residuum of a deterritorialized socius (2009, p. 33)

Family is the delegated agency of oedipalization: it represses desire while simultaneously ensuring the reproduction of society’s economic system. It is not that desire is Oedipal: on the contrary, it is the social repression of desire – the *statis* of libidinal energy (p. 118) – that incarcerates desire into society’s oedipal organization. The schizo-subject is a threat to familial harmony; a semiotic perversion consequent upon a process of breakdown and disintegration: “the more the process of production is led off course, brutally interrupted, the more the schizo-as-entity arises as a specific product” (p. 136).

2.2. Schizoanalysis: the positive task

The positive task of schizoanalysis is, as stated in *Anti-Oedipus*, to find “the functioning of his [*sic*] desiring-machines” (2009, p. 322), that is, the subject’s desiring-machines. The mechanism of schizoanalysis is activated by identifying the technical machines involved in desiring-production. In fact, the starting point for desiring-machines is the process of dispersion – of deterritorialization – defined in the previous subsection. The deviant schizo-subject must find its molecular elements, its particular objects. The molecular, singular elements of the desiring-machines are found in mutual independence and thus are *not* interdependent, but fully *disparate*. Deterritorialization produces a series of “schizoid sequences” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 324) which, far from acquiring coherence as interwoven elements, acquire full potentiality in their singularisation and dispersal. Such is the case in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* when Estragon’s shoe unleashes the ‘character’s’ corporeality as a machinic assemblage of haecceities:

ESTRAGON, *sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before.*

Enter Vladimir.

ESTRAGON: [*Giving up again.*] Nothing to be done. (1952/2010, p. 5)

Estragon’s inability to tie his shoelaces would seem to suggest a disabled, dysfunctional organism which has lost its wholeness in irreversible fragmentation. Instead of jumping into absurdist assumptions, however, I would rather suggest that a whole new paradigm of the body is at work. Constituted in their molecularization, the organs of the body no longer respond to the functions dictated by an organic organism: they have freed themselves from the molar organization that conceives them as partial objects of a “totality to come” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 324). As Deleuze states “dispersion has nothing to do with a lack, and constitutes their [the organs’] mode of presence in the multiplicity they form without unification or totalization” (2009, p. 324), and thus Estragon’s schizo-entity is conformed in a dislodged ontological structure. Estragon’s exhaustion, as Audronė Žukauskaitė has pointed out, suggests that all potentialities coexist in the virtual plane of immanence, where: “nothing is excluded, and nothing is preferred” (2015, p. 72). The synthesis whereby Vladimir and Estragon become full bodies without organs will be discussed in the following section.

2.3. *On our way to the Body without Organs*

As specified by Deleuze and Guattari (2009), the process of becoming-imperceptible follows three different syntheses: the first one is called the connective synthesis of production; the second one is the disjunctive synthesis of recording; the last one is the conjunction synthesis of consumption-consummation, which will ultimately produce the full body without organs.

The BwO is first produced in the passive synthesis of connection. In contrast to either/or binary oppositions, the connective synthesis of production displays an open formula – similar to the *differential* one that I have mentioned in the introduction – which contains a multiplicity of combinations and permutations: “either... or... or”. Hereby, differences are assembled as heterogeneous and do not cease to be differences. Deleuze and Guattari’s example is the molarity of our heterosexuality – produced by the socius as a molar aggregate– which coexists alongside the molecularity of our transsexuality or of our homosexuality. In contrast with psychoanalytical interpretation of the syntheses of the unconscious as resulting in the psychoanalytic Oedipal subject, the connective synthesis stands for the coupling of desiring-machines into an *anoedipal* flux. Žukauskaitė clarifies the obscure description provided by Deleuze and Guattari in the following way: “all these connections construct and create desiring-machines which, in their turn, increase the level of affectivity and desiring-production” (2015, p. 67)

The second synthesis – the disjunctive synthesis of recording – follows the schizophrenic deviant move away from the Oedipal triangle and “affirms the disjoined terms [...] without restricting one by the other or excluding the other from the one” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 76) An instantiation of this procedure is illustrated by Estragon’s schizo-shoe or the rope whereby Lucky becomes the masochistic actualization of power, and thus a molecular haecceity⁴ aggregated to Pozzo’s machinic assemblage of power:

POZZO: [*With magnanimous gesture.*] Let’s say no more about it. [*He jerks the rope.*] Up pig!” [*Pause.*] Every time he drops he falls asleep. [*Jerks the rope.*] Up hog! [*Noise of LUCKY getting up and picking up his baggage.*]

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari coin the term ‘haecceity’ to refer to a desubjectified mode of individuation: “A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date [...] They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and to be affected” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 304)

POZZO *jerks the rope.*] Back!” [*Enter LUCKY backwards.*] Stop! [LUCKY *stops.*] Turn! [LUCKY *turns.*] (Beckett, 1952/2010, p. 20)

This is the stage that disconnects one affective machine from another. This disconnection is not exclusive but inclusive, because all the affective machines coexist together. This disjunctive synthesis keeps Beckettian characters and events together: this is the plane of immanence where “everything divides, but into itself” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 76). The disjunctive synthesis differs from Hegelian synthesis, for instead of abolishing disjunctions, they persist and coexist on the same plane of immanence. The disjunction is also non-restrictive in that it can freely go across traditionally limited ‘bodies’ or individuals. In this light, Lucky and Pozzo would be viewed no longer as persons, but as “singularities flocking from all sides, evanescent agents of production” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 77), conforming a transpositional subject – which will be ultimately dissolved in *A Thousand Plateaus*, as I will discuss later on.

