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Nonnormative Ethics

The dynamic of transformation

PhD. Cultural Studies
Goldsmiths, University of London
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March 2018

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

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Signed:

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Summary

In this thesis I propose to address *trans* as nonnormative ethical formation. In the current definition (Stryker, 2008) *trans* is defined as a movement outside of constraints that encapsulate normative genders. Preciado (2012) argues that *trans* involves the constitution of a *soma-political* project, beyond identity.

As opposed to theories that describe identity formation as aspirational, the thesis extends Aristotle's arguments for ethical formation in terms of interactive engagement within environments through an agents' *dunamis* – the powers of its Soul (Lee 1992). The limits of the Aristotelian model will be overcome by use of Anzaldúa (1987) and Lugones (2003). The navigation away from imposed normative environments through agential action will be shown to lead to nonnormative *logos*: a formational logic shaping perception, action, and practical reflection culminating in practical truth. This reading enables centering *somatechnical* processes (Sullivan 2009) as generative of forms of life.

Wittgenstein suggests that agential logic informs forms of life, shaping validity of both principles and decisions. I use this insight to claim that the *polis* is ordered by a single logic that informs norms. I propose nonnormative ethics to encompass agents with differing *logos*. Reading *eudaimonia* as the demon standing behind the agent, I will suggest that nonnormative ethics takes place outside of the *polis* on the 'demonic grounds' (McKittrick 2015, Wynter 1990). Nonnormative ethical connections are *multilogical* and are bridged by collective codes.

I will draw from Glissant (2002) to make a case for acknowledging agential opacity away from a pathologising claim to interiority. I will argue for non-antagonistic playfulness and loss (Lugones, 2003) as keys to the emergence of nonnormative codes enabling shared forms of life. I propose that the distinction with the codes of the *polis* is the willingness to share loss, instead of exploitation.

The thesis makes the case that bodily change is central to changing one's understanding of, and relation to one's surroundings. Furthermore, I argue such change is a collective process, and that emerging epistemologies are connected to contextual ethics.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis proposes an argument about structures of formation of new forms of life. The focus lies on moving away from the norm, and thus to become trans. Trans, here, does not limit itself to gender, while I will discuss trans as the formation of a *nonnormative logos*. I will repurpose the Aristotelian term *logos* to sum up the formation of the *ensouled* body. The structural patterns in and against which this formation takes place are discussed as ethics. Ethical structures connect agents in their practices, but also transcend individual agents, and more importantly they are open to modification in practice. The question to practical change is at the heart of ethics. Trans agency is directly concerned with change, both agential as well as relational, and I will therefore discuss trans as ethics. I will propose the thesis that trans is the formation of a life, and because this life is nonnormative – as a nonnormative ethics.

Ethical change emerges as problem in rule following accounts, in motivations for people to follow the rules, or invent new ones, when the need arises. If rules are taken more broadly as norms, that allow for measures of variation, the problem of adaption arises, with its connected issue of retaining agency, such as Aristotle brings to the table. Aristotle, in the *polis* – the city state of Athens in 300 B.C. – can be said to ask of agents to reinvent the wheel: to transform oneself in well-functioning members of the political community. This thesis is about changing ethics, however, and not about politics: a concern with social order and questions concerning just authority and the problem of transgression of order and social disorder (Robinson 2016). I will propose in chapters three and four, that it might be a better way of thinking to leave the *polis* behind, and relinquish the idea of political order, because it is based primarily on exclusion. The ethical focus of this thesis concerns itself indirectly with the Socratic question ‘*how should I live?*’ (Williams 1985, 1), but focuses instead on a modification: ‘*how can I do something else?*’

This question will be thought through from the starting point of trans formation: making a form of life outside of the *polis*. This new form of life is not aspirational: it does not aim to adapt to going forms, which is where its anti-political commitment stems from. However, as I shall discuss in chapter three, agents

might need to use current forms as camouflage. To propose new forms of life as ethics indicates also that it is the practice of agents that will be leading this change, instead of focusing on epistemic changes. In chapter two I will propose the argument that bodily change underlies ethical change. This argument will stem from a reading of Aristotle dynamic of the *ensouled* body to understand formation that is generative. Aristotle suggests a reading of bodies that suggest they shift in their responses to and with the environment as key to understand ethical change. These shifts, I will argue, offer the possibility to do something new as well. *Ensouled* bodies come with *logos*: the formation of the agent structuring perception, reflection and action. *Logos* comes further with a practical truth that is context dependent, and is tied in with the formation of the agent, and can thus also shift with its transformation. This then, provides the rationale for looking at change as practical and ethical project. This insight leads to the understanding that epistemic articulations follow practical change. This articulation can be understood to provide a contrast with notions of identity, and thus offers a way of thinking beyond neoliberal identity inclusion. The notion of opacity (Glissant 2010) further serves to support resistance to encapsulations by categorisations. Instead, I propose navigation of codes and *technes* which emphasise a practical approach.

While the project of trans formation proposes to understand lives outside of the walls of the *polis*, it doesn't mean it is immediately relieved of those pressures. In chapter four attention will be paid to the emergence of codes not bound by the *polis*. Codes, I will argue structure actions of agents and are used to carry insights and *modus operandi* across contexts, which include memories. Codes from the *polis* are functioning to navigate agents into places where their being is placed according to utility within operational logics. This does not mean that agents need to be disciplined into behaving according to strict formations, but only that their codification allows placement in a hierarchy of exploitation and extraction. In this codes differ from *technes*. *Technes* are both the relational crafts between agents that can structure meetings and forms of life, but also *technes* are the negations of rejected ways of relating. *Technes* both come in affirmative forms, as well as negations. In chapter two I will focus on *technes* as negations, in order to

come to a proposal for indeterminate affirmation in action. Namely, a modus of acting in which the agent doesn't know what it's doing, but does something regardless. This indeterminate affirmation is structured by a double negation, a rejection of structures that form normative demands that are limiting or encapsulating agents. This form finds its basis in Aristotle, but I will suggest it needs rethinking through the work of Gloría Anzaldúa (1987).

This thesis is structured by making a distinction between normative and nonnormative forms of life. Partly this distinction is definitional, while trans in the articulation of Susan Stryker *moves out* of a normative gender (2008,1), and thus becomes nonnormative. I use 'normative' to indicate a form of life that is upheld by the dominant order, nonnormative designates a wide swath of lives outside of this elevation. The terms itself can be found to operate at different modalities of ethics: at the *logos* of the agent, the logics and *technes* of forms of life, and the codes used to navigate contexts. Underlying the *polis* is the logic of exploitation finding form through the dual basis of misogyny and slavery. It is my contention that all forms of diversity and democracy are in the end structured by the necessity of a unity to preserve these forms of exploitation, an argument I will present in chapter three. In contrast to this structure I will offer an ethics that functions as departure, perhaps escape out of these structures. The argument I offer is that it is bodily relations in environments, which is ethics, functions as strategy for change.

In sum, my thesis proposes that trans is a strategy within ethics aimed at radically changing forms of life we are in. This trans is not limited to the realm of gender, but trans as the possible escape out of the *polis*. In this project trans escapes a gendered notion and instead becomes a form of ethics. This proposal emerges from two different strands of scholarship. The first is Transgender Studies as it is currently taking shape, and the second are debates on nonnormative lives, and the possibility, or impossibility of the emergence of new forms.

A central notion in this thesis is a proposition by Susan Stryker, who defines trans as moving out of current dominant patterns (2008, 1). This provides the grounding for my conceptualisation of a *nonnormative* ethics, which emphasises forms of life outside of normative patterns, for which the *polis* is placeholder in my argument. The *polis* is structured around misogyny and slavery, but also around differences of insight and truth. Taking both key points of difference and exploitation at the same time, allows to understand that the norm operates through a logic, as well as codes and forms. Normativity is not a single form of life, but found in the single order retaining exploitation. This is a normativity without discipline of form, as I shall argue with help of Luciana Parisi and Tiziana Terranova (2000). This leads to the second notion of Stryker, who suggests non-domination as key term, because there needs to be agency possible for moving away from existing forms. Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore have debated whether to think with the terms trans, trans- or transgender (2008). Suggesting -gender as “set of several techniques or temporal practices (such as race or class) through which bodies are made to live” (Stryker, Currah, and Moore 2008, 14). Trans-, with hyphen, can become thought as “capillary space of connection and circulation between micro and macro political registers” (Ibid.). Gender can thus be seen as a set of relations indicating positionalities, concurrently trans- can become indicative of “an analytics of embodied difference” (ibid.), and thus of a somatechnics aimed at leaving the norm behind.

Marquis Bey embraces this impetus of trans- beyond transgender, returns the * to trans* to indicate a multiple connectivity. Trans* is suggested together with blackness as “poetic, para-ontological forces” (Bey 2017, 276). Bey argues that black and trans* lie beyond the space of power, and thus politics, as *fugitive* (Bey 2017, 278, 290). In order to understand techniques of fugitivity, and different modi of escape I will articulate an ethics used perhaps as a vehicle on the run. If escape goes through the body, the body escapes while making new forms and thus coming into new modes of relation, using codes to camouflage and indicate connections, leaving traces to follow. Trans (with * or -) is simultaneously a defence against the *polis* as a strategy for escape.

My argument is thus grounded in an understanding of trans bodies and trans practices. By discussing trans as a structure of ethics, it is not limited to current understandings, nor is this thesis a description of current practices. To conceptualise trans as ethical practice, it becomes possible to understand trans as emerging form of life, and moreover its functioning vis-à-vis dominant structures. Perhaps from personal experience too, I will make the argument in chapter two that it is not necessary, or possible to (always) know what one is doing, when one is engaging in a process of transformation. This thesis will thus propose that understanding follows practice. This shift in emphasis enables extending argumentations about emerging practices, by not needing to commit to existing forms of knowledge, but neither to propose indeterminacy as final answer. Even if it is not clear what one is doing, something can be said about how one is practicing. This thesis on *nonnormative ethics* aims to provide such an understanding of practice in the light of indeterminate actions, or actions that escape existing patterns of knowledge (Bey 2017).

Nonnormative or emerging forms of life have been recently discussed by Sara Ahmed (2010), Lauren Berlant (2011), and Rosi Braidotti (2006; 2013) in three different ways that shed light on the complications of thinking about a project of nonnormative ethics. Ahmed discusses nonnormative lives in their relation to a dominant norm and highlights how evaluative patterns are linked to existing notions, which exclude nonnormative agents. Berlant shows how principles that might seem to support nonnormative aims make people in fact worse off. A principle that Berlant terms *cruel optimism* (2011). Braidotti understands nonnormative lives as possibility, and offers the figure of the transgender as rallying point for an emergent ethics (2013). The discussion oscillates between affirmation of potentialities and negation of present norms.

Before I discuss these authors in more depth, a small remark that to understand trans through Transgender Studies with trans experience and lives in the background will necessarily offer new directions of philosophical development. The emergent form of life under the codification of trans meets with more than joy (EU-FRA 2014; Stonewall 2018), while negation of current forms of life is not

sufficient to conceptualise a trans practice. Neither is desire or affect perhaps sufficient to propel such a project forward (Buchanan 2011, 10). This does not preclude the possibility of joy in a process of trans, but loss equally features large in trans existence. I will develop this understanding in chapters three and four and suggest this to lead to fruitful ethical conceptualisations, which are also rooted in practical experience.

My proposal for an emergent trans ethics shifts trans from personal change to a change of relations and change of codes. In chapter two I will discuss that changing one's body entails a change in practical truth, which suggests patterns of action. In chapter three, I will argue that this change of truth is accompanied by changing one's forms of relation. And while there is no necessary order, for change stemming from the agent, this order is likely. Changing relationalities is not only a personal process, but also a process structured by systematic codings, as I will discuss in chapter four. Changing relationality entails thus equally addressing these codifications of bodily being and the accompanying hierarchies. To retain ethics as *nonnormative*, and thus rejecting these hierarchies, means forging codes that do not reproduce existing classifications. Changing one's body thus entails changing forms of life, both contextual and their abstract figurations. This thesis leads to the conclusion that beyond changing one's self, this means that trans can be understood as changing the world.

Lives beyond the norm

In order to ground my proposal for nonnormative ethics, I will focus on discussions in Transgender Studies that will situate a discussion of the trans body. Transgender Studies sets up the discussion in my thesis, but the specificity of the debates will also flag the need to include a wider conceptual framework for a thesis on nonnormative ethics. Transgender Studies is explicitly relevant because it offers dynamism and change of form as lived practices, and offers important insights in the reality of lived change.

The widely used definition by Susan Stryker suggests trans as:

the movement across a socially imposed boundary away from an unchosen starting place (Stryker 2008b, 1)

As A. Finn Enke argues (2012), describing trans like this has the effect of making it procedural, and not an epistemic category. This insight finds further elaboration in, for instance, Marquis Bey, who suggests *transness* is a force, perhaps, arbitrarily related to bodies “said to be transgender” (2017, 275), which functions parallel to blackness, as refusal of the current normative ordering:

Trans* and black thus denote poetic, para-ontological forces that are only tangentially, and ultimately arbitrarily, related to bodies said to be black or transgender (Bey 2017, 277).

The category of trans is thereby a term that does not encapsulate a mode of being that can be known either as object or as process, but instead functions to indicate a vector of indeterminacy of being. The conceptualisation of this vector as ‘para-ontological force’ suggests that the forms of life forming themselves in relation to such forces are not part of the normative wholeness that forms a world, but instead claims trans as a movement away from the established and ultimately hierarchically ordered codifications of life. This is not a solely theoretical articulation but comes alongside concerns about living life while being in a space of indeterminacy, as concrete material form of life (Spade 2011; Bhanji 2012a; P. B. Preciado 2013; Raha 2015).

The conjunction of indeterminate materiality of life and a theoretical space of possible escape of the order of the world, suggests a theory of ethics that is not constrained by pre-existing orderings. Neither does such a theory need to be based on mechanisms that have created the conditions in which these nonnormative forces need to operate. In short: such a theory does not need to aim for inclusion, nor for a *better* application of existing principles. This entails that it is possible to articulate a theory of lived indeterminacy, while not succumbing to an idea of total openness, where every form that emerges out of a

refusal is a collapse of the project of negation of dominant forms. On the contrary, as I will argue, trans indicates how such a project of negation necessarily comes in a variety of forms. I will simultaneously pursue the argument that it is not necessary to claim such forms as stable. Emergent forms of life do not need to end up in new stasis. In this project of nonnormative ethics I will argue that epistemic clarity follows ethics. Thus, modes of relation are crafted, before they are known, as will be my argument in chapter three. And consequently, when they are known, they might be negated. Trans specifically offers the understanding that it is not necessary to know what one does. A pattern of transformation will allow understanding of indeterminate affirmation of practices, and subsequent emergent understandings, as well as be able to avoid claiming stasis.

Transgender Studies, as an academic field, has an originary moment in the early nineties (Stryker 2008b, 121). Three texts are suggested as key influence: Sandy Stone's *The Empire Strikes Back: a Posttranssexual Manifesto* (1991), which called for a reformulation of the practices then taking place under the heading of 'transsexual'. The following year the second text appeared, which extended the call for new formulations of transgender life, by giving an historical reading of the 'phenomenon of transgender'. This was Leslie Feinberg's *Transgender Liberation: a Movement whose Time has Come* (1992a). Two years after that, Stryker's *My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage* was published (Stryker 1994). In this text, Stryker claims the position of transgender as societal outsider, and as a monstrous product of medical science. The three texts suggested that pathologisation of trans as transsexual (Benjamin 1954) was false and dehumanising, which leads to expelling trans people from communities, while historically trans practices were a wide-spread phenomenon.

The encapsulation of trans as medical and psychological pathology is an instance of interventions upon nonnormative bodies. While my proposal for a trans ethics comes with a firm basis in the body, it is worth the effort to delve into the history of the pathologisation of trans bodies. I will discuss shortly the pressures that

arise from gender clinics and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) by their use of certain codings for trans practices. This will frame the discussion and indicate the lines of thought I am aiming to replace. Among the issues Stone's *The Empire Strikes Back, a posttranssexual manifesto* (1992) critiques are the then current medicinal-psychological narratives around transsexuality as initiated by the Stanford Gender Dysphoria Program.¹ This doctrinal narrative consists of two strands, as Stone describes

a transsexual is a person who identifies his or her gender identity with that of the "opposite" gender. Sex and gender are quite separate issues, but transsexuals commonly blur the distinction by confusing the performative character of gender with the physical "fact" of sex, referring to the perception of their situation as being in the "wrong body" (Stone (1991) in: Stryker and Whittle 2006, 222).

The two strands I want to highlight are concept of the 'transsexual' and the narrative surrounding the body within this concept. Transsexual is the medical definition of a transgender person, primarily based on the work of Harry Benjamin (Benjamin et al. 1966). This work suggests there is a psychological condition later named 'Gender Dysphoria' that can be cured by Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and surgical interventions. Stone argues against pathologising trans agents and the idea of two gendered categories grafted upon stable physicalities. Stable bodies erase insights of transgendered experience, by disavowing the physicality of their existence. A 'wrong body' narrative seems to imply that bodies have a 'real' gender to tell.

Stone draws attention to the similarity of trans narratives, and emphasises that in these stories there is a clear demarcation point of a switch of gender identification, within a proscribed stereotypical description of femininity (Stone 1991 in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 227) that is seemingly straightforwardly

¹ In 2015 this medical-psychological narrative is still firmly in place in gender clinics in Europe, regardless of the 20 years of theory formation and activism. Transsexualism was awarded the status of official disorder in 1980, and it still is in 2015, under the name Gender Dysphoria (Association and others 2003) (DSM V)

copied from Benjamin's medical manual *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (Benjamin et al. 1966). As Stone concedes, lying one's way through the gender clinic by telling the researchers the story they want to hear, was, and is, necessary for getting the treatment one felt one needed. To lie and adopt codifications as camouflage is necessary for to qualify for access to medication. Pathology leads to conformity of codes and the concomitant problem of erasure of experiences and reduction of people to categorical sameness. One becomes identified as a phenomenon one doesn't identify with: medical standard transsexual, and this after one left an identification one didn't identify with: the lived positionality of the rejected normative gender; this is both problematic and cynical. The second part of the title of Stone's essay: *a posttranssexual manifesto* finds its origin in this problem, and calls out for trans initiated transformation of this monolithic category. Despite not directly referencing Spivak's essay *Can the subaltern speak?* (Spivak 1988), Stone asks "how, then, can the transsexual speak?" (Stone (1991) in: Stryker and Whittle 2006, 230).

Stone argues that the transsexual is caught in a frame of medical violence, and proposes this violence might be countered by not aiming to *pass* as one of the two genders, stop using 'wrong body' as description of trans, and offer self-articulated visions that allows a 'mixing of genres' instead of absolving in a 'totalising monistic identity' (Stone (1991) in: Stryker and Whittle 2006, 232). At the point of writing, Stone was a student of Haraway and Anzaldúa, both forceful proponents of theories of 'impurity', constructedness of embodiments, and against meaningful points of origin (D. J. Haraway 1985; Anzaldua 1987). Stone's proposal echoes the work of Anzaldúa and Haraway, whose *New Mestiza* (1987) and *Cyborg* (1985) are articulations of mixing, openness, extended embodiment, and interest in border conditions, as opposed to a totalising frame of embodiment and identity. Mixing beyond imposed limiting conditions and rearticulating visions of what it means to be trans beyond solid categories ties in with the current need to articulate trans as a project of ethics, countering limiting categorisations that erase experiences.

The outlines of the medical-psychological discourse are still relevant because gender clinics have held on to the pathology of 'transsexual phenomena' and still function as gatekeepers and do not allow escalating explorations of gender within their walls. Gender clinics, the official site for treatment and sometimes route to legitimacy, thus function as hindrance to the formation of nonnormative ethics in practice, claiming ownership over the proper development of a form of life. The official discourse is biased on behalf of a medicalization that is bent on normalisation of the nonnormative agent. For a nonnormative ethics conceptualised through trans agency, it is urgent to leave the psychological-medical bias behind. However, it is important to note that the nonnormative lives developed outside of the walls of the gender clinic and the normative and normalising demands inside the clinic exist side by side (Stryker 2008b).

I will discuss the medical-psychological model of Benjamin to outline the forms of this widely used medical discourse and its embedded bias. This is relevant to understand how the body has been viewed in medical discourse, and how the proposal for an ethics starting from the body changes this framing. Benjamin proposes a model of transsexuality that carries two main elements; firstly there are two sexes and some people 'belonging' to one sex 'desire' to 'cross over', and secondly, this desire can be alleviated through a mimetic approach to physical form (of the 'opposite sex'). Benjamin makes clear distinctions between pathologies, necessitating screening of patients, and the implementation of different 'cures':

The transsexualist is always a transvestite but not vice-versa. In fact, most transvestites would be horrified at the idea of being operated. The transsexualist, on the other hand, only lives for the day when his hated sex organs can be removed, organs which to him are nothing but a dreadful deformity. Therefore the transsexualist always seeks medical aid while the transvestite as a rule merely asks to be left alone.

To put it differently: In transvestism the sex organs are sources of pleasure; in transsexualism they are sources of disgust. That seems to me the cardinal

distinction and perhaps the principal differential diagnostic sign. Otherwise there is no sharp separation between the two, one merging into the other. It is quite evident that under the influence of sensational publicity a reasonably well adjusted transvestite could become greatly disturbed and fascinated by ideas of surgical conversion so that his emotional balance may be endangered (Benjamin 1954 in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 45).

The elements come with precise differentiation. There is a categorical distinction between somebody who 'cross-dresses' and somebody who wants to 'cross-sexes'. Genitals demarcate sexes in the medical discourse, thus establishing a material narrative of sex-specific reality. Subsequently, a psychological narrative of hate or disgust gets used as the validation of the lived experience over one's material form, with adaptation of this form as sole option. The 'end-result' is clear and present to the mind: ending the 'deformity' that is spoken of. The proposed pathway functions as a cure. According to this schema the transsexual wants to conform to the existing norm, according to a clear *telos*. The dysfunction as 'deformed' member of a certain gender can be cured by a transitional *telos* resulting in attempted membership of another gender. This membership is overshadowed by the pathology, which indicates the need to hide it, and thus to 'pass'. Furthermore *telic* desire is discussed as the 'cardinal distinction' and 'principal differential diagnostic sign' between the transsexual and others. To recall Stone, trans people were immediately aware what the benchmarks of acceptance are due to those theories (Stone 1991, 228). This *telos* introduced by the diagnosis function as normalising aspiration, which makes a person eligible for treatment as such. The pathology is framed as a desire for normality, and thus functions to limit exploration and experimentation with gender.

The pathology functions to keep the trans person within limited confessional expressions of internal states of being. The need for gate-keeping as limitation external to the 'patient' gets justified by clinics with allusions that 'under the influence of sensational publicity' persons might get confused into believing something misguided about themselves. The need for control of 'patients' adds to the severity of the pathological condition, because it is postulated that they are

easily swayed by external narratives and do not have full and reliable agency. Furthermore, this double bind of unreliable agency and imposed confessional similarity functions to keep gender clinics from questioning their own role in the production of homogeneity. To strive for gendered nonnormativity means not only falling outside the diagnosis, which is structured around a clear male-female binary, but makes the agent *qua* agent suspect. It is literally not normal, not wanting to be normal. Deviation from normality is key to the pathology and legitimises the necessity for gate keeping. Hereby the normalising frame reinforces itself, and need not move beyond its tautological double bind. The clinic itself is irrelevant, and only guards normality. However, the pathological description harbours three elements that deserve scrutiny, because in those elements the possibility of escape and disruption emerges.² These elements are *telos*, agency, and – in contrast to the clinic - change without knowledge or aspiration. These are the elements that will inform the starting point of chapter two, because these are guarded against disruption of the norm.

To further understand some of the violence of the clinic, I will zoom in to a few other concepts. Some of the more disturbing elements of this story are obviously that there are only two 'sexes', and that all other forms of embodiment are forms of psychological disorder. The assertion that medical interventions cure the 'transsexualist' maintains this fiction of a sex dichotomy. Most worrying is that disgust with oneself is the only relevant desire for access to any treatment at all.³ People who sit on or across a border of the postulated dichotomy could be 'greatly disturbed and fascinated by the idea of surgical conversion'. The patient's gender "him" is referred to through a biological narrative as grounding of reality. This reinforces the idea of inherent instability, an idea well known from the suppression of 'inverts' and other deviants.⁴ The emotional balance of the patients is something that needs to be monitored as it is presumed to be unreliable. Even the transvestite 'wants to be left alone', in contrast to being

² This could be the reason they are guarded.

³ A disgust that is undoubtedly introduced as indicator of public and acceptable opinion, deviance leads to disgust and needs to be cured with a desire for normality. (Cf. Foucault 1977, 1998b)

⁴ Homosexuality was still in de DSM in 1966

accepted and socially present. The idea of agency and accountability has been discredited from the conception of trans as pathology. This system of gate-keeping has had serious consequences for the well-being and treatment of transgender people, including the discussions between transgender agents (Stryker 2008b; Serano 2007; Koyama 2006; Spade 2011; B. Preciado 2013). What is interesting to note is that despite contemporary changes in legislation regarding gender change, gender clinics can continue to operate on the above pathologising grounds, because the treatment protocol has not been changed.⁵

The techniques for approaching trans agents have not arisen in a vacuum, and the impositions of forced medical interventions to cure deviancy dates back certainly to 1858. In this year the English gynaecologist Isaac Baker Brown invents cliterodectomy, which was performed in the USA at least until 1905 or 1925. This “coexisted with, and then was superseded by circumcision of females of all ages up to menopause [...] performed [in the USA] until 1937 at least” (Barker-Benfield 1978, 120). Surgical intervention was practiced as an approach allegedly able to cure ‘mental disorders’, and when its application waned, the medical knowledge could be channelled onto differently categorised disorders:

Women were still being castrated for psychological disorders as late as 1946. [...] Female castration was largely superseded by other similar operations, including hysterectomy, which had coexisted as an alternative and auxiliary to castration since about 1895 (Barker-Benfield 1978, 121).

All this happened in a climate where surgical interventions on women and children were frequent and excessive (Barker-Benfield 1978, 121), even more so when the subjected patients were racialised as Black (Threadcraft 2016). C. Riley Snorton provides the argument that it is exactly the medical experimentation on black bodies, which created the idea of malleability of gender in the reorientation

⁵ Denmark is a case in point, where in 2014 progressive legislation went hand-in-hand with the closure of the trans-led gender clinic, stopping funding for medication, and leaving only the heteronormative gender clinic open. Factually transgender became only accessible for a normative and affluent group of transfolk. (Based on personal conversation with trans activists from Denmark). A similar story applies to the Netherlands, where legislation changed in 2015.

of flesh (Snorton 2017, 44). The combination of transsexuals perceived to be men opting in for treatment to become 'female' and the implementation of surgical intervention came to fruition in an environment that was already saturated with such practices: "[g]ynaecological materialism was symbolized by the removal or modification of a woman's sexual organs on account of her mental disorder"(Barker-Benfield 1978, 126). These practices consist of a dominant norm being enforced by interventions upon the body of those othered. This domination went to such lengths that even if male doctors paid attention to articulations of female patients about self-determination, these demands were largely refocused to reinforce the existing norm: "If 'rights' rhetoric reflected awareness of feminist demands or of contradictions in democratic practice, it was usually pressed into the service of the reimposition of the male order"(Barker-Benfield 1978, 125). As I will discuss shortly, this matches the findings of Kitzinger (Kitzinger 1987) in the psychological domain. The difference lies in the approach, while the normative order remains the same: a specific white male dominated view on humanity that imposes itself through changing techniques, to keep up with the times, but not adjusting to political demands. The European practice of forced sterilisation of trans people is still widely in practice (EU-FRA 2014). This practice I will discuss in chapter three, linking it to *eugenics* and *dysselection* of those made other under slavery, colonisation by the violent interventions on bodies (Wynter 2001; Spillers 1987).

As touched upon above, Benjamin's pathologies can be understood as strategies that keep agents close to the norm, or at least in apprehension of it. In the same article as discussed above, Benjamin describes 'three types of transvestites'. I will focus on the first, which is termed a 'principally psychogenic transvestite'. This person is described firstly as "anatomically a normal male, but may lack masculinity"(Benjamin 1954 in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 48). The quote underlines that Benjamin stresses trans as a psychological condition. Benjamin describes this type as "More than anything else the psychogenic transvestite wants to see a change in restrictive laws, so that he can lead a woman's life"(Benjamin 1954 in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 48ff). Apart from the conceptual unclarity about what it means 'to lead a woman's life', for a trans

person living in the fifties is reasonable to want laws prohibiting wearing clothes belonging to the 'opposite sex' lifted, as these were used to bully, harass, and criminalise trans people (Stryker 2008b, 76).⁶ This state of affairs is ignored by Benjamin, in order to further pathologies the trans person: "*He does not want to be changed, but wants society's attitude to him to change, again revealing his narcissistic tendencies*" (Benjamin 1954, 48). From decades distance Benjamin's point is baffling, because the trans person does not seem unreasonable at all. Yet, from within the norm maintaining degrading attitudes is of enormous importance⁷, because this is how normativity functions. The norm is either invisible and supportive, or visible because an agent fails it. It is not unreasonable to conclude that norms exist to fail people. Benjamin's pathologisation thus constructed as double bind: either one fits in one psychiatric category, and wants to adapt oneself to normality, or one has a political point, which gets filed under another psychiatric category, again prohibiting full agency of the trans agent. Physical change is taken as a sign of mental deviance, while not wanting physical adjustment is equally regarded as deviant as it challenges social norms. The norm serves as measuring stick the agent will fail in either option, and this failure is used to question and deny agency. The body functions as the ground upon which existing norms get played out through claims about normality: both by adaptation as well as by rejection. The norm is constructed to fail it, because agents falling into the norm are not subjected to it as it disappears. This leads to the need of an ethic without norms. In chapter three I will offer suggestions for a multilogical ethics by drawing on the work of María Lugones (2003) and Sylvia Wynter (2015; 2001, 1990), which makes invisibilities visible without failing agents.

⁶ Dean Spade offers a sustained argument how the law is still used to bully and harass gender nonconforming and racialised people (Spade 2011). See also the forthcoming work of Chryssy Hunter regarding the situation in the UK. For more information about current developments visit www.bentbarsproject.org (UK) or www.slrp.org (US).

⁷ While Nancy Fraser resists 'mind control': the demand not to have to change in the face of anti-oppressive demands (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 31), I will provide the argument (Chapter two and chapter four) that we indeed need to allow for opacity of other agents, but their navigating spaces will be expressive of their beliefs (logos) as they are not inseparable of practices. It is the invasiveness of their beliefs that is structural. Furthermore Fraser keeps a strong separation between action and belief in tact, which is questionable.

This leads to the second key text in the constitution of academic transgender studies: Feinberg's *Transgender Liberation [...]* (1992), which takes a historical turn and discusses a broad variety of 'transgendered' practices, and thus challenges pathologisation. "Simplistic and rigid gender codes are neither eternal or natural. They are changing social concepts" (Feinberg 1992b in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 205). Feinberg remarks that falling outside those constraints opens one up for harassment and violence (Feinberg 1992b in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 206). Feinberg traces this persecution and oppression through class war and colonisation, arguments mirrored by Silvia Federici (2004). Taking anti-oppression as the main inspiration for a self-defined possible form of life within the broad (but imposed) category of transgender, Feinberg connects trans struggle to other struggles:

Solidarity is built on understanding how and why oppression exists and who profits from it. It is our view that revolutionary changes in human society can do away with inequality, bigotry and intolerance (Feinberg (1992) in: Stryker and Whittle 2006, 206).

Solidarity between oppressed peoples is, in Feinberg's analysis, deeply linked to the notion of exploitation. This profiteering is not only of a capitalist nature, but also about the distribution of agency. The intolerance of trans practices fortifies certain social positions (Feinberg 1992b, 207). This intolerance can take many forms, from outright violence by the state, communities, or individuals, economic violence in the form of poverty, lack of housing and shelter, lack of adequate medical care, to the patriarchal demands of gender clinics deciding upon the emotional adaptation, the need for "passing", and the reduction of a variety of practices to a singular form (Feinberg 1992b, 207). Intolerance of deviancy is a common phenomenon in a colonialist world, demanding servility and self-sameness of groups of people in order to be useful for the wider demands of capitalism (Feinberg 1992b, 215; Federici 2004). Feinberg relates those capitalist ideologies to be similar instruments of class warfare such as, for instance, prisons (Spade 2011; A. Davis 2003).

By arguing that transgender practices are historical, local and social, Feinberg counters the medical argument that boxes agents into clear and defined categories. Connecting misogyny, capitalism, and systemic oppression, Feinberg brings transgender liberation on par with other forms of anti-oppressive struggle and thus makes connection key in the formation of new forms of politics and community. Not only does this counter the medical model of clear demarcation, it also counters categorisation and commodification as a basis for social ordering. An emergent trans ethics should show awareness of non-domination of different forms and approach differences not as constitutive of problematic others, but as constitutive of ethics. In chapter three I will have specific focus on this theme.

Ethics is also at work in Feinberg's text through the use of the inclusive 'we'. In a passage that describes categories of name-calling, Feinberg switches from a third person perspective to a first person plural:

There are words used to express a wide range of "gender outlaws": transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens and drag kings, cross-dressers, and bull-daggers, stone butches, androgynes, diesel dykes or berdache – a European colonialist term.

We didn't choose these words. They don't fit all of us (Feinberg 1992b in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 206).

Feinberg's switch of perspective already indicates solidarity, a multiplicity of forms captured within terms not of their own choosing, while from the inside, so to speak, this 'we' acknowledges plurality as starting point. The terms are accessible to self-described members, but will be changing. Feinberg's 'we' is never static. "The language used in this pamphlet may quickly become outdated as the gender community coalesces and organises – a wonderful problem"(Feinberg 1992b in; Stryker and Whittle 2006, 206). Feinberg underlines a changing community as key to evolving practices, instead of individual endeavours. I will use this insight to question how a community is

formed without becoming dominant or domineering, and stay open to change with the development and dispersal of its members. The possibility of change and fluidity is a marked contrast with a medical-normative perspective, which seeks to keep agents in established categories, thereby guarding the bounds of the acceptable.

Within the institutionalized medical-psychological framework, norms find their stability by postulating themselves as *the* evaluative standard, instead of as *an* evaluative standard amidst a multiplicity. However, countering the medical-psychological norms by removal of 'gender dysphoria'⁸ from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) might not be sufficient for trans liberation. If gender dysphoria is removed as a category in the DSM, there can be reasonable doubt about this automatically recuperating lost agency for trans agents. In psychological developmental models proposed with regard to lesbians after the removal of homosexuality as pathology from the DSM, a liberal humanistic bias figures strongly, as Kitzinger argues (Kitzinger 1987). This is not conducive for acceptance of nonnormative forms of life. In a normative developmental pathway, that is difficult to distinguish from a generic idea of white middle class adolescent coming of age, a lesbian finds her identity, radicalises and turns away from heterosexuality and heteronormativity, in order to develop a new-found 'healthy balance' and 'dignity'.

Kitzinger remarks that the liberal humanistic discourse claims lesbians lives as lifestyle, rather than socio-political position, which retains the individualised demarcation suggested by pathology (Kitzinger 1987, 45). While lesbianism was removed from the DSM in 1973, a few years before transgender was introduced to it (Stryker 2008b, 98), its removal didn't simply depathologise lesbianism. The removal got replaced with the endeavour to place nonnormative sexuality within perceived normality. This is achieved through the suggestion that lesbians are not different from heterosexual women. Problematically this claims that

⁸ Since diagnoses have a tendency of getting their names changed, it might be called different. DSM V (2015) names it 'gender incongruence'.

behaviour and beliefs “are reduced to those congruent with the dominant order” (Kitzinger 1987, 46ff). Ahmed addresses this problematic by arguing that queer lives fall short of the norm, because the objects of happiness that structure normative lives are not in reach (2011). I will return to this below. The process Kitzinger describes in 1987 unpacks the strategies used to counter to multiplicity and pluralism and to enforce dominant norms through processes of inclusion. However, as Kitzinger points out, perceived normality includes oppression against lesbians as such, while a newly introduced humanistic developmental model pathologises those who retain a political stance against the dominant order. This is an analogous functioning of the norm as discussed above on Benjamin's interpretation of transgender politics, where the need for changed societal attitudes is described as ‘narcissism’.

Normative inclusion comes with a demand for normalisation: “[l]esbians are portrayed as being just like normal people, and there is a refusal to acknowledge or discuss lesbian differences”(Kitzinger 1987, 48). The norm is postulated as already inclusive, without a further need to scrutinise who this norm is including, and what violence goes on at and beyond the limits of what is deemed acceptable normality. According to this pattern a removal of trans from the DSM would suggest that instead of being pathologised within the medical context, a trans agent will need to focus on fitting into the norm in order to escape pathologisation, while any deviancy will automatically pathologise the trans agent as ‘wrongly developed’. Thus even if transgender is not yet removed from the DSM, the perspective that after such a possible future removal, one would get full agency in the light of politicised - and thus social - perspectives seems bleak. As Kitzinger argues “[...] the lesbian may no longer be sick by virtue of her lesbianism, and hence in need of a cure, but she continues to require psychological services to assist her in gaining developmental maturity as a lesbian”(Kitzinger 1987, 55). The normative momentum displaces formation as activity of resistance to counter the norm, towards formation as process by itself. Problems are presented as personal instead of structural (Kitzinger 1987, 55ff). In exchange for an adventurous inner world full of possible development, which is constituted by denial of the outer world with actual misogyny, the lesbian in

the humanistic model never gets alleviation from normative pressure. The register of pressure gets changed: from possible psychotherapy for pathology, to not having reached the values of the therapist 'just yet'. Formation is constructed as normative aspiration. This process gets solidified, by a refined questioning of agency:

Through the diagnosis of mental illness in those who pose a potential threat to the dominant social order, competing conceptualizations of reality are neutralized by assigning them an inferior ontological status (Kitzinger 1987, 33).

For a possible future of trans liberation, in line with Feinberg's proposal of solidarity amongst oppressed peoples and non-dominating forms of life, processes of formation thus need to retain their structural focus. However, it is equally important to retain space for agential change. Here the focus of a nonnormative ethics, as lived difference, will thus need to encompass both individual change as well as branch out to address structural patterns. This double focus coincides with the elements that were placed under the scrutiny at the gender clinic: agency, *telos*, and the operation of different perceptions of how the environment of the agent operates. I will address this in chapter two as the formation of agential *logos*: agential formation, which includes a re-reading of *telos*. Then in chapter three I will address *technes* of relation and the possibility to form lives outside of normative constraints. Subsequently in chapter four this needs to come with a discussion on codifications that redress the confining demands of normativity.

While experimentation regards the conduct of bodies is central to an understanding of trans practices, it is not immediately evident how these practices are structured from a trans perspective. Overarching descriptions, like Stryker's 'moving away from a norm' (2008) can not only be done in a myriad of ways, but it is not immediately evident how or if such a practice is constitutive of a trans formation, or temporal instances of subversion. The question remains whether a trans agent is tied to the norm in a perpetual renegotiation, or else if a movement away leads to new formations. A further question remains how to

articulate or understand the navigation between 'outer worlds and inner worlds' and if these need to be separated or fused. In chapter two I will tackle these issues through a reading of Aristotle in order to propose a reading of formation that claims space for agential change, which retains connection to its environment. Not only will this dissolve the problem of inner and outer worlds, but also suggest reading of tactical and strategical negotiations with one's surroundings.

In *My words to Victor Frankenstein* [...] Stryker suggests that trans is a visible disruption of naturalised orders, by offering an image that is "replicating our abrupt, often jarring transition between genders" (Stryker and Whittle 2006, 245). Trans existence is ushered into a space of abject bodies that do not, perhaps, have a life on their own terms, but only on the terms of their subjugation. "Transgender rage is the subjective experience of being compelled to [...] enter a 'domain of abjected bodies, a field of deformation' that in its unlivability encompasses and constitutes the realm of legitimate subjectivity" (Stryker and Whittle 2006, 253). Trans figures here primarily as legitimation of normative understandings of selfhood, but hardly as a form of life in and by itself. Trans is outside the norm, but is not constitutive of a form of life, other than that as outsider. Trans thus functions as disruption and thereby makes a norm visible, but does not seem to be able to lay a claim beyond transgression. In short, in Stryker's text trans bodily disruption can be understood as transgressive, but not as constitutive.

Stryker draws inspiration from Mary Shelley's (2016) novel about Dr. Frankenstein and the monster. The monster trope proved a successful conceptualisation for transgender narratives (Koch-Rein 2014). While first being used in anti-trans rhetoric, its appropriation provided a fruitful metaphor for received violence and alienation, and moreover as a site to negotiate complex relationships to nature. The monster in Shelley's novel is an outsider and a singularity to boot. It is an expression of the boundaries of community and serves as a demarcation thereof. However, this singularity of the figure of the monster is expressly important as it hinders, both in imagination and conceptual

possibility, an affective and political connection extending to other experiences of nonnormativity. Simultaneously, this idea of 'having become' an outsider was an important formulation as it connected to the lived reality of many transgender individuals. This makes the monstrosity of transgender perhaps an explicitly a white middle-class formulation, as one of being *removed* from a placement in normality. The monster serves as a trope to denote a state of *fallen from grace* (van der Drift 2016). To be removed from a community, and to have to enter an outside, is to have had a placement within a normative reality first, a position that is questionable for many with non-white, non-middle class, diasporic backgrounds.

Nael Bhanji problematizes such a singular disruption: “In our increasingly globalised world, a shared experience of profound discontinuity has contributed to the unstable notions of identity and origin”(Bhanji 2012b, 159). This origin as movement is not only a trans reading, but also one of migration and questionable belonging in society. Stryker’s reading of the monster expresses a singular disruption; out of normality, ruptured into being as monstrous outsider at the moment of the cut. Stryker’s essay expresses a critical nonnormativity, as reaction to being violently removed from what one feels is a place in society. The violence Stryker discusses is an experience that is not an addition to existing violence, but constitutive for their experience of transgender.

Twenty years after Stryker’s essay, Jin Haritaworn comments on the shifting of violence away from some trans bodies, which reinforces other boundaries of exclusion:

[a]t the same time not all queer bodies are visualised as lovely. The desirability of the queer subject follows familiar lines of whiteness, youth, ability, and gender conformity. While transgender bodies too, emerge as innocent and worthy of protection *for the first time*, their regeneration follows a different logic. As hyper-diverse bodies that add colour to areas from which bodies of colour are being displaced, they become an index of how far the LGBT-friendly society is willing to go (Haritaworn 2015, 32).

While Haritaworn draws attention to the reluctant acceptance of transgender bodies in queer spaces as a novel phenomenon in 2015, it is immediately added that this 'acceptance' is done via racialised lines of exclusion.

Further critique from within transgender studies concerns the use of metaphors to describe trans. Oftentimes metaphors flock around various approaches to geography: migrations, border crossings, and homecomings. These approaches using spatialisation are certainly not innocent, as Bhanji (Bhanji 2012b) argues and often come loaded with colonial assumptions; which land does one move into? Which border does one cross, and which prices paid by others serve as metaphor for whose liberation? Furthermore, as Aren Aizura argues the travel narrative oftentimes serves to reinforce a logic of binary genders, through the metaphor of journey and return (Aizura 2012, 144). This keeps processes of change hidden and relegated to the private sphere, as a secret and secretive act (Aizura 2012, 146). This reinforces "the containment of gendered indeterminacy in a spatialised elsewhere [...] to return triumphantly having accomplished the feat of self-transformation elsewhere" (Aizura 2012, 153).

Bhanji summarises Aizura's argument as a recognition of "submerged nationalisms, which undergird transsexual theorizing [that] have contributed to a problematic 'politics of transsexual citizenship'" (Bhanji 2012b, 166). These metaphors not only implicate a linear teleology within 'transition' from one gender to another, they also come as civilizing narrative, and are "rooted in hegemonic notions of embodiment in national, and therefore racialized and gendered, space" (Bhanji 2012b, 166). In order to disorient these notions away from "the 'fictional unity' of the transgender collective" (Bhanji 2012b, 167). Bhanji argues for the urgency of awareness of the intermeshed reality, and against "a theoretical approach that assumes everything is "OK" – à la multiculturalism – ends up silencing voices of dissent, which unfortunately legitimizes its universal appeal" (Bhanji 2012b, 167). To redress this issue I will in chapter three scrutinise the problem the *polis* poses as aspirational site to contain the diversity of forms of life. The problem of 'unity in diversity' lies in the

need to retain the *polis* in order to be able to exploit by means of misogyny and slavery. To counter this problem I will suggest we can give up the *polis* altogether.

Monstrous individuality in conjunction with a fictional unity of a transgender collective functions to imagine trans as isolated and contained phenomenon. The imagery focuses on private experiences of abjection that are transposed to an imaginary field in which these experiences are shared. This experience can worryingly be equated with “a conception of transgender as first and foremost victimised” (Snorton and Haritaworn 2013, 67). The outsider status in combination with daily transgressions seems to strip trans experience from the validity of constituting a form of life. Furthermore, an imagined collective experience of transgressions suggests a collective based on homogenous experience from which a ‘pure’ transgender form of life can be distilled. This newfound purity comes instantly with an idea of the boundaries of collective solidarity, which is thoroughly problematized by Lugones (2003, 141). However, it is not only solidarity that is at stake in such a formulation and imageries, but also a demand for agential coherence. Purity and coherence are closely linked and coherence can only be demanded from very specific positions, and only over the incoherence of others (Lugones 2003, 210). In sum, a trans theory of ethics demands a rethinking of collectivity not based on transgression and an accompanying homogeneity, but in contrast seems to require a theory of formation and the emergence of nonnormative collectivity. This calls for a theory that is not primarily centred around recognising each other’s struggles with its attendant homogeneity and exclusion, but on forging connections through and in acknowledgement of differences of formation and experience. These connections might not be found in a growing unity, as Bhanji flagged, but instead might need to be faced as differences that retain their difference. This then would call for a theory of ethics in which connections are not permanent, but possibly passing and of a local nature. In chapter three and four I will address these issues through engaging with Lugones concept of world travelling and an attendant idea of loss of practical truth in order to be able to meet other agent’s worlds.

These contradictory demands within and between agents, to form a practical truth and to give it up again, preclude linear development from one “place” to another. Nonnormative agents will, without access to clear and preformed patterns, need to establish forms of practical research, play, and will fail at times. Such failure can even be understood as strategy, in order not to come to the constitution of a new *polis* (Moten 2017; Harney and Moten 2013; Halberstam 2011). Such a conceptualisation leaves no room for the perpetuation of more traditional transgender narratives of 'leaving, crossing a border, and finding home' (Prosser 1998) as guiding structure. This calls for a reworking of terms, which acknowledges and incorporates the articulations of outsider status, individual formation, but reformulates collective experience and the possibility of collectivity. Furthermore, an understanding of collectivities outside of a demarcation of homogenous, or recognisable, experience suggests a shift from an epistemic angle, to a focus on ethics. This articulates trans as a question how to live, or form a life and through that activity questions the formation of collectivity. This collectivity is formed around *technes* and multilogical connections and defends against the impositions and interruptions of the dominating norms that make such an ethics necessary. *Techné*, here, shifts from the usage in chapter two, where it is predominantly a modus of departure of norms, to new forms of alignment between agents in chapter four. These conceptions are joined by the conception of *technes* as multilogical connections to bridge different worlds without imposition in chapter three.

Trans Agency, Bodily Change

I will focus on Paul Preciado's *Testo Junkie*, as a proposal how change functions in a trans formation of life, and unearth important questions about agency, codes, and ethics. However, Preciado's theorisation of trans unravels slightly because of an unclear theorisation of the place of the body vis-à-vis norms, codes, and change. As I will aim to show, Preciado's work functions very well in the phenomenological realm where the discussion of agency is at stake, but wavers when it comes to providing grounding of understanding the agent in its

environment. In chapter two I will propose an alternative reading of the body, which I will consistently follow throughout chapter three and four towards an ethical ontology that supports both change, differences, and an understanding of agency vis-à-vis external influences. At various moments Preciado suggests that trans can be envisioned as ethical project. The destabilisation following their use and reliance on prosthetic testosterone suggests centring the body in ethics is inevitable. This is an important shift from epistemic approaches grouped around the question of trans being, to questions how lives are changed in categorical manner, which is a question of nonnormative ethics. Trans shifts from a bracketed 'transition', as limited, medicalised approaches will have it, to a larger project of nonnormative formation of life. While I do embrace the proposal to understand trans as ethics, Preciado's concomitant commitments of disciplinary formation within a normative-bodily split does not seem to provide a solid basis to understand this ethics with. Instead I will propose a conception of the *ensouled body* through an Aristotelian reading, which will be able to provide resistance and agential formation, as well as a navigation of dominant norms.

HRT can be summarised as a combination between organic and inorganic *non-self* matter leading to (corporeal) transformation. While normative and normalising trans discourses (Stone 1991; Prosser 1998) can refer to an essentialist picture of 'becoming what one *really* is', a conceptualisation exploring indiscrete bodily plasticity keeps the effects of HRT open. An articulation of a body open to the environment allows for undisciplined influence of hormones, because the effects are open to modification of both the agent and external influences. This allows articulation of trans as indeterminate process. The categorical encapsulation of fixed identity needs to be transgressed by definition, following Stryker (2008, 1). The dependency on external-to-self-additions shifts the perception from an imagined Cartesian bodily integrity (Shildrick 2013, 1997) towards viewing the body as already open to the outside world. Preciado extends this understanding of influences on the trans body with their conception of the pharmaco-pornographic network. It is this move that enables a switch from a predominantly epistemic perspective to the possibility of ethics. Preciado, following Haraway (D. J. Haraway 1985, 162), argues that:

[t]he body in the pharmaco-pornographic era is not a passive material but a techno-organic interface, a techno-life system segmented and territorialised by different political models (textual, computing, bio-chemical) (B. Preciado 2008, 113).

The quote allows the double perspective of the body under pressure from different political models, while this body is not a passive recipient, but an active participant. The different networks come with demands on the body in the form of various subjectivities regulating pleasure and desire, which stem from technologically driven political models. The tensions operative on the body open it up to a rephrasing as political-ethical project, given that those networks are already regulated through evaluative patterns – that is an ethics of pleasure. *Pharmaco* refers to molecular technologies used to influence the body, and *pornographic* to the regulation of attendant pleasures. These terms combined conceptualise a disciplinary approach that is operative from within the body, instead of working from the outside upon the body.⁹ HRT is thus not a mechanic operating on a discrete body-as-object whose movements needs to become fixed, but on an opened up body-as-network whose affective interests are regulated and to which the body is demanded to adapt.

Synthetic or animal hormones push physically for the formation of novel embodiments. The imaginary unity of the body is broken up by molecular additives, which are at once technological and animal. These hormones intertwine human, animal, and technology. This intertwinement forms a new physicality from within the trans agent. The life-long dependency guarantees immersion in the pharmaceutical network, keeping the boundaries between self¹⁰ and network active and blurred. It is the medical pharmaceutical network that demands a specific subjectivity: a social enactment that shapes and

⁹ Note that Preciado is arguing for an inverse of a Foucauldian model of disciplinary punishment (Foucault 1977) that works upon bodies from the outside in order to become integrated. Preciado shifted the model from punishment-outside to pleasure-inside.

¹⁰ Preciado claims their work as a theory of the self (2013, 11). I will not follow them in this conceptualisation.

legitimises the need for the hormone structured around desire. The agent needs to deliver oneself to the workings of the non-self hormones for its embodiment, hence becomes a “junkie” (P. B. Preciado 2013, 393). The ghostly invisibility of the hormones suggests that the embodiment might be initiated by the agent, but is crucially out of its control: “The testosterone molecule dissolves into the skin as a ghost walks through a wall” (P. B. Preciado 2013, 67). The agent seemingly changes from the inside, through the operation of the hormones (P. B. Preciado 2013, 67), while these changes move the agent through a novel immersion in networks of perception, affects, action and desire. The networked and fluid agent is delivered to change as much as it is trying to change itself.

Preciado’s emphasis on the dual structure of change is vital for understanding an emergent trans ethics. On the one hand there is the dynamic of the hormones affecting the networking of the agent, and on the other hand there is the agent navigating the effects of change. For a nonnormative ethics it is therefore important to theorise the extent to which seemingly novel forms of embodiment are emerging out of norms prescribing change on the individual level, as well as how forms coming out of the formation of the agent are surpassing existing structures, and thereby present radical change. Preciado’s theorisation reminds us that while forms may appear new to the agent, they can be immersed in existing political networks that are supporting dominant norms. Preciado sets the stage for a theory of trans via the administration of testosterone, while trying to open a space for resistant agency. Hereby the possibility for a theory of the body as active site of ethics is opened up. This theory is conceptualised as *somatechnics* (Stryker and Sullivan 2009; B. Preciado 2013, 78): the contraction between *soma* – body – and *techne* – the mode of ethical relation. *Somatechnics* captures the “connection between embodiment, technology, and bodily practice”(Sullivan 2009, 275). Furthermore, it can be understood to be “the mutually generative relation between bodies of flesh, bodies and knowledge, and bodies politic” (Stryker and Sullivan 2009, 51). *Somatechnics* enables articulating bodies as always already “enmeshed/enfleshed” (ibid.) with technological norms. In the words of Stryker and Pugliese:

Somatechnics suggests the possibility of radically different ways of relating embodied subjectivity to the environment, [...] somatechnics demands, too, a re-evaluation and reframing of ethics of the proper regard for the interrelationship between other, self, and world. It raises anew the hoary questions of agency and instrumental will, of freedom and determination (Pugliese and Stryker 2009, 2).

Within somatechnics the question of ethics emerges as question of renewed attention to the structure of relations. As far as I can see, this debate has taken the turn of re-articulating how the body is central in the formation of political relations and knowledge (eg. Sullivan 2005; Stryker and Sullivan 2009; Sullivan 2009; Wadiwel 2009; Agathangelou 2011; Laforteza 2015). However, the question to the emergence of new forms of ethics has yet to be addressed. This is partly due to the conception of *techne* as articulating existing social relations; a process taking place through “inscription” (Sullivan 2005). Inscription suggests external norms being imposed on the body. In contrast I will theorise how the body becomes constitutive in the emergence of *technes* of relation and forms of life. Preciado argues that only through risking self-experimentation can agents end up in new forms of genderedness, which lie beyond the constraints of the medicalised subjectivities. Somatechnical self-experimentation puts the body in a central focus in the formation of these new forms of life.

While the body in Preciado's theorisation functions merely as storage of normativities, and subsequently materialises as the site of resistance, I will argue instead that the body is constitutive in new forms of life, and can provide the starting point for a theory of a nonnormative ethics of change. It is in this location of agency that provides the possibility for resistance that the problem emerges. Because of Preciado's investment in interiority, and the struggle with and against the prosthetic testosterone, the body is suggested to have an unquestioned neutrality, which disappears in the experiment only. This means that the body is a site of external struggle of disciplinary formation, as well as a site of internal struggle operating through technology induced *eros*, but is in itself providing nothing. Furthermore, while the site of struggle is the norm or the embodied norm, agency seems to emerge from a non-localisable in-between,

suggesting a further escape from the body. This risks suggesting agency as a puppet master struggling to gain control over the site of struggle. This is understandable because the focus on interiority suggests a Cartesian split, whereby the interior and the exterior are two different planes of existence. Preciado's intention of bridging that gap is unfortunately precluded from succeeding because of their methodological commitment to interiority¹¹, which is rooted in their use of Foucault. Foucault, by articulating the effects of disciplinary actions as coming with interior consequences, remained tied to the Cartesian and Kantian projects, and could thus not escape its own demands of formative action (Foucault 1977, 1998b, 1998a, 1990). Preciado folds the Foucauldian space open by suggesting testosterone functioning on the inside of the body as much as on the outside, however, this creates the problem of non-localisable agency and resistance. Preciado's work is illuminating exactly because it shows this problem so lucidly. While it may be possible, perhaps legitimate, to suggest these concerns are merely methodological conundrums, I will instead claim that these concerns are central to the problem and solving these issues will provide a different theoretical framework, which will consequently deliver a theory of ethics and bodily change. This theory offers the potential to further the understanding of *how* it is possible to think beyond the moment of a call for change as ethics, by moving away from the site of understanding the problem. Of particular concern in Preciado's text are three main issues. The first is the understanding of agency as political action, the second is the body having the possibility to be generative of new forms in the form of micropolitics, and this comprises the third strand, which is a gradual shift to emphasise ethics, instead of epistemic approaches. The three concerns provide indications for the development of a theory of nonnormative ethics. While I will address the body through agency, which logically foreground ethics over epistemology, I will take distance from the *polis* in chapter three. Interestingly enough, the solution I propose might have been foreseen by Judith Butler who contemplates: "I do not mean to rehabilitate Aristotle in the form of Foucault (although, I confess, that such a move intrigues me, and I mention it

¹¹ In the contrasexual manifesto (P. B. Preciado 2002) this seems to be less the case, as the body is presented as navigating different actions in order to find new relations.

here to offer it as a possibility without committing myself to it at once)" (J. Butler 2002, 224). This thesis could be seen as tribute to Butler's musing, but instead of Foucault, offers a rethinking of Aristotle in the light of concerns raised by Preciado.

Agency in Preciado can be discerned as the navigation between norms comprising genders: "male and female, exist only as 'political fictions,' as somatic effects of the technical process of normalisation. [...] T is only a threshold, a molecular door, a becoming between multiplicities" (B. Preciado 2013, 142). Gender is offered as multiplicities of being, summarised in two overarching categories. "T", testosterone, is not the change, but intensifies a dynamic of becoming. This becoming is not linear, but perhaps more aimless, as Preciado suggests that resisting existing normativities is to become nonnormatively embodied, which is precarious, and consists "of wandering from one language to another like being in transit between masculinity, femininity, and transsexuality. The pleasure of multiplicity. [...] None of the sexes I embody possesses any ontological density, and yet, there is no other way of being a body. Dispossessed from the start" (B. Preciado 2013, 133). While nonnormative bodies might indicate dominant orderings of gender, these bodies are not seen to come with 'density' an unquestioned belonging in a category. Preciado's solution to this problem of dispossession is to offer multiplication of gendered forms: "[c]hallenging rigid constructions of gender and fossilised forms of sexuality can be accomplished only through viral proliferation, at the same time as through bacterial survival. On all fronts, in all spaces. My body: the body of the multitude" (B. Preciado 2013, 247). Preciado rejects the current epistemological assessments of embodiment and starts working towards disrupting existing normativities by supplying new nonnormative forms of life through the body: "I lay claim to the irreducible plurality of my living body, [...] to the very materiality of my body as political site for agency and resistance" (B. Preciado 2013, 250). Preciado claims the body as 'site for' agency, by claiming its materiality instead of its embodied normativity. This leads to a double dislocation of both of the norms, as well as agency itself, as it works from an unspecified elsewhere on the body. Preciado seems unwilling to accept that a dislocated subjectivity still has

agency that emerges out of this displaced body. However, as I will argue in this thesis, that agency emerges from the body immersed in its environment. Agency is not displaced.

The emergence of new forms is construed as a proliferation of practices, which can be shared. "Sharing multiplies desire, sex, and gender. The problem is that, until now, desire, pleasure, sex, and gender were thought of as nontransferable essences or as private property" (B. Preciado 2013, 277). Preciado suggests the move from private approaches to affects and norms, to collectivizing approaches. This enables understanding an openness of affects, but also that proliferation is not singular and individual but collective. Furthermore, such proliferation comes as an escape from existing norms. This escape from recognised formations comes with the analysis that power shifted from manufacturing, structured creation, towards information, various forms of knowability, which "[t]oday extends to sex, gender, and race in their capacity as precise codifications of informations and subjectivity" (B. Preciado 2013, 277). Power operates through systems of knowledge that capture and mark agents in structures that are known, predictable, and controllable. The escape from these systems lies in misrecognition within those structures as well as simultaneous proliferation of forms of life through shared practices. Preciado uses the concept of *code* as entry point to understand the operation of micro norms, as information leading to practice (B. Preciado 2013, 277). I agree that codings form a key element of ethics. Codings structure the relation between abstractions and practices. Furthermore, these codings are used to subjugate and exploit. However, as I will argue for below, codings and sharing in collectivities need a more precise formulation, where relation and shared forms are spelled out in their different operations, even though they are immersed. Doing so, will enable a deeper understanding of ethical change, and the different momentums operating between agents. I will therefore present *codes* in chapter four in conjunction with *technes*, the crafts of relationality, in order to flesh out the transitions between forms of life, forms of relation and abstractions decontextualising these forms, to comprise an ethics.

