Introduction

...this series of liberated simulacrum is activated, or mimes itself, on two privileged stages: that of psychoanalysis, which should be eventually understood as a metaphysical practice since it concerns itself with phantasms; and that of the theater, which is multiplied, polyscenic, simultaneous, broken into separate scenes that refer to each other, and where we encounter, without any trace of representation (copying or imitating), the dance of masks, the cries of bodies, and the gesturing of hands and fingers. And throughout each of these two recent and divergent series ... Freud and Artaud exclude each other and give rise to a mutual resonance. The philosophy of representation - of the original, the first time, resemblance, imitation, faithfulness - is dissolving; and the arrow of the simulacrum released by the Epicureans is headed in our direction. It gives birth - rebirth - to a "phantasmaphysics". (Foucault, 1977a:171-2)

The movements between metaphysics and bodies constitute the pathways of ethics. This thesis is about a shift in the way these pathways can be considered. It is about the transition *from* a State morality and philosophy ordered by the transcendent eye-representation dyad which judges. It is about a transition *to* a consideration of the immanent situations of bodies[1]; bodies that interact with Foucault's phantasms in a "phantasmaphysics". This transition, it will be argued, constitutes the beginning of a contemporary ethical pathway. This would be an ethics of a body more and more capable of being affected and affecting - a body that has many

---

[1] Or even of the eye *as* body (thus a *Story of the Eye* as written by Georges Bataille).

becomings, including those of simply being still. It is a movement away from theatricalised forms of representation, which are aligned with State philosophies and homogeneous forms of the majoritarian. It is a movement which ceases to deny becoming, and instead sets up a plan(e) of immanence from which can be drawn continuous variation, connection, and affection. This plan(e) of immanence is literally *transgressive* of predetermined limits in that it occupies an interstitial space that is not predetermined by taxonomies, beginnings or ends, or by representational cartographies of the body dominated by the deferred desire of a transcendent signifier.

This is not to imply that transgression in itself is inherently ethical. Rather it implies that transgression forms a necessary basis for further ethical analyses. In Michel Foucault's essay, "A Preface to Transgression" (1977a:29-52), he suggests that -

> *The death of God does not restore us to a limited and positivistic world, but to a world exposed by the experience of its limits, made and unmade by that excess which transgresses it.* (32)

This experience of limits and their transgression has several consequences for us, the most important of which are those which reflect upon the ceaseless constitution - and deconstitution - of being and subject, language and sexuality, human and machine. In all these areas "Limit and transgression depend upon each other for whatever density of being they possess" (34). Whatever limit being can define for itself, it is forced to face the fact of its imminent disappearance in this limit's inevitable transgression. Similarly, the position of the autonomous subject, distant from the world it 'commands', is destabilised. For this position is also constituted by the placing of limits which are subject to, and in fact defined by, their transgression and imminent disappearance.

With the action of transgression -

...the limit opens violently onto the limitless, finds itself suddenly carried away by the content it had rejected and fulfilled by this alien plenitude which fills it to the core of its being. Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being. (ibid.)

Yet the being of the transgression itself is also exhausted as it crosses out the limit upon which it depends for its existence. Thus their relationship takes the form "of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust" (35). The world is both made and unmade by the excess which constantly transgresses its own limits. This transgression-limit world is one not only *of* words, but also of the spaces or interstices both *between* words in real time and space, *and between words and bodies*. The world, therefore, is not one which appears in full to a distant speculating subject, but one in which the human must participate in *interaction* with each of the world's other elements; other humans (genders, sexualities, races), other animals and, as shall be argued, other machines.

This thesis confronts the theoretical problem of interaction as it occurs at the nexus of three different areas of study. Firstly, in philosophy and politics, a theory of interaction allows for an ethics which puts interaction *before* representation - affect before distant observation. Secondly, interaction will be considered as it is presently being defined within different notions of the machinic, and in the development of new interactive technologies. Thirdly, interaction will be considered as it is conceived within different models drawn from performance and the visual arts, from traditional theatrical conceptions of performance to those in performance art, machinic installation, sculpture and popular performance forms such as popular music.

These might seem to be very disparate areas. In fact, all three are linked precisely through a consideration of the conflict between interaction, insofar as interaction can be taken as an ethical priority, and the prioritisation of the representational. The idea of the latter as a priori in human

experience is derived largely from a continuous stream of theatrical models which have served as

justifications for cultures of representation. These can be found as early as the shadow puppetry

of ideal forms in Plato's famous cave, and as late as Brenda Laurel's recent book, *Computers as*

Theatre (1991), which draws heavily upon Aristotle's *Poetics* (1965). They are also found in

Howard Rheingold's *Virtual Reality* (1991), which amongst other things draws upon the

experience of ancient ritual in the Lascaux Caves; or Michael Heim's *The Metaphysics of*

Virtual Reality (1993), which draws upon Plato and even upon Wagner's notion of 'total

theatre'. Such theatricalisations of the world can be opposed to those of more immediate

interaction developed in performance work this century. The importance of this clash of models

of distancing representation on the one hand and proximate and immanent interaction on the

other is demonstrated in the conflict between them in present ideas about - and practices

developed with - interactive technologies[2].

As this thesis deals with the intersection of many quite different fields rather than one well-

defined field, there will be no attempt to provide a full survey of the literature in all these fields.

This would be a thesis in itself. In fact, the attention given to theorists and artists will vary

widely. Some theorists, such as Martin Heidegger, Paul Virilio or Michel Foucault, will be

considered only from a particular angle, with no attempt to give a clear account of some of the

main concerns of their work. At the same time, examples will be given from twentieth century

---

[2] Jane Goodall, in an article which argues for the postmodern as another variant of modernity, points out that theatre and performance have a somewhat paradoxical relation to postmodern culture in general. On the one hand -

> where theatrical practice is a catalytic influence in modernism, it can seem by comparison strangely irrelevant to the postmodern era....You can read your way through half a dozen collections of essays on postmodernism without coming across a piece that concerns itself specifically with theatre - performance art, perhaps - but theatrical practice is just not on the usual agenda...At the same time these essays are riddled with metaphorical acknowledgements of theatre and performance. (1991:18)

Goodall points out that it is striking how much post-structuralist and postmodern theorising is propped up by theatrical metaphors. I shall argue here that Deleuze and Guattari provide a way out of this. Of course, I shall also be arguing here that some of these paradoxes might be resolved in treating 'performance' and 'theatricality' separately.

performance work and the ideas informing it. Artists discussed will include John Cage, Marina

Abramovic and Ulay, Rebecca Horn, Joseph Beuys, Stelarc and Joyce Hinterding. These artists

will be discussed, however, without a very detailed discussion of many of their works in

particular, or of the history of performance work in general. Some brief examples will also be

mentioned of some currently popular models of new technological interaction, largely based

upon the theatrical, which are offered in the writings of those such as Brenda Laurel, Howard

Rheingold and William Gibson. Once again, although examples will be given, this thesis is not a

detailed examination of theories of interactivity as they are applied to new technologies such as

computers and virtual reality.

The central focus of this thesis is a detailed application of the work of French philosophers

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to a theory and ethics of interaction.

The impact of technologies has always directly derived from, and fed straight back into,

practical, social and sometimes ambiguous ethical relations[3]. This is quite a different set of

circumstances to the more removed moral precepts through which technologies are often

discussed. In the latter case, interactivity has normally been considered as the in-between of

more important stable entities, such as human subjects, nations, or even the in-between between

machines and humans. All of these entities are, because they are *conceived of* as stable,

extremely representable. However, what will be suggested here is that it is the *instability of*

interactivity, not the stability of representation, that is primary in the formation of the world.

Representable entities are secondary to this instability and possess a perhaps somewhat illusory

---

[3] The simplest example here is of the complex relations between war and technologies. The development of
a complex array of technologies such as cavalry, firearms or even Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence
Initiative (or "Star Wars" programme), occurs both to satisfy the needs of a broader 'war machine' and
changes the very nature of that war machine in the process.

stability; a stability that exists as a kind of freeze frame of constantly shifting interactions. Representation gives a 'slice of life', but this slice is also a slice cut off from life. This can be a slice of immediate actuality (in the case of a film or photograph, for example) or a slice of virtual existence (a representation of an idea or the imagination, for example). The question raised here, then, is one of how to theorise the world; firstly, without slicing it up and freezing it into representable portions that may have little to do with the turmoil of the world and, secondly, without *subjecting* the world to its representations.

Ethical relations, as they involve technology, will therefore be discussed here as interactive, shifting, creative and multiple, rather than as stable moral precepts existing between pre-existing stable entities. The boundaries of interactivity will be examined as fluid, not discrete, and as neither limited nor overarched by the human. As such, an ethics of interactivity must also be an ecology, but an ecology which, from a pragmatic point of view, must incorporate the human, the socius, the "natural" environment and the technological (*TE*). All of these form a broader, constantly productive and shifting multiple network which Deleuze and Guattari have labeled the 'machinic'. For them, the ethics of the machinic are those of machinic heterogenesis - multiple productions of variation that lead in turn to the *further production of variation* in a constant and useful exchange between all the elements of the ecology.

These considerations will be grounded in an analysis of the way in which performance - as arguably an aesthetic activity primarily concerned with such a heterogenesis - has both used technology[4] and shaped its use. Ever since the *deus ex machina* - the god who comes from a machine - the theatre has been a site where technological practice and its conceptual grounding have met and thence been extended into the social. The same Greeks whose theatrical machines

---

[4] Here technology will be considered in a broad dimension, including such formations as those technologies of the self that Foucault (1979) has labeled "discipline" or "panopticism", political formations and discursive functions.

delivered visible gods to their audiences also proposed a theory of mimesis which tied theatrical actions into the social, and eventually the political. In this theory of mimesis, with which we still live, one stable entity is able to imitate another to produce a seemingly stable system of moral values, be those the values of fate inherent in Greek tragedy, the representation of power in a court masque, or in the performance of the American president as representative of a set of moral precepts tied to the development of armaments. Of course, there is no argument here that such acts of representation are not involved in social production. What will be questioned, however, is the stability that these acts of representation supposedly represent. To this end, it will be suggested that activities such as performance art or popular music performance have a much more useful understanding of the primacy of the interactive and productive over the representative than the 'classical' theatre possesses. These performance activities emphasise *production*, even as they incorporate the theatrical and the representational as secondary activities of production. They give a much clearer example of how technologies operate through transformation and interaction. The performance event is not, for example, always centred on a stable perceiving subject. Rather performance is situated in a general machinic ecology of environment, socius and shifting and multiple subject.

According to Foucault the stable subject has disappeared. Here it will be considered as lost to the world. For Foucault -

> ...*philosophical language proceeds as if through a labyrinth, not to recapture him, but to test (and through language itself) the extremity of its loss. That is, it proceeds to the limit and to this opening where its being surges forth, but where it is already completely lost, completely overflowing itself, emptied of itself to the point that it becomes an absolute void - an opening which is communication.* (1977a:43)

Following Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari in their different ways here, I am proposing both an investigation of the loss of the stable subject as proposed by Foucault *and* a more specific and moving *determination* of the subject. This latter is not one which is totally annihilated in a post-structuralist sea of difference. As Lawrence Grossberg has put it -

> *The nomadic subject is amoeba-like, struggling to win some space for itself in its local context. While its shape is always determined by its nomadic articulations, it always has a shape which is itself effective.* (Grossberg, 1987:39)

There are four sections and nine chapters in this thesis. The first section is "From Revealing to Becoming - The Non-being of the Technological" and deals with a general philosophical approach to technological issues. The first chapter, "Cathecting Being", discusses the uses and problems of a Heideggerian philosophy of technology and the ways in which this reflects more general approaches to technology in twentieth century culture, especially as they are grounded in notions of the theatrical and representation. The second, "Bicycling to the Limits of Heidegger's Machine of Being", moves from a more general discussion of the discourses surrounding technology to a consideration of Deleuze's essay on both Heidegger and the avant-garde theatre practitioner Alfred Jarry. Deleuze gives a new inflection to Heidegger's philosophy of technology, one that perhaps undermines some of Heidegger's more problematic approaches to Being.

The second section, "Double Osmosis", deals quite specifically with the way in which some recent performance work has engaged with technology and technological issues. The third chapter, "At the Skin", gives a brief description of some recent work in performance with technology, focusing in particular on the work of Stelarc. This will all be contextualised within:

Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of production and representation, drawn from their two *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* books (*AO, ATP*); their formulations of concept, percept and affect as they impact upon an understanding of art, drawn largely from *What is Philosophy?* (*WP, QQ*[5]); and finally, Deleuze's notion of the 'event', largely drawn from *The Logic of Sense*. The event will be considered both as it can be opposed to, and as it is entwined with, the representational. The fourth chapter, "Becoming - the Ground of Groundlessness", gives a detailed discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking through of becoming, its relation to issues of gender, and some conclusions as to its usefulness. The fifth chapter, "Vibrations in the Air - Cracks in the Subject" considers some applications of the notions of becoming in Deleuze and Guattari's work. It gives some descriptions of performance and installation art which suggest different approaches to the relations between interaction and representation as they impinge upon the use of technology.

The third section, "The Machine in the Ghost", outlines a Deleuze-Guattarian approach to a consideration of interaction, ethics and machines. The sixth chapter, "Interactivity, Machines, Bodies and Technology", outlines Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the same, and describes Deleuze and Guattari's notions of the machinic as well as the profound differences between the machinic and the technological in their work, particularly as drawn from *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. There are detailed discussions of the machine and desire, abstract machines and the war machine, social and desiring-production, and technology. The seventh chapter, "New Souls, New Bodies - Objectiles, Virtual Reality and the Threshold of Perception", develops these concerns in a consideration of the Virtual. Deleuze and Guattari's notions of the

---

[5] At times, as in the case of *What is Philosophy?* and *Qu-est-ce que la philosophie?*- I shall use both original French publications and English translations. There is no real attempt to cover the whole area as it has been discussed in the French language as I am not a French scholar and have only used my basic French to access some major works that would otherwise not have been available to me. In some cases, as in *What is Philosophy?* the English translation has appeared during my reading of works in French and I have availed myself of both.

machinic and technology are briefly compared with Paul Virilio's (1986, 1989, 1991a, 1991b), and complemented by both Deleuze and Guattari's individual writing, particularly that drawn from Deleuze's *The Fold*. This gives the basis both for a discussion of art and technology and for a consideration of new technologies per se, especially of Virtual Reality and the internet. This leads to a more concise definition of the relations between interactivity and ethics. The eighth chapter, "'n -1' Interactions, 'n - 1' Ethics", outlines a theory of interaction and ethics drawn from all the previous chapters. This follows Deleuze's work on Spinoza and ethics (*SPP*, *EPS*, Hardt, 1993), and on Nietzsche and chance (*NP*).

The fourth and final section is a conclusion. The final chapter, "Becoming Interactive - Interactive Becomings" grounds all these considerations in a specific, critical analysis of becoming. The thesis concludes that, although there are problems with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming, these are perhaps problems which only take us further into the theoretical field which they propose than they themselves were able to go. This is a field in which we may never be able to think the True, but where we cannot avoid thinking the real.

I

From Revealing to Becoming - Non-being and the

Technological

Chapter One

Cathecting[1] Being -

Technology and Heidegger's Unchained Beasts

Machines speak to machines before speaking to man, and the ontological domains that they reveal and secrete are, at each occurrence, singular and precarious. (MH:22)

Remove the world around the struggles, keep only conflicts and debates, dense with men, purified of things, you will have the theatrical stage, most narratives and philosophies, all of the social sciences: the interesting spectacle we refer to as "cultural." ...Our culture cannot stand the world. (Michel Serres cited in Conley, 1993:77)

Many of the concepts and practices surrounding 'interactivity' today are not as interactive themselves as they might be. Many of them attempt to contain interactivity within the sinking ship of preordained orders. The interactive itself either leaks out on all sides or is sent to a premature and watery grave. This has led to some confused thought and cultural practice, particularly in the areas of ethics and aesthetics.

---

[1] The notion of cathexis as providing a connection between different theories in the twentieth century was raised by Tony Thwaites at the Foucault Conference in Queensland, 1994. Thwaites discussed the specific relations between Freud's notion of cathexis and Foucault's theories of social formations. A *cathexis* is defined in the *Macquarie Dictionary* as "1. the investment of emotional significance in an activity, object or idea" and "2. the charge of mental energy so invested" (1981:310).

This confusion tends to exhibit two symptoms. The first is an insistence on the *centrality* of some vestige of the human subject within a consideration of interaction. This is despite the fact that interaction shows us, if nothing else, that humanity may be able to blow worlds up, but humanity can neither control, nor completely know, the 'technological' *or* 'natural' worlds. This first symptom reflects an avoidance of the *impermanence* of ontological domains that is the result of their fundamentally interactive nature. In the terms of Félix Guattari this impermanence means that ontological domains, the domains in which things can be said to 'be', are extremely " precarious". Any conception of these domains must always exceed a simple constraining of them which would extract and distance closed representations *of* the world *from* the world. Concepts must interact with this tenuous world at large, not just reduce the world to the human *perception* of it. This is, at least in part, because these ontological domains are not only - or even primarily - human. Even machines have an ontological process - perhaps *the* ontological process, depending upon what we consider machines themselves to be[2].