After the state of disjunctive synthesis there is the conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation, which reconnects the disjointed elements into the intensive flow of becoming and desiring-production. This is the stage where a new nomadic subject is created, not as a transcendent cause of the desiring-production, but as “an effect, a side-product” (Žukauskaitė, 2005, p. 65) In short, the conjunctive synthesis produces the nomadic subject and pure intensities: “the nomadic and polyvocal” (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, p. 105) qualities of the conjunction synthesis can circulate on the plane of the Body without Organs. In their recapitulation of the three syntheses, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the Nietzschean announcement of the father’s death always manifests the need for a belief, for a structure: “a belief by virtue of nonbelief” (2009, p. 107). According to this, the present schizo-reading of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* refuses to condemn Beckett’s staging of indeterminacy as a bare desert of ‘nothingness’ or an ultimate mourning for the loss of grand-narratives. Instead, a *productive* reading of desire’s anoedipal iterations is put forward. Engaging with Guattari’s micropolitics of desire, Vladimir and Estragon will not be viewed as homogeneous subjects in relation to an individual bodily unit, but as “subjective-objective assemblages of heterogeneous components” (2007, pp. 369-370) that, having escaped the ‘neurotic couch’ of oedipalization – that is, the investment of desire’s unconscious in the production of the social field – and having freed themselves from the molar aggregates that “subject it [desire] to transcendent laws, and make it serve

a higher social and cultural production” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 74) have entered the virtual field of the plane of immanence.

3. THE BODY WITHOUT ORGANS AND THE PLANE OF IMMANENCE

If in *Anti-Oedipus* subjectivity is deconstructed through schizophrenizing the unconscious and de-oedipalizing desire, in *A Thousand Plateaus* the deterritorialized subject of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is dissolved into the Body without Organs. The plane of immanence – the plateau where all becomings and transformations take place – is a plane of intensive connections and reconnections, a machinic complex of intensities and flows of desire. As “every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency” (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 183), the Body without Organs is in contact with its oppositional plane: the plane of organization – or the plane of transcendence – which subjects it to the molar strata of the organism, signification and subjectification. I find this notion particularly productive in relation to Beckett’s presentation of dis-embodied ‘characters’, for instead of viewing them as dysfunctional or de-naturalized, mutilated beings, it makes it possible to conceive them as producers of a new political ontology: one that is constituted by flows of intensities, by displacement, by a constant reassembling of planes of intensity.

In the plane of consistency desire is not defined by exterior transcendent causes: “desire no longer lacks anything but fills itself and constructs its own field of immanence” (2013, p. 181). This field of immanence disturbs the dichotomy between inside and outside, external, inner, or nonself: the unconsumable body without organs allows all intensities to pass through, it is the “surface for the recording of the entire process of production of desire” (2009, p. 11). It is no longer an ontology of *dasein* but a fluid ontology of becoming:

Instead of speaking of a *subject*, a subject of enunciation, or of Freud’s psychic agencies, I prefer to speak of a ‘collective assemblage of enunciation’. A collective assemblage does not correspond either to an individuated entity or to a predetermined social entity. Subjectivity is produced by assemblages of enunciation (Guattari, 2007, p. 43).

Subjectivity is, thus, re-considered as an ensemble of collective instances produced by the arrangement of processes of individuation. An example of this machinic process would be: the collective assemblage of enunciation presupposes the assemblage of

language and words which, at the same time, presupposes a social machine that selects and uses them – connective synthesis. Once the whole is defined by the parts which independently belong to it, the disjunctive synthesis takes place and the molecular aggregates – the components of the machine – are divided in a non-exclusive, amalgamating disjunction. At last, the desiring-machines are reconnected to other desiring-machines and allow intensities to pass freely through them, constituting the plane of immanence of the body without organs, where no distinctions between natural and artificial, nor inside and outside are made (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 311).

3.1.Nomadology

Deleuze and Guattari articulate nomadic identity as a dynamism or ambition against the collective body of the State. They qualify of State-nology the monopolization of organs of power, the sending out local representatives, and the way the State “gives thought a form of interiority” and endows it with a universalizing tendency (2013, pp. 430-437). The nomad wields war against the State’s *pouvoir* and sovereignty: “the *imperium* of true thinking” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 436), and its classical image of thought: myth and logos – the foundation of true thinking and its legislative and juridical organization. Nomadic thought, they argue, rides difference and exteriority instead of interiority and identification. In this, the notion of *speed*, as defined by Deleuze: “a body whose irreducible parts occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex, with the possibility of springing up at any time” (2013, p. 473) becomes productive for thinking the nomad’s in-between, dynamic locatedness. The nomad’s life is defined by its never-ending trajectory in the *intermezzo*: “the nomadic trajectory distributes people (or animals) in an open space, one that is indefinite and noncommunicating” (2013, p. 443). Opposed to the migrant, which pursues an ultimate reterritorialization, the nomad is the “Deterritorialized par excellence” (p. 444), precisely because he does not seek anchoring nor identification. Rosi Braidotti develops Deleuze and Guattari’s “War Machine” – their denomination for nomadology – further as a writing practice, a political ontology, and an aesthetics (see Braidotti 1994), and similarly to Deleuze’s *intermezzo*, she puts emphasis on the nomad’s “radical nonbelonging and outsideness” (1994, p. 16). Braidotti’s polyglot draws from Deleuzoguattarian nomadism in that it poses being in between languages as crucial for the deconstruction of the illusion of a unitary, self-transparent subject:

The necessity of not having control over language, of being a foreigner in one's own tongue, in order to draw speech to oneself and bring something incomprehensible into the world (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 440)

In this respect, the distressing estrangement effect on *Waiting for Godot's* non-sense mumbling would support the idea of a subject which has become defamiliarized with the same language-systems that produce it, suggesting, perhaps, a “parodic” refusal of the State-apparatuses’ discourses on molar – or oedipal – subjectivity. What really is at stake in *Waiting for Godot's* “absurdity” is not just a “defamiliarization technique” – as Aston and Savona suggest (1991) – but a resistance to micro-fascism’s scattered hegemonies, that is: the resistance to a State organization of thought whereby the subject is an internalization of a universal truth. In his preface to *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Michel Foucault argues that Deleuze and Guattari’s collective work is a critical endeavour against fascist systems. By this he means not just Hitler’s or Mussolini’s state fascism, “but also the fascism that is in us all, in our heads [...] that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us” (2009, p. xiii). In this regard, Deleuze and Guattari’s aim is clear: they are not the new Hegel, nor do they offer a new all-encompassing theory that can supposedly sustain thought in its various manifestations. Instead, they put forward a theoretical machinery that helps us to de-stabilize and constantly de-centre the power-structures that both reside within and produce us. *Anti-Oedipus* is a *modus operandi* – in Foucault’s words: “the first book of ethics written in France in quite a long time” (p. xiii.), a theoretical tool of de-individualization that seeks to reassemble us in a collective, anti-Oedipal, non-fascist subject: “*Anti-Oedipus* is the introduction to the non-fascist life” (p. xiii).

3.2. Micropolitics: the molar and the molecular

Regarding the State-noology described in the former section, what I attempt to introduce hereby is the contingency of two coexisting planes, the molar and the molecular, whereby the Deleuzian schizo-entity or nomadic subject is constituted as a de-centred entity. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze states that “every society, and every individual, are plied by both segmentarities simultaneously: one molar, the other molecular” (emphasis on the original, 2013, p. 249), thus emphasizing that both domains are inextricably linked. The configuration of the Deleuzoguattarian political ontology is directed, firstly, at dismantling the molar institutions from which we are always afraid to be detached of. The molar, arborescent organization of the subject’s plane of consistency

is what gives us a “well-defined status” (2013, p. 265) and a codification into the social machines. In my introduction I gave an outline of the dialectics between the molar and the molecular by posing Godot as a conflation of the two. Its physical absence deems Vladimir and Estragon’s existence a violent mourning for an apparent pre-ontic meaning – and thus acquires a mythological state – but, at the same time, it establishes a series of “lines of flight, which are molecular” (2013, p. 252), namely: Vladimir and Estragon’s re-organization in a virtual plane of becoming. It seems, therefore, evident that the Vladimir-Estragon-Godot society points at an ultimate collapse and involution of the ‘characters’ corporeality.

The difference is not at all between the social and the individual (or interindividual), but between the molar realm of representations, individual or collective, and the molecular realm of beliefs and desires in which the distinction between the social and the individual loses all meaning” (2013, p. 256)

Along these lines, then, Godot foregrounds the tension between the molar and the molecular in so far as it is a two-fold structure: both a symbolic, mythical element, and a machinic, real element of desiring-production. Deleuze’s conceptualization of what Foucault calls “micro-fascisms” – that is, our desire for the same power that exploits us – is briefly exposed in *A Thousand Plateaus as microtextures*: “microtextures – and not masochism – are what explain how the oppressed can take an active role in oppression” (2013, p. 263). To instantiate the process whereby molar, fascist institutions engender their own noology in individuals, Guattari provides a practical example:

Everything that is produced by capitalistic subjectivation – everything that comes to us through language, the family, and the facilities around us – is not just a question of ideas or of transmission of meanings by way of signifying statements [...] It has to do with systems of direct connection between the great machines of production – of social control – and the psychic agencies that define the way of perceiving the world (2007, p. 37)

The collective assemblage Vladimir-Estragon shows evident proof of not fitting into the Godot-molar regime: they have become sceptical of his arrival and their waiting has become consequently pure intransitive becoming, for there is no transcendental cause justifying it. They have constituted themselves – through the disjunctive synthesis – as

Deterritorialized beings *per excellence*, or as Deleuze calls it: “as war machines, following other models, another dynamism, a nomadic ambition, over against the State” (2013, p. 426).

