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**READING THIEVING THEORIZING: PHILIP HENSHER'S *OTHER LULUS* AND
KATHY ACKER'S «THE SELLING OF LULU»**

For the Ancients, the verb 'to read' had a meaning which is worth recalling and which is of value as regards an understanding of literary practice. 'To read' was also 'to assemble', 'to pick', 'to watch out for', 'to seek out traces', 'to take', 'to steal'. 'To read' therefore denotes an aggressive participation, an active appropriation of the other. 'To write' would be 'to read' become production, industry; writing-reading, paragrammatic activity, would be the aspiration towards aggressivity and a total participation ('Plagiarism is necessary' – Lautréamont).

Julia Kristeva's¹ archeology of the paragram will serve our study not in finally locating the cardinal points occupied by reading, writing and plagiarism on a map, but rather in providing an initial indication of the fluidification of these coordinates in a continuum of textual production, or the changing contours of rewriting. Accordingly, since rewrites of prior literatures flaunt in printed form the activity of reading, they allow us to trace reading as a form of writing, *reading become production*. This paper will therefore focus in particular on the different reading strategies deployed in the rewritings of Frank Wedekind's Lulu figure, which between 1894 and 1994 have produced what can only be referred to as a Lulu-industry. Since her manifold inception in Wedekind's own numerous reworkings of the Lulu plays (*Earth Spirit* and *Pandora's Box*)², the Lulu figure has been reincarnated in different translations, stage and film adaptations, such as G. W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* for instance, or Alban Berg's 1934 *Lulu* opera, but has also been the subject of rewrites, such as Kathy Acker's «The Selling of Lulu» in her quest narrative *Don Quixote* and Philip Hensher's novel *Other Lulus*³.

While the labyrinthine genealogy of the Lulu plays, including the many editions by Wedekind during his lifetime, and the subsequent re-editions and reconstructions

after his death in 1918, prevents us from determining what the *Urfassung* really was, the multiple origins of the play's contents, drawn from Wedekind's readings of Goethe, Molière, Schiller, Wieland to name but a few, also imbricates the Lulu-text in a network of other texts. Furthermore, the Lulu-figure herself, sometimes referred to as Mignon, Nelli, Eve, or a devil, an angel, a snake, a sweet little animal, is assigned many identities, and since she remains without parentage, without a mother, and a father who may or may not have been her father or her lover, she remains, to use Judith Butler's words, «in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or end»⁴. Acker's rewrite of Lulu, which is a re-reading, amongst many other texts, of Wedekind's Lulu plays, as well as Hensher's rewrite of Berg's Lulu, itself already a re-reading of Wedekind, amplify this seriality that we are compelled to attribute to her. In this paper I will «seek out the traces» of readings that bring together but also contrast these many Lulus, on the one hand to differentiate between reading as a form of appropriation, expropriation and a-propriation, and on the other hand, to pose additional questions as regards gender and reading. My aim therefore is to read «intersexually», to use Naomi Schor's phrase⁵, but doubly so. For not only do I wish to put Acker, *who is a woman*, writing-reading, side by side with Hensher, *who is a man*, writing-reading, and practice what Nancy Miller calls a «gendered poetics that rereads men's texts in the weave of women's»⁶, but also, I wish to consider the rewritings of Lulu, her asymptotic engenderings alongside her degendering, that is, the removal of her matrix at the hands of Jack the Ripper, which occurs in the final act of Wedekind's play (perhaps the most tellingly overworked aspect of the *Lulu Dramen*), in order to explore what this means for such a «gendered poetics».

1. The «First» Lulu

Wedekind was the first to incorporate the figure of the Ripper within a fictive context; and although Lulu's death at his hands has been interpreted in different ways, as «evident moral justice» for her sexual promiscuity⁷, or conversely, as an exposition of patriarchy's containment, and thus punishment, of woman's assertion of her sexual independence, we should also «watch out for» her many deaths, that is, the different endings at the hands of her rewriters. I would therefore like to begin by briefly considering the most recent translation of the Lulu plays, entitled *The First Lulu*, partially because its translator, Eric Bentley, clearly sees his translation as the equivalent of Wedekind's «original» text (inherently ironic given Lulu's complex genealogy – see n 2), and partially because the dominant strategy of translation still prevailing strives for faithfulness, and therefore at least on the surface might be taken as the very paradigm of a faithful writing-reading. Nevertheless, Bentley's translation of the play's final scene makes an omission, reveals a crucial cut; consider this passage from the 1894 (reconstructed) version, when Jack comes back to centre stage after he has killed Lulu, and Wedekind has him say⁸:

JACK I would never have thought of a thing like that. – That is a phenomenon, what would not happen every two hundred years. – I am a lucky dog, to find this curiosity.