The second symptom of the cultural confusion surrounding interaction, related to the first, is a rendering of the world into a theatre. It is as if the world occurs on a stage which we can direct from behind the scenes, or view from a darkened auditorium, but on which we rarely have to perform ourselves. This 'rendering theatrical' occurs within a broad range of practices; from the theatre as it is traditionally thought about, to a much broader "society of the spectacle" (Debord, 1977). It will be suggested further here that such a 'rendering theatrical' is central both to much twentieth century thought and, indeed, to the history of philosophy since Plato. Many philosophies tend towards giving a distant and all knowing 'fixed' representation of the world, even if this means denying the fundamental interactive fluidity of the world.

---

[2] This will be discussed throughout the thesis, and in detail in chapter five.

Actual theatre practice can, nevertheless, tend towards the interactive. In fact, every act of theatre or performance could be placed somewhere on a line between the two extreme poles of a rendering theatrical, on the one hand, and participatory interaction, on the other. For the sake of some precision I shall use the term "classical theatre" to denote that theatre practice which represents the world in order to control it (and subsequently to deny the world's exceeding of any knowledge of the world, along with a denial of the world's constant process of interactive becoming). The rest I shall term simply "performance" [3]. The classical theatre, as practice or as conceptual metaphor, is used to represent the world to ourselves in order to control that world. The classical theatre subsequently holds the escaping flux of the world as being somewhat repugnant. In short, as Michel Serres has noted, "our culture cannot stand the world" (cited in Conley. 1993:77). Of course, this world that our culture cannot stand is a world which includes many of the 'minor' aspects of the culture itself - aspects that cannot be pinned down; aspects that inhabit and animate the well represented 'Majority' without being allowed visibility. Deleuze and Guattari define the major and the minor as possessing two different powers which relate to the visibility of fixed 'States'. "The first would be defined by the power (pouvoir) of constants and the second by the power (puissance) of variation" (*ATP*:101). I shall return to these powers in more detail in later chapters.

This chapter and the next are attempts to use some of the philosophies surrounding technology as points of departure from the classical theatre. The particular focus will be on a movement from the work of Martin Heidegger to that of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Here it shall be

---

[3] This will be the case even when other theorists use the terms differently. In a very different context to this, Patrice Pavis (1986) uses Roland Barthes (see Barthes' "From Work to Text" in Harari, 1979:73-81) to differentiate between what are best called the "classical", "modern" and "postmodern" aspects of a text. Although I am not in complete agreement with Pavis' use of all these terms (I do not, for example, accept a simple theory of ideology), some of his definitions of the "classical" may prove useful in the current context. For him, the classical text is "spontaneously ideological". It is a "text whose formal perfection is such that one forgets that it is a text situated in history. Verisimilitude and techniques of persuasion are used in this kind of text to make us believe in a 'real story,' in flesh-and-blood characters; we forget that the text and its procedures fabricate all these reality effects" (4).

argued that many prominent theorists in the area of technology and interactivity, such as Heidegger, have made invaluable contributions to an *ontology* of the interactive. They have made possible a thinking through of what interactivity might be - *before* interactivity is anything else, before, that is, it is an interactivity between pre-existing subjects or objects. It shall be argued, on the other hand, that conceptions of technology such as Heidegger's[4] and others only ever go part of the way towards a truly *interactive* theory of interactivity because they wish to preserve an 'interactive free domain' - a realm of purity away from interactive contamination. This could be the domain of aesthetic form, a conceptual or cultural realm, or simply a series of practices that emphasise the preservation of what *is* (the actual) rather than the preservation of what *is becoming* (the virtual).

Yet how to move away from this raises problems. Firstly, the reason that many ontological theories rely upon a theatricalisation - a freeze framing - of the world is in order, precisely, to make sense of it. Secondly, alternative theories cannot so easily escape the prevailing discursive currents of this freeze framing. Thirdly, any theory which is truly interactive must be constantly changing. It can only present a series of phoenix-like problematics that constantly renew and change themselves - *as problematics* - from the ashes of each failed, or, at least, historically redundant, solution.

Despite these problems, there is already a history of philosophy's attempts to deal with interactivity that shows that the problems run in more than one direction. The problem of being - of establishing a position within the changing world - of being in fact *a part* of the world - is a vast and old one. The stability of any position in the world is always and immediately contaminated by interaction *with* the world. It is not the intention here, however, to give either a

---

[4] It should be emphasised here that I am mostly interested in the advantages and limits of Heidegger's more influential writings on technology, and not really in his work in total. However, the more interesting aspects of some of his later writings, as far as a theory of interactivity is concerned, will be dealt with briefly in chapter two.

history or a critique of the history, even in the twentieth century, of attempts to grapple with this problem[5]. Nevertheless, a great deal of the history of philosophy has fed on such critique. The work of those on a pathway stretching from Friedrich Nietzsche (1968, 1973)[6] to Jacques Derrida (1973, 1974, 1978)[7] in particular has questioned the relations between thought, language and the world with an explosive intensity. This work will be taken here as a fait accompli as regards a critique of 'classical' thought's pretensions to be able to represent the world adequately. It will be taken as given that there is no 'Truth' to be found in a separation from the world and that the shadows in Plato's cave[8] were in fact the result of interactions that occurred within that cave and not between the cave and some great light coming from beyond. However, it will also be understood that many assumptions about human language, knowledges and ethical and aesthetic practices are based upon notions of transcendence and identity which mitigate against an easy negotiation of interaction and 'being in the world'. Critique may only be

---

[5] This is by and large the history of the difficulties of trying to either transcend this problem *or* to critique this problem in favour of the world's immanence. Here the intention is to tend towards immanence, whilst understanding that transcendence, as a kind of functioning concept, still exists and does work, though it does this work immanently.

[6] For example, In Deleuze's (*NP*:47) version of Nietzsche, and in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (299), Nietzsche's 'eternal return' is interpreted as the return of difference in repetition, as against a return of identity. It is this return of difference that must be taken into account as a complication of any theorising of experience. Most philosophy, not to mention science, theories of subjectivity, or even pop psychology are, of course, based upon a notion of identity, where it can be said at the bottom line that there is some 'a' which equals 'a'. It can immediately be seen that any theory which substitutes interaction for stable identity forms both a powerful critique of the ways in which humanity thinks about itself and the world, and also, at the same time, poses a great problem in terms of how otherwise to think about humanity and the world at large other than in terms of identity.

[7] Derrida's discussions of the history of philosophy employ a deconstructive method which could be said to consist precisely of emphasising the instability of supposedly stable systems, the way for example, in which it is a question of "force" rather than "signification" (1978:3-30) when one considers what it is that signs do. This leads of course to Derrida's famous formulation of the dynamics of "différance" (1973) (a neologism combining aspects of differing and deferring in a dynamic interaction of each aspect of language with each other aspect it comes into contact with). See Fuery, 1995:39-41, for a detailed discussion of différance.

[8] See Plato's *Republic*, Book VII (Plato, 1961:747ff). This is, of course, Plato's image of men in a cave who, fettered and having their heads constricted, can see only the shadows made by an unseen light. Not knowing any differently, and in a sorry state, they take these illusory copies of the real for the real itself. Plato's image of the cave itself is a *representation* of Plato's theory of ideal forms. According to Plato, we are afflicted by only seeing the weak copies of these ideal forms in daily existence. Plato's use of this image of the cave is one of the first theatricalisations with theoretical intent that we know about. It is, perhaps, the beginning of what I have called here the 'classical theatre'. For a thorough critique of the way in which

the first step away from this. The question raised here shall be one of how to exceed critique while using it - in short, how to enhance philosophical, ethical and aesthetic practices through a critical use of theories of interaction and technology such as Heidegger's. Can such old or existing ideas and practices be used to build new assemblages which allow for a more interactive thought? Is there reconstruction along with deconstruction? I will focus initially on Heidegger's work for two reasons. Firstly, it has indeed been crucial within theoretical thinking about technology. Secondly, it has formed one of the major influences on French philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, both directly and indirectly.

The Age of Heidegger's World Picture[9]

Heidegger's work, from the 1930s to the 1950s, can be seen as being invested in a more general cathexis linking and energising ideas about technology, the tragic and the essence of 'Western' culture. His writings on technology can be seen as an outcome of the twentieth century *problem* with technology which surrounded those writings' development, rather than as the consistent thoughts of a solitary thinker. Indeed, Heidegger's ideas, in response to the social currents within which they were grounded, developed and changed profoundly over the years. There will subsequently be little analysis of the early work of *Being and Time* (1962- first published in 1927), except with regard to the way in which certain ideas during this period make

---

Plato's use of this seemingly innocent representation produces a dubious inauguration of a regime of the specular, see Irigaray, 1985.

[9] In "The Age of the World Picture" (1977a) Heidegger argues that "metaphysics grounds an age" and that this "basis holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguish the age" (115). For Heidegger, what is "decisive" about the modern age is that "the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject" (128). The world becomes a picture for Man, the subject. In this, representation plays an important part. Heidegger replaces Descartes 'Cogito ergo sum' with the "co-agitatio" in which the "ego of the cogitare now finds in the self-securing "togetherness" of representedness, in con-scientia, its essence. Conscientia is the representing setting together of whatever has the character of object, along with representing man, within the sphere of representedness safeguarded by man" (152). The task this section of the chapter sets itself is to depict the specific grounding of Heidegger's picture of the world and its envelopment by its "age".

participation in the later cathexis possible, if not necessary. The 'middle' period of his work is of interest here, during which time Heidegger dallied with the Nazis and wrote "The Question Concerning Technology" (1977b - first published in 1953). This period and this essay are of the most relevance to this thesis. Verena Conley argues for the centrality of this essay, writing that it is necessary -

> ...to go through, but also beyond, Heidegger, who thought in terms of domination of nature and of loss of humanness by way of technology, but neither of transformations of subjectivities nor of limits imposed by natural or social ecology. (1993:xiii)

The third period discussed (in chapter two) will be that marked here by Heidegger's short essay *Time and Being* (Heidegger, 1972 - first published in 1969). By this late period many of Heidegger's fundamental ideas had changed, complicated by the attempted extrication from his involvement with totalitarianism.

Heidegger's shadow has fallen on many of the French philosophers - Deleuze, Guattari, Virilio, Irigaray and Foucault[10] (Rockmore, 1995) - who are discussed in this thesis. Indeed, Heidegger's thought informs many philosophers' thinking through of technology even if they are opposed to him[11]. In short, Heidegger's thought must be dealt with. This can be seen, for example, in Jürgen Habermas' highlighting of Heidegger as someone who has falsely led thought away from the notions of subjectivity that Habermas wishes to reinstate[12]. Even those who only occasionally refer to Heidegger still sometimes seem to travel through the same territory. It could be argued, for example, that some of Deleuze and Guattari's central concepts, which will form

---

[10] Foucault, for example, is recorded as saying "My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger. " (cited in Eribon 1992:30). He goes on to say, however, that Nietzsche was decisive. For a more complete account of the influence of Heidegger on Foucault, see Miller, 1993:46-51.

[11] See Bernstein (1985:71) for a description of one example - that of Herbert Marcuse, who tried to tie the ontological status of Being back into the ontic, rather than to the more abstract fate (death) that Heidegger proposes.

[12] See Bernstein (1985:167) for a brief description of the way in which Habermas believed that post-Nietzscheans such as Heidegger (and Foucault) took a wrong turn in their supposed disillusionment with subjectivity.

the major focus of this thesis, are coincidental with Heideggerian ideas. For example,

Heidegger's "destining" and "enframing" (1977 b:26), in which humans are caught up in the

processes behind technology, are significantly re-inflected in Deleuze and Guattari's

"mecanosphere" (*ATP*:514) and "machinic phylum" (409) [13]. This does not mean, however,

that Heidegger's philosophy should be taken as primary or originary for thinkers such as Deleuze

and Guattari. As Hardt notes, although Deleuze -

> *...insists ... on alternatives within the ontological tradition...we should be careful from*
>
> *the outset to distinguish this from a Heideggerian ontology...Deleuze...limits us to a*
>
> *strictly immanent and materialist ontological discourse that refuses any deep or hidden*
>
> *foundation of being.* (1993:xiii)[14]

Here I shall be heading towards a Deleuze-Guattarian ontology of processual opening, after

posing Heidegger's focus on a "deep and hidden foundation of being" as an indication of the

major problematic in the area. Therefore, rather than considering the influence of Heidegger's

thinking on other theorists of technology, I shall consider that thinking's immediate and material

context, in particular the influences on, and forces of production of, Heidegger's essay on

technology itself. What relations between being and technology does it allow for?

---

[13] For two brief instances of hostility to Heidegger, however, see *ATP*:125 and 561. Both instances are to do with the way in which Heidegger closes down the possibilities of escape from oppressive historical conditions and instead actively participates in them - for example in claiming that the ancient Greeks invented modern tragedy. See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (64-66), for his account of Heidegger and difference - the uses and difficulties of Heidegger's approach. See *DR*:129 for a criticism of Heidegger's notions of beginnings. See *DR*:195-6 for a discussion of Being and difference. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze has yet to leave the influence of Lacan. Perhaps in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is working through such influences as Heidegger's. In *The Deleuze Reader*, (Boundas, 1993:100) Deleuze discusses Foucault and Heidegger and it is clear here that despite the uses of Heidegger, Deleuze considers Heidegger's work to be against life. According to Deleuze, Foucault writes a "Nietzschean rather than Heideggerean history, a history devoted to Neitzsche or to *life*." Deleuze's recent essay on Heidegger and Jarry will be discussed later in the thesis.

[14] Hardt also notes (1993:125) that Deleuze, unlike most of his French contemporaries, was never really very interested in Heidegger.

Questioning Technology

Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" is so well known that it s content will

not be discussed extensively here. However, a brief summary will be given. For Heidegger,

following the Greeks, technology, knowledge and art were all intimately filtered through each

other. He takes up the Ancient Greek term 'technē', which *can* be broadly translated as

knowledge, or more specifically as knowledge 'at work' (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990:53). For

Heidegger instances of technology should be subordinate to the 'knowledge at work' which

makes them possible - something which perhaps attains more clarity in Deleuze and Guattari's

conception of the machinic[15]. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Heidegger portrays the modern focus

on technicity, derived as it is from the delusions of both humanism and the Cartesian subject not

facing their ontological and epistemological fragility, as a misapplication of knowledge. For

Heidegger this is a violation, a turning away from, the fundamental realisation that *Being* lies

outside the ken of beings, and is not just something available for temporally based beings to use

in order to attain a feeling of omnipotence. Thus Heidegger argues that "the essence of

technology is by no means anything technological" (Heidegger, 1977b:4). For Heidegger, the

essence of technology is, or should be, a way of revealing (12) related to technē. Technē is in

turn related to poeisis, which, as art, is a bringing forth of what is (10). This revealing in poeisis

has a relation to his conception of a deep Being. This Being is not the same as individual beings,

but rather relates to that which gives beings their Being. Being gives the 'is' when one says that a

being *is*. This is as much as there may be a general phenomenon of a table that underlies all

tables. It is not quite the same as Plato's ideal forms as it is based upon actual existence rather

than a deferral to some other place outside of 'the cave'. As such, Heidegger is trying to

---

[15] This will be discussed in detail in chapter six.

produce the articulation of the Being that pre-exists as the ground for beings. This is to raise the

fundamental question of the phenomenology of Being, of what Being *is* as a phenomenon. There

is a sense in which this Being seems to pre-exist the existence of beings. In other words, as

Deleuze claims, Heidegger "invokes a pre-ontological understanding of Being". Yet this is one

which refuses "objective presuppositions, but on condition of assuming just as many subjective

presuppositions (which are perhaps the same ones in another form)" (*DR*:129). What are these

subjective presuppositions? They are presuppositions of a revealing or disclosure *to* a subjective

position.

It is the *disclosure* of Being that is important to Heidegger in the operation of techne.

Heidegger opposes this disclosure of Being in poiesis to a more instrumental revealing of

resources through modern technology in a simple *challenging-forth* of the environment (that is,

when the essence of technology is conceived of *only* as technological and not as intrinsically

related to the disclosure of Being). In both cases, technology "reveals whatever does not bring

itself forth and does not yet lie here before us" (13). However, Heidegger's division between

two *modes* of revealing has an implied ethical dimension.

Firstly, technology as used by "handcraftsmen" (13) is ethically favoured. It seems to sit well

with Heidegger's admired Greek thought, where techne is *also* a poeisis or 'bringing-forth', in

other words, where technology maintains a relation to, and acceptance of, a Being exceeding

beings. This essentially relates to an ethics determined by the preservation of what is special

about the human version of Being. This itself partakes in that which Heidegger calls 'Dasein'[16].

---

[16] Dasein is the specific quality of 'being-there'. It relates (but does not belong) to the human and the philosophical in particular, in that "Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein" (Heidegger, 1962:263). The task here is that of revealing, not uprooting, in a sense approaching the right representations, not producing new thoughts. The uprooting of Being is, in fact, a mistake (264) as Dasein is essentially "falling" (ibid.). Dasein's task is to "appropriate what has already been uncovered, defend it *against* semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again" (265). In this way Dasein might attain "a primordial understanding of its own Being" (ibid.). Dasein, in its uncoveredness, is essential to truth (272). It is precisely this disclosure of Being that Heidegger argues modern technology defeats. It is because Dasein can either cover up or uncover Being (268) that it leads to the kind of

True Dasein, by being able to think Being, is able to conceive of beings in a relation to the death

by which they, as individual beings with a certain finitude, are exceeded. This, as shall be argued,

is something akin to the Greek conception of the tragic. The underside of this is that, for

Heidegger, Dasein itself *needs* to preserve a relation to disclosed Being in order to maintain some

kind of ethical authenticity[17].

