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Khora and Violence: Revisiting Butler with Whitehead

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(Abstract) In revisiting Butler's critique of Plato's *khora* in her reading of Derrida, Kristeva, and Irigaray in *Bodies that Matter* with Whitehead's use of *khora* in *Adventures of Ideas,* we ask whether Whitehead's understanding and use of *khora* repeats the heterosexual regime of intelligibility that Butler finds to be engrained in Plato's contrasting opposition of *khora* and Ideas—the autogenesis of the Law of the father. While *khora* might remain a moment of the regulative mechanisms of phallogocentrism, as Butler argues against Kristeva and Irigaray, Whitehead's account of her confronts us with another possibility: that she suggests an invitation for refiguring and transmuting all metaphysical categories involved—like Ideas, sensible things, matter, place, Law—as void traces in her mutually immanent movement of the overcoming of their constitutional violence secured by her exclusion from the phallogocentric economy. As Butler suggests for Benjamin, Whitehead's *khora* wants to confront us with a "sacred transience" (suffering happiness) of life that is always in the process of overcoming this violence of exclusion.

1	**'*Xora*' ('crossing in')**
2	**Matter that bodies (beyond 'doublicity')**
3	**Other penetrations ('intragenesis')**
4	**Performing indirection ('indetermination')**
5	**'*Perikhora*' ('otherwise within')**
6	**Polluted sexes ('indiscretion')**
7	**Surnames of 's/he/it' ('mutual transgression')**
8	**'… yet to come' ('divination')**

1 **'Xora'** *('crossing in')*

Khora appears in Plato's dialogue *Timaeus* as a complication of his cosmogony in which two genus or classes or kinds of being interfere: one is "a pattern intelligible and always the same," the other "only the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible" (Timaeus 48e).[1] It is this interference that concerns Plato since the imitations that constitute the world of becoming from the intelligible and within the material elements have no "reason" if not for a third genus or class or kind that is neither intelligible nor sensible. In a sense, *khora* is beyond reason and necessity (and, hence, of neither of their natures) by being the "reason" (Timaeus 52b) for the "necessity" (Timaeus 52a) for both of their *interaction*; the "reason" for the intelligible to imitate itself in the material elements and the "necessity" for the necessity of the becoming world to be situated as imitation of the intelligible within the material elements. In fact, *khora* is neither Ideas (or Intelligence) nor becomings, nor the material elements themselves, but something entirely different: "the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation" (Timaeus 49a).

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[1] Cf. D. Miller, *The Third Kind in Plato's Timaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2003).

Since *khora* "is difficult of explanation and dimly seen" (Timaeus 48e), she can only be introduced with a series of "images" that interfere with one another and leave a diffuse enough "character" that can really only inadequately be formulated in differentiation form "being" and "generation"—namely as "space" (Timaeus 52d). If "space" is her "proper name"—although she has no such "property"—it is only by the *mutual relativity* of other images like 'receptacle', 'nurse', 'mother (substance)', or 'home of becoming' that her function as an "universal nature which receives all bodies" can be named: she is always "the same" insofar as "she never departs at all from her own nature," but she "appears different from time to time by reason of" the impressions she receives. As "the natural recipient of all impressions," she "never in any way, or at any time, assumes a form like that of any of the things which enter into her," but in being receptive she "is stirred and informed by them" (Timaeus 50b). She is not intelligible, but still "in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible" (Timaeus 51b).

Khora "is most incomprehensible" (Timaeus 52a). Although *khora* is not the intelligible—which is "uncreated and indestructible, never receiving anything into itself from without, nor itself going out to any other, but invisible and imperceptible by any sense"—she is "eternal, and admits not of destruction"; but other than the intelligible, she "provides a home for all created things." Although she "is hardly real," she expresses for "all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space" (Timaeus 52a-b). Although she "is apprehended without the help of sense" (Timaeus 52a), that is, is *imperceptible* like the intelligible, she is "experiencing all the affections which accompany these … appearances" (Timaeus 52e). And although she is received "by a kind of spurious reason," this reason is really "as in a dream" (Timaeus 52b).

Khora only reveals her "character" in a series of inconsistencies.[2] While this "mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things" is "an invisible and formless being which receives all things" and *must* be "devoid of any particular form" in order "to receive all forms"—"the resemblances of all eternal beings"(Timaeus 51a-b)—she is not nothing, but "full of powers which were neither similar nor equally balanced, [so that she] was never in any part in a state of equipoise, but swaying unevenly hither and thither, was shaken by them, and by

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[2] Cf. E. Grosz, "Woman, *Chora*, Dwelling" in, Idem, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 113-7.

its motion again shook them" (Timaeus 52e). While *khora* is receptive, this receptivity is not mere "emptiness" but *activity* and the *medium* that activates so "that fire is that part of her nature which from time to time is inflamed, and water that which is moistened, and that the mother substance becomes earth and air, in so far as she receives the impressions of them" (Timaeus 51b).

Khora is not the activity of the intellect, that is, of resemblance, but of *difference;* and she is not the material medium of the elements (fire, water, earth, and air) or "matter" (as in Aristotle), but their very *medium* by which she "presented a strange variety of appearances" (Timaeus 52e). In fact, *khora* is multiplicity—"one" only as difference—but she is so only by being (the) *within* (of) the process of resemblance and unification. *Khora* "allows" and "refuses"; she is the outside in and the inside out. In fact, it is this "characteristic," which is always indefinite, always initiating a process of *indetermination* in all the determinations she mediates, that made her attractive to current philosophical appropriations.[3]

Most suggestive is Plato's "allegory" of her as being like "soft substances [that] do not allow any previous impression to remain" (Timaeus 50e). *Khora* as a process of inscription— writing on a surface; impregnating it with images that are not *what* they are, because they are *of* something else: the intelligible; writing signs of what is estranged within the other. Writing signs *into the surface* becomes the *place* of writing itself, the medium of inscription, mediating nothing (cf. OG 242-46). Estranged from there essences (the intelligible), the signs are nothing "for themselves." *Khora* is the indirection of inscriptions *in* the surface that becomes *surface itself* in the process of 'writing *in*'. As such—without origin, without depth, with nothing beyond— *khora* becomes the "allegory"[4] for *différance* in Derrida, "pure multiplicity" in Deleuze and "the void" of sheer (inconsistent) multiplicity for the process of unification it harbors in Badiou.[5]

Khora is the incomprehensibility of pure multiplicity: she "appears" as difference, as the plenitude of unrestricted complexity, or as "nothingness." She has no name and no property, but

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[3] Cf. E. S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 32-40.

[4] J. Caputo, ed., *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham Press, 2003), 97.

[5] Cf. R. Faber, H. Krips, and D. Pettus, eds., *Event and Decision: Politics and Ontology in Badiou, Deleuze, and Whitehead* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010).

can only be "named" by series of "allegorical characteristics" that *in* her "appearance" always *deconstruct* themselves along their construction that she facilitates. 'With Heidegger, she only names a "crossing out."[6] She only "appears" *in* the process of 'crossing *in*' in which all signs appear through her exclusion *in* the process of "crossing." Like Derrida's series of impropriations, that is, supplementations in the process of improper writing (OG 141-64), *khora* cannot be written properly (cf. WD 361). *Χωρα* begins with the Greek letter "chi" (χ), which is a "cross:" in being so written, she crosses herself out, or better: she *crosses herself in* by "placing" the manifold from which she is, at the same time, excluded.