ESTRAGON: Oh yes, let’s go far away from here.

VLADIMIR: We can’t.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We have to come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON: What for?

VLADIMIR: To wait for Godot.

ESTRAGON: Ah! [*Silence.*] He didn’t come?

VLADIMIR: No.

ESTRAGON: And now it’s too late.

VLADIMIR: Yes, now it’s night.

ESTRAGON: And if we dropped him? [*Pause.*] If we dropped him? (Beckett, 1952/2010, p. 90)

The line of escape suggested in this passage recalls the Foucauldian movement towards *vagabondage* which, as described in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), refers to a process instigated on the molecular level which consequently involves a turning towards a world of real existence. In a Deleuzoguattarian threshold, this deviant, nomadic move against State power would be fined as a “revolutionary tendency on the molecular plane” (Uhlmann, 1999, p. 68) What follows is a movement towards becoming-imperceptible: the plane on which the body without organs acquires full potentiality.

3.3. Becoming-imperceptible

Žukauskaitė defines the process of becoming-imperceptible as a “means to disorganize the body, to dismantle the system of signification, and to renounce the subject and subjectivity” (2015, p. 9). As described formerly, the molecularization of the Self to which Žukauskaitė refers to implies an escaping the over-codification of the State-nology. Once the prison of the Oedipal-subject has been dismantled, what follows is an opening of the body’s cartography to a series of speeds and affects that uproot the organs from the hierarchization assigned to them by the molar idea of the organism. As Todd May suggests, all becomings – animal, molecular, imperceptible – are affirmations of the ontology of becoming: ‘they call us back to the becoming of difference as the fundamental

non-ground of specific identities' (May in Cull, 2009, p. 7). At such a point of de-codification, the Body without Organs follows a "creative involution" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 278) that is: a heterogeneous form of evolution, which radically re-organizes it as an intensive spatium through which all intensities can pass. The BwO is "the matrix of intensity = 0" (2013, p. 178) that is no longer in need of an arborescent structure to sustain it. The renunciation to a transcendental cause – Godot as *myth* – re-establishes desire no longer as lacking something, but "filling itself and constructing its own field of immanence" (2013, p. 181).

Becoming-imperceptible should not be interpreted as self-annihilation but as a movement towards a de-subjectivized and non-organic immanent force. It is no longer about the body's organization but of its intensive composition; according to its movements and speeds, it will affect in more or less intensity other machinic assemblages. In this plane is where their affect theory is developed: Deleuze and Guattari equate Spinoza's "capacity" to *latitude* – a term borrowed from physics –, conceived of as "the affects of which the body is capable at a given degree of power" (2013, p. 299). Whereas latitude is the total sum of the intensive affects the body is capable of at a given degree, longitude refers to its movements of speed and slowness. It is by these two parameters that Deleuze and Guattari articulate a body-cartography of becoming.

Becoming-imperceptible is the last synthesis whereby the molar subject is dissolved, it is the "immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula" (2013, p. 325). Composed of haecceities, flows of intensities and assemblages, the body without organs allows affects to pass freely and constitute it. The subject becomes, consequently, re-configured in what Guattari calls a "collective assemblage of enunciation" (2007, p. 43), encompassing not just individuals or persons but also haecceities – a kind of mode of individuation different from that of a person, a subject or a thing –, which set in motion a series of relations of movement and rest (longitude and latitude). The process of individuation of a subject involves, in the plane of the body without organs, a set of "nonsubjectified affects", which Deleuze and Guattari call ethology: the science that studies what a body can do, what its affects are (2013, pp. 300-306). It involves the intersection(s) of certain degrees, certain intensities or haecceities; the schizo-subject becomes a proliferation of *n*-becomings, of multiple assemblages. The notion of the Body Without Organs becomes highly productive when theorizing the machinic assemblages involved in the production of the theatrical event. The becoming-differential of

performance and its multiple actualizations proliferate in ever-new desiring-machines: the irreducibility of the performance's *n*-becomings is what I will try to develop in the next section.

4. BECKETTIAN INDETERMANENCE IN *WAITING FOR GODOT*

It is remarkable that Beckett sets up an undelimited, undetermined space of performativity for the 'characters' to evolve. The very fact that there is no symbolic reference to a recognizable, mappable reality brings about Ihab Hassan's notion of *indetermanence*, this one being the conjunction of 'immanence' and 'indeterminacy' – namely: "decreation, disintegration, decenterment, de-totalization [...]" (1987, p. 217). In such indeterminacy – even of iterability – is where the full-potentiality of immanence can operate. "A country road. A tree. Evening" (Beckett, 1952/2010, p. 5) gives rise to *unsettling* setting with no permanent, central reference point from which to articulate reality. In a non-place where all possibilities coexist in potentiality without any structure or plan, we are dealing with the plane of immanence, where all "disjunctions subsist [...]" but the disjointed terms are affirmed in their nondecomposable distance" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 153). Conceiving Beckettian 'characters' as *becomings* does not just re-shape the cartesian, molar notion of the subject, but re-shapes all the chain of signifiers tied to it: the language-machine, the social-machine, in short, all molar strata constructing the subject. In doing so, the collapse of the signifying system – or, in other words, its unproductive state – moves from the conjunctures of space and time – which are basic to our notion of humanity – to broader social bodies: language and the articulation of subjectivity. If we understand language not only as a semiotic machine but also as a component of a broader social machine that produces bodies, the corporeal *dismemberment* is just the effect of a larger collapse.