Secondly, in the use of *modern* technology, art as a kind of harmony with the world and with

Being is divorced from techne. Techne subsequently heads towards *technicity*. For Heidegger,

the ethical problems with this modern 'technicity' are twofold and related. The first problem is

that the world is treated, with a degree of contempt, only as a kind of resource for the furthering

of the technological - everything becomes a "standing-reserve" (18) for technicity. The second

problem is that, with technicity, everything is directed, through the processes of technology,

away from the disclosure of Being. In short, in what could be regarded as a somewhat circular

argument, modern technology conceals its own concealment of the 'necessary' understanding of

Being which is the essence of Dasein. Instead of the reflective philosophical man preserving a

relation to that thought which had been inaugurated by the Greeks and submitted to its

conditioning by death (Being and so on), we have man "enframed" (19) within technicity's

treatment of the world as standing-reserve. 'Man' is distracted from the disclosure of Being and

---

possibility of the tragic double bind that will be discussed in this chapter. Aristotle's formula of tragic
recognition is in fact the recognition of precisely this double bind - that the nature of things resides in their
possibilities of covering up or disclosure.

[17] See *Being and Time*, section 44, Heidegger, 1962:256-273. As Lyotard (1990:86) points out, Being is, of
course, behind technicity as it must be behind everything. What technicity obstructs is not Being but the
disclosure of Being. Lyotard here also points out the impossibility of approaching events such as the
Holocaust from the point of view of the tragic - "the Holocaust signifies the impossibility not only of the
tragic-political fulfilment but also that of the stage where it takes place" (ibid.). Being in a sense trips itself
up with technology - "It is because in modern technology, Being gives ('transmits') itself as available
ground that the essence of the *Gestell* deploys itself not as fate, but as 'danger'...This danger is equally
revealed, according to Heidegger, in agribusiness, in nuclear armaments, in Third World indebtedness and
famine - and in the holocaust". Although Lyotard's analysis of the relation (and nonrelation) between
Being, the technological and the tragic seems correct here, he perhaps misses the complete political project
involved in Heidegger's discourses on technology. As Rockmore writes, "Lyotard refuses to amalgamate
Heidegger's thought and his politics" (1992:388).

from 'being-towards-death'. For Heidegger, the consequence is that, "In truth...precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e. his essence" (27). When *techne* is combined with poeisis, art and thought (and nature) are in control and this 'essence' is revealed and preserved in thought. In the case of the 'challenging-forth' of nature, however, pure *technnicity* is in control and it seems 'Man's' essence is endangered (ibid.). To perhaps characterise this in a less flattering way, Heidegger returns to the Greeks to tell us what the essence of technology should be, and then proposes that what is wrong with modern technology is that it has not followed 'Greek', and, by implication, his own assumptions. For Heidegger the only way out of this is through technology's saving power, which is related to the very danger it presents to Dasein. This power will arise when we "notice that the challenging-forth into the ordering of the real as standing-reserve still remains a destining that starts man upon the way of revealing" (31). In other words, challenging-forth can still lead us back to a more ethical (in the Heideggerian sense) relation to the world. It seems that it is precisely through the danger that technology reveals to us that we are brought, *by extremes*, back to an understanding of "the innermost indestructible belongingness of man" (32)[18]. "How can this happen? Above all through our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological" (32). Once again we are back to where we started - in that the essence of ethical activity as regards technology begins with *thinking about technology* and allowing the disclosure of Being to a perceptive subject. One must become a philosopher![19] Yet Heidegger is

---

[18] Simply put, a disaster such as Chernobyl should make us look beyond the technological. It is arguable whether it has.

[19] Of course, Deleuze also values philosophy but only in a more direct relation to life. Carcenac de Torné (1995:14) quotes him as saying "Not that life is *in* thinking, but only the thinker has a potent life, free of guilt and hatred, and only life explains the thinker". No doubt Heidegger may have agreed with this. The difference between Deleuze and Heidegger is perhaps that Heidegger's philosophy approaches the junction between life and thought, never quite arriving there. Deleuze's thought takes its departure from this junction.

perhaps right in that this saving power can lead out of his own subsequent dilemmas as much as it can circle back on them. How can this be?

Kathleen Wright has pointed out that it is "Art" that "grows out of the 'danger' of technology as a 'saving power'" (1992:58) but that this is in a process that leads us to mystery. Heidegger writes that "the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious (geheimnisvoller) the essence of art becomes" (cited in Wright, ibid.).

This mystery is problematic. Heidegger seems to move against thought that conceives of the world in terms of pragmatic subject-object relations only to replace it with the thought which takes place within the mind of what is, in effect, an elitist tragic subject equipped with a perception of this mystery. As with Dasein, a tragic subject nearly always exists within an overdetermined relation to death. To take an example from one of Heidegger's favourite writers, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus faces a plague caused by his own undisclosed close relation to death - he is unaware of the patricide he has committed. By the end of the play, Oedipus has faced his proximity to that death and its consequences. Yet must we also, like Oedipus, tear out our eyes to see the 'mystery' of Being? Heidegger's tragic ontology becomes also, in the theatrical context, a tragic *aesthetic*. In the tragic theatre, poiesis gives a tragic form to the facing of death both on (for Oedipus) and off (for the audience) the stage. This is a form in which death as a mysterious limit-experience can be disclosed. It is thus the form of a disclosure of Being.

Heidegger seems to oppose technicity simply because it overwhelms this whole process. In short, the modern use of technologies distracts from the disclosure of Being. Yet Heidegger's alternative seems to assume a somewhat elite and obscure form - the elite tragic subject to whom Being is disclosed within a tragic relation to death[20]. The tragic form can retrieve a split subject,

---

[20] Deleuze, on the other hand, also sees uses for tragedy but not for a tragic *subject* such as the philosopher. Rather tragedy is that in which the emptiness of pure time overwhelms the subject (*DR*:87). The self is smashed to pieces (89). The coherence which is produced is "the secret coherence which establishes itself only by excluding my own coherence, my own identity, the identity of the self, the world and God." (91).

one which has a *special perception* of its own subjectivity, even if split. This is transcendent specifically *in the manner in which it thinks itself outside of the general cultural relations of the many*. The tragic subject stands at the apex of cultural relations, in which Heidegger's beloved relation to tragedy is a privileged relation to a representation of representation itself[21] - a philosophical freeze-frame of the whole process of freeze-framing. Everything is held frozen in the chaotic standstill of death. For Heidegger, poeisis has priority over techne only because it *brings form* to the chaos which is the result of the passion of disclosure. Perhaps for Heidegger, in a fashion not so far removed from this, Nazism was to give form to the chaos of the German people in the 1930s[22].

Yet can this form hold? It is perhaps necessary to qualify the discussion of the tragic; to differentiate between two tragic modes. One, as discussed, is a form of pure *representation* which attempts to freeze the chaos of existence in the face of death, in an aesthetic form and for an elitist subject. The other, which could be seen to parallel Heidegger's technicity, is a form of tragedy which dismantles this subject, and through its 'death' admits the possibilities of difference that the repetition of a form may open out to. Both of these can be derived from Heidegger's work but Heidegger often seems to hover between the two. It will be asserted here that, in his middle period at least, he tends towards the former. Deleuze opts for the latter.

---

[21] In a critique of representation in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze notes that it "is of the essence of representation not only to represent something but to represent its own representivity" (*DR*:80).

[22] Deleuze also recognises this relation between form and the formless but it is again a question of direction. Heidegger retreats to form as a way of containing the mystery of the formless. Deleuze moves towards the overturning of form by the formless. Deleuze writes that "the form of time is there only for the revelation of the formless in the eternal return. The extreme formality is there only for an excessive formlessness...In this manner, the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal grounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return" (*DR*:91).

Finding a German when you were expecting a Greek

Heidegger's essay on technology is echoed in the work of many other theorists[23]. Two of these echoes concern us here. Firstly, there is the way in which his essay forms a continuum with other theorists in a general basic appeal to the past - to the ancient Greeks. The Greeks are seen as having attained an ideal that has since been lost - particularly as regards the way in which technology and art interact with culture and ideas about humanity. Secondly, there is the recourse to the classical theatrical, the artistic and the representational. The recourse is not to these as acts of production in themselves but as 'stand-ins' for, or containments of, the 'mysteries' or 'essences' that are dealt with.

When the appeal to the Greeks and the recourse to mystical representation combine, there are dual dangers. Firstly, Heidegger perhaps devalues individual beings in favour of Being. This can amount to a devaluation of the specifically political and social in favour of the abstractly philosophical. The latter is not, of course, without its own political implications. Secondly, the fixation on a pre-ordained tragic destiny seems to preclude any movement towards different possible futures. It therefore precludes ideas of contingent 'becoming' or, simply put, the possibility of cultural change or lines of escape.

Heidegger's own appeal to the Greeks and his recourse to aesthetic and classical theatrical representations in his attempts to approach Being are, in fact, clearly entwined. Heidegger uses the Greeks as a way of turning away from some of the more radical interactive aspects of his own ideas. A contention will be that this is a common trope when dealing with interaction. Many theorists invoke the interactive only to promote its dangers and the need to contain it. In addition, Ancient Greek culture - its theatre practice in particular - is often seen as a cornerstone

---

[23] See, for example, Conley, 1993, Sofia, 1994 and Ihde, 1993.

of 'Western' civilisation to which frightened theorists can flee[24]. Yet certain factors which are inherent within the Greek 'foundation' of Western theatre practice may, in fact, mitigate against an understanding of interaction. For example, for the Greeks, the perils of highly interactive disorder involved in the Dionysian were recovered, and contained, within the *form* of tragic representation that emerged from Dionysian ritual[25]. Tragic *representation* can be seen here as an inaugural taming of the disorder of *interaction*[26]. Tragic representation provides the ground for later supposed stabilities and identities which will base themselves upon this taming through tragic form. This is paralleled in Heidegger's privileging of Dasein's 'Being-toward-death', which as a necessary, founding component of authentic Dasein[27], seems to parallel the tragic. The problem with both the notion of an authentic Being-towards-death and the acceptance, through formalisation, of a pre-ordained tragic destiny is that both presuppose, while they ignore, the inauthentic. The emphasis in the tragic, as it is in Heidegger's philosophy, is on pinning down the mysteries of the phenomenon of *Being* whilst restricting the expressions and interactions of the lesser *beings*, who never quite seem to realise just what is going on. Similarly, that which creates the shadows in Plato's cave is transcendent and, in its transcendence, demonstrates the ignorance and imperfection of the beings within the cave. Equally, the formulation of Greek tragedy in which the gods may be pernicious and unpredictable but are still *in control from beyond*, enables a similar escape from consideration of the immediate and immanent interactions.

---

[24] For example, Brenda Laurel's *Computers as Theatre* (1991), though a groundbreaking book in many ways, does exactly this.

[25] For discussions which echo the way in which the grandeur of Greek tragedy is seen in its formal containment of these contradictions within Being and beings see Kitto, 1939; Taplin, 1978. For discussions of the structure and history of the Greek stage see Pickard-Cambridge 1946, 1962 and 1968 and Webster, 1956. For a discussion of the difference between theatre as interactive with daily life and theatre as a separation, no matter how grand, from daily life, see Turner, 1982. For a specific discussion of the rise of the tragic from the Dionysian dithyramb see Turner, 1982:103-104.

[26] Just as Plato's early theory of Forms may have been the result of a desire to tame Heraclitus' theory of flows (Vesey and Foulkes, 1990:135).

[27] "Death is Dasein's ownmost possibility. Being towards this possibility discloses to Dasein its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, in which its very Being is the issue" (Heidegger, 1962:307). See 304-311 for a more complete account of this problem.

Heidegger's formulation of the disclosure of Being by the authentic philosopher parallels this escape from consideration of more immanent interactions. Perhaps these attempts to tame the interactive are recognised by Freud when he postulates that *Oedipus Rex* is a 'sublimation' and control of incestuous (it could be said overly interactive) impulses by theatricalising them, making them happen somewhere else - on the stage, in the dramatic world where they are all the 'fault' of transcendent gods; or in the unconscious[28]; or, in Heidegger's case, in a world of unchained beasts from which the philosopher is excepted.

There are many useful, indeed crucial, aspects of Heidegger's philosophy for a consideration of an ethics of interaction, particularly in its more submissive moments[29]. However, Heidegger's thought, transcending or forgetting as it does the more interactive concerns of individual beings, may provide only one part of a more thorough critique of ontological issues that is needed with regard to both the arts and technology.

Even that which is useful in Heidegger's thought can be seen to be complicated by its own specific dangers in its capitulation to the utopian ideals of National Socialism. Deleuze and Guattari locate these difficulties within Heidegger's thought precisely in its relation to the conception of a Greek origin for philosophy whose "technico-worldwide development" is "reterritorialized on National Socialism" -

> *...in Heidegger it is not a question of going farther than the Greeks; it is enough to*
>
> *resume their movement in an initiating, recommencing repetition.... What remains*

---

[28] Freud goes on to attempt to control and mystify incestuous desires further by once again using the Greek trope as a support for his theories that all incestuous desires (in fact all desire) are formulated in this Oedipal form (Freud, 1991:363-365).

[29] See in particular Ingrid Scheibler's "Heidegger and the Rhetoric of Submission: Technology and Passivity" in Conley, 1993. One of the more important aspects of Heidegger's thought is, of course, the way in which it can, in some interpretations, require us to submit to the world that surrounds us rather than attempt to control it. The Heideggerian requirements of thought are, however, more ambiguous than one might wish when this ties one in to some kind of tragic destiny.

common to Heidegger and Hegel is having conceived of the relationship of Greece and

philosophy as an origin and thus as the point of departure of a history internal to the

West, such that philosophy necessarily becomes indistinguishable from its own history.

However close he got to it, Heidegger betrays the movement of deterritorialization

because he fixes it once and for all between being and beings, between the Greek

territory and the Western earth that the Greeks would have called Being. (Deleuze and

Guattari, 1994:95)

In "Heidegger and the Greeks" Rainer Marten (1992:168) points out that the narrowness of

Heidegger's thought resides in its localisation in his conception of the 'West' "which begins with

(*beginnt*) and has its 'inception' in (*anfängt*) ancient Greece". Marten points out that for

Heidegger, everything depends upon projects that Heidegger considers to have been inaugurated

by the Greeks - projects within which the 'West' still thinks. "The ancient Greeks *are* ; they have

not passed away but *have been*, and in such a way that they are now coming into their own: in

the Germans, in German" (ibid.).

This has several consequences. Firstly, if technology is 'endangering' something, then what it

sometimes seems to be specifically endangering in Heidegger's philosophy is this particular

formation of the 'West'. If something must be 'saved' it is the philosophical project begun by the

Greeks. Those who will save both the 'West' and this instated philosophical project are the elite

few, both elite nations and elite thinkers and writers from within those elite nations (or races).

And these are few! For Heidegger, one of *only two* 'great' Greek poets is the dramatist

Sophocles. It is along the line on which such thinkers and writers carry this project that new elite

cultures will find their ground. Marten (169) cites Heidegger as writing that "When we fight the

battle of the ancient Greeks, we do not at the same time become Greeks but Germans".

From Totalisation to the Tragic Double Bind

Unsurprisingly, Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism[30] led to a great deal of turbulence within his thought (Schürmann, 1992). In *Beiträge zur Philosophie*[31] (1936-1938), written just after the peak of his involvement with the Nazis, and whilst he was still a party member, a number of the complications of this involvement are revealed. Usefully, Heidegger begins to move from the consideration of universal Being to the beginning of a consideration of the event[32] through which Being comes to be. More ambiguously, he moves away from the specific political practices of National Socialism in Germany[33] while still seemingly supporting its ideals[34]. Heidegger moves away from German National Socialism's focus on the singular - the Fuhrer, the Nation - and towards the double bind of the tragic, but still within the context of what is special about the German nation and its particular relation to Ancient Greece. He moves from the domination of the one to the domination of the double. He never quite seems able to move beyond this to the *open* event until late in his thinking, and long after his essay on technology. In addition, Heidegger moves to the tragic double bind only in a framework which posits *a few* who are capable of rescuing Being so that others may follow (Schürmann,

---

[30] The blindness of some followers of Heidegger's thought is perhaps demonstrated in Micheal Heim's contention, in *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*, that "Not only did he make technology central to metaphysics, but he came to see in it the root evil of the twentieth century, including the Nazi German catastrophe, which he described as 'the confrontation of European humanity with global technology'"(1993:54). This reads as if Heidegger was unambigously opposed to the Nazis.

[31] As discussed by Schürmann, 1992.

[32] The full force of which can be seen in the much later work, *Time and Being* (Heidegger, 1972).

[33] In the early years he was an active member - *philosophically* active, marrying his notions of Being and Dasein to the Nazi transformation of Germany. In 1933 he wrote - "The National Socialist revolution is bringing about the total transformation of our German existence [*Dasein*]" (cited in Wolin 1993:46). Of course, the debate about Heidegger's Nazism has been fully staged by now (for example in Rockmore, 1995; Lyotard, 1990; Wolin, 1993).