2 Matter that bodies (beyond 'doublicity')

In Butler's *Bodies That Matter*, the appearance of *khora* is related to Derrida's reflection on *différance* over and against logocentrism (cf. BTM 41); but *khora* becomes only relevant in a more specific context: that of phallogocentrism for which the "matter of femininity" is bound to the "classical association of femininity with materiality" and its link of "matter with *mater* and *matrix* (or the womb)" (BTM 31). Butler's thesis seems to be that, first, the conceptuality of "matter," as it appears in the philosophical tradition from Aristotle on, is already *founded though a set of violations*" (BTM 29) of phallocentrism; second, that a critique of Aristotelian matter, when mediated through Foucault's understanding of the body as the inscription of a soul through power, can be countered by Irigaray's and Kristeva's alteration of Plato's *khora* as "*inscriptional space* of that phallogocentrism" (BTM 39) which, at the same time, undermines phallogocentric power in naming the non-representable feminine; and, third, that the *khora* still reverberated with the "sex of materiality" instead of a "materiality of sex" (BTM 49) even in the form of Irigaray's use for the non-representable feminine insofar as its sexual immateriality remains part of the phallogocentric economy.

A deeper layer of reference to *khora* in Butler's text that points beyond Derrida's metaphysical deconstruction of universals with the khoric space of *différance*, although it remains related to it, is initiated by a peculiar coincidence of Butler's interests. First, while Derrida's

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[6] Cf. F. A. Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Srudy of* Mitsein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 44.

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grammatology implies a surface of inscription in the process of writing as the deconstruction of any logocentric "metaphysics of presence," Butler's implication of Foucault develops such a surface of inscription as a description of the body under the phallogocentric rule of power that creates the subject ("soul") as perpetual subjection under the exclusion of a multiplicity of gendering in the primordial act of its violent erasure (cf. BTM 32-6). It is the gendered character of this *imprint* on the khoric surface that interests Butler. Second, the common "ground" of Kristeva's, Irigaray's, and Butler's evocation of *khora* in the context of phallogocentrism is the psychoanalytic traits they follow with Lacan. Hence, *khora* appears not only as "incomprehensible reasoning" and "dreamlike thinking" (as in Plato) but, in fact, as an exposition of the Lacanian triad of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary to which Butler's analysis of *khora* remains bound (cf. BTM 13, 17).[7]

As for Lacan's 'Real', *khora* for Kristeva and Irigaray remains the (self-excluding) excluded in the phallogocentric economy of symbolisms although she is implicated in this process of symbolization. *Khora's* "function" is that of being inside and outside the symbolic economy of the law of the father at the same time. While for Kristeva *khora* is only beyond the symbolic by being identified with the *semiotic materiality* of the mother so that *khora* remains bound to the Aristotelian dualism of matter and form (cf. BTM 41)—and, hence, the Foucaultian process of inscription that creates the "form" ("soul") by erasure of the body within the empty surface of imprints (cf. GAO 22-26)—Irigaray formulates the 'inside out' and 'outside in' of *khora* as "matter that exceeds mater, where the latter is disavowed for the autogenetic form/matter coupling to thrive" (BTM 47). In other words, Irigaray's *khora* wants to escape the phallogocentric economy by not referring to the self-production of the law of the father (the intelligible) in his images (the sensible as mimesis of the Ideas), which are always formulated from within the mater/form dualism, but she transcends both matter and form insofar as it is *the* non-representable within this phallogocentric economy of violence. Instead of Kristeva's "identification of the *chora* with the material body," Irigaray situates *khora* "outside the form/matter and universal/particular binarisms" so that she "will be neither the one nor the other, but the permanent and unchangeable condition for both" (BTM 42).

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[7] Cf. 43A. Thiem, *Unbecoming Subjects: Judith Butler. Moral Philosophy, and Critical Responsibility* (New York: Fordham Press, 2008), 43.

This move is based on a deconstruction of Plato's *own* identification of *khora* with the feminine in the form of the 'mother', the female articulation of "her," and the stereotype of her femininity being equated with 'receptivity' (by Plato himself) and 'materiality' (by Aristotle). Although Butler recognizes that Irigaray's reference to Plato and the whole philosophic tradition is performed in the conscious *engagement* of their very phallocentrism—even in the "figure" of *khora*—she asks whether Irigaray's strategy of performativity in which "the discourse which performs that conflation invariably produces an 'outside' where the feminine which is *not* captured by the figure of the *chora* persists"(BTM 41-2) *can*, in fact, overcome the phallogocentric economy or whether it is "only" its performative repetition. Butler's conclusion is that insofar as Irigaray *identifies* the 'outside' of the feminine figure of *khora*, that is, the *non-representable khora* (that is beyond her "figure" as she appears always *within* the phallogocentric symbolization), with the non-representable feminine that has *no "place"* in the phallogocentric economy, Irigaray *repeats the phallogocentric exclusion* of both *khora* and women.

In fact, Irigaray reiterates the "phallic phantasy of a fully self-constituted patrilineality" because "this fantasy of autogenesis or self-constitution is effected through the denial and cooperation of the female capacity of reproduction" (BTM 43) by which the "function" of *khora*/women/mother is reduced to 'receptivity' and all reproductivity is transferred to the intelligible/male/father. In this analysis of Irigaray, Butler's Foucaultian and Lacanian interests coincide. On the *Foucaultian* side, Irigaray is accused of an "authoritative naming of the receptacle as the unnamable" as "a primary or founding inscription that secures this place in the inscriptional space" and, hence, "a penetration into this receptacle which is at once a violent erasure" that establishes a "site for all further inscription" (BTM 44). On the *Lacanian* side, Irigaray's "displacement of the material origin" must appear as a symbolization of the "feminine as material" that "does not offer itself as an alternative origin" (BTM 45) because it is bereft of its "reproductive function" (BTM 43). In a more *Derridian* context, this means that in "identifying the feminine with that position"—"the unthematizable"—Irigaray "makes use of the phallogocentric exercise to produce this identity which 'is' the non-identical" (BTM 48).

At this stage of analysis, Plato's *khora* has been pierced by the violence of logocentrism. She has become a doublet, a double of herself not only in the form the duplicity of matter 'within' but also matter 'without' the logocentric binaries of form/matter or male/female. Even

more profoundly, she has become a *double* "representing" non-representability (herself) beyond all binaries. But by "naming" her *as such,* she transforms into a "figure" *within* the phallogocentric economy of male autogenesis. This 'doublicity' makes her a victim and an expression of the *violence* of autogenesis: "representing" her *inability* to be captured by a male self-production *by way of* reiterating male autogenesis that reduces her productivity to mere immaterial receptivity. Thereby, she becomes a 'double' of the *exclusion* of women, children, slaves, and animals from the disembodied rationality of male autogenesis (cf. BTM 49). Instead of becoming a "matter that bodies" by way of her vital refusal of autogenetic dematerialization, she has become *a 'double' of her own erasure*—an *empty void* for phantasmagoric impression by phallogocentric self-reproduction.

3   Other penetrations ('intragenesis')

In Butler's "own rude and provocative reading of the same passage" (BTM 36) of Plato's *Timaeus*, she makes recourse to precisely all of its elements that in Irigaray contributed to the 'doublicity' of *khora,* turning them against the text itself. Her main argument is that they all cumulatively contribute to a dematerialization of the female as unproductive receptivity and, conversely, to a dematerialization of the male as phallogocentric autogenesis (of masculinist reason) under exclusion of the body of women, children, slaves, and animals bodies that, now, "perform [only] the bodily functions that it will not perform" (BTM 49). This becomes obvious when Irigaray's strategy of reading Plato's *khora* as the strictly non-representable female implies that this move *prohibits* for women that which is prohibited for *khora*: to assume a form. Since the verb for "assuming"—*eilephen*—also means "*to have a wife* and of *a woman to conceive*" (BTM 50), Butler concludes that women for Irigaray become what they are presumed to be in phallogocentric economy: unproductive surfaces for phantasies of male autogenesis (which is the production of a Foucaultian subject as "soul," a phantasmagoric production of male autogenesis).