Lastly, Preciado's formulation of the body in an environment structured as politics crucially hinders an understanding of bodily agency as generative. While Preciado articulates the agent navigating between the body and norms:

On the one hand there are my exercises in intentional masculinisation, somato-political gymnastics brought to bear against [...] the programs of gender that dominate social and political representation. [...] In reality, testosterone belongs to neither of these two devices for the production of gender. Mixed with other molecules in my body, it instead composes the somato-political context for the performative implantation of these practices. Both these devices belong to what we would call an aesthetic [...] or even an ethic, of genders: the intentional care brought to the somatical-political production of masculinity and femininity. (B. Preciado 2013, 322)

Prosthetic testosterone provides the context for the shift out of normative genders, while genderedness itself is described as a form of intentional care, which is somato-political. The body in Preciado is placed on the fault line of factional struggles for social dominance, which is politics:

[T]he fact that your body, the body of the *multitude* and the pharmacopornographic networks that constitute them are political laboratories, both effects of the process of subjection and control and potential spaces for political agency and critical resistance to normalisation" (B. Preciado 2013, 348).

However, this questions whether the body is political as storage of normativities, or that the body is constitutive of those normativities as site of resistance. In short, by situating the body on political fault lines does agency have the possibility to extend beyond the already known, and how can the body function in the process of developing new forms of genderedness. The latter question gains prominence with claiming this work as a form of care, further emphasising work on the body as ethics.

Preciado discusses the formation of the body in a three-fold way. First, there is the normativity coming with the medicalization of the body, which moulds the agent into a normative programme of medicinalised subjectivity directing the agent's needs, desires and pleasures, which can subsequently be put to use within a larger framework of capitalisation. Second, there is the embodied past of the agent "my body has been trained to produce the affects of a woman, suffer like a woman, love like a woman" (B. Preciado 2013, 329). This training refers to upbringing and normative patterns the agent learned to comply with. The programme of medicalization is used to destabilise these norms, but, as Preciado writes "[t]estosterone isn't enough to modify this sensory filter" (Preciado 2013b, 329). Past formation and current practices, whether aided by testosterone or not, do not instantly replace each other. Preciado focuses on actions, which is the third possibility of formation: "I force myself into a programme of virile coaching" (B. Preciado 2013, 330). The agent needs awareness of norms, and also to apply strongly counter-normative actions in order to adapt and re-form an affective 'filter'.

Preciado's use of 'filter' suggests that the body is hidden behind normative patterns, which explains why testosterone doesn't work by itself. Testosterone supplies an impetus for the transformation of affect and action, but cannot adapt the normative layer. Preciado envisions norms to operate slightly outside but enveloping the body. Norms are alien and 'embodiment' claims norms encapsulating the physicality that one uses to negotiate the outside world. This straightforward tripartite division: world, filter, body is broken down by the backdoor of molecular immersions into larger networks. Still, Preciado seems to be looking for something that is untouched, unmodified, something that can work upon these two different normative strands: filters on the front, pleasure from the back. They merge at the moment Preciado explains: "[i]t is, however, only through the strategic reappropriation of these biotechnological apparatuses that it is possible to invent resistance, to risk revolution" (B. Preciado 2013, 344). Here Preciado leaves the epistemological predicament of being delivered to norms and starts working towards disrupting existing normativities by creating new nonnormative ones. The question that remains and is solved in a not

entirely satisfying manner is how agency locates itself in relation to the encapsulated body, and especially if this body is multiple.

Processes of subjection, by habituation and networks of capitalised drug use and labour, are operative on and in the body as a pincer movement. The effects that will be produced in and on bodies are not predetermined, even if there is outside pressure towards normalisation or exploitable variation. This space between inner and outer regulation suggests a degree of freedom for using agency and is consequently the space where Preciado places politics. Preciado describes this as “it will consist of a positioned, responsible corporal political practice, so that anyone wishing to be a political subject will begin by being a rat in her or his own laboratory” (B. Preciado 2013, 353). This practice consists of experimentation upon one’s own body, and happens therefore in the present and locally, is therefore positioned, and is responsible through the use of oneself as the site for experimentation:

We must reclaim the right to participate in the *construction* of biopolitical fictions. We have the right to demand collective and “common” ownership of the biocodes gender, sex, and race. [...] Such a process of resistance and redistribution could be called *technosomatic communism* (P. B. Preciado 2013, 352).

This complex paragraph brings a few topics to the fore. Firstly, Preciado states that norms are operative on the body as biopolitical fictions. As collective fictions they are participatory and can be replaced by other collective ideas that can be constructed. These constructions can be imposed, as has been discussed above, or alternatively collectively “owned” which is one’s “right”. Hinting at the commons, collectively maintained and shared resources used for social reproduction (Federici 2004, 68), Preciado articulates these projects as experimental collective processes. The body is central to this, making the process responsive and local, and thus allowing for non-oppressive formation. Preciado claims that “[a] philosophy that doesn’t use the body as active platform for technovital innovation is spinning in neutral” (B. Preciado 2013, 359). Active

resistance needs physical engagement in order for it to become practical and engaged.

These practices are referred to as “micropolitics” (Preciado 2013b, 364; Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 208) and “disidentifications” (Munoz, 1999 in: B. Preciado 2013, 366) and “resistance to domination and refusal to surrender” (B. Preciado 2013, 376). These micropolitics refer to the changing relations lived through the agent, opposing generalising and dominating structures. Disidentifications are similar in the sense that these are acts of distancing oneself from categorisation dominant culture claims upon those in the margin (Muñoz 1999, 3). These are situated around the “collective experience of the arbitrary and constructed dimensions of our gender” (B. Preciado 2013, 368). Arbitrary, in this context means specifically not attached to a reality that is revealing a truth beyond our own complicity in it, and ‘constructed’ reinforces that idea by making the gendered experiences local and shared; the *techne* of somatechnics. Micropolitics in Preciado can be understood as modifying *techne*. Out of these experiments space gets created that opens up possibilities for new formations:

Man, woman, masculine, and feminine, and also heterosexual and homosexual seem to be insufficient codes and identity locations for describing the contemporary production of the queer, trans, and crip body. Performative politics will become a field for experimentation, a place for the production of new subjectivities, and, as a result a true alternative to traditional ways of doing politics that surpasses resignifying or resisting normalisation (B. Preciado 2013, 369).

The emphasis on the short cuts used to summarise identities ‘man’, ‘woman’, ‘masculine’ underlines the insufficiency for negotiating shifts in experiences of identity and experiments with the political body. However, Preciado holds on to *subjectivity* as the outcome of those experiments. This favours an epistemic emphasis above action: "which is preferable changing my personality and keeping my body, or keeping my body and keeping my current manner of experiencing reality? A fake dilemma. Our personalities arise from this gap between body and reality"(B. Preciado 2013, 236).

This locates the third strand of Preciado's ontology. Caught between internal and external pressures on and through the body, both pressures mediated by epistemic networks and affect regulating entanglements, Preciado finds the only gap that offers an escape: a place between body and 'reality', where a person can hide in order to maintain a stance against normativities ensnaring both body and speech. It is a last stance of Cartesian interiority, that might as well be surrendered in order to come to a theory of ethics, which avoids this problem entirely.

Predominantly problematic is the isolation of the person. Suddenly 'reality' is no longer experienced through 'filters' but the filters seem to be experienced, behind which reality takes place. Metaphorically speaking, agents are looking at the 'window' when they turn critical, instead of at the world. Not only is gender arbitrary and constructed, but the filters through which the world comes to pass are that as well. How the gap is constituted is not entirely clear, and thus the question remains how the personality hides, or comes to exist in there, and also how this personality relates to both the body, and the filter, the reality behind the filter. Is the gap not subject to an infinite regress of little gaps between world and body? Furthermore the question is if this 'new subjectivity' is located in the personhood in the gap, in the normative filter, or in the alternative embodiment that follows out of experimentation.

Instead of focussing on a strategically safe space of personhood between body and reality, filter and molecular immersions, I propose to look deeper into the possibility the concept of the gap has to offer. I will propose not to look for this placement in an agent, but on the contrary follow Preciado's own suggestion, that this space is first found in action, a proposal I will forward in chapter two. Preciado locates a gap, an *interstice*, in the micro-politics of experimentation. Looking at the work of Merce Cunningham, whose "chance operation", is referred to as a technique for "finding a way between norm and improvisation, between repetition and invention" (B. Preciado 2013, 373), Preciado's active use of agency lies in moving into *interstices*. Here, I want to recall Preciado's earlier statement

(B. Preciado 2013, 322) about the attentive care of forming gender as ethics, and finding ways and situatedness between known norms, forms, and positions, as a way to maintain room for experimentation, and collective experiences.

Alternatively, I want to propose a contrasting reading of trans in order not to have to draw resistance out of the world, in a gap between reality and body, but propose to focus on ethics as a way to change the body, and emphasise resistance as in the world. This means that the *interstice* will be located in the actions of the agent: in its ethics, rather than finding a gap in an epistemic place of safety, between body and reality. This approach emphasises agency and formation as site for emergent forms of life, as opposed to fall back into knowledge production as ultimate place of resistance.

I will take my cue from Preciado's argumentation and elaborate upon the call for experimentation:

The theoretico-political produced during the last forty years by Feminism, the black liberation movement, and queer and transgender theory seem to be lasting acquisitions. However, in the context of global war, this collection of scholarship could be destroyed also, as fast as a microchip melting under intense heat. Before all the existing fragile archives about feminism, black, queer, and trans culture have been reduced to a state of radio-active shades, it is indispensable to transform such minority knowledge into collective experimentation, into physical practice, into ways of life and forms of cohabitation (B. Preciado 2013, 349).

Preciado suggests an explicit shift from epistemic approaches to nonnormativity towards exercising ethical agency. A shift that implies going from theory to collective somatechnics. This means a move from epistemological approaches perusing difference and alternatives towards ethical approaches: making multiplicity. Consequently, nonnormativity follows not out of subjects of recognition, but out of agents of ethics. In turn, this shift means that the pragmatics of ethical actions has precedence over ontologies, and that metaphysics follows ethics. Subsequently, the scrutiny of a way of being follows from the possibilities of forms of life. This means that it is necessary to take what

is needed from ethical approaches, and only afterwards reason towards the implications for metaphysics, and thus ontologies. This is of genuine importance, because the shift that is suggested by Preciado is that to come to a viable understanding of the ethical needs of nonnormative agents, it is that it is imperative to start from actions, and that agents need to discover the world they are situated in, instead of navigating superimposed discursive-theoretical means. The discoveries made by the agent are done through actions. As we have seen above this means that it is not always clear to the agent what is done, except as activity that resists invasive dominant normativities. I will set this line out as follows: in chapter two I will discuss the operation of agency and the effects on the body. In chapter three, the relations between agents outside of encapsulating normativities will be conceptualised. And in chapter four, a proposal for traversing contexts and storing information in the form of codings will be forwarded.

Nonnormative Lives, Nonnormative Ethics

Resulting from the discussion by Preciado of trans as nonnormative form of life, I will turn to a recent series of discussions about nonnormative lives and the structural understandings they provide. Nonnormative forms of life are recently debated in the works of Rosi Braidotti (Braidotti 2006, 2011, 2013) Sara Ahmed (Ahmed 2010) and Lauren Berlant (Berlant 2011). Metaphorically it can be said that these authors provide the x, y, z axes from which to further the discussion emerging from Preciado. Braidotti offers the bounds of affirmation, Ahmed of negation, and Berlant of aspiration.

I will start by focusing on Braidotti, who centres 'transsexuality' within a project of Deleuzian *affirmative ethics* (Braidotti 2013 chapters 1, 2, 2011 chapters 10, 11, 12, 2006). Affirmative ethics "entails the creation of sustainable alternatives geared to the construction of social horizons of hope, while at the same time doing critical theory, which implies resistance to the present" (Braidotti 2012,

267). Braidotti's ethics comprises a renewed relationship to oneself and one's environment, theorised through forms of Deleuzian *becoming*, which is "[...] a radical redefinition of thinking as the activity that consists in the act of creation of new forms of thought and of collective experiments with ways of actualising them"(Braidotti 2012, 271). These nonnormative forms of thought and actualised lived experiments get crystallised in *The Posthuman* through the focal point of transgender: "What are the consequences of the fact that technological apparatus is no longer sexualised, racialized or naturalized, but rather neutralised as figures of mixity, hybridity and interconnectiveness, turning transsexuality into a dominant posthuman *topos*?"(Braidotti 2013, 97) Followed by "If the machine is both self-organising and transgender, the old organic human body needs to be relocated elsewhere"(Braidotti 2013, 97). Preciado's discussion left a conceptualisation of trans as self-directed experiment that involves machinic connections in the form of HRT and other technologies, calling for trans as the focal point of creating a new commons as a form of ethics. Braidotti's proposal is very close to what is needed for a theory of nonnormative ethics, however, as I shall discuss below, an other theoretical grounding might offer nuance for the focal point needed for trans.

In contrast to Preciado, Braidotti's use of the terms of transgender and transsexual are largely metaphorical. While the elements surrounding the formulation of ethics, namely technology, new modes of thinking in conjunction with lived experience, and collective experimentation are also discussed by Preciado, Braidotti's theory functions as ethics, by providing the organising principles of expansive joy (Braidotti 2011, 300) and sustainable connections (Braidotti 2011, 294). However, these principles might not be manageable for a trans ethics, due to the reality of trans lived experience. In chapter two, I will defend that in affirmation new realities are found, while bringing it in closer contact with a double negation to generate a further understanding of indeterminacy in necessary connection with *telos*, as discussed above. This shifts my theoretical base from Spinozist affirmation to Aristotelian affirmation. Spinoza can articulate expansive joy, as this affect coincides with alignment to 'nature', which is God and reason. The infinite expansion is found in the

provision of infinite connections of 'god is nature' (Spinoza 1969 part IV, preface), and joy emerges from coming closer to this understanding (Spinoza 1969 part IV prop. XLI).¹² Trans reality, I will argue, suggests that for trans ethics a bracketing on expansive joy should be in order. This is partly due to the need for constituting a form of life, which cannot be articulated from the available logics. For this reason I will provide an argument for situated practical truth in chapter two, in order to make an argument for multilogical connections in chapter three. This embeds in my argument the acceptance of limitations of one's logic, and suggests loss as key feature of a trans ethics. This loss is a proposal to deal with the limits of one's outlook and practical truth, and is not connected to mourning or melancholia. These two tenets disrupt an immediate application of the principle of expansive joy as provided by Spinozist commitments. Because the trans ethics I will articulate through different methodology, it functions rather as a parallel work offering some nuance, than as a negation of the insights of Braidotti.

Trans has an interesting history in Braidotti's work. In *Metamorphoses* Braidotti discusses the 'trans-sexual' and locates it as a specific theoretical position aimed at eradicating the power structures that underlie the gender binary; it is to go beyond the binary, both sexual and gender, to overcome or destroy the current gender system, but as neutralising force, rather than specific new form of life. Braidotti conceptualises the terms trans-sexual and transgender to indicate a space of transition as it emerged out of debates (between non-trans theorists) in the 80s and 90s, even as "the prototype of the cyborg" (Braidotti 2002, 57), imagery also found in Preciado. The figure of the transsexual is primarily read as a theoretically destabilising factor that might even re-inscribe the current division of gender. This seems both a reading of transgender where its history is stronger than its agency, but also forms the figure into a monstrous outsider aiming to destabilise prevalent logics without engaging reality (cf. Braidotti 2002, 46). Stryker's monster claims to be *made* just that (Stryker 1994).

¹² The place of Jewish mysticism in Spinoza's conception of reason is evident from this thinking. Also, it should hardly be overlooked that Spinoza was writing during the Dutch independency and civil war. Protestants at that time were not *pro joy*. Spinoza's context of writing provided perhaps the needed emphasizes on this point.

Hayward criticises Braidotti for using “cultural anxieties about transsexuals to mobilize sexual panic and reinvigorate normative orderings”(Hayward 2010, 227). Hayward continues:

Braidotti and Baudrillard are not alone in their pronouncements or use of transsexuality in the service of interpretation. Their work seems to imply that the transsexual is good to think with without transsexuals as lived subjectivities. The ethical problems of this interpretive move are difficult to ignore, but it does point to the way the transsexual, as Susan Stryker proffered, “is the golem” in service of postmodernity, continental philosophy, and sexual difference feminisms (Hayward 2010, n1).

Braidotti conceptualises the figure of trans outside of its lived reality in order to critique the absence of analysis of power relations upon the female body. While Braidotti criticises the use of the figure of the transgender as ‘neutralising force’, the figure of trans is not conceived as a way to deepen the analysis of power relations beyond and within a gender dichotomy. As I will offer in this thesis, trans offers a fruitful way to engage with difference. However, difference can be discerned in other locations.

In *Transpositions* (Braidotti 2006) Braidotti recalls the discussion of four years earlier and critiques the then current "fantasy of stepping 'beyond gender' [in a] blurring of the boundaries as a generalised androgynous drive"(Braidotti 2006, 49) as a "sexually indeterminate or transsexual discourse" (ibid.). This movement in a re-entrenching contemporary sexist culture turns out to be:

The schizoid double-pull of simultaneous displacement and re-fixing of binary gendered oppositions is one of the most problematic aspects of contemporary political culture. It is also key to its vehement anti-feminism, in that it erodes the grounds for the affirmation and empowerment of embodied and embedded feminist political subjects (Braidotti 2006, 49).

The double pull Braidotti takes aim at, is the claim to a place in the natural order, as well as the disruption of that placement by technologies. The double demand of conservative and progressive values disrupts a possible and positive feminist

agenda. Braidotti's observation that the displacement of binary oppositions, which politically is simultaneous with an anti-feminism, needs to be corrected in any new proposal and should centre the body, otherwise the ground for political action dissolves. The figure of trans as hybridity moved but seems indirectly aligned with "the progressive and more active drive of more innovative solutions" (Braidotti 2006, 50). Trans seems to hover in the space between indeterminacy and an ethics of displacement, Braidotti's position shifted from a metaphorical territory in 2002 towards thinking in ethical terms that informs a later position.

In *The Posthuman* (Braidotti 2013) there is a stronger elaboration on the dislocation of differences into rhizomatic patterns that are marked by processes. However, this blurring of boundaries does not erase or improve power differences that used to be in place in more strictly organised subjectivities. The means of control have shifted from bio-power to "molecular *zoe* power of today" (Braidotti 2013, 97) and from the "political economy of the Panopticon to the informatics of domination" (Ibid.). This alleviation of strict boundaries leads Braidotti to return to the figure of the 'transsexual' as a figure of "mixture, hybridity and interconnectiveness" as the "dominant posthuman *topos*" (Ibid.). The vision of transgender as mixture stems from an enduring commitment to new subjectivities as key to unlocking political and ethical problems, and this mixture is able to provide bridging between different homogeneous forms:

Advanced capitalism is a post-gender system capable of accommodating a high degree of androgyny and a significant blurring of the categorical divide between the sexes. [...] A strong theory of posthuman subjectivity can help us re-appropriate these processes, both theoretically and politically, not only as analytical tools, but also as alternative grounds for formations of the self (Braidotti 2013, 98).

The mixture and hybridity are based on the remains of older and possibly discarded subject-positions. "Transsexuality" stands in Braidotti's argument for a form of *becoming*, which is the adaptation to and adoption of a new subject

position from which to challenge the current power-axes, as well as the political and ethical problems that come with advanced capitalist forms of social organisation. Braidotti's transsexual is informed by Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of becoming:

A line of becoming is not defined by points that it connects, or by points that compose it: on the contrary it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 323).

The transsexual in Braidotti passes between older points of stable normative organisation, whether it is man-woman, machine-man. The transsexual is not defined by those points, but is still composed of the remnants of them. The hybridity of the transgender that results is the negotiation between the stability of genealogy of the points and the fluency of the line of becoming. Braidotti's rendering of the 'transsexual' as hybridity enforces an idea of two more or less solid formations; one masculine, one feminine, and Braidotti's transsexual cannot overcome these, but can elaborate upon the remains of subjectivities left behind. The conceptual question remains whether trans is a new form, or a blending of old forms. Deleuze and Guattari seem to suggest norms as external, while Braidotti seems to understand norms as embodied and thus internalised. In the first option passing through offers a new form, in the second formulation a new form is a blend of old patterns. Furthermore, it is unclear if this change is a change of normativities or a change of bodily being. In short, is there a change of norm, or a change of form? While for a critical philosophy this question might be tangential, for a trans philosophy this question is central.

Braidotti's interrogation of affirmative ethics structures *becoming* in relation to *sustainability* (Braidotti 2011, 302). These concepts provide the conceptual tools with which to build an argument about transgressing existing normative structures. Braidotti discusses a collaborative ethics that rests on a vision of mutual and co-dependent realities. Within those dependencies ethics suggest to be open to being affected by other agents:

thus undergoing transformations in such a way as to be able to sustain them and make them work towards growth. [...] An ethical life pursues that which enhances and strengthens the subject [...] in the awareness of one's interconnection with others (Braidotti 2006, 162).

A principal focus of this ethics is the enhancement and strengthening of the subject. Braidotti's transsexual agents are entangled in a vision of ethics as

achieving freedom of understanding, through the awareness of our limits of our bondage. This results in the freedom to affirm one's essence as joy, through encounters and minglings with other bodies, entities, beings and forces. [...] It is life on the edge, but not over it (Braidotti 2006, 163).

While joy is certainly a central element of ethics, it is uncertain given for instance the discussed issues with trans becoming and lives by Bhanji (2012), Haritaworn (2015), Raha (2017), or Snorton (2017) if this element can occupy such a prominent position in a trans formulation of ethics. Given the differential realities and the actuality of trans lives, some trans agents who I have articulated elsewhere as *fallen from grace* (van der Drift 2016), might need to focus on dissolving normative patterns, instead of being empowered. Contemporary discussion in trans theory focuses strongly on the hybridity of marginalisation and privilege and thus other elements need to come to the fore. Affirmative enhancement could block engagement with becoming as process beyond gain. An exemplary formulation is:

[Ethics] is a mode of actualising sustainable forms of transformation. This requires adequate assemblages or interaction: one has to pursue or actively create the kind of encounters that favor an increase in active becomings and avoid those that diminish one's potentia (Braidotti 2011, 317).

Because of the aim to create a sustainable ethics, the limits of becoming could risk becoming fixed, or return trans to figurative usage. Braidotti's current formulation might limit usage within the necessary transgressions of fixed formations as lived trans reality. While the marginalised position of trans would

need enhancement in general, trans lived reality cannot include becomings that diminish one's potentia. Situating trans as central it is a specific challenge to conceptualise that affirming one's potentia leads to a loss of lived capacity, and yet leads to a nonnormative ethics. The reality of trans lives shows that far from having increased potentia and sustainability, trans agents are negotiating violent and violating contexts. Living a trans life will often not only deliver expansive joy, but also troubling reality. Embracing that understanding justifies the formulation of a new theory of nonnormative trans ethics. This new theory will, in line with Braidotti's aims, function as affirmative theory of ethics, as well as negate current dominant contexts.

To conclude, while the trans metaphor strongly influences Braidotti's conceptualisation of affirmative ethics to affirm the mixage between agent, machine and the possibility to overcome current normativities, due to its disconnection of lived trans reality the theory does not supply the tools needed for a nonnormative trans ethics. Partly, it might be worth questioning how far Braidotti's investment in subjectivity and ethical difference, which emphasises an epistemic analysis while trans emphasises change in action, might be an underlying cause. Furthermore, Braidotti's investment in 'expansive joy' as guiding thread for a nonnormative ethics surpasses the actuality of trans lives. Trans reality turns out to impede flourishing (Stonewall 2018; EU-FRA 2014), even if that is not the only thing it does. Trans agents need to cross a normative boundary, to suggest this lends the option of creating sustainable lives by staying within the realm of the possible risks turning out to be a cruelly optimistic impediment. It is optimistic that it comes with affirmative ethical hope, but looks to be cruel, as it doesn't come with the tools that are needed to make trans flourishing likely. The diminished potentiality of lived reality suggests the need for tools to craft relations without centring generative expansion. Within a Spinozist *affirmative ethics* the figure of the transsexual risks becoming an example of what Berlant has termed *cruel optimism* (Berlant 2011, 2).

Berlant's concept *cruel optimism* signals an engagement of agents who aim at flourishing while focusing on figures of thought that actually hinder this occurring:

A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. It might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be the fantasy of a good life, or a political project. [...] These kinds of relation are not inherently cruel. They become cruel only when the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim you brought to it initially (Berlant 2011, 2).

In the case of trans lives to aim at expansive joy without altering their forms of life and attendant evaluative mechanisms would be an example of a functioning of cruel optimism. This is cruelly optimistic as it hinders activity by staying in the limits of the available, while those limits are rigged against trans lives.

Furthermore, this would blame trans agents for a lack of flourishing and an absence of expansive joy. A metaphorical figure of trans can become a concept that cannot deliver in reality the descriptions it suggests as *topos*.

Berlant conceptualises *cruel optimism* as normative fantasies agents are focusing on, that make them in actuality worse off. These fantasies ensure a population that is holding on to patterns that will not ensure the aims they are invested in. These populations will remain fluid and unable to form their lives in alignment with their aims:

[...] precarity is an economic and political condition suffered by a population or by the subjects of capitalism generally; or a way of life; or an affective atmosphere; or an existential truth about the conditions of living, namely, there are no guarantees that the life one intends can or will be built (Berlant 2011, 192).

Berlant draws a picture of a population adrift, who focuses on ideals, but has no guarantee that what one intends is also how one will be able to live. More than a general statement, Berlant theorises this as a failure of the framing of ideals as they suggest solutions that do not solve the problems the agents are facing.

Therefore agents are in a perpetual state of flux, unable to stabilise in sustainable realities. In Berlant's theory the question of how the general condition came into existence is perhaps irrelevant, because the concept is not carried by a causal analysis, but indicates an interlocking of various layers of life, material, affective and existential. Spinning between flexibility as form of life and moderately creative living, demanding predictability of other agents, this precariat is privileged, bourgeois and less interested in:

a radical democratic embrace of the chaos, antagonisms, and interests of the least privileged [but are] attached to the soft hierarchies of inequality to provide a sense of *their place in the world*. [To] prop up the sense that the good life fantasy is available to everyone (Berlant 2011, 194).

Berlant, like Braidotti, forcefully critiques the idea that a little flexibility will bring the good life in reach. The flexibility that is needed should be focused largely on accommodating the needs, desires, and lives of the least privileged. Berlant takes aim at the idea that an affirmative project without analysis of the material circumstances of the least privileged will deliver an ethic that makes good its promise. Berlant is looking into precarity as a *situation*, "a genre of living that one knows one's in but that one has to find out about, a circumstance embedded in life, but not in one's control" (Berlant 2011, 195). Berlant's project is thus marked by negotiations within a present that is not affirmative, but confused, where the signposts to possible actions are indeed "the conditions under which certain attachments to what counts as life come to make sense or no longer make sense, yet remain powerful as they work against the flourishing of particular and collective beings" (Berlant 2011, 13). While Braidotti focuses in these conditions on affirmation and figuring possibilities of forging new forms of life as *resistance* to such ongoing disruptions, Berlant aims to bring into view how a specific focus on flexibility as idea of the good life under neoliberal conditions works to bring people into circumstances where they are worse off. In this, as specific analysis about trans lives both Dan Irving as well as Jasbir Puar warn against flexibility and workplace integration as means to advance trans well being. While Irving specifically focuses on the narratives of adaptability of

trans agents in the work place (Irving 2008), Puar signals the fragmentation as a major danger for trans agents under capitalism (Puar 2015).

Berlant's solution is not to come with new concepts, but to "advance a kind of political pragmatism that involves becoming a political subject whose solidarities and commitments are neither to ends nor to imagining the pragmatics of a consensual community, but to embodied processes of solidarity itself" (Berlant 2011, 260). Berlant firmly embeds the acting agent in the present, concerned with "one's individual or collective attachment would ideally be an attachment to the process of maintaining attachment" (Berlant 2011, 260). This is opposed to long-term good life fantasies, or even a political effectiveness of one's actions. It is the "embodied process of making solidarity itself" (Berlant 2011, 260), as opposed to "[t]he compulsion to repeat a toxic optimism [... an] unimaginative space of committed replication, *just in case* it will be different" (Berlant 2011, 259). What matters to Berlant is the coming together as such, and attaching to each other, not as closed community, but as open process of building solidarity across material difference. Berlant's work reads as a critique of modernist conceptions of "effective individual agency, that fits both the strategist, and those who act as managers, foremen, lesser officials, and upholders of its 'institutional apparatus'" (Berlant 2011, 210). Berlant is describing a situation whereby the limiting of possibility and effectiveness is theorised in the light of traditional conceptions of long-term planning, uninterrupted lives, and predictable possibilities.¹³ Berlant's solution, to hold on for holding on, on the bodily level of the social as it were, brings the modernist agent back from a situation of enduring social support, towards the conception of itself as a fragile being. Consequently, even though Berlant does not directly engage Braidotti, their theory reads as cautioning not to put the ethical project of affirmation on too high a level of expectation. Whereas Braidotti's theorisation is situated in the conceptual realm of a theory of possibility, Berlant positions the agent in a social reality without recuperating a subjectivity.

¹³ These are traditionally ingredients of ethics theorized from a bourgeois perspective coming from late Modernity (Lugones, 2003).

Parallel to Berlant's critique of the modernist individual receiving enduring social support is Ahmed's analysis of the functioning of happiness. While Berlant terms *Cruel Optimism* "a more formal work" concerned with the structure of relationality than Ahmed's *The Promise of Happiness* (Berlant 2011, 13), Ahmed's concerns are of importance as they are primarily concerned with the affective experiences with normativity of the agents in question. Ahmed's work supports understanding the affective lives of nonnormative agents, and their navigations of normative environments. Ahmed's work fleshes out a possible understanding of negation of current reality as necessity.

Ahmed's discussion of happiness is centred on immediate affect. Ahmed argues in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, that emotions are in between people, not personal, and negotiates a model in which emotions are constitutive of social categories and objects. "[I]t is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others" (Ahmed, 2004/2014, 10). Emotions shape the surfaces they are experienced on. In contrast to Preciado, Ahmed keeps emotions external, where they function as force. This leads Ahmed to discuss happiness as boundary shaping, whereby obtained happiness for some, necessarily creates unhappiness for others as this happiness is out of reach due to different social positions. Happiness is given as objective measure, reachable through a stable set of norms. While sadness in Ahmed's discussion is described as indetermined (2010, 71), happiness is directed or focused such that it has become an object. In both Preciado and Ahmed pleasure has a direction. In chapter two I will propose affirmation as indeterminate, while negation comes with clear direction.

"For those positioned as coming after, *happiness means following somebody else's goods* [...] In communities of feeling, we share feelings because we share the same object of feeling" (Ahmed 2010, 56). In other words, feelings are communal goods, and thus less an individual functioning of desire. Happiness is one such communal good, but not one that is shared by every community, or member of community, in the same way. Communal goods are both scarce, and widely

available. They are scarce in the sense that not everybody can always reach them, but enough people should be able to attain the norm, otherwise they lose their focus as evaluative standard. In this manner they (can) function as “aspirational normativity”(Berlant 2007, 275) as focus for agents to direct their lives towards.

However, as Ahmed problematizes, there are categories of people not only unable to aim for these standards, but actively troubling the imposition and desirability of those standards. It is questionable if trouble dislodges an evaluative standard or if it serves to keep it in place, by signifying the troublemaker as troublemaker (Ahmed 2010, 60). The direction of fit of unhappiness to agent is very much a concern (Ahmed 2010, 67), so that trouble reverses and the agent becomes the issue instead of the troublesome standard. As Ahmed argues, evaluative standards do not only serve to demarcate shared goods, but also to identify those that do not share, or want to share. The evaluative standard works as two-way identifier. For those that cannot participate in the object of shared feeling, there seems to be nothing else left, but to turn away from the feeling that serves as the identifier of the good. “To leave happiness for life is to become alive to possibility”(Ahmed 2010, 78). Happiness became the object that is objectionable. To leave the forms of acknowledged happiness is to open up to new forms of life, as these will be undetermined by existing patterns.

To use ‘trouble’ as figure of thought suggests a domestic fight as the metaphor of replacing evaluative standards.¹⁴ To object to known objects of happiness is to become objectionable oneself. “Consciousness of ‘being not’ involves self-estrangement: you recognize yourself as the stranger” (Ahmed 2010, 82). To recognize oneself as stranger is to recognize received violence, to recognize how one was, or is, objectionable according to the established norm. The difficulty of recognising norms lies in the manner how these are negotiated contextually, it is often not unequivocally established in a context. “Because I am never sure, then x

¹⁴ As I have discussed earlier some people falling outside of the normative standards are pathologised or dehumanized. ‘Trouble’ seems to light a term to describe these cases.

is lived as possibility about racism, as being what explains how you inhabit the world that you do”(Ahmed 2010, 84). Norms are idealisations, as Berlant argues, that can function as aspirations for normality (Berlant 2007). Norms figure as recognised possibility, but not one that is always possible. They therefore function as aspirations, which is as vectors to direct attitudes and actions. To be a nonnormative agent is to aim to grow out of this normative world, a world that is ‘shared’ but is not yours. This normative world is where normative happiness is obtained. The normative world becomes borrowed, and the normatively adapted patterns figure the nonnormative agent as the stranger, which is forced to live in somebody else’s world. “There is solidarity in recognizing our alienation from happiness, even if we do not inhabit the same place (as we do not)”(Ahmed 2010, 87). The solidarity of alienation of happiness hints at the possible formation of groups that are living with their mutual differences.

However, Ahmed looking at normative affective structures surrounding the possibility of being happy as actual lived experience, answers the question to the possibility of the good life in the negative:

[...] the happiness of the straight world is a form of injustice. Heterosexual happiness is narrated as a social wrong, as based on the unthinking exclusion of those whose difference is already narrated as deprivation. Happiness for some involves persecution for others: it is not simply that this happiness produces a social wrong; it might even depend on it. The unhappiness of the deviant performs a claim for social justice (Ahmed 2010, 96).

Ahmed argues that the markers for happiness are out of reach of nonnormative queers, which suggests the good life is thus unattainable, and even that it is undesirable: "I have argued that the risk of promoting happy queers is that the unhappiness of this world can disappear from view"(Ahmed 2010, 117). Ahmed insists on a necessary negativity in order to do justice to the injustices in the world. Ahmed’s discussion opens the space for analyzing discontent with the norm from the perspective of the lived reality of the agent. In spite of this, the negativity needed to critique normative mainstream gets juxtaposed with the

possibility of “[h]aving space to breathe, or being able to breathe freely [...] is an aspiration”(Ahmed 2010, 120).

Ahmed’s theorisation of ‘objects of happiness’ that are out of reach is of importance for a trans theory of nonnormative ethics as warning. Nonnormative agents caught in unhappiness can yearn for normative patterns, which will be impossible to reach. This yearning will lead to *cruelly optimistic* endeavours. However, from a trans perspective Ahmed’s analysis does not provide necessary concepts for thinking through possible lives. The term ‘trans’ by definition includes moving away from current patterns, and negation alone is not sufficient. Like Braidotti and Berlant, Ahmed leaves room for the option of indeterminate aims, when directing attention towards nonnormative lives. Within these queerly informed perspectives indeterminacy is the absence of *existing* norms, which can get conflated with absence *from* norms or forms. The question for trans is not if forms of life can exist outside of dominant norms, which is undisputable, while it might be out of sight, as I will argue in chapter three, but if these forms of life can be lived beyond negation – that is, with their own evaluative patterns as a form of nonnormative ethics.

Nonnormative Ethics

In chapter two I will work through the proposal that trans comprises a form of bodily change. Aligning Preciado’s insight of dynamic change and both their and Braidotti’s emphasis on technology, I will focus on the *low-tech* practice of ethics as somatic endeavour. In order to provide a conceptualisation that can coherently grasp changing bodies, changing norms, and agential practice I will re-articulate Aristotle’s *ensouled body* as underlying the formation of ethics as a form of life. This concept allows understanding how Aristotle’s ethics fit with *somatechnical* articulations, such as Preciado (2013), Sullivan and Stryker offer. However, to create the space for nonnormative formation, the dispositional ethics of Aristotle needs to be displaced and not remain confined by the *polis*.

Outside of the *polis* different practical truths can emerge in the formation of *logos*, instead of being situated around the same formational logic. In order to extend the insights of Aristotle I will bring the postcolonial and queer understandings of Gloría Anzaldúa (1987) in dialogue with the *ensouled* body of Aristotle. This will lead to an understanding of *logos* as contextual and agential formation that can ground bodily change as well as function as lift off for a conceptualisation of collective ethics.

In chapter three the contextualisation of *logos* as particular formation and the connection across differences come into focus. Instead of searching for approaches that aim to come to a collective homogeneity I will suggest connections across different *logos* come through creating space through *multilogical* engagements. The concept of 'multilogical' emerges through María Lugones (2003) and suggests connections across 'worlds' with different logics. Such connections are formed by focusing on the *daemon* that is behind the agent in order to understand how agents that do not approach the world through shared practical truth, can connect as well as are read differently in different 'worlds'. I will consequently apply this articulation to understand emerging forms of life as collective processes outside the *polis*. The multilogical connection by perception of *daimons* leads to a discussion of *demonic grounds* outside the *polis*. Demonic grounds are articulated by Wynter (1990) to suggest lives lived outside the view of the dominant form of life. This articulation will allow understanding emergent forms not as immediately oppressed, even though they certainly may be, but as out of sight and thus operating according to different logics and forms of life. The monological ordering of the agents in the *polis* cannot conceive the evaluations emerging on demonic grounds, because the projections on nonnormative agents limit understanding. Subsequently, this suggests an axiomatic non-imposition for nonnormative agents in order to come to multilogical connections.

In chapter four the question to traversability of multilogical connections needs to be addressed. This is vital in order to avoid a theory of ethics that is provincial, by only thinking contextual. Moreover traversability allows understanding how

contextual discoveries can be used to memorise and enable future explorations. This understanding of abstractions influencing formation and navigation leads to an exploration of *codes*. Black studies has provided far reaching insights in the functioning of the *master code*, as Wynter terms it (2003). The tension between emergent codes and the navigation of dominating codes from the polis serves as underlying frame for the articulation of the operation of abstractions in a theory of ethics.

These chapters will provide a theory of nonnormative ethics, which situates the changing body central within an understanding of relational and abstract navigation of environments in order to come to a conceptualisation of emergent forms of life as modus of resistance to dominant normativities.

Chapter 2 - The Emergence of Trans Bodies

In this chapter I will investigate the role of the body in the emergence of forms of life. In the current definition of trans by Susan Stryker leaving the norm is emphasised, while the formation of the trans agent is indeterminate. Preciado offered a theory away from too constraining disciplinary formation. This theory emphasised openness, but placed the agent in a gap between body and social and technological norms. An agent making decisions free from both the body and the world evacuates the agent to a metaphysical realm. This is at the cost of articulating trans as activity in the world, which seems inevitable for a theory of ethics. It is therefore my aim to formulate the formation the trans body in its situated environments with the perspectives and actions of the agent grounding a theory of ethics. Of prime importance is to understand how the formation of the agent departs normativity – and as can be understood from Berlant – and aspiration, but is directed towards indeterminate forms of life. That is a form of being and becoming that is not yet structured through normative, or paranormative, codings. The chapter will be structured around the question of agency of nonnormative becoming. I will discuss this through the concepts of *logos*, the form of one's being, *vectors* of courses of action, and the relation to ends, and *technes* of relation. These concepts will provide a structure of ethics from the first person. This form of becoming is *trans* if it is more than negation of the norm alone. Muñoz clarifies that negation keeps one tied to the norm (Muñoz 1997, 83). To be trans one has to leave a normative compound, however shortly. It becomes liberatory if refusal comes with agency, as Reina Gossett reminds us of (R. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton 2017, xvi). I will explore this working of agency through the concepts of *techné*, vector, and *logos* to see how agency can operate to undo the norm. I will offer this theory as the agency to form lives, however tentative they may be.

While Queer theory, such as Ahmed articulated, can be offered through a negative project, of criticality and understanding limits and constraints, a trans project entails necessarily a new form of bodily being, as it is a shift of the body out of the norm. This does not mean that this new bodily being is therefore constructed through medication, new names, surgeries, or other procedures. While technological situatedness is as much part of any form of life, as has been

discussed in Preciado, trans, as indeterminate concept, does not need to lean on specific technologies in order to generate a form. However, this does not mean that an agent is free, or free to do as one pleases. I will take Preciado's cue and return to *somatechnics* (Sullivan 2014) to situate an agent's becoming. Somatechnics allows conceptualising the body (soma) in its modes of relation (technes), as discussed in chapter one. Beyond formulating space in the interval of existing forms of relation and knowledge, I aim to make space for direct indeterminate formation of the agent. I will conceptualise this by tying somatechnics in with Aristotle's *ensouled* body to close the gap between norms, agency, and indeterminate formation as the starting point for a form of life: an ethic. I will formulate this ethics as nonnormative by articulating it through trans agency and emerging forms of life as resistance in formation.

The structure of Aristotle's agential formation allows the negation of norms, and creates space for the emergence of new forms. Aristotle's *ensouled* body is, however, constrained within the normativity of the *polis*. Departing from normatively validated relations, I will consequently align the trans agent with Anzaldúa's modus of becoming, which operates on parallel principles as Aristotle, but offers insights concerning nonnormative formation. These understandings allow indeterminate formation of agents while retaining a focus on the body.

Part 1: Anima - Matter of Form

In this part I will offer a reading of Aristotle's *Anima* to provide grounding for a nonnormative ethics. Aristotelian *anima* can provide a conceptualisation of the body away from pathology and constraining binary categorisations. Furthermore the reading of the ensouled body, as I will offer below, enables understanding generative capabilities and embedding of the agent in context. Moreover, the concept of an 'ensouled body' allows understanding how agential formation leads to differences without either subsuming agents in overarching categories,

or collapsing them in contexts. This is necessary to enable an understanding of trans agents away from binary categorisations, for instance man or woman, but also to relieve trans agents from conformist pressures that only allow articulation within existing relations.

The Aristotelian framework provides agents with a tri-partite soul, compounded as *substance*. The basis of life is the plant, and its soul makes for growth and the ability to receive nourishment (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 413a25-28). The plant soul exists in the animal, whose basis is sense perception. And if there is sense perception, then the animal

has motion in respect of place, and if sense-perception then also imagination and desire. For where there is sense-perception, there is also both pain and pleasure, and where these there is of necessity also wanting (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 413b20-23).

The connection between perception, movement, desire, and imagination is built up from analytical necessities. The plant soul is primarily organised around nourishment, as Aristotle thought that it had no sense perception.¹⁵ An animal becomes distinct from plants through their ability to feel, and when there is feeling, there is reaction to the environment. With this environmental embedding come desires and imagination, needed for going around and finding food, mates, etc. Abilities of the soul come in connected clusters, which are partly constitutive of the life forms of the different animals. Added to the animal soul is the intellect and the potentiality for contemplation, which from an analytical angle constitutes a different soul "and this alone can exist separately, as the everlasting can from the perishable" (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 413b26). That a reflective soul can be analytically separated does not mean that it works independently from the rest of the actualised body, but there is a part of the soul that can operate in disconnection from its environmental embedding.¹⁶ In chapter four I will discuss such separation more extensively drawing on Quine, who suggests

¹⁵ Plants are found to be aware of their environment (eg. Aken 2016).

¹⁶ This is what reflection is.

reflection can be used to stabilise norms in order not to change one's engagement with the environment (Quine 1951). Chen muses "it is compelling [...] to recall the outlines of [Aristotle's] image of the 'soul' as an animating principle"(Chen 2012, 4). It offers an organisation of the living being, *animated* through a distribution of powers and possibilities. This distribution is organised as *logos*, as I will explicate below, which allows conceptualising difference and overlaps between agents. The body that moves is *ensouled* (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 412a20). The soul can be envisioned as the driving principle of agency.

Important within this conceptualisation is that Aristotle's categorical separations are not found in practice. The categorical identity relation $A=A$ is true in abstraction, but in practice this identity relation is not found. The difference is one between formal and practical identity (Wiggins 2001a). David Wiggins makes the argument that general essential properties function while allowing "a thing's being articulated *at all* from the rest of reality. These predicates are not in the business of explaining anything much [...]" (2001a, 119). Wiggins continues the argument that other predicates function *a posteriori* as explaining practical accounts. This helps the argument because it shows that *essentialising* definitions such as 'man' or 'woman' do not comprise practical identities, even though these definitions can certainly function as codings enveloping bodies, which I will discuss further in chapter four. Wendy Lee furthers the argument separating practical and categorical distinction by specifying that "a generic definition of the soul need not specify the relation of distribution of its powers [...]"(Lee-Lampshire 1992, 41). Lee details that a general definition need not be concerned with the workings of the embedded soul. In practice differentiations arise that will cover explanations. That these differences between particulars are changeable, perishable, and unstable is what makes change possible and sometimes desirable. This means that subsets can change, which changes the category. For instance, while objectionable nonnormativity included white gay men, with the rise of rights affluent gay men have shifted out of the nonnormative objectionable category and taken up positions in the mainstream (cf. Puar 2007; Spade 2011). Another example would be, without committing myself to thoughts on historical appreciation, is that the inclusion of

nonnormative women in the category of women changes the category. That means that formerly essentialist ideas about womanhood situating white bourgeois conceptions have to change if the experiences of low income, racialised, intersex, and trans women are taken into account. I will offer the practical conception of the Aristotelian soul in order to be able to articulate a conception of differences as well make suggestions about the relation to abstract codings. A small note from the outset: this conceptualisation offers not a new universal, but a conceptualisation that might allow a strategy for thinking about forms of life, which includes differences, relations, and bonding, in sum: a theory of ethics.

An Aristotelian being consists analytically of three terms: matter, form and substance, where the latter is the combination of the two former parts (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968 413a1). In practice bodies are *ensouled*: "for the ensouled thing maintains its substance and exists as long as it is fed" (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 416b14).¹⁷ Forms of life remain substantial and animated when they are feeding. Lee explains: "Living things do not have souls, they are rather ensouled" (Lee 2007, 68). Body and soul are intertwined. The substances of plants, animal and human differ in degrees, of increasing complexity; an animal incorporates the plant soul, and the human incorporates the animal and the plant soul. While there might be a danger of hierarchizing substances, a more friendly reading offers beings as multiple and layered. Beings have different forms understandable through "enumerating the powers or *dunamis*" (Lee 2007, 68). Ways of being in the world are thus shared and overlap, even if they differentiate in form (Broadie 1991, 62). Sarah Broadie insists there is a large difference between the different forms of life, however these differences need not come with a more substantial conclusion than that different life forms have various ways of thriving, which does not mean there are no overlaps between forms of life.

¹⁷ Cf. Ahmed suggests breathing as basis for life (2010), where Aristotle suggests nutrition (cf. Berlant 2011, chapter 3).

To theorise trans agency, I will suggest bodily change as stemming from activity in an environment. Aristotle introduces *anima* as the form, and the *logos* as the driving force by which we know and live (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 414a4). This *logos* operates through the body, as *ensouled matter* (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 412a16 414a4). *Logos* is the form of the *ensouled* body and engages through *dunamis*. These *dunamis* are the operative functions facilitating change and movement. As Lee argues, *dunamis*, commonly translated as 'faculties' of the soul, are better read as 'powers' of the soul (Lee-Lampshire 1992, 29). Lee follows William Charlton (Charlton 1987), who discusses *dunamis* from a functional perspective, as engagement "[...] 'connected with change'. I take this to be not fulfillable possibility, but rather exercisable power" (Charlton 1987, 277). Faculties would connote a more passive and spatial reading, lacking the active, organisational aspect. Furthermore, faculties would suggest 'possibilities' as abstract potentialities that need or fail to be fulfilled; Charlton and Lee press the argument for reading the practicality of *dunamis* as operational powers. Thus, *dunamis* structure agency through the body, as the exercise of power in interaction with the environment (Lee-Lampshire 1992, 41). *Dunamis* read as powers organises beings around their actions and make it possible to argue *logos*, and thus *ensouled* matter, is formed in interaction with its context. This offers the possibility to see bodily change as underlying and structuring agency.

To read *dunamis* as exercisable power facilitating change and formation, supports Aristotle's ethics and provides an impetus to theorise agential change. Agents have the capacity to contribute to the direction of their development and formation, constituting difference. As Lee describes offers "[f]or the relation between an ensouled thing with its environment is not solely of being acted upon but rather one of interaction and reciprocity" (Lee-Lampshire 1992, 31). Parallel to the discussion of Preciado and Haraway in chapter one, the body is immersed in its environment through *dunamis* from within, as much as through outside influences. Environment is not specifically nature, but can also be conceptualised as social, technological and cultural surroundings. An Aristotelian reading of *dunamis* can radicalise Preciado's theorisation. Preciado proposes that

[c]hemical substances that can be assimilated by an organism function like *potentia*: they provoke a substantial modification of the body and consciousness – provided that subjectivity allows itself to be affected, that it makes itself dynamic in the Greek sense of the word *dynamis*, which is to say, it allows its potentiality and its capacity to pass from one state to another to emerge” (P. B. Preciado 2013, 360).

Preciado’s argument is that the chemical substance can modify physicality and consciousness, and is thus operative on the bodily *dunamis*. In Preciado’s reading *dunamis* is passive and a recipient of forces, while subjectivity is then the steering force allowing this to happen. The will is placed between body and change. However, if *dunamis* are considered operative powers concerned with changing the ensouled body, the case can be made that chemicals are either influencing, or are a form of *dunamis*: a power that operates through the body reciprocal with its environment, which has the possibility to inform its *logos*, the form of organisation. The Aristotelian addition to current theory brings the agent’s body sharper into view as constitutive within formation, and not a carrier of discursive norms, that might become passively ‘embodied’. The ensouled body grounds ethical formation, and drives change and the emergence of potential forms of life. This agency is a navigation between what is given, found, context and possibility, as I will discuss below. There is thus no ‘subjectivity that allows itself to be affected’, but an activity emerging from the ensouled body in reciprocity with its environment, which includes forms of life, and thus normative orders and nonnormative codifications and relations.

The *anima* avoids the epithet of “somatophobic practice” (Murray and Sullivan 2012, 1), indeed Dinesh Wadiwel understands the Aristotelian conception as fitting within a somatechnical framework, discussed in chapter one. As an extension of current somatechnical theory I suggest the *anima* lends an indiscrete, interactive, changing ensouled body, to contrast conceptualisations of ‘inscription of norms’, which suggest a passive body. This Aristotelian somatechnics of becoming extends beyond the *high-tech* of surgical interventions and HRT, to the *low-tech* of the somatic practice of ethics. This

approach is capable of articulating processes over time, which Sullivan explains as “particular modes and practices of embodiment come to matter in *relation*; in order to foreground the constitutive [...] power of ‘trans-‘: the matter of transsomatechnics” (Sullivan 2009, 283). The negotiation of the agent within its environment as specific matter of ensouled formation is constituted by somatic change, which makes the engagement with the extended technologies of HRT possible. This approach avoids the problems of Preciado’s conception of personhood caught in a *gap* between body and norm, while still retaining the critical approach to technology and normativity. Elaine Marie Carbonell Laforteza argues “somatechnics is the more relevant methodology with which to analyse the bodily negotiations of power that constitute colonial relations” (Laforteza 2015, 5). I will make the case below that nonnormative ethics can extend *techne* within an understanding of somatechnics as the negation of current relation of power making the body constitutive of indeterminate emerging forms of life. This enables trans to be understood as beyond current relational structures.

Within an Aristotelian articulation of agency formation of the agent is partly outside of its control due to the *dynamic* immersion in its environment. However, the agent is not delivered to its immersion. The formation of the extended body organises itself in *logos*. Hamlyn discusses the possibility to read *logos* as form, rather than principle (Aristotle and Hamlyn 1968, 79). Articulating *logos* as form offers an easier understanding of the multiplicity of connections, and reduces the need to claim a single-faceted image of operation. Furthermore, this alleviates the critique that *logos* is law and thus necessarily patriarchal (Derrida 1981, 76). However, in order to avoid that critique the development of the *logos* as form needs to be nonnormative. I will expand on this below. External hormones, horse-produced or synthetic, are working within the *ensouled* body as substance-forming drive. This means that different hormones, eg. testosterone or estradiol valerate, will have different effects on the body. These active powers lend possibility to bodies for interaction with its environment, and thus its immersion in wider normative networks too. What the hormones not do is take over the formation of the agent’s *logos*. While hormones are pushing substance, the

ensouled body comes with a multiplicity of *dunamis* that interact with each other and its environment. This navigation enables the agent to form a new organisation of the body: matter in form, and can be understood as trans. Trans ceases to be a 'mixture' between 'two known genders', in a binary vision of what trans can be. I will reiterate and unpack this point in more detail below. Trans is thus the formation of a *logos*, the ethical form of an *ensouled* body. If there is a distinction to be made between *cis* and *trans* bodies, it would be that *cis* bodies direct their formation of *logos* to the world as they find it. Trans bodies need to turn away from an encapsulation by the norm. However this does not mean that trans necessarily remains *fugitive* (Bey 2017). This reading enables intertwining processes of racialization and sexuality with the process of formation, and undercuts a constitutive transnormativity (Snorton and Haritaworn 2013), as discussed in chapter one.

To read hormones as *dunamis* is supported by the conceptualisations of agents having undergone HRT, stating differences in perception, emotional patterns, and physicality (B. Preciado 2008; Serano 2007; Stryker 1994; Stone 1991). I have argued that it is not HRT that makes agents trans, but the contextual navigation. First and foremost, trans remains a "somato-political" experiment as an "ethic of genders" (P. B. Preciado 2013, 322). Trans is the practice of remaining out of the encapsulations by the norm, as Stryker articulated, while Marquis Bey further extends the definition of trans as fugitivity. Bey conceptualises trans as beyond known patterns, because "hegemonic patterns disallow the very possibility of trans[gender]" (Bey 2017, 277). Bey claims trans as the "undoing of stasis, of being-as-such, tied to a known and knowable fixed identity" (Bey 2017, 287), linking conceptual lineage to Heraclitus and Aristotle. Within these theorisations trans remains *active*, instead of passively delivered to machinic interventions. In sum, I have argued that exercising agency changes the body. This change is the *(trans)somatechnical* interaction of the technological-normative environment and agent. Formation away from societal norms will thus deliver a trans body *by definition*, and the resultant body – with or without HRT – will be changed through this process. This *ensouled* body is in the latter case formed around a nonnormative *logos*.

Formation as action. How to decide upon the Soul?

Aristotelian *logos* is not structured around rational coherence, but can be best viewed as a first person focal point of the organisation of the agent, unified by nutrition (Lee-Lampshire 1992, 44). The ensouled body is immersed in an environment, and networked through its particular organisation. Agential transgression of the norm leading to bodily differentiation, needs first personal activity (T. M. Bettcher and Shrage 2009, 112), while simultaneously not requiring that "the distinction between self and non-self is absolute and embodied" (Shildrick 2013, 278). Shildrick suggests that to understand bodily change a model that emphasises the body as discrete entity is neither helpful, nor exactly true. Bodies in Shildrick's account are always open to the environment and made up of self and non-self matter. Taking this into account allows both a vision of the self already immersed in environments, as well as takes the pressure off to understand hormones as artificial, or 'belonging to the body'. The body is always intertwined with non-self matter. Ethics is thus partially a matter of accepting that self-organisation is immersed in one's environment, and yet needs acting. Bettcher suggests that "[trans] F[irst] P[erson] A[uthority] should be understood strictly as ethical phenomenon" (T. M. Bettcher and Shrage 2009, 101). While my reading of *De Anima* does not specifically focus on duress, I have made the case that the formation of *logos* takes place through either normative or nonnormative processes, which require agency. Nonnormative processes are prone to receive duress, but, as I will further discuss in subsequent chapters, are not only structured by duress, or, for that matter, discipline.

To focus on the practice of agential self-organisation, I will discuss the relation action-affect-rationality in Aristotle. Nussbaum discusses there is agreement upon "the connection of *eudaimonia* with activity" (Nussbaum 2001a, 323). For a nonnormative ethics *eudaimonia* is less relevant as 'a good life', but I will instead use this as stand in for 'a form of life'. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle

proposes that "no activity is complete if it is impeded, and happiness is something complete"(Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1153b16-17). This means for *eudaimonia* that there is a mutual relation between agential activity and external circumstances. Agential activity is performed through dispositions, which are formed between the non-rational and the rational elements of the soul. As Aristotle formulates "[...] the virtues of character belong to the part that is non-rational, but whose nature is to follow the rational part"(Aristotle 1992a, 1220a11-12). It is worth noting that "rational" for Aristotle meant something different than "the demands for a single currency of reasons, [which] are certainly expressions of modern bureaucratic rationality" (Williams 1985, 228 n.13). What is perhaps sufficient short hand is to see affects functioning within structures of what is perceived reasonable, rather than a post-enlightenment 'rationality' as single grid of coherent thought to which emotions need to be subjected. Aristotle draws a distinction between the affective virtues and intellectual virtues. While deliberation is engaging in reasoning, actions are always effected through the affective part of the soul, which at least indicates how affects are not disconnected within such deliberations. Furthermore, the rational and the non-rational sides of the soul are both focused on practice. Aristotle enumerates:

[i]n the soul, the things determining action and truth are three: perception, intelligence, and desire (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1139a18).

These three elements are analytically separated. However, as we will see below, one's dispositional formation structures deliberation and perception as much as one's desires, due to the nature of practical truth. Origins of action are not given by perception or intelligence, since "perception is not an originator of any sort of action" (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1139a19), and "[t]hought by itself sets nothing in motion" (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1139a36) will lead us necessarily to conclude that 'desire' is involved in action. The logic in the Aristotelian conception is that desire offers the structure that makes animals move, grants imaginations, aims and suggests needs. Fulfilling desires might be relevant, but not for the desire *as such*. Desires organise movement. It is not of

primary importance that desires stem from 'lacking something.' As soon as there is animal anima, there will be movement, and thus desire. Desires are the embeddings of forms of life. They are pathways along which the ensouled body operates.

My reading of desires organising movement lays close to Ahmed who argues that "emotions are a form of cultural politic or world making" (2004, 12). Emotions are embedding agents in structures of feeling. While Ahmed makes the case that emotions are public, I will add a nuance to this reading and offer affects not only on the surface, but constitutive of ethical multiplicities as well, and thus surfacing from the formation of the agent. However, it is not necessary to find a 'deeper, internal' truth hidden behind a desire, as the surface assessment is key for a nonnormative ethics, an argument I will develop in subsequent chapters. On a side note, instead of sticking with 'desire', I will use the wider conception of 'affects' as theory after Aristotle has adopted (Gregg and Seigworth 2010).

Affects and reason operate within an intertwined structure as Aristotle explicates:

What affirmation and denial are in the case of thought, pursuit and avoidance are with desire; so that, since excellence of character is a disposition issuing in decisions, and decision is a desire informed by deliberation, in consequence both what issues from reason must be true and the desire must be correct for the decision to be a good one, and reason must assert and desire pursue the same things (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1139a21-26).

Affirmation and denial structure Aristotelian reason, a structure mirrored analogously when engaged with affect: pursuit and avoidance. Aristotle links three elements in order to conceptualise activity: reason, affect, and the pursuit of ends. As we will come to see below, this structure is in practice tripartite, with (minimally) two negations and one affirmation. I will argue that this structure is key to move beyond a binary modality, in order to create space for indeterminate emergence of nonnormative ethics. Below, I will suggest negation can be a determined, while affirmation of a course of action can remain indeterminate. In

order to unpack that structure, I will focus further on the development of dispositions.