[...].

When I am dead and my collection is put up to auction, the London Medical Club will pay the sum of three hundred pounds for that prodigy, I have conquered this night. The professors and the students will say: That is astonishing! [...].

Bentley, on the other hand, in his 1994 translation, following this version, has him say:

JACK What luck! I could never have thought this up. Such a thing happens once in 200 years.

[...].

When I'm dead, and my collection's auctioned off, the London Hospital Museum will pay three hundred pounds for this night's conquest! (He taps his pocket.) Students and professors alike will find it an astonishment! [...].

Bentley's cutting of Wedekind's reference to her «curiosity» expropriates what it takes to be unique, or proper to Lulu, what is curious or mysterious about her, and by so doing, becomes implicated in those discourses, for example, the psychoanalytic, that seek, above all, to determine woman and thereby bolster the male paradigm of identity (a point we shall return to shortly.) If Jack kills Lulu by cutting out her womb, and if as we have just seen, Bentley cuts out her womb again, he does not so much determine, or de-terminate Lulu, kill her again, by killing what is unique and proper to her, but adds another ending in what is already a series of differently translated final acts of the play⁹. This is also why Bentley's rendering, rather than illustrating that something always gets lost in translation – that translation is to be defined in terms of loss, as is so often claimed – illustrates instead that translation is a series of rewritings which overspill the supposed parameters of textual propriety, an «ex-propriation» or overspilling that necessarily appropriates and is appropriated by additional discourses – be it scientific, political, aesthetic, etc., as we shall now see.

Thus, since the body of Wedekind translations, which can be read through Lulu's body, embody discourses which cannot pretend to the translators' neutrality (neuter) of reading «the text» itself; they force every reading to confront the wider social, psycho-cultural and lecturological discourses, as Kristeva and Philippe Sollers say¹⁰, which have written themselves, in this instance, into Bentley's text, into his writing-reading. This, as we have already signalled, is to say that Bentley's cutting of Lulu's «curiosity» demands that we reread her fate in terms of those discourses that pose woman as lack¹¹. For, precisely because Bentley's cut exposes the sex of his writing-reading, his reenactment as it were, of the psychoanalytic theorization of woman as lack, Lulu's tale and the details of Lulu's missing womb, can therefore be recounted again, not only as overwrit-

ten by Freudian speculation as regards woman's scientific penetrability or determinability, but also re-read through the corpus of feminist criticism which has read against Freud and his «weary sons». Here then, Bentley's reading of Wedekind as well as our own reading of Bentley's reading, both in the context of Wedekind's writing and in the context of psychoanalytic discourses, has imposed itself as a «double question of the reading of sexual difference and of the intervention of sexual difference in the very act of reading»¹². In other words, Bentley's Freudian amplification of woman's lack exposes a patriarchal *reading of sexual difference*; which, in turn, demands an *intervention of sexual difference in the very act of reading*, that is, a feminist reading of Bentley's patriarchal reading: «to challenge masculine appeals to legitimate (textual) meanings and legitimate (sexual) identities»¹³.

2. Other Lulu

Philip Hensher's novel *Other Lulus* is a homage to Alban Berg rather than a «wilful revisioning» in the sense that Harold Bloom defines the re-reading of prior writings¹⁴, and although Hensher explores this theme through the fictional character of Archy, as we shall see, he nevertheless seeks to provide originality with a legitimated shroud of untouchable integrity. The novel also plays with the re-figurations of Lulu, and therefore provides us with an occasion to further explore the conceptualizing of Lulu's seriality.

«My God», I said to Archy when Charlotte and I got home from the rehearsal, «is there no end to these *Lulus*? These other *Lulus*?».

«No», said Archy. «There might be another one, somewhere, another secret version, another orchestral version, a quadrille for piano duet, a fantasy for string sextet on themes of *Lulu*? Who knows? It's alive».

«Hatching», I said. «But why not the third act? It's here. It could be done. You haven't stolen it. What's the objection?» (p. 171).

This exchange between Archy, a singing teacher and would be composer, and his wife Friederike, student, singer, and narrator, articulates the key mystery of the novel. For, having taken the role of Lulu in the production of Berg's unfinished Lulu opera (here the facts about Berg retain some historical accuracy), Friederike, alias Lulu, alias possibly Berg's granddaughter, increasingly becomes curious as to why her husband both reveals the missing third act of Berg's opera to her, together with a fragment of Berg's journal (here the fiction is interwoven with Berg's autobiography), and simultaneously conceals its significance and place of origin.