This "essential" female *inability/exclusion*—"never contributing to the process of reproduction in order to credit the masculine with giving birth" (BTM 50)—is locked in by Irigaray's woman/mater/*khora* identification and by a reading of Plato's *khora* as a "figure" of the formless mother/mater/receptacle as a void that is devoid of anything *except* being the surface

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for the imprint of the intelligible imaging within her. In her impenetrability, *khora* is the *only* "thing" that is penetrated, allowing for her penetration because she is "nothing" herself. It is the same move of Irigaray that makes *khora* a "figure" of impenetrability (being 'the beyond') and *as* "figure" the *only* penetrated in the otherwise "smooth" (irresistant) process of self-regeneration of the intelligible, that is, the phallogocentric economy of autogenesis. This explicit "heterosexual *matrix*" results in a "distribution," "which establishes the 'he' through this exclusive position as penetrator and the 'she' though this exclusive position as penetrated" (BTM 50-1).

Insofar as Butler considers this configuration of a "refusal of an eroticism of entry and containment" (BTM 46) to be one of Irigaray and (her strategy to read) Plato alike, she asks these two related questions: First, is this "prohibition that secures impenetrability of the masculine … a kind of panic … over becoming 'like' her, effeminized, or a panic over what might happen if a masculine penetration of the masculine was authorized, or a feminine penetration of the feminine, or a feminine penetration of the masculine or a reversibility of those positions—not to mention a full-scale confusion over what qualifies as 'penetration' anyway"? And, second, are "the speculative and phantasmatic beginnings of Western metaphysics in terms of the spectre of sexual exchange that it produces through its own prohibition … a panic over the lesbian or, perhaps more specifically, over the phallicization of the lesbian" (BTM 51)? What, however, would happen if we would *question* this distribution "in which matter redoubles itself as a proper and improper term, differently sexed" (BTM 49) and would instead allow for "the relaxing of the taboos against tray penetration [in order to] destabilize these gendered positions in serious ways" (BTM 51)? What would happen if we allow this "prohibition of resemblance" to be lifted so that instead of "mutually exclusive and complementary" positions "she would be penetrated in return, or penetrate elsewhere" (BTM 50) or our scheme would allow for a "relation of penetration between two ostensibly feminine gendered positions" (BTM 51)?

If it is this taboo, the "resemblance that must be prohibited in order for Western metaphysics to get going" (BTM 51), it is Plato's immateriality of *khora* that attests to the impossibility of this metaphysics to think the body, which only appears as "non-living, shapeless, non-thing which cannot be named," or cannot name "the female body as a human form." If it is this "theoretical gesture of pathos of exclusion" (BTM 53) insofar as it "appears as necessary and founding violence of any truth-regime," it is this very notion of *khora* that "preserves and

recirculates a violation, and then invokes that very concept in service of a compensation for violation" so that with her very affirmation "we run the risk of reproducing the very injury for which we seek redress" (BTM 54).

On the other hand, if it is precisely *khora's* "doubleness of the matter of matter" that indicates that the "bodily schema is not simply an imposition on already formed bodies, but part of the formation of bodies" and if these "forms which are said to produce bodily life operate through the production of an excluded domain that comes to bound and haunt the field of intelligible bodily life" (BTM 54) so that the "boundaries of the body are crafted through sexual taboo" (BTM 55), it will be only the performative relaxation of these taboos in the form of an *inter-penetration* of *khora* and intelligible body-formations that will initiate the mitigation of this foundational violence in metaphysics and "the specific social regulatory ideas" (BTM 54) of body formation. At this stage, Butler only hints to strategies for such a "dangerous crossing" (BTM 143) and "queering" (BTM 223) by way of variable and more ambivalent shapes of *penetrating otherwise*.

Instead of simply affirming the violations of heterosexual economy as "sad necessities of signification," Butler envisions this multiplicity of "other" penetrations as ways to perform other ways of inclusion and exclusion. This discourse will, however, simply become *the* one of universal inclusion because it would presuppose that "a given discourse is to claim that a singular discourse meets its limits nowhere" and that it "can domesticate all signs of difference." Nevertheless, if we can never master "the exclusion by which we proceed," we will still need "this necessary 'outside'" that the *khora* disfigures *in* the phallogocentric economy, namely, "as a future horizon, one in which the violence of exclusion is perpetually in the process of being overcome" (BTM 53).

We might not view *khora*, then, as reiteration of self-origination of male autogenesis, but as destabilization of phallic economy, which produces only "'copies' of the heterosexual origin," in indicating "improper resemblances or imitations that Plato rules out of the domain of intelligibility" that by accepting the "necessity to install a prohibition" along a "compulsory gendered matrix" as a *contingency* and seeking "rival possibilities for the organization of sexuality" (BTM 53) *as practices of a different (metaphysical) universality*: that of *performative interpenetration,* that is, of improper forms of '*intragenesis'*—"masculine penetration of the

masculine was authorized, or a feminine penetration of the feminine, or a feminine penetration of the masculine or a reversibility of those positions"—in which "the mimicking of the masculine" (BTM 51) penetration *contests* the 'originality' of autogenesis (cf. BTM 51).

4 Performing indirection ('indetermination')

Besides the poststructuralist interest in *khora,* it is a rarely recognized fact that Whitehead introduced her to his philosophical work.[8] However, before we revisit Butler's account of *khora* with Whitehead, we must ask: why Whitehead? The answer may surprise: it claims the *same* reason for *khora* that would lead us to revisit Butler with Whitehead's account of "substantialism" and his critique of the whole philosophic tradition as essentially a "metaphysics of presence": that is, his own critique of "logocentrism," his serious attempt of a philosophy of the body (philosophy of organism), his own pitch on 'performativity' as "reality" of event-nexuses in the process of reenactment and differentiation, his complex deconstruction of transcendent truth-regimes by his insistence on an immanentism of all concepts, principles, and laws, and his systematically worked out resistance to any totalitarianism of any kind of ideology, philosophy, or conceptuality (epistemologically and ontologically), including his own—in one phrase: the astonishing resemblance and profound resonance with the conceptual strategies of the poststructuralist corpus.[9] Although, in relation to Butler, Whitehead will be closer to Deleuze and Derrida than to Lacan and Foucault, Whitehead might—as Deleuze discovered—be an as yet to be discovered resource for the alteration of, and living difference in, the strategies of poststructuralist discourses, speaking to their own conviction of non-closure and incompleteness.[10]

Whitehead introduces *khora* late in his work and only in *Adventures of Ideas*, that is, after his opus magnum and under different conditions. While Whitehead's earlier conceptual strategies

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[8] Cf. Casey, *Place,* op. cit., 42 & R, Faber "Prozesstheologie" in C. Barwasser et alia, *Theologien der Gegenwart. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2006), 179-197.

[9] Cf. C Keller and A. Daniell, eds, Process and Difference: Between Cosmological and Poststructuralist Postmodernisms (Albany: SUNY, 2002).