ESTRAGON: And all that was yesterday, you say?

VLADIMIR: Yes, of course it was yesterday.

ESTRAGON: And here where we are now?

VLADIMIR: Where else do you think? Do you not recognize the place?

ESTRAGON: [*Suddenly furious.*] Recognize! What is there to recognize? All my lousy life I've crawled about in the mud! And you talk to me about scenery! (Beckett, 1952/2010, p. 56)

The fact that external recognition is unfeasible for generating knowledge points at the dissolution of their molar subjectivity, at the schizophrenization of the traditional phenomenological body, namely: the complete deterritorialization of the ‘characters’ ontology. The real is considered as that which differs from itself rather than as any self-same presence that is doomed to be distorted in mimetic activity of representation. Laura Cull holds onto this idea by comparing the becoming of the theatrical body with Deleuze’s clothed repetition – the differential power of repetition –, and deeming the performance act a full Body without Organs in itself: “theatre’s bodies are not just mediated by the embedded systems of representation, but always differentiated in their own way of becoming” (2012, p. 7). In these lines, life – the scenario – appears as essentially connected to its longitude and latitude: its extension through space and time. Estragon’s burlesque statement points, meta-reflexively, at the individual/collective third body of the stage’s intercorporeal field and breaks immediately with the illusive notion that theatre articulates a mimetic representation of reality. Becoming has acquired primacy over representation. Beckettian ‘tragedy’ is not to be thought as an acknowledgement of life’s lack of meaning, but as the affirmation of life’s impossibility of transcending its contingency and self-creative power.

4.1. Full bodies without organs: Vladimir and Estragon’s virtuality

Analysing the implications suggested by punctuation in Deleuze’s article: “Immanence: A life...”, Giorgio Agamben points at the virtual domain contained in the ellipsis dots. In his lines, the indefiniteness – or indeterminacy – of the punctuation suggests the “transcendental determinability of immanence as singular life, its absolutely virtual nature and its definition through this virtuality alone” (1999, p. 224). The potentiality of the incompleteness accomplished by this “atactic” (p. 222) articulation, he argues, does not refer to a lack or a suspension in meaning, but rather a radical transformation of the notion of ‘life’ itself, from which the ellipsis dots become inextricable. Incompleteness, indefiniteness and indeterminacy acquire a reality on their own: the determination of immanence, or the full virtuality of Deleuze’s plane of immanence. In regards to this, it is remarkable to quote Deleuze’s statement on the implications of the indeterminate pronoun “a”, whereby “children use it not as something indeterminate but, on the contrary, as an individuating function within a collectivity” (2013, p. 308). By this he criticizes linguistics’ tendency to personologise haecceities – desubjected processes of

individuation –, affects and molecular intensities, and foregrounds the potentiality of immanence.

Laura Cull has argued that Deleuze’s immanence is not a call to the dissolution or disintegration of the body, but rather a call for “participation, multiplication and extension of the human body” (2012, p. 7). In these lines, the Deleuzoguattarian ontological framework articulates Beckettian characters as fluctuant bodies without organs, traversed by a tendency towards becoming-imperceptible that raises the question of life as a non-organic power. It is in their dismemberment, in their de-humanization that the desiring-machines arise as productive mechanisms of meaning-production: “the genesis of the desiring-machine lies in the opposition of the process of production of the desiring-machines and the non-productive stasis of the Body without Organs” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 8)

POZZO: I don’t seem to be able ... [*Long hesitation.*]... to depart.

ESTRAGON: Such is life. (Beckett, 1952/2010, p.44)

Removed from a recognisable place, Beckettian ‘characters’ emerge as schizophrenic entities; they acquire a near-catatonic status as reminders that there is no original primordial entity called ‘organism’ or ‘individuum’, but what has been defined as the immanency of becoming: “there is only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together” (Deleuze, 2009, p. 9).

Vladimir and Estragon’s de-humanization is translated to an organic dismemberment of the body. The very notion of humanity is put on the ropes by the mechanism of stripping off basic defining coordinates – such as time and space, which are continually reversed – in order to expose the ‘real’ substratum of their existence: a tendency towards becoming-imperceptible. Whether Beckett exposes a humanitarian crisis or presents a new constellation of thought is not as relevant as the way in which he analyses human condition as an assembly of desires and fluctuations.

Subjectivation is part of a gear assembly of affects circulating through deterritorialized bodies – desiring-machines that produce one another and progress, circularly, in its own continued re-definition. As Deleuze puts it: “the subject is born of each state in the series, it is continually reborn of the following state that determines him at a given moment, consuming-consummating all these states that cause him to be born and reborn” (2009, p. 20). No wonder Patrick Stewart – who appeared alongside Ian

McKellen as the lead duo of Vladimir and Estragon in Broadway – affirmed that the more you embrace all the contrasts and the less you try to link them in a logical linearity, the better you understand the diverse nature of the play (McKellen, 2013).