Friederike's narration of Archy's mystery, although it repeatedly runs up against the limits of her knowledge, relative to Archy's; for example, of English (her second language, Archy's first) or of music (she sings, he composes, even therefore puts words in her mouth)¹⁵, but especially as regards Archy's secretive, deceptive toings and froings,

gradually begins to unfold the mystery of what turns out to be Archy's forgery of the third act of Berg's *Lulu*. However, when Archy is exposed as a fraud and a trickster, precisely because he has dared to overstep the mark between mere addition or appreciation and the outright invention of a putative Berg «original» (singing, playing or reading aloud, we are told, is leaving one's own mark on the text, even making it one's own, a constant theme, which is posed for Friederike merely in terms of «adding something to it»; p. 6), Hensher's text is immediately imbricated in the politics of appropriation. In this sense, what we might call the «Archy» or «archi-strategy» – the strategy of the original – is successful despite the exposure of the forgery: the original remains the original and the copy a mere simulation of it. «Imagine» then, as a character hypothesizes, «being the person who discovered the complete manuscript of Berg's *Lulu*. Or the person who successfully fooled a lot of musicologists with a brilliantly executed forgery. It would be almost as good as writing Berg's *Lulu* yourself» (p. 185). The discovery of even a hypothetical lost original, and the attendant proprietary rights over it, fails to approximate the former's status. The archi-strategic stakes of Archy's forgery, however, are the equivalence of appropriation and origination: possession of the original Lulu would entail the suppression of her derivatives, her copies: THE Lulu is to be elevated over the OTHER Lulus. And yet the original may only maintain its position – and in this respect, all the better that it remain lost or secreted away – by virtue of the relative impropriety of its copies.

Archy's rewrite of Berg's marginalia, his work of *Lulu* and outworks (parergon) thus interweave work and life, fiction and fact. As the perfect fake it must not be different to the original, must disavow the secondness of the false text. Insofar as this is the case, the fake, or forgery, simultaneously marks the attempt to utterly neutralize appropriation, to singularize seriality, and reinstitute the simulacrum of propriety and the propriety of the simulacrum. This is mirrored in Archy's – the grand originator behind the simulacrum – attempt to reduce Lulu to an individual, to individuate her as the original from which all the other, simulacral Lulus, derive: she is Berg's real life mistress, and evidence suggests she is in effect Friederike's grandmother. In other words, identity precedes difference, essence precedes serial appearance; this then is at the core of an archi-strategic conception of the Lulu-figure. If, it is as Gilles Deleuze writes, «a question of two readings of the world insofar as one bids us to think of difference in terms of similitude, or a previous identity, while the other invites us on the contrary to think of similitude or even identity as the product of a fundamental disparity»¹⁶, then Archy's construction of Lulu is Platonic rather than Nietzschean for it erects «*Ein Lulu*» (p. 107), that is, to translate the German, she is a Lulu, one Lulu. But precisely because Archy changes what should be *eine* (feminine) into *ein* (masculine) – *Ein Lulu* – and has «Berg» change Lulu «from a plural to a singular» (p. 100), he obliterates her otherness in (the quest for) the return of the same. In short, Lulu is, to use Luce Irigaray's words here, hom(me)ologized¹⁷: identified, individuated, subjectivated as man's original other, the other originated by man.

Since patriarchal culture, according to Irigaray, is a culture based on *homme*, and can only function if he is its model, and others are modelled on him, it necessarily reduces women to the other of the same (= man)¹⁸. Thus hom(me)ologized, Lulu is no longer a multiplicity, «in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or end», for she is given an origin as Berg's real life mistress, and an end: «'Look at the end again', Archy said. I looked. There were no gaps in the music. Everything was finished. Everything was perfect» (p. 107). When however, Berg's journal turns out to be forgery, the fallen simulacrum of Lulu's completeness (the opera) reveals her for the lack she really embodies, i.e. there is still something missing, her third act or her final part. Thus pinned down, realized and fleshed out by Archy's generous hand, Lulu's incompleteness – her missing third act and her part – is exposed only as a consequence of the collapse of the hom(me)ological conceit; a conceit which did not merely seek to finish her off, but finish and perfect the work of the master, Berg. What then is the difference between Bentley's Jack the Ripper and Hensher's Archy? Bentley, as we saw, expropriates Wedekind's reference to Lulu's womb, and thus in effect imposes a double lack on Lulu, Hensher's Archy reduces her to One. If Bentley is faithful to the text, even to the extent of faithfully imitating Jack's gesture, Hensher, on the other hand, explores where the proper boundaries of the art work lie, explores authorship and propriety. With Berg as precursor-father, Archy the epebe-son carves out a space for himself, completes where the master has left off, perfects. Whilst the fictional character of Archy transgresses the propriety of the text, Hensher, its author, unlike Kathy Acker, as we shall see, never transgresses such boundaries, but insulates the original and the proper against such expropriation through a parody of faithlessness that ultimately serves to bolster the original against its copy, the one against its many. This is why Friederike's grandmother, who turns out not to have been Berg's mistress, draws the following conclusion about *Lulu*: «It is incomplete... In a sense it is. It needs another act. But even if there was a proper third act it would be complete only in the sense that it is complete now. And no more» (p. 208).