[34] Although he seems to eschew totalitarianism (whereby the many are subsumed under the signifier of the one - the voice of Hitler, for example) he does so, in part at least, only because he is disappointed with the lack of philosophical perception of the Nazis. The reasons for this may have been simply personal. Removed from his position at Freiburg in 1933, he had not, as he wished, been made the Nazi's philosophical guru (Osborne, 1995:18). Yet Heidegger remained a "member in good standing of the Nazi Party from 1933 to 1945" (Wolin, 1993:vii).

1992:316). This is not a view far from the ideals of Fascism. And what is to be saved here is essentially "the West" (ibid.), specifically *through a recognition of the tragic double bind* (317). This tragic double bind binds the West to the disclosure of Being along a particular line which passes directly between the Germans and the Greeks.

This is a relation between the Germans and the Greeks which seems to transcend history and politics. Once again, mystery raises its head. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (given as a lecture series in 1935), we see that this Greek-German relation is partly based upon a *mysterious relation* between language and being (Heidegger, 1959:171). For Heidegger this is as "the chorus of *Antigone* has told us" (ibid.). Heidegger's use of theatrical reference here seems caught in a hall of mirrors between the Germans and the Greeks. Being, the Germans and the Greeks reflect the same poetic, linguistic character, the same heroic and technical manifestation. He writes that "along with German the Greek language is (in regard to its possibilities for thought) at once the most powerful and the most spiritual of all languages" (Heidegger, 1959:57). In short, it is up to Germany to fulfil the ideal relation to Being that was inaugurated by the Greeks. "This collective subject must step into the *topos* historically occupied by ultimate referents, a *topos* Heidegger otherwise *denounces* as the nest of all metaphysical illusions" (Schürmann:319)[35].

---

[35] Schürmann, however, argues that this movement towards the 'Fascist Same' in Heidegger is tempered by various counter-strategies - that, in short, Heidegger's thinking of this time is split and that some of his thought can be usefully retrieved for an ethical project. According to Schürmann the other side of this split is a recognition of what the tragic double bind implies - that even these few will not be in control of a pure universal destiny. Thus, in the people, there is not only the gathering (of destiny) but also dispersion (into existence), and not only in the people or a particular people. This counterstrategy "will place every single phenomenon within the normative double bind of gathering and dispersion, of unconcealing and concealing, of appropriation and expropriation" (319). Every single phenomenon is caught in a tragic relation to Being. However, Schürmann's may not be a complete vindication of Heidegger's project because although every phenomenon may be placed within this "normative double bind", not every phenomenon in Heidegger's philosophy is capable of *perceiving* this, of participating in the disclosure of Being. The dispersion perhaps calls for the disclosure by someone perceptive enough to think the situation through - the elite (tragic or tragi-philosophical) subject.

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1959:106-107), Heidegger discusses Oedipus as "the embodiment of Greek being-there...who most radically and wildly asserts its fundamental passion, the passion for disclosure of being". Yet this passion, in the end, subjects everything to a particular kind of philosopher. Oedipus' condition is "the fundamental condition for all great questioning and knowledge and also their metaphysical ground" (ibid.). In Section 44 of *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962:256-273), which discusses the importance to Dasein of the disclosure of Being, one can see that such a relation to this fundamental (Oedipal) activity in relation to this cultural inception by the Greeks is not just peripheral to Heidegger's thought. For Heidegger, what is good about the Greeks and about Sophocles *is* their passionate disclosure of Being.

In every such moment of Heidegger's retreat from metaphysics, philosophy or subjectivity, there is a return to them through the philosophical transcendence of the Greek (and German) intelligence and perception - *but only for some*. The non-philosophical is excluded - and, it could be added, the specifically technical. Instead, all of Heidegger's lines of thought circle back on themselves in a kind of frequency resonance between the Greek and German intelligence he pre-supposes.

There is a side to all this that has broader implications than just those of national-aesthetics. Marten points to the way in which the aligning of oneself with this passion of disclosure amounts to a form of "intellectual" or philosophical "racism".

> *The view of man has become incomparably narrow in its object and its thinking: mankind is reduced intellectually to the true Greeks and the true Germans who are essentially intellectual in nature.* (1992:173)

According to Marten, Heidegger judges races, nations and individuals on the basis of those who are "capable of Being", "deserving of Being".

Dignity itself is extended to man only out of the Greco-German Being history... This is profoundly disturbing: the one (Heidegger) who, by his own admission, is the true intellectual man eradicates the nonintellectual man... Blacks, as he determines in his lectures of the summer semester of 1934 (edited into the notes), have in common with minerals that neither think. Because they are incapable of thinking, it is impossible that they could be worthy of Being. This is no intellectual naiveté. It is intellectual racism, a philosophical scandal that cannot be called anything the least bit paler or less precise. (1992:173-174)[36]

In moving to the tragic double bind Heidegger is perhaps only moving from the unitary exclusion of despotism to the binary exclusion of the tragic which may not necessarily be any less a form of intellectual racism.

Heidegger's 'Technicity' arises in the Staging of the Encounter of Philosophy and Fascism

It is in the movement between National Socialism and the tragic double bind that we can situate the beginnings of Heidegger's thoughts on technology. Just before *Beiträge zur Philosophie,* in the writing of *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* Heidegger seems bitter about being rejected as a suitable philosopher by the Nazis. Still trying to find his place in a National Socialist vision of the world, he writes, in a quote that is now somewhat infamous -

---

[36] Schürmann argues that there is a way out of this totalitarianism and racism. This is in the tragic once again, in an alternative "nomological" reading to *Beiträge zur Philosophie.* In this Heidegger moves away from the uniform regulation of law and from logic "understood as the corpus of norms for truth" (323) and, moving away from such representations, "takes a step back towards the tragic logos" (ibid.). This is a logos based on the tragic double bind of "life-death" or "natality-morality" (ibid.). It is immediately apparent here, however, that this marks a return to the 'Being-toward-death' of *Being and Time.*

The works that are being peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of National

Socialism but have nothing to do with the inner truth and greatness of this movement

(namely the encounter between global technology and modern man) - have all been

written by men fishing in the troubled waters of 'values' and 'totalities'. (1959:199)

Dominique Janicaud suggests that the phrase here in parentheses was not written until this

lecture was published in 1953. In 1966, however, Heidegger claimed that, even if written later, it

"corresponded exactly to the conception I had then [in 1935] of technology" (cited in Janicaud,

1992:353). There is some confusion about this, and Janicaud gives several interpretations of the

comment, but the confusion in itself is suggestive of Heidegger's own confusion in his attempt to

place both *himself and technology* somewhere successfully within a conception of the world's

destiny. The important point, according to Janicaud, is that, in any case, "Heidegger saluted the

Nazi movement in terms of historical and destinal possibilities" (355) and, it should be added, its

encounter with "global technology".

Perhaps it was technology in and of itself that quickly came to carry the burden of Heidegger's

'mistake' - this hasty association with National Socialism - in an act of philosophical and

psychological displacement. According to Marten, Heidegger had long conceived of technology

in relation to the devastation of the earth, which, according to Heidegger in 1928 "rages about in

the world today like an unchained beast" (cited in Marten, 1992:179) [37] and one can easily see

how this can slip into a discussion of the Nazi's use of technology. Technology, for Heidegger,

was a distraction from philosophical and political greatness but the *battle* with it seems the *mark*

of greatness. For Heidegger, the task in response to this "unchained beast" was *to think*, and in

doing so, preserve the "gifts that strive for Being" (Marten, 1992:179). Technology - in itself

and to its own ends in technicity - comes to be desired and followed only by those *who do not*

---

[37] Of course, Heidegger was right here in many ways but one can see how the context of such remarks makes them very double-edged.

think. Technicity takes these supposedly thoughtless beings away from the disclosure of Being's

necessary relation to the tragic double bind and to death, precisely because technicity itself moves

away from the disclosure of Being, the tragic double bind and 'Being-toward-death'. In short,

technicity gives a false sense of security - away from considerations of Being - about which

Heidegger is scathing. However, Heidegger formulates this scathing for those who seek security

in technicity in the precise period of his life when he *himself* is also seeking security[38], having

had a breakdown. Schürmann quotes Heidegger's comment that -

> *"The dread before being has never been as great as today. The proof: the gigantic*
>
> *staging by which we attempt to surmount this dread" (BzP, p.139). He describes the*
>
> *gigantic therapeutic contriving as an all-pervasive "operative machination"*
>
> *(Machenshaft, a word that expresses at once making [poiesis and techne], sinister*
>
> *maneuvering, and the collapse of physics into "that which produces itself"; BzP, p.*
>
> *126). Later he was to describe the same thetic contriving as "positional enframing"*
>
> *(Gestell).* (Schürmann,1992:323)

It is in seeking security that Heidegger would move the world away from security. Conversely,

it is in seeking the therapeutic that Heidegger eschews it[39]. It is in eschewing the staging of

representations[40] that Heidegger moves towards the Greek dramatists and the tragic. In

eschewing the particular form of National Socialism he found himself a part of, Heidegger only

---

[38] When Heidegger had a breakdown after the war, he was brought back to mental health by Heinrich Wiegand Petzet. After his recovery, Heidegger presented Petzet with a translation from Sophocles' *Antigone* - an act in which the relation between 'Being-toward-death', the tragic and the health of the philosopher seem tied. It read "resourceful in all (resourceless he goes to meet the nothing that is to come). From death alone he will procure no refuge; but he has devised escapes from baffling illnesses" (Ott, 1992:98).

[39] It is worth comparing this attitude to Wilhelm Reich's, who never eschewed the therapeutic, never admired the Nazis and was persecuted much more for much less. See Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1975), which presents a similar theory accounting for the attraction of fascism which is much less cluttered with ancient history. It was the questions raised by Reich in this area that partly inspired Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. See Foucault's introduction to the latter book for a description of the book's anti-fascist project.

[40] In such essays as *The Age of the World Picture*, Heidegger can be seen to argue against the possibility of a representation having any relation to a simple depiction of a permanent world.

manages to move to a form of elitism that is - at least in part - still ensnared by a historic line running from Germany to Greece and back. In moving away from the one of totalitarianism, Heidegger gets as far as the two of the tragic double bind but no further - and both are bound in a relation towards death, in totalitarianism of the death of the particular in the universal despot and in the tragic a relation of 'Being-toward-death'.

This all implies a purity to 'Western culture', supposedly undermined by technicity, which is, of course, invented[41]. It is exactly this attempt to make genealogical links in a pure line between majoritarian States that Deleuze and Guattari attack in "Rhizome" (*ATP*:3-25). The task set here in relation to Heidegger's work on technology will be to extract what is rhizomatic (a rhizome is an "anti-genealogy" (*ATP*:11)) about the limits of beings in the face of death from that which reterritorialises itself on totalitarianism and elitism. Heidegger sometimes seems to freeze everything in a staring at this death-limit - in his rejection of challenging-forth, and, one could say, of a world which produces itself rather than simply exists. Perhaps Heidegger himself had to look too long and hard at the results of a political philosophy based upon the marriage of death and technology. No doubt this is partly his point. Nevertheless Heidegger's philosophy leaves little room for an accounting of the dynamism of technology - its production - its *celebration* of going to the limit. It is perhaps useful to turn to Heidegger's theories in order to sometimes let things be, but his theories are not as good at accounting for how things *change* or how they are being produced. For example, Heidegger's theories give little account for the *differences* between *new* technologies. They only attempt to account for the differences between modern and older (German or Greek) technologies.

It will be suggested that Nietzsche's version of tragedy and what Deleuze calls "orgiastic representation" (*DR*:42-43) are important additions or qualifications to the use of Heidegger's

---

[41] See Hughes, 1989/90 for a discussion of the impurity of such cultural lines, especially in relation to performance.

theories. These allow us to extend a Heideggerian ecology, which so often returns to a revealing from the past, to a consideration of an ecology of the future - of an ecology that includes the forces of production, 'natural' and 'social', within it. Before outlining these additions and qualifications, however, it is perhaps necessary to outline the dangers of the ways in which Heidegger himself became caught up in reterritorialising his confrontation with limit-experiences onto elitist cultural determinants.

The Totalitarian-Tragic Binary Machine and 'Western' Culture

One could say that Heidegger's thinking, along with many current attitudes to thinking about technology and its relation to being, combine two sets of vectors[42]. These are the tragic and the teleological. This powerful combination of vectors gives a new set of vectors[43] - those of what I shall call here the *totalitarian-tragic binary machine*. This machine operates as follows.

In attempting to repress technicity, Heidegger, in part at least, heads towards a philosophical version of the same, in which everything becomes 'standing-reserve' for his intellectual-cultural machine. In his thinking about technology this machine either heads Heidegger towards the double bind and the tragic, the passion of the disclosure of Being *or* it leads Heidegger to retreat

---

[42] By vector here I mean it as developed by McKenzie Wark from the work of Paul Virilio. This is "a term from geometry meaning a line of fixed length and direction but having no fixed position" (Wark, 1994b:11). What Wark here calls the "paradox of the media vector" (ibid.) applies equally well to what I am calling the 'totalitarian-tragic binary machine' if one can accept a philosophical system as a kind of machine, (which is one of the basic assumptions of this thesis). With regard to the vector the paradox is that the "technical properties are hard and fast and fixed but it can connect enormously vast and vaguely defined spaces together and move images, and sounds, words, and furies, between them. The vector is an oxymoronic relay system; a rigorous indeterminacy; a determinate imprecision; a precise ambiguity; an ambiguous determinism" (11-12). In a sense there is no escape from that which Heidegger fears as technicity - as shall be seen in chapter two when a commentary is giving on the way in which Deleuze marries Heidegger's philosophy to a kind of technicity which is not about revealing what *is* but about becoming *unconscious enough to become what is possible*.

[43] A mathematical property of vectors is, of course, that, as with the forces they represent, they can be combined and a new vector can be produced from that combination, just as two forces can combine to produce a new force applied in what may well be a different direction to either of the original forces.

from this to that which he criticises - security in a sense of totalitarian destiny. This is security and destiny specifically found in such things as the purification of the German language (Janicaud:354-55). In both the use of the tragic and of the totalitarian, Heidegger *himself* believed he was attempting to construct one line of purity from the Greeks to the Germans. Seen from its outside, however, Heidegger's thought is being constructed, not by its perceived relation to the Greeks, but by a twentieth century problematic. For a start, as Marten notes -

> *The Greeks whom Heidegger constructs, in order to find through them the way to that*
>
> *which is "German," never existed - not their language, not their thinking, not their*
>
> *polis, not their amazement, not their gods.* (1992:183)

Marten suggests that Heidegger territorialises 'the Greeks' on the intellectual and philosophical (rather than the political or social) which invests them in a generalised essence of Being (with a concurrent political naivety or innocence as regards the Greeks' actual political and social practices, including those involving their own technologies). In short, Heidegger was perhaps using the Greeks to justify his own difficult and, at times, confused position in history.

It would not be wise, however, to make Heidegger the philosophical scapegoat for twentieth century thought. The twentieth century in general is not immune from the confusion which Heidegger both participates in and attempts to diagnose. In fact, the Heideggerian movement between different forms of purity could be seen to exemplify the more general double movement of the binary machine of exclusion throughout much of 'Western' culture - its attempt to maintain its purity in the face of 'contagion' (by other cultures, by women, by other languages, by technologies, by animals, etc). Put simply, 'Western' culture in general, seeking the refuge of its own purity, is on a tightrope suspended between tragedy and totalitarian apocalypse. The subsequent balancing act, which always involves a cathexis of Being in some form, is performed in accordance with variant combinations of the two sets of vectors of the teleological and the

tragic. The first set, as with Heidegger's movement from the Greek inception of Being in the past

to its possible fulfilment by Germans in the future, are evolutionary, millenarian or apocalyptic.

This would include some aspects of Marxist analyses (Jean Baudrillard and the apocalypse of the

sign, the end of the end[44]), or Christian/Humanist analyses, such as Paul Virilio's, whose work

will be dealt with in more detail in later chapters. The tragic vectors are an inversion of the first,

where the extremes of a teleological beginning and end (life/death; natality/morality) are

collapsed into the one situation, providing what has been discussed here as the tragic double

bind. These vectors, pressing into the one situation, *could* force a qualified opening up to the

double bind of the state/family and the personal/political, or exterior/interior double binds which

undermine each other within the tragic. Yet this second set of vectors is also one which perhaps

fixates the gaze upon the impossibility of movement, perhaps because all teleology has been

impossibly contracted into a(n in)decisive moment without a corresponding way out. The time of

other possibilities beyond the pre-decided linear time of teleology is denied. All that is left within

the tragic moment is the *character* with which one faces it. This is the very root of the character

which still haunts us in many actor training theories and psychoanalytic assumptions today. This

is a character whose essential consistency is posited in the collapsing of action into a double bind

of the interior and the exterior, into the paradoxical representation of the world to an interior

subject and the production of that subject by that exterior and destining world. What is at stake

here regarding interaction is that the *personal* (as represented in relation to some stable frozen

representation or logos, such as Heidegger's Being[45]) and the *technological* (as processual

opening) are conceived of as being in *conflict*. This is because processual opening provides

alternatives both to an apocalyptic teleology and a frozen character.