Deepening the Aristotelian frame, we find that:

the origin of an action - in terms of the source of the movement, not its end - is decision, while that of decision is desire and rational reference to an end. Hence intelligence and thought, on the one hand, and character-disposition on the other are necessary for decision; for doing well and its contrary, in the context of action, are conditional on thought and character (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1139a30-1139a36).

Aristotle merges desire and reference to an end together to create a decision. Dispositions inform desire, and thought informs the end. This Aristotelian abstraction needs to be re-understood after being concerned with the way dispositions shape and thus modulate this perception - thought duality. Furthermore as I will argue later when the structure of agency turns from normativity to nonnormativity the end becomes indeterminate, decision changes to negation and navigation in actions. Lastly, how decision is read, is of crucial importance for interpreting the connection between thought, action, and affect/desire.

The decision process around actions can be explained in two ways: either, a way of acting is decided upon, or how to act with one's desire is decided upon. These are two radically different interpretations that are both possible from this text. Bernard Williams discusses problems with the first option of separating decision and action. Disembedding reflection from affect creates a gap in a decision making process, which afterwards has to be theorised as a problem. Williams highlights this problem:

Its answer, the conclusion of the deliberation, is of the form "I shall do..." or "what I am going to do is..." - and that is an expression of intention, an intention I have formed as a result of my deliberation. When it comes to the moment of action it may be that I shall fail to carry it out, but then that will have to be

because I have forgotten it, or been prevented, or have changed my mind, or because (as I may come to see) I never really meant it - it was not the real conclusion of my deliberation, or it was not a real deliberation. When the time for action is immediate, there is less room for these alternatives, so it is paradoxical if I come out with an answer of this kind and immediately fail to do what I said I was immediately going to do (Williams 1985, 18).

The first element in this quote is a reiteration of the limits of exclusively discursive deliberation, resulting in a proposal for future action. The gap between the statement about an action in the future and the future action creates room for divergence. To explain the problem away deliberations have to be revised post-hoc. This problem grows more acute if deliberation and dispositions are suggesting different directions.¹⁸ The second element is in the last part where Williams draws the reflection and action in close proximity. Without explicitly stating so, Williams draws reflection into the same time as the acting agent, and makes the process intertwined. The deliberation on the course of action is emerging from within the activity, and eliminates the gap between reflection and action. Action negotiates itself along possibilities within structures of feeling. The procedural distinction that deliberation is a pre-hoc affair concerning a follow-up activity can be dismissed by insisting that deliberation is an ongoing state immersed with and through affects already blended with activities. This is the argument I shall defend in this thesis. I suggest a linkage between reflective and affective states of the ensouled body. Action and perception are merged with practical reflection. This theorisation offers an agent with ensouled body, bringing abstract thinking within practical life, an approach known as *praxis* (Lugones 2003, 37, 54).

Reading “the origin of an action - in terms of the source of the movement, not its end - is decision, while that of decision is desire and rational reference to an end” (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002 1139a30) conceptualised as immersed reflection, it is suggested negotiating acting upon one's desires in the light of reflection. This reading gives weight to the affective layer, rather than something

¹⁸ If dispositions are ignored, the chasm might be incomprehensible.

that should be repressed and mistrusted. Annas remarks: “[n]one of the ethical schools share th[e] view [that virtues are correctives to our feelings]” (Annas 1993, 53). Furthermore an intertwined approach to affective-reflective agency opens up the possibility of various affects reacting to each other. The affective side of the soul can consist from a variety of imaginations, desires, feelings, longings, etc., which can be appraised regarding their intensity. This reflects back in the formation of a decision. This exploration of affects, both intensity and presence, and a reflective deliberation upon the various courses of action can be brought together under the heading of navigating a rich affective life, with its pulls and pushes, fashions and fads, with its demands and its urgencies. It needs noting here that the end need not mean a positive goal, but can also be indeterminate, or a negation. In chapter four I will unpack this as the total negation of the *polis*. Embedding operational agency makes for a less binary reading of the affective ensouled body: a multiplicity of different affective structures, through which we find, or try to find, a way of acting in combination with the intellectual appraisal of the interaction within the environment. Furthermore, this formulation creates room for the contraction of the reflective soul within the embedded experience, instead of the retraction of reflection from affect. Reflection becomes embedded, and thus contextual. The space and necessity of abstraction in contextual ethics will be discussed in chapter four.

Normative ethical formation evaluates the decision-making procedure, and not the structure of dispositions as such. Normative moral education claims to make the non-rational part of the soul adhere to reason. This is the “readiness the execute a prescription” (Broadie 1991, 105). Broadie explicates this is done through a detachment of emotions, and being brought to 'order'. Ordering requires desensitising and adaption. For Aristotle the 'right reason' in a particular situation can never be known in advance (Broadie 1991, 60), the soul gets shaped in “[intelligent dispositions] of action, desire, and feeling” (Williams 1985, 36). This formation needs to be responsive to prescription, and in that sense responsive to reason. Aristotle discusses this as follows; “it is the way one is reasonable when one *takes* account of advice from one's father or loved ones, not when one *has* an account of things, as for example in mathematics” (Aristotle,

Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1102b30-33). As Broadie comments, "this allusion to respect for paternal authority quickly ceases to be a metaphor" (Broadie 1991, 63). Normative ethical education in the *polis* requires shaping one's soul to paternal authority by conforming affects to existing structures. In chapter three I will discuss how reason and principles can be seen to emerge from agential dispositions, and thus function as replications of ethical life.

Broadie's reading is in tension with the analysis of relation between affect and reason as is discussed previously. The problem with Broadie's view is that it makes emotions submissive to moral life, while moral life simultaneously leans on it, as dispositions are supposed to execute reliable actions in unknown situations. There are two main reasons why I propose to revise Broadie's view. Firstly it holds primarily for normative ethics and is thus a political programme (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 10), and secondly it leans on post-Kantian thinking of distrusting emotional life, and in need of correction (Annas 1993, 53). As a political programme Aristotle's work is open to re-interpretation, while the structure of agency has room for different interpretations. Moreover, if Broadie's interpretation is strongly post-Kantian, there is a nuance to be found in the relation affects and prescriptions.

Affects, Reason, and the norm

I will first discuss the hierarchy of reason and affect as it comes out of the normativity of the *polis*, in order to further an understanding of affects and their devaluation within the norm. I will do this by focussing on the idea that feelings need to be corrected in order to propose an alternative suggestion. I am arguing that affects and reason mutually supporting forms of life still allows the soul being responsive to deliberation and decision, and the possibility of giving reasons to others. However, the nature of reasons will change, as will be discussed in chapter three and four. Understanding affect in actions is the first step to come to the conception of nonnormative ethical multiplicity, as I am proposing in this thesis.

Broadie discusses affects as "mere having of feelings, reaction to stimuli, being carried by impulse"(Broadie 1991, 68) as opposed to prescriptions that are "partly experience of the way things are, but partly also our interests, moral concerns and values"(Broadie 1991, 68). Broadie flattens affect as a mere impulse, which needs to be tamed by reasoning in accordance with shared abstract concepts. As discussed above, *dunamis*, the powers of the soul that are formed in interaction with the environment, are also operative in animals, which would lend some hesitation to accept this. Aristotle grants animals more imaginative credit, than following stimuli alone. Lee discusses this in the following way: "What is involved in the *telos* of a living thing is a *becoming*. [...] The soul, then, as the form of an organism, is not adequately described by reference to the physical function of its parts"(Lee-Lampshire 1992, 43). Lee lends here *any* living thing a *telos* that is more than functionality, and thus suggests a form of organisation based on experience, interaction, and moreover *formation* within an environment. It is not merely impulsive, as it has a *telos*. That is – it has a form of contextual organisation.

As shortly discussed above, Annas analyses the idea that virtues are correctives to feelings is a post-Kantian thought that was not shared in ancient times:

Given that virtue is a disposition to do the right thing [...] how do feelings come in? A common modern view, deriving from Kant, is that virtues are *correctives* to our feelings, and consist essentially in strength of will to overcome feelings. For feelings might lead us in the wrong direction as well as the right one; they cannot be guaranteed to lead dependably to the right result. None of the ancient ethical schools share this view (Annas 1993, 53).

To defend this Annas draws attention to Plutarch, who discusses that "[p]eople do not consider self-control a complete virtue, but rather less than a virtue" (Annas 1993, 53). The point of ethical development seems partly to be able to act *without* having to go through a rational checklist before a proper action. To keep referring back to reason would make development unnecessary. Dispositions are formed by affect, intelligence and perception. In action a disposition functions as

starting point, while the action is navigating between various elements. As Broadie clarifies; acting in accordance with the right reason, is not to be equated with a principle that can be identified before the act (Broadie 1991, 60). Reason in Aristotle is thus more open-ended, situational and embedded, than modern readings of rationality generally allow, as comprehensive, shared, and unchangeable.

Aristotelian striving for *eudaimonia* is "through the alteration of a substance already in being" (Broadie 1991, 103). To make the affective soul listen to reason flows directly out of the demand to conform to an existing ethic. Normativity is, at least at first, never embodied. Normativity starts with the inadequacy of the agent to dispositionally conform their actions to norms.¹⁹ Norms thus need to be 'inscribed' or 'embodied'. To postulate existing forms as the aspiration for development instantly forces mistrust upon personal agential desires (cf. Berlant 2007). In sum, normative agential formation is to mistrust one's feelings, as they need to be brought to order, and to mould one's feelings into the shape that one *presumes* others hold. In chapter three, I will discuss variation and multiplicity of agents, and discuss that variation comes with different negotiations of the norm. This implies that there are various forms of adaption and navigation of norms.

Nevertheless, as discussed above the Aristotelian framework gives sufficient space to unearth an immersed functioning between affects and reason: there are no guiding principles, but particular judgements in situations. Action directedness is affective, and the reason responsiveness of Aristotle relies on affects. The primary reason that a prescriptive schema seems necessary is due to the demand of compliance with *existing* values. This forces the agent into a certain shape, because the *polis* requires stability, which loops back to reading agential development as *political* act. In the *polis* the politics is conformation, even if modulation is possible. Changing a form of life cannot be done within hermetic reasoning, simply because nonnormative actions fall outside the

¹⁹ Hence, the paternal/patriarchal prescriptions: patriarchy starts out with a hierarchy based in inadequacy, the less reasonable somebody sounds, the more they are in need of correction. The rest follows. This then, needs to be linked with material economy of free labour in order to unpack the strata of relations.

bounds of reason. Below, I will connect this to pathology. Aristotle, in Annas' reading, offers intelligent dispositions that keep being reshaped throughout life (Annas 1993, 53) and holds that changes can only become effective if they emerge from ensouled affects (Annas 1993, 54). Consequently, there is room to read affective and reasoning sides of the soul operating in tandem. Such operation can move agents beyond the bounds of the present.

In addition it must be noted that dispositions have a receptive side, as affects offer feedback in the perception of one's ethical environment. Lacking such a function would create a random ethical life by being unable to learn from one's successes and mistakes. A purely rational assessment of ethical life would, without further qualification, remain within the parameters of the known, as there is no space for development: coherence needs depth, but not change.²⁰ Annas stresses that the demand to have the 'proper' feelings comes with the idea that ethical development is taken over a longer period (a life) instead of a contemporary approach that moral actions get assessed on an ad hoc basis (Annas 1993, 56). Over a longer period 'wrong' feelings may find themselves placed as failures, explorations, developments and openings to new forms of life (Massumi 1992, 5). These shifts of negative appreciation, and their impact on life, ethical and moral, are necessary in order to explore possibilities, potentialities and realise actualisations. This doesn't mean that the agent does not have grip on this process by steering their actions. I will explore the possibilities of nonnormative Aristotelian agency from the perspective of agential formation in Part 2 of this chapter.

To sum up, I have argued that the ensouled agent is formed of a variety of intertwined layers. The ensouled agent undergoes substantial change with its formation in an environment. This change occurs through engaging *dunamis*, and forms *logos*. *Dunamis* allow for various forms of engagement in an environment, or with other agents. *Logos* is the organisation of actions, perceptions, and

²⁰ It is believed that contradictions disrupt functioning. As I will argue in chapter three and four, this needs not to be the case at all. Certain contradictions intensify power, by subjecting nonnormative agents to impossible demands, and excusing normative agents for contrary actions.

reasoning in an agent. I have argued for an open approach regards the distribution of rationality, affects, and perception in courses of action. This openness will allow understanding emergence of nonnormative forms of life, and the effects upon perception, affect, and deliberation. These effects inform world-making and world-finding as part of forming an ethic. In addition to *dunamic* engagement with an environment, first-person agency is crucially important (T. M. Bettcher and Shrage 2009, 101; P. B. Preciado 2013, 322) for nonnormative agency, due to the impossibility to adapt to existing forms. This underlines the active engagement of the agent with the environment. As I have argued, the formation of life requires action, and actions can only be executed in the first person. In chapters three and four I will discuss other levels of ethical world-making: relation and abstraction. In the following part I will focus on the formation of contextual ethics through the actions of the agent.

Part 2: Navigating Multiplicity: Agency as ethical endeavour

In this part I will focus on the practical formation of the nonnormative agent. The previous part conceptualised the possibility of agential change. The Aristotelian framework provides the starting point for agential nonnormative ethics, as it enables change of substance, agential *logos*, and an intertwined operation of affects, reason, and perception. This enables conceptualising agents without subsuming them to a single organising principle, predetermining the direction of change. I will argue below that nonnormative agential formation requires indeterminate direction, and the possibility of radically diverging *logos*.

To uncover Aristotle's theory for nonnormative ethics a nonnormative perspective needs to be read into the existing framework. The *Nicomachean Ethics* can be read as political programme meant to steer *demos* towards the specific eudaimonia of the *polis* (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 10). Aristotelian discussion will thus be geared to the normative. In an Aristotelian frame *logos* is the organisational form of the agent. I propose to read *logos* to

operate according to indeterminate forms constituting nonnormative forms of life.²¹ To establish the possibility of nonnormative agency, I propose to unpack the operation of the normative agent, as if it is contributing to the *logos* of a nonnormative agent. I will focus on the formation of dispositions as central to emerging forms of life. Bernard Williams argues “dispositions are basic because the replication of ethical life lies in the replication of dispositions. [...] if the ethical life that we have is to effectively be criticized and changed, then it can be done so only in ways that can be understood as appropriately modifying the dispositions that we have” (Williams 2006, 75). Williams’ critique suggests a reading of Aristotle, while leaving the content of virtues contextual to the *polis*, and emphasising the practical formation of the agent. Aristotle’s axiom that pre-established values are the framework of the developing agent can hold true, while nonnormative ethics steers away from those values. Nonnormative agents use the frame as basis for negation. Aristotle’s conservatism lies in the suggestion of a single and specific form of life as aspiration for agential *logos*. Encountering Aristotle from a nonnormative perspective I will rethink norms as not to present inalienable forms. The focus of my discussion will be on agency as means to dispositional formation, in order to configure what is at stake in the formation of nonnormative *logos*.

Action as basis for Eudaimonia

The complexity of discussing actions within the Aristotelian framework stems from a deep commitment to diversity, as much as a desire for generalisation. “For with discussions that relate to actions, those of a general sort have a wider application, but that deal with the subject bit by bit are closer to the truth” (Aristotle 2002 1107a28). These two strands are at odds and run parallel to Wiggins’ observation about differences between practical and analytical identity (Wiggins 2001a). Aristotle’s framing of agents leaves room for modulation of agents, while they remain under a single form – the *polis*. I will

²¹ In chapter three and four I will propose various tools for keeping *logos* indeterminate. Loss and generosity are two such proposals.

focus on general theory of nonnormative ethics, in order unearth formation as well as connection across differences and overlaps.

As discussed in part one, a course of action emerges in an agent through a variety of capacities: *dunamis*. Those can relate to affinities: the agent is attracted to something or not, capabilities: the agent has a 'talent' in a direction, or susceptibilities in perception: a better ear for music, or a better memory *et cetera*. Furthermore, agents are different in where they find pleasure and experience pain; both in the wide sense of the word and operationally: the physical, affective, and intellectual levels. Capacities, affinities, and perceptions are structured in dispositions. Dispositions acquire form and are changeable. Dispositions operate in two directions: they influence perception, and function as starting point for action. Within perception dispositions highlight features of the context as relevant factors in courses of action.

In order to discuss the formation of nonnormative forms of life it is important to avoid equating agential formation with striving for *eudaimonia* as feeling happy. Firstly, *eudaimonia* is not exactly to be equated with a 'happy life' (Nussbaum 2001a, 294ff). *Eudaimonia* is an amalgamate of different projects, developments, and experiences taken over the whole of a life-time (Annas 1980, 43). Secondly, it can be understood through Ahmed, that the formation of trans lives takes place in the absence of objects of happiness (Ahmed 2010, 26), because there are no nonnormative ends to aim for. Furthermore, nonnormative agents are likely to receive duress (EU-FRA 2014), impeding a notion of *eudaimonia* as happy. More importantly, Bey argues that transness is paraontological existence, a form of being that has no place in this world (2017). A point which finds resonance in Raha, who claims trans femme as broken, as already in pieces and unable to form existence (Raha 2017). This indicates that nonnormative agency might not focus at normatively better lives, as that is simply an unavailable form of being. A 'pursuit of happiness' model is therefore an improbable focus as organisational gesture around a form of life. This is not to say that pleasures might not support certain courses of action, or that joy might occur, but it is not an end agents can aim at. The first person perspective needs to bracket ethics as the fulfilment of

affectively pleasurable forms, and even the constitution of a new stable form of life: a new *polis*. The first person perspective allows exploring nonnormative ethics as formation of nonnormative (perhaps temporal) forms, between Ahmed's absent 'objects of happiness' (2011), Braidotti's 'expansive joy' (2013), or Berlant's failing normative aspirations (2011). As indicated in chapter one, these are the x, y, z axis of my discussion, but I am proposing ethics as strategy to avoid collapsing into the problems of the current regime. A first person perspective need not collapse into a private endeavour, as I will explicate below.

Focusing on the prospect of pain or pleasure within determining a course of action, Aristotle remarks: "In everything we must guard most against the pleasant, and pleasure itself, because we are not impartial judges in its case" (Aristotle 2002 1109b8). Aristotle explains that agents might be drawn to pleasure, which might be unavailable, or unhelpful. As Ahmed discusses, queers might aim for normative objects of happiness from which they find themselves excluded. Berlant suggests a similar functioning of normative goals, that suggest goodness, which make agents worse off (Berlant 2007, 2011). However, pleasure is an experience, and Aristotle holds it as a good, because "everyone does, in fact, aim at pleasure" (Annas 1980, 288). However, Aristotle does not suggest aiming at pleasure unqualifiedly, because "it is one's conception of the good life, which determines what counts for one as being pleasant" (Annas 1980, 288).

Eudaimonia is explained as a set of activities and projects, instead of the experience of pleasure. To equate pleasure directly with *eudaimonia* would make *eudaimonia* a *private* enterprise, instead of a collective one as indicator of a form of life.²² First person activity is thus not private. An unacknowledged reception of collective support is primarily an indicator for a societal position that has the power to make such support invisible. *Eudaimonia*, then, is for an emerging ethics relevant insofar it understood as a collective form of life, in which first person agency is immersed, as *ensouled* body. In sum, for the development of nonnormative ethics, agents do not simply aim at better lives, or pursue pleasure. I will consequently argue that the formation of *logos* is a navigation of contexts, which includes negation of forms and indeterminate affirmation.

²² Below I will discuss accepting loss as key feature in the constitution of relations.

From nonnormative perspectives the avoidance of pain or aim towards possible pleasure can well figure as ingredients for courses of action. Desire can suggest explorations, and as Aristotle argues: to act in accordance with desire is at least voluntary, even if it is not always the best option (Aristotle 1992a 1223a29ff). Likewise resistance against normativity can indicate alternative modes of being. Rethinking the above passage on pleasure (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002; 1109b8) it can be discerned social markers in normative mainstream point away from excesses: mainstream is perhaps extreme as a whole, but not always in particulars (Wekker 2016; Wang 2012).²³ Jackie Wang argues innocence is the method for turning away from the violence of normative mainstream. Normative structures serve as the foundation making acts of extreme violence possible through normalised racism, sexism, xenophobia, and body normativity; think for instance of the mutilation of intersex infants, and trans bodies by normative medical science, the regularity of black people dying at the hands of police officers, and the regular death of women by domestic abuse. What is worth noting is that there are not only excesses in normative mainstream, but mainstream can be read as the norm that determines what excess is. Nonnormative agents should be aware that their actions can be read as 'merely excessive' by others as well as by themselves (Stanley 2011, 9), instead of as valuable pursuit of a form of life. Finding limits leads to normative instability. Aristotle's quote can be read as the warning that in order to be 'successful' within mainstream: a good and thriving participant in the order of the *polis*, one must certainly not follow the drives of desire, pleasure and affective leads. Normative life is served by keeping the median and steering away from perceived excess. This means that until nonnormative agents have developed an evaluative standard determining excess on their own terms, they will only have

²³ See for discussion on the point expressly Jackie Wang's 'against innocence' (Wang 2012). Innocence is seen as shying away from the violence happening in the margins of mainstream. Mainstream serves as the embedding making acts of extreme violence possible through normalised racism, sexism, xenophobia, body normativity (think for instance of the mutilation of intersex infants, and trans bodies by normative medical science) & still, this list is nowhere near complete.

normative terms available.²⁴ Not being 'impartial judges' acquires a double meaning of not being impartial from a personal perspective, but also not being impartial that societal pressure draws one away from forming a life that is meaningful. The weighing of affect outside mainstream is an intensive and multifarious effort. Connecting the above discussion on agency in action with the problem of evaluation, I will re-focus on agential formation in context.

Contextual Standards and Agential Formation

I will focus on evaluative standards to understand decisions and judgements as conceptually different. Subsequently, I will argue both are contextual and influence action. In a reading of Aristotle, the case can be made that truth is determined by ethical practical formation, and thus influences what is deemed right. This will indicate that good, right, and true are interrelated concepts that find grounding in agential *logos*. The *polis* claims a single right for all *demos*, while offering particular modulations of the good (Sennett 1995; Rawls 2009), which underlies demands for agential conformity. However, nonnormative agents come with different practical truth, leading to widely diverging *logos*.

As discussed in part one, decisions are directly related to action, while judgements are related to knowledge. Judgements are expressed as true and false (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1111b33). Decisions are weighted in terms of good and bad, both as decision in itself, and as the course of action that flows out of the decision. In the relation between reflective thought and affects as discussed in part one, there seems a tension in the interpretation of the workings of decision and action and judgement. While a judgement is a claim that the agent knows what is the case, the decision focuses on good courses of action. These two strands seem separate. Broadie, however, suggests Aristotle is looking for the truth within practical reason, which gets expressed in a course of action.

²⁴ This is one of the themes of Ahmed's work: to focus upon the normative markers of mainstream pushing against nonnormative lives (Ahmed 2010, 99 and Ch.3).

And it is important for [Aristotle] to speak of *truth* in this connection, not merely of the *good, right, or appropriate*, because these terms also apply to the non-rational infrastructure of rational choice. The *truth* of a choice is its distinctive excellence as an articulate product of *thought*, whereas 'right' simply rates it as excellent without differentiation, or else, more narrowly [...], points to its *moral* goodness (Broadie 1991, 224).

Broadie differentiates strongly between 'the rational' and 'the affective'. This is not the problem we are looking at in this passage. We have discussed this issue in part one and I will stick with the earlier, more intertwined reading of affect and reason. The interesting problem here is the question: what does this notion of truth signify? In epistemic matters truth indicates the correctness of an assertion: the way that the world is spoken about is the way the world is (accepted). In practical matters, this analogously would then indicate that the way the world is acted in is the way the action *indicates how the world is true from my being active*. Practical truth moves from 'know that' the object-oriented approach of the verity of states of affairs, to a 'know how' the action-oriented verity of agents. This means truth is not stable, but active, and also agent dependent, through differing *logos* and different actions.

To complicate matters further, I want to underline that agents are in flux, because the beginning of an agent in action is not the same as the end-point of that agent in that specific action, and agents are in a process of formation. Moreover, actions and agents are not discrete within the Aristotelian frame. Consequently, I propose that truth in action follows the formation of the agent, as it is tied up with action-directed dispositions. In chapter three I will discuss why this is not relativism *per se*. For now it suffices to stress that practical truth is expressed through forms of life and agential *logos*. Good, right and appropriate are contextual evaluations, which a word like 'truth' tries to overcome. Truth fixes flux, and introduces a seemingly objective measure beyond appreciation of particular instances. It is important to highlight that 'object oriented' truths are

deemed timeless (cf. Da Silva 2014)²⁵, and that truth is *always* and for everybody true²⁶, while Aristotelian ethical truth is a practical truth that shifts over time with the formation of the agent. Recall here Wiggins' argument: abstract identity does *not* equal practical identity. I conclude that practical truth is not the same truth as abstract truth.

This creates a vast amount of space for disobedience to the going norm. While the norm encapsulates actions in Broadies' judgements of goodness or appropriateness,²⁷ nonnormative truth values bypass the norm and are expressive of forms of life beyond the dominant state of affairs. It might not be the case that an action is approved, but that this action indicates a true state of affairs is another matter entirely. It indicates an objective claim subtending a evaluative appraisal. Through this move goodness changes from a stable valuation of lives, or states of affairs, to a relative appraisal of changing circumstances by fluid agents. The good as object changes into the good as indicator of direction: as vector. While objects of happiness may suggest stability, good as vector indicates how objects are perhaps not more than waypoints and footholds, a discussion I will return to in chapter four. In sum, the concept of the good transferred from objects to vectors, with the good acquiring a kinetic quality. Norms present stability, while forms allow fluidity. This indicates a shift from objects to activity in appraising forms of life. Activities can aim at being normative, or alternatively nonnormative. Agents are involved in various activities as a matter of ethics. Ethics remains political, when these forms are modulations of *eudaimonia* in the *polis*. However, nonnormative ethics will allow for an ethics without politics, a discussion I will hold in chapter three (cf. Robinson 2016; Da Silva 2014). Currently, I will discuss agential action.

²⁵ While da Silva discusses knowledge as situated in time as intuition, this means that objective truths are deemed timeless. Da Silva understands this as problematic and perpetuating the commodification of black bodies. In contrast, temporal forms are suggested as mode to engage the world with. I aim to align my argument in a parallel track to da Silva's understanding.

²⁶ This means that truth is also always accessible to all agents, a conception that severely hinders the possibility of change. See chapter one for discussion.

²⁷ But do not forget the Wobbly and later surrealist T-Bone Slim's statement "wherever you find injustice the proper form of politeness is attack" (Roediger 1994, 129), which gives an alternative reading of the notion of the appropriate, instead of a knee-jerk normativity.

In the Aristotelian frame agents are aiming for the intermediate in action. The intermediate is the expression of both vector and verity, of good and truth, two categories that lost their stability and instead have gained a temporal assertion of limited scope. While truth and good are fluid, they are not erratic or random. Both are kinetic forms that are in motion over time. I will discuss below how commitment to the action is an important determinant in the operation of the agent. The commitment is the dedication to act upon the combination of worldview and evaluative standard, while accepting that both are in formation. Harney and Moten formulate this as “we owe each other the indeterminate” (Harney and Moten 2013, 19), a point I will elaborate in chapter four. To claim that indeterminacy is owed, ties commitment in to shifting truths and evaluations, in order to hold the space for the emergence of nonnormative forms. Commitment is needed to steer away from imposed norms, singular practical truths, and alienating evaluations. This returns the discussion to the acting agent. First I will elaborate on decisions and how these relate to ends:

[...] decision is about what forwards the end, as e.g. we wish to be healthy, whereas we decide on the things through which we shall be healthy, and we wish to be happy, and say that we wish it, whereas it is out of keeping to say 'we decide to be happy'; for generally decision appears to be about what depends on us (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1111b27-30).

Decisions are directing the *dunamis* of the agent, suggesting new forms and vectors of navigation of agents in contexts. Decisions form dispositions, and thus form *logos*. The perceptive side of dispositions needs to come with certain sensitivities to read situations in their specific complexity, while the action-directed side of the disposition indicates vectors for decisions. Dispositions have thus a dual quality of being perception and action guiding, and decisions influence dispositions on both qualities. Decision influences becoming, but Aristotle suggests they pertain only to what is contextually available (2002 1111b20-23). Decision is about the present action, and wishes are directed out of the world. This does not to say the impossible should not be wished for.

Wishes bring imaginations in action. The difference between decisions and judgements ties into action and perception:

We form a decision to take or avoid some such thing, whereas we make a judgement about what it is, or to whom it is of advantage or how; we certainly do not make a 'judgement' to take or avoid something (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1112a3-6).

This structure frames decision-making in the first person perspective of the agent. Judgement concerns the epistemic side of the course of action. It determines the complexity of a situation. If we talk in this light about reasonable decision, we find the rationality in the reflective determination of the situation, *not* in the course of our action.²⁸ This point gains importance whence action moves away from normative forms of life. Judgements about contexts can differ significantly from courses of action decided upon, because those two approaches are not necessarily closely connected. The rejection of normative possibilities in context still demand at times a navigation of that context. While for normative decision-making the perceptive verities can be invisible, and being what Aristotle terms either voluntary, non-voluntary, or counter-voluntary:

So, given that 'counter-voluntary' applies to what comes about by force and what comes about because of ignorance, the voluntary would seem to be that of which the origin is in oneself, when one knows the particular factors that constitute the location of the action (2002, 1111a22-4).

In the above we see how normativity can operate as a mix between what is pushed, and thus undecided upon, or volition as aspiration. If one fits into accepted norms, perception can turn 'counter-voluntary' due to the pervasiveness of its invisible practical truths. Resistance to duress, or normative force, determining how to act against impositions brings the voluntariness of perception into view. Nonnormativity is thus not an accidental state of affairs, even if not all nonnormativity is voluntary, but determined through external

²⁸ See for discussion for instance Williams (1985, p18) and above in part 1.

categorisations outside of one's control. The non-voluntariness in decisions is lacking the insight "where the action is located and what it is about" (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1111a1), as it fails to consider the truths emerging from the action. In order to unpack decisions, ends, and perceptions as nonnormative action, I will now focus on the acting agent in context, and re-connect to discussions in somatechnics, to make space for concepts of indeterminate formation as well as highlight normative practical truth as epistemic matter.

Forms in Action

Agential formation of dispositions in the Aristotelian framing happens by aiming in their actions for the *intermediate* between two negated options. Normatively acting through the intermediate is executing the action well; doing it just right (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002; 1106b32). This rightness lies in the space in between two (or more) positions, or ways of acting, that one wants to avoid, because it does not fit with one's desires, one's perspective on the world, or one's perspective on the intended recipient. In a nuance of a *somatechnical* approach, Aristotle suggests that dispositions are *not* like skills (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002; 1140a9; Broadie 1991, 205) that aim at 'reproducing states of being'. Dispositions culminating in *logos* and *techne* are thus different. Martha Nussbaum likewise discusses that in Aristotle "practical wisdom is not a *techne*" (Nussbaum 2001a, 290). Nussbaum discusses *techne* in relation of a choice between practical ethics and universal rules. In this conception *technes* are situated with the universal and judged on their lack of space for particularity, indeterminacy, and mutability (Nussbaum 2001a, 302). Practical wisdom, it is concluded, uses these *technes* as summaries or guides (Nussbaum 2001a, 305). Dispositions are aiming at an insightful flexibility within a form of life, which finds partly form through *technes* of relation.²⁹ For nonnormative forms of life an

²⁹ James C. Scott suggests understanding practical wisdom through the notion of *metis* (J. C. Scott 1998, 313). Scott seems to understand *techne* in a more platonic version (cf. Nussbaum 2001a, 290 and chapter four and five), and does not engage with dispositions as feature of ethics.

absence of examples might perhaps be an advantage, as there can be only exploration.³⁰

Indeterminate action between two negated options enables conceptualising *somatechnics* beyond determinate formation. As discussed above, Aristotle suggests a difference between *logos* and *technes*, while *technes* are structures of relating navigated by dispositions. Current conceptualisation of *somatechnics* suggests the opposite: modes of relation get embodied by agents (Sullivan 2005). While the emphasis in these discussions lies on understanding the relations and the role of the body in the production of forms of life, Aristotelian theory enables envisioning how the understanding of *techné* can be extended with indeterminate formation. Judgement then functions to evaluate modes of relation, which ties in with current somatechnical conceptions. Decisions pertain to engage with those modes of relation or negate them. This can lead to navigating out of existing forms of life, beyond existing *technes* of relation. New forms of relating will find summary in new *technes*, which are part of forms of life. It is important to highlight that in Aristotle's model action is situated prior to understanding. Below I will extend this discussion through the theories of Anzaldúa and Muñoz.

Aristotle's discussion situates indeterminacy in action in the discrepancy of *technes* and *logos*. Actions are not fixed and require contextual approaches:

things in the sphere of action [...] have nothing stable about them[...]. But for what one says is universally like this, what one says about particulars is even more lacking in precision; for it does not fall either under any expertise or under any set of rules - the agents themselves have to consider the circumstances relating to the occasion, just as happens in the case of medicine, too, and of navigation. (Aristotle 2002 1104a4-8)

Actions cannot be carried out as following sets of rules, but need agential navigation – actions are thus aspirational or indeterminate, but not prescribed. Broadie further remarks:

³⁰ Consequently it can be argued that nonnormative social reproduction can only be revolutionary transformation, as there is no form of life to reproduce.

Aristotle cannot want living well and doing right to be more difficult than it has to be. If he believed in a single constant end that justifies every rational choice, he would surely hold this up as one 'fixed' answer (Broadie 1991, 199).

Aristotle's theory does not come with a 'Grand End' (Broadie 1991, 198). An agent is engaged in a course of action, and Aristotle reminds us of the connection to navigation. In the moment an agent is improvising, and just like a doctor aware of the possibility of bodies and of their functioning. In addition, an agent is operating with a changing body. Performing actions is the combination of movements directed on a course, negotiating the particular and contextual forces operating in the moment, just as navigation requires the constant adjustment of the ship relating to different forces, and is directed through a vector at a distant aim. Action is manoeuvring a shifting body, a body that in each particular moment changes and operates and acts slightly different. These actions change bodily dispositions, and open up new potential routes, experiences, and possibilities for action. This means that action functions to elaborate understanding, and understanding is a *post hoc* feature. This is why Aristotle claims acting is *not* like a craft, as crafts come with outcomes that can be evaluated in advance: a good building, beautiful lute play. Acting does not have a predetermined end, and can thus be only evaluated when it is finished.

A body in action is thus never merely a vehicle for reproducing norms, which it would be if it were stably habituated.³¹ The body in action can be the performance of a form that will change the body as it performs. Dispositions are shaped in *dunamic* interaction with the environment and change the body in the continual formation of *logos*. Because ethics emerge from dispositions, ethics is a bodily process.

However, the formation of the *ensouled* body is not entirely under the control of the agent. Aristotle elaborates:

[...] actions and dispositions are not voluntary in the same sort of way; for we are in control of our actions from beginning to end, because we know the particulars involved, whereas we only control the beginning of our dispositions, and the

³¹ See especially John Dewey for this reading (Dewey 1922).

process of incrementation is not something we are aware of in its particulars (Aristotle 2002 1114b30-1105a2).

So, while the control of the course of the action is something that requires our constant commitment, like a ship, to keep steering it towards the intermediate: “[...] following Calypso's advice: That spray and surging breaker there - keep your ship well clear of that” (Aristotle 2002 1109a32-33). One navigates away from obstacles that will block routes and strand courses of action, but these blocks are also negated positions. The formation of our dispositions is aiming at future becoming. Since dispositions are forming embedded reflection, actions, and perception future ways of being are not in contemporary control. This means the end is indeterminate. Thus, agents are acting *over time*, and affects, ends, perceptions, and the form of the good changes with the formation. Consequently, agents cannot but give themselves over to themselves, and *not* control how they are going to become, but focus on what they do in the present. In transformation away from the norm, decision is thus negation, and indeterminate affirmation.

In normative ethics formation is clear from the start, as the individual sets out to match accepted societal virtues. Alternatively, nonnormative ethics needs openness, because it is without clear ends. The process of becoming needs trust in indeterminacy. As touched upon before, Moten and Harney articulated indeterminacy as the debt people owe to each other (Harney and Moten 2013, 20) making it collective, while in the Aristotelian frame indeterminacy emerges within first personal action. Moreover, Aristotelian indeterminacy is not all the way down, while *logos* is necessarily formed by bodily activity. This means that agents cannot lay claim to openness, but have to make space for indeterminacy from one's position. That position is partly structural, and thus partly reflected in one's *logos*, while practical truth suggests what is relevant in the world. My argument does not suggest indeterminacy *per se*, but proposes various forms of openness as contextual engagement. In chapter three and four, I will explore this as loss of practical truth and logic.

Aristotle establishes ethical life as lived through a set of dispositions that connects agents in their reactions to others (Williams 1985, 37), which is more

open than current conceptions of *somatechnics*. Normative forms of life claim dispositional navigation of existing standards. Nonnormativity needs destabilisation of this relation. Agents form *logos* through different, and sometimes overlapping processes of formation. Sometimes, agents adapt to patterns and, sometimes, new patterns need to be formed. Adaption can be done skilfully, but some forms of life need different directions. I will continue this discussion in chapter three and four, and focus presently on the action of the individual agent.

Aristotle discusses the dispositional adaption to *technes*:

But someone may raise a problem about how we can say that, to become just people need to do what is just, and to do what is moderate in order to become moderate: for if they are doing what is just and moderate, they are already just and moderate, in the same way in which, if people are behaving literately and musically, they are already expert at reading and writing and in music. Or does this fail to hold, in fact, even for skills? (Aristotle 2002 1105a18-22)

In order to gain a disposition, to be just or moderate, one needs to aim at acting just and moderate, since this is the only way to become just and moderate. The problem arises, because acting in accordance with a certain virtue is not fixed in rules, but needs contextual adjustment and decisions. This means actions will be relative to the agent's own affinities and not in relation to a fixed frame of behaviour. However, actions need to be recognisable within a shared evaluative framework as being just and moderate. The shape of the act is a recognisable figure referencing the just form – the virtue. Virtues, the forms within the *polis*, function as aspirational standard for dispositional development, but are not reducible to fixed forms, like *techné* can suggest, and are neither a set of rules (Aristotle 2002 1104a4-8).

Perception is agent dependent, as much as action is, recognition of agents and action is bound to modulation of forms. *Technes* of relation might be misrecognised. Analogously, the *agent* might be misrecognised in the act, while other perceivers might think it was a proper act by the right agent. This is comprehensible, for instance, through the working of shame. Shame is to be

“seen inappropriately by the wrong people” (Williams 1993, 78). Aristotle remarks about such situations of misperception: “This is why those at either extreme try to distance themselves from the one between them, associating them with the other extreme” (Aristotle 2002 1108b27-28). When acts are not modulations of accepted forms, perceptions will involve misreading. In the *polis* virtues are shared forms; particular acts are its expressions. If expressions are too intangible the act will not be recognised, if it is too formulaic it can hardly be an expression of a disposition, but becomes the reiterated enactment of a societally accepted ritual. The just act brought to life from an agential disposition is an elaboration and a creation of a new instance. The newness can lead to miscomprehension and disagreement (Aristotle 2002 1108b27-28). As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, misreadings can also occur due to imposed codifications, linking agents to certain relations. Across different forms of life just acts might not be recognised, because of exploitative and hierarchical codifications.

Navigating Bodies

Aristotle uses metaphors of navigation and medicine, which are not random references. The medicine reference invokes interventions in an schematically understood physicality, while restoring it to a norm (Canguilhem 1991). A body not only changes over time, but earlier interventions and developments over time change the reactions of the body to itself and to outside occurrences. Just like medicine, which requires adaption to both the history of the body and its current specificity, actions aimed at forming disposition come with history and require adaption at by the agent. Recall Aristotle on dispositional formation as discussed previously, the quote continues:

[...] whereas we only control the beginning of our dispositions, and the process of incrementation is not something we are aware of in its particulars, any more than we are when we are becoming ill; but because it depended on us

either to react to things in such-and-such a way, or not in that way - this makes them voluntary (Aristotle 2002 1114b30-1115a5)

The decision for the direction of formation is a starting point³² that moves out of sight as soon as the agent engages in action that is instigated by the disposition, which in turn feeds back into the disposition as further formation. The course of action shapes the disposition, which in turn steers further formation. I will refocus on the navigation metaphor, which deserves some further unpacking. Navigation happens on multiple levels: “Marine navigation blends both science and art. A good navigator constantly thinks strategically, operationally, and tactically” (Bowditch 2002, 1). The opening of the Bicentennial edition of the work of navigation handbook of Bowditch opens in this Aristotelian vein. A navigator calculates and creates, and does so with a long-term view, playing to changing circumstances in a larger framework of actions (Bowditch 2002, 1). *This* is what Aristotle is talking about. Navigation comprises various short and long term elements, the context, and from this multiplicity forms a vector, that is both an action within the situation, as well as an exit from it. Action is contextual somatechnics combining tactics and strategies. This means that *logos* gets formed within this triangulation of activity, contextual and wider perspectives. Therefore, action does not reduce formation to the discrete agent, and is thus not an individual endeavour, but already environmental and social. Below, I will further engage with tactical-strategical thinking by discussing María Lugones’ (2003) conceptualisation.

To recall, normative coursing happens by means of recognisable patterns of affects: “[h]appiness shapes what coheres a world”(Ahmed 2010, 2) . This navigation finds its coursing through narratives, praise, and reproach, and is set within a tangible, visible and sometimes reachable normative frame (Ahmed 2010, 2007, 2004, Berlant 2011, 2008). Furthermore *technes* of relation structure interaction between different agents. Sullivan explains:

³² Compare this with Arendt's *natality* in the realm of Action. Arendt, 1958, Ch.V

[T]echnés [...] are techniques and/or orientations (ways of seeing, knowing, feeling, moving, being, acting and so on) which are learned within a particular tradition or ontological context (are, in other words, situated), and function (often tacitly) to craft (un)becoming-with in very specific ways. (Sullivan 2012, 302).

Particular ways of acting, feeling and being are structures within which normative agents can aim the formation of *logos*, and normative *logos* comes with shared perceptions, which structure formation. Nonnormative *logos* can equally come with shared perceptions, but in contrast, not with the robust power to collectively act on those perceptions. Normative becoming is thus a coursing towards supported ends. That is, if they are not 'cruel' and make agents worse off (Berlant 2011). Nonnormative navigation is another matter in absence of clear ends. Vectors, indicating possible ends, emerge from within the act. Negation of dominant norms keeps affirmation indeterminate and open for such emergent courses. Agential formation through dispositions suggests pathways that are both first person singular, which is what this chapter will explore, as well as relational, the topic of chapter three, and also abstract, which chapter four will be concerned with. This breakdown comes with lineage in feminist decolonial theories, Chandra Mohanty terms this feminist practice (2003, 5) and María Lugones tactical-strategies (Lugones 2003, 207).

Analogously to *techne*, thick and thin ethical concepts can be seen to structure courses of action as tactical or strategic. Thick concepts are contextual and specific, while thin concepts are abstract tolerating high degrees of indeterminacy. A *thick* ethical concept, like courage, might guide an agent's action, or alternatively a *thin* concept like obligation (Williams 1985, 129, 140–45) might be a reason to look for action in a certain direction.. Reasons for actions lie on different planes of abstraction with different influences and translations in the agent's action, which makes the agent not only more well-rounded, but also lends explanatory credibility to an individual agent's action, because of the myriad of connections possible. “[...] the agents themselves have to consider the circumstances relating to the occasion, just as happens in the case of [...] navigation” (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1104a8-10). In

determining one's actions there might be instances of navigational positioning. While two individuals cannot be in the same place (Aristotle in: Irigaray 1993, 34), they might course along parallel vectors. Having set out indeterminacy in the formation of the agent, I will explore the direction of actions in more detail below.

Intermediate Agency, Changing Agents

To further understand nonnormative agency and formation of *logos* I will focus on Aristotelian framing of acting from a first person singular perspective. This is not to reify the individual act, but to unpack acting in contextual embedding. I have argued above that the actions of the agent influence affects, rationality, action, and perception. I will currently discuss formation of *logos* and evaluative forms.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle asks "but perhaps it is the mark of agents not to take care?" (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1114a4). This quote will lead the exploration around the question of the possibility of a thriving agent; the concern of *eudaimonia* (Arendt 1999, 192ff). Aristotle holds that we have to be responsible for our ethical being in the broad sense otherwise we cannot be responsible for our acts (Broadie 1991, 165). For normative ethics this means agents are aiming at stable objects (Ahmed 2010, 2), which structures their acts. For nonnormative ethics this implies agents steer their actions along vectors stemming from dispositions, in this place of the discussion without an overarching scheme. The absence of a cluster of ends could imply nonnormative agents need to be overtly careful, as translators transposing a fluid vector into the seeming concreteness of the act. Alternatively, agents could rely on the materialisation of nonnormative affects in their acts as means of exploration of directions.

Nonnormative disposition formation thus comes with the problem of care versus carelessness. I have argued that dispositions suggest courses for action, even if

the formation of dispositions is never complete. Agency then comes with reliance on imperfect courses, and negation of normative suggestions for vectors, technes of relation, and ends. Here, the tension between trusting indeterminacy versus taking care in the face of societal pressure and personal direction emerges. Shuffling forward with eyes wide open will be determining *logos* as much as tumbling headlong into a ditch will. The conundrum of the agent between available norms and first person action finds concrete expression in Aristotle's ethics. Taking too much care might lead one to understand formation as friction free. However, as I will also discuss in chapter four, friction is what makes dispositional ethics social. Tension is translated in the navigation between normativity, critique, and nonnormative vectors. Attempts at strategy are contextual, and can be limiting formation, while simultaneously creating means of escaping these oppressive contexts (Lugones 2003, 15; Bey 2017). In this tension between limitation and escape, indeterminacy of ends signals the possibility for emerging ethics, as the refusal of normative demands.

Nonnormative agency does not only not have a concrete end, as will be elaborated below, but can also be misread by other agents (Lugones 1987, 3). This finds expression in the tension surrounding the agent's actions, as I discussed above. Indeterminate action might lead to association with 'the other extreme', between which there is tension (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1108b27-29). Extremity is not a fixed point, but an intertwined social and personal assessment.³³ For Aristotle this is conceivable as sliding scale, however, as it will be discussed below through Anzaldúa, this need not be the case. Aristotle situates evaluations; for a rash person a careful person can look like a coward, but in order to avoid total relativism this modulation of actions is encapsulated by the normativity of the *polis*. From the perspective of the nonnormative agent, there is a multiplicity of issues with such a structure. The intermediate course of action of the nonnormative agent might find itself between two readily accepted places, whereby other agents occupying those places 'misread' the agent as occupying a position where they do not belong.

³³ Recall here the earlier discussion about extremity of the norm: it are often nonnormative agents that are judged as extreme, rather than the actions within the norm (cf. Wang 2012).

Falling outside of this behavioural binary the agent seems a dysfunctional version of the other extreme, thereby reinforcing the idea of a duality from within the norm. Talia Bettcher emphasises this point in an interview with Pelagia Goulimari: “trans men are oppressed in having their existential identities annihilated through placement within the category “woman” and trans women are oppressed in having their existential identities annihilated through placement in the category “man.” In such instances of transphobia the term “trans” may not even be salient” (T. Bettcher and Goulimari 2017, 50). Bettcher specifically makes the point that the self-understanding of the agent disappears from positions outside a hegemonic binary in negative readings. This subsequently underlines why specifically from a position outside of a dyad the whole presumption of a duality seems false. By moving actions *in-between* two positions, these are constituted as extremities, uprooting a duality. Within a dyad, any other position is merely viewed as belonging to *the* other option. This *intermediate* movement creates new forms by breaking down binaries.³⁴ However, the term *intermediate* suggests, perhaps at times falsely, that indeterminacy is literally between two positions that are normatively clear. This indeterminacy might also be conceived as going another way completely, with normative positions merely as points on a retreating horizon. Furthermore, it can be thought that indeterminate affirmation does not need to come with a mapping of the normatively available identifications, but can come with unfolding of means that indicate ends that are other options of being. Muñoz has articulated such a perspective with the concept of *disidentification* suggesting that this third term, away from identification and counter-identification, opens the space for new forms of being (Muñoz 1997, 83).

Concluding, I have argued that acting outside of the norm, the formalised and acceptable patterns of behaviour by recognisable agents, leads to (sometimes intended) misrecognition of nonnormative agents. Their actions can variably be reconstructed as irrational, strange, or simply deviant because they are read in a normative frame in which they are read as extreme. In chapter three I will follow

³⁴ Not only in Aristotle, but for instance also in Deleuze and Guattari and Braidotti this ‘in between’ plays a role as the constitution of the new (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25).

use this argument to conceptualise the invisibility of forms of life. As I have argued in part one of this chapter, agency of the ensouled agent lays in the possibility of substantially changing perception, affects, and rationality. The above argument explains why dominant norms enforce a reading of the nonnormative agent as pathological or dehumanised (Williams 1985, 36), because social power is structured around variations of a singular form (Lugones 2003, 68). I will elaborate this in chapter three. Nonnormative forms of life moving between dominant orderings have been theorised by María Lugones (Lugones 2003, 77). This scales up the actions of the agent to the emergence of shared forms (Lugones 2003, 65) and the constitution of 'worlds'. Below, I will focus on the possibilities of Lugones' arguments for nonnormative ethics. First, I will focus on the *intermediate* as underlying practical decisions.

The negation of dominant norms can form nonnormative intermediates. Aiming for the *in-between* is a practical decision, which informs an ethic. Aristotle argues dispositions are built on modulations of a norm, which are "continuous and divisible" (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1106a26-27). Since nonnormative agency is not structured around aspiration to the norm, as is the perspective within Aristotelian ethics, I will elaborate on *intermediate* courses of action as negations of the norm. This allows unpacking nonnormative praxis. Following this first person's singular point of view as elaboration of nonnormative agency, I will discuss in consequent chapters nonnormative relationality and abstract perspectives.³⁵ Emphasising the first person singular in nonnormative ethics is inevitable, because the formation of *logos* happens through this perspective. Focusing on courses of action as forming *logos* will allow theorising nonnormative navigations of contexts, without necessarily leading to increased connections (Braidotti 2006, 2011), which becomes a next step, while still retaining agency in ethical formation, instead of merely holding on to others as last resort in the face of collapsing codings (Berlant 2011, 260).

³⁵ This could be understood as first person singular, first person plural, third person, however, not every relation forms a 'we'. I will discuss in chapter three and four, how in the *polis* ethics is not possible, because it rests on exploitation (cf. Harney, Schapira, and Montgomery 2017).

In the Aristotelian framework following a course of action is aiming for the *intermediate* between two negated norms or forms. The intermediate is agent-relative and therefore found in action. Aristotle's suggestion of a 'divisible plane' of action cannot be mapped out and claimed unqualifiedly for all agents. In Aristotle's framing this plane of action is a divisible continuum stretching over two correlative vices for every virtue (Williams 1985, 36). This *intermediate* virtue correlates strongly to what Canguilhem describes as "normal is that which bends neither to the right nor to the left, hence that which remains in a happy medium" (Canguilhem 1991, 125). Canguilhem links, like Ahmed, happiness and normality, in a frame that sounds rather Aristotelian. Williams critiques this form of the *intermediate* as "an unhelpful analytical model, (which Aristotle [them]self does not consistently follow) and a substantively depressing model in favour of moderation" (Williams 1985, 36). Moreover, this model furthers a problematic correspondence of agential *logos* with the social world. While I do agree that limiting courses of action to virtues with correlating vices is unhelpful, and is difficult to be applied consistently, and also that the claim for moderation is depressing, I do not agree that the analytical model as such is unhelpful. Firstly, I will restructure Aristotle's claim concerning the 'plane of action', by problematizing the idea that such a plane needs to be socially coherent and divisible in three aligned options. Secondly, I will offer the structure of double negation and indeterminate affirmation as promising for understanding emergent ethics away from pre-existing relations. Thirdly, this model allows articulating change over time, with changing perspectives that can include multiplicities, while retaining action orientation.

Changing Worlds

In order to adjust the Aristotelian model to nonnormative agency I will engage with Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of formation. Anzaldúa's model of action is articulated tantalisingly close to the Aristotelian model, but offers important extensions and the possibility to move beyond normative engagements. Writing

about constitution from a nonnormative perspective, Anzaldúa suggests that the plane of action stems from an agent's normative location, thus radicalises the notion of agent relativity. This claim enables understanding nonnormative action as coursing *in-between* non-compatible normativities (Anzaldúa 1987, 100), thereby problematizing coherent planes of action. Anzaldúa situates the agent between two different and internally consistent 'cultures'. Intermediate agency, Anzaldúa suggests, allows the formation of a new culture (Anzaldúa 1987, 103). Navigation *in-between* dominant normative spaces is exactly where agency rests (Anzaldúa 1987, 101). This articulation contrasts the idea that agency occurs within the normative as Aristotle offers, where nonnormative choices are either treated as vice by not falling together with a virtue, or alternatively as weakness of will (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002; 1140b10, 1145a16). Anzaldúa draws the discussion concerning the formation of life-worlds towards the possibility of negotiating 'extremes' as two separated clusters of norms. The plane of action can be inconsistent and incoherent (Anzaldúa 1987, 104), while actions become the expression of the navigation of this claimed intermediacy. Here the discussion on *logos* informing practical truth as the claim how the world is true from an agent's being active is especially helpful. This indicates that certain connections only come into perspective, when activity claims their existence. Anzaldúa negates the notion that pre-established normative patterns are determinants of action.

To understand *logos* being formed through a myriad of divisible continuums means that planes of action are not perceived by all agents in the same way or even as existent. This ties in with Bettcher's comment on the perception of trans agents within a dyad, as discussed above. The view of the normative positions being part of a larger frame comes into view only from the perspective of the nonnormative intermediate. From a position of binary thinking trans could be placed imaginatively between two normatively gendered extremes³⁶, which is

³⁶ These extremes can for instance be a gender dichotomy in so far as that makes sense for an agent, but can likewise be more simple as in the case of 'not too pinky, not too punky' and all other variations both small and large. The 'extremes' need not be dichotomous, but can be imagined multiplicitous. The Aristotelian threefold image (two extremes and one intermediate)

not a position I aim to defend, but it's an image that often surfaces (Stryker 2008a, 148). This imagery can be discerned as Gayle Salamon places the trans body in this negotiable gap:

[t]he trans body can help us understand the traversal of sexual boundaries not as unrepresentable breach, but as negotiation of difference. [...] When each sex is given its own domain which the other can never traverse, the place of sexual difference is always beyond the scope of understanding, just out of grasp (Salamon 2010, 143).

Salamon seems to place trans in the gap between a perceived dichotomy, and by functioning as a bridge trans becomes illustrative of a divisible continuum. Recalling Braidotti's suggestion of trans as hybridity (Braidotti 2013, 97), which is a perspective that seems to emerge when difference (and thus sameness) is a prime element of understanding becoming. Elaborating on such imagery Nederveen Pieterse comments that hybridity "[a]s a perspective [...] entails three different sets of claims: empirical (hybridisation happens), theoretical (acknowledging hybridity as analytical tool) and normative (a critique of boundaries and valorisation of mixtures, under certain condition, in particular relations of power)" (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, 238). Nederveen Pieterse's analysis makes it possible to see that Braidotti and Salamon are engaging in exactly this renegotiation of boundaries, and nudging moves beyond a binary that appears to be firmly in place. However, Anzaldúa offers the possibility of "a new mythos" (Anzaldúa 1987, 102), which extends far beyond the dominant codifications of difference, especially in comparison to Salamon. Using imagery strongly resonating with Aristotle, Anzaldúa suggests this new mythos emerges by navigating the "in-between" of dominant cultures, "floundering in uncharted seas" (Anzaldúa 1987, 101). Within "our very flesh, (r)evolution works out the clash of cultures. It makes us crazy constantly, but if the centre holds we have made an evolutionary step forward"(Anzaldúa 1987, 103).³⁷ Nederveen Pieterse

can easily be extended to a myriad of points, patterns, and performances. Of importance is that the binary structure has been transcended.

³⁷ The link to evolution is tricky, as it might come with eugenicist undertones. I will discuss this topic in chapter four. See (Hedrick 2009) for discussion on Chicana philosophy and eugenics.

explains: “[...] hybridity is ‘in-betweenness’. Recognising the *in-between* and the *interstices* means moving beyond dualism, binary thinking and Aristotelian logic” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, 238). Nederveen Pieterse argues this form of *in-between* is a negotiation of normative boundaries allowing shifting outside of existing categories. However, it is important to emphasise here that shifting categories works through the body, and moreover that this works if the centre holds. That means that boundaries are ruptured, if the body manages to sustain the breach. This does not mean that bodies cannot move in and out of categories, but as revolution the body needs to emerge as form beyond the category. This does not imply, however, that this newfound form is a new stability.

Anzaldúa's proposal for the formation of a new mythos through the flesh shows boundaries as porous, valorises mixity, and goes further by claiming it is *other* than the dualism. Moreover, Anzaldúa's claim that the emergence of new mythos is rooted in the body fits an Aristotelian account of *ensouled bodies*, and provides the necessary nonnormative impetus. The bodily grounding provides substantial change beyond established categorisations, not as “a plaything of the bourgeois elite” (Nederveen Pieterse 2001, 238), but as the “crazy making revolution” of a new ensouled logic. Re-framed Aristotelian ethics already moves beyond Aristotelian dyadic logic. Nonnormative ethics dismantles categorical accounts by offering different practices, which comes with new logics: the new cultures. This further underlines differences between analytical and practical identity already in place within the Aristotelian account. Nonnormative formation leads to divergent logics in forms of life, with ensouled bodies grounding emergent truths.

Anzaldúa makes clear that the space *in-between* or *interstices* is found between non-connected normative options that come together in the plane of action of the agent. First person singular agency is the nexus of the agential continuum:

[...] but it is not enough to stand on the opposite border [...] at some point on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, [...] so that we are on both shores at once [...] or we decide to disengage with the dominant

culture [...] and cross the border into a new and separate territory [...] or we might go another route. The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react (Anzaldúa 1987, 100).

Anzaldúa argues that intermediate action can take many different forms and is not as neat as the Aristotelian suggestion of a coherently interlocking modulation of forms. Anzaldúa does not offer a choice between two negatives flanking a positive, but offers the vision of a myriad of normative clusters, between which an agent navigates action. This navigation entails negation of present norms, which extends beyond a countering a single norm, as can be discerned from “leave the opposite bank” as well as “disengaging with dominant culture”. Negation finds a counter-point in the indeterminate affirmation of future possibilities, which are “numerous”. Anzaldúa does not suggest a new singular organising principle, when the formation of “a new culture” is at stake.

With the above discussion I have restaged the Aristotelian account of the movement *in between* as constitutive for ethics beyond an account of moderation and conformity. The newly proposed Anzaldúan-Aristotelian conception generates space for emergent ethics and divergent logics. Subsequently, space is created to surpass coherent planes of action. Agential action beyond coherence generates the possibility to envision a radical perspective of agents acting outside of established patterns. This enables understanding *techne* of relation that can emerge within indeterminate action. With this account I aim to retain practical nonnormativity from the embedded perspective of the agent, without relapsing into merely modulating existing forms of relation. These forms of relation are beyond doubt transphobic, racist, and colonial (Snorton and Haritaworn 2013; Raha 2017; Lugones 2003; Wynter 2003).