3. *The Selling of Lulu*

While Cervantes' *Don Quixote* rereads but also parodies chivalric romances, and implicitly carries a warning of the dangers of reading, particularly Quixote's readings and misreadings, Acker plays on that dangerous nature of reading books¹⁹. Since the concept of woman in Acker is taken as a term to describe oppression²⁰, Acker's readings, as a *woman*, necessarily involve a politics of rewriting. The epitaph to the second part of her collage-novel *Don Quixote*, of which «The Selling of Lulu» is but one text, thus reads:

BEING DEAD, DON QUIXOTE COULD NO LONGER SPEAK. BEING BORN INTO AND PART OF A MALE WORLD, SHE HAD NO SPEECH OF HER OWN. ALL SHE COULD DO WAS READ MALE TEXTS WHICH WEREN'T HERS.

Acker's plagiarism, both blatant and aggressive, never hides the sources from which it takes, never pretends or «say[s] it [is] mine»²¹, but puts the texts of others side by side, across and against her own concerns. As such, the cuts and omissions as well as the overlappings of the plagiarized texts give clues both as regards her reading strategy of these texts, and her own strategy of writing. The plagiarist technique, which undermines the claim to authority of any one language or vision within «her» texts, is not so much to be thought of in terms of «an abdication of authorial control but a textualization of it», that is, as Richard Walsh further points out, «a foregrounding of textuality over authorial identity»²². It is precisely in this sense, that Acker's literary poachings which subvert and dismantle these spoils, also serve to undermine the very institution of literature as that which relies on enlightenment notions such as autonomy, authenticity, originality, or genius. Since Acker conceives of the subject, the «I» accordingly, for when she points out that «the I became a dead issue because I realized that you make the I and what makes the I are texts [... which is why] I became interested in just text. Other people's texts», she immediately also reconceives the relations between the «I» and the other. As she puts it: «If there's no problem with the I, then in terms of text there was no self and other, I could use everyone else's writing» (*Lecter*, p. 11).

The character of Don Quixote does not so much find a self then, but endlessly shifts between different identities she assumes from the texts of others. Quixote's discontinuous narration «subverts any monolithic narratorial identity», which is why Walsh suggests that Irigaray's «equation of woman's sexuality – and hence women's writing – with multiplicity, with the absence of a single voice» is relevant to Acker's writing (p. 162). Precisely because woman has no history, in the sense of her-story, no identity or «speech of her own», and as Irigaray's analysis has shown, woman is always defined as a void by patriarchy, «subjectivity» in Acker's narratives «is always deferred to an other», to the very extent that «[e]ven sexual identity is entirely arbitrary»²³. As Don Quixote, catheter Hackneyed, Juliette, Villebranche, Lulu, Eliza Doolittle, even a dog, the questing knight explains that she is «scared because I have or know no self» (p. 171), and furthermore, that *she/he/it* just «can't get my sexual genders straight» (p. 159). Because Acker's narrative refuses to stay still then, refuses any one character to be hom(me)ologized, her Lulu-figure does not so much come to be one instance of Don Quixote's many subjectivities, but is already additionally interwoven with George Bernard Shaw's Eliza, and as such exceeds two, is already many.

What is thematized and subverted in Acker's configurations of Lulu, is Lulu's definition as lack. In the section of the novel entitled «The Selling of Lulu», Lulu is shown in a «social experiment» Professor Schön, alias Higgins, conducts to expunge Lulu's «depressing and disgusting» speech. In moulding her according to the laws of his language, and into an object of his desire, his aim is to make Lulu into something out of nothing. When Lulu responds to him by saying: «You can't change me cause there's nothing to change. I've never been» (p. 78), and adds: «I'm nothing. You've made me nothing... Daddy, you have given me everything. I don't have anything else but you because I don't know anything but you» (p. 82), the very void Schön has made