---

[44] Baudrillard is apocalyptic in the sense that he pronounces the end of the connection between the real and its simulacra. As in most forms of nihilist post-Marxism, Baudrillard's theories, though in some ways anti-millenarian, at the same time derive their force from the idea of a collapse of a certain teleological trajectory. This is apocalyptic in its pessimism in that it assumes that these trajectories have no alternative.

[45] 'Being' here is meant more as a signifier than as a concept.

One could conceive of things differently to this conflict. For example, Heidegger is right in suggesting that it is being-towards-death that is the essential mark of the tragic, but there are different ways of approaching death. Death *as a horizon* should be liberating beings into becoming, not fixing beings within singular cultural lines of purity and destiny. In fact, it is precisely when the past is allowed to die that the new is possible[46]. This is even a process that we cannot avoid at some level. Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, writes as regards this path into the future -

> *As Klossowski says, it is the secret coherence which establishes itself only by excluding my own coherence, my own identity, the identity of the self, the world and God. It allows only the plebeian to return, the man without a name.* (90-91)

Technological change needs to be theorised in relation to this "secret coherence", a coherence that exists outside of the totalitarian-tragic binary-machine. In this machine technology heads only, on the one hand, along the line of the totalitarian future, and, on the other hand, along the tragic, double binding, predestining line of the *always already defeated*. These are lines of retreat easily fallen back to by many discursive frameworks, from Marxist concepts of historical destiny to the Freudian Oedipal tragedy[47] to which we are all supposed to be subject. To break away from these lines, new theoretical possibilities are necessary, possibilities in which death does not cease to exist but, on the other hand, becomes a broad horizon against which the enormity of these lines diminishes to a vanishing point. In these circumstances, death becomes less central as *the* mark of being, or as the singular attractor for every vector of thought. Rather it enables becomings which can outmaneuvre the insecurities raised by change.

---

[46] Lyotard points this out in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984:79). In such a way the postmodern (fragmentation of the old) is the *pre*-condition for the modern (the new).

[47] It is perhaps possible to understand why Deleuze and Guattari's use of Marx and Freud to critique each other in *Anti-Oedipus* is a way of moving out of this whole binary machine by allowing it to deconstruct itself.

For Deleuze and Guattari it is necessary to confront these insecurities, not only in a

philosophical 'being-towards-death', but in a directly political sense from which philosophy and

thought are not excused. For Deleuze and Guattari one must also face the insecurity of opposing

the major reterritorialisations on major States and major lines of history that the totalitarian-tragic

binary machine requires. In short one must develop different vectors from the forces available so

that one's travel is a becoming-minor rather than an attempt to constantly redefine one's 'Being-

Major'. One must abandon all capital letters (Palbart, 1994:178)! One needs, in order to re-

position a culture in relation to technology, the becoming-minors of Kafka, the becoming-animal

of Beuys, or becoming-electricity of Joyce Hinterding[48]. And one needs some new

'assemblages'[49] in order to allow this to happen - some techniques that will allow one to forget

one's relation to the Greeks, to Being, or to death long enough to cross into the new. One needs

techniques that will carry one through to the outside of one's conception of what *is* to *what can*

become. This is why it is necessary to challenge the grandeur of the classical theatre and

representational - as mimesis of what *is* - and head instead towards the becomings of the

performative[50] (where machines speak to machines and ontological domains are precarious).

In fact, even the thoughts and cultural activities that would not normally be considered as

technological have a dimension that seems to consist of productive technique. Thought and

cultural activity themselves form series of 'machines' which can be seen to operate as a particular

collection of 'assemblages'. These are machines, even in Heidegger's case, that can just as easily

be caught up in technicity. As I have argued, even Heidegger's thoughts about Being can reduce

---

[48] Beuys and Hinterding will be discussed in chapter five.

[49] This is the way in which the French word "agencement" is often translated in Deleuze and Guattari's work. The French gives a flavour of what is meant, with more than a hint of agency.

[50] The performative, and performance will here be defined in this way - as those actions (which can even involve representation secondarily) which tend towards the becoming of the potential rather than the fixing of what is seen already to be - the inevitable. The simple, if extreme, comparison is between performance art and the classical theatre - between a 'happening' where we do not know the result and the kind of 'classical theatre' to which we go precisely because we know what to expect.

the possibilities of beings to that of standing-reserve for the ongoing production of particular social formations, in production of a Heideggerian, philosophical technicity that amount to "intellectual racism".

Heidegger both overstates and understates the way in which technology overwhelms Being. In fact, *beings need technology* in order to pull their past frozen identities apart long enough to interact. Heidegger always wants to preserve the distance and isolation of the 'thinker', the 'Greek', the 'German', the 'west', the 'man'. He wants to find the centre of thought and preserve it against too much interaction with the impure, with non-thought in particular. For others, however, it is a question of more impurity, not less.

Although there is, then, still value in Heidegger's pioneering work in thinking through technology, how is it to be used? Towards the end of this chapter, and in the next, it shall be argued that it can be used, but only through reinflecting it towards multiplicity, away from the one or the two, and more particularly, away from the play between these two in which contemporary debates can become caught.

From Heideggerian Being to Deleuze-Guattarian Processual Opening

To recapitulate, Heidegger is (eventually) arguing that totalitarianism, the modern and technicity are all based on "the truth of being" having been "cleansed of its intrinsic discord" (Schürmann, 1992:325). The positive side of Heidegger's answer to this purification of antagonisms - a restoration of the tragic antagonism - is that it introduces *some* difference into the equation, even if this only moves from one to two, though not yet really to multiplicity. In the

process it introduces a notion of 'event'[51] which undermines the notion of Being as the Same or as fixed.

The event is interactive. As a notion, it is the signalling of the irruption of difference and instability into supposed stability. Yet it is also that through which states of affairs come to be. Brian Massumi writes of the word "essence" that the "essence is always of an encounter; it is an *event*; it is neither stable nor transcendental nor eternal; it is immanent to the dynamic process it expresses and has only an abyssal present infinitely fractured into past and future" (1992:18). This notion of the event will become much more important in Heidegger's later work, such as *Time and Being*. Yet even in this later work, Heideggger will never quite be able to abandon the capital letter in the word 'Being'. He will never quite abandon the fate of the 'Human' - as a transcendent signifier separate from actual humans - when confronted by the impossibility of the human's being able to think itself either totally into or out of its Dasein, its being-there. Heidegger will never quite be able to deterritorialise his ideas from their disastrous reterritorialisations on the grandeurs of Western history. How does one enter into "being-there, its instant and its place..." (Heidegger cited in Schürmann:325)? One continues the question by asking "...how does this occur in Greek tragedy?". The answer, according to Schürmann, is "always through assenting to the double bind by which, in Aeschylus and Sophocles, the law of the family lineage undermines the law of the city, and conversely". One remains trapped within a double binary-machine between family and state. A potential event is forestalled. As Guattari notes, Heidegger and the theorising of technology which follows him -

> *...entrusts techne - in its opposition to modern technology - with the mission of "unmasking the truth" that "seeks the true in the exact." Thus it nails techne to an*

---

[51] The notion of the event will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

> *ontological plinth - to a grund - and compromises its character of processual opening.* (*CHS*:34)

It is this "processual opening" that will be sought in the theories of Deleuze and Guattari in the following chapters.

Many contemporary notions of technology, consciously, or unconsciously, remain caught within the binary-machine or complex that Heidegger first delineates and exemplifies. This is often demonstrated in contemporary popular culture. For example, in *Terminator 2* (1990) this conflict is resolved through a typically tragic-heroic gesture. The cyborg, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, takes the position of Father - securer of stability - against the ravages of another cyborg whose specific power and evil is that it can become fluid and *change shape*. In truly tragic fashion the Schwarzenegger cyborg destroys itself, destroying the shape-changer at the same time, in order to bring into being a "saving power". This follows the same tragic vector that has been discussed. The heroic cyborg is pincered between the technological on the one hand and a relation to Being ('Being-towards-death') on the other. By entering into the 'Being-toward-death' the Schwarzenegger cyborg-character affirms its Dasein, its 'being-there'. It transforms its status from that of the technological to that of the human - as it melts in a pool of molten metal. This is clearly in opposition both to its own technicity and that of its foe. In so much cultural activity one moves away from technology as apocalyptic destiny - or utopia - only to face a choice between the passion of disclosure of Being which constitutes Dasein *or* technicity's supposed overwhelming of this possible disclosure. Must all Dasein be realised only through denial of the (modern) technological and a concurrent flirtation with death? It is as though technology itself is somehow *outside* of this "quintessential" realisation of Dasein - as though it has only a diabolical relation to human existence.

Deleuze and Guattari, in at times different ways, follow a different set of vectors which resolves many of these problems. They align themselves with Heidegger in not approaching technology technologically, and in his desire for a specifics of thought that can open onto the limits of preconceived knowledges. Deleuze and Guattari part company from Heidegger when he attempts to retrieve, and retreat to, a Universal which is seen as lacking in thinking about technology. Whilst Heidegger looks to the preservation of the past, Deleuze and Guattari envisage a processual opening to the future[52] that incorporates the past. In many ways that which unsettles Heidegger, even within his own thinking, Deleuze sees as necessary. In *Difference and Repetition* he writes of -

> *...a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the conditions of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor.* (94)

In the process they arguably enable thought about technology which can incorporate a politics and an ethics. Heidegger's lack of comment on one of the most significant politico-technical (and German) events of the twentieth century, the Holocaust, signifies, at the very least, that Heidegger himself found such a politics difficult to fit into his philosophy.

Agriculture, Blockades, Bombs and Genocide

It seems fairly commonly acccepted now that Heidegger did not just have a brief flirtation with National Socialism in 1933, but that this continued until at least the end of the war and probably long after - in some form at least (Osborne, 1995). As Janicaud (1992:360) notes, "We now know that his evolution after 1934 was in no way ever reduced to disillusionment in an ideology

---

[52] In *Le Monde*, after his death, Deleuze was called a "sage of the Future" (Droit, 1995:11).

that could still be presented as an ideal". Lyotard (1990) suggests that it was Heidegger's

ideological attachment to the tragic-poetic ideal that lead to Heidegger's political dismissal of the

holocaust and subsequent other political events in the now famous comment (edited out of "The

Question Concerning Technology"), a deviation from his general silence surrounding the

extermination of the Jews, that -

> *...agriculture is now a mechanised food industry, in essence the same as the*
>
> *manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the*
>
> *blockade and starvation of nations, the same as the production of hydrogen bombs*
>
> (cited in Rockmore, 1995:150).

A reading of this statement changes the significance of "The Question Concerning Technology".

This is because Heidegger, although mildly critical of all these technological abuses, still manages

to equate them - to render all uses of technology the same in the modern world. Heidegger is not

primarily arguing with the excesses of the Nazis in the Holocaust or the excesses of other

nations in the bombing of Hiroshima and other disasters. This is not to say that he approved of

such excesses at all, but his focus is not firstly the politics of these situations - or the

consequences for those involved. Rather, in equating all such technological production as that in

agriculture and in the Holocaust, Heidegger is arguing for the general lack *of philosophical*

perception in *all* of them - a lack which makes them all equal. In other words the presence or

lack of proper philosophical thought involved in any technological situation provides the basis for

a judgment of that situation. The political consequences seem inconsequential. As Ott (1992:109)

points out with regard to the Nazis, "Heidegger imposes a harsh judgement on the

Führer...because this *Führer* had given in to the fear of Being and had evaded every decision to

set goals" - not necessarily because Hitler did anything politically reprehensible. In short, it could

be inferred from this that the problem for Heidegger with the German relation to technology

during this period was not that millions of people died. It was that Germany did not involve itself

actively enough in the tragic project that had been incepted by the Greeks. Sluga (1993:215)

points out that this was precisely because Heidegger saw the Germans as embarking "on the

great and long venture of demolishing a world that has grown old and of rebuilding it

authentically anew" (Heidegger cited in Sluga:215). That tradition had to be returned to in this

authentic rebuilding is shown in that "Poets like Sophocles and thinkers like Parmenides and

Heraclitus needed to be called on once again" (Sluga:215).

Although Heidegger's thinking has a specific relation to his own German situation, I shall

argue in chapter two that many of the contemporary technico-philosophers of new technologies

such as Virtual Reality follow Heidegger here in a more general sense. Many thinkers about

technology and interaction return to the classical theatre[53] and to such works as Aristotle's

Poetics[54] to give grace and a moral underpinning to their technological projects[55]. This is so

---

[53] Paradoxically, some theatre theorists during the last thirty years have turned to more technological models in order to understand what happens on the stage. For example, Roland Barthes once called theatre a "kind of cybernetic machine" (cited in Carlson, 1984:493). One could consider the whole of the semiotic movement in the analysis of the theatre to be along these lines (see, for example, Elam, 1980; Eco, 1977; Matejka and Titunik, 1976). However, what for Barthes, and sometimes Eco was a machine in a more fluid, shifting and dynamic sense - that which Deleuze and Guattari take up - in theatre studies in general semiotics became an attempt to understand the semiotics of the stage in a brute mechanical fashion, trying to apprehend the events of the stage as if their interactions were not contingent and singular (no matter how sophisticated the subsequent result). As Roland Barthes wrote in *Leçon*, "It is precisely when semiotics becomes a grid that it ceases to stir up anything at all" (1978b:38 - my translation).

   Even prominent theatre semioticians, such as de Marinis, have acknowledged this long ago. He concludes in his article, "Problemi e aspetti di un approccio semiotico al teatro" -

> *This consideration takes us to the central theme of these notes: and that is to the extreme difficulties that will be met when you try to elaborate a theoretical model of the theatre which adequately takes into account the complexity and heterogeneity of interagent codes and of their internal hierarchies... If we do not do this analysis of the hierarchy of codes we will have to content ourselves with a semiotics which is concentrating on the message, and which limits itself to simply writing down lists of the phenomena of the substance of expression without really formalizing these phenomena.* (1975:358-359 - translated fourteen years ago with the assistance of an Italian friend whose name I now, shamefully, forget)

In a sense, and perhaps a little unconsciously, de Marinis is here pointing out a problem with the whole semiotics of theatre project per se, in that these complexities of signs are due to their hierarchies, but it must be pointed out that as agents, or interagents, these hierarchies are constantly shifting.

[54] It is not my intention here to give a lengthy description of Aristotle's Poetics. This is, in part, because they are very well known but more because it is the *idea* of the Greeks that concerns us more here than the actual Greeks. Marten (1992) has argued, for example, that Heidegger completely misinterprets Aristotle as regards the existence of a Being that one can conceive of separate from beings. The interest here is obviously more in Heidegger's (mis)interpretations than Aristotle. Jones (1971:11) suggests that "the *Poetics* must be

even if this underpinning only gives a tragic sense of the allowance of "suffering to appear as

form and beauty" (Lyotard, 1990:87) - in other words gives an aesthetic form or a philosophy

that easily overrides political considerations. It is nevertheless possible that the most destructive

of technological projects could still have the most beautiful interface. In addition, what more

effective totalitarian-tragic binary machine has there been than nuclear detente with its

authoritarian impositions and its tragic double binds, its being-towards-death? The dangers here

are more than the potential compromise of Being. There is a fatality to this return to the Greeks,

and to Greek fatalism, that gives the 'Western' subject a drive towards a compensating

national-aesthetisation (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990:58). According to Lyotard, it leads to "a poetic

ontology of the tragic-political fate" (Lyotard, 1990:87)[56]. In short, this impulse towards a

Greek based aesthetic of representation which ignores political consequences is perhaps one of

the major acts of force that constantly reconstitutes 'Western' culture *as* 'Western' culture.

---

distinguished by almost total failure of contact between Aristotle's argument and successive traditions of exigesis." Nevertheless, to give an all too brief summary, Aristotle's *Poetics* are, in fact, very open to interpretations. He suggest that all poetic forms are based upon some sort of pleasure in imitation (mimesis) (Aristotle, 1982:47). This mimesis seems to make bearable the unbearable, to transmute pain into a kind of pleasure. Drama is based upon the imitation of an action. The most important part of tragic form of drama is this *action* - not the character (51), because character is revealed through the many necessary reversals of circumstance which form the plot. This plot must have a unity which comes through a beginning, a middle and an end (52). In Tragedy, the best actions have a reversal, which is "a change from one state of affairs to its exact opposite. The best tragedies also find reversal accompanied by recognition, "a change from ignorance to knowledge" (56). These in turn will be accompanied by suffering. In all this, the tragedy should be a "representation of terrible and piteous events" (57) inspiring "either pity or fear" (ibid.). This is to be found in the action whereby a character, who is neither wholly good nor bad, finds his or her circumstances reversed through the making of a mistake. Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is Aristotle's main example (and arguably the only Greek tragedy which precisely fits his prescription). The mistake made is usually an overestimation of the character's own power, although this is often unavoidable in any case, and is seemingly in the hands of fate or the gods (59). Finally, tragedy is the better form (compared to the epic - comedy is described but Aristotle's further extensive work on comedy has been lost (Jones, 1971:11)), precisely because it gives "not just any pleasure but precisely the pleasure we have indicated" (79). This pleasure is the imitation of an action which forms a unity which inspires fear and pity. It is a kind of purging in relation to fate.

[55] These are, of course, often projects deeply immersed in the new formations of the military-industrial complex. More simply, these projects are often aligned with specific national interests, such as in the market competition between the United States and Japan.