The play rejects the plane of organization of traditional theatrical teleology, conceiving the *fabula/sujet* parameters of Aristotelian drama as cornerstone of theatre, in a way that Brian Richardson puts as the following: “in many of Beckett’s plays, the characters’ speeches and disclosures are so oblique, fragmented, contradictory, or unreliable that a single consistent story cannot be exhumed” (2007, p. 59). *Waiting for Godot* survives in the margins of textuality, it lives by the questions it arises, by the referential voids it produces: it unfolds through its ever-new becoming(s) in the form of haecceities. *Waiting for Godot*’s potentiality of differential becoming(s) is linked by Žukauskaitė to Deleuze’s notion of ‘time-image’ – the equivalent of the plane of immanence in Deleuze’s film theory –, that is, a plane consisting of “simultaneously virtual and actual, composed of different and multiplied time dimensions” (Žukauskaitė, 2015, p. 73). This would harmonize all possible interpretations of the play to its univocity of being – a differential, processual, immanent “oneness” of life. The multiple becomings of *Waiting for Godot* are best seen in its vast staged performances, for it is in the practice of mis-en-scène that the text’s meanings are crystallized in materiality:

“the staging creates yet another additional dimension of dissemination, dispersing and cancelling textual significance in a field of heterogeneous materials, structures and processes which in turn create new and largely unpredictable meanings” (Lehmann, 2007, p. 37).

Susan Sontag talks about the direct impact the play had in Sarajevo during the siege by the Serbian forces in 1993; how Haris Pašović – a Sarajevo theatre and film director – convinced her to direct *Waiting for Godot*, for it “seemed written for, and about, Sarajevo” (1994, p. 88). Similarly, Jan Jönson – who staged *Waiting for Godot* at San Quentin’s prison in 1985 – states that the inmates’ “standing behind the bars, just listening to silence” (Reilly, 1987) makes them really understand the language of the play. All layers of *Waiting for Godot*’s performative virtuality coexist and conform the play’s own Body without Organs. It is just in conceiving it as a semiotic continuum transformed in time and space that the play can be read over and over again.

What aligns this paper as a deconstructive insight into *Waiting for Godot* is outlined by a discourse that runs against systematic or intended sense, and especially against a reified authorial intention. Deconstruction and Deleuzian machinic assemblages, reveal the infinitely subtle ways by which the play's complexity is characterised: a constant deferring of ultimate, transcendental meaning. In this sense, *Waiting for Godot* inscribes itself into what Martin Midekke and Christopher Henke have specified as postmodern aesthetics of drama:

A fascination for self-reflexive, metadramatic modes which reflect upon epistemological uncertainty, ambiguity, and blanks; a mistrust of totality which results in fragmented formal structures: collages, cut-up forms, paradox, pastiche, parody -signifiers that disperse unidirectional attributions of fixed meanings, intentions, or propositions (p. 13).

In this Beckettian non-place, bodies are disjointed not just from transcendental meaning – or molar aggregates –, but also from their own organicity. The social machine is now incredulous of 'metanarratives' and thus conscious of its immanent and contingent condition. Meaning is not already there, *être là*, but rather fabricated through processes of 'différance' and repetition. It is the aim of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis to set up a new ontology for a displaced lodging of referentiality and substance. Thought becomes an element of exteriority that does not lodge itself in an ordered interiority, nor reposes on identity, but that contemplates and rides difference.

4.2. Godot as a desiring-machine

Waiting for Godot's experimental staging has been qualified as an expression of post-war existential anguish (see Herbert Blau, 1987), as an obsessively repetitive play on human's absurdity (see Esslin, 1989), even a "estrangement" device of the linguistic sign-system (see Aston and Savona, 1991). However, Beckett's refusals to establish any kind of determining interpretation points at his rejection of "dominant significations and orders of subjection", as well as his preference for "incorporeal transformations and corporeal disarticulations" (Žukauskaitė, pp. 3-4). His refusal to incarcerate the text's multiple virtual possibilities goes in hand with Derrida's conception of meaning as a molecular element constantly displaced and postponed. Vladimir and Estragon's world is, formally, a circular continuum offering no possibilities of enunciation beyond being

stuck in the waiting road; first and second act end with a time-space reversal, both in the same way:

ESTRAGON: Well, shall we go?

VLADIMIR: Yes, let's go.

[*They do not move*] (p. 51)

A few casuistic inquiries may emerge from this – what is it, then, what keeps them in motion; in constant walks out of the stage, peeing, shouting and wanting to hang each other? Is the evidence of life's contingency unbearable? Derrida suggests that the worst form of injustice is the fixed presence of the present, the life which is fully present to itself which therefore has no conception of death and no desire to hear it spoken of: no conception of what is past or what is to come (Derrida in Uhlmann, 1993, p. 278) The mechanics of the waiting status, however, constitute a *desiring-machine* organized by an abstract machine: the physical absence of Godot. As Deleuze and Guattari define in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the plane of immanence or the Body Without Organs is organized by abstract machines. Assemblages and their organizing principles are the structure of the virtual (2013). These do not conform to the Platonic model of thought – whereby signs and ideas are defined negatively in regards of the real: always not the 'real' thing – but operate without resemblance to it, organizing, and actualizing the real itself. Illustrative of this is the relation drawn at the first section of the paper between desiring-production and social production, whereby desire is not foundational of an imaginary realm – and a necessary deviant of the Real, as stated in Lacanian theory – but a machine that produces sociality and the real itself. In these lines, I would rather reformulate the 'naturalistic' questions posed at the beginning with a more rhizomatic ones concerning the operativity of the Godot-assemblage in producing real effects on the plane of immanence and articulating Vladimir and Estragon as potential nomadic subjectivities.