out of her finally also turns out to be the biggest threat to his panoptic regimes; since the very nothingness, her darkness becomes the blindspot, to follow an Irigarayan analysis here, which evades his panoptic gaze seeking to capture, categorize, and determine her. Schön's horrified remark, «I hate you, hole... You are nothing, nothing. I will not have you break into my world, break me, destroy me. (He points a gun at Lulu.)» (pp. 89-90), can therefore be read as his «recoiling from the threat posed by the absence he has defined»²⁴. Although Lulu shoots him at this very point, she herself is not killed in Acker. For, despite the series of false endings, final visions, and many deaths of Don Quixote, throughout the novel, Lulu, unlike in any of her other versions, survives, continues to exist and as such also continues to transform. Acker does not so much dismember the Wedekind-Lulu, does not have Lulu killed, but pours life-blood into the Lulu-figure to revive her. In short, she demonstrates the positivity of rewriting, pirates from Wedekind's play to patch together a Lulu who affirms herself as pirate:

Lulu is standing in front of the ocean.

LULU: Now I must find others who are, like me, pirates journeying from place to place, who knowing only change and the true responsibilities that come from such knowing sing to and with each other (p. 97).

Acker's writing-reading of Wedekind constitutes a serial or «seriological» version of Lulu rather than a hom(me)ological one, as did Bentley's and Hensher's. One question which arises here however, is whether Acker in challenging «masculine appeals to legitimate (textual) meanings and legitimate (sexual) identities», whether Acker in *intervening sexual difference in the very act of re-reading* Lulu, reads as a woman, and/or as a feminist; or for that matter, whether this very distinction is a false one. How is one to read as a woman? How is it, to put it in German, *man* to read as a woman? In other words, what is the relation of woman to hom(me)ology? What is the relation of woman to one? Is Woman one? If not, must woman become one? Hom(me)ologically speaking, woman is not One, but must be supplemented, and made into one à la Hensher. Does this mean therefore, to read as a woman, that woman must appropriate herself as, or even as if she were a woman? Having been expropriated from her history, and appropriated as *history*, his story of her, must she reappropriate herself, and would this not be to hom(me)ologize her self, as her SELF? Propriate herself, clean up her act, become distinct from, in order to be distinct within hom(me)ology? Or, non-essentially speaking, we might ask: must woman appropriate herself as other, be properly other? Is there an *essential* difference then between Bentley, Hensher and Acker reading? Does Acker really read as a woman? Yes, but she also reads as a dog, a knight, a he, it. Therefore, she does not appropriate her SELF as other, but a-propriates as other, she a-propriates pirates, thieves in the course of which «she», not unlike Lulu, is always becoming other, especially other to her or any other SELF. In Acker then, one is not born but becomes a woman, a dog, a knight, Eliza Doolittle, Lulu etc.; one is always in process and never one, never hom(me)ologous.

4. Reading and Gender

The question of what it is to read *as* or *like* a woman, or indeed a man, which has been the object of much debate recently²⁵, and which has primarily sought to negotiate the problematic of a core gender identity, be it the necessity or the pitfalls of essentializing the concept of Woman or Man, is by-passed by Acker in this extract from an interview²⁶ with her.

Ellen Friedman: In «reading» *Don Quixote* – you're a woman reading *Don Quixote*. Is it a way of appropriating the language for women?

Kathy Acker: Not really. I had the actual copy of *Don Quixote*, and as a kind of joke, simply made the change from male to female to see what would happen. I don't think there was much more behind it than this direct and simple move. Whenever I use «I», I am and I am not that «I». It's a little bit like the theater: I'm an actress and that's the role I'm taking on.

Since «reading *as* a woman, or as a man» assumes that one is that particular gender position in advance of even beginning to read, and thus implies the existence of a sexual identity *behind* the reading subject; and since «reading *like* a woman, or like a man» assumes that it is possible to read as if one were impersonating a particular gender position, and thus implies the existence of a real person *behind* the mask – being is the privileged point of reference, and not becoming. For Acker on the other hand, reading is a becoming, insofar as the «I» of the actress, in Diderot's conception of the term, is marked by total metamorphosis: «because the actor is nothing and nobody [s/he...] can become anyone and anything, playing the most diverse parts»²⁷. Thus defined, essentialized as a void, a projection surface against the full presence of a lived reality, the actor as this empty screen nevertheless becomes reinscribed, the nothingness endlessly rewritten: as excess; an excess of appearances which undercuts even the possibility of essence to reveal, as Nietzsche had it, a dance of masks without faces.