[10] Cf. R. Faber and A. Stephenson, eds., *Secrets of Becoming: Negotiating Whitehead, Deleuze, and Butler* (New York: Fordham Press, 2010).

were tied to the primary subject of cosmology, the works after *Process and Reality* and especially *Adventures of Ideas* exhibit different intentions; namely, to analyze the emergence, development, and potential futures of human society *with* cosmology, but also, conversely, to *review* cosmology *as a moment* of conceptual strategies in understanding human reality under conditions of pervasive power structures.[11] While the former might resonate more with Plato's *Timaeus*, the latter speaks directly to Butler's *Bodies That Matter:* to address the discursive limits that shape the truth-regimes of our social structuring. This is the precise context in which *khora* appears in Whitehead as the discursive limit of *any* universal conceptuality and, in this sense, as the "figure" of the beginnings and endings of all figures—much like Kristeva's pre-symbolic semiosis and Irigaray's non-representable non-one as well as Derrida's *différance.* With Deleuze's (pure) multiplicity, however, it shares this cosmological edge that deconstructs social (power) structures that strive under the exclusion of humanity' chaosmic environment (cf. TF 79-92).[12]

Khora's appearance has forbearers in Whitehead's oeuvre that reach back to his criticism of the "bifurcation of nature" into the Aristotelian the binarisms of mind/matter as foundation of the (philosophy of) science with its paradoxically reversed reductionism that prefers "thought" (conceptual simplification) over the "percipient event" (experiential complexity) such that the former reduces the multiplicity of physical relationships of the latter to substantial entities which, then, are used as epistemological instrument to analyze bodies as substantialized (pieces of) matter.[13] This basic deconstruction of binaries reappears in Whitehead's deconstruction of the whole Western philosophical tradition—metaphysical or otherwise—as a series of foundational reductions of "reality" to the "presentational immediacy" of substantialized subjects and their essentializing universals—much like Derrida's criticism of (a metaphysics of) "presence"—that obliterates the pre-symbolic chaosmos of the constitution and movement of bodies from and within complex (internal and external) relationality.[14]

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[11] Cf. R. Faber, B. Henning, and C. Combs, eds., *Beyond Metaphysics? Conversations on Whitehead's Late Work* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

[12] Cf. R. Faber, "Introduction: Negotiating Becoming" in Idem and Stephenson, eds., *Secrets of Becoming*, op. cit.

[13] Cf. R. Faber, *God as Poet of the World: Exploring Process Theologies* (Louisville: WHK, 2008), ch. 2.

[14] Cf. R. Faber, "Surrationality and Chaosmos: For a More Deleuzian Whitehead (With a Butlerian Intervention)" in Idem and Stephenson, eds., *Secrets of Becoming*. op. cit., ch. 8.

Against this "misplaced concreteness,"[15] which takes universalizing abstractions as eminently "real" by instilling them with the powers of activity and subjectivity (an inscribed soul of universalized surfaces) *as* the activity and subjectivity of power, Whitehead develops different strategies of "imaginative generalization" that, ironically, are "tentative formulations of ultimate generalities" (PR 8) only insofar as we know them to *remain* fantasies of universalization.[16] One of Whitehead's profound strategies is to always limit any concept and its universal claim by a multiplicity of others that are only "coherent" *together* without ever being a logical implication of one another (cf. PR 3).[17] In this sense, Whitehead produces a discourse on power as a series of paradoxical concepts-nexuses that *exhibit* binary oppositions *in their very abstractness* as empty limits *of* mixtures that for themselves remain abstract because they do not touch bodily reality as long as they are abstracted *from* their events of bodily becoming.[18] Thereby, Whitehead performs—as Deleuze says—a *reversal* of the philosophical endeavor because, now, "abstraction does not explain but must be explained" and "the search is not for an eternal or universal, but for the conditions under which something new is created (*creativeness*)" (TRM 304).[19]

It is in this context that *khora* gets a voice in Whitehead's earlier work, anonymously yet. It disguises a *universal 'within' of relationality* in the notion of "necessity in universality" (PR 4) of relativity for any rationality (conceptual strategy). It shows a *universal 'within' of extensity* in the notion of the "extensive continuum" that conceptualizes the bodily placement of any event and connections of happenings within a "non-social nexus" that "answers to the notion of 'chaos'" (PR 72) that is open to any immanent (evolution of) order. And it appears as a *universal 'within' of infinite becoming* with reference to Plato's doctrine of the "evolution of matter" itself and "the origin of the present cosmic epoch … traced back to an aboriginal disorder, chaotic

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[15] Cf. E. Kraus, *The Metaphysics of Experience: A Companion to Whitehead's* Process and Reality (New York: Fordham Press, 1998), 10-15.

[16] Cf. K. Robinson, ed., *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[17] Cf. M. Weber, *Whitehead's Pancreativism: The Basics* (Frankfurt: ontos, 2006), 96-7.

[18] Cf. R. Faber, "Immanence and Incompleteness: Whitehead's Late Metaphysics" in Idem, Henning, and Combs, eds., *Beyond Metaphysics?* op. cit.

[19] Cf. R. Faber, "Whitehead at Infinite Speed: Deconstructing System as Event" in C. Helmer, M. Suchocki, and J. Quiring, eds., *Schleiermacher and Whitehead: Open Systems in Dialogue* (Berlin: DeGruiter, 2004), 39-72.

according to our ideals" (PR 95) for which the chaosmos has no "origin" or "aim" and no "identity" (being) that is not presupposing and implicating an excess of becoming.[20]

With these foreshadows, *khora* shares an indetermination of any limit that could ever be known and determined (identified). She is the *indetermination* of limit. She "limits" the limits and, hence, raises the question for their immanent condition as limits *of* universality. In this sense, *khora* is none of these foreshadowing conceptualities. Rather she upsets them as being even more *removed* and a "figure" of this removal; but in being their very *immanent* condition, she functions like Deleuze's 'paradox' in *The Logic of Sense*: as *indirection* of sense against "good sense" and "common sense" (LS 75). In her paradoxical universality or universal paradoxality within all processes of (bodily) formation, she exhibits *the togetherness of the mutually excluded* as resistance against the violence of exclusion *as well as* the totalitarianism of universal inclusion. She always escapes *insofar as* she always lets escape.

5 'Perikhora' *('otherwise within')*

In *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead introduces *khora* in the discussion of "Cosmologies"—as determining conceptualities of social structuring. It is especially against two types of foundations of social, by way of cosmic, laws that Whitehead defends his understanding of Law as chaosmically *immanent* and, hence, as socially *negotiable*. On the one hand, he contests the scientist "doctrine" of the mere *statistical* distribution of laws insofar as it is rooted in a mere positivism that defies any form of rational analysis beyond mere description. On the other hand, he even more vehemently fights the religiously motivated (or at least reiterated) "doctrine" of an *imposed* law for which it is the expression of a transcendent power—the fatalistic will and inaccessible eminence of omnipotence. *Khora* is set against their implication to forego paradoxical indirection by an installment of truth regimes that either negate the formative power of laws altogether *or* determine their transcendent sacredness—and, thereby, hide the power maze untouched by, and presupposed in, but working through negation and sanctification.

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[20] Cf. Faber, *Poet*, op. cit. § 16 & 24.

Over these truth regimes of power formation within society and subjectivity, Whitehead suggests another "doctrine": namely that of the *immanence* of law in the nexus of events that form chaosmic societies and, hence, *as conceptuality*, reformulate the pervasive power relations within the social formation of ideas *as negotiable.* By neither negating the reality of such power regimes nor by accepting any justification of their (absolute) truth, Whitehead establishes *such* an 'indirection of sense' that does neither, as does "good sense," know its *purpose* (an ideal society) nor, as does "common sense," allows for any *ideal universality* of which society (in its status quo and its ideal end) would be an exemplification. It is this indirection by which Whitehead formulates a "sense of peace" (AI 296) that, as in Butler, functions "as a future horizon, one in which the violence of exclusion is perpetually in the process of being overcome" (BTM 53) without knowing its shapes yet to come by always being in becoming (and overcoming).

It is as expression of such a *sense* of the immanence of Law that Whitehead introduces *khora* as "figure" of chaosmic relationality that in its very immanent creativeness (allowing for novelty) configures bodies as structural formations of repetition and differentiation—much like Butler's concept of performativity (cf. BTM 15). Over against pure statistical distribution without recognition of Law *and* an imposition of a sacredly sanctioned Law, *khora* includes the formative force of Law *and* its alterability in an "an emphatic doctrine of real communication" (AI 134).