In order to further suggest emergence from a nonnormative perspective, I will return briefly to Aristotle’s rhetorical question: “[b]ut perhaps it is the mark of agents not to take care?” (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1114a4) Agents are suggested to “go on and on actually *doing* whatever it is” (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1114a8-9). Action is marked not by caring, perhaps being careless,

and yet not uncaring. Action has a part that is negation, which is the opposite of care, as it is about undoing instead of preservation. Action is furthermore not hindered by the absence of a perfect form or perfect intermediate. Doing *whatever* it is, that is what marks the agent. Recall Anzaldúa's 'floundering in uncharted seas'; action can be navigation without points of reference. This indeterminate action is what marks an agent – not the model of successful agency that connects intentions with causally effected changes in the world as normative power claims (Lugones 2003, 210). Nonnormative actions might be frowned upon regarding their comprehensibility, but agency need not be in question. This contrasts normative accounts that deny agency through pathologisation or dehumanisation. But “only an utterly unmindful person is unaware of the fact that by pursuing certain lines of conduct we come to be such as to act in those ways (114a3-10)” (Broadie 1991, 165). Thus while agency lies in acting *simpliciter*, the consequence is that one becomes how one conducts themselves: whether or not desired. The upside of this perspective is that possibility for the formation of *logos* is gained³⁸, while the downside is that a freedom of options might be assumed while not always present. I will pursue the argument that ethical nonnormativity is constituted by indeterminate action, leading to a nonnormative *logos*. This, then, needs in subsequent chapters further attention to the connection between *logos* and forms of life. As is briefly discussed above, forms of life are structured by *techne* but also by a constitutive logic. Nonnormative ethics provides a contrast with care in Canguilhem's formulation of restoration to a norm (Canguilhem 1991). I pursue this line of argument, because nonnormativity might be a categorical given, as in the case of trans, however the constitution of a nonnormative form of life is an activity. Caring as preservation within normative evaluations is the opposite of this kind of agency. Nonnormative action is directed to indeterminate *becoming*.³⁹ As I will

³⁸ This includes responsibility for normative perspectives and outlooks that contribute to duress of nonnormative agents. On a side note, this argument counters the 'freedom of conscious' argument that assumes that oppressive positions without actions do not generate duress, and that arguing for a responsibility is akin to 'mind control' (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 31). The Aristotelian frame argues that such positions are indeed stemming from actions, and can thus not be 'safely' assumed to have no harmful effects, on the contrary, these dispositions have likely come about through normative patterns full of harm to nonnormative agents.

³⁹ It is possible that in nonnormative communities care becomes central in order to restore those within the community.

discuss in chapter three and four, this becoming is not marked by preservation, but loss.

In contrast to an attitude that is marked by caring as a preservation of the present, the *intermediate* that marks the nonnormatively acting agent is in between the carelessness of wilful not-knowing, and taking too much care of not-daring. Lugones argues this is the application of tactical strategies (Lugones 2003, 218–19). Tactical strategies are negotiations in the present, from a concrete perspective, and letting “vicarious” strategies emerge out of these actions (Lugones 2003, 225). This mode of acting has previously been explained by the navigation metaphor, which as we have seen is the constant combination of strategy, tactics, and operational thinking (Bowditch 2002, 1). The agent’s uncaring agency in its present ensouled embedding, translates itself into a moving on, aiming along a vector, while its becoming falls out of direct control (Aristotle 2002: 1115a1; 1149b25).⁴⁰ While external determinants may work upon the agent and have to be navigated, the agent has to move through the situation, entering the next unknown, while its vessel, that is itself, is changing *logos*. Aiming for the nonnormative *intermediate* is aiming at this possibility: not caring for all that what is, because that may be precisely what needs to be left behind. Lugones speaks in this respect of an ‘active subjectivity’ (Lugones 2003, 215).

While I will not discuss the nonnormative agent in terms of subjectivity, in order to avoid re-emphasising the epistemic side of agency as this contrasts with indeterminate formation. I will focus instead on Lugones’ descriptions of navigation as multiple, long term, and contextual. Lugones argues against a modernist form of agency, conceived as the power of a unitary subject for effecting change in the world (Lugones 2003, 210). This modernist reading is inapplicable to nonnormative agents, for they are neither unitary (Lugones 2003, 86), nor coming with the power to effect desired change (Lugones 2003, 211).

⁴⁰ On a side note: whenever there are two norms, and an *intermediate* course of action, there can easily be three norms or four norms. What is important is that the distinction is not one of merely norm-no norm. It is a passing through that is important.

Alternatively, Lugones proposes that agents draw on a resistant agency, which disrupts top-down theory (strategy) and concrete action (tactics), and replaces modernist ideas with emergent knowledges, and shared intentionality of nonnormative agents negotiating dominant spaces. The dichotomy between 'objective' distant strategic knowledge, and immersed tactical actions is thereby shattered in favour of agents with long term visions negotiating social fragmentation (Lugones 2003, 215). "Active subjectivity is alive in the activity of dispersed intending in complex, heterogenous, collectivities, within and between worlds of complex sense"(Lugones 2003, 217). Lugones' insights make it possible to extend the theorisation of Anzaldúa onto a multiplicity of agents moving between varieties of worlds. However, these agents might not necessarily be able to ground 'a new culture'. Lugones retains the activity of formation at the forefront and argues for it as a complex negotiation between different worlds (Lugones 2003, 3, 220), carried forward by resistance to dominant worlds (Lugones 2003, 140). At the same time, this moving forward and in between, comes with "a liveliness of possibilities of connection and direction that can bear the fruit of moving, that is intentionally tense with complexity"(Lugones 2003, 217). Parallel to Braidotti, Lugones articulates nonnormative actions as enabling connections. In contrast to Braidotti, this need not come with 'expansive joy', but is rather structured by tactical-strategic resistance, in order to constitute forms of life in which agents know themselves as not-subjugated. "The tactical-strategist participates in intending as a long lived social act. Intentions move and mutate within a changing sociality"(Lugones 2003, 218). This double movement of acting with changing and shared intentions comes with negotiating direction both between nonnormative agents, as well as by renegotiating dominant normativities. "The 'I' is a misdescription of formation of dispersed and complex collectivity"(Lugones 2003, 227). Concluding, this indicates that instead of an emphasis on intention mediated by understanding, a shift to relationality in action structures nonnormative agency. However, in order to accommodate trans *logos* it bears fruit to unpack agential operations further.

To understand nonnormative *logos* as changing form, it is inevitable to discuss how the agent moves through changing vectors, and the resulting effects on the formation of the ensouled agent. The shift between the collective and the first person agency will be discussed in the next chapter. In chapter three I will discuss how relationality across different *logos* is formed. For the present discussion a further understanding of action will enable later understandings of loss, relation, and emergent codes of connection and imposition. Now that the tactical-strategies of the acting agent have been discussed, the question remains what the agent aims at without a normatively clear focal point. The agent moves along vectors stemming from their ensouled bodily perspective and embedded position, thereby suggesting forms of life. If the agent has affirmative aims, and not only negates present normativities, it becomes pressing to know how these aims are constituted. In a perhaps romantic fashion, it can become easy to equate nonnormative decisions with bravery, sending the courageous agent off to boldly go where nobody has gone before. This is as romantic as it is uninformative, comes with an aftertaste of colonialism, and does not answer the question of the possibility of nonnormative forms of life, even if it doesn't exclude it. To answer this question I will first look at Aristotle's discussion of nonnormativity, and then connect to nonnormative aims in action.

Aiming at Deviancy

Aristotle clearly delineates nonnormativity in the following passage:

[It] is not the person who deviates a little from the right path who is censured, whether he does so in the direction of excess or deficiency; rather it is the person who deviates significantly, for there is no missing [*them*] (Aristotle, Rowe, and Broadie 2002, 1109b19-22).

Aristotelian ethics comes with a commitment to plurality of forms, which can be envisioned as modulations of a stable evaluation. Considering agents are recognised as having their own sets of affinities, sensitivities and training, or

habituation, a commitment to variety within certain parameters is inevitable. However, nonnormativity is situated outside of acceptable differentiations. Nonnormative forms deviate from the 'right' path in a significant way: the attention this attracts might draw censure. Without making too much of it, this could easily be a reference to Socrates, who was put on trial for deviating too much from accepted opinion, and landed in what was essentially a censorship trial (Plato 2010, 19a). The verdict was either banishment or suicide. In chapter three I will discuss life outside of the *polis* as a consequence of nonnormativity. However to read Aristotle's passage as a condemnation of Socrates, or pushing it further, as condemnation of deviation, is simply not the case. Aristotle remarks that the person (*them*) who deviates will be noticed, and might attract censorship. Read like this, it can be also a warning from a student that lost his old master: *them!*⁴¹ The quote indicates the possibility of duress outside of mainstream: if one deviates too much, will be noticed and censored or punished. Censorship comes in the form of a stern talking to by Meletus (Plato 2010, 26a) or as a "medical treatment [which] is no less a form of correction than flogging is" (Aristotle 1992b 1214b35). Aristotle points out that deviation leads to duress, but not that deviation is incorrect (cf. Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011). In contrast to stricter rule-based accounts, deviation *in itself* does not constitute the problem. A certain amount of modulation is necessary for experimentation and in order to 'master normative systems' as has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Problems arise when deviation becomes destabilisation, as for instance in the definition of Stryker regarding trans (Stryker 2008b, 1). The importance lies in the extensive difference between divergence from the norm constituting 'diversity' (Bannerji 2000; Duggan 2004a) or constituting new forms as liberating formation of agents.

I will focus on duress in order to deepen understanding why 'expansive joy' (Braidotti 2011) or Aristotelian *eudaimonia* might not be attainable for nonnormative agents, in order to draw conclusions about nonnormative *logos*

⁴¹ Remember also that Aristotle was an immigrant in Athens, and Socrates a citizen. Compare this to Socrates' passages about refusing to go in exile in the *Apologia*, because as immigrant he would have even less room to speak.

and actions. Duress is one of the ways nonconformity is punished (Puar 2007, xxvi, 77; Berlant 2007, 277; Aizura in: Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014, 143; Moten 2011; Alabanza 2017). I will further this discussion to see how forms of duress, as manifestation of correction or punishment, play out in nonnormativity. Duress is a mark of impeded activity, and through activity there is a relation to pleasure. Annas unpacks pleasure as mediated by dispositions:

[t]he pleasures available to the bad man are not a source of temptation to the good man, for he does not choose to perform the activities that give rise to those pleasures. Since he does not share the bad man's aims, the bad man's actions do not offer the same attractions [...] as they do to the bad man [...] (Annas 1980, 288)

Pleasure and activity and ends are linked and intertwined. Pleasure is expressive of a form of life, to recall the previously discussed statement of Aristotle: "In everything we must most guard against the pleasant, and against pleasure itself, because we are not impartial judges in this case" (Aristotle 2002 1109b7). We are not impartial, because feeling good might come from unimpeded activity. "What is supremely important to be right about pleasure, because it is only the appropriate pleasure that will lead in the right direction" (Annas 1980, 286). Ahmed suggests that by being nonnormative certain objects of happiness are out of reach, however it can also be understood that being nonnormative keeps those objects desirable for some, even if they lead towards repressive normativity (Conrad and Nair 2014). Annas reminds here that where pleasure is found is fundamental to the organisation of the form of life. Aristotle holds that all animate things aim at pleasure (Annas 1980, 288). Aristotle is thus not against pleasure as such, but pleasure is to be reckoned with. The good life will be a pleasant life, because it is the end to which agents will strive, while not all pleasures lead to the good life. However, for nonnormative agents, this does not need to hold. While nonnormative action is offering necessary escape, formation, and exploration, these vectors of action can encounter duress, which impedes pleasure. For normative lives "[g]oodness does not consist in avoiding pleasure in the interests of some higher ideal but in being right about what is truly pleasant" (Annas 1980, 289). Within this statement it is clear that avoiding

pleasure is not the aim, rather the use of *truly* indicates reflection and grounding in practical truth. This disregards activities that only present themselves as pleasant because they may be unimpeded. As discussed earlier, nonnormative activities can receive duress purely due to deviating, while being *truly* needed. Recall that practical truth is the veridical expression of agential *logos*. Truth thus relates to pleasures as desired activity, and not just unimpeded activity. Pleasure is not *any* or *many* activities, but agent-specific. The stigmatisation or exploitation⁴² of nonnormative agents has led to unhappy lives, not because pleasures were of the wrong kind, but simply because they were nonnormative (Lugones 2003; Puar 2007; Ahmed 2010; Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014; Moten and Kelley 2015). Regarding Annas' remarks about the focus on pleasure in Aristotle it can be concluded that in case nonnormative agents do not receive pleasure from their actions, due to received duress, agents need commitment to keep on pursuing the perceived veridical vectors. If actions do not lead to joy, they can be pursued because they are true.

I will focus on commitment to these vectors of nonnormative actions to come to an understanding of nonnormative aims. Focusing on commitment will suggest a bridge between the singular agent and their embedding in community. This will nuance Berlant's ethics of attachment *simpliciter* (Berlant 2011, 260), and simultaneously nuance Braidotti's suggestion that nonnormativity can be structured around expansive joy (Braidotti 2011, 303). In place of a direct engagement with joy, I will suggest in chapters three and four the dual operation of loss, as the readiness to give up truth in order to make connections, in conjunction with generosity; making space for each other (Lugones 2003, 129; Godelier 1999).⁴³ Generosity can be understood as an articulation of joy, without, however, suggesting this affect directly.

⁴² Exploitation will be more strongly the focus of subsequent chapters.

⁴³ Lugones talks about 'perceiving richly' as opposed to pure and unified. I interpret these richness of perception as an act of generosity, if this is not tied to one's own perception of multiplicity. Similarly with Godelier, I reinterpret gift giving with generosity to constitute new relations. I will discuss this in subsequent chapters.

Commitment to the interstice: do the means justify the ends?

Navigating an intermediate course of action, commitment to the performance is what makes the action stand out. It is not only the repetitive action: for it takes the practice of bad building to become a bad builder (Aristotle 2002 1103b11). While all activities contribute to *logos*, agency within formation materialises with commitment to the direction of acts. It is not a one-off event, but a structural affirming of nonnormative vectors suggesting new forms of life. Aristotle emphasises commitment as being juxtaposed to chance: "for the bad person it is as chance will have it" (Aristotle 2002 1113a25). To be clear: commitment lies in the focus on the intermediate, as *means* to formative action for dispositions and not in the pursuit of *ends*. Ends, as has been shortly discussed earlier, will change with the formation of the nonnormative agent. In nonnormative lives it is not always clear what the end is, or even if the desired end can be attained. Lugones argues in this respect for 'vicarious' strategy (Lugones 2003, 225). This form of strategic formation emphasises both the resistance to domination, as well as the "space constituted in relational movement" (Lugones 2003, 225). Resistance to domination is expressed in mappings that are negotiated on the concrete level of action, reshaping the strategies. The aim of action lies in the execution of the action: it is the practice that emphasises the 'doing' of 'doing well'. The aim is the *interstice* between negated options. Forms of life emerge out of action: ends follow in the wake of means.

In the Aristotelian framework it is pointless to ask if the ends justify the means, for an Aristotelian framing is guided by an inverse question: do the means justify the ends? In emergent strategies, ends and means are expressed in each other as complementary mappings that express the double requisite for resistance and affirmation. Tactical acts can cover a variety of needs, from "a lie [that] may be a necessary form of defence" (Williams 2010, 114) to the necessity of "insurgent agency" (Bierria 2014, 140). Insurgent agency, conceptualised by Alisa Bierria, is aimed at destabilising elements of structural power, even if the agent cannot escape its grasp. This agency will temporarily destabilise oppressive conditions of structural social erasure of intentions (Bierria 2014, 133) by violent codings of

nonnormative agents. While this insurgent use of agency is not to be understood as transforming oppressive power, but as resistant navigating of conditions rigged against nonnormative agents. In that sense this use of agency suggests dealing with contexts it cannot immediately transform, while the liberatory functioning of this agency lies in corroding structural oppression (Tadiar in: Bierria 2014, 140).

The question of whether the means justify ends cannot be posed without a perspective on the negotiation between different normativities that the agent finds itself embedded in. This is a direct result of nonnormative reasoning under duress. Bierria's argument for insurgent agency cannot be understood by focusing on the act alone and postulating a normative framework as an evaluative and agential standard. Insurgent agency is necessarily tied to nonnormative perspectives and negotiations. In order to theorise transformative agency (Bierria 2014, 139) it is imperative to go beyond a mere restoration of agency in normative terms.

An end is two-fold: as an envisioned trajectory following out of a vector expressed in the act, and as recoil of an envisioned end onto current activity. The future is made active in the present, and the future is already multiple at the level of the act. A vector suggests a temporary horizon, while the horizon retracts in the act as the mean that forms the end. It bears emphasising that not all aims are intended individually, nor even collectively, but ends are often negotiations with conditions not of one's choosing and are rarely perfect (Kelley 2003, 136). My argument for agency as transformative activity subsequently means that whatever one does, one puts oneself at stake. There is no shirking in the Aristotelian framework: because *eudaimonia* is seen as a whole life. A 'legalistic' framework, where one 'should abide by the rules' only makes sense when there is a possibility of getting away with it, as insurgent agency suggests: in the Aristotelian conceptualisation there is simply no escaping oneself. The Aristotelian frame points out that one becomes the aggregate of actions: one's *logos*. In the formation of nonnormative lives this is merely a reasonable assumption, and not specifically weighty; nonnormativity is structural. This

commitment shimmers through in Lugones' strategical intentions, as intentions do not translate to change in one's inhabited world (Lugones 2003, 210, 218).

Aristotle is only marginally concerned with ends: "[b]ut we deliberate, not about ends, but about what forwards those ends" (Aristotle 2002 1112b12). Means are the focus of deliberation, and ends are a way to order one's actions, ends are the strategic long term visions, intertwined with tactics in the present context:

[...] everyone who can live according to his own choice should adopt some goal for the fine life, whether it be honour or reputation or wealth or cultivation - an aim that he will have in view in all his actions; for, not to have ordered one's life in relation to some end is a mark of extreme folly (Aristotle 2002 1214b7-11).

Certainly there is *an* end, but it is an aspecific, open-ended end: *some* goal, *some* end; it is not *the* end, or *the* goal. The vector of the action suggests an underdetermined *telos* with an open-ended and unsubstantiated end. The lack of need to deliberate about ends is explained either through clarity of ends as short term goals: Aristotle's examples range from making patients healthy, to convincing audiences, keeping citizens within the law, to building houses. In those cases deliberation is about means to the end (Aristotle 2002 1112b7-10). In other cases, the end is a wish for the good:

Further, wish is more for the end, and deliberation is for what forwards the end (Aristotle 2002 1111b27-8).

That wish is for the end, we have already said; but to some it seems to be for the good, whereas to others it seems to be for the *apparent* good (Aristotle 2002 1113a15 (italics in original)).

The latter statement indicates space for nonnormative ends. Deliberation, as one root for courses of action⁴⁴, takes as its object our present action. The wish is lying on another level of concrete imaginings or affective hopes. With undetermined ends these need not exceed the level of well wishes. Deliberation concerns what seems *good to us* as *intermediate* action in the present. The navigation between negated norms and unclear ends makes focusing on the

⁴⁴ see above discussion on 1113a5-8: partly it is a negotiation in the act.

vector of the act an expression of escape and a commitment to the future as already present. Lugones summarises this as “an anti-utopian direction to the future”(Lugones 2003, 224), Bey suggests this as trans fugitivity (Bey 2017, 276).

Aristotle discusses briefly the analytical differences between wishing for the good, and wishing for the apparent good. In the first case, if the wish turns out bad, it becomes in reverse not a wish, but something else, and if we can only wish for the apparent good, there is no object of the wish, and thus nothing is wished for (Aristotle 2002 1113a17-22). Aristotle solves this problem by saying that for the excellent person the

object of the wish is the one that is truly so, whereas for the bad person it is as chance will have it (Aristotle 2002 1113a26-27).

At first sight this quote could go in two directions: either it becomes a case of blaming the victim, or it lends itself to the interpretation of trying to steer one's life and being adaptable in the process. The first case is evident: one becomes a bad person if one's actions did not bring about what one wished. As Broadie explains “[f]or as Aristotle constantly tells us, in ethical matters the good and wise person is the standard, and his judgement must be accepted as right”(Broadie 1991, 52). The end of one's actions should be achievable, and wise persons know what good ends are. This is consequently seen as right, since the ends are reachable. If an agent doesn't manage, this agent is not only to be pitied for being disappointed, but actually for being a disappointment. While, their underachievement can be a case of bad luck (Nussbaum 2001a part III, especially ch. 11 & 12), it can also be attributed to bad character (Broadie 1991, 165), or bad choices (Lugones 2003, 59). However, each of these attributions conserves existing forms of life and standards of evaluation, and leads to 'blaming the victim'. For example, with trans this can be seen in the double bind of rejecting somebody's trans status and then blaming them for not living a 'successful' life. Furthermore, the assumption that the social acceptability of ends makes them good is problematic at least. In the Aristotelian theorisation “wise men”(Aristotle 2002 1102b30) are issuing the evaluative standards thereby limiting

determination of ends to acceptability within their norms. This sums up patriarchy.

Alternatively, these quotes can work to explain what is the case in trying to do something well: it can be the merely practical side of 'getting things done'. The issue of disappointing and disappointed agents focuses on the practical side, since it is within actions that one fails or doesn't manage to succeed. Focusing on nonnormative forms of life unearthed ends as embedded in structural patterns, and general evaluative standards are problematized by the contextualisation of nonnormative agents' lives. The normative focus on existing ends is conservative and patriarchal. The failure to reach determined ends is individualised and leaves no room for structural critique of normativity (Cf. Duggan 2004a *passim*). Lugones argues that oppressive normativities are oppressive in part, because it is impossible for nonnormative agent to formulate practical syllogisms. Their nonnormative logic does not extend into normative possibility (Lugones 2003, 61). Theories of oppression become inescapable if the actions of the nonnormative agent are only viewed through the normative perspective (Lugones 2003, 59). However, as discussed previously different actions place agents in different practical truths. As opposed to being subjected to normative logics, Lugones argues that "[the interstices] is a place where one can perform liberatory syllogisms" (Lugones 2003, 59) and thus new *technes* can emerge. In the *interstices* nonnormative ends can emerge as they grow out of practical engagement in context.⁴⁵ The emergence of *technes* in the means, instead of commitment to the social positions that are normative *ends*, makes it possible to understand that it is in action that new relations come about. *Technes* of relation hint at (the possibility of) forms of life, and thus at ends. These ends shift with the shifting of *techne*.

⁴⁵ I will leave this part with the suggestion that the realisation of nonnormative ends, pursued under duress, are a good indicator of the amount of openness a larger societal structure has to offer. Little nonnormative success flags up the stronger imposition of normative structures, and indicates more duress to nonnormative agents.

A further interpretation of the wish-end conundrum comes from Martha Nussbaum. In the *Fragility of Goodness* (2001) Nussbaum discusses the influence of luck on *eudaimonia*. For Nussbaum the passage indicates the 'bad person' is hit by hard luck: "as chance will have it" (Nussbaum 2001a ch11 V). It is not a validation of the agent and their pursued ends, but a validation of their *eudaimonia*. This reading is explicitly possible because Nussbaum focuses on the aristocratic happy few, and the discussion is centred on the fragility of happiness in privileged lives. Nussbaum points to luck and interdependency as destabilising factors in the pursuit of *eudaimonia*. These two factors can be constructively deployed in order to theorise about duress and failing of nonnormative lives. Firstly, bad luck is harder to counter, when one has little resources to do so: thus bad luck acquires a structural quality (Duggan 2004a passim). Secondly, interdependency is not only a condition placing accountability for one's life outside the control of a normative agent. Within normative lives Nussbaum emphasises interdependency as making *eudaimonia* fragile. However, recalling the nonnormative navigation of indiscrete *dunamic* ensouled bodies interdependency is a structural given. Within nonnormative lives interdependency acquires the triple quality of safety net, as problem of normative intrusion, and also as interpersonal dependency. Interdependency is collectivity without isolating individuality. I will focus further on this discussion in chapter three.

Returning to the discussion, a different interpretation can still be advanced. Agents in normative life worlds wish for things that fit in the normative mainstream. This should be easy to accept, since this is exactly what renders agents part of the normative mainstream.⁴⁶ For normative agents deliberation about 'what forwards those ends' can feel just as much a necessity as outside mainstream, because the ends are all relatively well-known, though not always easy to reach (Aristotle 2002 1112b12). The successful person reaching for those not-easy to reach ends, knows their own qualities well enough in relation to the desired ends, and can stir themselves in such a way that they can be reached,

⁴⁶ That is, if we leave all 'categorising' theories such as sexism, racism, classicism aside. In such theories people wish things, because they are not-rational, inferior, or deluded.

unfolding their character and reaching their end in a rewarding process. This should be a rather recognisable mainstream story about success. This story is marked by a narrative of linearity of becoming and reaching recognisable and acceptable ends (Cf. Ahmed 2010). This argument is problematic because it combines a voluntaristic idea of what is possible: 'choose your own ends!' with a vitalistic idea of self-actualisation.⁴⁷ Failing to reach acceptable ends is seen as a failure of life, but equally a failure of the agent *as agent*. Aiming for non-recognisable ends, or not reaching recognisable ends may be equated within tropes such as that of the *undeserving poor*, which are used to discipline and punish agents for non-conforming behaviour (Berlant 2007). Recognisable ends are necessary for an aspirational normativity, even if those ends are out of reach.

In a nonnormative interpretation interdependency of ends not only suggests fragility, but also possibility. Realisation of ends is a collective process (Aristotle 2002 1112b27). Nonnormative ends surface as wishes, aiming at an undetermined end: the *apparent* good. Since normative ends are embedded in shared forms of life, the assumption that nonnormative ends are individual is baseless. Consequently, when nonnormative ends emerge as form of life between agents, the vector aiming at such ends can be understood as collective endeavour. However, since those ends have no existence previously as form of life, they need to start out as wish. Considering they are wishes, and not *ends* they necessarily need to be indeterminate. In their commitment to means, agents further ends as *apparent* good. For ends to emerge as *truly* good, collectivity is needed. *Truly* refers to the practical truth of agential formation, constituting vectors of action. Nonnormative ends entail collective coding of actions. These are *technes* of relation and practical epistemology. An end is therefore always a shared end, because only when something is shared it can be recognised as good beyond a wish. I will elaborate these arguments in chapter three and four.

In sum, the means in action of nonnormative agent might indicate what appear to be unachievable ends. These wished for ends can seem unrealistic, given that this form of life does not exist, and might thus appear 'impossible'. It is in the

⁴⁷ Cf. (Berlant 2011) who argues against this vitalism

means that emergence and exploration takes place. Such ends might shift along within the vector of action, which can shift over time (cf. Kelley 2003). 'A bad practical end' is not a condemnation of failure, merely an acceptance of the fact that a form of life didn't emerge in practice and not a normative indicator claiming the aim 'wrong' for other evaluative means. The Aristotelian nonnormative frame is undetermined regards its evaluative standards, and thus creates room for the emergence of evaluative standards. However, this cannot be the full story either. Since it does not leave any room for structural duress. Duress is marked by forced imposition of evaluative standards and modes of relation. This translates as actual confinement of actions, resources, and the impossibility to realise projects without interruptions by normative forces. Nonnormative agents need formation of *logos* and *technes* of relation outside of normative enclosures (Bierria 2014, 139).

Reflection destroys Knowledge

In order to clarify the development of new ethical insights by nonnormative agents, I will draw upon Williams' work on the nature of ethical knowledge and the use of reflection.

I will turn to Williams' argument about consequences of ethical reflection, notorious for its conclusion, "reflection destroys knowledge" (Williams 1985, 148). This conceptualisation will underline conceptualisations of *logos* and the attendant emergent aims of nonnormative agents. Furthermore, an extended understanding of ensouled negation will indicate intricacies of connection between nonnormative agents, which I will subsequently discuss in chapter three. This argument will serve to intertwine the discussion about ends with the ensouled body, practical truth, and changing *logos*.

Williams argues that "[p]ractice is not just the practice of practice, so to speak, but also the practice of criticism" (Williams 2005, 36). Critical reflection "becomes part of the practice it considers, and inherently modifies it" (Williams

1985, 168). Reflection is thus practical and not a disembodied accumulative endeavour, if knowledge is determined as objective, rationally coherent, and not implicit (Lugones 2003, 211). Williams' suggests ethical knowledge is a way of orienting oneself in the world, via a system of assumptions, acknowledgements, and aims that are shared, while remaining open to change. The practices can be understood as *technes* within forms of life that structure agency, relation, and distribution of resources. Williams' forwards the argument that practical reflection dismantles ethical patterns, overturning knowledge of how to move around in the world:

If we accept that there can be knowledge at the hypertraditional or unreflective level; if we accept the obvious truth that reflection characteristically disturbs, unseats, or replace those traditional concepts; and if we agree that, at least as things are, the reflective level is not in a position to give us knowledge we did not have before - then we reach the notably un-Socratic conclusion that, in ethics, *reflection can destroy knowledge* (Williams 1985, 148).

Within the current argumentation this conclusion implies two things: first that within a normative Aristotelian frame an agent sets out to follow accepted societal patterns, where those patterns are not what is reflected upon, but the behaviour of the agent within those patterns is. This ethical knowledge counts as 'traditional', as it follows a tradition: the current form of life. The agent in this framing still retains the experience and practice of reflection, because it is navigating *logos* by aligning with the *technes* in current forms of life. Normative lives are thus *not* unreflective, but 'critical within the norm'.

The second implication is that nonnormative means question those patterns, and even move out of those patterns, at some point it becomes impossible to follow them, or even: to return to those patterns in the same committed way as one was before. That means that reflection happens on two levels simultaneously: one within the agent upon their own behaviour, the means, and secondly through the agent upon surrounding forms of life, the implied ends. Practical reflection in

actions thus leaves the existing forms of life behind, and by changing *logos* destroys the attendant formation, which suggests that form of life as truth.

Both arguments should be relatively unproblematic to accept. The first argument is basically the premise of the Aristotelian ethical framework. An agent becomes a virtuous agent by aiming to become a virtuous agent: one trains oneself in the laudable patterns of the given society. This cannot be done with an unreflective attitude, but needs to be done with a commitment to the normative ethic. The second argument rests on the idea that once one starts to question the normative frame, and draws conclusions by moving out of the current accepted patterns, that one cannot return to a similar state of acceptance. This even holds if one would be forced to accept the normative patterns. This insight should also be relatively unproblematic, and is basically the premise of what reflection is all about. Namely, that after reflection one does something else, or sees something different, than before reflection.

These arguments combined conclude that agents on a nonnormative course are *destroying the ethical knowledge* that creates (a part of) normative ethics. Here loss figures to understand what is at stake is losing knowledge of orientation in a world, and thus practical truth (cf. Lugones 2003, 90). Consequently, nonnormative agents possess new ethical knowledge that inspires new ways of living, perceiving, and acting within the world (Harney and Moten 2013, 74; Bierria 2014, 139). As this knowledge functions as replacement, it must be concluded that ethical knowledge is not accumulative. Herein rests my hesitation with the Spinozist notion of increased connection, as discussed in chapter one. This argument does not mean that the normative and nonnormative are two hermetically sealed forms of life; they share spaces, are porous, and there's straying between worlds (Anzaldúa 1987; Lugones 2003). Ethical insights and reasonability is therefore dependent on forms of life. Pushing normative arguments upon the practices of nonnormative communities is thus a use of force and oppressive; recall Ahmed's objects of happiness (Ahmed 2010, 21). As Bierra's arguments have made clear nonnormative agent do need knowledge of normative codings, for tactical and strategic manoeuvring in order to survive

(Bierra 2014). Normative framings lay claim to both evaluative standards and *techne* of agential operation:

Dispositions are basic because the replication of ethical life lies in the replication of dispositions. [...] If ethical life is to be preserved, then these dispositions have to be preserved. But equally, if the ethical life that we have is to effectively criticized and changed, then it can be so only in ways that can be understood as appropriately modifying the dispositions that we have (Williams 2006, 75).

Williams' replication of ethical life is clearly presented from a homogenous perspective, and the 'we' in the quote indicates a 'normative first person plural'. Important is that dispositional modification entails an intertwined change of *logos* and forms of life. To transform *logos* is to give up the current ethic. This works on a variety of levels, from disruptions of codings to limiting practices and interruptions of life worlds. The obstruction of social reproduction lies exactly in the removal of the possibility for dispositional continuity, which can function both as duress and as futurity.

Nonnormative agents can be envisioned to create a plurality of ethics: forms of life divergent from normativity. Negation in this process functions as undoing of normative forms and their subordinating orders. Indeterminate affirmation enables the emergence of new relations and forms of life. As Lugones formulates: "the oppressed know themselves in realities in which they are able to form intentions that are not among the alternatives that are possible in the world in which they are brutalized and oppressed" (Lugones 2003, 59).

Agents can be discerned to live in different worlds, between which nonnormative agents navigate (Lugones 2003, 65). "By travelling to other people's 'worlds,' we discover that there are 'worlds' in which those who are victims of arrogant perception are really subjects, lively beings, constructors of visions [...]" (Lugones 2003, 97). Power disparities function to construct visions of others, but Lugones also underlines the existence of parallel forms of life in which agents construct different visions and live in different forms. Nonnormative agents can, by negating norms, emerge with different *logos*. This leads to different navigation of

the environment, this will inform strategies and tactics, and enable divergent practical truth. Nonnormative agency needs to be indeterminate, in order to avoid creating new impositions. This affirmative indeterminacy is achieved by aiming for the *interstice* between known norms, which they are intending to escape, revise, or change.

In addition to Preciado's *somatechnic* experiments (P. B. Preciado 2013, 322) to generate new forms of life, the nonnormative agent can be discerned to destroy the world as we know it. This replaces Berlant's agential attachment *simpliciter* as solution to aspiring to fraying normative fantasies (Berlant 2011, 260). Furthermore, nonnormative agent can be seen to operate beyond the need for a determinate single organising principle structuring their actions. The form of action, as double negation and single affirmation, is sufficient to structure the emergence of new forms.

Concluding

In this chapter agents have been established as operating from dispositions, which encompass perspective, action, and deliberation, culminating in *logos*. This structure forms the basis for both normative change in aspiration adaption to normative life of the *polis*, as well as nonnormative bodily change: *dunamis* changing the ensouled body in interaction with their environment. The focus on agential actions allowed for an understanding of indeterminate change from the first person's perspective. However, new forms of life emerging from action are not generated by a singular agent. Lugones claims: "[t]he I in this piece is in company and actively looking for company" (Lugones 2003, 227). The conceptualisation of ensouled bodily agents necessitates to conceptualise relations across divergent *logos*. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - The multilogical grounds for emerging ethics

My thesis conceptualising nonnormative ethics as an exploration of trans lives, offered, in chapter two, a description of the formation and change of a single agent in relation to an environment. As I have argued through Aristotle and Anzaldúa, ethics starts with ensouled bodily change. However this is not to make a plea for an individualist ethics. In this chapter I aim to expand the conceptualisation of nonnormative ethics beyond the *ensouled bodily* change of a single agent to focus on emergent relationality. The structure of relations is an integer part of the normative and nonnormative environments a nonnormative agent finds itself in and links *techne* with the logic of forms of life.

My argument in chapter two focussed on the formation of the single agent. I argued that the agent as *ensouled body* connects to its surroundings through *dunamis*, the active powers of engagement. This connection is theorised as a navigation of context by the agent along vectors of formation, linking changing means of navigation with changing (imagined) ends. Passing between existing norms and evaluations the agent establishes a *logos* through indeterminate affirmation. The negation of norms and affirmation of divergent action organises dispositions as nonnormative *logos*, which influences its perception, actions, and practical reflection. *Logos* forms the practical truth of the agent. This practical truth is expressive of the navigation and the agential actions in contexts. Nonnormative dispositions disrupt the reproduction of current norms, and allow for the emergence of new forms of life. This ethics can be conceived as a form of *somatechnics* that leads the agent towards a new form of becoming: a *transsomatechnics* (Sullivan 2005, 2009; Stryker and Sullivan 2009; Pugliese and Stryker 2009). I specifically use *transsomatechnics* as a form of becoming that aims at moving outside of established categories, codifications, relations, and forms of life.

Conceptualising the agent as constituted by nonnormative action through the navigation of the environment, without established aims or forms of life, I have argued that means imply ends, as new ends emerge from practice. The agent can thus be seen to operate along vectors of formation. These vectors aim at indeterminate and temporary ends, which shift according to changing practical

truth. The vector is both expressive of the current navigation, but also indicative of agential *logos*. However, the vector is not so much a linear *telos* as path of development, but an attempted unfolding of *logos* and the formation of a form of life. A nonnormative vector is thus not stable, as Sara Ahmed's discussion on normative objects of happiness suggests (Ahmed 2010), but changes with the unfolding of the agent. The articulation of nonnormative vectors aims to avoid cruelly optimistic aspirations (Berlant 2011), by being merely temporal footholds. In this way chapter two answered the question of nonnormative agency through an exploration of navigation of surroundings, both its norms and practices that influences the ensouled body and establishes both practical truth and evaluations.

Now the argument for nonnormative agency is established, the thesis needs to expand from agential *somatechnical* formation to relations between agents with different *logos*. A focus on singular agential nonnormative development leads to a theory emphasising multiplicity and divergence, above connection and relation. In this chapter I explore how agential divergence and multiplicity can converge into shared forms of life, without a necessary pre-established communal ground such as the ethical and political sphere of the *polis*, or a single order of reasoning.

To leave the conception of the *polis* is to break the encapsulation of nonnormative lives, whereby agents can primarily conceive of themselves through reasons adhering to the state (Wynter 2003, 277; Spade 2011; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015). This will open the reading of agential interaction beyond structuring by a dominant political organization. Consequently, I aim to offer arguments for the emergence of new forms of life. Emergent forms of life without an enclosing singular logic open up new questions about agential difference without losing the possibility of ethics. Opening up the possibility of different organisational logic does not condemn nonnormative agents to a space of Otherness for which in or exclusion of the *polis* has to be enacted or negotiated (Wynter 2003, 315).

The interstice, which I have argued to be constitutive in the formation of the agent, is not only a generative space for the singular agent, but also the space in which agents construe relation. Therefore, I will be arguing that this expanded perception of the interstice is the site of emergence of forms of life. In order to do so, I will look at Sennett's discussion (Sennett 1995) of the classical *polis* where the idea that enclosed space of the *polis* was necessary for creating friction between bodies to generate heat. However scientifically inadequate this idea turned out to be, the regulation of friction would remain tied to the political space, ordered around metaphors of heat. By engaging with Luciana Parisi and Tiziana Terranova's discussion of heat-death (Parisi and Terranova 2000), I will articulate discipline as problem for the *polis*. Parisi and Terranova's discussion understands turbulence as spilling over the ordered political space. However, in their understanding, turbulence does not necessarily break down the underlying logics of power. I will use their insight, and aim to formulate an ethics of turbulence, finding ways to connect between flows without disciplinary organisation.

Throughout, the *polis* will remain my stand in for a monological order, because it functions through a single organising principle: the master code (Wynter 2003, 272), which orders variation and expulsion. This is necessary to discuss changed forms of life, while the distribution of power remains tied along established lines. The coding of the Athenian *polis* as stand in for distributions of power, harks back to the shift in global power, where commitment to the colonial project was bought on the idea of ancient Greek political organisation (Wynter 2003, 298). I return to that moment to undo this imaginary, in order to articulate against the functioning of the master code (Wynter 1984).

To extend the conceptualisation of an ethics without single organising principle, I will discuss the emergence of relations between agents with differing *logos*. Lack of a formal ordering makes it inevitable to review what creates connection between nonnormative agents. I will resist the temptation to articulate a new organising principle. Consequently, I will contrast the monological order of the *polis*, and theorise nonnormative agents in multilogical worlds by using

theorisations of María Lugones (Lugones 2003). Subsequently I will focus on the classic notion of *eudaimonia* as a reading of the *daimon* that is behind one's shoulder, which can only be seen by one's company (Arendt 1999; Nussbaum 2001b). This articulation will give the opportunity to go beyond the organisational principle of the citizens of the *polis* – the demos, to a wider conceptualisation without the *polis* – the demons, as demons can take forms that are out of reach of the demos. The monological ground of ethical operation within the *polis* will be expanded by introduction of the *demons* as multiple nonnormative forms of life.

Outside of the *polis*, not encapsulated by the monological order, are what Katherine McKittrick terms *demonic grounds* (2006). This coding offers reading forms of life outside of, and articulated against, the monological norm. This is needed to draw the conceptualisation of the agent away from voluntaristic, individualistic models towards a nonnormative relationality. Furthermore this reading offers the possibility to understand the monological order as not only the operation of a singular state, but also an economic logic of exploitation. This understanding will function as lead in to an account of loss, as opposed to exploitation, which functions as providing a base for connection, offering themes that will be further developed in chapter four. Having set up the discussion with both demonic grounds and multilogical worlds, I will return to the work of Lugones to connect multiplicity of practical truths in different forms of life and world-travelling: an agent's moving from one form of life to another, in which they understand themselves differently (2003) as nonnormative ethics. Lugones' concept of *loving perception* will add to the readings of the *demon* in order to reach across differences. The emerging relationalities between agents with different practical truths and different forms of life with their particular organising logic, culminates in a proposal for *multilogical ethics*. This further step underlines an entanglement of affect, reason, and ethical openness that was introduced in chapter two, and juxtaposes a monological ordering.

Preciado's (2013) account suggested that ethical openness combined with the interdeterminacy of ends require a rethinking of *mythos* (Anzaldúa 1987;

Sennett 1995) and codes (McKittrick 2015b; Kittler 2008) structuring relations. New codes open the possibility of forging connection between different agents. Wynter emphasises this mode of connection is often opaque to agents, making this coding explicit enables denaturalising of relational hierarchies, as well as opening them up to change (Wynter 2003, 273). To understand norms and codes as more than either aspirational or foundational (Berlant 2007) I will turn to Wittgenstein's *forms of life* (Wittgenstein 2010) to provide a concept of sociality. Wittgenstein conceptualises forms of life as structured around a logic that informs both principles and decisions. This insight will enable a conceptualisation of codes without immediate linkage to principles. Consequently, it is possible to have diverging meanings of the same code, which retains relations without a demand for sameness. Thereby the possibility of contextual codes arises, which do not need to overlap with principles of the *polis*. I will use this distinction to draw the difference between *monological* forms of life (Wynter, 1984, 1999, 2001, 2007) that moulds diversity within one norm (eg. Bannerji 1992) and *multilogical* ethics. The latter emerges from the possibility of agential difference as underlying new forms of life. In chapter four I will discuss code in detail, and offer an account how codes can be thought beyond exploitation. In this chapter I will discuss emergent *technes* of relation within multilogical ethics.

Variation and Deviation: the polis as norm

In chapter two I have discussed that the formation of dispositions is agent-relative, whereby Aristotle seemingly emerged as a champion for multiplicity. Agential formation leads to differing practical truths, and these are deeply embedded in the agent's form of life. This reading leads to a possible problem of solipsism. The world comes to be as it appears to the agent (Nussbaum 2001b, 244), and the flow of appearances changes form with the truth of agents. This leads to the further problem that exchange between agents becomes difficult or impossible as perceptions of situations and forms of life cannot sufficiently

match. Singular approaches create impossibilities within ethical understanding.

There are various approaches available to bridge such individualised understandings. One strategy would be to argue that the difference between agents is not a relevant difference; another could be the claim there is necessarily a connection based on objective inquiry; or alternatively that agents should ignore their difference and rely on toleration (Williams 1985, 159). The first approach explains the problem away, the second approach claims there is a standard that can ignore all differences, and the third replaces the acknowledgement of differences with a universal standard that urges one not to heed them in a manner relevant to those differences. These approaches all think through the problem of differentiation from a monological perspective – they aim for a single ordering principle giving a coherent shape to the world. I will approach these issues from a nonnormative perspective and argue, with Sylvia Wynter, that such a single principle of order must be abandoned (Wynter 2003, 1990, 1984) in order to shape an ethic beyond the imposition and demand for coherence. Denise Ferreira da Silva offers that a demand for coherence creates nonnormativity, by creating a space outside the norm (Da Silva 2016, 63). Da Silva suggests that to allow difference and incoherence leaves space to perceive the world as Plenum, instead of modulations from a singularity (Da Silva 2014, 86). A nonnormative ethics will thus need to find understandings that do not categorise differences as retaining separation, but allow traversing across logics in order to open *ensouled* bodies to make connections without collapsing into the separability demanded by hierarchy.

Individualistic approaches to trans centre on personal acts and changes, individual courage, and personal growth. Aren Aizura writes:

Under the terms of free market democracy, infinite perfectibility becomes not only a capacity of the individual, but a responsibility: if each individual is free, then every individual is responsible for regarding herself as a set of capacities to be transformed, improved and worked on. In the early twentieth-century United States, similar attitudes towards self-discovery and a desire for infinite

perfectibility intersected. Both discourses took the body as the vehicle for transformation (Aizura 2012, 152).

Trans fits such a picture by becoming exemplary for development, and empowering affect. Furthermore, such approaches focus on inclusion and exclusion of the agent. Nonnormative agents become monstrous outsiders (Koch-Rein 2014). Stryker's paradigmatic text rearticulating Frankenstein's monster as image of trans (Stryker 1994) might have involuntarily contributed to an imagery of trans as *individual* experience on the outskirts of community. This ties in with figurations of travel narratives, which metaphorically asks one to depart and new home-comings (Aizura 2012; Bhanji 2012a) fitting a dominant individualistic imagery. Home is the space of privacy, not so much the space of collectivity in those narratives. Exclusion becomes a singular and individual experience in these understandings.

In contrast, an ethical approach to trans nonnormativity generates space for collective experiences. This aligns with a contextual, environmental approach of the ensouled body (Martinez 2000, 83). Trans as an activity (Stryker 2008b, 1) is immersed in and emerges from collectivities - that is: shared forms of life. These collectivities do not need to be homogenous. Moreover, it does not mean that trans agents are specifically welcome, embraced, or feel home in such collectives (Raha 2017). Articulating trans through ethics underlines trans is not a solitary experience, but always contextual and thus relational. *Logos* allows understanding how the bodily experience interlaces with the collective as a bodily shift in understanding positions. An ethics of gender as experiment (P. B. Preciado 2013, 322; Anzaldúa 1987, 102) is thus necessarily a collective endeavour. Such an endeavour can be made subject to the demands of the market (Irving 2008), but trans can also resist the logic of marketization, exploitation and inclusion in the *polis*, as I will argue for below.

An ensouled agent navigates their context in action, and this means the point of view of the first person singular cannot be substituted. Aristotle formulates “[...] change is continuous, and action is change” (Aristotle 1992b 1120b26 ; cf. Bey 2017, 287). Trans agents changing their form of life are in continuous action.

This continuity of action is not an even pattern of activities, but is the activity of *dunamis* relating to the environment. This means that actions of the agent still come in different patterns, forms, instances, and so forth. Surrounding agents respond to the acting agent doing well or not. Aristotle suggests the dichotomy between acting in isolation and responding in collectives:

[...] for an isolated person life is difficult, for being continuously active is not easy by oneself, but is easier in company of people different from oneself, and in relation to others (Aristotle 2002 1170a5-7).

Aristotle is positive about difference, but is necessary to keep in mind that this difference is within a collective system of inclusion, exclusion and friction: namely the *polis*. Aristotelian *dunamic* action is in its normative forms aimed at agential modulation within a shared form of life. The double pull on the agent lies between personalising of a form and remaining operative within the collective (Nussbaum 2001b, 363). One becomes a person through immersion in the collective. Wynter emphasises this specific conception as central to the re-articulation of the world ordered secularly in the 16th century, as opposed to a theological framing (Wynter 2003, 263, 277). I flag this specifically as this is the point at which the *demos* – the citizens of the metaphorical *polis* - were made complicit in the double project of misogyny and colonialism (Federici 2004). The *polis* with its subjugation of the wives of citizens, and relying on the labour of its slaves, while being flagged as the seat of democracy, can only with effort be thought as an accidental example for the re-ordering of the world in the emergent colonialism. Since the *polis* remains in effect one of the key codes to think democracy through (Benhabib 1992; Foucault 2010; W. Brown 2015), I will use this concept to rework ethics beyond the confinements of the norm. Through this conceptualisation I aim at a simultaneous undoing of the commitment to the state/*polis* as site of agential validation, as well as create space for a thorough critique of monological orderings, linking this thesis conceptually to projects of anti-colonisation. In chapter four I will focus deeper on the conception of codes, the abstract action initiations, while here I will use them as connotation for structural relations.

Nonnormative agents are outside of the singular normative collective, and the question is consequently how divergent collectivities take form. This is not to say that everything needs to be new, but changing agents fall outside of existing patterns of relation as well as come with new practical truth to find relation with. I will expand on this question below using Lugones' formulation of impure communities (Lugones 1999) and Ortega's complex collectivities (Ortega 2016, 104). For nonnormative agents a juxtaposed double bind can be discerned: on the one hand there is a lack of peers, which could offer support, understanding and friction by equals, and on the other hand there are uncomprehending arbiters,⁴⁸ which explains mainstream duress (Bhanji 2012a). This duress gives partly a false feeling of 'non-thriving'. It is false as it is based on improper, irrelevant, or inapplicable evaluative standards that are based on other forms of life and bodily being. This is different from violations and aggressions, even though they are likely to occur as well. When nonnormative agents are evaluated according to normative standards, an isolating idea of exceptionalism can be espoused (this could induce agents to adjust actions and shape undesired dispositions). Norms necessarily come with a tendency to preservation, since they are evaluative standards and thus remain sites of aspiration (Berlant 2007), as well as suggest how to approach deviancy (Wynter 1990; Canguilhem 1991). When norms are dominant, duress follows from this preservative-tendency directly, as difference gets approached as something that should be conquered (Lugones 2003, 94) or punished, as way to being corrected and brought back in line. Recalling the discussion of chapter two:

[...] the holders of such views are in need, not of arguments, but of maturity in which to change their opinions, or else of correction of a civil or medical kind (for medical treatment is no less a form of correction than flogging is). (*EE* 1.3 1214b32-36)

As discussed in chapters one and two, there is a lengthy tradition of approaching alternative *logos* as illness, criminal, and in need of punishment (Cf. Chapter 1:

⁴⁸ It is not only the incomprehension that is the problem, but the social power that makes these uncomprehending agents *arbiters*. This gives the power to unleash actions. Ignorance alone would explain duress from racism, sexism, transphobia etc. as a misunderstanding. That explanation is false, because it excavates exploitation and postulates equality.

Canguilhem 1991; Kitzinger 1987). The connection Aristotle draws between medical intervention and flogging serves to underline the aim to "cure" deviants (Cf. Chapter 1: Benjamin 1954).⁴⁹ The use of flogging as either cure or subjugation remained operative in modern colonial practice (Wadiwel 2009). However, it is worth noting that Aristotle frames this perspective within the need for multiplicity and difference. Below I will expand on the neoliberal need for diversity, which remains tied to a monological order. Aristotle's conception that "the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and the individual" (Aristotle 1996 1253a19), suggests an evaluation into right and wrong kinds of difference that serve to protect the functioning of the overarching whole. Difference, in Aristotle, is necessary and laudable, but only in a frame of coherent unity of the *polis*. There is a switch-point between variation and deviation, which is captured in the form of life, as I will argue through Wittgenstein at the end of this chapter.

Aristotelian theory claims multiplicity within the constraints of diversity in the *polis* (W. Brown 2015, 89). This diversity rests on private property (*oikos*), misogyny and slavery. The private retreat is at the basis of differentiation, and is conceptualised as possible faction to counter dominant logic. Salkever argues diversity is guaranteed exactly through the *oikos* as having the power for other forms of rationality to emerge: "The life of the *oika*, like that of philosophy or music, can provide an attachment to a rationalising order different from the *polis*" (Salkever 1990, 198). There is the possibility to group together in an array of like-minded agents, as alternative *oikos*, family. Aristotle terms this 'civic friendship':

Civic friendship on the other hand is constituted in the fullest degree on the principle of utility, for it seems to be the individual's lack of self-sufficiency that makes these unions permanent - since they would have been formed in any case merely for the sake of society (Aristotle 1992b 1242a7-9).

⁴⁹ For nonnormative agents negotiating normative gender clinics this might certainly feel recognisable. And furthermore, it is saddening that the large percentage of "deviants" in the penal system finds its origin already in the thought of the Athenian democracies.

This different rationality comes then with a different view on the organisation of the *polis* aiming at a certain kind of (new) ordering: “Therefore to seek the proper way of associating with a friend is to seek for a particular kind of justice” (Aristotle 1992b 1242a22-23). This different view gets formed with like-minded people and is thus suggestive of a form of homogeneity needed to counter differences.

Salkever argues thus that the origin of a political order finds its source in the *oikos*, as a continuity of function between the family order and the *polis* (Salkever 1990, 189). Salkever’s argument allows to see how differing rationalities can emerge and function as contestation within an overarching norm. However, as discussed previously, Aristotle is equally committed to a strong pluralistic idea of multiplicity and agent-dependent truth, as I have argued in chapter two. This seemingly creates a paradox when combined with this social pressure of the *polis* and the necessity of like-mindedness of disagreeing factions (Sennett 1995, 63). The homogeneity advised for political purposes seems purely utilitarian, not the basis for home, but the basis for unified action. There are two contrasting demands at play, the first is that disagreeing factions are internally homogenous, as Salkever also argues, and the second is the necessity of multiplicity of the *polis*. This homogeneous difference within unity, constrains variation by the demand for operational possibility within the limits of the dominant norm. This limits variation to positions that could be seen to be acceptable in logics that are already available, including the position that submission to the order of the state is ingrained in the potential for difference. Outside of the possible variation lies deviance, which comes with punishment and curing, as discussed above, or in by placement in a new order of enslavement and death (Weheliye 2014, 37). The possibility for criticism and questioning the foundations of the dominant order, such as slavery and misogyny (Wynter 2003; McKittrick 2015b, 2006), is severely limited by the double bind of validation and punishment tying agents into the *polis*, or brutally placing them outside the order of citizenship.

Aristotelian negotiation of this political paradox of corrective punishment and agent-dependent truth lies in politics: claiming the space where we negotiate

about what is "just" (or fair) and what is "unjust" (or unfair) (Aristotle 1996 1253a35-39). Curbing of agential difference, as well as a defence of multiplicity within the space of politics stems from an understanding of the body as in need of friction, which functions as code to explain the political order. The need for difference is thus partly instrumental, and needs to be balanced and calibrated. Aristotelian practical philosophy, without categorising metaphysics, lends thus the double basis for differing practical truth, as well as the need for difference. In this it contrasts homogenising epistemologies, and it can thus provide the basis for a multilogical ethics. The conception of the body as requiring friction instead of benefitting from a passage through smooth surfaces with an uncontested functioning carries some promise for a theory of nonnormative ethics. I will discuss through the work of Sennett (Sennett 1995) why friction was thought to be a necessity in the *polis* and how this leads to a specific understanding of pressure release to counter centrifugal forces. Consequently, I will problematize this coding of a political space, and engage with Parisi and Terranova's extension of material codings to conceptualise political space (Parisi and Terranova 2000). This will in turn allow an understanding of the polis creating different codings around a monological order, which will benefit the argument for a nonnormative ethics, contrasting normative diversity.

Heated bodies

In contrast to an argument for unity through homogeneity, in this section I will provide a conceptualisation for the arguments for differences in collectives. This will allow conceptualising friction as a positive and constitutive, and not merely as competition and threat (Da Silva 2016, 63). For Aristotle multiplicity is fundamental because "a city is composed of different kinds of men; similar people cannot bring a city into existence" (Sennett 1995, 56). Homogeneity is not a desired state for a collective, but what remains to be seen is how difference and deviation are constituted. Aristotle's defence of multiplicity arises from a wider Ancient Greek conceptualisation of the body as ordered by heat, found for

instance in Galen (Sennett 1995, 42). This ordering remained effective imagery from its Egyptian conception for thousands of years until this conception was proven untrue around the seventeenth century (ibid. 43). “Heat in the body seemed to govern people’s power to see, to listen, to act and react, even to speak” (Sennett 1995, 43). A warmer body responds more intensely to stimuli, images as well as words, and bodies in solitude or slavery would grow cold and become sluggish (ibid.). The double negation in agential action, as discussed in chapter two, thus not only frees the agent from singular engagement with the norm, but orders friction as multiple and constitutive of affirmation in action. The heat of action stems from a sharpness of friction in negation. This friction ties the agent to the negation – but not the norm – as at the same time the agent is propelled out of the norm. Aristotelian bodies were conceptualised as belonging to “a larger collectivity called the *polis*” (Sennett 1995, 46). These bodies would behave as in love – rubbing against each other to generate heat (Sennett 1995, 50), while isolated voices became markers for “misrule and disunity” (Sennett 1995, 52). Friction from the Athenian perspective was necessarily within a *polis* as the walls needed to enclose the agents, keep them pressed together so that heat could be produced. In contrast to the *polis*, in a space that is suggested to operate under the heading of individual freedoms, friction can be seen to identify problematic demands on nonnormative agents (Ahmed 2010).⁵⁰ The political space within the city was necessary for the engagement of heated bodies, to become and remain quick in absorbing impressions and returning speech in the agora. The Athenian democracy of the *polis* attempted to shape the city in such a way that citizens would not be dragged along by passionate rhetoric to the extent that they would not take responsibility for their actions anymore. This was done by making visible the different fractions in the city (Sennett 1995, 65), as well as holding the collective as a whole responsible for the outcome. The overall picture suggests heat contained by a single system of collective control.

⁵⁰ Note: elsewhere I will argue that anger or rage serves as much as protection against normative invasion by functioning as shield, as well as fuel for departing the normative enclosure. The friction that is negative by operating monologically need not be equated by positive friction: the multilogical engagement with differences, that can cause irritation or anger to preserve difference, rather than trying to subsume it in an imaged unity that is colonizing (Lugones 2003, Lorde 1984)

The unity amidst friction is partially necessary to retain a system of exploitation of slavery and sexism.⁵¹

Heated bodily interaction was thus a necessary ingredient of a functioning *polis*, and channelling this heat in collective acts was what the belonging to the *polis* signified (Ibid.). The power of heated words was contained in the collective responsibilities for the acts that followed – the *polis* was responsible as a whole, also disagreeing factions. These negotiations of oppositions in multiplicity was the balancing act of the political space of the Athenian democracy⁵²: “the body ruled the word, and estranged men’s power to live rationally through the unity of word and deed [...] The heat of the body [...] led people to lose rational control in argument; the heat of words in politics lacked as well the narrative logic which it possessed in theatre” (Sennett 1995, 66). The space of meeting provided the necessary frictions to retain bodily hotness, but directions could not always be successfully navigated. The *polis* needed to maintain a centripetal force and contain multiplicities within a functioning whole.

Normative somatechnical formation needed therefore to be aimed at establishing agents that are close enough to share rationality in the *polis* (Sennett 1995, 46), but also coming with interests and perceptions different enough not to subsume all agents under a strict normative regime. However, an *ensouled body* not only offers heat that can be channelled to comparable rationalities, but indeed can also emerge with different *truths*, not as interests, but as lived reality. The rationality that is looked for in the *polis* is one coming from a unificatory perspective that need not be found in differently ensouled bodies. As discussed in chapter two, actions can be expressive of practical truth, and this suggests an alternative to approaching politics with norms alone.

⁵¹ This has barely changed: white women will vote for a sexist in order to preserve Whiteness, and the working class votes for racism. This can be discerned in frightening clarity in the recent Presidential elections in the USA and the Gubernatorial race in Alabama. Unity for exploitation seems to come before liberation.

⁵² As flagged before, the *polis* was structured by slavery and misogyny. I am not defending the *polis*, in contrast I will argue below that it should be abandoned.