When Acker writes: «You create identity, you're not given identity per se», she echoes Judith Butler's notion of «gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations» (p. 141); and when Acker adds that «[w]hat became more interesting to me wasn't the I, it was text because it's texts that create the identity. That's how I got interested in plagiarism» (p. 7), she is in effect saying that writing-reading is the production of identities, even multi-gendered and trans-species identities, as is illustrated in *Don Quixote*. To return to the question then whether Acker in *intervening sexual difference in the very act of reading*, is reading as a woman; it must be rephrased to suggest that she produces a feminist reading insofar as she, not unlike our reading of Bentley and Hensher, reads against hom(me)ology. Yet, Acker's approach also elicits different feminist readings, dependent on either an essentialist perspective which has it that woman must be conceived as a pre-existent identity in order to act; or conversely, dependent on an anti-essentialist perspective which – while critical of notions such as agency – nevertheless seeks to negotiate the

necessity for political action with a post-structuralist emphasis on the decentred subject (rather than the humanist – or essentialist – conception of the unified being). The point here is not so much that Acker's *Don Quixote* might be more closely aligned with this latter position, while the former position would provide a critique of Acker's apparently disabling fragmentation of the subjecthood of Woman; nor that the possibility of more than one feminist reading of the novel already calls into question the notion of a unified feminist reader; but that reading against hom(me)ology – whatever the strategy adopted, be it essentialist or anti-essentialist – would seem to suggest an act of resistance, reading in opposition. Before returning to this point, I would like to explore further what reading in op-position, what the positionality of reading entails.

Diana Fuss, in her «Reading like a Feminist»²⁸, outlines the debate between essentialism and anti-essentialism, and addresses its very crux: the problematic between feminism and deconstruction. Following Gayatri Spivak who simultaneously critiques and endorses essentialism, but sees it as a powerful tool in the service of the «dispossessed» themselves, Fuss adopts an essentialist deconstructionism. Here, she is careful to point to the risky and necessarily provisional character of such an engaging in essentialism, and makes it clear that its «political and strategic value is dependent upon who practices», and that, as an interventionist strategy, it is therefore always «framed and determined by the subject-positions from which one speaks» (p. 108). What is important for Fuss, and what particularly interests me here, is the articulation of *place or positionality*, the signalling of a «subject position», the «where I stand» of a feminist politics (p. 105). Precisely because Acker's feminist reading, I would suggest, is not the strategic establishment of a place, «the where I stand», but lies in wait for opportunities of whatever character, those holes and voids and nothings at the core of hom(me)ological discourses, in order to poach whatever becomes temporarily necessary, we might draw, at this juncture, a differentiation between an «establishment of a place», or strategy, and a «utilization of time», or tactics, according to Michel de Certeau²⁹. For us, this distinction also marks the crucial difference between the essentially, and essentialist, static nature of place, which marks the location of being (*Dasein*), and the continuum of time, which marks change and movement and thus the displacements of becoming.

For Fuss, *to read like a feminist* thus involves taking a stand, that is the «political identification» (p. 102) with a stand-point. A feminist reading in this sense is figured as an act of resistance (here we return to the question of «reading against»). Since resistance always involves a resistance to something, as well as implying at least a nascent or potential alternative to this something, it is embroiled in a process of doubling. This is undoubtedly also why Fuss has it that reading means that we are «continually caught within and between at least two constantly shifting subject-positions (old and new, constructed and constructing)» (p. 108). Does this mean then that to read against (hom(me)ology) is always to engage in a double reading: reading old subject positions (such as those offered by Freudian discourses about Lulu's lack) and new ones (such as reading Lulu like a feminist)? If not, then how does Acker's reading avoid being caught between two positions, between the old and the new, position and opposition? The

logic and strategy of binarism – which is, as we have seen, homologous to that of hom(me)ology (the one against *its* other) – which underlies this question is by-passed by Acker because reading against the One, does not mean falling into the trap of reading the One from the position of its other, reading as the other of the One, in opposition to the One. Just as de Certeau has it that readers are always in process, not here, not there, neither one nor the other, for «readers are travellers», that is «nomads poaching their ways across fields they did not write» (*Practice*, p. 174), so Acker's writing-reading consists in a poaching which takes what it needs, a piracy which is «always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'» (*Practice*, p. xix), and moves on to further plunder.