What Whitehead means by this "doctrine," is rather appealing to our "leap of imagination" (PR 4) instead to the pretension to describe "real" reality. The "emphatic assertions of a real communication between ultimate realities" that "Plato's doctrine of the real Receptacle [υποδοχη and χωρα]" reveals is meant to defy any "doctrine" of discursive formation in which *abstraction* would function as medium of universality—since it only installs of power regimes as logocentric determinants of its "realities"—*or* which creates the illusion of a mere "accidental" communication of independent realities—since in their very independence they project the substantial(istic) nuclei for violence. Instead, if we follow the image that it "is part of the essential nature of each physical actuality that it is itself an element qualifying the Receptacle, and that the qualifications of the Receptacle enter into its own nature," we actually say that *khora* "is the way in which Plato conceived the many actualities of the physical world as components in each other's natures." Regarding any "universal" character of discourse, *khora* addresses the very *limitation* of totalizing (logocentric) ideas and of the excluding violence of "justified" regimes of

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competitive and antagonistic powers by projecting an "immanence of Law, derived from the mutual immanence of actualities." As "medium of intercommunication" (AI 134), *khora* appeals to a concept of an always already subversive *becoming* of (logocentric) formations of society and subjectivity that as (performative) activity "in between things," exhibits resistance against negation *and* sanctification of Law from the limit of "interbeing" or "*intermezzo*," as Deleuze says (TP 25), *in which* formative powers become *contingently accessible and available for negotiation* of their reasons of coercion and strategies of their overcoming.

With *khora*, the limit of discursivity is not held in the grip of the omnipotence of abstract binarisms but always only appears *in the middle* of body formation, in the midst of subliminal and omnipresent power projections, subversively and as means (potential) of a *communicability* that unhinges the phantasmagoric illusion of logocentric structuring from being either considered non-existent or omnipotent. It is precisely *this performative middle of communicability of becoming* between a logocentric nothingness and omnipotence that Whitehead "names" with a new key concept from his reading of Plato's text on the *khora*: namely—similar to Derrida's "milieu"[21]—that of a "medium" that is not something "(for) itself" but only a "figure" for the very activity of the *mutual immanence of (all) becoming*. This mutuality is *not* logocentrically mediated, that is, it is not working with and through (binary) abstractions instilled with power, nor is it *hindering* the construction of such logocentric structures in the very activity of any (social and psychic) body formation. It merely hinders our discourse on (and as) social and psychic inscription of power within body formation to *simply neglect* its pervasive universality *or* to *simply affirm* (the phantasy of) an omnipotent Law. This non-logocentric or logo-*de*-centering "universality" of Whitehead's 'mutual immanence' indicates—like that of Butler's 'performativity' (BTM 15)—discursivity as being in the process of overcoming the violence of exclusion (though inscription) by, at the same time, being aware of its mutual limitation *from the middle* of all conceptuality avoiding the totalitarianism of universal inclusivism.

In the chapter on "New Reformation," Whitehead traces this concept of 'mutual immanence' back to Plato's *khora*, but not without noting that it is not "identical" with Plato's "figure." In fact, while Plato's *khora* can be understood as a serious effort to overcome the

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[21] Caputo, *Deconstruction*, op. cit. 91.

violence of the imposed Law, the discovery of "persuasive agency" in midst of "coercive agency"[22] "begins in barbarism and ends in failure" since in its "metaphysical sublimation" it remained bound to the phantasy of a "doctrine of God as the supreme agency of compulsion" that erects the very phallogocentric reign of a "supreme reality, omnipotently disposing a wholly derivative world" (AI 166).[23] It *ended* in failure since the *discovery* of an unqualified "doctrine of mutual immanence" (AI 168) *in the midst* of the phallogocentrism of the autogenetic intelligence, namely, by way of "highly special forms" (AI 168) such as that of the Christian trinity, remained not only bound to the phallogocentric omnipotence of the divine, but in its final restriction to the inner working of the divine sovereign it remained caught in the "sublimation of its barbaric origin." It was bound to *disappear* again *into* its phallogocentrism that "fitted on very well to the Platonic doctrine of subordinate derivations" (autogenetic imitation)—namely, that of "the one absolute, omnipotent, omniscient source of all being, for his own existence requiring no relations to anything beyond himself" (AI 169).

However, *in the midst* of this phallogocentric phantasmagoria, the non-violence of 'mutual immanence' appears as Whitehead's key interpretation of Plato's figure of *khora* as *perikhora* that reflects the imitative performativity of 'intragenesis' *within* autogenesis and, hence, the "other" interpenetrations that upset the heterosexual matrix that penetration indicated vis-à-vis khoric passivity. Precisely in opening a khoric space in the midst of divine (trinitarian) interpenetration, *in which* "a multiplicity in the nature of God" becomes "unqualifiedly Divine" (AI 168), *this* khoric mutuality subversively imitates and upsets the very stability, alleged identity (as the One), and autogenetic imagination of the 'phallomnipotent' divine. In its classical connotation with the concept of *perichoresis,* this unqualified (trinitarian) 'interpenetration' is inherently *peri*khoric, that is, initiating all kinds of *other* penetrations that subvert the heterogenetic matrix: e.g., in form of the improper resemblances of the male and incestuous penetration of Father and Son and of the polyphilic penetration of (female) Spirit of, by, and side by side with both male images.

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[22] Cf. B. Mesle: *Process-Relational Philosophy: An Introduction to Alfred North Whitehead* (West Conshohocken: Remplton Foundation, 2008), ch. 7-8.

[23] Cf. Faber, *Poet*, op. cit., § 35.

'Mutual immanence' in Whitehead does not "name," but subversively imitate/differentiate Plato's *khora* as *peri*khoric immanence: not as an "universality" of being *"within" khora,* but as a multiplicity *being 'otherwise within' one another without any universal "within"* (as indicated by the very "figure" of *khora*). In fact, if this perikhoric immanence *would have* "made this advance into general metaphysics" (AI 169)—as Whitehead desires with his 'mutual immanence'—it would, indeed, have unsettled the very heterosexual matrix and its very taboos on which the social and psychic formation of bodies is found. Obviously, the restriction of '*perikhora'* within divinity and its (heterosexually underpinned) de-sexualization is the very proof of Butler's theorem that the "boundaries of the body are crafted through sexual taboo" (BTM 55) by which we become "copies" of its heterosexually installed "origin."

6 Polluted sexes ('indiscretions')

Whitehead's philosophical impulse in general and of his concept of *perikhora* in particular can be understood as an undertaking that avoids, and a procedure that undermines and overcomes, autogenetic binarisms. Instead of abstract oppositions bound up in the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (SMW 51) Whitehead seeks the always-becoming mutuality of *pollution*—where the "body pollutes the mind, the mind pollutes the body" (RM 87)—so that in the *event* of becoming substantialism is avoided, undermined, and overcome. In Whitehead's indirected philosophical conceptualities, oppositions are always abstractions from *contrasts of mutuality*, that is, of *graded differences* of mutual pollution, so that it becomes "a matter of pure convention as to which of our experiential activities we term mental and which physical" (S 20). Hence, for Whitehead, *khora* is neither form nor matter, but also in our contamination with substantialized abstractions always a graded indetermination of form/matter. As 'mutual immanence', *perikhora* is the 'indiscretion' *of* these abstractions: she is *indiscreet* towards their hidden heterosexual matrix and deconstructive of the *discreteness* of oppositeness that guard the autogenetic control of sexes. She reveals the *deconstructive indirection* of the neither/nor that undermines and overcomes these abstractions *in*, and in mutual immanence *with,* the process of multiply sexed becoming.