There is a tension between evaluative norms and the truth value of agential actions which is part of a space for politics: it requires an adjustment of the agent's *logos* to socially evaluative statements. However, norms or judgements can be socially dominant, while agents' lived reality does not provide an impetus for dispositional change.⁵³ Normative inertia can be explained as the hesitation to adapt *logos* to newly acquired social forms. This means that social change requires bodily change, as the discussion in chapter two advances.⁵⁴ Differences in practical truth require different negotiations between agents than a politics based on norms suggest. Norms appear as a single and shared measure when there are differing perspectives or interests in a world that is similar to all agents. Practical truth differences suggest actions and exchange, before there is a space of shared evaluations. In the *polis* these different truths are offered in an encompassing formal space, because there is no single principle available. To protect this form against distortion and retain the power of negotiation in the *polis*, citizens would vote to exile citizens with too much power (Sennett 1995, 55). This form of letting off steam focuses on the build-up of power as stifling heated movements. From the perspective of the *polis* and its exiling of too powerful members, we can draw a parallel between ostracising as the discharge needed for the functioning of the system, preventing overheating. The build-up of force is contrasted with the creation of under-pressure allowing for new balance in the distribution of energy and heat. While the *polis* is thus suggestive of a thermodynamical approach to power difference and control, this thermodynamics should be understood as functioning outside of its modern conceptions. While scientific conceptions currently function as code for political control (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 2), in the democratic *polis* of the fourth century, thermodynamic explanation was thought to be a materialist and not metaphorical.

Parisi and Terranova code the operations of disciplinary society as thermodynamics in contrast with fluid turbulences. Thermodynamical systems

⁵³ For instance, people want to be both anti-racist, or not sexist, while not adjusting their *logos* to embrace this new ethics. It is a new ethics, because it requires different practical evaluations. (cf. Wekker 2016)

⁵⁴ Especially the insights of Bernard Williams (1985) and Denise Ferreira da Silva (2013).

of discipline malfunction through entropy: the energy that cannot be absorbed back into the system, while survival of the system depends on maintaining equilibrium (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 4). Parallel to the *polis*, this reading of thermodynamics can be understood to be a system dealing with physical construction and heterogeneity (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 5). Parisi and Terranova argue that it is not only the universe, but also the social order that functions through a thermodynamic logic will end in heat-death. Heat-death, translated into the logic of the *polis* would mean a stagnation of processes of redistribution of energy, successfully transforming energy into functioning political processes. "It is not only the universe which one day will run towards heat-death, but also the social order which builds itself on thermodynamic principles" (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 5). Parisi and Terranova suggest that compression of the social body in solid forms, by means of instrumentations of prisons, factories, asylums, and clinics lends itself to understanding through processes of "the constancy of energy and its irreversible processes marked by accumulation and discharge" (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 1). This understanding of the body as open to tight discipline can be traced to the functioning of chattel slavery in the European colonies (Hartman 1997) and the subjugation of the European working classes (Federici 2004). Federici remarks: "the human body [...] was the first machine developed by capitalism" (Federici 2004, 146). The body could be envisioned as an organisation bounded in a self that can be disciplined into a specific functioning.

Parisi and Terranova argue that in order to avoid heat-death the female body became a constitutive element in the cycle of energy distribution. Parisi and Terranova argue that this body is the outside, reproducing fluids in the thermodynamic cycle, with energy subordinated to the system for this to maintain functioning (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 5). Shatema Threadcraft's explanation extends further to the black female body, which performed the reproduction for the white body outlined by enslavement, at the expense of her own reproductive care (Threadcraft 2016, 9). In order for the thermodynamic cycle to remain functioning a double layer of reproduction upon reproduction was crafted (Threadcraft 2016, 10). Designating a body as female becomes a

broad categorisation of material operability, with various layers of social functioning and codified discipline, extending far beyond easy naturalisations (Stryker and Whittle 2006; Koyama 2006; Spillers 1987; Weheliye 2014). The body in these processes can be read as an intersection of forces and relations constituting its existence as a result of these interactions. Forces of discipline operate on the body to reproduce the function of the thermodynamic system. The somatechnical body, however, also contains an inversion of these processes: formed in response to available technological, cultural and social norms, the *ensouled body* becomes constitutive of the norms it (re)produces. Reading an operation of fields of force pressing on bodies, the possibility of resistance and divergence, where the world is not so much reproduced, but contested, opens up (Threadcraft 2016, 18). The world is thus always made anew, and sometimes in its own image.⁵⁵ In the *polis* cold bodies of women and slaves were needed for reproduction, and kept away from heated interactions of the *demos* (Sennett 1995, 68).

Parisi and Terranova contrast the thermodynamic logic of discipline, pressing bodies into shape, with the control of turbulence, where bodies are constituted by their relations “never attaining a final state” (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 6). The disciplinary, mechanical society claims bodies as “molding fluids to a solid, hierarchical and thermodynamic formation, control is about the management of these speeds and capacities” (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 6). The authors further argue that control is about modulation of the capacities. The contrast between a thermodynamic logic in processes of control under disciplinary industrial capitalism vis-à-vis turbulent logics is larger than between the logic of turbulence and the heated interactions of the *polis*. While a disciplinary reading needs fixed forms, which are juxtaposed by control of flows in a turbulent model, the *polis* needs modulations around a shared logic in order to generate heat, while retaining sufficient friction. Hot air streams.

Processes of inter-relationality, and thus mutuality in generation of forms of life, are central in a somatechnical approach. Somatechnics is both the relation to

⁵⁵ See chapter two for details on this point.

techne within ethics, the craft of formation and skills of relation (Aristotle 2002 1098a15, 1103a15-1103b15; Stryker and Sullivan 2009), as well as the care of self-shaping contrasting dominating relations (Laforteza 2015, 51, 52; Pugliese and Stryker 2009). A turbulent engagement with formation is juxtaposed to the solid disciplinary formations of industrial capitalism. Within turbulence the body is a relation of forces between bodies in their dynamic capacities, much like the heated bodies of the *polis*. Parisi and Terranova conceptualise the body defined by its longitude and its latitude:

the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude): the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude). Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 6).

This opposes a disciplinary formation, which reads fluids as a solid, while maintaining a vision of the dynamic possibilities of the body, even under pressure. Managing the movement of bodies under pressure is the new form of enclosure, post-discipline. The ensouled body of the *polis* is in turn, as I argued in chapter two, constituted partly through its *vector*; the direction of its movements aiming towards a certain valuation from a specific position and potentiality – analogous to a reading of longitude and latitude – but also, in addition to this as the particular world it is occupying – its geopolitical location channelling the effects of the code of the body. While certain bodies can operate along modulations of predictable normativities, other bodies are already vectors that leave imposed codings behind. Marquis Bey articulates this as a fugitivity constituting black and trans bodies always departing the operations of the dominant logic (Bey 2017, 276). As I will argue for below, these effects are not singular, but different at different locations, and not decisively in the agent's control, operating in a multilogics instead of a disciplined solidity. This ties in with Parisi and Terranova's argument that the thermodynamic body was moving away from representation (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 7), which can consequently be conceived as one of the forces operating from the dominating norm – as the remnant of disciplinarity, or as camouflage of a fugitive practical

truth, making a world for itself. The body is thus turning turbulent either in somatechnical terms or in the escape of entropy (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 7). The nonnormative agent is outside the understandings of control in its own practical truth, regardless of the imposed control. This is thus one of the negated norms as I have argued in chapter two. Duress on an agent in formation is the force put on a vector by imposed codings and possible options and the agent is not in a solid disciplinary enclosure.⁵⁶

Bodies are not on the same plane of logical entanglements as their formation is constitutive of a specific practical truth as my argument in chapter two, part two demonstrated. Somatechnical formation allows the envisioning of the constitution of a multilogical world, where vectors are emerging from non-comparable mappings, and relations function as differing readings, codes, and forms of being. Control within a turbulent world functions as modulation of flows (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 6), while still constraining agents in a monological order (Wynter 2003). Counteracting a mapping of the world as ordered within one pervasive logic through a somatechnical reading, it could be discerned that these vectors of nonnormative flows are already out of the reach of monological control. The bodies within these flows might appear visible, but the truths operative in these movements cannot be captured, as these function in a multilogical world of nonnormativity (Lugones 2003, 65ff; 77ff; 121ff). Even in a turbulent reading control stems from the monological necessities of the dominant system. While in a thermodynamic *modus operandi* the processes of categorisation were “paranoid about the questions of boundaries, but confident about its mastery of them” (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 8) control was the reaction to outside threats to the system. Passing through thinking about processes of *autopoiesis* and self-constitution (ibid. 9), the operation of turbulent control focuses on difference as generative, while retaining its order in a single logic of exploitation (ibid. 10). This cybernetic order mutates through renewed self-constitution and organisation, staying close to the demands of normative somatechnical development, which imagines the creative activity of the agent as

⁵⁶ This is not to say that there’s not solid enclosure in the Prison Industrial Complex. See (A. Davis 2003; Spade 2011; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015).

reproducing energetic variations of the dominant logic. The agential heat of the *polis* offers this modular and heated interaction of social reproduction and organisation maintained in “a single field of power” (Sharma 2015, 164).

Recapitulating the argument, I have argued through Wynter that the idea of the *polis* was constitutive of tying the agent to the state as primary way to understand its self. Focusing on difference in the Ancient *polis* it became clear that it occupies a space between the strict disciplinary boundaries of thermodynamical operation, and the turbulent logic of usefulness of difference. Already in the Athenian *polis* difference was seen as necessity for generative processes within a single order. Considering that a turbulent logic operates on a similar pattern of usefulness of difference, I will consequently retain the *polis* as code for a monological operation of power in order to negate the idea that the self can only be understood through an overarching state or principle. Monological imposition is still the case in the current turbulent order with its attendant possibility of changing codes and unpredictable differences. This is justifiable, for instance, through the contemporary rights discourses, where the role of the democratic order is to be the proposed guardian of difference (Puar 2015; Spade 2011) with its attendant programme of normalisation of deviation, as well as a simultaneous exploitation, erasure, fragmentation and murder of nonnormative agents (Weheliye 2014). In sum, within the *polis* difference is only different within the bounds of the singular logic of exploitation and exaltation, outside of that logic difference is invisible (Da Silva 2014; Lugones 2003).

A nonnormative multilogical ethics, therefore, needs to take its *poiesis* out of the *polis* and enters practical engagements away from the constitutive unity of exploitative differentiation. Voluntary relation is all there is. This provides a major contrast with the monological order, which is currently inescapable as force to take into account. However, this order is not totalising and necessarily misses out on multilogical truths and practices, as I will argue below. A nonnormative ethics can turn *poiesis* into an ethics that doesn't “limit and define the scope of decolonisation” (Da Silva 2014, 81). Da Silva terms this *poethics*, which connects forms of life and a creative capacity of Blackness that demands a

decolonization (Da Silva 2014, 85). This severs ethics from subservience to the dominant norm within a universalising form. This nonnormative ethics does not look to reproduce current life, but to replace the operation of the norm with new nonnormative logics and forms, as I have argued in chapter two. While relations can be marked by interdependency, instead of autonomy, it need not be aggrsed by the necessity of an assumed shared monological ordering (Wynter 2003). Parisi and Terranova’s call to “come up with a dealing with turbulence that is based on ethics rather than control”(Parisi and Terranova 2000, 19) resonates with this insight. This ethics consists then in negotiating and navigating interactions that are not contained within a single field of power, but are rather a meeting of different logics of action, perception and reasoning across different vectors and codifications.

Turbulence is the movement of hot air creating new flows. Escaping the confining thermodynamics of the *polis* with its attendant ostracism and exclusion, a turbulence of differences within a single norm is the new coding of control, which retained the underlying logic of exploitation. Consequently, instead of limiting differences, I will discuss interaction of multiple forms of life based on their own logics of traversing along a vector, oscillating between the solitary and the collective in order to extend my proposal for nonnormative ethics.

In order to fruitfully conceptualise this nonnormative ethics it needs to be thought away from the closed system of the monological norm – away from a singular framing of Chaos-Order (Wynter 1984, 27). This framing from within the monological order operates by exclusion and the creation of deviances. While there are differences in a monological system, these are based in hierarchical orderings through codings of sexism, racism, indigeneity, homophobia, poverty, and imprisonment (Weheliye 2014, 28). Approaching those exclusions and their operation is what I called in chapter one a critical approach. Continuing from my conceptualisation of chapter two, I want to make the case for an understanding of a radical approach, which questions not only the possibility of deviancy away from the dominant imposition, but goes further and asks how such a potential

can take form. This is led by the understanding emerging from chapter two that the generative approach of *dunamis* make it impossible to 'empty the body' and then replace its functioning with a different form. Instead, understanding the ensouled body as generative underlines the need of moving through forms, instead of coming to a neutral before developing something new. This is further understood in a somatechnical reading of bodies, which supports the insight that we cannot do nothing, as the body is always in relation. Because the body is by necessity active, it will form *logos*. The question that currently needs to be faced is not if the body find form, but how it can be avoided that its formation becomes imposition, or alternatively creamed off within exploitation.

While a singular negation of the norm will keep the agent tied to it (Muñoz 1997, 82), the need for articulation of the movement away from the norm is emphasised. As a disruption of social reproduction this *poiesis* allows to articulate an ethics of shifting multilogics. As discussed in chapter two this shifts the terminology away from inscriptions of norms and margin-centre based approaches towards nonnormative formations open to connect multiplicities. A multiplicity of logics operates as platform of possible connection or relation. This requires shifting the heat-death of entropy to the possibility of a pluralist ectropy. While entropy signifies the chaos over the order of the system, ectropy signals a plurality of forms, the Chaos to Order principle (Kragh 2008, 190; Wynter 1984, 27; Da Silva 2015, 91). Wynter explains: "The order/chaos figuration of a physico-ontological principle of Sameness and Difference was the axiom about which the mode of cultural imagination, the status-organizing process, the aesthetic the conceptual ordering rational world view of Christian Medieval world, was founded and represented as divinely caused/ordered" (Wynter 1984, 28). While in a single order, everything outside looks like chaos, different forms in this 'chaos' do not converge in a single order. This spilling out of a single system of logics to escape a comprehensive organisation, I will propose as forming multilogical relations.

The transsomatechnical conception of changing bodies in relation that grounds nonnormative ethics, is strengthened by the Aristotelian theorisation that

difference is a given, a necessity, and generative of collective space. Bodies change in exchange, by navigating different codings and through friction. It is necessary to exercise caution and not equate mainstream duress with the friction of multilogical interaction. I will articulate this difference below as the friction caused by differing logics, which contrasts imposed duress of determined relationality as it emerges from the *polis*. Subsequently, I do not offer an argument for a utopian smooth space of mutual exchange, as this would rely on a single order, either essentialist or imposed.

I have argued in chapter two for agential somatechnical formation, which creates space for flows and *logos* countering prevailing and domineering logics. In this chapter Lugones' articulation of operational difference in complex collectivities informs ethical *poiesis*. This connects the argument of the last chapter about the formation of the single agent, with the current discussion about the agent in a nonnormative collective space. The tenet of somatechnical agential multiplicity can be seen as parallel to the call for a turbulent ethics of Parisi and Terranova, expressing the need for relationality between different vectors of flow, without a single order of control. Because *logos* is the necessary outcome of agency – of interstitial action navigating environments - connection through multilogics is a navigation of an interstice between agents, finding a bridging in action, temporal perhaps, situational maybe, but practical and constitutive of a world that is not yet present. This second order emergence follows from the necessity of first order emergence within the agent (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 13). It “produces the unexpected” (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 14) demanding the attention of the agent to generosity and loss (Lugones 2003), to make space for the *demons* (McKittrick 2006, xxiv) escaping the *demos*.

The multilogical Worlds of nonnormative Ethics

In order to conceptualise the agent in collectives and the attendant relation to *logos*, other agents, and forms of life, I will provide an account of connecting

logics without succumbing to an idea of a single principle providing the bridge. The singular agent with its particular *logos* needs for a nonnormative ethics to be situated in collectivities, for as Lugones argues “[u]nless resistance is a social activity, the resistor is doomed to failure in the creation of a new universe of meaning, a new identity” (Lugones 2005, 97).⁵⁷ However, this collectivity resisting dominating norms and forms of life cannot be posited as homogenous. As I have argued in chapter two, agents come with particular formations, which move away from a collective relation to a dominating norm. These could be seen as processes of *disidentification* (Muñoz 1997, 82), forming an alternative beyond identification and counteridentification. For a multilogical ethical practice this means the inevitable connection from differing perspectives, truths and partial forms of life, as particular formations differ in kind. The interstice which emerges out of a multiple negation is a primarily practical space of action, as I have argued through engaging with Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa 1987, 102). This space can be seen to give room for the single agent constituting itself – as process of somatechnical authorship – and following the question about second order emergence, that of collective meanings, arises. While Parisi and Terranova make the case that first order emergence is constitutive of variation – and thus emerges in practice through practice, the second order variation adds “functionality to the system” (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 13). The ordering of terms suggests there needs to be practice for praxis⁵⁸ to emerge.

As we author every act of resistance, we can understand it as meaningful to the extent that it is inserted in a process of resistance that is collective, but we can also aspire to acts of collective resistance, breaking down our isolation against the odds prescribed by “the confines of the normal” (Lugones 2005, 97).

While chapter two focused on the practice of the agent moving out of normative confines without attendant meaning, the following chapters will focus on praxis,

⁵⁷ A singular agent changing its *logos* in isolation will not make new relations with the world, and is therefore not an ethics. This is why for trans a change in relationality is inevitable – even if it is limited and small scale.

⁵⁸ Praxis in the usage of Lugones indicates the indissoluble link between theory and practice (Lugones 2003, 37 n.1). It thus indicates the reflection on practices in practice allowing understanding. I have discussed this in chapter one.

action with a shared understanding, or aimed at a shared understanding, that might be local or temporal (Lugones 2003, 4; Martinez 2000, 84; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015, 31). At stake in praxis as nonnormative ethics is the activity of the ensouled body in its navigation of material surroundings, creating a new consciousness that is shared and communicated (Martinez 2000, 86).

Normativity comes with the tendency to impose separation and to isolate, following the operation of excluding categorisations of the Order/Chaos principle (Wynter 1984, 27), and thus comes with accompanying deviances. This principle envisions the world as a two-fold operation, and this dichotomy suggests the vision of order happens necessarily from the centre to the margins (Wiegman and Wilson 2015, 15; Povinelli 2015, 169). A posited homogeneity functions as the control of multiplicity (Lugones 2003, 127), leading to separation. Claiming homogeneity, or purity, in collectivities dismantles the functioning of the particular agential *logos*, while portraying a fiction of control and singular competence. This mode of engagement leads to agonistic strife (Lugones 2003, 95), that blocks the possibility of understanding differing formation. Bounded groups come with members that are “transparent with respect to their group if they perceive their needs, interests, and ways as those of the group and if this perception becomes dominant” (Lugones 2003, 140). This transparency is the coding of unattentive to the difference with other members in such a ‘bounded’ group and regrouping the features and needs as single order. On the other side are the ‘thick’ members who are aware of their difference “of their otherness in the group, of their needs, interests, ways, being relegated to the margins in the politics of intragroup contestation” (Lugones 2003, 140). Bringing this structure back to the Athenian *polis* – as the overarching structure of intragroup heated exchange, it suggests with these tools in hand that heated debate between fractions necessarily marginalises members. Furthermore, this model has no tools available to deal with these differences, except fragmentation into smaller homogenic fractions – a process that can continue *ad infinitum* to the detriment of the marginalised. A similar perspective can be discerned in Salamon’s articulation (Salamon 2010) of trans as occupying the interstitial space in-between dominant conceptions. This fragments difference as bridge

furthering categorised epistemic understanding, but has no conception about mutual practice or connection. In order to deal with this issue and formulate an ethics that goes beyond the control demanded by visions of unity or category (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 19; Lugones 2003, 132, 2005, 97) it is necessary to formulate an ethics of complex collectivities (Ortega 2016, 104, 108).

Particular transsomatechnical formations of agents lead to differing *logos*. Complex collectivities are thus neither homogenous, nor traversed by a dominating logic creating the dichotomous emulsion of transparent and thick members. This calls for an attempt to understand relationality in absence of a concomitant category. Drawing on Wynter and McKittrick, I will articulate the space of meeting outside of the *polis* as the demonic grounds of emergence through friction, with an ethics that doesn't aim at possession (McKittrick 2006, xxiii). This leads to an understanding of ethics informed by generosity through making – not taking - space and accepting loss (Lugones 2003), as I will argue for below.

Loss and ensouled connection

The normative world might be theorised affectively in its dominance by feeling at ease (Lugones 2003, 90) as exemplary of one's normative happiness. The resonance with Ahmed's theorisation of agents aligning with objects of happiness (Ahmed 2010) comes immediately to mind. In juxtaposition, the ethics of multilogical navigation is not aimed at ease of affective passage, but as I will argue for, the willingness to face complexity and accept a "loss of attributes" (Lugones 2003, 96) as necessary negative in a project of collective formation. This loss of attributes is a partial consequence of functioning in different logics. Agential formation leads one towards a certain *logos* that comes from specific normative negations and affirmative influences. When the agent functions in another form of life, emerged from other *logos*, their *ensouled* formation will function differently. The loss that Lugones describes is a loss of practical truth, which functions as suggesting ease in the world. This uneasiness, I will argue,

creates the space for making connections, because it allows an opening to understand oneself through other forms of life. In a multilogical relation this loss is a mutual process in order to allow emergence that is not imposition. The point of the acceptance of loss is that it will structure collectivity, without demanding unity. I will provide the argument below, and continue with further nuances in chapter four.

This is important as it contrasts with a Spinozist framing of ethics where “the ethically empowering option increases one’s potentia and creates joyful energy in the process” (Braidotti 2011, 303). Affirmation in multilogical approaches as relating to and within different forms of life might not lead directly to agential expansion. The *ensouled* body is further contrasted with the Spinozist suggestion of Parisi and Terranova that a body is not constituted by form, but by relations and capacities (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 3). As the engagement with somatechnics has shown, the ensouled body will emerge through forms, as its agential *logos*. However, as I have argued, *logos* emerges through navigation of processes and codes, and I can therefore agree with the suggestion that bodies are also constituted by their relations. This navigation is negation as well as affirmation, and is consequently structured by the capacities of *logos* in its environment.

The capacities of operation include the possibility of an agent to be prepared to accept loss in order to engage in multilogical entanglements, as opposed to venture into monological domineering spatialisations (McKittrick 2006, 141). Lugones clearly articulated this through non-agonistic playfulness, as *techne* of relation (Lugones 2003, 94). Loss is structural in the process of change by not centring existing competence. Loss is non-agonistic as it centres generosity in combination with the willingness to put to question the practical truth as it is offered by one’s current *logos*. The necessary negativity in conjunction with play and formation means that the nonnormative agent is not expanding only, but in a *telos* of formation, that will limit as well as expand. The emphasis on *ensouled* formation slows down the possibility of connection as agential *logos* is not free, but materially intertwined with its surroundings. Vectored processes need time to change form. Lugones further suggests in a discussion on hangouts, that

collective intentionality can only arise by not by taking space and surrounding oneself with mythical territorial enclosures, but through sensitivity and allowing directions to form, beyond individual intention (Lugones 2003, 220).

This is opposed to loss in modernist reasoning, where property and agency combine to fix a middle range in temporal distance that can be causally affected. Effective agency is then the changing of the world to one's intention, where intention signifies gain (Lugones 2003, 210). Loss in modernist agency is seen as mismanagement, risk gone wrong, or the destruction of property. In these concepts loss functions as negative, that diminishes influence, wealth, or some form of unpredictable tragedy. Loss is an absence that is negative.

Julliette Hooker offers an account of loss as structural to democratic political processes, where loss is always displaced upon black citizens, in order to satisfy a white demand for mastery (Hooker 2017, 486). Hooker theorises that loss is always key to a political process, and how uneven displacement of loss is currently structured around the racialised lines of the master code. Hooker's argument serves to understand how the displacement from political loss to non-white, primarily black citizens highlights (imagined) white losses by the unacceptability of black gains. While, what Hooker shows to be, the narrow white political imaginary (Hooker 2017, 485) demands a loss of sensitivity and centralising of an epistemology of ignorance (Hooker 2017, 487) to keep the ruling order in place. What Hooker's argument underlines is how the politics of the *polis* after the master code have reorganised loss as imposition, instead of centring loss as shared feature of the political order.

Drawing on Frederick Douglass' 1894 essay 'Why is the Negro lynched?' Hooker confronts the question of absence of loss in white political activity. Douglass articulated the nuance between the South killing bodies, and the North killing Souls (Hooker 2017, 499) with the structure of white indifference, mixed with grievance for a perceived loss of superiority. Hooker underlines the practices of today's political violence as cycles of black death, unpunished killing, and mourning as "a continued assault on their souls" (ibid.). Douglass makes the case,

and Hooker affirms, that in order to move beyond the elevation and degradation, whites must learn to cope with political loss (Hooker 2017, 500).

Routing Hooker's argument back to the discussion on ethics, it can be discerned that a middle distance of agency, not only 'elevates' the agent to the position of strategist (Lugones 2003, 207), which keeps a managerial position in place, but also dissolves the agent's option for accepting loss in direct interactions, as it denies the agent tactical engagement (ibid.). Elevation allows for displacement due to larger control. Lugones argues for the acceptance of uncomfortability, and absence of practical knowledge about (inter)actions. These propositions function in the current argument as the readiness to accept loss of *logos*. Agential *logos* offers action initiation, steers perception, and suggests thereby practical truth. Lugones' suggestions claim space for the foolish, the uncomprehended, and the mystery of absent of truth (Lugones 2003, 90). The space thus created opens the possibility for the emergence of new relationality, or minimally a navigation of other forms of life. It is loss, and not for instance curiosity, that structures the possibility as it moves away from a cumulative approach where an agent always knows more, towards an approach where agents accept that they know less and replacements of dominating patterns of relating can start to form. Loss remedies what Lugones terms antagonistic play, which is imposition, or arrogant perception. Loss accepts the necessity of making space. Due to Lugones underlining of absence of relational knowledges: *technes* of relation, there is a further possibility created to move beyond existing roles, and thus beyond the working of the master code.

In a discussion that resonates with this current appraisal of loss, Jacques Derrida analyses society as the individualism of roles, not of persons (Derrida 2008, 37). These roles can be understood in the current discussion as *technes* of relation, where the *logos* of the agent is hidden under the imposition of the coding in which the agent is bound to act. Imposed *technes* of relation thus erase or indeed can be used as camouflage. Persons, in Derrida's conception, would translate to an attempted encounter with the *logos* of others. Loss is theorised by Derrida as a giving without return – that is, as a gift (Derrida 2008, 41). While I will discuss

this theme in chapter four, it is important to flag it here, as loss in ethical interaction needs to be distinguished from a giving and taking of market interactions and commodified relationality, and also away from the impositions of the *polis* as extraction and exploitation (Wynter 2003; Weheliye 2014; Hooker 2017). Instead nonnormative loss can be envisioned as the willingness to unfold oneself and meet changing *logos* in others, away from the crumbling forms of relationality that necessarily accompany change. This loss can only be a gift if there is no exploitation at stake. To make new *technes* asks of *logos* to navigate new forms, accepting the loss of old forms, can be a gift.⁵⁹ Demands for giving up *logos* or relationalities within the commodifying monological order are thus new articulations of exploitation, rather than a striving for nonnormative ethics.

The agent in its surroundings is changing because of engagements, while the surroundings need not be understood as stable, as I have already argued through a reading of the interactivity of the *anima*. Analogous to the processes of agential formation of chapter two, in the current extension of the argument onto complex collectivities we need to approach categories of control as plastic over time: “[t]he barriers to creative collectivity and collective creation appear insurmountable. But that is only if we think of the act and not of the process of creation” (Lugones 2005, 97). This affords multilogical engagement the possibility of failure of connection, as well as a slow re-connectivity over time. Multilogical negotiations are therefore extensions of singular agential development onto collective processes of *somatechnics*, placing bodily formation central in processes of collective experimentation. The unease of loss or navigation of unknown forms of life I will translate below as a demonic engagement. Here I will focus on multilogical formation away from affective synchronicity – leading to a feeling of unease, and focus instead on possibilities of establishing interactions beyond existing *techne*.

⁵⁹ This can be understood as either a willingness to deal with transness, or also to shift one’s mode of being in the face of migration. I think it is relevant to speak about gift and loss on all sides, because it might involve letting go of things one appreciated. I do not say it is one’s ‘right’ to keep those things/ways of relating/forms of life.

Multilogical worlds, multi-sensitive interaction

In a multilogical world navigations and negotiations require multi-sensitive interactions. Lugones theorises this as 'world-travelling' (Lugones 2003, 77ff). Agential practical truth, its *logos*, is structured in different ensouled formations, and thus agents come with different truths about their being. These are dependent on the environment they find themselves in: "[t]he shift from being one person to being another person is what I call travelling" (Lugones 2003, 89). Lugones makes this claim not along a temporal axis of *telos*, but explains this through contextual shifts that bring other modes of the agent in operation. Agential *logos* operates thus in different worlds of sense and logic, which brings other capacities and relations to the fore. While *logos* is comprised of multiple *dunamis* it has thus different modes of operating and relating, and need not be subsumed in a single mode of accessible and articulable patterning. It is an easy, but unnecessary assumption to equate *logos* with a singular logical structure. Bodies, coming with different capacities, can traverse epistemic singularities and re-surface in different operational capacities (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 6). An agential *logos* as relational structure – it forms in connection to an environment – need furthermore not be singular, but can be as complex as the environments it traverses. Lugones explains shifting between worlds as not always recognised by the agent, as happening or as working through their body "one may be completely unaware of being different in a different 'world', and may not recognize that one is in a different 'world' "(Lugones 2003, 89). This further underlines how in a multiplicity of worlds perceptions do not always match surroundings, and agential interaction cannot subsumed in an immediate or clear sense of unity or shared understanding. This indicates not only a loss of agential practice, but also the willingness to accept a loss of clarity.

Lugones complicates the framing "in a world some of the inhabitants may not understand or hold the particular construction of them that constructs them in that world. [...] I may not accept it as an account of myself [...] and yet, I may be animating such a construction"(Lugones 2003, 88). Lugones offers a double insight: on the one hand an understanding of coding that effects differently

across different forms of life, and on the other hand the understanding that one does not necessarily have insight in the way one's *logos* operates in other forms of life. The latter point can be explained by recursion to practical agential truth, which allows understanding how one's perceptions do not match across differing logics. This extends directly onto perception of actions and *modus operandi*. Agents may animate constructions in other worlds based on how their operational logic has affected those worlds in the past.⁶⁰ The *anima* is a two-way process as the formation of the agent, but indeed also as the possible *animation* it carries. This animation is what I will theorise below as the *demonic* (McKittrick 2006). Lugones makes the case that being outside of mainstream experiences of differing animation are part and parcel of life. Drawing this discussion back onto Aristotelian ensouled bodily formation the suggestion of linearity of substance formation and the possibility of multiple truths that enshrine one's reading of oneself share an uncomfortable presence.

An ensouled body operating through *dunamis*, whereby actions in context inform bodily change that offers a dynamic perception, reasoning, and action-orientation can readily be thought monologically. Substance gives the suggestion of wholeness and singularity structured around a solid essence. While I do argue that agents form their *ensouled body* around a *logos*, I am not suggesting this *logos* needs to be singular or operate one-dimensionally. *Dunamis*, the formative powers offering possibilities of agential engagement with its environment, do not necessitate such a reading. On the contrary, the immersion in contexts through a plural engagement suggests the possibility of differing reactions in differing circumstances. As discussed in chapter two, the *ensouled body* is acted upon, but is also active. *Dunamis* are a plurality of active means of engagement and interaction and are thus necessary offering multiple ways of engagement. It begs the questions whether these different modes of engagement need to offer a singular whole of the agent within its surroundings.

⁶⁰ Think for instance of racism, which can make white people a suspect presence in non-white worlds. Parallel, in monological structures it is the racism that operates as masking of reality of interaction.

Logos, however, could be read as singular, easily offering a single-mindedness. I have discussed above the tension between the possibility of multiple engagement with different ‘worlds’ as Lugones argues, and the formation of *logos* – as form of the agent. While *dunamis* are suggestive of this possibility through their implication of necessary engagement with surroundings, and there is no need to think surroundings as singular, not as other agents, norms, environment, or engaged technologies, the tension seems to focus on *logos* itself. The question to be answered is if the agent as singular substance can operate as a multilogical formation. I would suggest that dispositions are a complex web of possible modes of operation, perception and reflection, and the resulting *logos* comes with a diversity of means of engagement (Anzaldúa 1987, 99). *Logos* is as complex as the environments it navigates.

I will unpack this complexity by focusing on the agent in relation, and subsequently by questioning how a multilogical engagement is working in abstraction, without succumbing to a single organisational principle. While somatechnical structures might keep an agent fixed in normative *technes*, agential *logos* can disappear out of sight. Relation and abstraction, which I will theorise through *coding*, are thus equally key to any form of change. A singular *logos* can be understood from either an isolated, or homogeneously operating agent. A singular *logos* requires fixing other agents in place with *technes*. However, in nonnormative relation multiple forms of operation immediately necessitate itself. As Hooker suggested, it requires studied ignorance to dismiss the multiplicity of interactions and its effects on agents. In chapter two, I argued navigation of norms or forms is central in forming an *ensouled body* and engaging in a process of *transsomatechnics* (Sullivan 2005), which equally changes available *technes*.⁶¹ In this chapter I will extend this argument by unpacking the mode of formation through the navigation of agents in relation to the formation of shared forms of life and its impact on *logos*.

⁶¹ The difference between inclusion and radical engagements might be that inclusive politics invite agents to make use of available *technes*, while radical engagements are finding new forms.

Codings of Logos

Monological formation of an agent within a dominant form of life disappears agents with different *logos* and logics and the monological agent remains “untouched, without a sense of loss” (Lugones 2003, 80). As discussed above, dominant monological ordering of difference assigns places and possibilities to agents through hierarchical and limiting categorisations (Lugones 2005, 86; Wynter 2003, 290). Dominating orders require hierarchical ranking instead of mutual relationality. This hierarchy is a monodirectional order, creating an untouchability of the dominant position, which Hooker explained as mastery without loss. Within multilogical connection, collectivity needs to be crafted and cannot be assumed as given (Anzaldúa 1990, 142), I will make the case that these engagements can be mutual through multilogical surfaces and need not be unified within a monological order.

Multilogical formation between agents and forms of life shifts the stress of an imposed ordering over to the precarity of crafting relationality. It is a crafting that needs to be done despite the workings of hierarchical and dominating duress (Lugones 2003, 80) that disrupt and hinder nonnormative formations. Furthermore, due to differing practical logos between agents, a claim to shared intentionality is irrelevant, as intentions express in different actions. Focus on intentions is relevant only in a monological ordering, because the assumption of shared reasons rests on the idea of shared principles of practical reason (Lugones 2003, 217). Translating divergent or nonnormative actions into monologically understood intentions serves to pathologise or dehumanise (Stryker 1994; Wynter 2003; Lugones 2003). However, manipulating the workings of a dominating monologic, expressions of intentionality can be used to camouflage diverging practical logic as a form of resistant or insurrectional agency (Bierria 2014, 140)⁶² and tactical misrecognition (Muñoz 1997, 83). An assumption of similarity between agents, either as colonising, as assumed purity of form (Lugones 2003, 126), or attempted mimesis without understanding

⁶² It can also be argued that normative logic camouflages itself in nonnormative language, as Matthew Fuller suggested.

(Lugones 2005, 86) all rest on the idea of a monological ordering of an assumed unity (Lugones 2003, 128). The unity is presupposed as means to assert control (Lugones 2003, 142). This conclusion ties in to the earlier conclusion regards the *polis*. Unity is necessary for continued exploitation.

The monological ordering finds its counterpoint in the oppositional logics of resistance, initiating an imagery of a binary logic of oppression-resistance (Lugones 2003, 159). On the one side is the racist logic of colonialist appropriation and violent reduction, and on the other side is the tightly drawn boundary of the resistant community blocking the white racist violence. However, as Lugones argues “fluency in more than one logic breaks one out of the two exclusive logics paradigm, a paradigm that necessitates fragmentation and mistrust [...]” (Lugones 2003, 160).⁶³ Engagement with multilogical formations will enable agents to

[...] make[s] one self-aware of the very construction of resistance, its sources, the process, the company. It enables one to be choosier about the company by uncovering way of asking the question of identity, one that doesn’t presuppose simplicity of two opposed logics, one racist, the other oppositional, resistant. It opens the door to a plethora of resistant possibilities, alliances, understandings, playful and militant connections (Lugones 2003, 162).

A multilogical approach does not subsume agents into a unifying underlying, or overarching, principle. It is therefore an immediately relational approach as there is no further tie than nonnormativity that structures engagements. That is not to say that people might not share features, pressures or duress, can think through shared histories, or draw on similar sources – in short, there might be groups, but that doesn’t mean that between or within groups agents necessarily operate within a similar logic.

⁶³ the quote continues with “[...] amongst people of color.” While that is certainly true, for my purposes I want to introduce the multilogical ethics in order to dislocate the racist paradigm, which necessitates this binary. A similar dichotomy can be found across cis-trans divisions, straight-lgbq, and so forth. The aggressive logics of invasion-resistance operates on many fronts, though on each front differently.

This means for the project of nonnormative ethics that engagement needs to be rethought along lines of perception, connection, and the making of new shared forms. This indicates that instead of arguing for the existence of a code that binds ‘us’ all, I will look at the necessity for sharing different codes of thought, modes of life, and practical logic as inevitable. While the Aristotelian frame posits difference as necessity in relations and thus shared forms of life, in chapter four I will discuss sharing codes from different *logos*. Moreover, this emphasises the arguments in chapter two that the navigation between norms is not only between imposed norms, that can function as ‘inscription’ (Stone 1991 in Stryker and Whittle 2006, p.227; Stryker 1994 in: Stryker and Whittle 2006, p.254), but also navigation between different embraced forms. Inscription suggests the harnessing of the body onto standardised, or specific categories, creating legibility for dominant perception (DiPietro 2016, 65; Sullivan 2005). Instead of presupposing categorical connection as is the dream of monologics, I will argue for emergent relations as multilogical ethics, which amounts to a “nonimperialist understanding between two people” (Lugones 2003, 89) even if it might be “ontologically problematic” (ibid.).⁶⁴ It is ontologically problematic as it needs to argue for the possibility of connection without common referent. Furthermore, it needs to dispel the “desideratum of oppression theory that it portray oppression in its full force, as inescapable, if that is its full force” (Lugones 2003, 55). That means two commitments are necessary – the first is the acknowledgement that the ensouled body is capable of generating forms offering evaluations, and the second is that it is possible to do this collectively, even under duress. The first commitment I have argued for in chapter two as the ensouled coming with a practical truth. I will argue for the second commitment in this chapter. I have named these above first and second order emergences.

Mythos as code

⁶⁴ Above I argued how differing practical truth allows for multilogical worlds, and solves the ontology of multiple logics in a single space.

The formation of *logos* makes the agent's action, perceptions, and practical cognition operate in a particular manner. However, beyond its particular formation the agent operates within environments. Dominant norms, normative or nonnormative *techne*, specific attributions to appearance, and group clustering also shape perceptions and interactions. Lugones terms clusters of these 'worlds' (Lugones 2003, 87). Worlds may be incomplete, and populated by people, histories, imaginations, and references. A world in Lugones' sense is not a fractioning off of dominant society in smaller community, but might constitute the agent differently, due to differently operating shared forms and connective codes. This makes it possible for worlds to be incomplete or partial (Lugones 2003, 88). These worlds I have termed earlier *forms of life* (Wittgenstein 2010 241).⁶⁵ These forms are also constituted by mythos: the connective codes of mutuality beyond one's direct formation (Sennett 1995, 81; Anzaldúa 1987, 101; McKittrick 2015b, 32). In chapter four I will discuss codes in greater detail as action inducing abstractions. Mythos here is a subset of codes, which can invite connection. Mythos in a renewed usage is beyond an understanding of 'untrue tales' that are defeated by reason (Fowler 2011, 45). From the Homeric time to Plato the meaning of the word mythos traversed from 'that what is said' to 'fictional tales' where *logos* started to occupy the space previously held by *mythos* (Bottici 2008, 2). Mythos in a current usage comes to stand for "the broad frameworks of value and meaning in terms of which we conduct and evaluate our lives and experience the universe as a whole" (Richards 2011, 9).

Lugones' world-travelling, functions here as *techne* to attend to the diversity of meanings within forms of life, and is a *modus operandi* in the interstice of relations. Relations beyond immediate connection take place between forms of life, which has space for an account of *mythos* functioning as temporal bridge, ethical foothold, or code that can supply connection across differences. This bridging as relationality allows agents to navigate *logos* through overarching forms of life, but mythos also allows a shifting of perspectives, not perhaps by the full understanding giving through *logos*, but at least a partial understanding allowing mutuality in connection. Glissant terms this relations that allow for

⁶⁵ I will return to an engagement with Wittgenstein more fully below

opacity (Crowley 2006, 106; Glissant 1997), the possibility of relationality without full understanding of a 'kernel': "Opacities must be preserved; an appetite for opportune obscurity in translation must be created" (Glissant 1997, 120). I will expand on Glissant's insights in chapter four, but for now it is sufficient to stick with the current version of the argument that relation does not necessitate transparency and connective homogeneity of *logos*. The partiality of worlds and the lack of need to centre such worlds on a kernel of *logos* or logic make such forms of life emergent, but possibly coming with a temporal limitation. Forms of life may emerge between a set of agents, as I will discuss below, and be of limited scope.

Decoupling *logos* and *mythos* from their excluding binary and merging them as formation influencing praxis and connective tissue in forms of life allows an immediate understanding of how agents can operate a variety of constructions about themselves. *Mythos* thus bridges the different logics of forms of life. As Lugones formulates "it may be that I understand the construction, but I do not hold it of myself. I may not accept it as an account of myself, a construction of myself. And yet, I may be *animating* such a construction" (Lugones 2003, 88). Concurrently with the racialised hierarchies offered by DuBois and Fanon (Du Bois 1903; Fanon 1967), Lugones suggests the working of codings on different levels partly as directly influencing relation, but also as presence out of reach of the agent. *Mythos* supplies understanding of disconnected codings: animated constructions.

The *mythos* shaping meaning in a world of different norms, forms, tensions, and power come with codings indicating potential and actuality, and suggest safety and proximity to other agents. Katherine McKittrick summarises this as "the *referent-we* that determines our sense of place-and-kin" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 25). For Williams, what matters in ethical life is "not [to] draw a line at all, but recognize that others are at varying distances from us [and] that our reactions and relations to other groups are themselves part of ethical life" (Williams, 1985, 160). Williams' recognition functions as claim for ethical openness. However, removed from the norm, such openness takes on a different

meaning. “According to the logic of purity, the social world is both unified and fragmented, homogenous, hierarchically ordered” (Lugones 2003, 127). The openness that is required is thus not only a reflection on boundaries and openness of impurity within categories, but furthermore needs to come with the openness to different logics and other mythos. Williams’ argument for agential distance can be understood as the structure of social hierarchies, and the subsequent navigation of those hierarchies, by adapting to them. In chapter four, I will discuss this problem, for now I want to flag the issue that such relations need not be based on categorisations, but can emerge from shared understandings of relation. This nuances Williams’ take by softening a reading of ‘placing’ towards relating.

The tension between distance, relation, and the question of how to connect brings the argument back to Lugones’ world-travelling (Lugones 2003, 91). When social interaction is not determined from the outset by social position and existing *technes* of relation, interactions can find mutuality, instead of adhering to a social order. Alternatively, as Lugones argues, forms of life require travelling between different worlds of perception. Within world-travelling playfulness is a necessary feature, not with an antagonistic aim to gain dominance in interaction (Lugones 2003, 94), but as openness to not-knowing or a possible malfunctioning operation of one’s constitutive logoi. It is a willingness to move out of an ease in being (Lugones 2003, 93), and forego the immediacy of one’s practical truth. However, this ‘unease’ should not be mistaken for the forced submission to dominant perception and demands.

The conceptualization of Lugones’ world-travelling needs to be distinguished from the colonial imperative as conceptualised by Sylvia Wynter. Wynter traces a genealogy of the idea of humanity ranging from medieval Christendom to Man 1 (late 15c – late 18c) to Man 2 (19c – present) (Roberts 2006, 160). This tracing scrutinises the impossibility of multiple forms of humanity in colonizing impositions legitimizing the white, colonising subject as the “proper version of Man” and relegating all others into a steep hierarchical positioning, with the

colonially subjected people at the lowest ranks. This imposition of a global single field of power (Sharma 2015, 164) was constituted by the material economic project of exploitative colonialism. For a nonnormative ethics relationality needs to be thought away from such an imposed exploitation and hierarchical codification. This returns the argument briefly to the coding of the *polis* as space for democracy, structured on exploitation through misogyny and slavery. Da Silva negates the idea of racism as mistaken science; a wrong epistemology of human 'races', and emphasizes Wynter's reading of colonialism as material economic staging of the world (Da Silva 2015, 93), installing fields of force in order to assign possible social locations and actions to categorized agents (Da Silva 2009). This means for a nonnormative ethics, that relation and the varying distance that Williams indicates should be thought away from "use" as indicated by the earlier discussion on the *polis*, and turbulence and difference.

Fundamental to any social relation is thus mutuality in interaction. For the current discussion, this means that the *master code* (Wynter 2003, 279) structuring the colonial project as ethico-political technology of exploitation instead of a 'mistaken epistemology' needs to be made visible, in order to be broken down. Da Silva summarises Wynter's articulation of breaking out of the master code beyond a Foucauldian working on the Self that is focused on interiority (Da Silva 2015, 97) towards a collective undoing of this project. For an emergent ethics it is thus important that the meaning of coding is mutually established and changeable, as opposed to imposed. Emergence makes meaning shared, also if it indicates difference. Emergent meaning is interactive, in contrast to the resistance countering imposed meaning within a monological order.

Returning to multilogical engagements with this problematic in hand clarifies the necessity of the engagement with one's *logos* within emergent collectivities, beyond scrutiny of the Self. The methodological absence of an upfront unifying scheme is necessary to break the colonial cycle of imposition. However, returning to this methodology as ethical project emphasizes this engagement as tactile and tactical engagement with oneself as part of a form of life, linking first and second order emergence, as a matter of praxis (Lugones 2005; Parisi and

Terranova 2000). As short side note, I want to flag that first order emergence of agential change, without addressing second order emergence is indicative of a turbulent monologic, because it allows agential change as it navigates the operational logic of dominant functioning.⁶⁶ Sharon Holland articulates this task of bridging the agential and the collective as tactile, even erotic engagement (Holland 2012, 96, 103). This erotic engagement conceptualized through the breaking of the normative positioning of colonizing, racialising, and gendering fields of force (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 7)⁶⁷ underlines the need for unease (Lugones 2003, 90). Normative evaluation always elevates one term in an imposed dichotomy creating ease of passage on one side, and anxious scrutiny on the other (Wadiwel 2009, 55). Disrupting the disciplining mould enabling a tactile engagement (Holland 2012, 95) of all involved agents as ethical project, connects ensouled bodily logics beyond epistemic-discursive coding of rational/irrational being (Da Silva 2015, 98) and affective ease, and creates unease (Lugones 2003, 225), unhappiness (Ahmed 2010), but also playfulness (Lugones 2003, 93; Massumi 2014). This tilts tactile engagements towards the collective domain, and brings Lugones' tactical-strategies (Lugones 2003, 207) in view as project of dispositional disruption focusing on new forms of life (Roberts 2006, 185). Tactical-strategies are an uneasy navigation, keeping away from the breaking of the surf (Aristotle 2002 1109a32-33), while straining to make the centre hold (Anzaldúa 1987, 103), without subsuming activity to self-scrutiny, but retaining connection and changing overarching structures, such as, techne, mythos and codes. Nonnormative unease in world-travelling between the multilogical forms of life outside of the norm is done under the logic of pluralism instead of constructed deviance from a monological order. The main difference is the imposed monological ordering of the norm versus the acknowledgement of multilogical ordering of nonnormativity that comes with different evaluative patterns and shifting perspectives.

⁶⁶ Diversity policies are more often than not indicative of this practice. See for discussion for instance (Bannerji 2000; Alexander 2005).

⁶⁷ I am aware that Parisi and Terranova suggest the body as field of forces, while I also offer forces itself as fields – that is less precise than disciplinary points of power would suggest.

It is important to keep in mind that the agential *logos* is formed through interaction with environments as a somatechnical process of navigation of spaces, norms, possibilities and prohibitions. A connective *mythos* needs to be able to attach to *logos* – it cannot be a free-floating tale and still lend explanatory quality to the agent’s surroundings, or provide connection, an imposed code does not provide connection, but enables exploitation.⁶⁸ Katherine McKittrick explains this process in a reading of Sylvia Wynter as a co-relational connection of an “articulation of both bios and mythoi [...] that authors the aesthetic script of humanness” (McKittrick 2015a, 144). Focussing on the social production of the world beyond the categorisations of racism, McKittrick explicates through the work of Wynter the possibility of an emergence of words as dual descriptive statements of bios and mythoi that traces connections in the world (McKittrick 2015a, 148; Wynter 2003, 331), which can offer a new political imaginary, breaking the code of the normative (McKittrick 2015a, 150). Bios refers in Wynter’s work to the shaping of life through the body, while mythoi is the coding for the possibilities of understanding forms.

While Wynter finds space for the emergence of new codes through the anatomical and neurobiological, I will remain rooted in the argumentation of chapter two, and follow the emergence of a new nonnormative mythos through *logos* – the formation of the ensouled body. Claiming a space away from a reading of the body articulated through an anatomical focus, I have argued that bodies change because of their interactions. These changes are made through *dunamis* influencing *logos*. *Dunamis* offers a wider palette of engagement than a neurobiological/ anatomical reading as it allows articulations of talents, changes, and localised formation, which includes duress, food, sexual practices, and so forth as influencing bodily formation. Furthermore, it allows for the articulation of bodily change beyond a factualisation of bodies, which should underlie a social relationality. An *ensouled* bodily reading articulates the space of interaction as existing before and beyond articulation, while it is not abandoning the body to an

⁶⁸ Here is an obvious connection between tall tales of distant others, and direct connection with different perspectives. Bias can reinforce closed groups, and keep newcomers out. This is why processes of dehumanization function to keep groups closed (Holland 2012).

institutionalised biology. *Dunamis* can be extended to molecular levels, as I've argued in chapter two, and also make space to see different connections and forces working upon the body, such as food, environment, affects, reasoning, as well as offer the starting place for mutuality. In chapter four, I will engage with Spillers and Weheliye in order to discuss what a body stripped of sociality – as *flesh* – can mean for an understanding of nonnormative ethics (Weheliye 2014; Spillers 1987). This means that beyond the operation of codes and *mythoi*, agents also have their *ensouled* experiences available as practical truth, this means the agent is not subsumed in its sociality, coding, or surrounding mythologies. This claim is not a claim stemming from a singular body, but a claim through *logos* – that is an *ensouled* body having navigated its environment, which includes codes, beings, the soil, the weather and so forth. I steer away from the body as facticity in order to make space for change, but also to read the body as beyond the organism and make space for a variety of forces and *techne* that can work upon its *dunamis*.

Returning to the previous discussion on Wadiwel (Wadiwel 2009) who can be understood to argue that *technes* are tied to racialization. The punishment of flogging works differently on differently codified bodies. An openness to interrogation of the soul marks an agent as white (Wadiwel 2009, 54)⁶⁹, while flogging of aboriginal peoples functions as the biopolitical technology to subordinate peoples by stripping away possibility beyond the barest state of operation of the soul. Wadiwel argues the action of whipping functions as different *techne* for white and indigenous people. It is to humanise the white agent, and bring them on the 'right' path, with a general demise in flogging midway the 1800s. In contrast, the aboriginal agent needed to be dehumanised by retracting the possibility to live (Wadiwel 2009, 55). Racist codification changes the action into a *techne*, instilling a hierarchical order. The navigation of the *ensouled* body is encapsulated in these codes.

⁶⁹ Think here about court hearings, confessional practices, and psychologizing for white agents, while institutionalization, criminalization and imprisonment are processes subjugating black, indigenous, and other racialised agents (Spade 2011; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015; J. Butler 2006)

In juxtaposition, revisiting the insights of Anzaldúa provides an example of extending the navigation of the agent. The contradicting codification, which limit the space of ensouled operation, are re-imagined to create an interstice in a hierarchical dichotomy allowing the agent to break out of the constraining forces. This allows the emergence of a new mythos (Anzaldúa 1987, 104) through the flesh (Anzaldúa 1987, 103). The formation of the body as *logos* enables and supports new connecting tissue, as the new practical understandings allow for new relations. The

new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings (ibid.)

which is possible “if the centre holds” (ibid.). This centre can be understood as *logos* navigating a new mythos. The connection between the codings, the formation of the agent – ‘I am an act of kneading’ – and the breaking of the myths that keep one enclosed is intertwined. The navigation of the agent - making ‘a new story to explain the world’ – connects changing the codes, pulling them apart and bringing them together, as well as making new ones – emphasising the plural – ‘and our participation in it’ – of the collective, which is still only possible “if the centre holds” (ibid.). *Logos* needs to have space for formation in order to make new worlds. Here lies the contrast with Wadiwel, who underlines the retraction of the soul as process of dehumanisation.

Yet, an agent’s centre is not singular, but moves through various codings, and animates different constructions, as discussed through Lugones. My proposal for nonnormative ethics combines connections across power differences, but also connection within forms of life, to underlay emergence of codes. These codes can be understood, for instance, as social ontology and structuring *technes* of relation (DiPietro 2016, 68; Lugones 2003, 226; Raha 2017). In order understand connections within structures of different codified animations by nonnormative

agents, I will focus on the demon to provide connection, which does not need to rely on similarity of *logos* in the connection between agents. That means agents can appreciate each other in multifaceted forms, without needing to focus on a principle supposedly revealing itself in actions, which would demand a normative sameness, and a mimesis of practical approaches and intention (Lugones 2003, 216). I will focus on these processes of connective sociality in relation to *logos* and *codings*.

The Generosity of Demonic Codes

To further conceptualise emergent relationality between agents, I will propose the *daimon* as imagery that allows passing beyond principles and offers another *dunamic* connection between agents. This imagery suggests interdependency and connection in environments, but also directly negates agential isolation. *Eudaimonia* can be explained as 'the thriving of the *daimon* that accompanies one through life' (Nussbaum 2001b; Arendt 1999, 193 n.18). The *daimon* is standing behind the agent, and cannot be seen by the agent, but only by their company. In normative Aristotelian approaches to ethics, the *daimon* will be valued according to shared standards of the *polis* – that is, beyond the heat of the friction of the factions making up the *demos*. The *demos* in greek etymology refers to 'the people', as *demos/kratia* would translate as rule by the people, even though the meaning of who those people are is unclear and also in ancient Greece up for debate and limited besides (W. Brown 2015, 19). The *demos* might be the unhappy many (Sennett 1995, 32, 61), as opposed to the happy few who could attain *eudaimonia* through leisure. I want to propose another distinction, one between *demos* – the people residing within a singular principle of organisation, and *demons* – the nonnormative agents, placed outside of the unificatory framework of the *polis*. This division rests on the willingness to see the *polis* as unified, and the outside as multiple extending beyond a single ordering, and not only fragmented (Lugones 2003, 140). Fragmentation would explain agents as splintered, lacerated through imposed categorisations, instead of being multi-

faceted beings. “Domination through unification, and hierarchical ordering of split social groups are connected tightly to fragmentation in the person” (Lugones 2003, 141). The demand for unification splits a person apart. This operates partly by claiming the need for affiliation to different social groups, which serves to splinter agents by imposing multiple singular logical orderings and incompatible codifications. Categorising agents as fragmented hinders envisioning many-sided connection (ibd.). In contrast I will argue that multilogical connections allow for multifaceted engagements that unfold the agent in different forms.

The *daimon* connects also to the – in Wynter’s term – *demonic grounds* outside of the polis (Wynter 1990). These grounds are not only the place for silencing and erasure, but also recuperate the possibility for proliferation of *logos*, *mythos*, and multilogical engagements (Weheliye 2014).⁷⁰ Affected by hierarchal patterning *demos* see other eudaimonic *daimons* than nonnormative agents through the blockage of mutual connection with mono-directional judgement (Lugones 2003, 70). While differences in perceptions can be supposed from the constitution of the ensouled body, as I’ve been arguing throughout, the hierarchical coding imposed by a monological ordering of the world blocks mutual relations, and even makes situations unthinkable (cf. Trouillot 1995, 73). Wynter explicates this as the normative mapping of soul onto the world as a systematic order (Wynter 2003, 268), necessitating a fit of agents under a descriptive regime that limits their being. This limitation of being can be understood as either curbing potential of nonnormative lives, but also desensitising *logos* of normative agents in order to justify exploitation. Extending my argument of chapter two, nonnormative agents have differently ensouled bodily formation than normative prescription would suggest, leading to different perception (Lugones 2003, 68), and thus also differently constituted practical truth. In Lugones proposal, it can be understood that nonnormative agents act in different worlds, but can form a mutual ethics. A demonic reading of *daimons*

⁷⁰ Appropriation can be understood as harvesting understandings and expressions from the demonic grounds in a process of exploitation of proliferation, without acknowledgement and credit. Demons can make, but not be. This could be linked to a social version of primitive accumulation.

means to have undergone nonnormative *ensouled* bodily formation. This does not mean that every agent operating within nonnormative worlds is necessarily open to nonnormative perception (Lugones 2003, 97, 142): agents might hold on to normative codings and *techne*. The formation of the agent in the environment is not only a navigation of norms, codes, and technologies, but also navigating *technes*. Mutual formation as a reading of the daimon shifts the interstice from within the agent, to in-between the agents, allowing for different *techne* to emerge.⁷¹

Nonnormative formation of collectivities rests on mutual acknowledgement, as opposed to hierarchical imposition. Sidestepping the argument to a parallel discussion drawing on ancient imageries, Irigaray writes

[Eros] is between one and the other, in a state that can be qualified as daimonic: love is a daimon (Irigaray 1993, 23).

The *daimonic* bridge between ensouled bodies is a connection based on love. In other words, seeing each other's *daimons* generously can be understood as loving perception (Lugones 2003, 97). The space between nonnormative agents can be forged as interstice through daimonic acknowledgement. Love is a *daimon*. In the *polis* such a bond was supposed: "[a]n erotic bond [...] between citizen and citizen, is [...] an active [...] love" (Sennett 1995, 50). However, as I discussed in the beginning of the chapter this bond was more a civic friendship based on utility, than a suggestion of connection based on relationality (Salkever 1990, 189; Aristotle 1992b 1242a7-9). While normative demos require an active bonding finding unity as homogeneity, nonnormative demons are structured by loss and generously make space for each other. *Daimons* provide bonding traversing a gap, and creating an interstice between agents. The interstice is here the space of emergence. Love is seeing one another's daimon: the acknowledgement of differences without agonistic attitude (Lugones 2003, 95).

⁷¹ Nat Raha's *brokenness* (Raha 2017) can be explained to comprise the state of non-mutuality after nonnormative change, and the failure of surrounding environments to engage in mutual formation of new *techne*. I argue for this in (van der Drift 2018).

Generous love between agents is juxtaposed to the agonistic imposition over differing perceptions. This generosity is playful, because it is not ordered, nor principled. However if this playfulness is not mediated by loss it becomes agonistic. “Agonistic playfulness leads those who attempt to travel to another ‘world’ with this attitude to failure. [...] One cannot cross boundaries with it” (Lugones 2003, 95). The boundary that needs to be crossed is not only the hierarchical ranking of the monological order, even if that can play a part, but letting go of one’s own practical truth as constitutive of the world. This opens the agent as unbounded and unclear, which is necessary for exploration, as I have argued in chapter two. Playfulness and loss are close knit, as it is a part of truth that needs to be lost and regained in shifting across agential differences. The acknowledgement of differences as mutual (Lugones 2003, 68) and the acknowledgement of animating constructions in each other’s worlds (Lugones 2003, 88), just as much as perceived differences from one’s own *logos* are part of this traversing which enables the second order emergence of mutual meanings.

A crucial element in the formation of nonnormative ethics is thus the acceptance of loss of one’s practical truth, in combination with a generous perception of another. This makes spaces between agents, as opposed to impositions from the monological order, which takes space of agents and confines them in the hierarchical order of the polis. In chapter four, I will deepen the conceptualisation of loss as essential for the emergence of mutual meaning, and thus underlying nonnormative praxis.