It is this nomadic tactics of seriality, of becoming, that prevents reading from being sedimented into a position, from which stand-point the problematics of inclusion/exclusion attendant upon the hom(me)ological model are simply reiterated. Rather, nothing is excluded in advance. Piracy knows nothing of insides and outsides, nothing of a position from which it will conduct all its raids. If a position is raided, it is only temporarily occupied before moving on to another (even subject-positions: Eliza Doolittle, a Knight, Lulu, a dog, etc). The important thing is the serial and plural character of pirates, nomads, readers and writings-readings: packs do not respect the proprieties of the one and its other. This is why it is at least difficult to conceive of such writing-readings as Acker's as oppositional: pirates' maps are not reducible to an address belonging to a place, an essence or a subject. When Lulu therefore says, «Now I must find others who are, like me, pirates journeying from place to place, who knowing only change and the true responsibilities that come from such knowing sing to and with each other. Now I am going to travel», then, as we have seen, the question of what Lulu is «like» is not an easy thing to settle; in fact, where Bentley and Hensher's Archy try to do just this (the first Lulu, the real Lulu), their efforts founder on the problem of just how many Lulus there turn out to be. The question is not therefore *which* Lulu to be like, or even *what is* Lulu like, but rather, *how to become*, like Lulu does, «knowing only change».

¹ *Semiotike* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), pp. 120-21.

² The first play, in what came to be known as the *Lulu Dramen*, and on which Wedekind worked between 1892-94, was the unpublished version *Die Büchse der Pandora. Eine Monstretagödie*, parts of which came to be incorporated into (*Der*) *Erdgeist. Eine Tragödie*, parts of which were later rewritten for *Die Büchse der Pandora. Eine Tragödie*; a splitting of the play into two halves, with the addition of new incidents and new characters, which was made necessary because of Wedekind's constant battles with the censors, and thus self-censorship. Despite the endless rewrites to tone down the material (in some versions he cuts Jack the Ripper's hypotheses of how much the gentlemen of medicine may pay for Lulu's womb, in the 1913 version, for instance, he cuts the Ripper scene altogether), it is only the two separate plays which come to be published, albeit in different shapes and at different

times during his life time, and not until 70 years after his death, that is, until Hartmut Vinçon's reconstruction of the original text fragments that *Die Büchse der Pandora. Eine Monstretagödie* finally comes to be published, first in *Theatre Heute* 4 (April 1988), and later in book form in the historical/critical edition *Pharus III* (Darmstadt, 1990). (It is to this latter version of the play that I will specifically refer to later in this paper.)

- ³ For the different translations of Lulu, see S. A. Eliot, *Tragedies of Sex* (1923); F. Fawcett & S. Spender, *Five Tragedies of Sex* (1952); Stephen Spender, *The Lulu Plays and Other Sex Tragedies* (1972); Peter Barnes, *Lulu* (1971); Carl Richard Mueller, *The Lulu Plays* (1967); Steve Gooch, *The Lulu Plays and the Marquis of Keith* (1990); Edward Bond & Elizabeth Bond-Pablé, *Wedekind Plays: One. Spring Awakening. Lulu: A Monster Tragedy* (1993). My references will be to Eric Bentley's translation, Frank Wedekind, *The First Lulu* (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1994). All page references to Philip Hensher's *Other Lulus* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994) and Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote* (Paladin, 1986) will appear in brackets in my text.
- ⁴ *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 33. All subsequent quotations to this work will be referenced in the text.
- ⁵ «La Pérodie: Superposition dans Lorenzaccio», in *Michigan Romance Studies* 1 (1982), p. 84; quoted by Nancy K. Miller, «Men's Reading, Women's Writing: Gender and the Rise of the Novel», in Nancy K. Miller & Joan DeJean (eds.) *Displacements: Women, Tradition, Literatures in French* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1991), p. 45.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ⁷ See J. L. Styan's *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3. Expressionism and Epic Theatre* (Cambridge: UP, 1981), p. 21, where he reads Lulu as a «figure of simultaneous attraction and repulsion»; but also compare Silvia Bovenschen's *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 50, where she reads Lulu as Wedekind's exposure of a principle of projection of male fantasies and fears of woman.
- ⁸ I should point out that I have also made an omission in my quotation from this scene, having left out the final lines by the lesbian character of Geschwitz; for the importance of this character in the play see Lynda Hart's chapter entitled «Enter the Invert: Frank Wedekind's Lulu Plays», in *Fatal Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 47-64.
- ⁹ I should indicate here that it is only Edward Bond & Elizabeth Bond-Pablé's translation who leave this significant anatomical detail in their translation, and that the other six translators, for reasons which are too complicated to develop here, all excise her womb. For a detailed treatment of the different translations (as well as Pabst's film adaptation of *Pandora's Box*), see my essay «Refractions of the Feminine: The Monstrous Transformations of Lulu», in *MLN*, vol. 110, No. 4 (1995), pp. 888-912.
- ¹⁰ As Kristeva, *op. cit.*, writes: «All the principles we are developing here concerning writing as 'lecturologie' [the logic of reading], as 'double', and as 'social practice' were announced for the first time as a theory-writing by Philippe Sollers (*Logiques* 1968)».
- ¹¹ For Freud and «his weary sons», to use Catherine Clément's phrase, there is only one true sex, which is male, because woman lacks the vital organ: the phallus. Precisely because she visibly lacks this organ, lacks genitalia, her sexuality not only presents Freud with a riddle, a dark and mysterious secret, or a black hole, but also, of course, triggers man's castration anxiety. In short, female genitalia embody his phallogocentric fears of woman.
- ¹² This quotation is taken, although from a different context, from Shoshana Felman's «Re-reading Femininity», in *Yale French Studies*, 62 (1981), p. 21.