In this graded indirection of abstractions in the process of becoming, *perikhora* cannot be *limited* to one imagery over another, e.g., that of "penetration" over and against "receptivity"; rather she *limits* the autogenetic image *itself* that generates this binary and its function as generative "imitation"—be it heterosexual *or* performative. Whitehead's 'mutual immanence' is distinctly *khoric* insofar as it absorbs Plato's interpretation of the "beyond" of signification/resemblance (penetration) as "Receptacle" that "participates in no forms" so as to be imagined in the figure of "the fostermother of all becoming" and "a natural matrix for all things" (AI 134). In light of Butler's analysis of Irigaray, this raises the question whether Whitehead, in the end, does not *repeat* the heterosexual complementarity of autogenetic masculinity and a merely receptive femininity rather than to unsettle it. A careful analysis, however, will reveal that Whitehead's 'mutual immanence' is distinctly *peri*khoric, insofar as it avoids, undermines and overcomes these complimentary or oppositional binarisms and—in its unexpected resemblance to Butler's and Derrida's affirmation and critique of Plato's *khora* as "discursive limit of 'sex'" (BTM title)—cannot be forced back into the autogenetic/heterosexual matrix.

Contrary to Irigaray's *khora*, Whitehead's *perikhora* knows of *no* gendered distribution of ultimate abstractions. Although Whitehead mentions the female and feminine images of *khora*— 'fostermother', 'matrix', and 'receptacle'—as part of *Plato's* text, Whitehead's *never* uses them *constructively*. Instead of *khora* and her gendered pronoun "she," Whitehead consistently employs the "Receptacle," instead, and *only* with the de-gendered neutral pronoun "it." And although Whitehead uses the all-receptive matrix constructively insofar as it "participates in no forms, according to Plato" (AI 134), he does so by *avoiding* any *identification* with pure passivity or mere matter; on the contrary, as 'mutual immanence', it *invites* all forms as participants in the bodily formation of *any* actual event of becoming. Instead of becoming a hypostasized "figure," the Receptacle *disappears* in the *very activity* of the mutual immanence of all events of body formation; that is, bodies are the outcome of events as *situations of invitations* for forms to form, as are the forms the *outcome* of the mutual immanence of these events of formation. Instead of masculine and male "neutrality," which only repeats and hides the autogenetic superiority over the feminine and female particularity, Whitehead's "neutral" (non-gendered) Receptacle "is not the voidness of abstraction,"[24] but indicates a void that reveals the *multiplicity of its intragenetic*

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[24] M. Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984), 136-137.

voices. As Derrida notes on Heidegger, Whitehead's "a-sexual neutrality" of the Receptacle "does not desexualize, on the contrary, its *ontological* negativity" liberates "*sexuality itself*" (GSD 7). Whitehead's Receptacle is a "mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each 'individual,' whether it is classified as 'man' or 'woman'."[25] *Perikhora* opens, as in Derrida, "*khora*-ographies"[26] of gendering, de-gendering, and trans-gendering.

As a consequence, Whitehead's *perikhora* indicates the *disappearance* of any hypostasized abstraction into the immanent process of the formation of bodily nexuses of becoming such that this counter-pollution predates both Deleuze's and Butler's deconstruction of the autogenetic phallogocentrism of Plato's Ideas. In fact, 'mutual immanence' can only realize its function to generate a multiplicity of being "otherwise" within one another if it, at the same time, upsets any transcendent origin of the autogenetic Law that only imitates himself in his "images" as they participate in himself as variations (*logoi spermatikoi*). Deleuze refers to the one place in the *Sophist*, in which Plato himself seems to have recognized the *immanent* power of the simulacra that, freed from their resemblances with the Same, become resemblances *of* one another, that is, of their *difference* (cf. DR 68). Butler's criticism of the deeply engrained autogenetic self-imitation of the Ideas in the wholly passive "figure" of *khora* speaks not only to her de-gendering of *khora* (against Irigaray) but even more to the de-gendering of the Ideas. This is what Whitehead achieves with the *polluting mutuality* of the de-hypostatization of *khora* into a multi-gendered multiplicity in mutual immanence and the de-hypostatization of Plato's Ideas as autogenetic and self-repetitive "originals" beyond the world over and against their shadowy "mere dramatic imitation … of his ideas" (AI 167-8) as "second-rate substitutes and never the originals" (AI 168) within and as world. Like Deleuze's virtuals, Plato's eminently real, autogenetic Ideas instead of "representing" the violence of the one Law, now, in Whitehead, transmute into *multiply, otherwise penetrating and receiving, intragenetic potentials* for a differentienital sexual actualization of body formation in the multiplicity of mutually sexed or de-sexed or trans-sexed event-nexuses of becoming. Indeed, Whitehead's remaining "eternal objects" are not "forms" at all anymore, but *polyphilic promiscuities that arouse erotic desires*

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[25] Grosz, *Space*, op. cit., 78.

[26] Caputo, *Deconstruction*, op. cit., 105.

for actual sexual indiscretions—differentiations, complexifications, intensifications, and polyphonic scores of *creative* alterations of any givenness of facticity and legality.[27]

7 Surnames of 's/he/it' ('mutual transgressions')

In Derrida's account of *khora*, she is the "surname" (ON 126) of *différance*—another "figure" that only figurates the *insignificant* in any signification. She cannot "name" *différance* as she is likewise the irritation of all logocentric signification and bodily inscription, but she comes *after/beyond* (the logos of) naming as that which cannot be named—the nameless non-universal that "spaces" *in between* all boundaries of names, their rules of installation, and their transgressions. In "spacing" the *un*-naming *in between* all names, she deconstructs our binary conceptuality as the non-gendering or multi-gendering of "universals" in the autogenetic/heterosexual matrix. This is the function of 'mutual immanence' in Whitehead's text: the un-naming of all (metaphysical) universality as it represents the phallogocentric matrix of all things, that is, their very embodiment of binary abstractions on the basis, and as the expression, of the autogenetic opposition of "reception" and "penetration."[28] Whitehead's invocation of *khora* in the form of 'mutual immanence' is a deconstructive procedure of resembling "allegories" in the production of *polluted surnames of indiscretion—mutually transgressive and suspending the bodily inscription of "universally" gendered boundaries*.

In Whitehead, however, *khora*/Receptacle is the first surname of *perikhora/*'mutual immanence', which transgresses all oppositions (of abstractions, inscriptions, and boundaries) by contrasting them with one another and, in this process, "spaces" the procedure by which 's/he/it' is mutually immanent with all of them. It is to this effect that *perikhora* appears in another chapter of Whitehead's text on "Grouping of Occasions." As in a portion of Plato's text (that Butler excludes in her analysis of Irigaray), where *khora* is transgressing pure passivity or a mere void[29] by actually "being full of powers which were neither similar nor equally balanced" so that

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[27] Cf. R. Faber, "Bodies of the Void: Polyphilia and Theoplicity" in Ch. Boesel and C. Keller, eds., *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation, and Relationship* (New York: Fordham, 2010), 200-223.

[28] 'Cf. R. Faber, "The Infinite Movement of Evanescence'—The Pythagorean Puzzle in Plato, Deleuze, and Whitehead" in *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 21/1 (2000): 171-199.

[29] Cf. Casey, *Place,* op. cit., 33-6.

khora "was never in any part in a state of equipoise, but swaying unevenly hither and thither, was shaken by them, and by its motion again shook them" (Timaeus 52e), any patterning or body formation in Whitehead's text "is the outcome of some common function performed by those occasions." This "general common function exhibited by *any* group of actual occasions is that of mutual immanence" which is "the function of belonging to a common Receptacle." Beyond any "common relevance" a "Nexus" of all becoming "does not presuppose any special type of order, nor does it presuppose any order at all pervading its members other than the general metaphysical obligation of mutual immanence" (AI 201).