Demonic Spaces, Demonic Collectives

At this point three stages of practical agential formation are aligned, which can now be woven together as nonnormative ethics. The first is the transsomatechnical formation of *logos*, the second is the daimonic appraisal between agents, creating space for emerging *techne*, and the third is the travelling between worlds, necessitating loss and generosity. While *logos* comes

with a practical truth emerging from the dispositions of the agent, *daimonic* connection moves the agent out of the singularity of their truth by other agents, and world-traveling necessitates shifting the operational logic of agents due to being in different forms of life.⁷² These agential stages and layers can be summarised as an ensouled form, with multilogical perception, and multiple beings. Because agents are changing, *technes* of relation are changing, and thus codes and mythos are changing. Nonnormative ethics comprises first order dispositional formation, second order mutual relation, in connection to the environments of the agents. To conceptualise relations of agents outside of the *polis* I will draw on Wynter's notion of *demonic* grounds (1990). As part of the multilogical worlds, which are bridged by appraisal of daimons, nonnormative agents share codings that are expressive of the form of relationality that have emerged in the mutual engagement. Having discussed the master code of the *polis* very shortly, I will below address sharing of space and emergent codes through nonnormative agential engagement.

Extending from their somatechnical starting point, I will focus on situatedness of bodies as a way to theorise the emergence of codes. Second order emergence relates to spatialisation, as navigation from the agent extends beyond its first personal engagement with norms. A nonnormative spatial configuration is not Berlant's space of normative aspiration (Berlant 2007): the necessary gap between the norm and the agent's placement, creating a space for interiority (Da Silva 2015, 97) and external punishment (Wadiwel 2009, 54). Such a space of imposition and control is the space of the monological order of the *polis*. Nonnormative spatiality is the space for bridging the gap between agents to allow the emergence of new forms (Lugones 2003; McKittrick 2006; Wynter 1990). It is as such not positive – territorial space, but negative space – the absence of imposition and the openness for new forms. It needs “ the physical landscape and infrastructures, geographic imaginations, the practice of mapping,

⁷² Note: Wittgenstein highlights that forms of life are not the result of rule-following, but moreover agreement on judgements. This suggests instead of a platformed approach – as liberalism will have it – that axioms underlie the possibility of actions, a diamond shaped form, where both axioms and judgements enclose forms of life between which variation can happen, or deviation or difference can be noted. I will expand on this below.

exploring, and seeing, and social relations in and across space” (McKittrick 2006, xiii). McKittrick argues through black womanhood that spatialisation, as placement in space, is one of the forms of classification (McKittrick 2006, xvii). Classification and space are also tied in together in the imagery of the *polis*, walled in physically to give ‘men’ (sic) control over the heat of their flesh (Sennett 1995, 65). The physical wall is directly connected to the attribution of joint responsibility for the citizens (Sennett 1995, 66), keeping the heat bound to the body politic. This pressure creates a monological order – the citizen is tied to the state, and the state can only exist through its internal order of heated citizens and cold women and slaves, and the expulsion of others as outsiders. This creates a simultaneous space of Otherness outside of the bounds of the logical order (Wynter 2003, 296) as well as shapes a hegemonic and legitimate state (Wynter 2003, 297) that functions as enclosure of being and rationality. The citizen in this ordering finds itself necessitated to “subdue his private interests in order to adhere to the laws of the politically absolute state, and thereby to the “common good” (Wynter 2003, 288). The territory and its logic are intertwined in the dominating function of order (Robinson 2016).

The *polis*, the hegemonic state, subjects citizens to a single order of reason and strips outsiders from the need for choice and desire: “Women of color are not supposed to make sense or choices outside the domain where they are dominated” (Lugones 2005, 87). While citizens make sense of themselves through subjecting to the functioning of the monological order, dominated ‘others’ find themselves socially positioned: put in place – so to speak. The fields of force of the monological order sustain one-dimensional spaces to deflect multilogical engagement. A binary ordering retains the dysselection of outsiders by ascribing citizens a monological frame of reference that orders their understandings as loyal to the state. The *demonic grounds* outside of the polis offer the space for the emergence and proliferation of *logos* and *mythos*, through multilogical engagement, making new forms of life.

Juxtaposing a universal ‘silenced ground’ of ‘white western womanhood’ as the silence in the centre of the *polis* with the silencing of black women, Wynter

claims the perspective out of view as 'demonic grounds' (Wynter 1990, 355). This double erasure runs not only along gendered lines, but is also racialised, and pushes the black woman out of a legible frame of reference as a function of the system. This specific mode of social causality, which the *topos* of race prescribes as teleology in the dominant system of meaning (Wynter 1990, 357). "The variable of race/racial difference is [...] destiny" (ibid.). This coding of difference is claimed as mapping onto physiognomy and anatomy leading to the naturalisation of hierarchy (Wynter 1990, 358ff). Racialised codings lead to the extraction of cultural production, labour, and territory. This 'stabilised form of life' (Wynter 1990, 362) signals attribution of behaviour, motivations, and possible dynamic change. For instance, as Parisi and Terranova suggest, the shift from disciplinary logic to turbulent logic is merely a shift in form, if dominant codifications do not get altered. Increased complexity means that further expansion and extraction can take place (Parisi and Terranova 2000, 9, 10). The underlying logic remains intact but new forms open up new places for extraction in line with established hierarchies. Wynter unearths in a reading of the *Tempest* how black women are conceptualised as having no will or desire (Wynter 1990, 363) *because* these attributes are irrelevant in the imposed system of exploitation. Wynter explains:

[g]iven that the idealization/negation of both groups is effected precisely by the dominant group's imposition of its own mode of volition and desire (one *necessarily* generated from the *raison d'etre* of its group – existential interests) upon the dominated; as well as by stable enculturating of the latter by means of its theoretical models (epistemes) and aesthetic fields, generated from its increasingly hegemonic and secularizing system of meanings (Wynter 1990, 363).

The monological ordering of the world creates a space outside of its system of thought that is outside of its space of perception. The monological order literally cannot see the space it shaped, as it exists entirely outside of the projection and inscription, and the monological order has no *techne* or coding for interaction available, because the *raison d'etre* for the projected wall is to enable primary

and purely extraction and exploitation. This 'demonic ground' – as imposition of silence, is removed from the 'universal' silence of the centre exactly by the barrier of racialization – (white/normative) women are silent at the heart of the *polis*, where Black (nonnormative) women are coded as absent or unnoticed (Lugones 2003, 71; McKittrick 2006, 121).

I will return here shortly to trans, not only as coding for the possibility of disruption of categorical enclosure (Stryker 2008b, 1; Bey 2017, 276), but also as that other meaning 'transgender'. To read trans as part of the *demonic* is not accidental. Since trans has in the normative imagery no capacity for reproduction, and therefore the category flags dysselection as well as disposability (Stryker 1994). The plea for life in the *polis* might run through the promise of perpetuation of the dominating *logos*, for instance by making the plea of productivity in the workplace (Irving 2008, 159). It could be argued that the trans liberal practice aims at access to the force fields of the dominant monological order. Unironically, this trans liberal project goes by the name of 'inclusion' (Raha 2015; van der Drift 2016). However, both the trans liberal project, as well as a project of nonnormative ethics are contrasted by the normative practice of forced sterilisation, for instance of trans people, but also of people with disabilities. Gender clinics still work with a pathology that projects the desire for dysselection into the trans agent (Benjamin 1954; EU-FRA 2014). This projection is claimed as trans' own will, and it is this pathology that assigns the trans agent a degraded social position (Stryker 1994). This somatechnical dysselection lays claim to the soul, the body, and the social marker of the trans agent, expelling them onto the demonic grounds of silenced projection, naturalised dysselection, as pathologising impetus. However, if racialization is tied into this analysis the codings flag an increased jeopardy of aggressive action upon the trans body (Raha 2017; Bey 2017; Krell 2017; Stanley 2011). Nonnormative ethics as trans project departs from trans liberalism and makes the case for a negation of the dominant order, and claims its place on the demonic grounds outside of the *polis*, not only as constitutional, but also as starting point for a vector of re-coding meaning and *logos*. This argument for the

demonic grounds as starting point is expanded upon by Alexander Weheliye (2014), which I will turn to in chapter four.

While the coding of the monological order is done both through epistemic models, aesthetical fields, as well as somatechnical applications (Glissant 1989; Feinberg 1992b; Stryker 1994; Wadiwel 2009), ensuring replication and consolidation of the hermeneutic field of meaning (Wynter 1990, 364), the space outside of the *polis* is open to de-coding and re-coding. The ‘demonic models’ have already conceived of “a vantage point outside of the space-time orientation of the [...] observer” (ibid.). The breaking of the code cannot happen from inside of the monological order, and thus the demonic ground becomes the space *par excellence* for the disruption of the systemic definitional behavioural patternings (ibid.). As McKittrick argues, the workings of demonic systems have indeterminate outcomes, “because the organising schema cannot predict the future” (McKittrick 2006, xxiv). I return here shortly to flag up the interstitial bridge away from dominating norms that Anzaldúa proposed. The formation of a new *mythos* as code of behavioural sensibilities necessarily came with the constitution of a new practical truth. Truth is tied into predication: the affirmation or denial of parts of an argument. While discussed in chapter two, as the shifting practical truth of ensouled formation, truth can be seen to stabilise a changing world, and thus claim these are clear. In contrast, openness to second order emergence needs indeterminacy in order for the possibility of new evaluations to arise. The problem with the monological order is not that it is organisationally static – as factory discipline would presuppose – the problem is that it is dynamic with a stable logical core, unable to halt its entitlement to extraction, yet able to adapt to new forms. This means that the monological order can change code but not form, as the core value of entitlement to extraction needs to remain stable. Nonnormative ethics is structured by loss, which translates in to the willingness to suspend practical truth, in order to allow new mutual forms to emerge. I will discuss this further in chapter four, and argue that willingness to change practices, signals a willingness to emerge with new truths, which creates the space for indeterminacy.

The emergence of new forms of meaning needs multilogical truths, both to break out of domination/subjection model, but also to allow for the proliferation of practical exploration. Experimentation of new forms of life and patterns of meaning needs to be practical due to the previous finding that connection between agents cannot be presupposed through an overarching principle. Subsequently, a space to connect, to play, to move that has not yet been overtly structured is necessary in order to have connective codes emerging. This space is demonic allowing for the possibility of emergence of new *technes* or codes, and thus unpredictable futures. In response to Wynter, da Silva urges to question how we come up with answers to the questions of who we are (da Silva 2015, 104). This development of new models of questioning aligns with the creation of new *technes* of self understanding and relationality (van der Drift forthcoming). Furthermore these *technes* and codings should emerge outside of the realm of established use (Da Silva 2014, 82), in order to keep making space. As argued in chapter two, this needs a model that emphasises first order emergence, before second order emergence, as it places both the disruption of the dispositional order contained in the agent at the front, as well as emphasises practical engagement before theoretical procedure, in order to avoid centralising pre-existing answers. This does not mean a *tabula rasa* of practices, it means, as I've argued in chapter two, a recoding in praxis, but negation of orders. This changes the time assessment within the operation from the future – when the theory can be implemented, to the present: the possibility of generating new forms in space.

Lugones operational model of tactical-strategies explicitly folds first and second order emergence into the practical present (Lugones 2003, 208). The dual perspectives of tactical resistance and strategic alliances, envisions in close conjunction with epistemic ordering of knowledge and codes of situated meaning. The double negation of the practical present allows for the “end of the world as we know it” (Da Silva 2016, 59, cf. 2014), while simultaneously nudging re-coding as agential activity by its indeterminate affirmation in action. As the discussion in chapter two has shown, there is no de-coding without re-coding, and dispositions need to be undone by being redone (Lugones 2003, 55; Williams 1985).

Returning to some elements of the above discussion, especially loss and playfulness, Lugones' hang out space (Lugones 2003, 220) is important as it tries to undo the pressure of fields of force of the dominant order. The above conclusion that this dominant order necessarily creates spaces that it cannot perceive, returns here in new form. As discussed in chapter two, agents are in processes forming *logos* coming with a practical truth, which entails that in a non-dominated multilogical space there is no access to intentionality. Intentions are emerging from different logics, and not through assigned social positions as the monological order claims: in order to order. Intentionality needs therefore to be elusive and be able to flow into shared space as Lugones suggests. Within this emergence, loss and playfulness are tools for navigating the negated containment, letting go, and rescripting of the complex collective of agents.

The space for hanging out of "the streetwalker", who is part of a variety of collectives, is thus suggestive of localised meanings, situated evaluations as multilogical emergence. This is in contrast to the experienced and projected ascriptions of the monological order. While navigating that order might be situational, as its fields of force are adaptive around a static core, the aim of the order is to allow the emergence of a set of agents mirrored through their wielding of power as belonging and functional within the *polis*. It is the wielding of power, more than an internal identity that forges the dominant, monological agent (Da Silva 2009, 219). Domination enables extraction and ease of passage through space (cf. Enke 2012, 243). The friction of heated bodies in the *polis* are subsequently navigations of modulations steering the *polis* towards singular ends. Nonnormative navigation is partly functioning through camouflaging of its logic and emergent collective potentialities. As discussed above, da Silva questions the grounding of the question of who we are; in the space of multilogics these questions are sought in emergent collective practice in which indications of answers find various vectors of expression. Furthermore, what the coding of 'heated bodies' and Wynter's term 'master code' shows, is that codes do not need to be true in order to function. The intermittent answers to relationality in nonnormative space could be envisioned as pragmatic *techne* over staking

truth claims, because the questioning goes on. It is in this space for ongoing mutual exploration of forms that underlines it is ethics above epistemology that shapes the entry to the question. In chapter four I will go deeper in this material. In sum, nonnormative ethics is not about the epistemic excavation of the world through practice, but about emergent relations that steer forms of life away from exploitation and extraction, which only seems possible away from the monological functioning of the *polis*.

The question that presents itself consequently, is to the structure of nonnormative worlds. The question is less one of essentialism – a question to the pure core of a group, which I have previously discussed this in this chapter – but more one of possibility of deviation and different approaches to connection, interrelation and evaluations (DiPietro 2016). As DiPietro argues language use is often discussed in gender and sexuality studies as “social positioning across power differentials. Seldom do they encounter languages as the realities that they are (Arteaga 1994) and what they contribute to the study of social ontologies or the understandings-meanings of the basic entities of our realities” (DiPietro 2016, 68). DiPietro discusses codes in language as connective tissue and linguistic variation as inscribing difference based on class, race, and locality. Mindful of the globalising normativities encapsulated in nonnormative terms in other localities, DiPietro draws attention to the operation of different codings in different contexts, even when deployed by agents mixing in the same space.

For a nonnormative ethics, DiPietro’s insights underline not to conflate code and logic, and open terms for a myriad of uses. This ties in with the earlier observation that it is not truth, but relationality that is at stake in nonnormative ethics, and further that codings have different functions within the same space. To specify; *logos* comes with practical truth structuring perception and action, *technes* are the modes of relation between agents, and *codes* cue in positionality and potentiality, and *logic* is the internal structure of forms of life. While a logical kernel is not necessary to connect across differences, patterns of domination need to be avoided; otherwise imposition and connection are conflated. The absence of a need for a logical kernel in emergent forms of life, subsequently puts

multilogical formation forward as alternative model to conceptions based on prefigured commonality, whether that is identity, or shared conceptions on how such a form of life should be shaped, which includes 'proper' use of codes, masking as truth – in epistemological approaches to relational coding, as is for instance discussed by Wynter.

Wynter's task of breaking the code returns hereby to a radical root of not claiming self-knowledge, but collective generation in space (Wynter 2003, 331). This collectivity can only be emergent if it "does not mythify territorial enclosures and purities of peoples, languages, traditions" (Lugones 2003, 220). Lugones' proposes that change, including self-change and self-knowledge is interactive (Lugones 2003, 74). This interactivity functions within a plurality that contains multiple logics in which the truth that one's being animates differs with different perceivers (Lugones 2003, 73). As opposed to reading differences as constitutive of the norm (Wynter 1984, 47), coming with a dismissal through which the norm becomes singular. As argued, forms of life outside of the norm are not necessarily proscribed in their form by the norm, but the agents within such forms will receive various forms of maltreating projections, for instance racism, sexism, colonialism, that proscribe possible "meaning" to an agents' actions (Lugones 2005, 86). Lugones articulates forms of life as a series of connecting worlds that function necessarily in resistance to an overarching norm, while not being internally constituted by it.

Lugones connects the solitary norm-disrupting and border-crossing agent to the collective, not as already part of a homogenous whole of like-minded souls, but as agent forming meaning in order to illicit a response as part of a collective process of formation:

As I understand the liberatory project, the inner and the collective struggles are not separable; they are "moments" or "sides" of the liberatory process. [...] The collective struggle backs up, makes resistant meaning-making possible as meaning-making is interactive. The conceiving as well as the taking up and carrying of meaning requires a collectivity, however disorganised or open-ended

that collectivity may be (Lugones 2005, 97).

The connection between inner and outer is readily conceived as bundled navigation, negating norms in negotiation with collectives against dominant impositions. Lugones' 'hanging out' is a gathering without an already set and practical plan of action, in order to open the agents' senses to transmutations of borders of meaning (Lugones 2003, 220). Hanging out is conceived as a "tactical strategic activity that informs space against the construal of bounded territories that mythologise sameness" (Lugones 2003, 220). Especially as these collectivities are not organised around the idea of a necessarily connecting norm, the disorganisation requires attention to generosity and loss in order not to disperse before any meaning can arise. The connective code of the *polis* bases its bonds on pre-established similarity, not on connections across difference. The openness hanging out carefully holds allows for differing *logos* to come together and avoid impositions of dominating logics (Lugones 2003, 224). It is a concrete practice of creating and engaging with meaning-making, without a sense of wholeness, which is perceived as dangerous and intruding fiction (Lugones 2003, 225). This bodily being in space generates the possibility of meaning to emerge from the spaces in between, not as the immediate and directed generation of political heat, but as the possibility of an emerging action orientation and a tactical-strategical production of meaning and collective *mythos*. That this *mythos* is not directly connected to each singular *logos* (Sennett 1995, 81) makes it possible to find connection without simplifying each agent to the aspiration of matching a collectively imposed norm. The absence of a presupposed sense, and the creation of meaning as call-and-response, needs a double vision of the agent. "I move between the solitary and the collectively social, two sides of resistance" (Lugones 2003, 227).

This further explains the somatechnical operation of the agent as resistant collective navigation. Understanding this practice comes now with a qualitative nuance: while moving away from oppressive norms requires a closing off or blocking out, which is similar to the operation of *technes* reducing agents to roles, as discussed through Derrida, an emergent collective form requires an opening-up. The space between agential *logos* comes with a side reminiscent of

the bodies in the *polis* “[t]he knowing is from within our bodies, its senses felt from within when sensing the outside; the imagination open to sexual/social callings” (Lugones 2005, 98). Here heat generation and friction come together in a multiplicitous meeting. In addition this meeting comes with a side that is social, but hesitant resistance against “common sense and the power of simplification” (Lugones 2003, 228) needed to not presuppose a unity that will allow monological domination. This dual working is theorised by Audre Lorde as generative, as much as creating separation:

Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognise those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behaviour and expectation” (Lorde 1996, 163).

In Lorde’s words the problem lies indeed not in the difference between agents, but in the malforming codifications that create worlds of dominant sense, and subordinate potential. In the inverse of the categorisation lies the openness to difference as a form of dialogical knowing as an “poli-vocal complexity that has anti-utopian direction to the future” (Lugones 2003, 224). This way difference becomes not an insurmountable barrier (Lorde 1996, 163) that runs as deviance from the norm, splitting agents through unmatched purity (Lugones 2003, 143), but can work as tool for change.

A non-dominating interaction allows for the creative function of difference in our lives (Lorde 1996, 159). It is urgent not to reduce this difference as an arrogant perception that is used to “graft the substance of another” onto ourselves, what Lugones terms “abuse without identification” (Lugones 2003, 80). Non-dominating mutlilogical interactions need to be approached with a sense of disunity of other agents. “Community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretence that these differences do not exist” (Lorde 1996, 159). To conceive such a relationality of difference as generative and not in need of a logic of control, requires an ethics of pragmatic and turbulent relation

(Parisi and Terranova 2000, 20), which furthermore requires the generosity to deal with disorganisation. The heat generated in nonnormative interaction does not come with a pressure valve – such as ostracising – but leans on generosity and loss to make space for differences. Collectives are generative because they come with differing operational logics creating unknown, and anti-utopian, emerging forms of life. The ensouled body changes form and generates thereby new practical truths. These truths propel insights in new forms of relation, and the intertwined renewing interactions between agents can create new forms of life. An ensouled body have new capabilities when not caught in a single grid of ordering reason.

The formation of agential *logos* finds effect in the *daimon* that is seen by the agent's surroundings, but not by the agent themselves. Not only does this explain Lugones' animation of codes in other worlds, but it also gives shape to the collective processes an agent is engaged in. "If rebellion and creation are understood as processes, rather than as isolated acts, then each act of solitary rebellion and creation is anchored in, responsive to, and looks for a response from a collective, even if disorganized, process of resistance" (Lugones 2005, 97). This does not mean that the formation of the *daimon* happens in collectives that are sympathetic to the agent, but that the formation, while contextual, does not need to mimetically follow available forms. An agent does not need to copy, while still being responsive to, or with its surroundings. *Logos* informs practical truth, it can only emerge as meaning through a mutual and interdependent process of formation. "Meaning that is not in response to and looking for response fails as meaning" (Lugones 2005, 97). These collective codings can suggest *techne* in the further formation of nonnormative agents. While normative *eudaimonia* appears meaningful in dominant codifications, nonnormative forms of life are resistant to existing categorisation, but also nurture new codes. The interactivity of somatechnical change and the formation of forms of life suggests that changing one's body changes one's world as practical truth shifts. This shift allows for a further fluctuation of interdependent and interactive emergent logics, that as long as they can resist unification and purification, leave agents with an open-

ended formative possibility. The body remains central in propelling these new formations.

Ends, Means, and the Diamond of Form

Up until here I have laid out the argument that bodily change is underlying emergent collectivities. Nonnormative formation of *logos* allows for emergent relations away from the confined positionality of the *polis*. Daimons perceived on demonic grounds lend connection beyond projected codifications.

Nonnormative formation emerging away from the enclosure of the *polis* opens the possibility for multilogical connection situating loss and generosity as parts of the process of making space. The projections of power encapsulate these grounds in static imagery, locating the agents in presupposed positions. The monological order of the *polis* cannot perceive the space of multilogics except as space for extraction (Da Silva 2014, 82) and enclosed territory (McKittrick 2006, 135); the spaces of commodification of life into the maximum extraction through slavery and lands as *terra nullius* ready to be laid waste.

The multilogical nonnormative complex collectivities emerge from a *modus operandi* that can situate adaption as loss that is generative. To lose a part of one's *logos* is to make the space for connection, which allows for new *mythos* of relation. This new emerging forms are not a negotiation with the present monologic, but skirting under the radar of projections it aims at connection divergent from powerful ordering of the dominant singular regime. I have proposed change is not a spontaneous combustion of new possibilities, but crafted relationality that presupposes mutual difference and disordered connection. Because of these commitments it is necessary to stay out of a theory that calls for a *tabula rasa* in possible nonnormative interaction and emergent *techne* (Lugones 2003, 217) as it forecloses formation and agential history. Cherríe Moraga suggest that “[m]aybe one of the greatest damages white feminism did to women was to convince us of our own victimization without at

the same time requiring us to acknowledge our complicity in oppression and the ways in which we, ourselves, oppress” (Moraga 2011, 59). Relapsing in the silence at the centre of the *polis*, its universal womanhood was unwilling to acknowledge logics outside of the walls. A nonnormative ethics is only possible by acknowledging which parts of oneself one has to lose, as the walls of the *polis* are fractals running through *dunamis* ending in dispositions. Beyond the singular order “the World [can be seen] as Plenum and not as Universe” (Da Silva 2014, 86). This instant appearance of multiplicity creates room for seeing different relations and thereby different interactions of power. Moving away from the universe and dissolving its orderings requires an “unknowing and undoing of the World” (Da Silva 2014, 86). Subsequently, it becomes pressing to navigate meeting between agents, which can grow into forms of life. I have argued through changing *logos* that only way to de-code is to re-code, which has to be done from the demonic models which render outcomes uncertain (Wynter 1990, 365; McKittrick 2006, xxiv). Careful about the possibilities for doing this, it is worth emphasising that Wittgenstein suggests a form of life does not only presuppose agreement on principles, but also agreements on decisions and judgements (Wittgenstein 2010 241). This suggests that it is not only necessary to heed the remnants of the norm present in emerging forms of life, but also that axioms alone will not be sufficient as it presses the point that principles of interaction are *post-hoc* fabrications after a form of life is established.

In order to elaborate on the working of monological approaches, I will now look at an example of a monological theory that aims at keeping space for difference. According to Rawls, in a classical formulation of liberal ethical theory, the conception of the good life lies within a conception of the right life (Rawls 2009, 348). Rawls argues that the constraints of justice both allow for a protection of difference, and a proliferation of forms of life. In the terms of the current discussion, Rawls claims the *polis* will support all differences that are ethically compatible to be contained in a monological space. The Wittgensteinian critique of this model points to the misconception in this idea, and claims that it is the right that is contained by notions of the good. The agreement on what counts as a good form of life is, allows for reverse engineering the principles of right, and

thus constrains the proliferation of forms of life, as these fall outside of existing agreements of possibility. Nonnormative trans bodies are an example of this problematic, as these do not come with the social power necessary to disrupt existing orderings, yet receive undue social pressure, as discussed in chapter one. The invasiveness of monological orderings stems from these normative agreements on judgement and perception, and their claim to a “well-ordered society” (Rawls 2009, 4, 397). Multilogical connections are blocked out, precisely because of the perception of regulation through principled evaluation. Rawls’ conception of well-orderedness is not a content-neutral evaluation. The imposition of ‘order over chaos’ (Wynter 2003) leads directly to an misidentification of nonnormative agents as deviant (Lorde 1996, 163) instead of as inhabitants of worlds of being with mutual difference from the perceiver (Lugones 2003, 97). Through Wynter’s reading it becomes clear why multilogics will be perceived as ‘chaos’ that needs to be controlled. Singular monological perception cannot perceive practical truths that do not match its own, and the notion of well-orderedness lays a (false) moral claim to the right to rule. The two notions enforce each other, as not allowing one to face loss of truth, and extending generosity in perception, in combination with an alleged right to impose, will lead to the immediate impossibility of facing lived multilogical reality. Liberal reasoning of encapsulating multiplicity in a single principle formed the theoretical model for conceptions of ‘multiculturalism’ (Bannerji 2000, 1).

However, as my discussion in chapter two already indicated the means form the ends in agential formation. The navigation of agents allows for both the first order emergence of practical ensouled truth, as well as the second order emerge between agents of shared forms of sense. A primary single principle claims the inverse: first we know what ordering to prefer, and then we can see what life fits in that order. This is the dominant claim of the monological order, which does not need discipline, but can offer adaptability situated around a stable normative core. In contrast, the Wittgensteinian perspective on forms of life claims that the principles are reconstructions after the agreement on ends. For emergent forms of life, this suggests that a diamond shape of ends, meanings, and principles is

emergent and in flux. The ends pull change, as much as the principles push change, and both are changed by the (collective) navigation. Both principles and ends can be envisioned as codings that propel and allow nonnormative emergence; a point I will elaborate in chapter four. It is a diamond shape as forms of life come with shared ends (Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011) that then inform principles, with modulations in the form in between, as explicated by the *polis*. It suggests thus that agents navigating environments not only face emergent ends out of the vector of their actions – which changes over time, but also that principles of structuring such ends are emerging out of shifting worlds of sense and visions of the good ~ flux happens on both sides of an (imagined) centre. This problematizes a ‘reflective equilibrium’ model, where theory is tested to practice and practice to theory, which will be mutually adapted to each other (Rawls 2009, 18). As Wittgenstein draws attention to, the description of the present already contains the basis for the principles. This ties in with the formulation of chapter two, where I argued that practical truth emerges from agential *logos* which influences how situations are perceived. In order to create the space for multilogical engagement, changing codes need to be drawn up and revised in conjunction with changes in *logos* and multilogical entanglement. Emergent practical truth and second order worlds of sense, are both in flux as the navigation of agents, single and plural, are forming relations based on loss and generation, which changes ends, and practical truths. For existing forms of life, this means that the diamond shape of possible evaluations is already in place. These are not only the principles, which can be rediscovered in the act, as intentions, both single and plural, but moreover the decisions on the outcomes of such principles, which are stably in place. These decision-evaluations are the primary markers of judging action with and testing agents as adapting to the available norm. Principles are thus *post hoc* evaluations. In sum, the possible movements of agents are regulated both on a principle level, as well as on an evaluative level. Normative agents are caught in the pressures of top-down and bottom-up appraisal of possibility and perception. This pressure hardens a monological order and can only allow agents to emerge out of it by force or friction. Ahmed’s theorisation of happiness is the case in point: it is not about the principles, but about the solid objects of happiness. Unhappy agents are forced

out, placed out, or cause sufficient friction to get out (Ahmed 2010). For a nonnormative form of life to emerge, it will thus emerge in a parallel formation of emergent principles as well as emergent evaluations. Daimons live not yet in diamonds, but are forming under pressure, by friction, and will be out of place.

Forming Logics, Codings, Lives

Summarising the argument, I have made space for the understanding that a form of life holds the space for existing judgements and principles. Judgements can vary, creating room for modulation and differences in interactions. Judgements, or evaluations, stem from shared meaning, based on dispositional practical truth. Nonnormative practical truth, organised as *logos*, emerges from indeterminate affirmation in action. Through Wynter the understanding emerges that practice comes before praxis: action comes before shared understanding about that action, even though it might be emerging from a shared conception about what is negated. Praxis entails shared evaluations and modes of relation, which can culminate in codings – the topic of the next chapter. Furthermore, accepting that one animates different logics in different worlds, and that these animations might be out of one’s control is one of the operational understandings to constitute nonnormative forms of life (Lugones 2003, 88). This underlines that other agents will evaluate your actions, and have an appraisal of one’s *daimon* that might not necessarily concur with one’s practical truth. These shifts in perception and a coinciding shift in actions are central to accepting multilogics as praxis, the shared understandings of resistance meaning (Lugones 2005). This affirms the conclusion of chapter two that the deed precedes the word and that language – or *mythos* – is a refinement of practice (Wittgenstein 1984, 31).

If interaction – before principles and judgements – is the plane of emergence of agents and connections, it is inevitable to emphasise space for relationality in lieu of prefabricated connective tissue: existing *technes* or *mythos*. Emergence of nonnormative code is thus after practice. Code emerges as (temporal) summary of recurring interactions. Bodies without normative ends are generating new

codes, which does not mean that they get imbued with the power to successfully contest the norm. Nonnormative agents can still be subjected to the operations of the monological order and its logical core of projection and extraction, even if they are also living nonnormative forms of life.⁷³

With material being generative the ordering of the terms ethics and epistemology is in that order – from the ethical to the epistemological: relations before knowledge, verbs before nouns (Hoagland 1988, 269). The monological ordering of the *polis* and the enclosure of the *demonic grounds* is partly the attempt at epistemic control (who owns the knowledge), which turned into process controlling, as Parisi and Terranova have successfully emphasised. Fracturing the norm, making space for multiplicity and non-dominance needs further approaches than multilogics alone

As I have argued above, the dominant order does not have the possibility to see the connections and multiple logics that are forming on the demonic grounds. The monological order creates its own space of impossibility of perception, as it can only understand itself through the projections it claims upon nonnormative bodies. The reflection of projection constitutes the norm. This argument is in contrast with the general reading that the norm is constituted by the margins (Edwards 2015, 142). I am arguing for the inverse of this reading that the deviant is not constitutive of the norm – this would suggest it happens in the same space of reason, but the norm projects on the deviant and sees it constitutive power reflected back on itself. The norm and the nonnorm have different spaces of reason.

The norm is thus the place that projects singular difference upon the space of multilogics, which is imaginatively outside of the *polis* yet practically enclosed by it. As argued before, the walls of the polis are fractals, culminating in dispositions and agential *logos*. In its impossibility to perceive the space of multilogics as an equal set of truths, it preserves an aggressive working of power as the right to

⁷³ While I believe that ethical decoding is necessary for radical social transformation, I am very reluctant to posit this as the only strategy to overturn exploitative orderings.

project. Traversing of different codings within the walls of the *polis* are thus not properly speaking 'inclusion' but encapsulations, the renegotiations of codings for the purpose of adaptation and legitimization of the norm. This leads to situations of trans and queer police forces described by Che Gossett as "[q]ueerness and transgender bodies are no longer policed, they are doing the policing" (C. Gossett 2013, 586). Fields of force can change, while the logical operation of entitlement to extraction and projection remains uncontested and embraced by 'included' agents.

The space of nonnormative multilogics thus operates under normative projections which can function as camouflage. Normative operation is still constituted from within the single space of chaos and order (Wynter 1984, 1990). If the monological order acknowledges these constitutions as their own, only self-establishing norm would evaporate and become part of the multilogic the logical operation of extraction and exploitation would then need to disappear alongside, while codings are serving this project. The demons outside of the *polis* are not (necessarily) subsumed in this aspiration, even though they can obviously be affected by it – such is the working of power. This affecting can be done through environmental pressure, the material conditions of life, but also through the power of projection limiting possibilities of understanding and formation by being drowned out in the singular projections of the norm. Vikki Kirby (2015) makes a similar claim about the perpetuation of re-centring the norm and returning life outside the *polis* to the walls of projection by the norm. In contrast I aim to give an account of nonnormative ethics which already decentres the normative order, while this alone can be seen not to be the solution – as this space has always existed. That the space outside of the walls of the *polis* is shared does not mean it is the same (Kirby 2015, 99). This emphasises the need for coalitional and hybrid relationality in forms of life outside of the monological order of the *polis*.

This hybridity and coalition is possible because the individual is constituted by its body, and not by a singular form. The individual is not divisible (Kirby 2015, 103), but that is only such as body: the constitutive substance based on the

existence of soul and need for nutrition. Individuality in a nonnormative, multilogical reading lies neither in the *logos* – as that can be multiple and is made of a manifold of *dunamis*, nor in the *mythos* – as that is shared and need not be singular, nor in the projections under which one lives – the daimons are read differently and the encapsulations are cliché by necessity. Individuation lies only in the indivisibility of the ensouled body. The agent, as agent, can only be one. Kirby argues that the human as individual exists with spontaneous self-generation (Kirby 2015, 105). My contestation to that claim is that while the body is by necessity generative, it is not spontaneously, but through navigation, generosity, and loss. I have argued in chapter two that formation is inevitable. Inside the *polis* one strives to adapt to the idea of shared *eudaimonia*, and the formation of form is adaptive to shared evaluations. Outside of the norm, on the demonic grounds and space of multilogics, the nonnormative agent has no ends to aspire towards, thus has to create those as praxis, following the generative possibility of means as was shown to be central in indeterminate agential action (Anzaldúa 1987).

The issue currently at hand is how to envision the space of multilogical interaction without a form of power that exists as fields of force of imposition through projection. Returning to chapter one the trans battle cry of “do not assume” returns here in a new light. If power is the power to project and extract through enclosure, the aim for a nonnormative ethics is to find a form of relational force that can embrace generosity and loss, instead of property and accumulation, and still have codings to enable relationality beyond the direct connection. Accumulation and enclosure is inevitable in the monological order of the *polis*. Nonnormative ethical connection understood through multilogical interaction, structured by generosity and loss needs the formation of nonnormative codings of relationality, instead of the dominating encapsulation of the master code (Wynter 2003). In chapter four I will propose an emergence of codings and discuss their place in nonnormative ethics.

Chapter 4 - Demonic Codes and Surface Tensions

In chapter two, the transsomatechnical formation of *logos* got conceptualised as navigation leading to practical *truth* and *ensouled* bodily change. The structure of navigation consists of a double negation and indeterminate affirmation. In chapter three *technes*, *mythos*, and *codes* have been discussed as structuring relations and forms of life. *Technes* structure relations between agents. Normative *technes* can erase agents by relegating them to patterns of action that masks their *logos*. Nonnormative *techne* are emergent structures of relation allowing mutuality and difference. Mutuality lies partly in the emergence itself, because agents offer their loving perception to make the *interstice* by which a structure can emerge. *Daimons* bring agents together in mutuality, but also protect differences, as they do not need to fall in a singular order. *Logos* makes agents particular, while *techne* brings them together. *Daimons* bridge the gap between as interstice and protect difference, by making agents multiple in themselves. World-travelling between forms of life with their own logic, has led to the understanding that agents make relations by allowing loss of practical truth in *logos*. This leads agents to give up (part of) the orientation in an environment and perceive differences generously. The *technes* that emerge in this manner further embrace differences, by not demanding impositions of truth, relations, and logics of forms of life. Furthermore, I have made the argument that forms of life can be bridged by *mythos*: connective codings that do not attach to *logos* or logics. *Mythos* allows agents navigations beyond the immediate environment, whether normative or nonnormative. However, *mythos* are not the only codes.

In this chapter I will concentrate on emergent codes, which allow nonnormative connections, without demanding singular logics of operation. These codes can traverse contexts and thereby lift a theory of nonnormative ethics out of the realm of immediate experience. Normative codings function as impositions of a dominating logic and structure hierarchies enabling exploitation. Nonnormative codings allow for connections between agents and forms of life, retain experiences and patterns of action, and can thus function as resistance, but also structuring explorations in radical transformation. By negating the *polis* as such, ethics, that is: agential relations in and between forms of life, emerges as the

ground for connection without relating structure to a political order. Codes are therefore a part of the structure of ethics that organises connection without demanding *stasis* of agents or forms of life.

In the last chapter the emergence of codes was discussed as contextual shorthand structuring relations across different logics. Sylvia Wynter uses the term 'master code' (Wynter 2003, 300) to describe the mapping of a symbolic order that follows the colonial expansion of European powers. The symbolic order claimed by the master code subjugates colonized peoples and structures the world according in rational/irrational and human/animal practical and epistemological hierarchies. In this chapter I will draw on anti-colonial approaches to problematize the operation of such practical codes and develop a proposal for nonnormative ethical codings, which are emerging outside of the *polis*. I will draw on insights of Sylvia Wynter who has argued that "one cannot 'unsettle' the 'coloniality of power' without a redescription of the human outside the terms of our present descriptive statement of the human, "Man" (Wynter 2003, 268), which is structured around a single organising principle and master code (Wynter 2003, 300). In this chapter, I will therefore look at emerging codes that structure relations, and their emergence in forms that do not tie in with the current forms of relationality. In a criticism of structures Starhawk boldly states: "nothing is easier to see than consciousness once we recognize that it is embodied in the forms and structures we create" (Starhawk 1982, 18). I will lie out this argument as a contrast between the changing codification of the monological order of the *polis*, and the multilogical connections between nonnormative agents.

This chapter endeavours to connect emergent coding with the ensouled bodily *logos* of nonnormative agents and enable theorising different layers of abstraction, durations of code, and changing of codes through nonnormative vectors. This reconnects the discussion with chapter two, where the double negation and single affirmation underlying agential formation, emerges in indeterminate vectors, which structures the means of formation with shifting ends. In this chapter I will propose that it is not only agential ends that change

with the unfolding of different means, but also that codes undergo similar processes of change, and can be short in duration as they are expressive of forms of life. This, in turn, deepens the findings of chapter three on shared connection in forms of life with a discussion on the workings of codes. In this chapter I propose that codes need to change in order to keep them functioning as mutually inclusive of different logics. This proposal clarifies frictions and tensions as points of scrutiny in connection. Acknowledging that different logics create friction requires giving up demands for clarity of intention. Hereby, Édouard Glissant's notion of opacity becomes a key in the understanding of nonnormative connections. This means that agents are willing to face opacity of others, and thus allow opacity in themselves. In conjunction with the argumentation in chapter three the connection between loss and opacity gets deepened. I will close this chapter by theorising this willingness to face loss as the mutual gift that allows for bonds to emerge. Mutual loss as a basis of emerging connection is contrasted with the imposed exploitation of the *polis*. However, just as codings are temporal, so can nonnormative bonds be, as they are not proposed as the walls of a new *polis*.

In the first two chapters I have offered arguments for my conception that bodies allow and are constitutive in the formation of new logics, new affective relations, and new ways of understanding the world. This chapter offers an argument about the emergence of new codes outside of the *polis*. These arguments about emerging relations between differing logics function without collapsing into confined groups with stable epistemologies, that happen to share a predefined political space, but indeed press an argument about how agents and collectivities can become *unheard* of (Abbas 2010; Weheliye 2014, 126) in the *polis*. To be *unheard* is to find articulation outside the terms of the *polis*, without aiming at inclusion, and legitimation offered by the structures that are the prime cause of exclusion (Abbas 2010). Instead of erasure this suggests escape, as well as frames the violence of the *polis* to be structured by indifference, as Weheliye cogently claims. As argued in chapter three, the invisibility of the *demonic grounds* emerges because the *polis* can only see the reflection of its own projections. The proposal in this chapter will claim space for emergence of codes

as *unheard* and invisible ethical claims suggesting practical footholds and waypoints to navigate one's environment, but also stretching beyond that as codes aligning vectors in interaction.

Coding practice

In the conceptualisation of nonnormative ethics two elements have been central. The first is *logos* – the formation of an agent. *Logos* combines affective, perceptive and reflective interactions of the agent in an environment, suggesting practical truth. The second element is *logic*: the mode of functioning of collectivities, coming with *technes* of relation. Logic entails the appraisal of the *daimon* behind the agents through shared meaning and evaluations. Furthermore, as I argued through Wittgenstein (2010, 241) in chapter three this logic combines both axioms and decisions, leaving space for modulation of agents between these two points. Modulations are not deviations of a central norm, but variations informing principles and judgments. This structure needs a third element, which is *code*. Codings function as guidance for relationality, and organise imagery and signs, indicating positionality and expectation within dissimilar relations. This dissimilarity can be either seen as a hierarchical and unequal relation, which is the case with the impositions of (variations on) the master code, or alternatively as differences in *logos*, indicating different logics, and thus in need of codes to enable temporal or durable connections.

Kwame Anthony Appiah conceptualizes 'code' in the context of moral change as "a set of shared norms" (Appiah 2010, 175), which extends beyond mere rules. A subset of this system of codes is the 'honor code' indicating whether someone of a "certain identity gains the right to respect, how they should lose it, and how having and losing honor changes the way they should be treated" (ibid.). Such a code structures relations between different groups, but also within a group: "[i]f you adhere to an honor code, you'll not only respond with respect to those who keep it, but you'll respond with contempt to those who don't" (Appiah 2010, 177). Appiah draws upon codes as operating alongside 'rights' to create space for

emotional interactions and personal development in a wider conception of morality than one based on legalistic structures alone (Appiah 2010, 182). Alongside perceived moral duties, Appiah conceptualises the space of respect.

While this conception makes space for relation beyond the discursive alone, the problem it runs in to is that it still rolls out a system of duties and rights, with affective zones regulating respect and dignity. What it can do is show how peer pressure in the form of respect can change the way duties and rights are conceived, but what it can not do is show how agents falling out of the zones of respect, can make claim change while standing outside of the zones of universal mutuality: it keeps agents tied into a single space of pressure. In short – if one is trans and pathologised, black and poor and deemed irrational, these structures allow little possibility in a singular ordering of a dominant norm to claim agency as nonnormative agent, while they can only claim benevolent actions within hierarchies. This returns the problems of in and exclusion within the *polis*, as I have been arguing against. Appiah’s system functions on a belief that everybody can be part of the *polis*, but fails to account for the structures of exclusion that the *polis* – as I have argued in chapter three - necessarily generates.

To nuance understanding of the operation of codes, I propose to look at the conceptualization of Friedrich Kittler. Kittler discusses codes both in a legal and technological context. The function of these codes lies quite close to each other, as they in both cases work to organise actions in a concise manner, abstracted from specific contexts. Kittler articulates codes as “what determine us today, and what we must articulate if only to avoid disappearing under them completely” (Kittler 2008, 40). This indicates vis-à-vis Appiah that before agents enter into the space of possible rights, agents can disappear under the codes that determine placement, functioning, and audibility. Nonnormative ‘respect’ can only begin to function beyond a system of imposed codes; codes have to be made visible.

Kittler traces code along two different lines. The first is as secret language, which emerged after logograms changed to alphabets, in combination with a communications technology (Kittler 2008, 40). The second is codicilla, known

also as imperia, the orders of the roman Emperor, extending into “code” the book of law, up onto Emperor Napoleon (Kittler 2008, 41). Already enclosed in the term code is both the imperial command, and emphasised due to its linkage with secrecy, the one-sided imposition. Codes are thus operational summaries, functioning within (a system of) relation. Systematic codes relate positions to activities, linking signage and imagery to positionality and output. Kittler explains programming code as ‘elegant’ when its output is longer than itself – thus less code is needed than the message that comes out. Short codes, and long outputs are the desiderata (Kittler 2008, 43). Here, we can tie in with the operation of the master code, as historicised and theorized by Wynter (Wynter 2003, 287), and its attachment to phenotypes and deviant bodies (Wynter 2003, 296, 1990, 359). This master code of racialization, misogyny, and transphobia is attached to bodies and functions thus ‘elegantly’ and comes with an output of denigration, exploitation, and availability for destruction, in line with the explained ‘desiderata’ of coding.⁷⁴ The simplicity of the master code creating an eugenical and dysgenical ordering that maps onto different contexts enables understanding of what Nandita Sharma has termed “a single field of power” (Sharma 2015, 164), and thus the master code functions as single organising principle.

Willard Van Orman Quine describes the ‘word’ emerging from the termination of Aristotelian essence (Quine 1951, 4). Word is what is left after essence does not describe the substance inherently, so to speak. As I have argued in chapter two and three, agents make *logos* without ingrained essence. And yet – there is word that is free from this essence – code that is not already attached to the body, but is made to take that place. Some of the codes are close to present logics – they are supposed to feel *natural* (Wynter 2001, 35) and its operation is matched to phenotype, such as the codings of racism. In this chapter I will use code with the suggestion of Kittler of ‘displacement’, the transferal of one element onto another element, susceptible to faulty communication (Kittler 2008, 45). Code is thus suggestive to function as translation of interaction, but will not mean universally

⁷⁴ The terms ‘elegantly’ and ‘desiderata’ are particularly cynical in this context. Yet, the terms do conceptually explain social codings in a relevant manner.

the same thing, as I will discuss below. Code, in the ethical sense, turns out to be “the practice of realities” (Kittler 2008, 45). It is code, not language, I focus on, because codes are operational vignettes structuring relations and indicating actions, which ties it in with ethics. Codes in the way I will discuss them are thus abstractions suggesting *technes*, and claiming structures of perception in contexts. These structures can be both negative and positive, but I will make the case, they do not need to encapsulate the situation or the agents in full.

Affect, Discipline, Change

Theorisations of nonnormative forms of life, with affect as the main point of focus, argue that affects traversing in between or through agents encapsulate reactions and perceptions, while these cannot help to formulate how the uncategorised can be faced – only that it might be produced (Ahmed 2004; Deleuze and Guattari 1987). This is a structural phenomenon as affect cannot face the unknown, except in fear, where fear is ultimately the fear of death (Derrida 2008, 44). Affect operates around existing forms of relation. In contrast, I have been arguing that agential becoming emerges through a nonnormative logic, which changes the form of the world. This means that the question of how to relate to what is unknown is re-opened, and is structured by re-figuring one’s changed relation to past ways of encountering the world. Loss operates as guidance to change, and in the falling apart of *logos* new connections can be formed. One becomes unknown to oneself, and that may open relation to the unknown.

My suggestion in this chapter is that agential action based on affects that either direct over the horizon of current forms (as indeterminate newness) or conserve these forms by keeping flows in demarcated paths (a problem affect theory addresses) do not provide sufficient materials for conceptualising the encounter with a changing world. For instance, friction remains an indication of falling out with current orderings (Ahmed 2010) – but cannot be understood as an indication of possibility: to start a fire. Indeed by claiming friction as indicative of

one's own position only as already outside of the frame of possibility will limit the understanding of one's actions, and what Cherríe Moraga calls the failure of white feminism to advocate its own complicity (Moraga 2011, 59). This is due to the focus of the agent in friction as the operator breaking the smoothness of normative placement and its subsequent articulation of queer, migratory, and racialised displacement. However, I will argue below that from within this displacement friction can be indicative of transposed normative attachments, but also as the indication of points in the interaction where loss of logic and generosity of perception could occur in a nonnormative exchange (Lugones 2003). From this insight we can conclude for nonnormative ethics that firstly, friction is many-sided and secondly, that friction can be experienced as indicative of the surface tension in the encounter of differing logics. That is to say, friction can be the space for healing and the presence of creation, and not only the space of the cut– the violent discomfort of separation and othering (Pillai 2016; van der Drift 2018).

Intentions, Actions, Waypoints

I will extend the discussion of the last chapter on bridging differing logics and the problematisation of conceptualizing intentions. Intentions are relevant only within a singular logical conception, after a form of life has been established with its concurrent agreement on principles and judgements. To contrast intentionality, I will discuss the emergence of codes that can function as markers and waypoints for unfolding new forms of life in encounters that are not envisioned through imposition, extraction, or destruction. These latter terms are the parameters for encounters used by the *polis* to subject the grounds outside its walls, as argued by Wynter (2003, 2015) and da Silva (2013, 2015).

Intentions function to modulate and assess codified behaviours within the normative single field of power (Sharma 2015, 164). Disciplinary approaches operate through a claim to an interiority, as Foucault has theorised (Foucault

1977), and the workings of shame and guilt can also be traced along these lines. Shame can be understood as being seen by the wrong people doing the wrong thing and guilt can be seen an emotional response to transgression of the law (Williams 1993). The key problem is that intentions cannot traverse logics relevantly, since differing practical truths render them (partly) incommunicable. Moreover, because intentions come with different logics of action in different forms of life, intentions as such are not the relevant facet for ethical scrutiny, because the logical framework is the frame from which confrontation will arise. Good intentions still come with structural imposition in the *polis*. Furthermore, as the discussions of Lugones (2005) and Wynter (2003) have indicated, in processes of subjection and forced codification intentions are not relevant for the recipient of imposed codings, and neither for the citizen of the colonial *polis*. Weheliye and Abbas (Abbas 2010; Weheliye 2014), in conjunction with Lugones and Wynter (Lugones 2003; Wynter 2001), defended successfully the claim that spoken ‘interiority’ cannot be heard, unless it is done in the available codes of the monological order. Subsequently, it becomes questionable to claim that this normatively coded speech backfires onto the nonnormative agent, instilling a new ‘interior’ that aligns to be demands of the order of the *polis*, as *univocal* occurrence. This would subscribe to the *polis* a total victory of body and mind, something that would make resistance impossible because the agent is enveloped by the norm.⁷⁵ From the perspective of the dominant agent the imposition of a social ordering is constituted by externalizing the actors placement forcing a contraction of the soul (Wadiwel 2009, 52). This imposition in its most extreme form is the creation of thingness (Césaire 2000, 42) in the Césaire’s discussion of the subjugation of a black population. This carries a resonance with the previous discussion of Wadiwel’s *techne* of whipping the Aboriginal subject, where mastery over the *soul* was intended (Wadiwel 2009, 54), at the same time as this interiority was put into question:

[...] being “black” means to have the existence of one’s soul put in question; epistemological, because the flogging aims not only to establish the existence of

⁷⁵ Matthew Fuller drew attention to this quote: “Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul.” (M.Thatcher, *Sunday Times*, 5/1/81)

a soul, but to discover its nature, to identify its truth that has previously been hidden behind a dark, thick hide (Wadiwel 2009, 55).

Wadiwel's description of the soul being disciplined and retracted, finds a parallel in the description of the *Muselmann* in the camps (Weheliye 2014, 126). The *Muselmann* was starved to the point of retraction of the soul. The technique of whipping the flesh recalls the discussion in chapter one, where the cutting of genitals was thought to affect the mind (Barker-Benfield 1978, 123). The transposition of forced sterilization, not only as disciplinary practice, but moreover as *eugenic* technique (Threadcraft 2016, 4) brings trans in renewed focus. The surgical and molecular technologies (P. B. Preciado 2013) claimed to rule the interiority of deviating bodies, structured through pathologisation, *must* spectacularly fail as they lay claim to an interiority that necessarily removes itself from the ordering of the *polis*. The aggressive means that are claimed to "normalize" a body (Spade 2011), force a *logos* necessarily to speak in a voice that falls out of the normalized domain, and hide under existing pathologies. This disappearance, or camouflage, under imposed codings, applied with technologies that work upon the body, is seen from the dominant norm as total.

Christina Sharpe indeed dismisses the claim to total subjugation in the extreme condition of enslavement and holds the space open for alternative agential *logos* (Sharpe 2016). Weheliye indicates a similar space in his discussion of the battle of the enslaved Douglas with overseer Covey, where Douglas manages to "wrest dominance from his overseer" (Weheliye 2014, 95). This is only possible if Douglas has no complete mimetic overlap with the ascribed code. Lugones critiques the image of oppression as total by ascribing it as a "desideratum of oppression theory" (Lugones 2003, 55). These overlaps contrast with the curious demand of total subjugation when articulated from within the norm. Its totality is not contested. For instance, the *Muselmann*, Agamben's signifier for the barest of life outside of the *polis* (Agamben 1998, 185) is narrated as life nearest to death in total subjugation. However, Weheliye unearths also here escape at its heart in the dreams of beatitude and gastronomical bliss (Weheliye 2014, 128). It could thus be thought that aim of the disciplinary actions are not to lay claim to the interiority of the agent under strain, but to create silence and normative

placement through domination allowing material exploitation (Wynter 2003; Da Silva 2015; Sampaio 2015). The double strain put onto the nonnormative agent from within the *polis* is then to translate itself through this silencing in acceptable terms (Abbas 2010). In the latter case interiority is irrelevant, but serves as “pornotroping” of the subjugated body (Weheliye 2014, 90; Spillers 1987; P. B. Preciado 2013; cf. Kitzinger 1987).

My proposal to avoid this regression of demand of sameness of interiority, absence of interiority, and thingification, is to conceptualise codings as laying a claim to a pragmatics of interaction, but not claim these as expressive of an interior space, while simply accepting that there is a logic of agential action present in the form of *techné*. The *demos* in the *polis* well believe their projections of interiority, but as argued in chapter three, this is what makes ethics with the *polis* impossible. My proposal both makes space for an ethics that accepts differing *logos* as well as creates space for bonding across multilogics. The claim to total subjugation is an extension of the idea of the necessity of single principles for bonding, because it claims that outside the principle there is no life. Both the claim to total subjugation as well as the demand for a single principle I contest with my proposal for nonnormative ethics.

DIY code (Code It Yourself)

Before I set out to articulate the unfolding of possible forms of life across multilogical engagements, I want to highlight an important pattern. In arguments about the entanglements of the discursive with matter, the emphasis necessarily falls on the linguistic approach.⁷⁶ A symptomatic approach is Gayle Salamon’s work who aims to “resist the temptation to define that specificity [of the body] in material terms” (Salamon 2010, 1). Resisting this temptation places Salamon’s project in a Cartesian modus with its accompanying post-Renaissance Christian dogmas emphasising disembodied thought (Wynter 2003, 274, 287). Salamon aims at a wider use of psychoanalysis to explain trans, rather than less, knowing

⁷⁶ Considering such theory is mostly written by academics whose outlooks are determined by the word, this should not be surprising.

full well how this has been used against trans people (Salamon 2010, 4). In one turn of phrase articulating matter as an impenetrable whole, and language the only possibility of nuance, Salamon strikes out at the idea of morphology of the body not scripting identification or desire, warning the reader to take “seriously some of the ways gender is currently being lived” (Salamon 2010, 93). While Salamon is aiming away from transphobia, the insistence that the theoretical formulation is what makes trans lived experience understandable contra the critique of “disembodied theorizing” (Salamon 2010, 71) risks curiously flattening theory. This stems from Salamon’s refusal to take articulations from the margins seriously and Salamon consequently bunkers down in scriptural explanations why lay and lived expressions are invalid, instead of seeing how they function and how theories might benefit from taking these articulations seriously. Salamon, in rejecting these expressions creates space for trans to remain *unheard*. Similar stress is articulated earlier when Salamon attacks Prosser for creating a theory emphasising the body that is unproductive for theorizing (Salamon 2010, 41). Regardless of the relative merits and faults of Prosser’s theory, it is the question whether productive theorising is what is at stake. Salamon aims to formulate theory and schemas underlying any conception of the body, but misses out on the play, change, nuance, dance, and sexual possibilities that do not find their way into words. Salamon in short aims to articulate a coherent frame of singular epistemology, which places trans alongside normative bodies, instead of foregoing coherence and creating space for emerging codes. It is therefore worrying that Salamon forecloses trans agents changing their own gender as navigation away from existing codes, and limits trans people to stick to articulations firmly controlled upfront by theories out of experiment’s reach. While schemas, or codings, might occupy an important position, Salamon’s theorisation indicates clearly how over-emphasis of conceptual schemes limits the possibility of understanding the nuances of change and emergent meanings. Especially by making matter impregnable, instead of a dynamic and open ensouled formation with the possibility of engagement across many different modes, the body collapses under the conceptual scheme imposed on it, making it impossible to discern possible escapes. I will return to this issue in the section ‘layers of code’, where I’ll unpack

the distinction between emergent codes with local meanings, and coherent theoretical forms.

To reiterate, overemphasising conceptual schemes hinders the formulation of indeterminate accounts of emergence, and renders partial codes marking vectors of understanding and evaluation either impossible, or illogical. The problem with these being impossible is that experimentation cannot be relevantly conceived to have an impact on theory formation in this structure, and the issue with seeing such experiments and emergences as illogical approaches is that these either need to be dismissed upfront or can only be conceived as pathology – an unsurprising effect considering the aims of psychoanalysis underlying Salamon’s conceptualisations. Salamon’s concerns stem necessarily from the structure of chaos/order that Wynter so eloquently unpacks (Wynter 1984, 28). The *polis* can only be ruled through a set of axioms and principles to which the judgements are already agreed upon, as I argued in chapter three, creating a hardened diamond shape of two points with possible modulations in between, indicating a hard cut between allowed divergence and othered nonnormativity, with its ‘illogical epistemic failings’.

In order to contrast a limiting of possibilities to aims, actions, and formulations already present, I will turn to Wittgenstein, who offers the insight that actions can precede words, and that words are consequently follow ups in a teleological development: as in the creation of a code (Wittgenstein 1984). This insight suggests two main implications. Firstly, code has a teleological emergence, which is an emergence within limited parameters. Instead of using teleological as forward looking formation, I use *teleological* here to indicate traceability, as it is based upon feedback (Rosenblueth, Wiener, and Bigelow 1943, 19). Traceability as backward looking formation, works even if the feedback is not placed upon the positive node of the action: the affirmation of action purposefully towards an end, but on the negative node: the consistent negating of adaption to a set of codes. The feedback makes it possible to trace the negation of existing codes, in order to understand formation, without needing an affirmed coding. This reading complements the indeterminate affirmation of chapter two, with its concomitant

double negation and vectors of development. However, it can be understood here, that this development is not a forward looking formation, because it can and will shift, but a backward looking forward formation based on clarity of negation. This is one of the key points Salamon misses, namely that negation of codes is equally informative for formation as adaptation and operation within a schema: negation is on the same level as aspiration. Furthermore, code can be partial, and does not need to be complete. One of the intermediate conclusions of chapter two should be recalled, that in ethics code does not need to be true in order to function. Ethical codes can also function in contradiction. Subsequently, limitation of the code as partial creates the option to read a further teleology into it. This teleology suggests a *post hoc* reading – emergence looks purposeful looking back at it. However, the moment of consideration is the ‘end point’ but there’s no need to accept it’s *the* end point, or the *necessary* end point. The latter is how colonialist narratives function (Miranda and Keating 2002, 204). However, an end can be merely an interval from which the route of emergence of the concept can be traced back.⁷⁷ ‘Teleology’ is thus not a problem as such, but either the impact of the codings is, or the use of teleological imposition as overextension and basis for a naturalization of dominant orderings (Césaire 2000, 33). These overextensions come with the presuppositions that teleology is an ingrained, essential and inescapable process, which it in this reading is not. I connect *teleology* and *code* to indicate code is subject to change, that its meanings can shift and be traced back, that it is not necessary to suppose that meanings are univocal at any point along its emergence, and lastly, that its tracing is *post hoc* and not predictive.