[56] Lyotard quotes Hegel, who wrote that "the great tragedy of the Jewish people is no Greek tragedy, it can rouse neither terror nor pity" (cited in Lytoard, 1990:87). Lyotard and Lacoue-Labarthe (1990) have dealt with this issue at length. For Lyotard the Holocaust does not represent but puts an end to the representation of tragic history, interrupting that tragic history itself, in a sense, interrupting fate.

The poverty of Heidegger's argument really lies in this - the shift towards the industrial has

always already occurred within the aesthetic. The 'West' relies on this. The industrial cannot be

avoided. There is nothing that is free from interaction with technology or even from simple

technique[57]. The world is a world in which aesthetics, philosophy and technology are mutually

implicated. *They all explicate each other.* The Jews, by reminding the 'West' of its elements of

non-Westernness, disrupt the boundaries between its supposedly pure realms, such as that of

which the tragic aesthetic comes to be the highest representation. Lyotard argues that for the

"crime" of not suppressing their difference before the monumentality of the Greek heritage of

the 'West', the Jews suffer a "fate" which is, of course, already prescribed for them; in the

thinkers, such as Heidegger, of the 'West'.

According to Lyotard, in the face of impurity which makes demands of the 'West',

Heidegger's thought remains "anchored in the thought of Being, in the 'Western' prejudice that

the Other is Being". For Lyotard, this is a "misprision", for the "Other" could also be thought

as "the Law". Heidegger's thought does not seem to even consider this Other as Law. Lyotard

suggests that Heidegger's thought, making the mistake of owing freedom to Being, is

subsequently "the hostage of the Law" (89). In short, b y saying nothing about the Law,

Heidegger's mysterious freedom of Being only becomes the more ensnared *within* the Law. For

Lyotard, Heidegger's silence on the Law is typical of the way in which "all 'knowledge' violates

the Other under the name of the Truth of Being" (ibid.). To how many Laws (or States) can

Heidegger's thought lead us to submit others (and ourselves) in order to be judged worthy of an

elusive Being? Heidegger's thoughts on technology all travel towards the possibility of freedom

in the disclosure of Being but this is a freedom that tends to territorialise itself on certain 'Major'

---

[57] In a feminist context Donna Haraway has put an ethics which follows from this as "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess" (Haraway, 1991b:181).

formations such as 'the West' in order to attempt to buy this freedom. For Heidegger, "Technology is 'dangerous' primarily because it uproots" (Lyotard:92) us from these formations. Heidegger resists this uprooting, but in doing so buys into the 'Totalitarian-Tragic Binary Machine' that is always attempting to replant the 'tree' of Being of the 'West'. It shall be seen in later chapters that Deleuze and Guattari travel in precisely the opposite direction; towards the nomadic or the rhizomatic and it can be seen already why this may be an ethical necessity. It allows the unravelling of those monolithic determinants of the 'West'[58] which attach it to Being and justify its own ignorance of, or complicity with, the political consequences. A more nomadic ethics allows for the culturally unknown.

In this it is fundamentally the combination of mimesis, identity and history that is disrupted by the technology *and*, concurrently, the thought of the nomadic -

> *The west is thinkable under the order of **mimésis** only if one forgets that a "people" survives within that is not a nation (a nature). Amorphous, indignant, clumsy, involuntary, this people tries to listen to the Forgotten.* (Lyotard,1990:94)

It is because he is always trying to remember, to preserve his philosophical volition, that Heidegger finds it hard to contemplate what Guattari calls 'being-for-the-other' as regards the fate of the Jews. Losurdo (1992:157) suggests it is even worse. He suggests that Heidegger only equates agriculture, blockades (which were held against Germany as Heidegger wrote) and the extermination to argue *for the Germans*, against *their* treatment after the war. Losurdo points out that in 1948 Heidegger claimed that "the Allies treated the 'Eastern Germans' in the same manner as Hitler treated the 'jews'" (ibid.). The determinations of everyday fascism are often those first formed within such mystifications of frustrated human perception in the face of the failure of attempts to participate in the Majoritarian State of Being.

---

[58] I am not suggesting that the 'West' ever exists in such a monolithic form. Nevertheless, the assumption that it has, and does, by those such as Heidegger is not without its consequences.

I have written a commentary on the loss of sovereignty that is being referred to here in the different context of film and popular music (Murphie, 1996). Here it is perhaps sufficient to note the very high price paid (often by Others) for the attempt to instil or preserve a mimetic (national or natural) series of identities which are revealed to the Western man[59].

For Heidegger, Old Art Makes for Good Technology

Perhaps the largest gap in Heidegger's philosophy of technology is a simple one. This is that Heidegger seems to find it difficult to engage with modern technology (and art using that technology) at all.

Don Ihde (1993:103) also asks if Heidegger's thoughts on technology, and his support for the Nazis who used that technology's full destructive potential, do not both relate to something at the heart of Heidegger's philosophy. For Ihde the problem with this possible relation is that it leads Heidegger (and Heideggerians) to misread contemporary cultural, technological forms. Indeed it seems that for Heidegger it is only the older art object that is the valid example of good technology[60]. He writes in "The Origin of the Work of Art" that the Parthenon is exemplary in this respect - in that it gathers earth and sky, gods and mortals. The implication is that the Parthenon reveals a relation to Being rather than mistreating it. Ihde points out, however, that

---

[59] Jones (1971) has noted that the difference between Plato's and Aristotle's ideas about mimesis revolves around Plato's consideration of mimesis as being of ideal transcendent form and Aristotle's replacement of this with a notion of "indwelling form" (23). Thus whilst Plato condemns art as a bad copy, Aristotle justifies it as a form of praxis (24). In this sense one can see that mimesis can be understood differently as a praxis of imitation rather than just as simple representation per se. In other words, mimesis does not just represent something transcendent or hidden. It can, alternatively, *represent itself* as a kind of self-production. Mimesis can then be conceived of differently as being involved in practical relational activities, in a sense not derived *from* Forms of identity, but *between* forms of difference. This will lead us to an increased ability to theorise interaction once we abandon the revelation of fixed truths as the goal of aesthetic practices.

[60] Deleuze and Guattari might agree that art practices are essential to an understanding of technology, but only in that everything in life should be subject to what Guattari (*CHS*) calls an ethico-aesthetic paradigm. This is a paradigm which, unlike Heidegger's, is able to include movement towards the future, in short, new art and new technologies, not just old art and technologies.

Heidegger is romanticising here - that the Greeks were also responsible for their own environmental devastation, even in the area around the Parthenon[61]. Ihde (105) challenges the Heideggerian division between good and bad technology, simple and complex, old and modern, claiming that "Heidegger prefers, likes, those technologies which express straightforward bodily, perceptual relations with the environment" (107). [62] For Ihde -

> *In **Being and Time** the context is "lit up" through technological breakdown. It is when the hammer is broken or missing that its involvements are shown...In short, to relate to a technology in a positive way and in a situation in which the artefact takes on what I call an alterity relation seems to me inconceivable in the Heideggerian scheme.*(108)

For Deleuze and Guattari, the break*down* of these relations can give rise to an ethical break*through*. It can give rise to new 'lines of flight', new machinic arrangements and new possible assemblages. Although Deleuze finds a way of introducing alterity into the Heideggerian scheme[63] it does seem that Heidegger himself cannot conceive of productive relations between machines and humans, let alone Guattari's "machines speaking to machines". Ihde further criticises that by which Heidegger appeals to 'deep ecology'. For Heidegger the good technology - the good bridge in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (Heidegger, 1971) - is one which "'gathers' a world in a certain way and 'lets be' the nature and community which is so gathered" (Ihde:109). Ihde raises the question of for whom and to what end the standing reserve comes to exist. He goes on to compare, as examples, Heidegger's temple and a nuclear power plant that was never commissioned due to protests (111). Both gather in their own way, but what is missed when they are analysed from a Heideggerian point of view as representations of supposed different relations to authentic Being, are the *cultural politics* of both artefacts. Yet for Ihde, an

---

[61] This rather invalidates Heidegger's assertions that a correct approach to Being is always concomitant with care.

[62] Heidegger's taste here finds its fellow in Paul Virilio's (1991a, 1991b) suspicion of invisible technologies.

[63] As will be discussed in chapter two.

Ancient Greek temple only *seems* the better technology because its distance makes these politics

less visible. Ihde writes, in his deromanticisation of Heidegger that -

> *...there is no previous time to which we can return where the gathering of the fourfold*
>
> *was "right."...in the modern - and now I would say postmodern - the network is what is*
>
> *beginning to make us aware of the displacement of our chauvinistic Eurocentricism*
>
> *which, to my mind, is linked with the romantic thesis not only in Heidegger but in our*
>
> *dominant views of technology, nature, and each other's cultures.*(114)

Heidegger is far from alone in this way of thinking.

Escaping the Heidegger Complex

It is in what could be called this 'complex' - a kind of complicated *cathexis of Being* around

technology, art, nature, culture and ontology that we can situate Heidegger's philosophy as

enacting a broader twentieth century problematic to which we are all perhaps subject. Certainly,

as will be shown, this problematic haunts Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose theories of

technology, philosophy and art will be the main focus of the rest of this thesis. While Heidegger

announces "The End of Philosophy", it is only of a certain kind of philosophy, which his own

will replace[64]. Whilst he attacks the humanist[65] it is only to replace it with another form of

humanism[66]. Whilst he undermines the a priori notion of humanity's being, he replaces this with

---

[64] Scheibler (1993) notes that Heidegger, in his later work, replaces 'philosophy' with 'meditative thinking', which far from being the calculative thinking of a Cartesian subject, is a kind of thinking open to Being, and therefore to the environment.

[65] When it comes to Heidegger's notion of 'Being' and its relation to the 'human' and 'humanism', Rockmore (1995) argues that two entire generations of philosophers in France have managed to misinterpret it.

[66] Scheibler (1993:130) also notes that there is a way in which "Being needs man, and exists partially because of, or in relation to, the nature of human being as open". Thus it can be seen that there is still a way in which humanity is central through its fundamental connection to a philosophical concern with ontology, with being and/or Being, although there is little doubt that Heidegger seriously questions the centrality of Cartesian subject.

the Being which throws up beings and, perhaps more worryingly, *Dasein* as a special quality of Being relating to the human. In sum, Heidegger, with much of his century, baulks at what could almost be called the technical implications of his critique of the subject. To put this in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari, Heidegger deterritorialises the Human, along with suggesting an openness to the Other, but immediately reterritorialises the Human in this relationship as the major partner in the exchange upon which, everything else, in turn, must be reterritorialised. Putting this another way, Deleuze and Guattari ask -

> *...is there anything worse, said Nietzsche, than to find oneself facing a German when one was expecting a Greek? (WP:108)*

Deleuze and Guattari both claim that Heidegger's mistake was to try to restrict the double becoming of the philosophical and the non-philosophical that is essential to an understanding of what is occurring in interaction -

> *...He got the wrong people, earth and blood. For the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is not the one that claims to be pure but rather an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably minor race...It is a question of becoming...The agony of a rat or the slaughter of a calf remains present in thought not through pity but as the zone of exchange between man and animal in which something of one passes into the other. This is the constitutive relationship of philosophy with non-philosophy. Becoming is always double, and it is this double becoming that constitutes the people to come and the new earth. (108-109)*

It is when this becoming is understood that the value of Heidegger's thought can perhaps emerge, not in the way it leads us (backwards) out of the twentieth century, but in the way it can lead us into it.

Being, Becoming, Technology and Ethics

Heidegger's formulations of Being are problematic and, at times, difficult to frame within

interactive or ethical concerns. Yet, it must be re-emphasised that Heidegger's thought, perhaps

because of its tendency towards a mixing of the mysterious into the material world, also presents

itself as a twentieth century 'problematic' in the sense of something that calls for new concepts,

new thought - something that constantly demands new solutions (*WP*:16). Ours is a century that,

with Heidegger, still finds it a strange and distasteful necessity to have to take technology's

interactions with beings into account in thinking about Being. It is a century that still refuses to

face the problematic of the technical efficiency of the holocaust whilst often applauding the same

efficiency as it destroys the planet in the name of the preservation of the Human. Conversely, it is

a century that refuses technological solutions to problems if those same technological solutions

cannot be redeemed through either the Subject (in desire) or Capital (in profit), or preferably

both - in short, if such solutions cannot be advertised.

Surprisingly long ago, in *The Order of Things* (1970:386-387), Foucault scandalously called

for a realisation of the imminent erasure of "man" [67] as the central focus of knowledge. In post-

---

[67] Foucault wrote -

> One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has
> been posed for human knowledge. Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a
> restricted geographical area - European culture since the sixteenth century - one can be certain
> that man is a recent invention within it. It is not around him and his secrets that knowledge has
> prowled for so long in the darkness...
>
> If those arrangements [since the nineteenth century] were to disappear as they appeared, if
> some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility - without knowing
> either what its form will be or what it promises - were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of
> Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man
> would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.

structuralist theory[68] such positioning of humanity as surrounded by an outside which subsumes it - whether discursive, technological or environmental - has become common enough in the academy, though it perhaps still seems an obscure set of ideas to the general community[69]. Yet the rapid development of technologies, coupled with both a general uncertainty about notions of the self and community, and the present seemingly apocalyptic destruction of the natural environment (along with the idea of 'Mother Nature' herself (Conley 1993:79) has now made the force behind these ideas palpably real in everyday life for what is left of a tattered 'Humanity'. How does one speak about such events? How does one theorise them? More importantly, how does one formulate an ethics in the face of them?

From Mournful Tragic Representations to Joyful Tragic Production

Returning is being, but only the being of becoming. The eternal return does not bring back 'the same', but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes...When Nietzsche says that hubris is the real problem of every Heraclitan[70]...he means one - and only one - thing: that it is in hubris that everyone finds the being which makes him return, along with that sort of crowned anarchy, that overturned hierarchy which, in order to ensure the selection of difference, begins by subordinating the identical to the different. (DR:41)

---

[68] West (1988:28) credits Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* as being the "originary text of poststructuralism", although this does seem somewhat oxymoronic, in that the undermining of notions of the originary seems a prominent concern for all post-structuralists, including Deleuze.

[69] As recently as 1994 there was an extended debate in *The Australian* newspaper's Higher Education Supplement over these ideas - often on the basis, as with Heidegger, that they were amoral mystifications directed against various basic humanist values.

[70] Heraclites was the Greek philosopher who posited that "all sensible things are forever flowing" (Aristotle, cited in Vesey and Foulkes, 1990:134).

In *Neitzsche and Philosophy* (1-38) and *Difference and Repetition* (87-96) Deleuze specifically outlines a Nietzschean approach to tragedy which could be used to reinflect Heidegger's 'Being-towards-death'. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze, after Blanchot, suggests that there are two aspects to death. The first concerns the subject, the "I or the ego" (112) and relates to the disappearance of the personal, "the annihilation of *this* difference represented by the I or the ego" (ibid.). The "other death...refers to the state of free differences...when they assume a shape which excludes *my* own coherence no less than that of any identity whatsoever" (113). It is the second that Deleuze claims Nietzsche's eternal return affirms. It is in this formulation that it is possible to discern a clear way through some of the problems of the Heidegger complex (even if this itself was based in part upon readings of Nietzsche[71]). It is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis to give an account of Nietzsche's ethics, or of the nuances of Deleuze's readings of Nietzsche. Rather the specific interest here is with the way in which such readings reveal the formulation of philosophical concepts by Deleuze and Guattari themselves.

According to Deleuze, Nietzsche said that his early *The Birth of Tragedy* stank of Hegelianism and the dialectic (*NP*:11). This could be seen to be similar to Heidegger's being enmeshed in the tragic double bind that he so admires in the Greeks. Deleuze points out that the tragic, as formulated by the early Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, still revolves around a Greek dramatisation of suffering and contradiction (12). The later Nietzsche, claiming that "It is I who discovered the tragic" (11), will convert this into *tragic joy*. It is perhaps at this moment that we can break out of the cathexis of Being. For Deleuze's Nietzsche this also involves a conversion from one version of Dionysus to another. The early Dionysus is involved in suffering, repression and a kind of subterranean rumbling because of it. Nieztsche's Dionysus is later changed into a

---

[71] Heidegger regarded Nietzsche as one of the great Germans and one of few great philosophers. Heidegger wrote many commentaries on Nietzsche's work.

life affirming Dionysus[72] who is quite removed from the double negation of contradiction and transforms the events of suffering into pleasure. This Dionysus could be compared to a possible Oedipus who simply retracts his own curse and accepts what he has done.

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze outlines three 'times' in which both Oedipus and Hamlet, as tragic protagonists, exist. The first is that of the past, of the "imagined act...supposed 'too big for me'" (89). The second 'time' is a 'doubling of the self' in which the hero undergoes a "becoming-equal to the act" (ibid.). Hamlet's sea voyage and Oedipus' investigations are both indicative of this process.

> *As for the third time in which the future appears, this signifies that the event and the act possess a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth: what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself.* (89-90)

Similarly, in answer to Aristotle's prescription of the tragic as that which induces "fear and pity" in the spectator, for Deleuze, the tragic transforms this fear and pity into a kind of joyful productive activity -

> *The tragic is the aesthetic form of joy, not a medical phrase, or a moral solution to pain, fear or pity. It is joy that is tragic. But this means that tragedy is immediately joyful, that it only calls forth the fear and pity of the obtuse spectator, the pathological and moralising listener who counts on it to ensure the proper functioning of his moral sublimations and medical purgings.* (NP:17)

It is also a process of opening. This is an opening out from that which is simply caught upon a line circling back into the past. It is instead heading towards difference. Deleuze writes that -

---

[72] This later Dionysus is one who, far from being oppressed by the Apollonian voice of reason, has in fact integrated reason and passion.