Resemblances of *perikhora* with these polluted surnames are abounding. Receptive and penetrating like *khora* is 'creativity', Whitehead's *intragenetic* "principle" of contraction and expansion, which is intensive 'within' and extensive 'without' like the 'extensive continuum'; and both are employing no pre-given forms.[30] That again entangles them with 'chaos' and any 'entirely living nexus', that is, the expansion of 'Life' beyond *any* 'character' (order, Law), although always contracted in processes of patterning.[31] None of these surnames of *perikhora* is exactly identical with 'mutual immanence' or one with the other, but rather repeating and differentiating, resembling and entangling, evoking and reversing the other, always multiplying 'intragenesis' as a "production of novel togetherness" (PR 21). Thereby, *perikhora* transgresses any boundary set by any "universal" by transferring them into transgressive surnames of 's/he/it' in which they become *mutually transgressive* and by which 's/he/it' becomes mutually immanent *with* all of them insofar as 's/he/it' disappears *in their* transgressive mutuality so as to not reiterate any pre-engendered matrix.[32]

However, how does Whitehead's *perikhora* avoid signifying anew a "position" of all-inclusive ultimacy in a kind of open-ended system of totalitarianism whereby 's/he/it' would lose her resemblance with *différance* as "spacing" of the very act of non-exclusive *non*-inclusion and would receive a "proper place" within the discursive economy as *logos* that "patterns" this space as Law? Whitehead does so by avoiding *securing* the boundaries of *perikhora* such that this

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[30] Cf. J. Bracken, The Divine Matrix: Creativity As Link Between East and West (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995), ch. 4.

[31] Cf. Faber, *Poet*, op. cit., § 15.

[32] Cf. R. Faber, "'O Bitches of Impossibility': Programmatic Dysfunction in the Chaosmos of Deleuze and Whitehead" in K. Robinson, ed., *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson*, op. cit. 200-27.

'void' spaces the uncontrollable multiplicity of the generation of in-between-genders *not* resembling the heterosexual binarisms. 'S/he/it' is *neither identical* with a purely indeterminate infinity of placing *nor without place within* the discursive economy, but 's/he/it' is the procedure of the production of *indetermination within and in between* discursivity. In other words: Whitehead avoids the reiteration of the violence of autogenetic exclusions that installs *any* discourse as "essentially" phallogocentric repetition precisely by producing *performative insertions* in the midst of its impossible phallic continuum that not only ironically repeat the *logos* of its imitation, but in which *perikhora* imitates the polluted surnames that always escape the *logos* as insignificant.[33]

The first kind of insertion, the indetermination of indetermination (of the limitless), appears in the last chapter of *Adventures of Ideas* on "Peace" and it marks the very end of the whole text. Here, Whitehead "supplement[s] the notion of the Eros by including it in the concept of an Adventure in the Universe" such that this supplement *escapes* and "compliment[s]" *khora.* Whitehead names this insecure boundary of *khora* "Beauty," the indetermination of indetermination, which is not "void, abstract from all individual occasions," but "includes among its components all individual realities, each with the importance of the personal or social fact to which it belongs" (AI 295), that is, *events* of patterns, proportion, rhythms, harmonies, polyphonies; *generations of novelty* within, through, and among structures, orders, and laws. *Perikhora* has unsecured boundaries that escape her, but 's/he/it' is the mutuality of transgression of these boundaries that avoids any 'doublicity' of identification on one or the other side of the boundaries.

The second kind of insertion, the indirection of indirection (of the purposeless), is even more astonishing. In the chapter on "Subjects and Objects," Whitehead places *perikhora* within the heterosexual economy of the binarisms of form/matter and soul/body—but as their "in/complete" deconstruction. In refuting the phallogocentric doctrine of the "self-identical Soul-Substance," Whitehead seeks the *insignificant supplement* left out in any doctrine of "personal

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[33] R. Faber "Wahrheit und Maschine. Wider das transsylvanische Argument von der Gewalt im Diskurs der Erkenntnis" in *Labyrinth. International Journal for Philosophy, Feminist Theory and Cultural Hermeneutics* 3 (2001). [http://labyrinth.iaf.ac.at/2001/Faber.html]

identity" by answering the remaining question of "Personality" (AI 186) with—*khora*![34] In a unique passage, Whitehead *writes over* Plato's text "with the insertion of such terms as 'personal unity', 'events', 'experience', and 'personal identity', for two or three of its own phrases." What Whitehead with this inscription finds is an understanding of personal identity *as khora*, that is, neither as logocentric repetition of self-identity (autogenesis) nor as pre-engendered heterosexual matrix of mind/body and male/female, but as *intragenetic void* of an unsecured *khora*-ography of multi-sexed bodies in becoming (cf. GAO 22-40).

The third kind of insertion follows the second. In mutually transgressing the "core" of human personality with *khora* of the *chaosmos*, Whitehead "places" *perikhora* in the midst of the heterosexual economy of inscriptions of bodies that violently produce subjects of Law of the father *such that* 's/he/it' not only imitates only the *multiplicity* of sexually marked voices we (might) perform as "personalities," but, moreover, *dehumanizes* this multiplicity and, hence, limits the poststructuralist preoccupation with human subjectivity in favor of a chaosmic relativity of all events and environments within *perikhora*. In exchanging "Plato's description of the Soul" with "his doctrine of the Receptacle [υποδοχη] or Locus [χωρα] whose sole function is the imposition of a unity upon the events of Nature," he not only uses the 'intragenetic' counter-image of "imposition" instead of "receptivity" for *khora*, but situates her within the disappearance of the exclusiveness of humanity into a chaosmic environment in which *all* "events are together by reason of their community of locus, and they obtain their actuality by reason of emplacement within this community" (AI 187). Resembling Butler's hint towards such a move in her critique of Irigaray, Whitehead radically seeks a non-human multiplicity such that "woman and slaves, children and animals" are no longer the "kind of being that is excluded from the economy of masculinist reason" (BTM 49).

8   '… yet to come' ('divination')

Whitehead's perikhoric alterations of the limits on discourse (of "sex") offer a mutual transgression, that is, mutual immanence, limitation, and incompleteness, of conceptual determinations and directions or, conversely, procedures of indetermination and indirection that

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[34] Cf. Faber, *Poet*, op. cit., § 22.

subvert an interpretation of Plato's *khora* as being fatally bound up with autogenetic patriarchalism—as Butler suggests with her reading of Irigaray; even in resisting an affirmation of the "exclusion" of *khora* from the logocentric discourse in which she would still remain *his* void of self-production. In this sense, Whitehead's non-violent *perikhora* seems to speak to this undisclosed *hope* in Butler's text, namely, that it *might* (under such a condition) appear as a "necessary 'outside'" that is not just the production of phallogocentric phantasies (cf. GT 38, 46)—but "a future horizon … in which the violence of exclusion is perpetually in the process of being overcome" without invoking anew the inclusive totalitarianism of a complete and universal "compulsory gendered matrix" (BTM 53).