Secondly, I propose to understand code as an effect of formations that are compilations of different modes of action, and thus need not to fit into one model of coherence. Wittgenstein offers “[l]anguage – I want to say – is a refinement, ‘in the beginning was the deed’” (Wittgenstein 1984, 31e). As I have argued throughout chapters two and three new forms emerge from agential actions,

⁷⁷ Subsequent re-tracings might indicate different meanings and actions of code that have gained acknowledgement due to later events. While there might be a traceable lineage, there’s no need to postulate that as lucid at all times past from the present standpoint.

consisting of a double negation and a possible indeterminate affirmation. This suggests vectors of formation and can involve changing codes. These unfoldings are thus not utopian actions with determinate outcomes, but limited fields of activity, allowing the emergence of new forms and changes in practical truth. Wittgenstein usefully underlines not only the possibility of emergence, but furthermore highlights that action and the formation of new codes – also through language – is a process of refinement. This allows me to conclude that forms not only start as *ensouled bodily process*, but also that codings shift over time – as unfolding of possible understandings, or formulations of these processes of agential action, allowing for shifting *technes* of relation.

However, this is not all that can be learned from this insight. If in the beginning was the deed and linguistic coding follows action, this constitutes a departure from a disciplinary approach as the imposition of precisely described formations by processes of *inscription* (Weheliye 2014, 24). Nonnormative actions can be structured around illogical and irrational application of elements available in agent's environments. Wittgenstein suggest this is a relatively unproblematic process:

<I> just took some apples out of a paper bag where they had been lying for a long time. I had to cut half off many of them and throw it away. Afterwards when I was copying a sentence I had written, the second half of which was bad, I at once saw it as a rotten apple. And that's how it always is with me. Everything that comes my way becomes a picture of what I am thinking about at the time. (Is there something feminine about this way of thinking?) (Wittgenstein 1984, 31e).

The elements of this paragraph show how actions and imagery can find temporal combination. Importantly, this emphasizes how codings are not only monolithic formations weighing down on agents, but are equally nimble and limited waypoints offering footholds and handgrips for quotidian reflection on actions. Furthermore, it shows how different modes, like knife wielding and sentence copying, can be combined unproblematically, with the linguistic not dominating the action (cutting apples as editing sentences). Rather the reverse is shown that

bodily activity is easily taking over the complexity of linguistic endeavours. This approach is neither a form of domination or imposition, but works “at the time”, suggesting a pragmatic combination of available elements creating ways of navigating the present. Such light-hearted codings can thus offer footholds as ways out of dominant signifiers, but do not demand agential loyalty. These codes can be easily discarded, forgotten, or replaced. Furthermore, these codes do not emphasise the need for elaborate systems of thought: problems can be solved without commitment to available logical means.⁷⁸ This leads to conclude that it is possible to solve logical problems (or problems of logic) by illogical means. I will come back to this below.

The last sentence of the quoted paragraph is interesting not for its gendering function – which can either be taken as essentialist or social, neither of which is deep or enticing – but indicates an intuition in this being a nonnormative approach. This comment is suggestive of Wittgenstein’s awareness of the problem of normative monologics, and the possibility of escape out of these singular structures by ‘irrational’ or ‘inappropriate’ use of imagery as part of a practical approach to structures of thought. This is suggestive of non-linear teleological processes. The combination of different elements allows multi-modular generation that need not follow logical unfoldings within one level of existence. This draws attention to the workings of imagery as relevant to processes of linguistic generation; it indicates the unproblematic application and mixing of different frames in order to escape dominant logical and discursive encapsulations. In sum, these considerations can lead to the conclusion that it is indeed agency before ethics before epistemology as a basis for the emergence of nonnormative forms of life. It is not necessary for an agent to know what they are doing, before they have done it, while the construction of understanding follows the rejection of the current state of affairs. Extending from the level of the singular agent, this implies conditions of emergence based on collective practices and allows room for emergent abstract codings. The inability to escape dominant codings can be understood as the over-focus on the epistemic modality

⁷⁸ A point elaborated by Deneb Kozikoski Valereto in Berlin, 4 July 2015 at ‘Emancipation as Navigation’ event.

of coding, as well as isolating agents vis-à-vis overarching structures, disappearing agents under the weight of codes.

Coordinates of Code

The space of the *polis* claims to lift up its citizens, while at the same time it subjugates those on the demonic and other grounds. Wynter terms this a “simultaneously subjugating and emancipatory homogenizing regime” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 63). What is consequently needed for a nonnormative ethical project is the possibility of breaking this code as an extension of remaking codes. Willingness to accept loss figures here as bulwark against reformation of the master code, furthermore generosity, which I will theorise through the gift below, pushes inclusion to such an extreme, that the unity of a *polis* cannot hold. As I have argued in chapter two there is no change that consists only in negation or destruction, because the *ensouled body* will form itself through its active *dunamis*. The resultant *technes* and connective codes break down the *polis* if they are not encapsulated in unifying principles, demanding exclusion and logically homogeneous ordering.

Focusing on emergent codings I have argued that codes function as shorthand for structures of relation and action, and these abstractions can function both as disembodied mythology as well as ethical form. Quine underlines Wittgenstein’s assertion that forms of life can encapsulate agents in a whole of axioms, principles, and agreement on decisions. Furthermore, Quine argues that myths manage the flux of experience (Quine 1951, 41). These overarching myths are theorised as encompassing both the norm as well as providing stability in the face of experiential divergence. This leads to a claim that myth overrules agential *logos* by keeping the agent tied to a relationality that is aligned to the dominant coding, even if agents meet local exceptions. In short, this argumentation also functions to legitimise untrue codings, by reverting to stable codes. For Quine codes embed themselves in agents and function as essences. Codings are absorbed by the agent and inextricable. However, in contrast I conceptualise

codes as providing navigation and relation between agents. Agents either aim for the norm, and claim code as interior, or aim away from the norm displacing code as exterior. The direction of fit I have argued for is the inverse of Quine. However, even within my proposal Quine's theorization remains useful. Recall at this stage clichés of xenophobia, which claim particular exceptions to general rules when the exception is located in constant proximity.⁷⁹ The flow of experience categorized under standardized codifications emphasizes normative markers with some room for modification. Quine's theory thus describes how the *polis* remains functional as monological whole, by providing insight how experience contrary to its projections can be ignored, and thus offers a second tier of dismissal by the agents of the *polis*. The first tier was the argument in chapter three that monological agents have zones of invisibility, and miss out on multilogical connections, and the second tier of Quine's argument now offers that even if connection to the contrary happens, it will not necessarily dismiss the existing mythological codification. This is further underlined by the argument that changing the mythos is not dependent on individual experiences, but only as "corporate body" (Quine 1951, 38).

This connects to the theorisation of Wynter, who makes the argument that all codes are *praxes*, namely agential constitution by actions (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 34). This alleviates the pressure to find interiority (or not) because the emphasis shifted outward. This is further explained and nuanced by the earlier discussed arguments of Bernard Williams (1985), and María Lugones (2003) in chapter two, who outline that dispositions come inherently with a practical focus. Concurring that self-constitution is *praxis* and being human thus not a noun, focusing on the *technes* by which we constitute ourselves as form of life necessitates paying attention to the navigation of abstract codifications. My argument provides nuance of Wynter's claim by focusing on the possibility of transformation. Hereby the immersed structure of *logos*, *techne*, *mythos*, forms of life with attendant logics, and code serves to conceptualise how change operates on different instances of ethical navigation.

⁷⁹ I refer here to the "not this gay/trans/black/immigrant" etc. narrative

My argument reconstructs trans as the somatechnical formation of a changing ensouled body in line with these terms from chapter two. As can be acknowledged from existing trans lives, through e.g. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn's argument about the existence of transnormative subjects (2013), trans as such is not radical, even though it remains nonnormative. Trans can articulate itself through normative patterns, either for survival, camouflage, or desire, and as such doesn't guarantee disruption of existing patterns in the world, even if it might add to a turbulent functioning. The lack of impact can further be the case because the impact of agential actions is too low, by having too small a field of operation, or because nonnormative patterns are relatively open to exploitation by the existing logics as temporal and passing codes, as Parisi and Terranova argue (2000, 10). These processes are conceptualised by Quine as the stabilisation of mythology (1951, 42). This entails that experiences can be taken as singular, while governing codes and logics can stay intact. The abstract analytic of trans pathology can remain in operation in the *polis*, even if every trans person denies pathology. Quine explains such processes as abstractions needing to refer only to themselves, which are mapped on experiences. This shifting of abstractions, which are separated from experiences, creates the space for emergent codes. The argument continues with the explanation that models can change at the fringes, while the normative core stays intact, because of such processes:

total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience [...] But the total field is so underdetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to re-evaluate [...] No particular experiences are linked with particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole (Quine 1951, 39).

The stability of the monological order is thus explained not only through severance of experience and codings, but also through mechanisms of internal bookkeeping creating stability of fields as a whole. It is noteworthy to flag here Wynter's remark concerning the role of the intellectual in the ongoing

reproduction “of the genre of being human, its mode of consciousness of mind, and therefore the latter truth-for. We are, as intellectuals, the agents of its formal elaboration”(Wynter 2003, 307). While according to my Wittgensteinian reading intellectuals cannot be said to have constituted the form, they can be said to function as “grammarians of their orders” (Wynter 2001, 58), which functions as explanation of Quine’s bookkeeping for normative stability.

For a nonnormative ethics this leads to conclude that it is not a new singular logic which is needed, one that replaces the normative *modus operandi*, nor a new code that can function as recoding⁸⁰, but the continued formative efforts of re-coding across differently situated nonnormative efforts. As Quine’s model explicitly explains – the standard can change at the fringe, but the core stays stable. Disruption of the fringes at a variety of levels, through a network of changing, situated, and communicated codes is thus necessary to ensure that nonnormative forms of life can find their own balance between change and equilibrium instead of constantly being re-checked against the monological order.

A parallel explanation of agential activity against the norm, has been termed micropolitical by Deleuze and Guattari and are similarly connected to the macropolitical (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 213). In the conclusion of chapter three I argued that within normativity the walls of the *polis* are fractals (A. M. Brown 2017, 51) and end in dispositions. Contextual actions are resonating with overarching structures, yet not bound by it, as *logos* can shift. Shifts in *logos* as well as shifts in logics can directly contradict the normative core. My argument here is not to create the space for differentiation and fluidity at a micro level, but to argue that such action can lead to the destabilisation of the macro levels of organisation. It could be argued that re-codings are micropolitical with an eye to the macropolitical destabilization of monological imposition. Deleuze and Guattari’s vision of *mass* is that is “always animated by all kinds of movements of decoding” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 220). To underline, I’m not suggesting an

⁸⁰ The work of Ramon Amaro explains how different codings remain operative within a monological order.

escape of the mass, I am claiming nonnormative ethics taking place against the walls: the spaces of exclusion and othering that are material and structural, as well as dispositional. To be excluded results, in contrast to a debate in the *polis* about 'inclusion', only in escape.

Nonnormative re-codings are contextual, but traverse across contexts by abstraction. Traversing creates networks, which lift codes above the contextual in an on-going resonating between macro and micro levels. Braidotti reminds to avoid generalisation, which can be envisioned as an overstretching of the duration and impact of emerging ethical codes (Braidotti 2011, 269). Codes here, do not produce rigid grids of categorisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 223), but, I would suggest, waypoints to direct vectors of ethical relationality along (cf. Kelley 2003). A rigid field of force imposes itself upon agents, while in contrast a nonnormative field of forces forms relational codes as the pragmatics of ethics. As Parisi and Terranova warned, this enables control, but could alternatively open up ethics (2000). A nonnormative ethics against the walls of the *polis* thus suggests that the micropolitical (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 199) is thus perhaps better articulated as micro-ethical, because these are the emergence of new forms of life, and not articulations of a new polis.

Opacity and Surface Tension

As I have argued in chapter three, agents with different *logos* find connection through different logics and *demonic* engagement. This micro-ethical pragmatic of relations can be understood as multilogical connections. In addition, if relationality cannot be crafted within the available connections of shared forms of life, codes could be suggestive of a further possibility of bridging. However, if codes and *logos* are claimed to overlap, then it can be justifiably feared that the problems of pathology, transphobia, and racism re-emerge. A theory of nonnormative ethics thus needs to disinvest from interiority, in order to avoid this problem. This situates an approach to affect and to codification. Notwithstanding the earlier argument that affects cannot face the unknown, in

emerging ethics affect could be seen to carry some weight of connection. However, theories centring affect seem disinvested from the tools for theorizing emergence post negation. Puar explicitly claims that a *trans becoming* is:

a divestment of codes, of signification, of identity and a process of taking on the register of the impersonal. Becoming is not about trying to make the body more capacitated but about allowing and reading more multiplicity, multiplicities of the impersonal and of the imperceptible” (Puar 2015, 63).

To divest as a tool of letting go of categorisations and clarity creates an indeterminate becoming. An emphasis on the indeterminate in theorizations of becoming and change, seems to come with a tendency to halt conceptualisations before new forms of life develop (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 232ff; Ahmed 2010, 120; Buchanan 2011, 8).⁸¹ My proposal is to scrutinise these emerging forms, not in order to be deeply invested in new codified forms, but to acknowledge their existence as part of structures in processes of emergence, partial or total if necessary, as waypoint or foothold. In contrast, a disciplinary approach can focus on the existence and impact of codes, but does not come with the tools to formulate a process of indeterminate emergence, nor has the capacity to suggest codes beyond confinements (Berlant 2011). Disciplinary approaches formulate codes as already constraining with an emphasis on codified self-knowledge. In an intriguing combination of the affective and disciplinary approaches Alexander Weheliye has discussed disciplinary violence shaping nonnormative positions of black life through Spiller’s concept of *flesh* (Weheliye 2014, 33; Spillers 1987). Weheliye aligns this *enfleshed* brutalised being as the possible starting ground for new forms of life, also beyond the walls of the *polis* (Weheliye 2014, 138). In, hopefully, an extension of the discussion, because I do not disagree with Weheliye’s argument, I have offered arguments for the ethical emergence of agents outside of the *polis*. I believe this is justified by having shown how new forms of life find their starting point in the body. This seems an extension of Weheliye’s arguments who claims the *flesh* might lead to a “different modality of existence” (Weheliye 2014, 112). Focusing on the

⁸¹ An interesting work that does the opposite is RDG Kelley’s *Freedom Dreams*, which links the political imaginary with lived struggles and experiments (Kelley 2003).

impossibility of life within existing epistemologies cannot formulate a possibility beyond the starting point. This is exemplified in the impossibility of inclusion of ungendered *flesh* (Weheliye 2014, 81, 96, 97). I am in agreement, which is why I have focused on creativity in the emergence of codes as suggested by Wynter (Wynter 2003, 304), as a way of clearing new ground to think emerging forms of life beyond current constraints on. This will direct the discussion to a *trans becoming* based on forms beyond dominant norms, that need neither be captured in the *polis*, nor be violently pushed outside its walls as Agamben argues (1998), or be marooned on a “demonic island” (Weheliye 2014, 136). Instead, I will continue my argumentation from the demonic grounds outside of the *polis*, perhaps laying siege, or involved in a Weheliyan “guerrilla warfare” (Weheliye 2014, 137) by somatechnical emergence of nonnormative coding and *techne*, that aim to bring the polis’ walls down. Tying flesh in with the discussion of chapter three; these *techne* should be structured by loss, as gift of generosity in relation. Note in the quote of Puar that divesting in order to come to multiplicities of relation a notion of loss can be easily embraced.

Intention, Opacity, and Surface

I have argued above that intentions are irrelevant in moments of multilogical engagement, because of differences in logic. This allows the emergence of codes through any means available, which need not come with shared explanations. Instead of proposing an intentional and axiomatic emergence, I aim to look at the structure of relation. Justifications about inequality in situations of monological imposition are part of the imposition (Césaire 2000 *passim*). Resorting to principles functions as teleological-epistemological justification for ‘unintended outcomes’ on the basis of ‘fair principles’. As Wittgenstein’s conceptualisation has shown, the outcomes and decisions are already embedded with the agreement on the principles and are expressive of a form of life. Approaches based on intentions and principles primarily legitimise the monological order. Furthermore, supposed clarity of intentions are used to pathologies those

outside of the *polis* as argued in chapter one. Scrutiny of intentions thus serves to legitimise the *post hoc* principles, that reinscribe the current division of power (Wekker 2016). This necessitates the understanding that codes are temporal, and partial in their functioning between agents and forms of life.

For nonnormative ethics there is an important difference between opacity (Glissant 1997) and thingification (Césaire 2000). Thingification is the extreme figuring of the black body as matter only. If the necessity of unearthing intentionality is put into question, anxiety that this might lead to an acceleration of thingification is justified. The walls of the polis function by projection and extraction, and minimizing intentionality does not legitimise the practice, but also seems not to curb it. Thingification is the extreme operation of a monological ordering on the world, reducing black bodies to commodities (Césaire 2000, 42). An extension of this functioning of the imposition of codes lies in pathologising, as a form of dehumanization, of trans bodies in processes of forced sterilization and disposability. While racialised bodies are enclosed in kin structures based on eugenical operations of the norm (Wynter 2003), trans bodies are categorized in the forced kinships of singular ordering – as pathologically invented beings. Trans processes of dysselection do not follow racialised understandings such as Wynter analyses of *dysselection* (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 60), but functions within an understanding of procreation. *Dysselection* in this form functions through physical modification as forced sterilization, which codifies agents as being culled out of the eugenical *or* dysgenical line. These impositions of trans modification are thus differentiated according to racialization (cf. Wadiwel 2009) and come down to differing processes of thingification and demonization. At the extreme end of the singular ordering is the black trans femme/woman that signifies an impossibility of existence in normative eyes (Spade 2011; Weheliye 2014; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015). These positions get further reinscribed by already ordering the trans feminine body as predator, removing them not only from the heteronormative space of procreation, but ushering trans femmes in a space of unlovability. In the monological ordering there is the double effect of

thingification as commodification, as well as intention ascription in the form of pathology and criminalization (McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015).

In order for a nonnormative ethics to function outside of this extreme violence inflicted upon bodies, it is inevitable postulate the existence of *logos* to evade thingification, but disinvest from ascriptions of interiority. *Logos* as undefined formation, as opposed to systems of signs, which already carry interlocking connections – such as psychoanalysis (Césaire 2000, 59), or physiological explanations leading to the specifics of bodily being, is in my argument a non-prescriptive suggestion of particular agential formation: it claims indeterminate affirmative formation. However, the claim to an indeterminate *logos* and underdefined relationality can only function when it operates under “*a pragmatics of mutual inclusion*” (Massumi 2014, 49) creating space for mutuality, before a logic of exclusion and separability applies (Da Silva 2016, 60). In chapter three I situated my argument around loss of *logos* in order to counter exclusion and create space for emergent relationality. It needs to be noted here, that not all agents can face equal loss – some agents have so little to lose that the leeway in which their shifts of *logos* can happen has been filled with exploitation (cf. Weheliye 2014; Spillers 1987). I do not want to suggest that agents come with a standard of possible loss. Shifts remain contextual and are dependent on the needed displacements of *logos* as well as the material space there is available to navigate. Weheliye’s argument leads to the conclusion that “[t]o have been touched by the flesh, then, is the path to the abolition of Man” (Weheliye 2014, 138). Weheliye centralizes loss, but it is the loss of exclusion and dehumanization that leads to the possibility of generation. It is the total loss, which enables abolition of the *polis* – of Man. My more modest proposal is to have this structure of loss functioning in making relations between those attempting escape, those excluded, and those resisting the *polis*.

Outside of the monological order, in the *demonic* spaces the claim to opacity guarantees both an engagement leaving one’s reflective and dispositional processes unpathologised, while at the same time making space to operations of generosity and loss. I have argued for this point in chapter two through Lugones’

concept of world-travelling, which give up ease and could be seen to be suggestive of loss and embracing opacity (Lugones 2003, 86). Opacity thus underlines the existence of another's agency, by accepting it *unconditionally* as the surface tension within the engagement. By leaving space for differentially operating *logos*, the question to intentionality need not be asked, as it is already postulated. While in chapter three I argued for the space of the meeting as the acknowledgment *daimons*, here the question arises in renewed form asking how codes operate without immediate presence or *demonic* entanglement in forms of life. The question that surfaces is how to meet across different fields of force and what ground can be found in between. At the most extreme the opacity leads to the impossibility of meeting as is exemplified by Wittgenstein's talking lion example (Bowell 2009, 7; Wittgenstein 2010 PPF 327), where Wittgenstein claims that even if a lion could speak we could not understand what was said, because our forms of life are so different. Wittgenstein problematizes the idea that the form of language is sufficient to enable understanding, because the form of life that resonates through the available terms is out of reach of understanding (Wittgenstein 2010, 235e 327). It bears reminding, that this does not mean that there can be no connection, as the *ensouled body* comes with *dunamis* that enable connection across more than language.

Furthermore, as discussed above light hearted and contextually available imageries can create temporal codifications which can structure exchanges leading to forms of language. The need for these quick codes of little weight does not need to arise out of the logical space but can, as I have argued above, arise out of available pictures, situations, and present environmental cues on the condition that the meeting is not structured by the demand for monological imposition. Available tools are thus merely pragmatic techniques for establishing a space of non-aggression in order for processes of emergence to take place. Intention ascription on the other hand, can thus be seen to provide a technology to the monological denizens of the *polis* to protect their own logic, claim axiomatic innocence, while subjugating others, in the name of political-ethical rationality.

Opacity and Abstraction

Opacity on the ethical level thus needs to come with inter-agential approaches that do not centre either accessible interiority or principled development. Emergent codes to bridge agential *logos* can be found in environmentally present practices, occurrences, or haphazardly applied imagery. While the codes can have contextual bearing, they are also immediately abstract as they do not lay claim to internalised connections, even if these codes can become part of the navigated environment and thereby influence the formation of *logos*. Agential loss as the willingness to open up one's *logos* to change can therefore only be self-accepted in this abstract reading of multi-logical connection. Considering that the interaction can also be partial, pragmatic, or circumstantial, these bridges can emerge and burn fast. However, opacity creates the possibility to open connection between agents without necessitating accounts of understanding that need to be negotiated between experience of the agent and the non-experience of the hearer (van der Drift 2016; Abbas 2010; Weheliye 2014). Demands for understanding create an inequality in which the founding experience – that which makes the difference – needs to be articulated, to those who do not have the experience, in order to be 'recognised'. Abbas articulates: "[t]he sensorium sponsored by liberalism assigns undisputed value to a form of expressed suffering as fitting with recognition, inclusion, and empowerment" (Abbas 2010). The recognition is not an open form, but a form of devaluation by articulating itself as subjugated by the power it addresses itself to. This not only devaluates agents and experience, but its structure is by necessity based in impossibility. Such epistemological recognition is thus immediately misrecognition, with as added problem a case of 'wounded attachments' (W. Brown 1995), holding on to foundational pain in order not to lose the codification that forms one's rearticulated social self. Weheliye criticizes this take by arguing that those 'attachments' serve as platform to demand rights (Weheliye 2014, 76). Weheliye's explanation opens possibility of opacity in such interactions, while material injuries are sufficient without an interiorised understanding that needs to be explicated and validated. Weheliye argues that

the insistence on pain is a counter-effect for the dismissal of violence and injury, not so much an articulation of identity (Weheliye 2014, 77). While Brown points to 'identity' as epistemological claim, Weheliye nods to it as code for enduring material circumstances. Taking this nod a step further, I have defended the claim for agential opacity, by removing interiority entirely.

Glissant's "right to opacity for everyone" (Glissant 1997, 194) deepens understanding of the *somatechnical* level of ethics. Glissant uses the term 'opacity' in a lineage ranging from 'greek mythologies' where opacity is always 'the other' in conjunction with a transparency of the self (Glissant 1997, 49). The other is never legitimised, and forever reduced to the transparency the self can wrangle out of this other. "Either the other is assimilated, or else it is annihilated" (ibid.). The possibility of coming into relations with opaque others is precisely by not questioning the legitimacy (Glissant 1997, 55). This discarding of legitimacy is possible because the agent does not claim to be transparent to oneself, nor structured around a specific legitimacy. The *polis* does not structure a claim to relation, nor is interiority providing the fundamentals. The resultant agential action focuses on environments and is thus contextual, and *logos* emerges by navigating *ensouled bodies* past dominant codings as well as local forms. Eva Hayward terms such nonnormative interactions between body and environment 'transpositions', which can be "perversions or deviations, misdirections that discompose order and arrangement" (Hayward 2012, 92). These transpositions are sensuous modalities of change. The importance of emphasis on sensations does not lie on a privileging of affect, but on the underlining of the absence of articulations when faced with agential change. The situatedness of action flags existing codings, while the emergence of *logos* simultaneously holds the door open to transpositions onto new forms. In these circumstances narration of experience needs to translate into abstractions if it is to move across contexts. While it can be important to flag narration as tool, shifting the focus to codings allows for ruptures of understanding and association, rather than nudging formation or transposition back to more linearly teleological formats, such as 'transitions' may suggest. Opacity functions

here as possibility to change without confession and demanded self-codification, and thus functions as openness to the possibility of unexpected emergence of *logos*. Furthermore, it can alleviate the pressure of clarity on the agent, and allow navigations to sensuously fold open new spaces between agents as possibility of relation. This allows further emergence of new forms, without demands for explanation.

Contextual forms can become codes that do not stay in place, but migrate under the radar of the *polis*, opening knowledge and attachment to agents, not as subject formation, but sharing of access to insights. Where the first makes a claim to knowledge explaining the place of the subject in terms localizable as social positions (Lugones 2003, 140) the second is less descriptive, as it is a mere indication of operations against imposition and possibilities for negation that still need to find rearticulation in localised *logos*. These codings can be footholds or waypoints, or flag possible vectors. The notion of opacity guarantees an agent space for an emerging *logos* as well as the possibility to change emerging codes based on further traversing along temporal vectors: “[t]he thought of opacity distracts me from absolute truths whose guardian I believe myself to be” (Glissant 1997, 192). Opacity thus works as multi-way process to create space between agents as explanation of material circumstances, as well as for the experience of an agent itself. The practical truth of agents and the logical-affective relationality does not need to constitute a definite version of the world, but can remain in the realm of the pragmatic.

My conceptualisation of nonnormative ethics resulted in the absence of the need to communicate experiential-epistemological codification across differences – this is a claim recognition theory makes, needing to translate relevant interiority into narrations of difference and similarity (Bhanji 2012a; Bannerji 2000, 48). This returns the perspective on codifications to being operative on surfaces instead of ‘felt insides’. Practical truth translates as the navigation of codes, material spaces, and connections with agents, but does not need to become a claim that is carried forward as similarity and unworked connection across analogue codifications. Here I am returning to a point elaborated in chapter two

– theory and practice need not be connected – that is: theoretical categorization and practical lives do necessarily not overlap (Wiggins 2001b). This is directly contesting disciplinary formation, a theorization that does not need to be discarded, but can be incorporated as a code that is navigated. This runs parallel to Weheliye (2014), who argues for an oscillation between discipline and the fugitivity this contains. Weheliye’s insights can provide contrast with the conceptualisation of Parisi and Terranova, by elaborating that discipline is ingrained in turbulence, as yet another mechanism creating differentiation for exploitation. However, Weheliye also creates space to unfurl under the radar of the constraining codes. This means we are not necessarily who we say we are, or we are not who you say we are. Abstract codes need not reach the soul, but leave space for renegotiation and resistance. This point is further underlined by Sharpe, that life does not only happen *in* subjection (Sharpe 2016, 4). Echoes of such experiences are found in Stone (Stone 1991) who makes it as demand to tell trans’ own stories. My argument has led to a nuance about bridging the space of resisting totalising notions and exploratory agential action with the argument that was found in Preciado, discussed in chapter one, about the gap between norms and person. The current argument stands without having to withdraw into ontological escapes of untouched personhood that somehow is able to retract from its body and the space around it, as I have discussed in chapter one (P. B. Preciado 2013). Instead an agent’s *logos* is always a navigation of codes, and can thus reside in indeterminate space. Codes can find resonance with *logos*, or remain detached from *logos* and be used as imagery, but also find deep connection. The code will always function in abstraction, as code is not *logos*. Code is the relational linkage between different *logos*. However, not all codes are accepted by all agents, and codes are thus not uncontested, but resisted, changed, and a variety of contradictory codings can be operative at the same time.

My proposal extends navigation and the existence of differential *logos* to all agents, instead of being the exceptional realm of a radical few. That means that navigation and formation of a *logos* is perhaps more explicit outside of mainstream, but certainly not unique to nonnormative agents. Tying Berlant (Berlant 2007) in at this stage, normative aspiration can thus be postulated as

universal for every body that is closed out of the norm, while it is irrelevant for those closed in by the norm, as they are carried forward by it. Since forms of life can be construed in such a way that certain agents are necessarily disadvantaged and unable to live according to these norms, codes can operate cruelly, by having agents aspire to, and thus support, forms of life that are obstacles to their flourishing (Berlant 2011, 1). Different positions have different codes to navigate, while it is not necessary that agents are determined by those codes. Norms are thus not 'embodied' as such, but agents direct their formation towards certain ends and negotiate their dispositional development under varying circumstances. These normative environments either enable relatively unproblematic threshold conditions for some, for instance for truth-qualifications in normatively positioned speakers, or alternatively bar agents from stably residing in the normative conditions, up onto the aggressive codification of dehumanisation. These conditions are consequently operative as fields of force determining the environment of codification and navigation as argued in chapter three.

The pressure of imposed codification is pushing against present knowledge of different forms of life, local codes, and underground formation. The demands of access to politics in the *polis* claim agents in regimes that move them away from their nonnormative *logos* accepting code as if it is *logos*. Articulations within this frame that are not explicitly camouflage, become aspirations or respectability (Raha 2015; Irving 2008). This is injurious as it switches *logos* with code; it pretends abstraction is formation. Not only constitutes this a removal from the contextual environment, it places aspiration before experience, claiming abstraction is necessary to understand one's *logos*. This sweeps different forms of life under a single heading, which is the normative representational demand of the *polis*. Such a replacement of *logos* with code lays claim, for instance, to an interiority of a single form of rationality as universal and expanding over the walls of the *polis* from a selected few onto *demonic* others. It denies nonnormative logics while aiming to replace it with normative code.⁸² This

⁸² These practices are every day in pathological processes such as trans, but also in prisons (Haney 2010).

constitutes a rule over interiority through exteriority. It is the pressure inward as claim to shared grounds that are encapsulations by the normative order of the *polis*.

Christina Sharpe counters such extreme conditions: “even as we experienced, recognized and lived subjection, we did not *simply* or *only* live *in* subjection and *as* the subjected” (Sharpe 2016, 4). The pressure of the dominant code does not discipline *simpliciter*. Sharpe continues “[d]espite knowing otherwise, we are often disciplined into thinking through and along lines that reinscribe our own annihilation, reinforcing and reproducing what Sylvia Wynter (1994, 70) has called our “narratively condemned status”. We must become undisciplined” (Sharpe 2016, 13 italics mine). This undisciplining recalls Hayward’s earlier articulations of disordering as form of transposition, and unmasks the operation of cruel optimism by turning away from it.

Sharpe argues that to know that force of subjugation is to know each other (Sharpe 2016, 34). Recipients and perpetrators of aggressive codifications know each other as violence – one receives it and another projects it. Camouflage against that force is a first possibility to re-opening space. A further line of defence suggested by opacity clears this fog of war of imagined lucidity and claims the meeting on the surface as sufficient acknowledgement of ethical and epistemological tension. Nonnormative codings are a pragmatic re-description of surface tensions, which allows new forms of life to emerge, because they are shared and not imposed. Surface tension serves as replacement of imposed codification. This tension is felt before there is codification of relation, and perhaps even after (Lugones 2003, 90; Rodríguez 2014, 141). Opacity furthermore allows the ethics of turbulence to emerge as simpler tensions finding footholds in flux.

I will recapitulate the working of codifications in order to introduce further nuance; I have introduced the distinction between force of imposition and tension, whereby force is one-directional and tension multi-directional. Force translates outward aggression as pressure directed inwards. The double

negation of the normative agent is thus primarily a negation of its direct environment in order to assume normative power. The codification of the norm shapes a one-sided interaction based on negation of mutual realities. Abstraction demands in the normative modality clarity interaction as determined relation, foreclosing mutuality. This connection is felt as force, when mutual relationality is absent, as figures in the work of Ahmed (2010).

In contrast, the double negation of the agent within nonnormative *somatechnical* formation is the negation of existing normative codifications and opening the possibility of relationality, as I have articulated in chapters two and three. Abstract codes in their nonnormative modality can function as indicators of possibility, by which connections can be envisioned. However, when relationality is structured around opacity, the possibility of seamless logical connection must be given up. An acknowledgement of opacity and agency only offers surface tension as site for connection. Tension is a mutual pressure, which is a necessary presence in the emergence of new forms – imposition is only a singular pressure: monological and monodirectional. Tension forms abstract codes on the surface of meetings enabling mutual connection through a shared sign. Tension is the invisible possibility of connection, which could be a ghostly feeling expressive of affective structures (Muñoz 2009, 41) or the felt presence of different *demons*. Muñoz explains how keywords such as *ghosts* open up the possibility to see how “structures of feeling link queers across different identity markers” (Muñoz 2009, 47). Codings, such as these, enable “traversing across categorical distinctions” (Muñoz 2009, 46). What I have added to this understanding is that these traversals of codes through new tensions come with the emergence of new collective codes. This relies partly on the hopeful present of intangible tensions. These tensions lever codes into existence as the solidification of felt logics of connection. However, with differing agential *logos* these codes need not be read similarly, even though they will function as possible bridging of difference.

Conceptualising an encompassing *transsomatechnics* within a structure of re-coding takes the view on emergence away from personal formation and articulates this as collective process. As I articulated in chapter three, *demonic*

grounds, as opposed to the silence at the heart of the *polis*, have enabled ethical conceptualisation away from inclusion into the established platforms of decision-making, emphasizing the possibility of connecting differing *logos* as collaborative multilogical emergence. New codes need not assimilate many into one overarching theme – there is no singular *topos* necessary, as local codes will do.

To sum up, abstractions give insight in moving away from pre-coded and pre-narrated forms of life. In chapter two, I argued that new forms of life emerge out of ensouled bodily vectors with undetermined ends. In chapter three I offered arguments for thinking about collectivities out of the *polis* – not only as not included, but also out of the confinements of *political* thought. This can be envisioned as a meeting of logically incompatible connections between differently *ensouled* bodies, leading to multilogical ethics. The discussion in this chapter has focused on emergent forms and re-codings as meetings on the surface, where the newness arising out of the tension of differing *logos* and mythologies can entangle.

Order of Codes

Code in the *polis* is based on order, necessitated by two main consequences of organisation. The first is that subjugated agents have no particular reason to stay subjugated, whereby a regime of control follows immediately from the introduction of the ranking as such. The second is subsequent to the first, because, as was discussed in chapter three, the citizens in the *polis* cannot lay claim to connection, other than through subjugation and have to deny (subsets) of their experiences, or actively evade having experiences of the humanity of their ‘subordinates’. The lack of connection further necessitates order and control, as there is no further recourse to connectivity. This then, leads to the question of legitimacy, which is ultimately summed up in the master code.

Outside of the *polis*, where relationality can be attempted, as this does not come with imposition, codes are partial, based on opacity and in their possible contradictions based on navigating surroundings that do not come with automatic procedures of social placement. As Stephano Harney states: “there’s no such thing as a white community. A white community is a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron. You can’t organize an oxymoron” (Harney, Schapira, and Montgomery 2017). The attempted relationality outside the *polis* does not guarantee absence of imposition, but inside the *polis* imposition is fundamental. The demonic disorder beyond the walls is partly possible because of the extension of agents beyond the knowable, the lucid and the articulable. Demonic *logos* is not based on a single grid of reasons, but on particular and mostly practical truth, found *technes* of connection, that are admitted to lay outside a claim to truth. Codes in the *polis* do claim the monological ordering as based on truth, which is therefore necessarily singular, dominating, and constraining alternatives. The codifications of the *polis* are just as mythical as the demonic codifications, but the stakes in the *polis* are higher: a system of exploitation enabling *eudaimonia* for a few over the lives of many. The difference in structure might be understood to be that in the *polis* agents are referred to by their *role* and outside the *polis* are addressed by means of the *daimon*. A role is lucid and circumscribed with a positionality, while the *daimon* is unclear, shifting, changing and has different forms in different moments, and through different perceivers.

Cedric Robinson suggests in *The Terms of Order* (2016) that the idea of leadership and political authority works to circumvent acknowledging the rootedness in myth and irrationality of social gatherings. Robinson discusses rationalising layouts highlighting political authority, founding Western political thought, including its alternatives Marxism and Anarchism. In the chapter on myth, Robinson explains myth as a form of “operational code” (Robinson 2016, 128). Myths serve to summarise and make experiences intelligible. Codes, as myths, thus function as summaries of experiences. This enables both dialogue and memory (Robinson 2016, 133). What is important and extends the reasoning earlier in this chapter is that code does not need to be logically

coherent, rational, or of purely analytical nature in order to function. The operative function of code does not need to fit in a 'mathematical understanding' of action (Robinson 2016, 144) in which all actions and epistemologies of social understanding fit a grid that is equally accessible to all. On the contrary, using Eric Dodds (Dodds 1951 in; Robinson 2016, 142ff), Robinson unearths how the *polis* is based on irrationalities that function exactly because they offer a form of thought in which agents find expression of experiences that cannot fit the pervasive understandings. Robinson sums up:

[P]hysical disorder presented paradigmatic closure with social disintegration; the transformation of the set of symmetrical laws and equilibrium into twisted, tangled, and perhaps fatal disequilibrium. Like the universe, the *polis*, the mind and the body contained the capacity for chaos, the possibility for the disintegration of order (Robinson 2016, 144).

This undoing of rationalised forms by the body has been central in my argument and the disintegration of order leads to the possibility of connection beyond roles of normative *techne*. Robinson highlights in the discussion how this idea demanded a concession to ordering and the irrational became integrated into order (Robinson 2016, 146).

In the current discussion the nonnormative undoing of the *ensouled* body brings this form of mythology as structure for irrationality back into focus. As argued previously through the work of Wittgenstein, functional codes do not need to fit into existing schemes and can easily traverse different realms of experience. Codifications emerging from this ordering can therefore be thought to equally wrap themselves around a combination of rational, affective, and sensible summaries of experiences and insights in order to bridge various layers of contact, memory, and operational logics (whether they are physical, social, or intellectual). This suggests bridging that has the ability to move beyond either a singular grid, remain solidly individual, or needs to subsume in operational hierarchies. Indeed, Robinson ends with two claims that are exceptionally interesting for the development of this argument. After discussing the social

relations of the Tonga, that have not formed in response to Western hierarchies, one of the main strands is that the claim to “belonging is open” (Robinson 2016, 196). This has resulted from an anti-hierarchical network of intermingling and connection, where different people can *function* according to their claimed belonging. The second claim extends from the first claim, and that is that in Tonga kinship structure “all are equally incomplete” (ibid.). Both claims resonate with the argument in this thesis, as the multilogical relations are based on the creation of belonging, and furthermore the incompleteness acknowledged by the Tonga, can be seen to resonate with loss, impurity of groups, and the necessity to bridge existing logics, which need not, and indeed cannot be done by the application of an universal, but on the contrary functions by laying claim to the irrational and mythological of the *daimon* in order to hold contrasting logics of forms in mutual relation.

Wynter discusses the connection between *mythos* and *bios*⁸³ as the sociogenic principle, (Wynter and McKittrick 2015; Wynter 2003, 2001). This term, introduced by Fanon (Fanon 1967), is “the information-encoding organizational principle” (Wynter 2001, 54) that determines what feels good and bad, and thus what it means to *be* a certain ‘organism’ or living under a certain codification (Wynter 2001, 50). These codifications function through “processes of socialisation effected by the invented *tekhne*” (Wynter 2001, 53). Wynter proposes human as hybrid between nature and culture (McKittrick 2015b, 26ff; Wynter 2001; Fanon 1967, 11). In the discussion on coding Wynter introduces a genetic set of instructions, as well as a cultured layer of codings that together inform the form of life and content of experience of the agent. At the same time Wynter searches for the ‘space for invention’ in the creation of forms of life (Wynter 2003, 331). Wynter draws forms of life (*bios*) and codes (*mythos*) in close proximity through *techne* and ties in *logos* closely, in order to explain different experience. In chapter two my reading of Aristotle’s *anima* offered an entanglement of the *ensouled* body of the agent with its environment through a set of *dunamis* – powers of interaction – that inform through actions a formational *logos*. This reading allowed me to stake a claim to changing bodies,

⁸³ *Bios* here can be understood as *form of life* as I’ve been using it throughout the thesis

away from a reading of 'bodily stability', as Wynter does, that is further informed by cultural codings. A changing *ensouled* body enables me to argue for a change of body as constitutive of a changing worldview. This argument allows envisioning the body as interacting with the world, changing, yet not bound by schematic descriptions. By offering a *mythological* reading of bodily connections and the power within constitution different modes of engagement and thus the space for invention opened up. The openness of the concept of *dunamis* leaves spaces for differently abled and differently emphasised interactions, and underdetermined modes of connection. The body need not function as an unquestioned whole, but can be thought as forming through its modes of interaction and environmental influences. These interactions thought as *dunamis* can for instance be thought as *traversing*, *transversing*, and *transsubstantion* (Da Silva 2014, 94); moving non-linearly through time, experiencing emotions across different bodies, and changing form. Da Silva's arguments make clear why a monological order is impoverishing, as it limits modes of engagement to the constraints of a single order. Desensitising in the polis is a poor connection to the world, as agents end up in one form, where social interactions can be envisioned as negotiations of that imposed coherence. The absence of an interior order opens new modes of connection.

Codings enter into this picture as "de-essentialised essence" (Quine 1951) of the monological ordering of the world, in what Wynter terms "the master code" (Wynter 2003, 263, 300). In order to re-envision lives away from the monological ordering, I will defend an argument about emerging nonnormative codings, as constitutive of relations between agents, and connections to *logos*. This involves the acceptance of a change of structure, which subsequently necessitates a re-ordering of logic. Furthermore, the evaluative keys – that which Wynter articulates what feels good and bad, and thus what it means to *be* (black) (Wynter 2001, 50) – will be up in the air and replaced by temporary codings, alternative and possibly confusing waypoints, and rely on 'surface tensions': both pleasurable and negative frictions, to enable new codes to emerge. Codes encompass the different *logos*, *technes*, and *logics* and retain connections without demand of forming a single form of life. Codes function as connection

detached from lived difference. This underlines the earlier conclusion of chapter three that *codes* are the new *mythoi*.

Wynter (2003) articulates a lineage of the monological order as the imposition of the master code distributing role allocations according to imaginations legitimizing economic orderings. Through claims of interiority – whether they be theological in nature, at later stages genetic, culminating in material conditions – the master codes enables exaltation and canonization of those in the *polis* and articulates dysselection and marginalization of those deemed to be *naturally* outside (Wynter 2001, 43ff, 2003). These codings lay a claim to interiority in order to stay rooted in agents and thus remain part of the reproductive processes. It is the mythology of superiority and inferiority that is coded on phenotypes – as Du Bois’ description of the ‘Colour Line’ (Du Bois 1903) – that is structuring agential formation. Wynter elaborates this claim to range from codings of genetic selection or dysselection to new codings centring material circumstances as “blacks, Latinos, Indians as well as the transracial group of the poor, the jobless, the homeless, the incarcerated, the disabled, the transgendered” (Weheliye 2014, 28) can be argued to be ushered onto the demonic grounds, with material circumstances still emerging around the codings of the Colour Line (McKittrick 2015b).

Codings are thus different from reading identity or subjectivity, as they imply a structure of relations, and structures in relations, which does not need to coincide with self-conception. While identity lays claim to a series of internalized understandings of one’s being, subjectivity makes the further claim that these forms of understanding are necessarily related to one’s understanding of the environment one operates in (Lugones 2003, 225; Ortega 2016, 116). Codings open the space between multilogical engagements to share forms of life, without needing to subsume understandings of one’s being or one’s surrounding. A code can indicate difference, as has been argued and unpacked extensively by Wynter (Wynter 2007, 2003, 1984), but can also indicate connections and collective actions without needing to revert to shared interior processes. Nonnormative codes thus leave space for difference, without essentialising difference as

belonging to larger overarching group identities, which fragment upon closer scrutiny. Codings arising out of collective praxis are different from codings as monological imposition. While imposed codings defend themselves as 'inevitable' and 'natural' (Wynter 2003), codings emerging out of collective experimentation with forms of life are temporal, situational, and thus changeable. However, as indicated above they can also traverse contexts and function as described in Wittgenstein's example – imageries enabling emergence in different contexts. Whether these codes stick and align with different situational practices is then a relational, contextual and agential issue.

Ontology of Code

Turbulent Geographies

The two modes of turbulence, discussed in chapter three, found normative agents inside the *polis*, as well as nonnormative agents on the demonic grounds, outside the projections of the walls of the *polis*. Nonnormative turbulence comes with an aesthetic of making connection on the surface, without access to the logic of the other in the meeting. Glissant terms this an ethics that is not determined in advance, and is possible by generosity (Glissant 1997, 154). An ethics of generosity comes with an aesthetics of turbulence (Glissant 1997, 155). This aesthetics is conceived as the work of joining the dynamics of emergence. This generosity resonates with the argument in chapter three about loving perception (Lugones 2003, 95), and its attendant non-agonistic attitude which enables openness to new forms and actions. This re-connects to loss, as a structure in the encounter, which is the willingness to surpass one's own logic, and lose sense, meaning, and even risk dignity by looking like a fool (Lugones 2003, 96). Turbulent encounters are thus a play of generosity, loss, and *dunamic* modes of engagement, which risks foolery. The ethical work on the demonic grounds is partly a continual retraction of imposition within relations. This retraction of imposition structures relations as making space, and becomes part of the coded

reactions of encounters. It is the mark to recreate possible re-encounters that has been pre-emptively coded under normative regimes, with their attendant claim of agential enclosure (Glissant 1997, 174). It is the work on the crossroads of logics without turning it into colonialism as extractions of those useful moments (Césaire, 2000). Agential encounters are making relational commons.

In these nonnormative encounters commonplaces (Glissant, 1997, 176) function as the (new) 'formalised' channels guiding the flow of interaction. These commonplaces are not a problem if they don't become normalising channels and should thus neither be naturalized (as 'inevitable'), nor reified (as 'the best') outcome, but seen as changeable occurrences. Commonplaces dim the intensity of (de)tracing coding, and agential usage of the double negation in *transsomatechnics*. They function as quick normative aspirations, or multiple shared waypoints of formation. Commonplaces need to be public and accessible, graspable, and leave room for individual navigation – these new codings do *not* need to come with multilayered perspectives – this is what commonality at the brink of *transsomatechnics* and commonplacing will do.

Turbulence will lead to placements and new tracings of code – the making of new shelters and anchors of flow – shielding intensity, but equally collectivizing the emergence of new forms. Commonplaces function thus as flexible codes, similarly to Wittgenstein's example of apples and editing. Paolo Virno discusses Commonplaces through Aristotle, as widely available means of expression that people cannot do without (Virno 2004, 36). This can be understood in the current discussions as the shifting terms of the debates around nonnormative gender, such as genderqueer or non-binary. The *transsomatechnical* movement will not need to become overinvested in them as permanent dwellings, or final aims. Historical approaches have shown a continued shifting in terms, as these terms are covering new conceptualisations (Stryker 2008b; Raha 2015). Commonplaces can become ethical vectors, normalised and in need of less flexibility, or these vectors function as passing point, forming new lives as part of destabilisations of the *polis* and recoding of nonnormative spaces.

While commonplaces function as moments of evaluation, providing a stable point, they also indicating loss of flexibility. A current example would be the use of the term 'genderqueer' (Nestle, Howell, and Wilchins 2002) which rose up, and is again moving out of use. It could be said that the discussions surrounding 'non-binary' (Barker 2016) have become centralised, rather than envisioning this as replacement. Such shifts can be seen as markers of the *ensouled* effort of ethical engagement. These are moments of collective agency flaring up in a temporal code that will be incorporated and then recoded, as forms of life are in continued change. Feinberg has termed these the passing codes that change as we speak – the inevitable changing names of trans (Feinberg 1992b). These will not need to culminate in an around the world in 80 genders approach (Bhanji 2012a), but will also and perpetually need to be changed, opened and destabilised, keeping formations open and reworking possible impositions.

Destabilising Codes

Returning to Bernard Williams, it is now possible to retrace the statement that dispositions are central to ethics (Williams 1985, 160) with added meaning. It is not only the change in *logos*, but also the interactive change in *logos* and codings that is needed for changing dominant patterns. If only codes change, the logics operative on those codes remain intact, ensuring internal stability, as Parisi and Terranova (2000) have argued. If only *logos* changes, but normative codings remain dominant there is the possibility that agents are forced to fall back into dominant logics as they remain navigating dominantly coded environments.⁸⁴ While these nonnormative agents might fall out of the norm, the environment forces engagement with dominant codings. The earlier remark that the walls of the *polis* are fractals ending in dispositions situates Williams remark about the preservation of forms of life in dispositions:

⁸⁴ Some agents might want to navigate dominantly coded environments, as they want to be part of these. This would be inclusion in the polis, which is not what this thesis is concerned with.

Dispositions are basic because the replication of ethical life lies in dispositions. [...] If ethical life is to be preserved, then these dispositions have to be preserved. But equally if the ethical life that we have is to be effectively critized and changed, then it can be so only [by] modifying the dispositions that we have (Williams 2006, 75).

This quote does indeed underline the importance of agential change, however, as the arguments above show, this needs furthermore a change in logic and a change in codes. While attitudes to certain codings may change, an unchanged logic means that a change of codes is predominantly an aesthetic affair, for instance by keeping a structure of relations that enables exploitation. As opposed to a wholesale change of code and logic – which would be a utopian ideal perhaps, or often a change of code, but retaining a mimetic logic – a multilogical network changes the stability of the monological order, not only through emergent codes, but also through the possibility of perpetuating disrupting logics.

The problem of changing codes, while a dominant logic gets reinforced, is clear notions of backlash, further impositions, and re-emerging lines against fugitive logics (Harney and Moten 2013). In relation to this issue of collapsing back into stabilising norms, Wynter speaks about a ‘Ceremony that must be found’ to break this logic (Wynter 1984). As I have argued throughout this thesis, one key for such a ceremony is an Aristotelian strategy of changing bodily *logos* in order to come to a changed understanding of the world. This requires both *ensouled* bodily change, in combination with an Anzaldúan making of a new mythos: a change of code and form of life. Only then can a change of logic emerge. This strategy is thus a matter of action as well as space-making for emerging codes. These codes shift from unstable, to destabilizing, or a re-orientation of evaluative vectors.

This means in practice for an emergent ethics – as form of life – that it is irrelevant to judge such an ethic on the potential for coherence – as singular substantive project, albeit with different zones of activity: work, home and

family, friends and community, art, (secular) faith, and politics. This is the standard model of heteronormative happiness, and filling in the open spots leads to Ahmed's objects of happiness that will function as new zones of agential exclusion (Ahmed 2010). Outside of the zones of generative life, these zones function as Berlant's normative aspirations (Berlant 2007). Such aspirations can shift into codings that become symbolic norms for unreachable lives. Juana María Rodríguez writes in this sense about Latinx networks of relation that are not comprised of these clearly demarcated structures, but are made up of different formations (Rodríguez 2014). The encapsulations of these lives, in legislation, in adoptive possibility, legal aid, housing remain however tied to the monological ordering of dominant norms. This means not only that the agents live outside of the norm, but moreover that lives are structured through impossible demands, and unsupported practicalities (Spade 2011). The monological evaluations remain stable by judging nonnormative lives as failures with the impossibility to envision what is at stake in nonnormative lives – as I have argued in chapter three, a tendency with both positive and negative effects. Multilogical forms can operate as mutual supports through the possibility of retaining connection and support in absence of the aim of exploitation. Here, it is not the case that dispositions necessarily need further destruction, but the material forces operative on present logics need immediate adjustment (Spade 2011; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015).

Layers of Code

At this stage it is relevant to discuss layering of codes, as abstraction is a way to connect across distance for trans agents. Isolation and lack of communal ties (Raha 2017; EU-FRA 2014) return the agents to the necessity of translation and abstraction in order to make meaning of lived experiences and find alternatives to the dominant codings (Alcoff 1991).

Contextual codes need experience and affect in proximity: similarity and difference are key terms in these approaches, which can favour larger

encapsulations of agents, while – sometimes uncomfortably – retaining agential difference. Abstract code flows long distance, connecting different situations, and are *techne* for reading environments through – while agential effort is needed not to collapse these codes into the environment (Wynter 2001). Linda Alcoff furthers a similar argument as a critique of positionality (Alcoff 1991).

Positionality, which can be understood as the contextualisation of points of view, needs translation, which is in practice done by the listener. Alcoff elaborates that this translation is the necessary, but lonely, effort of isolated agents, making do with whatever imagery can fit their experiences – however distorted at times.

This illuminates the earlier discussion about Wittgenstein’s pragmatics – ‘whatever works’ as imagery is not only creative, but also a mode of survival in isolating circumstances. This fitting in of imageries to experiences can turn into new codings of mimesis and differences, but can also remain an on-going fragmentation and recoding. Only when coded community has formed can abstraction return to directly narrated experience and comparative difference.⁸⁵

Wittgenstein’s insight about the absence of private language, which emphasises that language is always shared (Wittgenstein 2010 243), maps onto codings. Codes share with Wittgenstein’s analysis that they need to be shared in order to be retained, and function as summary for a series of practices. There is a sense in which ‘knowing how a code works’ makes one part of a form of life, but also that at times it is possible one only has a subjective understanding (Wittgenstein 2010, 269). A private language, like the apple peeling as code (Wittgenstein 1984, 31e), works because it functions for the person and “I ‘appear to understand’” (Wittgenstein 2010, 269 italics in the original). However, also for shared codes there remains agential difference. Singular agents come with diverging *logos*. *Logos* comes with differentiated perspectives and action-initiations, however these singularities are not unique *per se*. There are overlaps, including *affirmed codes* and shared vectors of evaluation, as has been my primary argument of chapter three. Normative aspiration translates as the

⁸⁵ This refers to notions of affective feminist theory, which does not always work for trans agents, as the available affects are undercoded and do not fit trans understanding, or their needs. This hampers the direct theoretical model of translation of affects into community.

affirmation of existing codes as credible, desirable, or inevitable, and using the space between the code and the agent as vector for agential coursing. This is evidenced in Aristotle's theory of agential actions: how to become a normative agent and reach the shared marker of *eudaimonia* (Aristotle 2002; Nussbaum 2001b). I have argued that this process does not operate through *inscription*, but through affirmation. Affirmation of codes as central retains agential *dunamic* engagement, and thus the possibility for navigating away. It could be argued that envisioning these formations as passive, by inscription, reinforces the status quo, as argued before, because it summarises the *polis* as total system. This is different from forced processes of dehumanisation which are disciplinary reductions of the body to flesh, possibly through a contraction of the soul (Weheliye 2014; Wadiwel 2009; Spillers 1987). These disciplinary measures are the projections of the walls of the *polis* upon nonnormative agents and are *techne* of agential reductive hierarchisation in relation to the normative agent. However, as Weheliye argues this reduction can be reconceived as the starting point for new forms of life (Weheliye 2014, 138). From within my argumentation this is not due to the inscription, but to the enforced negation of the *polis*, leaving indeterminate affirmative courses of action as only option.

Here a further connection with Lugones' conception of loss can be welded. Weheliye re-conceptualises the flesh as starting point, because there is no positive coding available, while the determination to develop life, find dreams, and create connection does not get extinguished (Weheliye 2014, 128). Flesh is the total point of loss. Lugones, in making a plea for agential loss of meaning and comfortability – should we add confidence? – offers loss as founding moment for interconnection, as I have discussed in chapter three. While Lugones' loss is based on existing interactivity, the suggestion is to create space by leaving the need for a modernist agency of power to inflict intended change behind. Lugones' concept of loss operates on the level of truth formation and logics of interaction, in contrast to antagonistic notions of loss that use the term to indicate dimishment of goods and (modernist) agency. Lugones loss is based on more demarcated positions and not on a totality like Weheliye discusses. Lugones thus offers loss within relationality, where Weheliye discusses loss as

totality. Within relationality Lugones finds playfulness, as a form of indeterminate affirmation, which opens a space for foolishness – for doing it wrong: loss of dignity in interaction that is not based on domination. Play functions for Lugones as tool to open up to losing one’s practical truth. The attendant ‘wrongness’ is conceptualised in connection with others, while not suggestive of a codified and lucid relation. Lugones’ agent might not have much to offer, but is prepared to accept their loss. Weheliye in theorising flesh has taken the most deprived position, where only (mal)nutrition is available, and in that moment of extreme loss, found the pressure towards new life (Weheliye 2014, 128). A strange sweetness indeed (ibid).

Agential *logos* is thus not only based upon the navigation of the existing environment in relation to its codified possibilities, but has also a matter of agential instigation towards to undetermined new forms. The distance needed for agential resistance to the norm (Sharpe 2016; Lugones 2003) is thus not a distance from “oneself” but a distancing and reflecting upon the availability, desirability, morality even, of the surrounding codes. Read in this manner the discussed problematic “gap” between body, self (P. B. Preciado 2013, 236), and norms, in Preciado disappears as one is entangled in one’s surroundings, but not merged with its norms or signs.

In sum, there are various levels at play in nonnormative ethics. There’s the micro-ethics of navigating the formation of one’s *logos*. Then there’s the navigation of encounters through multilogics, and furthermore there is the abstract work of changing various layers of code. These are connected as one’s *logos* can be overdetermined by the code one has to live with/under/through. These encapsulations of agents in code can be negated in their normative reading, and recoded in nonnormative meanings. The coordinates of code change depending on the agential interactions, spacings, and the opening of possible negations and navigations. It is not the case that recoding is the final answer to the problem of nonnormative agency, even though recoding will indicate possibilities of vectors. A large part of the problem is the persistence and inevitable normative invasions of the monological order. Changing codes may

change the form of impositions, but not the logic structuring an assumed right to accumulate, exploit, and destroy (Da Silva 2015, 97).

In my proposal for de-essentialised trans conceptions is the uncomfortable possibility that certain logics have the option of traversing out of the social positions these might have originated in. Codings carry logics as normative aspirations, but also as structure of relations and *modus operandi*. This structure of relation can be copied as shorthand codings in dealing with division of labour that is not centred around generosity and loss, but around gain (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2017). That means it is possible to encounter large parts of “straight, white, masculine” logic encoded through minoritized bodies (Moraga 2011; Bannerji 2000). That is partly the effort of neoliberalism – awarding of the option of aggression as the key to inclusion – because inclusion is just that: inclusion in the colonial project (Spade 2011; Subcomandante Marcos 2017). This inclusion is more often only partial exclusion, rewarded with the power of partial aggression. This inclusion is negotiated through rights, which are thus protections against the violence of the majority. However the coding of rights suggest the operation is complete once the right is granted (Raz 1994). In this sense, rights are treated as privileges of yore. Some bodies have less chance of inclusion, as their (racialised) coding is heavily weighing down the possibility of upwards mobility: inclusion in the hierarchical reality of the *polis*. Weheliye’s arguments point to racialised, trans, and indigeneity as codings weighing bodies down to flesh, and suggests their experiences of subjugation might attest to untruth of inclusivity as means to solve exclusion. Inclusion in the project of “Man [...] synonymous with the heteromale, white, propertied, and liberal subject that renders all those who do not conform to those characteristics as exploitable nonhumans, literal legal no-bodies” (Weheliye 2014, 135). Inclusion becomes a condition of domination in order to exploit as means to reproduce the project of the *polis* (Sampaio 2015; Da Silva 2015).