...the order of time, time as pure and empty form, has precisely undone that circle. It

has undone it in favour of a less simple...eternally excentric circle, the decentred circle

of difference...(DR:91).

If it is sometimes necessary to return to the Greeks to understand the inception of the 'Westernness' of 'western' thought[73] this is not in order, as Heidegger suggests, to rekindle and preserve the Greco-Western project. Rather it is to realise why 'we' in the 'West' keep making the wrong assumptions about our relation to the Ancient Greeks, so that something else can finally be created out of our *dislocation* from our *supposed* Ancient Greek past.

What 'wrong assumptions', then, must be abandoned? Firstly, the assumption of the classical theatrical; secondly, the assumption of inception itself and its pure line; and thirdly, the assumption of a Being that finds its existence (even if only philosophically) outside of beings. The first is abandoned because "drama is still a pathos, a Christian pathos of contradiction" (*NP*:18). There is no room in this pathos for "heroic expression" (ibid.) or for interaction. The second and third are abandoned because, far from the project of Being, 'inaugurated' by the Greeks, improving life, it only leads to a deeper and more life-denying tragic nihilism. In addition, neither Heidegger, nor his Greek precursors such as Plato seem able to tolerate deviations from this pure line. Nor can they tolerate becomings away from the fixed determinants of Being. The suggestion here is that the negative notions of hubris and guilt (which are founding principles in Aristotle's notion of the tragic) are set up in order to contain exactly this becoming.

...for Plato, becoming is itself an unlimited becoming, a becoming insane, a becoming

hubric and guilty which, in order to be made circular needs the act of a demiurge who

forcibly bends it, who imposes the model of the idea on it. (NP:28)

---

[73] Though this 'Westernness' of course, is never really a pure line, rather it is born of many different segments, the vast majority of which are 'non-Western'.

The work of Deleuze and Guattari will be used to go beyond Heidegger's useful but problematic model of technology towards a becoming which breaks free of the cycle of a unified Self and its dissolution in some greater Being. For Deleuze and Guattari, there is no centrality to the self, even to a self reduced to a passive, philosophical subject. Heidegger's philosophy may take the modifications of the self and the world as far as they can go before it is admitted that the "self does not undergo modification s, it is itself a modification" (*DR*:79), but Heidegger cannot take the final step towards an ethics of becoming. The next chapter will examine the ways in which this constant process of modification of the self leads to a transformation, and, on occasions, rejection of Heidegger's ideas by both Deleuze and Guattari.

What are the alternatives to totalitarian-tragic teleologies of death?

Chapter Two

Bicycling to the Limits of Heidegger's Machine of Being

When the identity of things dissolves, Being escapes to attain univocity and begins

to revolve around the different. (DR:66-67)

Death is perhaps not as enigmatic or portentous as Heidegger makes it. If we subtract

tragedy and teleology from 'death' we are left with a nomadic dispersal of elements: the

cells and molecules of a decaying body mingling with the earth; memories, like phantasms,

that float up from and seep back into a general forgetting; some fleeting glimpses of a

yesterday that seemed to possess another sense of time, before that day 'died' in night or in

sleep; some words on a page created by an author whose identity fragments in publication

and distribution, if not before. Death's dispersal, as we all know, enables everything to keep

going. We need death, decay, forgetting, slips in time, the dissolution of identity. We rely on

them every day. Existing in the world is, in fact, not just a matter of 'finding your identity'.

It is perhaps more a matter of being able, always, to lose identities. Everything is implicated

in its own death. This is both Heidegger's realisation and that which traps him because it

implies that events cannot always be territorialised on Being. In fact, for every concept such

as Heidegger's disclosure of Being, we *need* a concept such as technicity involving the

forgetting of Being. Subsequently, Being cannot be so easily prioritised over the technicity

from which it can be seen to arise and into which it will fall once more. What does this mean

for the relations between Being and technology?

Capture and Escape

For Deleuze and Guattari, the virtual[1] potential of becomings always exceeds the static forms of Being. For them, there are always lines of escape from a State 'apparatus of capture'[2] such as the totalitarian-tragic binary machine. The task of the State, as something that 'freeze-frames' multiple social productions (or, to put it another way, the State reduces everything to one process of production, that *of* the State) is to capture these active and creative processes, and make use of them in its own processes of (anti)production. Significantly, in relation to the previous chapter, in order to do this the State, like Heidegger, needs to make "mutilation, and even death come first" (*ATP*:425). It needs to reduce its component beings to the "living dead" (ibid.) so as to reduce all its processes to "one milieu of interiority" (427). This is not death as nomadic dispersal but a death in which everything must be made to restrict itself to State forms of production; everything must be made to resonate with the State, and only with the State. The State does this by capturing heterogeneous flows and then redirecting the force of that captured in the direction of the State's own interests. There can, for example, be no resonance or interaction *between* those captured if the State can help it. In this -

> *It operates by stratification...In retaining given elements, it necessarily cuts off their relation with other elements, which become exterior, it inhibits, slows down or controls these relations...*(433)

---

[1] "Virtual" is a term that shall be used extensively throughout this thesis. Following the *Macquarie Dictionary*'s archaic definition I shall begin by defining the virtual as 'having virtue or inherent power to produce effects" (1981:1938).

[2] See *ATP*:424-473 for a description of "Apparatus of Capture". Essentially, these are apparatus which territorialise the nomadic onto State formations.

This stratification has an accompanying "regime of signs" which is a system of "machinic enslavement" (428). This works through overcodings - the rule of the Signifier, through, for example, the capital letters of such notions as Being, the Phallus, or the State itself. Somewhat paradoxically, the nomadic, as an expression of the captured flows, also arises *out of* this whole situation. Yet, as opposed to the State, the 'nomad', or 'war machine', "exists only in becoming, and interaction" (*ATP*:430). The nomadic creates "the war machine" which "occupies or fills nomad space and opposes towns and the State, which its tendency is to abolish" (430). One can analyse all discourses and forms of production on the basis of whether they operate nomadically or whether they are apparatuses of capture and stratification. In short, one can ask, especially during periods of intense social change - what is being allowed to resonate with what? What interactions are possible? What is being set free from the existing social web? What is being captured by it?

To take a simple and brief example, the World Wide Web can operate both to enable many new connections and to stratify these connections. It is a web in both senses. Yet it is no accident that the only State without an appendix to its own Web addresses is the USA[3]. While an Australian web address will nearly always end with "au", there is no such national indication for USA addresses. This is not to suggest that it is a matter of whether a form such as the Web is simply nomadic *or* an apparatus of capture. It is rather a question of what tendencies of production are being machined at *any given place and time* - of asking where the Web is stratifying and where it is nomadic. Analysis of this is a question of relating to impermanent and specific *processes*, not of making overdetermining judgements.

---

[3] An interesting version of the same thing, drawn from a previous age of colonisation/communication developments, still exists today in the fact that the United Kingdom is the only 'country' in the world not to have its name printed on postage stamps.

It follows that the beginning of an ethics apllied to such technologies will also be a contingent and specific process. In order to enter into this process one needs to first escape the apparatus of capture's blocks on relation. One needs to remove the capital 'B' from Being to allow for the specificity, difference and processual forms of beings. One can then concoct a mixture of beings with the technologies and techniques by which they enter into the processual openings of becomings[4]. This process is then capable of breaking out of those forms of thought or power that would attempt to bring everything to a standstill; before Death, Tragic Destiny, the State, Philosophy, Art or Capital. A corequisite of this, however, is that apparatus of capture *can* form part of the process *if* they themselves are subject to a dispersal. Pragmatically, in most discourses and most ethical, aesthetic or technological practices there is a tendency towards one or other of these two processes of opening or capture, but both tendencies normally exist within a process that always combines elements of both. One consequence of this is that you can always extract the nomadic from the State. For example, in that the State is based upon the pre-decided, it is the undecidable within the State that gives space to the possibilities of the ethical. This is also the case with new technologies.

> *The undecidable is the germ and locus of revolutionary decisions. Some people invoke the high technology of the world system of enslavement; but even, and especially, this machinic enslavement abounds in undecidable propositions and movements that, far from belonging to a domain of knowledge reserved for sworn specialists, provides so many weapons for the becoming of everybody/everything, becoming-radio[5], becoming-electronic, becoming-molecular...Every struggle is a*

---

[4] One could suggest a formula for this process which would sum it up.
   [(Being(s) - B) + technique] = becoming > apparatus of capture
[5] Guattari was actively involved in the Free Radio movement in the 1970s. See *MR*:236-241 - 'Millions and Millions of Potential Alices".

*function of all these undecidable propositions and constructs **revolutionary***

***connections** in opposition to the **conjugations of the axiomatic**. (ATP:473)*

It is not, then, a question of finding the right axiom with which to 'morally' address new

technologies. It is a question of constantly locating and activating 'undecidables' in

discourses and processes, of setting up interactions that are productive, not just axiomatic.

The End of the End of...

The two modes discussed here could be labeled simply the mode of the overdetermined

singular and the mode of multiplicity. They have very different implications for thought

around the issues involved in interaction. Yet they are interactive themselves. Moreover,

these modes' spiraling around one another has accelerated as both ethics and its social

context have reached a series of crises throughout the twentieth century. Deleuze and

Guattari have termed these two modes the *arboreal* (which relates to apparatus of capture)

and the *rhizomatic* (which relates to the nomadic)[6] *(ATP:3-25)*. The way in which the two

modes interact with certain fields, and with each other, is crucial in determining their effect.

The view from either mode, even of the same set of statements or events, is a very different

one. A simple example of this is the notion of the 'end of Man'.

Viewed from *within* such linear, arboreal systems as Humanism and the ongoing attempts

to keep the fires of the enlightenment burning, such declarations of 'ends of'[7] as Foucault's

---

[6] This is a common consideration throughout all Deleuze and Guattari's thought. The arboreal relates to the way in which knowledge, social practices, desires etc are all determined within the overdetermined and unitary tree-like structure of such concepts as Truth, Literature, the Phallus in psychoanalysis and so on (for the single and the multiple in psychoanalysis see *ATP*:26-38, a chapter titled "1914: One or Several Wolves?" in which they re-consider Freud's analysis of the 'Wolf Man'). The rhizomatic, like grass, is that which is multiple, and forms a field which is not overdetermined but allows the development and spread of multiple, interconnecting events.

[7] As with Barthes 'Death of the Author" (in Barthes, 1977), this has become a common trope in post-structuralist thought in particular. Heidegger is often credited with the end of the subject (see Rockmore,

seem to be apocalyptic. That is, they seem to indicate the end of something that was seen as essential and that can only be followed by a plunge into the abyss.

Viewed *from the outside of these linear systems of thought*, however, such declarations are not really about the end of something but about a change in the world, in what Deleuze and Guattari would call a change - or re-arrangement - in the "collective assemblages of enunciation"[8]. These assemblages produce the potential for certain discourses to occur. Deleuze and Guattari term this zone by which the world is produced the 'machinic' - that which enables all discourses and bodies to be produced in particular, though changing, arrangements, with changing relations, according to the different assemblages in which they participate. From a rhizomatic position that acknowledges contingency and multiplicity, Foucault's declaration of the 'end of Man' was, perhaps, only the acknowledgment of the end of a certain rhetorical (though productive) machine that connected things in a certain fashion. The overdeterminedly unitary notion of progress under either God above or Humanity on earth, along a line consisting of neat beginnings, middle and ends, sometimes conceived as beginning with the Greeks (in a cultural historical sense and also as an idea itself[9]), has finally fallen apart in the latter half of the twentieth century as this machine has imploded under its own weight.

Those discourses and practices which follow (or machines which *produce*) a linear notion of time invoke a kind of metaphysical linearity, in which things are either 'getting better' (progress) or 'worse' (decline) - heading towards utopia (heaven) or apocalypse (hell). This

---

1995), Baudrillard (1983a) with announcing the end of the social, to the extent that he has written a book whose title has been translated as *The Gulf War did not take place* (1995).

[8] See *ATP*:80 for a more complete explanation. For Deleuze and Guattari this involves a movement towards grounding the possibilities of enunciation within a consideration of the social - 'The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies *collective assemblages*" (ibid.). The assemblage relates directly to a "machinic assemblage of bodies". On the one side there are bodies and their passions and actions - on the other there are "incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies" (*ATP*:88). This will be discussed further in following chapters.

[9] In particular see Aristotle's notions of beginnings, middles and ends as discussed in the *Poetic* (1965).

is a sometimes millenarian, but always originary and apocalyptic, mode of thought. Time here is a rush through a precarious present, placed on a single *line* of time, which sweeps up a causal past and the possibilities of a future within it[10]. 'Culture' here preserves that within the present which can maintain the line of human progress, such as Leavis's 'great tradition'[11]. Following Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense* this view of time is that which the Greeks called Chronos (77).

A more rhizomatic way of thinking about history invokes notions of time's relativity. In this time interacts with other dimensions as a dimension itself, and time's *perceived* linearity is only a part of this process, just as a line is only part of a space or field. Time here is like a multidirectional plane which interacts with other planes in a shifting and chaotic process. Here an event in 'the present' takes place more as an intervention in the "past-future" (*LS*:77), than as an effect or cause on a single line of time. For Deleuze this is the Greek time of Aion. It forms at the intersection of a plane through other planes. The event of Aion cuts both into the past and the future in such a way as to change both in a manner that occurs at infinite speed[12] but which is not necessarily permanent. From the standpoint of

---

[10] Nietzsche advocates an acceptance of the danger involved in crossing this abyss without a focus on ends. This is also an acceptance of the abyss itself. He writes that 'Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman - a rope over an abyss...What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end. What can be loved in man in that he is an *overture* and a *going under*. I love those who do not know how to live, except by going under, for they are those who cross over" (Nietzsche in Kaufmann, 1982:126-127). Nietzsche (through Zarathustra) tells a tale of a tightrope walker who falls when a jester-like rival leaps over him. Zarathustra, in reply to the fallen man's fears of either losing his soul to the devil on the one hand or, on the other, of being 'not much more than a beast that has been taught to dance by blows and a few meager morsels" (132) tells him that there is neither devil nor hell and that he is more than a beast because "You have made danger your vocation" and can now 'perish" of it (ibid.). The point here is that of the crossing, of the immersion in the event itself, as opposed to a refusal of this immanent danger in the focus on false apocalyptic or utopian ends.

[11] Such as mode of thinking, and its difficulties, as it pertains to technology, theatre and performance, has been documented by Jane Goodall (1994b).

[12] This occurs at infinite speed because it occurs at a speed which, because time itself is shifting, is not a speed that can be measured. However, this is not so much a question of the speed of light as the speed of thought. Who could say, for example, how quickly any given thought moves through a social field? In that speed is relative to the planes which are intersecting, to change the way in which fields intersect is to change the nature of speed itself. In this regard, thought, as one field of the virtual, could be said to be that which is capable of rearranging the arrangements of fields of production - both on the virtual and actual levels.

Aion, everything 'moves forward' with no possibility of retreat (to the Ancient Greeks, for example, no matter how much we desire to rediscover them). With every move forward, everything is reconfigured. The Greeks that we 'remember' are not the Greeks that were. They have been necessarily forgotten; dispersed into 'machine components' that have been taken up in as many different ways as there have been machines to take them up. Cause and effect become unstable in this conception of time. Rather everything is subject to *the event as a disruptive force*. With such a notion of shifting time(s) it is no longer a question of the apocalyptic end which is given within the linear time of Chronos so much as the end of endings, the end of permanence of any sort, or the end of notions of progress and decline as necessary and permanent features of the virtual field.

Theorists of this second mode of thought are cognisant of the fact that a line which exists in a field (as one outcome of a particular field) could quite possibly be moved to a different field (as of course fields interact as well as lines). In this new field the line is likely to interact differently and to become a different line[13]. In other words, even supposedly constant lines are not constant, but subject to breaks, ruptures and the various re-suturings of the fields they move through. For the Foucault of *The Order of Things* (1970) this means that history occurs in "epistemes" - paradigmatically discontinuous fields (Racevskis, 1983:58-66), in which the notion that humanity is "bound to a finitude which belongs only to us, and which opens up the truth of the world to us by means of our cognition" (Foucault cited in Racevskis:58) is brought into serious question[14]. For Deleuze and Guattari, in *On the Line*, the question is political. For them political and ethical practice is a matter of the subtraction of the overdetermining identity, implied by the line, in favour of a field of

---

[13] David Hughes (1989/1990) gives a very clear account of how, for example, Derrida's concept of the line and space relates to performance.

[14] For a discussion of the way in which this raising of the question of the 'episteme" leads to a consideration by Foucault of power as a non-linear but divergent force see Paul Patton, 'Of Powers and Prisons" in Morris and Patton, 1979:109-147, particularly p112.

multiplicity which allows a consideration of events in the time of Aion. They give this the

algebraic formula of "n - 1" (*ATP*:24) where in fields such as 'the sexes' there are a

multiplicity of possibilities but no overdetermining, universal "1".

The thinking, the fears, the hopes, the aesthetic practices and the ethics involved with

technologies repeat the interaction of these two modes of the single line and the multiple

field and their effects. With this as a background, the general framework that surrounds the

discussion of technologies can be briefly outlined[15].