Nowhere does this reading of *khora* as the horizon of a process of the mitigation of the compensatory violence of the autogenetic/heterosexual matrix become more obvious than in a sub-current of Plato's, Irigaray's, and Butler's texts that hints toward, or explicitly addresses, the potential of a 'divination' of this hope. While Plato "identifies" *khora* with the female/feminine/maternal void vis-à-vis the omnipotent masculine/male/father, the intelligence (*logos*) of the Ideas in the process of a generation of "children" (the becoming world) as images of his self-production (cf. *Timaeus* 50d), Irigaray, in Butler's reading, "counter-identifies" *khora* with the feminine/female/maternal as evading, isolating, and excluding the male/masculine/paternal god of Plato—the divination of omnipotence, all-penetration, autogenesis, and logocentrism. While Irigaray herself finds reason to probe the divination of the female/feminine/maternal *khora* as a god of becoming and fluidity, of transgressing boundaries and as "the splendor of the body" as it resonates within the amorphous elements of fire and water, earth and air, Butler—in her commitment to Lacan's triad of 'Real', Symbolic, and Phantasy and Foucault's power-analysis (cf. GT 38)—warn us that such divination leaves the autogenetic identity "in place" and, hence, only reiterates the violence of the heterosexual matrix. Nevertheless, in both of their use of *khora* as the *horizon* of a perpetual process for the *overcoming of violence*, Irigaray and Butler resonate: Irigaray's desire to invoke "a *feminine* god" that "is yet to come" (DW 8) resembles Butler's desire to relieve *khora* of her reiterating opposition to the autogenetic god of Plato.

For many interpreters, one of the most irritating features of Whitehead's approach to *khora* is that it does *not* defy a 'divination' of the very process of the *overcoming* of the

inscriptive violence of phallogocentrism and its omnipotent god. On the contrary, Whitehead's strategy is to 'indirect' this 'divination' from any "identification." Other than Butler, he senses the self-deconstruction of Plato's 'intelligence' (the autogenetic god) in an appeal to the *non-coercive, persuasive function of Ideas* in the process of divine self-production (cf. *Timaeus* 51e) that deteriorates the omnipotent power of a transcendent god of phallogocentrism *precisely* by deconstructing the phallogocentric "placing" of Ideas themselves *in perikhoric immanence* (cf. AI 167). Instead of Plato's "second-rate God of the World, who is a mere Icon" and leaves the world only with imitations of the omnipotent all-penetrator, perikhoric immanence *transgresses* the heterosexual opposition of god and *khora* in their mutual incompleteness and vibrating through both "the necessities of the nature of God and the nature of the World" (AI 168) so as to reveal a *divination of perikhoric mutuality 's/he/it'self.* This 'divination' is ambivalent and *cannot be identified* with either the god of autogenesis or the *khora* of nongenesis: *both* appear in Whitehead as in becoming, transgression, and incompleteness in mutual perikhoric immanence.[35] In Whitehead's *perikhora*, god dis/appears into "Process" (PR 7)—as most notably Deleuze recognizes (cf. TF 81). Moreover, of *perikhora* "avoids the implication of a transcendent Creator"—like in Derrida's deferral of *différance*[36]—*the divine leaves a trace*—"the mere word Creativity suggests Creator, so that the whole doctrine acquires an air of paradox, or of pantheism" (AI 236)—in which 'divination' reappears as *the very desire for the overcoming of violence*.

Interestingly, Butler has recently taken up this *trace of non-violence as that which is always 'yet to come'* with her interpretation of Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" and other texts on the 'Messianic'.[37] She reflects on Benjamin's notion of "divine violence" (PT 218) that is directed against the omnipotence of the Law, but entirely unlike Irigaray. While both Butler and Irigaray might agree that this 'divine' overcoming cannot repeat phallogocentric violence, Butler's (Benjamin's) divine *acts* on Law rather than refusing his penetration with closed lips (cf. BTM 46& SNO 216). Here, Butler operates with the intrinsically difficult notion

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[35] Cf. R. Faber, *Prozeßtheologie. Zu ihrer Würdigung und kritischen Erneuerung* (Mainz: Gruenewald, 2000), § 25.

[36] Cf. Caputo, *Deconstruction*, op. cit., 99.

[37] Cf. R. Faber, "Messianische Zeit. Walter Benjamins 'mystische Geschichtsauffassung' in zeittheologischer Perspektive" in *Münchner Theologische Zeitschrift* 54 (2003): 68-78.

of a "divine violence" against the violence of Law—given her analysis of *khora*. In which sense is this *not* phallogocentric penetration? In which sense does this divine performance *not* imitate violence so as to be able to direct hope towards its overcoming? In which sense might such a divine penetration of violence *not* neutralize khoric otherness or even repeat the heterosexual matrix? Butler tries to establish the alteration of "divine or sacred violence" (PT 215) with the trope of "a violence that opposes violence," that opposes "legal violence" or the "violence of the positive law" (PT 211), in order to "safeguard the value of life over violence" through the "non-violent violence" (PT 213) of the "commandment not to murder" (PT 211).

Although *this* divine violence would still *perform* violence—in the sense of Butler's performativity as an alteration within practices of imitation—and, hence, imitate phallogocentric penetration (autogenesis), it is "shaped" by the 'other penetrations' of *khora* ('intragenesis') with which it shares the *indirection of exclusions that generates a sense of non-violence—*as in Whitehead. This khoric "shape" works through Butler's text on Benjamin by uttering the "*desire to release life from the guilt secured through legal contract … [and, hence,] to release life from a death contract with the law.*" This "violence without bloodshed" does not reinstate "a tacit Platonism … in the notion of the 'soul if the living'" (PT211) because it is not a *possession* of the living; rather it *destructs* this possession as violence in the grip of, and legitimized by, the Law. This "destruction," hence, is a "messianic concept" that appears in the *affirmation* of a "downfall" of happiness whereby we realize that life is not about "earthly life, death, and afterlife" (PT 214) but an *indirection* of the suffering *under* the fate of the Law (cf. PT 215) into a suffering that "is part of life itself" as it "may well constitute precisely what is sacred in life" (PT 215). Insofar as this "perpetual downfall of human happiness establishes transience as eternal," that is, "the rhythm of transience [as it] is recurring and without end," it unshackles from "the narcissism of guilt" and sublimates "mere life" (PT 216) with a "promises to return the subject to life, and not some eternal beyond, but life in this sense of its sacred transience" (PT 216-7). Only *this* life in sacred transience, which is neither "found outside of transience" nor "reducible to mere life," can be in "noncoercive appreciation" of "the commandment not to kill" (PT 217).

In light of Whitehead's perikhoric transgression of nongenetic *khora* and the autogenetic god in his concept of the '*divination' of non-coerciveness "in"* the very mutuality of intragenetic

khora and intragenetic divine—the "essence" of both being 'mutual immanence'—Butler's suggestion of "sacred transience" begins to vibrate with Whitehead's "tragic Beauty" (AI 295) of life as the perikhoric mutuality of both becoming/perishing and 'value' of Life,[38] in which only their rhythms of transience are eternal (cf. Imm. 90-96), as it does with Deleuze's 'virtuals' as they release '*a* life' from its very possession (cf. IM 29-30), which only generates, and is generated as, subjection under the Law.[39] Whitehead's *perikhora* might, then, "very well function as a principle that shows us what it is about mere life that is worth protecting against … violence" (PT 218) in functioning "as a nonteleological ground for the appreciation of life's value" (PT 219).[40] As in Whitehead's 'divination' of *perikhora,* Butler's perpetual downfall of becoming—Whitehead says "perpetual perishing" (PR 60)—that "gives life its rhythms of happiness" would be "happiness that would in no sense be purely personal" (PT 219), or—in Whitehead's terminology—would only be in a *perikhoric* sense "personal" (cf. AI 187), that is, a (non-subjective) 'value' *of* and *for* perpetual becoming of intensities of happiness—"in the name of the living" (PT 219).[41] This 'value' of life, however, would not be confined to humanity but implicate the chaosmos in us and us within it.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

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[38] Cf. Ph. Rose: *On Whitehead* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth), 2002.

[39] Cf. Faber, "De-Ontologizing God: Levinas, Deleuze and Whitehead" in Keller and Daniels, eds., *Difference and Process*, op. cit., 209-234

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