If normative codes have sufficient power, nonnormative agents can be encapsulated by code, as well as be in material circumstances that are constraining. To disrupt normative codings two strands of resistance

immediately come to mind. Either resistance is friction (Fanon 1969; Berlant 2011) or a move under the radar of the dominant code – and have a form of life lateral to such coding (Harney and Moten 2013). The aim of friction is to break the dominant code, but the grip of that code can be broken before the encapsulation in the dominant perception is over, in the invisible lives outside of the walls (Lugones 2003, 218). In addition to the argument that within a monological order there is the impossibility of perceiving other forms of life, I have suggested the existence of nonnormative codings that are operational, even if they are not “liberated” to the extent that the dominant power has no more hold on the bodies that live (also) nonnormative ethics.

Totality, Friction, and Ending the World

Local and Global Codings

Nandita Sharma argues it was the creation of a *single field of power* that characterized the creation of the new world in 1492 (Sharma 2015, 164). This single field of power finds expression in a hierarchical and monological code, which creates determinate places of eugenic and dysgenic narratives, and consequently dysselected and exalted members of the species (Wynter 2003 *passim*). The processes of universalizing creates a ‘referent we’ (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 33). This referent-we is explained by Wynter as “altruistic kin recognising [...] and its imagined community” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 27), a coding of some agents as inside and connected, and others as outside and disconnected of a kinship structure. Furthermore this coding contains a universalizing positive force when applied to the *eugenic* elite, and a universal negative when applied to the *dysgenic* others. These processes of universalization of code have created patterns of possibility, impossibility, with an emphasis on making available a labour force (D. Scott and Wynter 2000; Federici 2004; Sampaio 2015) as well as opening up spaces for occupation,

extraction, and destruction, under the heading of *terra nullius* (Wynter 2003, 293; Federici 2004). Taking over land is a further function of the referent-we, which operates by suggesting that territories not claimed by the elite not claimed at all. Dysselected, or negatively coded, agents cannot stake a claim that is recognised unless it is articulated as friction against the code. The structure of *eugenics* and master coding reduces abstraction from merely being part of a process to the claim that the master code is the only possible abstraction, negating all other universalising tendencies (Wynter 2003, 292).

Nonnormative ethics is not only aiming at a re-coding of this destructive conceptualisation, but looks for a different balance of connected and disconnected forms of life. The normative domain creates interactions based on ranking, which enables exploitation, and disconnected agents are ‘others’ – strangers both feared and desired due to their incalculability. In contrast I have been articulating a nonnormative ethics as finding ways of mutual connection away from imposition. This entails both a recoding of present relations, but also a new approach to disconnected others that does not travel through the norm in order to find footholds of relation. I have articulated these connections as multilogical in chapter three. Abstractions of multilogical connections enable codings that can traverse contexts. While I have conceptualised logics as the operational tendencies of a form of life, codings are the abstractions of interconnections, as well as the summaries of operational tendencies outside of their contexts. Codings are thus related to logics, but can also be used to challenge and criticise logics. Without the abstractions of code, both memory of activity cannot be retained, but also the danger of logics collapsing into provincialism will emerge.

Codings within a monological structure can be understood as the logistics of the monological order (cf. Cowen 2014), creating a form of life that through assimilation and aesthetical differentiation keeps the single field of power untouched (Bannerji 2000, 51). The codings function as logistics, because they aim at a distribution of material goods and labour, minimising friction with dominant aims (Cowen 2014, 11). Juxtaposed to distributive flows lies the field

of relation, where differing logics try to maintain connections through friction, opacity, healing, and overheated turbulent meanderings of social space, abstract codings, and agential logics. It is not so much the previously discussed problem of piecing and fragmenting (Puar 2015, 47), but multi-sidedness and acknowledgement of containing and contrasting different codes, as well as having multilogical connections in a single substance (Lugones 2003, 141). Simultaneously abstract codings can function as a moral marketing, for instance in the example of rights, that are flagged as social progress, but without attendant arrangements for access and non-domination are functioning as claim to superiority, rather than enabling connection (Puar 2007; Spade 2011; van der Drift 2016).

A singular subjectivity claims a naturally determined difference of rational substance: inevitable practical difference in *logos* are deemed unproblematic under the master codings, that aim at inclusivity, as these differences are perceived as modulations of the norm such as in the Athenian *polis* or bounded entities that aim to fit with the dominant logic (Bannerji 2000, 50). Simultaneously, these differences become a naturalized hierarchy in the master codings out of the norm through racialization and pathology – as discussed above. Thus if an agent is adapting to a normative range of modulations, but coded hierarchically lower, this agent cannot make it into the hierarchical norm – as there will be inevitable random moments of aggressive invasiveness (Sharpe 2016; Harney and Moten 2013; McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015). For a nonnormative ethics of relation the stake is creating a difference between singular and coherent subjectivity and articulating how codings and logics can operate to navigate an agent in its surroundings and different collectivities retaining the possibility for connection, without collapsing into demands of similarity, mimesis, and homogeneity (Ortega 2016, 109ff and chapter 3 passim). This will render a theorisation of change that can be indeterminate, and does not rely on formlessness as answer to domination of codes, and yet does not lapse in the contextual alone in total absence of traversing codes.

Alliance code and the war on the Soul

As I have been arguing, the codes of the *polis* traverse contexts and encapsulate populations. “Populations, therefore, are not simply groupings of human beings or individual juridical subjects of right, but rather are statistically organized and manipulated as groupings of characteristics” (Clough and Willse 2011, 52).

Clough and Wilse propose this manipulation of the coding of racism as manipulation of capacities, but also “to produce sensation, affects, and somatic effects [...] that are felt at the population level” (ibid.). What I have argued above, and I suggest this as an addition, rather than a criticism, is that agents and collectivities are encapsulated in these imposed codings, but not captured by them. The manipulation is thus one of steering the navigation of agents, up to the point that they are readable – and that could be ‘sufficiently readable’ to be deemed controllable. This ties in with the turbulent forms of control as discussed in chapter three through the work of Parisi and Terranova (Parisi and Terranova 2000). Codings, such as racism or transphobia, work to dehumanize the nonnormative agent in the perception by the norm. That does of course not mean *necessarily* that nonnormative agents hold those views of themselves, even though they could well be living with the adverse effects of such aggressive codings. On a resistant level Subcomandante Marcos, the ski-mask wearing spokesperson for the Zapatista insurrection, was offered as a hologram in order to gain readability by the norm, as the indigenous population was invisible (Subcomandante Marcos 2017, 230). Turbulent control can thus mean that dehumanizing codifications pass over people’s heads on the epistemic level – while mainly material effects are felt (Weheliye 2014, 77). Control happens through matter and the norm functions as codification of communication. Clough and Wilse make the argument that engagement through population management structure publics “that are full of passions and prejudices that allow affective states to take on a facticity without employing a logic of evidence” (Clough and Willse 2011, 53). This is primarily possible through a variety of connected levels: firstly, if the publics are navigating their attitudes to an alienated and dominated *other*. Secondly, evidence about material circumstances witnessed by either the

publics or those deemed other is already discredited by means of these enforced affective states. And thirdly, if these publics do not believe their attitude will have harmful effects on themselves, this is yet another effect of trying to draw a large distinction between the normative and targeted people. The point I am drawing out is that the operations coming from the *polis* and the effect on peoples are not one of total capture, but of affective encapsulation where people align themselves willingly to oppressive codes. This is part of the accountability Alcott indicated (Alcott 1991, 20): one does not only speak for oneself, because one navigates structural codes, and one's affirmations or negations are part of accountability. In tandem with the structure of thought discussed through Quine, making it possible to dismiss deviations of described standard patterns, the affective structure and the structure of judgements work together to solidify this web of the *polis* encapsulating agents. Codings can function as psychological warfare – a war of the *polis* on the soul.

Nonnormative ethics is thus not the dream of making an utopia true in the present, but it is partly the creation of a living archive of the work done to decolonize the imagination (Rage and Shenje 2017). Raha (2015) clearly formulates that the work of trans liberation easily disappears under normative pressure, making a point parallel to Rage and Shenje. Part of the project of nonnormative ethics is keeping the space between nonnormative agents open by dismantling oppressive codes. This in turn generates space to form lives against the targeting and pressured codings of the norm, beyond the directly tangible, but also traversing contexts. This does not mean that the material deprivation and exploitation is solved, for as long as the *polis* can supply (a part of) its population with targets to enable exploitation, it has barely reason to stop doing so, even though it is preferred to keep the exploited out of sight – either through ghettoization, or by levying the exploitation to other parts of the world (Cowen 2014; Kelley 1997; Bannerji 2000). As long as materials need to appear cheaply in the *polis*, downgrading those who supply it will not stop. This counts as much for resources, material as well as for emotional labour (Federici 2004; Raha 2017). The nonnormative ethical project is thus *not* a project of securing living conditions equal to those in the guarded zones of the *polis*, but to form

evaluations of lives that re-humanise⁸⁶ agents, as well as keep material and social success a limited factor in evaluations of what kinds of life could be seen as good. The above discussion on material deprivation and exploitation indicates that the material is relevant as it determines nurture and the possibility of different engagements. However, control over circumstances is not the key to *eudaimonia*.

Nonnormative ethics brings into perspective why the transsomatechnical approach as ensouled bodily change functions as starting point. The conditions for material survival, as well as the affective navigation of prevalent and emerged codings, not only create space for the nonnormativity, but also serve as reminder how deeply agents can be operating within normative codings. It is through the body as active archive that forms of life get preserved, whether these are normative or nonnormative. Normative somatechnics instrumentalises the ensouled body, while agents become the bodily technology of a singular purpose, aimed – when trained in that scheme – on a single course; the monological vector of the polis. The agent cannot fold, unfold or refold, as it misses the multidimensional spaces of the demonic grounds. The monological order can thus only run aground, or explode –surrounded by demons that are projections of monological orders on those multilogically human; as argued in chapter three the citizens of the *polis* can only see the reflections of their projections.⁸⁷ Fanon remarks such patterns: “[w]hen whites feel that they have become too mechanized, they turn to the men of color and ask them for a little human sustenance” (Fanon 1967, 129). Somatechnics as *transsomatechnics* needs this multilogical unfolding as form towards the possibility of a nonnormative ethics, which is not based on accumulation, destruction, or imposition. Without domination, there can only be relation, and relation needs to be multilogical in order to remain mutual.

Questioning patterns of *logos* returns multilogical ethics as the question of alliance against dominant codings. Deleuze and Guattari offer a thinking of

⁸⁶ This term is merely intended as the opposite of dehumanize.

⁸⁷ From this point it can be understood that fear functions to preserve unity, even in the face of a failing *polis*.

alliance as translation of stasis into flux (Deleuze and Guattari 1984, 219). While alliance is important for change, resonance or alliance happens through codes (and sometimes *technes*) – not the transformation of code into flux alone. As I have argued, there are vectors and directions that function as a perpetual recoding of the agent and attendant pragmatic abstractions. Flux happens through vectors, and pure indeterminacy will not happen. There will emerge fuzzy points on an imagined horizon, or temporal and local understandings of relational actions.

Abstractions are not different from the concrete (Deleuze and Guattari 1984, 221) – a moment of difference is introduced when abstractions are disconnected from *logos* and the impact of codings upon the materiality that it impacts. Coding is not a game, but it can be play (Lugones 2003, 93; Massumi 2014, 69). Generative play needs involvement of the body. Codes can produce each other in playful abstractions, but for a project of world-making attendant *logos* needs to change, otherwise new codes will reform only the forms of normative logics, and keep the monological order in place. This is what Parisi and Terranova termed the turbulent extraction. In a moment of world making abstraction and concreteness are connected due to this changes codes and *logos*. This connection in experimentation does not mean they are casually linked, because indeterminate change does not need to involve linear production. Indeterminate and unintended consequences come out of the bodily engagement between agents. As addressed previously, especially in chapter three, monological codes can serve to sever agents from acknowledging the realities of impact of the codes they live by – experiences become invisible. Other times new monological code is a form of bait – waiting for other logics to produce content that can be absorbed, and revalidate or obfuscate current logical operations.

Some codes are removed from the body, but desirable – these are what Berlant has termed *normative aspirations* (Berlant 2007, 278). That these are desirable does not mean they are good for the agents, in which case they become a form of *cruel optimism* (Berlant 2011). To recall chapter one, cruel optimism occurs when agents are aiming at codes that make them worse off. Trans codings are

different in that respect, in that they do not make agents better off necessarily, but neither are they cruel. Firstly, they are not normative aspirations, and secondly, because nonnormative trans codings are not aiming at things “getting better”, but at changing normative evaluations. This might entail falling apart or fragmenting under normative pressure (Raha 2017), or alternatively enable traversing, transversal, and transsubstantiation (Da Silva 2014).

Furthermore, there are codes that serve as navigations and waypoints, but they are not exactly endpoints or aspirations – these terms can be abstractly “sexist” or can be speculative, like “xenogenesis” (O. Butler 1987, 1988, 1989). These codes are not unequivocal:

In the 90s every white body wants a theory of becoming, other.

Don't let D&G fool you, nobody wants to become other (Salah, 2002, 47).

Salah puts a finger on a sore spot, while to be *other* stays in the normative reasoning, as the *other* is always descriptive, and the target of affective tension, as argued above. Codes that keep description or prescription in their core hold a fascination from within, but hardly from without the *polis*. Outside the *polis* one is already in the two-dimensional deflated zone of discarded *logos* and being overcoded by the word that bears too little resemblance to the processes around which one has to navigate. The imposed code is a marker for recognition from the *polis*, but merely another entity to negate for the agent. These are the imposed epistemologies which well-willing normative agents curiously then try to respect as originary.⁸⁸ The otherness in and of the *polis* is the disengaged flattening of the agent encapsulated in code. This is in contrast with the multilogical engagement based on opacity, where the lack of ascribed internality is not a flattening, but an unassuming approach opening the space for partial loss of logic and emergence of new codes. The processes I described earlier as surface tension can be found back in those normative renderings as two-dimensionality. To flatten and feel resistance is a responding to the absence of mutual inclusion

⁸⁸ To be entirely fair – not only normative agents try to respect such codes, also nonnormative agents try to adapt to imposed codings as truth bearers.

(Massumi, 2014). Surface tension can be generative in combination with opacity as ground for meeting. This surface tension translates then as space for entanglement, which is not encapsulation; the wrapping of the agent in normative code. Entanglement signals mutuality in meeting and finding connective codes and *techne*.

The neoliberal allowance of visibility of coding is certainly not only liberation (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014, 4; R. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton 2017). While it can be envisioned as helpful not to have to disappear as minority, this politics is not without its problems. The politics of diversity has received criticism from across a range of disciplines (Bannerji 2000; Duggan 2004b; Spade 2011; A. Y. Davis and Kelley 2012; Haritaworn 2015), summarising it as a shallow display aimed at the majority rather than the needs of minorities. The outcome of visibility is focused on control. Rey Chow writes “seeing is destroying” (Chow 2010, 4). Turbulent extraction of difference needs exploitable visibility. The operations of biopolitics as well as necropolitics thus needs to be able to keep its targets clear and visible, while simultaneously keeping other processes and categories out of sight. The code of ‘trans’ as visible code, exists easily “as image and slogan than as substance” (Chow 2010, 6) extending Chow’s argument around the visibility of $E=mc^2$, in relation to the destructive force of the atom bomb. In its simplicity the slogan $E=mc^2$ superimposed upon a mushroom cloud functions as political act, because it generates the simple message that one bomb creates sufficient terror that one nation’s willingness to resist is broken. In a neoliberal politics of inclusion trans imagery flags analogously the possibility of inclusion of those *fallen from grace*; the agents that ‘lost’ inclusion in the norm (van der Drift 2016) while being able to violently, administratively, and carceraly exclude others (McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015; A. Davis 2003). For a nonnormative ethics this means that the proximity of coding to *logos* is inevitable for survival as the promise of inclusion by neoliberal standards is encapsulation and violation as argued above. Inclusive ‘codes’ are codes that function according to the logic of the norm, this is necessarily removed from the *logos* of agents, especially when these are simultaneously codified as ‘lesser’ or ‘pathologised’. Forcing visibility upon trans bodies can be

partly understood as the securisation against “the trap of trans” – the stereotypical coding of trans deception and capture of innocent straight desire.

As I have been arguing earlier, a desideratum of oppression theory is that it is total (Lugones 2003, 55). The encapsulation within disinterested visibility suggests that this functions through lack of knowledge and simple codifications. I have contrasted the totality of encapsulation throughout the thesis with attendant claims that the body is generative, and will escape codes even if it cannot (always, or immediately) escape the social reality in which it is captured (Sharpe 2016). Consequently, it is inevitable to suggest that the structural cruelty of imposed coding and its enforcement by a series of *techne* is that it *doesn't* work on the epistemological level, while its functionality lies on the level of material exploitation and destruction. Imposed codings function as an ironic opposite of Berlant's cruel optimism, there coding is conceptualised as aspirational trap, however codings of visibility in its lack of totality functions even though one does know better.

Thinking through codings as creating space for material exploitation (da Silva 2015) the ‘body politic’ emerges as code for the valorization of bodies and politics of exploitation. The body politic is the mapping of the political space of the *polis* through the anatomy of bodies, but it hardly needs saying that the bodies that are functioning as the map, as the territory for the division of labour, are not the bodies that offering a reading beyond the established patterns of power. The body politic is thus code for the recreation of the existing political body as the anatomical model (Thacker 2011, 147). Thacker forwards an argument that the unificatory model of the body politic falls apart under the pressure of the many. “[M]ultiplicity is the disease of the body politic. Or, alternatively, *it is multiplicity that plagues the body politic*” (Thacker 2011, 154). My argument extending from chapter three indicates the opposite, that the encapsulation in a singular structure constrains the agents captured within and without. Therefore the reasoning should indicate that it is the body politic that plagues the multiple forms of life outside its walls. Thacker, in a standard reversal of the problem, shifts the weight back onto the multiple forms of life

when friction is experienced leading to the death of the body politic. It switches the necropolitics for its necrology, as if it's the monological order that now needs to be mourned.

Nonnormative Ethics and the Gift Code

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts – Virgil, Aeneid

Nonnormative Evaluations

The notion of ethics, as *transsomatechnical* becoming, returns at this point as a question of pragmatism in evaluations. How does nonnormative ethics pragmatically function? As Robin Kelley (Kelley 1997) discusses nonnormative activity navigates between survival and recoding, using dominant forms as means to get by. In the chapter “Looking to get paid” Kelley makes the case that the navigation between work and play as a means to make it through, defies the normative logic of play *versus* work (Kelley 1997, 43ff). The codings shift due to the impossible demands and exclusions operative at the same time. Likewise Raha (2017) emphasizes the way agents necessarily fall apart in the face of forces that aim at the rupture of nonnormative agents, but that this falling apart is not the end, resonating with Weheliye's conclusion. This contrasts with Puar's conceptualisation of the norm in a society of control that “all bodies are being evaluated in relation to their success or failure in terms of health, wealth, progressive productivity, upward mobility, enhanced capacity” (Puar 2012, 155). However, it is not only evaluation of different functioning that is at stake, but also the production of exploitable bodies. Wynter and da Silva stress that domination is the step before exploitation (Da Silva 2007, 11; Wynter 2007, 9). Raha's theorisation describes the structures where trans femme agents explicitly become solely providers of emotional and reproductive labour, and through these processes fragment to face disrupted possibilities of life building. Raha's work can be conceived as describing single-sided *techne* where relationality is

offered, but not returned. Irving warns in this light against the presentation of the trans agents as explicitly high functioning in the workplace in order to escape the predicament of marginalisation, as it only ties in to further economic exploitation (Irving 2008). This argument is supported by Puar warning against “piecing”: the flexibility of the nonnormative agent under conditions of capitalism (Puar 2015, 54). The nonnormative agent finds in the norm demands and appropriation and no mutuality can be established.

What does this mean for the functioning of code as nonnormative waypoints, footholds, and imagery? Firstly, we can find that nonnormative codes do typically not come with the “impact factor” that can dislodge normative codings, and thus cannot hope to directly change normative logics. Secondly, as we saw through discussion of Lugones these nonnormative codings can turn into new closed communities, furthering dominant and dominating logics (Lugones 2003, 143). What is needed then is a double working of differing codes, as well as changing logics. Logics function through webs of affects and reasons. Normativity demands fungibility of feelings, as well as agreement on decisions: it encapsulates both domains of goodness and truth. To this extent codings are subservient to logics and function as grammarians of the norm, and possibly as forms of moral marketing, or markers that make demands upon agential navigation. Both logics and codes need to be altered in nonnormative forms of ethics in order to escape both exploitation and complicity in domination.

Nonnormative ethics thus comes with differing *logos*: the agential navigation away from the normative domains by use of double negation and indeterminate affirmation. This enables the constitution of a new *mythos* and *techne* of relation. Attention to emerging codifications, which are not claiming to be solid foundations for new reasoning, but which need to function as waypoints allowing understanding emerging vectors of evaluation. Harney and Moten formulate the project of nonnormative break out:

But we won't stand corrected. Moreover, incorrect as we are there's nothing wrong with us. We don't want to be correct and we won't be corrected. Politics

proposes to make us better, but we were good already in the mutual debt that can never be made good. We owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect, to give the lie to our own determination. We owe each other the indeterminate. We owe each other everything (Harney and Moten 2013, 20).

Nonnormative agents are encapsulated in codes determining their wrongness, and faced with the demands for forced adjustment as perceived by the norm. The formulation of Harney and Moten allows understanding how the space to go with multilogical engagements functions as a way to remain indeterminate and allow opacity, without claiming a total space of openness, as I have problematized in chapter one. What they suggest is that this openness as mutual debt lies not in the claim to institutions representing the collective, but on the contrary a debt not to encapsulate each other – to owe each other the possibility of emergence, to create the space for generosity. Debt resonates with loss, but is a predetermined condition, not a structure within relation. Debt, so to say, provides foundation to the possibility of emergence. The account of loss suggests how to make openness in meetings. Debt is a condition, rather than the outcome of an act. New codes of collectivity are, when seen in this vein, unsuccessful regulations (Harney and Moten 2013, 97). These codes are unsuccessful because they are ready to disappear when they don't function as waypoint anymore. These are unclear and have plenty of space to malfunction: allowing cracks to appear. This is the direct counter of the normative codings as domination shaping the space for exploitation, accumulation, and destruction. In Harney and Moten's reading the space of loss is found as the indebtedness as waypoint; it can be read as a structure that suggests loss before the encounter. "We owe each other everything" (ibid.) allows re-understanding the claim of Weheliye, as the availability of one's becoming flesh in order to have a new world emerging. However, as opposed to be made flesh, it is crucial to reference the mutuality as well as the porosity of the 'we' (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 25), this is not false inclusion, but a mutual willingness to share loss in order to change.

New forms, new codes

In chapter two I proposed *logos* to be a dynamic formation giving shape to affects, perceptions and practical truth. *Logos* is thus not comparable to “the demands for a single currency of reasons, [which] are certainly expressions of modern bureaucratic rationality” (Williams 1985 ch1 n.13). The conception of *logos* that I offer already acknowledges the situated structure of its reasoning, perceptions and affects. What is at stake when thinking through codes, is thus not that *logos* and codes are demands for a categorizing approach to the world, but that *logos* is an inevitable formation in an environment, even when the agent is not subsumed in that environment: the double negation leaves the space to navigate and exit the current norms. The emergent codings between nonnormative agents do not only bridge multilogical engagements as discussed in chapter three, but have the opportunity to travel across contexts, because of their looser attachment to the context. Agents with different *logos* can also simply remain in affective resonance without emergent codes. The indeterminacy that Harney and Moten claim is being owed to other agents, is thus not a ‘freedom from everything’ indeterminacy, but an ethic against overcoding. The indeterminacy makes it possible to use an image as Wittgensteinian foothold, lightweight and in passing, in order to keep the space for emergent codings or affective resonances. One antidote to impositions of monological orderings, with its overdetermining codes is to make space for each other.

Returning to the pragmatic conceptualization of ethics, this implies certain forms of life come into existence because agents make space for each other. This making space is not a disentangling, but holding the space for affirming codes that can well up, as Lugones describes (Lugones 2003, 217). Against the “monosense of domination” (ibid.) stands the complex interweaving of multiple meanings. Codes are thus multiple in their meaning, with different facets to attach to from the diverse sets of *logos* of agents, yet enabling connection. This lack of univocal meaning of code, underlines again the need to think outside of what Williams had called the “bureaucratic boundaries” of rationality, and what

Moten and Harney frame as “policy is the new form of command” (Harney and Moten 2013, 74). The bureaucratic encapsulation of lines of action – the vectors of possibility – are curved back onto the core from the fraying ends of Quine’s network, with its stable core and fraying edges (Quine 1951, 40). Not only can the edges ‘fray’ and is the core stable, but as Duggan and Berlant have argued, the core sucks the edges back in (Berlant 2011; Duggan 2004b), making turbulence operative within exploitation (Parisi and Terranova 2000). While codes get taken up and taken in, the monological order does not change – it reforms its appearance to fit its primary aim: accumulation, exploitation, and destruction as asymmetrical order, functioning through a monodirectional singular grid.

These understandings figure as warning against claiming codes as universal, and to remain open to the difficult work of translating abstractions of code to allow multiple resonances with different *logos*. Removed from the monological form of operation is what Harney and Moten call planning: “the ceaseless experimentation with the futural presence of forms of life that make such activities possible” (Harney and Moten 2013, 74). This planning could be imagined to fluctuate between the determination of Anzaldúa’s Aristotelian double negation, Lugones’ anticipation of collective emerging intention, and Massumi’s and Lugones approach to playfulness not as antagonism, but as the sympathetic foolishness (Massumi 2014, 36; Lugones 2003, 96) that offers the possibility of emergence in the in-between. The socially exhaustive reproduction of trans emergence is thus already the production of new forms of life (Raha 2017; van der Drift 2018), simply because there is nowhere to go, which underlines Weheliye’s conclusions (Weheliye 2014). However, transliberalism, in claiming a form of a transnormative subject (Snorton and Haritaworn 2013), offers an affirmative space coded as part of the monological order, which is already structured as exclusion through the lines of the dysgenic humans (Weheliye 2014, 28). Transliberalism might try to move trans out of pathology, but it does so as part of the larger excluding structure of the *polis*.

Away from pathology claiming the interiority of the agent, codes can equally work their force immediately on the surface. Hortense Spillers articulates how the weight of codes can collapse the soul to leave just flesh: “flesh, that zero

degree of social conceptualization” (Spillers 1987, 67). Flesh, as Spillers materializes, is ungendered, in contradistinction to an indeterminacy of gender, as it figures in trans theory (Stryker and Whittle 2006; Stryker and Aizura 2013). My conceptualization of the body as *ensouled* forms its relations (that can be understood as gender) *under* the normative codings, possibly claiming the weight of codings as lighter than Spillers. In thinking through the possibility of being other than the code, it is at times necessary to do so despite its weight, despite the nonnormative lack of impact, and despite the disappearance of its kinaesthetic efforts, which might be why we forget the elders (Raha 2016). Eric Stanley summarises “[g]ender seems to always escape the confines of the language that we use to capture it” (McDonald, Stanley, and Smith 2015, 4). Between the ultimate reduction of the black body to flesh under slavery, with its loss of gender, and the enclosure of the body in prison, some space for trans is created. Somewhere in the space between the soulless existence and the soul crushing somatechnics of the prison complexes is a gap where the body finds a way to escape the code. The double negation of imposed codes needs merely a little wiggle room for it not to be extinguished. Spillers statement “words will most certainly *kill* us” (Spillers 1987, 68) claims the lethal power of code, while there are still ways in which nonnormative bodies have existed under the weight of the dominant codings, in underground assemblages, in the double meanings of words. This is not optimism, but acknowledging the efforts that have to be put in, in order to contract souls to the bare level of existence (Wadiwel 2009, 54). Disciplining that needs to be rejected will not function as “acculturation of the soul” (ibid.) as ethics (perhaps) also does, but merely limits the vector of escape and contracts the space for unfolding. Disciplining, then, is perhaps not so much the acculturation of the soul, as it is the work of domination in order to create room for accumulation by extraction at the collective level (Da Silva 2015, 99), negating the necessity of ensouled formation by replacing it with forced adoption of material powers. The nonnormative agent thus need not know itself, as long as it stays in the place the dominant descriptive statement assigns to it to further accumulation and exploitation (Da Silva 2015, 95). While I have been arguing for ensouled bodily formation from the first person’s perspective of the agent, it is merely a step to come to the emergence of new forms of life. Multilogical

connections and emergent codes are collective processes shying away from imposed determination, but outgrow the individual agent. The *technes* involved in this recoding are partly the ensouled space for connection across multilogics: it is non-singular code, and an engagement with the multiple possibilities coming from *dunamic* engagement.

Moreover, as discussed in chapter three, these connections are active and are thus acts. Codes may seem static, but its interpretation to connect to differing *logos* is the affirmative activity of collective formation. It is, as Linda Alcoff theorises, the translation of one position to another position (1991). If one claims one's position, context, and location as means to avoid "critical interrogation of the bearing of such an autobiography [...] It leaves for the listeners all the real work that needs to be done" (Alcoff 1991, 25). Not only makes Alcoff a claim for the *indexing* of certain speech acts, but more importantly lays out the argument that such translating might entail a "*partial* loss of control [over meaning, which] does not entail a *complete* loss of accountability" (Alcoff 1991, 17). This accountability resonates with Moten and Harney's account of debt that we owe to each other. Loss of meaning does not mean that accountability for one's *logos* is out of the picture. To not know and claim that discomfort as a way to forward change can be a method through which new forms can arise (Morris 2016). This tension of translation of indexed codes, coming with loss of control over meaning underlines also the earlier arguments about nonnormative indeterminacy between agents. Indeterminacy gives the code free, while embracing the insight that loss continues to be an inevitable ingredient in multilogical coded emergence. Loss in this sense is not to be read as 'loss of property and thus agency', where agency is tied in to the material means to effect actions, but loss is indicating here the possibility of connection and relation across logical frames. Loss is making space for meaning to arise. In this it is different from monological ordering where loss of control and communication indicates a battlefield failure, while intelligence is linked to command (D. Haraway 1991, 150).

Gift Code

Every imposed change comes with a loss of access. It is a limiting of options and constraining of material circumstances of sustenance, the monological imposition is directed to monodirectional extraction. A meeting on the surface between agents, who respect opacity, whereby extraction will not function, the available option is make space. This was found, as I have argued, in the surface tension, pushing new codes summarising relationality into existence. However, there is another way to envision those codes, especially as they can be read from different angles. Codes can function as gifts. I offer this theorization explicitly to take code away from contractarian thinking, the liberal logic that erupted from within the *polis* (Rawls 2009), where ethics is negotiated and documented in a system of rights, duties, and allowances. Godelier summarises that contractarian thinking about exchange makes “society [...] in its essence, [...] language, because it originates in a contract” (Godelier 1999, 23). This would also make the sign, the code, the contract, more real than the relation that is happening under that sign, code, or contract. My argument has been that codes are one level of navigation, situated alongside *logos*, *technes* and *logics*. *Logos*, and thus *technes* too as they find their origin in *logos*, goes beyond language because of its indeterminacy in action. Consequently the eruption of unimagined relationships is possible. Lucidity can thus be understood as limiting the terms of engagement to the already present. The present is undoubtedly more beneficial for some than for others.

The gift, especially when conceptualized outside of existing relations, is the material invocation of the difference between imposed change and signalling the readiness to accept loss, as givers are already in debt (Godelier 1999, 30). Gift giving is thereby structured in a non-commercial logic (Godelier 1999, 43). A gift between unrelated agents should therefore not be seen as an object of property, but as gesture towards that which doesn't yet exist: mutuality in existence. It indicates possibility of connection and offers the willingness of loss. It quite literally proclaims the readiness to give up something precious. This resonates with the earlier theorizations of Harney and Moten, and Lugones. Loss and

indebtedness are at the heart of making new forms of life. Gifting *logos* and logic is thus not accumulation, but change. Recall here Lugones' playfulness as medium through which a loss of logic can be navigated. The gift of loss is a formalized articulation, perhaps opening the space for play. The gift is the first sign of possibility, of creating a space of collectivity, of opening the floor to play (Massumi 2014, 41). This kind of giving is only possible with the acceptance of surface tension and opacity. Antagonistic approaches confuse this tension with the need to establish power, as it doesn't want to lose, but to accumulate and be ready to destroy what it finds. A monological order can never give; it can only attempt to pay off.

Knowing that the body is prone to grow new forms and (temporarily) stabilise, as a form can be the articulation of a certain perspective, a certain action instigation, and a way of thinking, I am, empathically, not making the claim for a state of constant flux – even though it is possible to imagine flux as traversing along a specific set of vectors, channelled through a stable function. I am making the claim to acknowledge forms, but argue against making a new *polis*. While we can trust bodies to grow forms, at the same time it is necessary to break down the walls of forms that might be tried to erect, and keep forms porous. Opening the space for multilogical emergence is one strategy of both being able to spend time on emerging structures and scrutinizing the codes that come up. Without enclosure logics can withdraw from the code, signalling a cease of function and a disruption of flux. The absence of walls guarantees the existence of multilogical forms of life more, than the presence of an enclosure will. These codes are the gifts that we give each other.

These gifts entail poetics: lyrical codes exploring new possibilities. The codes need to sustain the contradictions of multilogics, while simultaneously steering away from the *polis* and its coherent monologic. Such lyrical codings perhaps end the monological world (Da Silva 2014), by holding the space for bodies to emerge in new forms. Bodies undo as well as generate. This situates generosity and loss at the heart of emerging ethics. The code turns coda.

Conclusion: souls, forms, codes

In this thesis I have proposed a conceptualisation of changing forms of life at various levels: body, relations, and abstractions. This articulation of change that is emergent from the level of the agent and extends beyond adaption and subversion, comprises a conception of ethics that encompasses actions, relations and abstractions. The possibility of change as generative, which is not merely assimilation or mimesis, requires bodily change to become something else. It requires an acceptance of opacity of oneself and others in order for change to be new and not preconceived or comprehended. This leads to the necessity of a conception of multiplicity, which subsequently requires accepting loss of truth in combination with generosity towards truths of other forms of life.

The argument I propose in the thesis incorporates these requirements around three key notions. The first is that it is bodily change that allows a change in understanding and forms of life. The second is that forms of life need to be structured around the possibility of multiple logics. And the third is that codings should avoid imposing upon agents, but instead open space for emergent relations. These notions combined give the argument for an emergent nonnormative ethics.

The thesis finds its root in bodily change, because it emerges out of a conceptualisation of trans. Trans bodily change is not “biological” but material. Biology, the science of categorisation of nature, is naturally a cultural artefact. The schemas of classification and functioning of the body follow a specific pattern, and the attendant codings are aligned to dominant normativities and sensitivities. Revisiting Aristotle’s *ensouled* body allows both bodily change, but also in its various modalities of engagement opens the possibility to understand immersion in environments beyond schemas, vision, or language. *Dunamis*, the operational modalities of the body, once taken outside of a presumed “teleology” or “*ergon*” argumentation, allow for understanding and articulation of engagements, which are more than reflections or affects. This can be used for a wide range of conceptualisations and is not limited to trans. This palette could be used to support developments in sound studies, relations between animals and non-animals, and crip theory (Clare 2015; McRuer 2011), amongst others. This is

possible because thinking through an *ensouled* body freed from the metaphysical luggage of categorisations allows to conceptualise both change as well as immersion, but is not pre-ordered according to available schemes. An *ensouled* body allows thinking through the interstices of categorisations and codifications that are available. The various modes of the body do not need to be taken apart, but can be understood in its dynamic functioning.

Logos, which I articulate beyond what Williams calls, a 'bureaucratic rationality' (1985) can be seen to be a summary that allows for individual difference, but because of its navigational schemas lay connection between agents too. This frees the body from being taken apart in categorisations: for instance, trans and/or migrant and/or rural, where a body disappears in essentialising structures because it is not able to retain particularity. Yet, it is important to have a tool to understand particularity and collectivity in the agent. *Logos* with the attention to modification of perception, reflection, and practical truth allows that and moreover presents a clear argument why singular logics will always function as imposition. Furthermore, thinking through *logos* allows immediately a criticism of 'excel sheet' diversity – so popular in neoliberal times – while 'diversity' needs to be attendant to the possibility of different *logos* and logics not of different codifications alone.

To conceptualise forms of life through logic is contentious. It might suggest to some people that I would over emphasise rationality. However, this is far from the case. The logic of forms of life, as my argument has suggested is indicative of what seems good as principle and as decision. In contrast to disembodied articulations of decisions, claiming they come through an autonomous process of the will and reflection, for instance, I am making the case that decisions always follow the logic of a specific form of life. This is not a problem, as long as this form of life does not need to operate as a monological order. These arguments and conceptualisations are specifically interesting when trying to escape a zero-sum game, leave the competitive mind-set, and for understanding concerns of bonding across different practices. María Lugones terms these antagonisms. To

understand these as logics allows seeing as well how diversity work can be made to fail by being a front for the unhindered operations of an extractive ordering.

Logics of forms of life are being softened because their relationality operates through the notion of *daimons*. Partly this functions to allow intuitive approaches, but also it strengthens the argument against isolated individuality. An agent dependent on its environment cannot be transparent for itself, but neither can other agents be the authorities on their being. The *daimon* sits snugly in this place in between; it allows for opacity of agents, it cannot be fully explained, which would suggest a schematic ordering, but also opens the door for metaphysical allegiances, such as those Moten calls the 'inalienable wrong' (Moten 2017, 117) of slavery that plays out across time, or Avery Gordon's 'hauntology' of the past that continues to overshadow present complexities of the social (Gordon 1997, xvi). The *daimon* is another door that can be opened in order to explain or conceptualise relationalities that are not lucid, policy driven, or ordered through available principles.

The notion of loss comes in at this stage, because it allows explaining why generation does not function to explain change. In an upcoming article on the malfunctioning of rights and moral change, I will make the case that ever widening and inclusive principles do not function, because of a dual problem. First principles don't allow for change, because principles at least should be able to be comprehended for the agents that come in touch with them. Change, as I have argued here, does not follow that logic, and is at least for a while incomprehensible, also for the agent that is involved in the change. Secondly, widening principles are based on a logic of accumulation (Raz 1994; Moody-Adams 1999). This means that principles suggest that the world as we currently understand it is on the right path. That can be very easily called into doubt. Moreover, moral principles purport to be true (Raz 1994). This is called into doubt by the arguments provided in this thesis. A principled approach suggest agents come with divergent practical truth and yet need to fit in to principles that encompass this truth more or less unproblematically. These problems lead me to come to the articulations of coding, where codings can function within a

particular grammar of interaction, but need to be shed if the grammar of relations changes. Here, I diverge most strongly from accounts that centre language and understanding because shifting practical truths demand another approach than a 'misunderstanding or ignorance' of principles thesis, as for instance Michelle Moody-Adams suggests in criticism of Raz's account (Moody-Adams 1999). Loss functions to open this trap door of non-understanding and allows one to stare into the depths.

Loss here functions not as legitimization of a right to exploit, but as warning against knowing too much. Loss is opening up the space for non-understanding and hesitation in the emergence of mutual relations. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of loss generates the possibility to acknowledge that giving up truth is the way to allow emerging relations. Loss simultaneously opens the space for relation and thus creates the possibility for collectivity, as well as counters a logic of accumulation. It is simply not the case that one go on extending their relations, therefore loss implies the limitations of ethics and thus the limitations of the codings that can emerge.

This tension between limitations, loss, practices, and the danger of localism finds resolution in the chapter on codings. My attempt in that chapter is to build the argument for ethics as forms of life by explicitly situating the discussion in understandings of colonialism. The necessity for making that move stems from Sylvia Wynter who has argued that the European colonial regime started by harking back to the Greek *polis* and articulating agents as necessarily bound up in the interests of the state (Wynter 2003, 277). I have returned the argument back to Aristotle in order to break down the *polis* an attempt to destabilise the thinking of necessary immersion in the state. At this stage the thesis supplants ethics as emergence of a form of life with ethics as an anti-political programme. Encountering the work of Cedric Robinson (2016/1980) was a great help, but unfortunately the work is very isolated. Robinson equally suggests ethics instead of politics as solution to a way of thinking that does not explicitly demand lucidity and constricting rationality, but allows irrationality and disorder as modus of relationality. Robinson's work provokes the insight that politics cannot

solve the problems generated by politics, and instead proposes transformation without leadership. That means also, without privileged interpreters of ordering principles. Robinson does not propose chaos to counter order, but ethics: a radically transformed form of life. It is in Robinson's work that I found the clearest articulation of moving beyond a *critical* project, which scrutinises boundaries and transgressions, towards a *radical* project, where 'radical' indicates doing something new and transformed.

This transformation needs a space for not knowing what one does, which can become central to a conception of ethics, not as negation, but as indeterminate affirmation. Yet this indeterminacy does not need to come at the cost of acknowledging emerging forms. These emerging forms can be understood not to provide a new *polis* but to be forms one is passing through. This passing through might not provide greater inclusion – the project of legitimacy – but works to avoid imposition and exclusion. In addition, allowing loss in interaction suggests that homogeneity is not that much at stake in nonnormative ethics. The assemblage of *logos*, *daimons*, *techne*, logic, *mythos*, codings and loss suggests not categorical differences and homogenous collectivities, but on the contrary claims difference all the way up and all the way down. That is not to say that navigation of imposed codings cannot provide relationality ("solidarity") or bonding. This could be, for instance, understood through *logos* that connects easily, matching *techne*, contrasting logics *et cetera*. However, what my argument problematizes is that the coding as such provides the bond. In short, there is no overarching category or principle that suffices to do the work of ethics. Ethics is always the work of the body in environments making relations.

The claim I make is that trans is thus not limited to the modus of 'gender', even if that is a code that is specifically navigated, but trans can be understood as shifting the *ensouled* body in order to change relations in the world. Trans is thus an ethic that navigates and rearranges codes, *technes* of relation, and one's *ensouled* body. The notion of opacity is important here to protect the possibility of change into something new, and thus unknown, because trans is a nonnormative endeavour. It needs remarking that the navigation of *ensouled*

bodies constitutes agency, however not every navigation is nonnormative, and not always directed at shifting the codes bodies live with. This distinction is important as it indicates both a gradual shift of bodies in ethics, as well as the rupture that comes with nonnormative codification. This leaves room for explanation of formation over time (transformation) and also ruptures of codes, processes that can be understood through migration, new imposed codes, or encapsulations by logics. Trans as nonnormative ethics can thus be suggestive of various modalities of changing environments, whether it is by the agent, imposed upon agents, body, context, or code.

Aristotle does not offer a stable frame, internal to the agent, but on the contrary suggest that the agent is in formation. Aristotle becomes rapidly problematic for a theory of nonnormative ethics, exactly because of this reason. Since agents do not have an internal frame, but are extended through a web of relations, which determines their good life, part of their formative work is that of fitting into the *polis*. The frame of reference is the exterior, as opposed to the interior. Bernard Williams discusses the implausibility of the harmonious mapping between inside and outside (1985, 46). It could be thought that this would indicate a shift from authenticity – a claim to what one really is – to sincerity, which claims one’s acts as ordinary (Williams 2010). This does not need a very dubious to attempt to eradicate conflict as being *ethically* desirable, due to the demands of real selves (Williams 1985, 47). Friction might be pleasurable, while its erasure also demands a monological order. Denise Ferreira da Silva suggests this as an ethics without separability (Da Silva 2016, 58). This means partly to shift from a knowable authenticity, which “produces collectives as ‘strangers’ with fixed and irreconcilable moral attributes” (ibid.) towards an appraisal of multiplicities and agency which allows the emergence of collectives. Differences do not mean being apart, and friction might provide connection instead of suggesting fear.

Rather than arguing for inclusion, dispensing with the project of the *polis* altogether opens a more fruitful way of thinking through nonnormative ethics. Claiming inclusion legitimises the *polis* as single structure, while simultaneously erasing the foundational grounds of exploitative misogyny and slavery. These are

also the two main strands of critique offered by nonnormative ethics. Firstly the dismissal of the idea that a single structure will fit 'us' all, and secondly the idea that various forms of exploitation are permissible in any form, whether it is capitalist corporations, misogyny, or slavery. Inclusion generates second-rate citizenry, because inclusion is not about making space, but functions as allowance and at most protection of 'different and minoritised' forms of life from the majority. Laws of inclusion thus always designate the majority as violent yet are presented as progress. Benign majorities do not exist.

The dismantling of the *polis* is achieved through two central ideas. The first concept is a *multilogics* based on differences of *logos* informing connection, which circumvents single-order engagements, whether they are contractarian (Cudd and Eftekhari 2017) or interpretative in form. Contractarian approaches claim differences at a starting point and voluntary submission to a mutually encompassing ordering. Such approaches not only curb possible transformation to what can be envisioned at a starting point, but also circumvent taking account of consequences. This makes the ordering principle (the contract) stronger than possible shared agency. The second concept emerged from the work of María Lugones and enabled the willingness to accept loss of *logos* and thus practical truth, as well as extend generosity in one's interpretation of others and other forms, that makes multilogics possible (Lugones 2003). Centralising loss and generosity shifts the emphasis from the necessity of generation and abundance, to come to a different form of engagement based on the emergence of relationality, but also the possibility of refusal. What is to be gained is nothing more than potentiality, but it is not necessarily the case that this potentiality is generative, or that it should be. What is important is that relationality can emerge.

Multilogical ethics indicates how agents in forms of life can relate without the space in between already articulated or regulated. Multilogical ethics does not demand adaption to a ruling order, or an ordered society, or a principle of engagement. A monological order at times might need to adjust its orderings, or tweak its principle, but it cannot solve the problem of Wittgenstein's talking lion:

that even if a lion could speak, we wouldn't understand what it was saying, because its form of life is so different (Wittgenstein 2010). An ordering can only hear through its own form (Abbas 2010). The *polis* at its best (which it often is not) can only offer adaption but cannot change the drive to manage and order, because ordering is its prime directive (Rawls 2009, 4, 8). Robinson articulates lucidly how order and authority coincide in philosophical paradigms in the West (Robinson 2016), and Wynter has convincingly argued that it is in the moment of colonisation that the state conceptualised that the individual can only find its interests through existing within its parameters (Wynter 2003). Nonnormative ethics questions bodily change outside of existing orders of relation and thus outside of existing norms. Principles of social arrangements can not be expected, even at their best functioning, to have space for the emergence of divergent forms, other than what is seen as 'interesting' or 'useful' - or at least not too demanding - variations of forms of life (Parisi and Terranova 2000). In sum, because the *polis* is necessarily focused on its continued existence, it will strongly curb the possibility of new forms of life, and attach them to existing logics of order. These logics of order are in their foundation based on the right to exploit and hierarchical notions legitimising impositions. A multilogical ethics, which concerns itself with forming *technes* of relation open up new forms of life, new forms of engagement, and offer the possibility to think outside of structures of exploitation.

New is not necessarily good. In order not to get stuck in the demand for newness of forms the focus lies on relationality and logics, in order to remain open to needed changes in *techne* as undoing of the *master code*. The proposal for nonnormative ethics does not suggest the founding of a new *polis*, but emphasises that the walls, which will inevitably form as dispositions, keep being broken down in order to ensure the absence of new excluding and imposing codes or, as Lugones theorises, new demands for purity (Lugones 2003). Here, again, embracing loss functions as the willingness to generate space for other agents. Loss needs to coincide with generosity, because generosity alone runs into a politics of austerity: change seems only possible with sufficient resources. Forms with their attendant logics allow for thinking through stabilisation of

lives, without encapsulating agents in proposals for orders that hide the violence at their borders. A willingness to question forms, but not defying the emergence of logics, attends to the various modalities of change, and suggests *telos* as inevitable, but undirected. Logic emerges over time, and cannot be discarded easily in a whim. Generosity is needed to overcome burdens of *stasis* of forms, and loss functions as the modus by which this is possible.

Applicability

While this thesis started out as a way to think through changes of trans bodies, the argument broadened to allow thinking through more forms of life. Nonnormative ethics conceptualises the dynamics of formation vis-à-vis a dominating order. However, it does not suggest a revolutionary overthrow in the classical sense of the word. Nonnormative ethics perhaps proposes undermining monological orders in the spirit of Moten and Harney's *Undercommons* (Harney and Moten 2013), and especially an order that claims to encapsulate 'all of us'. This dynamic ethics forms an argument against the *politicisation* of change, as part of a system that supports and legitimises unequal distribution. This politicisation would then immediately suggest a capitalisation of change. The argument in this thesis provokes perhaps the idea that there can be no incremental change, other than changing our bodies. Systems of distribution of labour and resources force bodies in directions or demand accountability to vectors of formation that can be given up. The world as it is currently ordered, has been formed since 1492 and it can be changed again. In its current form the legalised aggression (Spade 2011), legalised maldistribution (Cowen 2014), and legalised slow death (Raha 2017, 2015) suggest that incremental change is only a breather until the backlash arrives.⁸⁹ An order built on exploitation cannot nurture different forms.

⁸⁹ Only by changing bodies to be nonnormative can incremental change function as strategy for radical change. Otherwise such change will function to accommodate moderates. By drawing the body out of the *polis* the need to pursue change is evident.

This thesis then proposes a strategy to grow out of the master code, to form new lives that do not endorse exploitation as immediate outcome of any organisational process. The conceptualisation of agency under duress as navigational possibilities suggest a way out of totalising articulations of nonnormative lives to find emergent possibilities. Furthermore, it offers these possibilities and potentialities as a way to make connection, rather than as demand to create new worlds that are 'autonomous' in their own right. Articulating this step using insights of Lugones, I have argued that such forms of autonomy are not only unhelpful and excluding, but follow majoritarian logics. In Wynter's terms, this would mean that the 'referent-we', those that we accept as kin⁹⁰, is too narrowly and inflexibly circumscribed (Wynter 2003; McKittrick 2015b). Both María Lugones, as well as Sylvia Wynter allow insight in the possibility of articulating structures of bonding across differing logics and out of the current codified structures. However, it is imperative that it is acknowledged that this bonding away from the current master codes is only relevant and more than self-indulgence if these forms are a way to destabilise and ultimately break down the master code. If not, then these forms are a variation that serve exploitation in a differences enabling capitalism, as argued by Himani Bannerji (Bannerji 2000).

Codings, gifts, and loss allow to see how the formation of new forms of being together do not need to be based on purity. The gift of loss of truth, as generosity between and willingness to give up one's truth, in its extreme form, strangers, is a gift of the possibility of relation (cf. Hooker 2017). The gift itself then, is the belief in the possibility of this emergence (Godelier 1999). The codes of relation that come out do not need to be stable, but can evolve with the passing histories and memories. What is key to this code is that it is non-binding. It is not a 'social contract'. At each moment any body can walk away, break the bond. This matters as the code needs to be honoured for it to exist, but there is no retaliation for betrayal, other than retraction. To lose a bond is to face loss of shared truth. This is not just the bond that is lost, but also the loss one was willing to face before the bond emerged; there is no return to a neutral, but only a lost relationality with

⁹⁰ Kin is used in a wide sense.

its shared logic structuring practical truth. One has lost part of one's *logos* and with it the naïve belief that one's *logos* could have been whole – perhaps, at its extreme. Just like multilogical relationality is a many-sided unfolding, loss is the fragmenting of *logos*, shattering truths and *techne*. To face loss when bonding is to create space for the emergence of a new code, a temporal stable relation. To face the loss of this bond is to have the emptiness in full. This is not a loss one cannot get over, but this ethical loss is destabilising. Part of one's form of life fell apart.

In nonnormative ethics it is the rewording and remaking of the 'referent-we' (McKittrick 2015b, 24) that is at stake. Processes of loss and bonding through emergent codings and *techne* create some hesitation around an idea of generation or expansion. The resultant 'we' of overlapping logics, codings, and demonic bonds might always be limited and partial. Partly, this is a given, because the structure of ethics is formed around the life world of the agents. However, codings, incorporating abstractions of *technes*, can traverse these life-worlds and extend 'we' beyond the lived realities of agents. How this 'referent-we' finds articulation is key – these are patterns of recognition, kinship, exclusion, and encapsulation (McKittrick 2015b, 24). The *master code* is one of bodily phenomenology creating a hierarchy enabling exploitation and diminishing social agency. In contrast nonnormative codings, as I have argued in my thesis, are one of bonding across logics. These are codings of non-imposition, making space for different traversals of space opening logical being to transubstantiate and change form. These nonnormative codings create the possibility to transverse across forms of life, without getting entangled in specific principles and judgements, as the diamond form of the *polis* is reduced to. Traversal, transversal, and transsubstantiation are suggested by Denise Ferreira da Silva as outcomes of the project of undoing universal subjects, demanding desires to be met (Da Silva 2014, 92). The *polis* keeps its variations guarded by hardening the principles of form, and solidifying the judgements coming out of its lives, as I have argued in chapter three. In contrast nonnormative ethics aims to find connection, suspension if necessary, between different principles and judgements by opening of the *logos* and logics of forms. This can be envisioned as

an opening in the middle, creating space for change of form and thus change of principles and judgements. This rearticulation of Quine (Quine 1951), allows understanding that it are less the fringes that needs attention, but a willingness of nonnormative agents to open up their core, or in my articulation to challenge their *logos*, rather than their judgements.

This structure of ethics leads to the possibility to think change beyond neoliberalisms key phrases 'it gets better' and 'inclusion'.⁹¹ One application is the challenge that it is sufficient to change laws to be more inclusive, while exploitative logics remain in place. This neoliberal 'multiculturalism' is criticised by Himani Bannerji, as an inclusion that generates exploitative difference (Bannerji 2000). One is reduced to the image that is 'included' (Abbas 2010), but not allowed to change the form in order to make different lives possible. Nonnormative ethics challenges this single logic of difference and variation in the *polis* by proposing tools to unearth logics beyond the 'identity' differences that have been generated in the recognition discourses of capitalist multiculturalism.

Because my argument offers no single solution and no new unity, it challenges the monological order. The suggestions for multilogical connection and nonnormative ethics can only be applied by generating space for retraction, and non-imposition as a way to create the space for emergence, but no demand for emergent codings. To be good strangers to each other is perhaps the minimal code, and suggests a respect for opacity and the right not to know (Glissant 1997). In the *polis* the stranger generates mistrust, either because they are suggested to come to exploit⁹², and are thus following the colonial logic of empire, or because they come to manage, and are in the monological attitude of ordering and subjecting, which can be called gentrifying, or, lastly, they do not follow the unspoken rules of hierarchy and are a challenge to order. The first of these three, and it is by no means an exhaustive list, are the invasive logics of colonialism and empire in the form of *logos* and logic, often backed up by state

⁹¹ It is most unfortunate that a part of trans politics in Europe (including the UK) is aimed at inclusion and necessitates spelling out such a perhaps 'trite' aim.

⁹² See contemporary papers, but also Anna Sampaio (Sampaio 2015), Jasbir Puar (Puar 2007), A Sivanandan (Sivanandan 1982)

force, that will disrupt the 'referent-we' of the web of relations in place in a certain space. The last one is the stranger challenging undisputed judgements and principles in the form of life, and bringing them to light in a new way. This can be done from a monological entitlement or from nonnormative 'foolery'. The joking appraisal of fossilised forms that are mono-directional beneficial for certain agents. Perhaps it allows some agents to invoke rebellion and not side with the going order, whether this is done in whispers or in shouts. A nonnormative ethics allows one to give space and simultaneously challenge, a monological ethics only sees the challenge to order and perhaps the adjustment of order to incorporate differences, while the order remains functional.

While it might be argued that agency as navigation without subjectivity will make for easy manipulation, I have aimed to undercut this problem in the thesis. Navigating agents might find themselves in an environment that is manipulated, and claimed in heated, or orchestrated, political discussions to consist of issues, debates, problems, and shortcomings. An agent without subjectivity, it can be feared, will easily get lost in the demands of the environment. In the articulation I have offered, the agent does not know itself as a mode of subjectivity, but its knowledge is displaced to knowing what it is rejecting in the environment (cf. Muñoz 1997, 83). This does not instantly lead to wantonness, because knowledge of rejection might be just as thorough and grounded as claims to subjectivity. At the same time, the indeterminate affirmation allows for a *logos* of being to emerge that is already outside of the bounds of the manipulated environment. Exactly because the agent is not tied to a stable subjectivity, and its way of being in the world can be know if it would be that, the agent is more difficult to manipulate, as the concerns fall out of the reach or understanding of the controlled parts of the environment. While the environment might be toxic, the agent can shift its engagements.

The nonnormatively ensouled body will come with a *logos* that is partly outside of its understanding, because indeterminate affirmation means, at times, that one doesn't know what one is doing. In my thesis this is not a problem. It contrasts for a reading of trans with the practices of gender clinics who demand to have a

clear and normative explanation about one's body and being, and who will not leave room for doubt or experiment. This demand for clarity becomes an extortion, which forces agents to pretend normativity, and puts strain on the agent to present in a way that is deemed comprehensible by disinterested observers. It demands erasure of the agent's being and simultaneously insists on a portrayal of imagery that can be judged according to norms that are out of reach of the agent. This demanded attempt to pass is presented as cure for an imagined pathology (Benjamin 1954). The pathology can, in fact, be summarised as lack of normativity. The process of the agent coming with its own navigation and thus formation stays out of sight, which is possibly the intention of the clinicians.⁹³ Clinicians are aware that trans agents cannot be who they want to be, because they tell the trans agents, thus clinicians will judge on how well over a period of time trans agents pretend to be what they want them to pretend. A *logos* out of reach might thus be played in a game of power differences structuring environments and demands for adaptation. *Logos* thus comes not only with being, but also with possible scenarios of camouflage.⁹⁴

Coda

A *logos* embedded in multilogical environments, navigating around *technes* and codes enables the articulation of nonnormative ethics both contextually as well as structurally. It is contextual as the multilogics differ, and codes take on specific formations, however, it is also structural as the conceptualisations that I have argued for are enabling another way of looking at formation, meaning, lack of meaning, and possible modes of being and their emergence. In a sense, I have argued for an ethics that allows looking over the edge of the known, not what to what can be found there, but to how it can be extended without exploitation. Possibly, this suggests similitude to the Ancient Greek vision of time as walking

⁹³ This is irrespective of how the agent identifies, as that will always be a modulation through *logos* and not a mimetic alignment with spectral diagnostic criteria.

⁹⁴ Outside the bounds of this thesis W.E.B. DuBois has articulated a similar process as double consciousness (Du Bois 1903).

backwards (Maul 2008): one can see what has happened, but cannot see what comes in the future. Navigation moves backwards, which is why the means produce the ends, as I have argued in chapter two.

I have argued that making limits visible is not sufficient, as this will only highlight categorical differences that seemingly structure those limits. The categorical differences are mapped onto bodies, which will function as short hand for projects of epistemic hierarchies. This possibly reinscribes codes along existing lines, but articulated in different patterns. For a trans reading this is not sufficient, because a trans reading needs to make space to change categories, or change categorically. Trans needs to dissolve categorical limits, even though these might return rearticulated after 'transition'. This displacement of limits comes with a suggestion of the shift of *logos* and logics. The claim that I have defended in this thesis is thus not that it is categorical being, but categorising logics that are the issues that need facing. Spread sheet diversity, as already conceived by Himani Bannerji in 2000, will not change the logic at work in harnessing difference to benefit the monological order of exploitation. While it is helpful to understand limits as structuring codes and enabling powers of exploitation, it is also helpful to see that logics can traverse limits and codifications and structure operations that at first sight seem nonnormative. It is in this sensitising to operational logics that ethics can emerge. The de-sensitised operation of the monological order, and it can only exploit because it is desensitised, demands with its violence a shutting down within the environments it touches. Nonnormative ethics is structured by sensitivity and using *dunamis* to explore engagement, an activity that is structured by the willingness to accept loss and extend generosity. And it is in this shift that exploitation shifts to something resembling the possibility of another form of life. This can dissolve the master code and turn it to a coda. The structure of the world as we know it can end, and something non-exploitative can emerge in its place.

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