As I have argued in the first section of this paper, desiring-machines are eminently social machines; the socius codifies and inscribe flows of desire. In this, the productivity of Godot's absence is found in the schizo-flows traversing Vladimir and Estragon and disjoining them from the coordinates of space and time. The mechanics of the waiting status are productive in as much as Godot's absence remains intact. In this way, desire is found to be functioning "not as a desire-lack, but as a plenitude" (Harper and Savat, 2016, p. 26). There are no separate realms – that is, the imaginary, the symbolic and the Real – and thus Godot has no more essence than Vladimir and Estragons' awaiting. Throughout

the ‘characters’ dismemberment, two things happen: firstly, the notion of a fixed subjectivity is dissolved in favour of becoming-imperceptible – as described in the third sub-section of this paper –; secondly, I would argue, Godot is re-framed in the libidinal investments of desiring-machines, that is, not defined as a lack in meaning or a representational void to be filled, but as a full producer of the real itself. In so far as his [*sic*] ‘absence’ is productive, it will prompt haecceities and intensities to move and *affect* not just the ‘characters’ corporeality, but also the performance’s space-machine: the stage, the audience, the lightning, the sound-system, and the actors are not separate individualities anymore, but “already entering into new *agencements*” (Lehmann, 2007, p. 44).

Beckett’s constellation of ‘characters’ is a radical objection to modernist dramatic tradition and a postulation for immanent ontology and ethics; a new mode of thought stripped off its old metaphysical beliefs and transcendent epistemology that can finally embrace the ‘unproductive’, the ‘unamendable’, the schizophrenic entities that conform the assemblage of our own dis-placed subjectivity.

4.3. Desire-principle as the ultimate conjunctive synthesis

Alan Badiou has located the vitality of Beckett’s work in his determination to preserve the desire-principle that keeps ‘characters’ in constant movement. He argues that, in the first part of Beckett’s oeuvre, his ‘characters’ are reduced to the three basic functions of human activity: movement and rest, being, and the imperative of language – or “la imposibilidad del silencio (p. 17).⁵ Engaging with what has been previously described as the ‘characters’ *vagabondage*, Badiou emphasizes that their dismemberment – what has been theorized as an inclusive-disjunctive synthesis consequently producing a Body without Organs – is an instantiation of the essence of movement itself:

No solamente la errancia debe ser separada poco a poco de todo sentido aparente, sino que, como se trata de presentar la esencia del movimiento, eso que en el movimiento es movimiento, Beckett va a destruir de paso todos los medios, todos los apoyos exteriores, todas las superficies sensibles de la movilidad (2007, p. 18)

⁵ I will quote the Spanish translation of Alan Badiou’s *Beckett, l’incroyable désir* (1995), for it is the only one available at the moment.

What he coins as “*ascesis metódica*” (2007, p. 17) undertakes the synthesis of all human functions to its irreducible functionality, which is to be found in the full collapse of Vladimir and Estragon’s mobility. Movement becomes, in the case of *Waiting for Godot*, externally inextricable from immobility. In contrast with Badiou’s statement that the almost larval ‘humanity’ of Beckettian characters conceals the real questions of subjectivity – such as the relation between language and being – a Deleuzoguattarian reading of this unproductive state of bodies would point rather to a deterritorialization of the logocentric *socius* of human activity, and thus would incorporate the larval, the static and exhausted elements of an ascetic humanity – in Badiou’s terms – into the very cartography of the Body without Organs. After the reduction of all human secondary qualities to the basic functions of a nearly-catatonic corporeality, what remains the motor of Beckettian desiring-machines is, according to Badiou: “un amor poderoso por la obstinación humana, por el infatigable deseo” (2007, p. 63).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In response to schizoanalysis’ real question(s), that is: “what drives your own desiring-machines? What is their functioning? What are the syntheses into which they enter and operate?” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, p. 290), I would first argue that Godot operates as the molar strata to which the full Bodies without Organs are linked to, and thus is the starting point of desire production. Given that the molecular revolution cannot take place in segregation with the molar strata – “social struggles are molar and molecular at the same time” (Guattari, 2007, p. 179), Vladimir and Estragon’s waiting is ultimately a productive deferral of transcendent meaning in so far as they dislodge Godot’s centrality in their own subjectivation-machineries. In other words, if power manifests itself in the field of micro-cells – as Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* (1995) – and the molarity of power is organized, micro-dimensionally, in the form of processes of singularization – the ‘subject’ as we know it being one of them – the revolutionary force of Vladimir and Estragon’s schizo-flows is found in the failure of the Godot-machine itself, not outside of it. What is at stake, therefore, is not the causality of the waiting – being thus Godot’s arrival an end-cause of the process – but rather the lines of escape the waiting produces, that is: the becoming-imperceptible and becoming-molecular of the ‘characters’ themselves. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: “there is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding Machine” (2013, p. 252). It would be an error to view Godot’s molarity as an