- ¹³ Pamela Caughie, in her informative review essay «Women Reading/ Reading Women: A Review of Some Recent Books on Gender and Reading», in *Papers on Language and Literature* 24 (1988), pp. 317-35, makes this particular point (p. 326) with reference to Mary Jacobus' book *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986).
- ¹⁴ Artistic influence and the history of art is an oedipal drama for Bloom, «a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism»; Bloom's model of rewriting is therefore based on creative misreadings, an area I will not be exploring within the scope of this essay. See *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973), p. 30.
- ¹⁵ She is the cipher of Berg's music, Lulu sings through her, or as she puts it with regard to her best performance yet, «I stood like a pillar» on the stage, «and let myself be sung about» (p. 200).
- ¹⁶ See Gilles Deleuze, «Plato and the Simulacrum», trans. Rosalind Krauss, in *October*, vol. 27 (1984), p. 52; translation modified.
- ¹⁷ See her *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca New York: Cornell UP, 1985), p. 134.
- ¹⁸ This is also why patriarchy rather than accounting for the difference of femininity, explains her sexuality as nothing other than a mutilated copy of his – a «small inconspicuous organ» to quote Sigmund Freud, rather than a «big dick» to quote Hélène Cixous. See Freud's, «Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes», in Anna Freud (ed.), *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 405-6; and Cixous', «The Laugh of the Medusa», in Elaine Marks and Isabelle Courtivron (eds.), *New French Feminisms* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), p. 262.
- ¹⁹ See Matei Calinescu, who argues in *Rereading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993) that Cervantes' *Don Quixote* «is the reader as hero... whose extraordinary adventures are (parodically, hilariously, endearingly, mysteriously) nothing but adventures of reading, rereading, misreading, and misreading» (p. 69). Compare also Jorge Luis Borges' short story «Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote», which plays with and blurs the boundaries between author and critic, creation and criticism.
- ²⁰ As Sara Mills points out in *Gendering the Reader* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994): «As many feminist theorists have shown [Judith Butler, for instance], the term 'woman' needs to be used to describe oppression, at the same time as its unified nature needs to be called in question» (p. 1).
- ²¹ Kathy Acker, «Devoured by Myths. An Interview with Sylvère Lotringer», in *Hannibal Lecter, My Father: Semiotext(e)* (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), p. 13. All subsequent references to this interview will appear in the text in abbreviated form as *Lecter* followed by the relevant page number.
- ²² See his «The Quest for Love and the Writing of Female Desire in Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote*», in *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 32, No. 3 (Spring 1991), pp. 149-68, 162.
- ²³ See Terry Brown, «Longing to Long: Kathy Acker and the Politics of Pain», in *Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 2, No. 3 (1991), pp. 167-77, 171-72.
- ²⁴ See Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
- ²⁵ See in particular Jonathan Culler, «Reading as a Woman», in *On Deconstruction. Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982); Robert Scholes, «Reading Like a Man», in Alice Jardine & Paul Smith (eds.), *Men in Feminism* (New York: Methuen,

1987); and Diana Fuss, «Reading like a Feminist», in Naomi Schor & Elizabeth Weed (eds.) *the essential difference* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1994), who provides a useful summary of this debate, but also pushes it into new directions. All subsequent page references to Fuss' essay will be given in the main text.

²⁶ Ellen G. Friedman, «A Conversation with Kathy Acker», in *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, vol. IX, No. 3 (Fall 1989), p. 12.

²⁷ This summary of Diderot is given by Bernard Dort in his «Liberated Performance», trans. Barbara Kerslake, *Modern Drama*, vol. 25, No. 1 (March 1982), pp. 60-68, 67.

²⁸ Also note Fuss' claim that in reading Robert Scholes' essay, she reads like a feminist: «what it means to read as or even like a woman I still don't know» (*op. cit.*, p. 102).

²⁹ See his *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 38-39. All subsequent references to this book will appear in the text in abbreviated form as *Practice* followed by the relevant page number.

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