opposition interceding in Vladimir and Estragon's processual becoming(s), for it is precisely from where the 'characters' can emerge as nomadic deviations, as molecular disruptions of the abstract-machine that subjects them. Their waiting becomes, being extricated from its linguistical transitivity, an intransitive process of ever-new becoming. Just as *becoming* and desire "lack a subject distinct from themselves" (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, p. 278)), Vladimir and Estragon's waiting is pure immanent transformation: not a 'waiting for' – an absent, unattainable thing to be found outside the 'waiting' – but a waiting productive in its intransitivity.

The functioning of the desiring-machine(s) follows an unhinged temporality – as seen in the scarcely perceptible transition from the first act to the second one: "*Next Day. Same Time. Same Place*" (Beckett, 1952/2010, p. 52) – and hence escapes the teleology of progressive action, a movement which Žukauskaitė defines as a "total distortion of representation" (2005, p. 5). Repetition replaces representation and difference replaces identity. In this light, "Beckettian laughter" (Žukauskaitė, 2005, p. 16) is directed at mocking the Modernist postulates of theatrical tradition that conceive the performative event as a 'representation' or 'imitation' of the Real. Beckettian "theatre of metamorphoses and permutations" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 68) leaves behind the world of representation and identity in favour of a becoming-virtual of performance, namely: "the process of actualization following the plane [the plane of immanence] that gives it its particular reality" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 31). The virtuality of *Waiting for Godot* is crystallized in its immanency – as Cull (2012) has argued: all theatre is immanent. The body of the theatrical event extends its affective possibilities across space and time, creating and re-creating full bodies without organs through continuous processes of becoming-differential. Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialized, anoedipal libidinal economy enables Cull to argue that "representation is real creation, not a second-order of being, forever detached from and inadequate to some 'thing' that is represented" (2012, p. 5), and thus is the triggering point for performance philosophy to embrace the performative potential of the Deleuzoguattarian Body without Organs:

It is a question of making a Body without Organs upon which intensities pass, self and other – not in the name of a higher level of generality but by virtue of singularities that can no longer be said to be personal, and intensities that can no longer be said to be extensive. The field of immanence is not internal to the self, but neither does it come from an external self or a nonself. Rather,

it is like the absolute Outside that knows no Selves because interior and exterior are equally a part of the immanence in which they have fused (2013, p. 182).

Agamben's reflection on the virtuality of Deleuze's ellipsis dots (1996, pp. 220-302) is central for feminist post-humanist critical schools, in that it renders all dichotomies unproductive constructs. The conceptualisation of *bare life* – in contrast to 'politically qualified life' – as well as oppositions such as *zoe* / *bios* are rendered impossible by Deleuze's univocity of being and philosophy of immanence. As Agamben puts it:

The plane of immanence thus functions as a principle of virtual indetermination, in which the vegetative and the animal, the inside and the outside and even the organic and the inorganic, in passing through one another, cannot be told apart (1996, p. 233)

Life as immanence and immanence as *a* life, as theorised by Deleuze, become of central importance in Braidotti's nomadic ethics and theorisation of a transpositional subject, as well as for contemporary performance philosophy (see Cull, 2012). In displacing the notion of life from the concept of 'the human' – which, according to Braidotti (2006) has been colonized by phallogocentrism – the Body without Organs becomes fundamental for thinking both the political ontology of the subject and the *body* of performance as an increasingly prosthetic, biocultural, and technologized art.

Deleuze and Guattari's molecularization of the self, as we have seen, constitutes a broader critique to the dominant social-political forces that operate within and produce the thinking-rational subject of the standard majority – understood in the Deleuzoguattarian anumerical sense of a standardized parameter “in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian” (2013, p. 339). The conceptualization of the Body without Organs' full immanency is the point of departure for Rosi Braidotti's nomadic ethics, which addresses the problematics around the ethical implications of a non-unitary vision of the subject and the processes involved in its deterritorialization. By considering the subject a product of social forces, a result of subjectivation-machineries, the boundaries between the singular self and society are blurred. Everything becomes, in fact, a machine assembled to another machine: there is no such thing as separated spheres. As Agamben states: “it is not certain that, in the

process [of tracing a genealogy of 'life'], political philosophy and epistemology will be able to maintain their present physiognomy and difference with respect to ontology" (p. 239). In this light, the quest for delimiting a contemporary philosophy of performance is intimately engaged with the re-configuration of the biopolitical dichotomy between human/life, *bios/zoe*, interiority and exteriority. Beckettian virtual indeterminacy – as this paper has tried to configure along with a schizoanalytic reading of his 'characters' – constitute one of the starting points for a radical critique of anthropocentrism, as well as the triggering point for a philosophy of performance that encompasses, finally, the ontology of a nomadic, schizo-subject and the ethics of the theatrical event as a virtual, intensive Body without Organs.

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