The Ghost is the Machine

How do we think and talk about technologies - both during and between our love/hate affairs

and adventures/misadventures with them?

New technologies, such as computers, weapons systems and information networks have

indeed changed at an amazing speed over the last forty years, producing many profound and, in

many ways, immeasurable, changes in the nature of human social life. The discursive and

practical fields in which they are situated are very diverse. At times these seem to have little

contact with one another. At other times we can only guess at the multitude of contacts within

military, commercial, academic and sub-cultural milieu that new technologies bring about and, at

that, hazard guesses at what went on long after the fact. For not only is technology moving faster

than ever before. Mutations in the more general level of the machinic - that realm which produces

'us', our discourses and our approaches to the production of knowledge, including critical

knowledge - always seem to be a few years ahead of the tools we use for thinking.

---

[15] This is not intended as a full survey of this field. Rather it gives a few indications of some significant examples of the types of discourses occurring in the field, in order to demonstrate the usefulness of a Deleuze-Guattarian approach. The general field of discourses surrounding technology is, of course, presently developing and changing very rapidly.

It is perhaps not surprising that the most *public* lodestone in the discursive field surrounding technology in recent years has not been philosophical work such as Heidegger's. It has been a work of fiction: William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1986)[16]. Gibson's novel gave some basic coherence to the statements surrounding computer technologies in the late 1980s and 1990s. Such statements in turn provided the ground for new discursive fields, or, more broadly, what Deleuze and Guattari would call new "collective assemblages of enunciation". The novel also provided for assemblages of bodies in the 'cyberpunk' movement that regarded Gibson's work as sacramental. Texts such as Gibson's *have* marked an event by which new machinic arrangements can come into being. Unfortunately, Gibson's fiction also recuperates this imaginary potential within standard narrative apparatuses of capture - such as the genre of the Western. Imagination is returned to the dystopia of a Humanism overwhelmed by technicity. Again, like Heidegger, when the machinic zone is approached too closely, the alarm bells ring. Again there is a clothing-over of old ideas and problematics in the *seemingly* radical garments of an overwhelming technicity. This thesis is not, therefore, so much concerned with texts such as Gibson's, however popular they may be. It is more concerned with which "collective assemblages of enunciation" and "machinic assemblages of bodies" it is possible to exist within, or to create, at the present time.

For the sake of this, a more general description of the discursive field recently surrounding technology will be given. Five strands will be assumed to reflect upon and, perhaps more importantly, *influence* the future directions of technological development. The importance of these strands is, of course, relative, contingent, and therefore always debatable

---

[16] Even more recent works in Science Fiction which seem to go beyond Gibson's work, such as Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1993) and *The Diamond Age* (1995), are often compared to Gibson's works.

Firstly, and not necessarily most importantly, there is the philosophical discursive strand. The broader level of this strand - the question concerning technology - perhaps encompasses the history of philosophy itself. Yet surprisingly little attention has been given to philosophies which specifically address particular new technologies rather than - as Heidegger does - the more *general notion* of the technological or the scientific. Perhaps this is because to address thought from the 'machine' backwards goes against the tenor of the philosophical projects grasping for the essential truth of Being. In short, technological considerations disrupt many of the bases of philosophy as a discipline. In 1993 Michael Heim, a Heideggerian Taoist, published *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality* which addressed exactly this gap in the discussion about specific technologies in a more direct philosophical fashion. However, this book has many problems[17], not the least of which is a naive approach which seems to discuss philosophers such as Heidegger, Plato and Leibniz as if they all just fitted neatly one within the other, like a Russian doll. Another problem in Heim's book is that metaphysics remains thoroughly unproblematised by Virtual Reality (VR), at the same time as VR remains untroubled by metaphysics. The resulting confusion is reflected in Heim's statement, quoting David Zeltzer's remark that "'True virtual reality may not be attainable with any technology we create...Nonetheless, virtual reality serves as the Holy Grail of the research'" (Heim, 1993:123). Meanwhile, of course, the VR industry is up and running and planes are being flown using equipment that is based upon the simulations of VR. The whole machinic realm is in top gear in this area - whether VR is 'True' or not. Heim, meanwhile, is still attempting to approach its "esoteric essence" (ibid.).

More successful are books such as George Landow's very recent *Hypertext* (1992) and *Hyper/Text/Theory* (1994), or Manuel De Landa's *War in the Age of the Intelligent Machine* (1991), a Deleuzean inspired book written from the point of view of the machine, dealing with

---

[17] For further criticisms, see my review of it in *Convergence* 1,2 1995:148-151.

the issues of the title. Both Landow and De Landa, rather than attempting to find the *philosophical* essence of specific technologies, attempt to map out the ways in which what has been assumed to be essential is under question. They pursue the *actual* ways in which technologies change the machinic field, including this field's production of the social. Perhaps the best recent discussion however, more successful in its general approach, is still Paul Virilio's quasi-apocalyptic discussion of technology on the basis of its specific, real and massive increase in speed, based primarily upon the rise of technology in war (Virilio and Lotringer, 1983; Virilio, 1989 and 1993), information architecture (1991a, 1991b) and visual entertainment[18].

There are many more *general* but still extremely useful philosophical discussions of technologies. The best of these perform a powerful critical function. There is, for example, Michel Foucault's discussion of Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon' in *Discipline and Punish* (1979), which is generally useful but of course based upon nineteenth century technologies and ideas about what these technologies do. There is also Walter Benjamin's very influential essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (in Benjamin, 1973:219-253), in which Benjamin argues that, when able to be reproduced (as posters or photographs, for example), artworks lose their 'aura', their sense of uniqueness. Benjamin's ideas are related to specific technologies, but they are discussed today in a more general fashion. The specificity of the ideas may, however, be in conflict with the changes in technologies since the essay was written[19]. It could be argued that there is now a new generation of technologies with which reproduction is no longer the main issue and there is no more mourning for an "aura" [20]. The

---

[18] Virilio describes himself as an 'art critic of technology" (cited in Madsen, 1995) rather than a philosopher.

[19] For some specific responses to Benjamin see Virilio, Baudrillard and Hall, 1988.

[20] Perhaps there is no real mourning for the 'aura' in Benjamin's essay - yet there is no doubt that, in some ways following a similar trajectory to Heidegger, Benjamin's theories of technology are based upon perceptions of the passing away of what was human about art, in favour of the power of the machine. I would argue, however that, paradoxically, Benjamin, the humanist, finds what we could call the shift from modernity to post-modernity less problematic than Heidegger, whose humanism was far more ambiguous. It is Benjamin who finds a way into the future, whilst Heidegger still idolises the ancient Greeks marriage of

issue now is not perhaps one of the human versus the machine. It is rather one of *operation* in general - a question of the passages in-between human and machine. More 'operationally' contemporary is Donna Haraway's essay "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" (1991b). This influential essay's main contribution has been that of the concept of the 'cyborg', a notion of an in-between entity within an interactive dynamic. For Haraway, the notion of the cyborg allows a specific conceptualisation of a feminine ethics of interaction as regards technology. Both the specific feminine dynamic and the hybridity are important contributions to a theorisation of interaction[21]. This is particularly so when one considers her later broadening of the notion of the cyborg to a participation of the natural in the whole process though the figure of the coyote[22] (Haraway 1991a).

The value of Haraway's work, as with Deleuze and Guattari's, is its contingency, its insistence on the 'otherness' of interactive relations, and its recognition of the technological and the natural as domains which are not subsumed within human ontological considerations. None of the thinkers, from Foucault to Haraway, remain, or like Heidegger, attempt to remain, uncontaminated by technology. In such work Philosophy is literally forced to become something else, or at least to maintain its specificity only under the condition of the hybrid.

The second bundle of discursive strands surrounding technology are found in the arts and media, primarily newspapers, magazines, novels and films. Gibson's *Neuromancer* has been mentioned. One could easily discuss the many films such as *Blade Runner*, the *Terminator*

---

technē and poiesis. For Benjamin, the question is not, for example, whether photography is art, but whether photography had transformed art (1973:229). For Heidegger, it is more a question of whether technology is compatible with art at all in the modern age, or whether, to perhaps oversimplify what is a constantly paradoxical argument, technology is 'danger' and art is salvation in that it reveals 'truth' (1977b:35). Benjamin's attempts at suggesting new aesthetics are far less problematic, in this respect, as regards the relations between art and technology.

[21] See Stivale, 1991b, for a discussion of Deleuze, Guattari and Haraway as regards Cyberpunk.

[22] For Haraway, just as the cyborg is a figure in-between the human and the technological, the coyote is another "trickster" this time related to the natural and the human (1991a:21).

films[23], or even Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, not just as *representations* of humanity's relations to the

technological but *as produced by and producers of* discursive fields or collective assemblages of

enunciation. One could further divide this strand into popular cultural strands and more obscure

(avant-garde) art strands, though determining the different degrees and specificities of influence

of the two seems to me to be difficult, if not impossible. Who knows, for example, where the

work of someone like Stelarc, with his technological amendments of, and statements about, the

body, to be discussed in the next chapter, will end up? Or, to take another example of the

difficulty of neatly dividing the influence of popular culture and the avant-garde, how do we

demarcate the avant-garde and the popular in practices such as those of artist and music

producer Brian Eno? Eno takes the ideas of the (slightly) more obscure and certainly avant-garde

John Cage and produces hit records for groups such as U2, or develops whole new musical

genres - such as 'ambient music' (Tamm, 1989).

Thirdly, there are the industrial and governmental discursive strands, taking in statements and

policy directives from the likes of William Gates, Head of Microsoft Incorporated and now the

richest man in the USA, to Al Gore, the USA's Vice President, who has been instrumental for

many years in the push towards the information superhighway network that he has labeled the

---

[23] The most recent example is Kathryn Bigelow's *Strange Days* (1996), written by James Cameron of *Terminator* fame. This has an interesting if confused and, as usual, dystopic, approach to the 'dangers' of representation and real life converging. It is a film which seems both totally abject about, and enamoured by, a world in which one's becoming-other is almost total (as someone's sensations can be recorded and 'played back' on disk to anyone with enough money and the right black market connections). The film attempts to make some interesting parallels between the technological aspects of this and the more general social machines, in particular dealing with race relations. However, once again the lesson seems to be that VR is primarily an extreme form of *representation* which should be avoided in favour of 'real' experience. The film is finally resolved by a benevolent police patriarch, but this conventional framing does not manage to contain the disruptions, both technological and social, that refuse to be reduced to such resolutions. On another level, the film can be read as Hollywood trying to deal with its own confusion about new technologies, whilst educating its market 'appropriately'. There are discussions about the ethics of violence in representation that belie the film's own violence, and there is a specific discussion of the advantages of film over the extreme forms of recorded reality (that a film 'ends' - taking us back once more to Aristotle and some neat plot lines). None of these discussions make sense within the context of the film. What is interesting is that the film makes so many contradictory statements, both in its filmic language and specific statements.

"highways of the mind" (Rheingold, 1994:11). The whole discourse surrounding Ronald Reagan's 'Strategic Defense Initiative' or 'Star Wars' programme also comes to mind.

Fourthly, there are the discourses produced or 'bent' in cultural usage - for example in the applications of Gibson's fiction to the creation of cyber(punk)culture or of the television series Star Trek to the US space programme (Heim 1993:120), or the technologically mediated sounds of reggae or rap music as they participate in the creation of new collective assemblages of enunciation[24]. New technologies are particularly interesting here as the culture in which they are first used often puts them to completely unexpected uses (Rheingold, 1994[25]).

Fifthly and finally, there are the technical and techno-philosophical strands. These both participate in the State and industrial strands and at times contextualise them from positions outside of standard industry or governmental policy programmes. Unsurprisingly here, the development of new technologies once again reveals the complex relations between industry, the State and technological thinking. For example, Thomas A. Furness III spent many years as director of the US Air Force's VR research with a huge budget before leaving to bring his ideas into the more civilian commercial world (Rheingold 1991:194). Despite such origins as the military and commerce, it is nevertheless true that some of the most influential discourses in thinking about new technologies have come, perhaps quite naturally, from those involved in developing them within these contexts. Rightly or wrongly, there is little doubt that such discourses, in a marriage of such thinkers' 'vision' and the vast amounts of capital presently available to develop such technologies as the Internet and Virtual Reality, will inform in precise ways the manifestations of future technologies. Most Virtual Reality research and development, when not premised purely upon either immediate financial gain or military advance, is premised,

---

[24] See, for example, Wark, 1992; Maxwell and Bambrick, 1994; Murphie, 1996b.
[25] See, for example, Rheingold's (1994:220-235) discussion of the development of 'Minitel' in France and the way in which it was quickly used for electronic conversation between clients rather than just the distribution of information from a central network.

at least in part, upon some kind of 'vision' of this type. There are, for example, the visions of the

likes of Myron Krueger (1983) who refuses the term Virtual Reality, preferring 'Artificial

Reality', or Jaron Lanier (discussed in Rheingold, 1991[26]) who, along with John Barlow of cult

rock band The Grateful Dead, sees many links between music (as a 'post-symbolic' language of

exchange) and VR. Some, of course, have, with a degree of ecstasy, seen an immediate link

between cinema and VR as an enhanced version of cinema's 'reality effect'[27].

Back to the Greeks Again

What is crucial for this thesis is that in many of the influential discourses that focus on *specific*

technologies such as VR the aim, as in Heidegger's thought, seems to be to head both towards

the theatrical *and* towards Ancient Greece. This is done in the pursuit of some kind of cultural

guarantee of the 'truth'. This cultural guarantee is a way of giving the new technologies

something to do - a position within State thinking or a line upon which to find their 'cultural

meaning', from Greeks to Germans, or to Americans. The clearest of these is Brenda Laurel[28]

---

[26] Rheingold (1991:158), in what remains the most complete survey of the development of Virtual Reality, writes that Lanier's 'oldest dream is that computers will enable people to exchange simulations - images and sounds and dynamic models - just as we exchange spoken and written words today. He calls this future computer-augmented metalanguage 'post-symbolic communication'". It was Lanier who first developed the glove which enabled the VR immersed operator to have a dynamic impact upon the simulated environment. Krueger prefers to do without gloves and helmets and instead create broader VR environments in which to generate 'artificial reality'.

[27] These include Morton Heilig (Rheingold, 1991:49ff.).

[28] Laurel's status as VR guru is perhaps demonstrated in her appearance on the cover of *Mondo 2000* (Issue 7, 1992), one of the two major, popular, and very fashionable magazines devoted to new technologies (the other is *Wired*). The attempt here is not to denigrate Laurel's ideas, which are, within their range of thought, very humane and useful. The point is more that Laurel does not raise the general question of the framework within which her work is being done, of *who*, for example, is being made an effective agent. What Laurel, with great skill, seems to be seeking is a reasonable way of representing such agencies as characters within the virtual world. As with Aristotle, there is a sense that the parameters of the represented world are not perhaps as open to interaction as they might be. Haraway's work on the cyborg might be an interesting qualification of Laurel's.

Moreover, despite her theatre studies qualifications, Laurel subsumes all theatre and performance activity under the principle of Aristotle's *Poetics*, including the work of those such as Brecht, who were notoriously and quite vociferously 'anti-Aristotelean'.

(1991), perhaps one of the most sophisticated thinkers in the area and a past developer of computer games software at Atari. She sees a basis for an understanding of Virtual Reality in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1965) and suggests that developments in new technologies can be seen as a form of theatre[29]. More recently, Randal Walser writes about a "cyberspace playhouse" (in Helsel and Roth, 1991), while Michael Heim (1993) invokes Plato and Wagner's 'Total Theatre'. Rheingold writes about "The Experience Theater" in *Virtual Reality* (1991:49-67) and describes a ritual in the Lascaux Caves as having relevance to VR (379-382). In *Virtual Community* (1994:145-175) Rheingold gives descriptions of Multi-User Dungeons (communal electronic fantasies accessed through the Internet) and the playing of characters (he calls these 'alternate identities') which demonstrate the very theatrical uses to which some new technologies have indeed been put.

Nevertheless, it seems somewhat counter-productive that while some of the most forceful applications of Virtual Reality are probably in more directly *productive* areas such as surgery, chemistry or the extension of human agency into hostile environments, much of the discussion of Virtual Reality, both in public and more specialist publications, has centred upon its ability to enhance the *representation* of experience. In this, the discussion of VR has promised a new world, whilst largely consisting, in its focus on representational modes, of the ideas and even machinery of the old. In addition, some of its commentators seem to use the theatrical to stage and to validate in the process their own slightly critical but basically American industrial views with recourses to Aristotle's *Poetics* or in Rheingold's case, to a drama in the Lascaux Caves. With all these commentators, the question remains - what are these representations producing?

---

[29] Erkki Huhtamo (1995) suggests that the assumption of Laurel and similar researchers of a "common ground" for humans and machines, leading to a "growing 'naturalness', immediacy and intimacy to the human-machine relationship" is "problematic, particularly if viewed from a wider social and cultural perspective" (82). Huhtamo underlines the contradictions that the human-machine relation in fact involves, as we move from an "oppositional" to a "cyborg logic" (ibid.), that may not be so easily resolved as they seem to be in Laurel's work. He subjects the notions of interactivity, immersion and automation, together with the anthropomorphism so often involved in discussions of interactivity, to a rigorous questioning.

How do they relate to the production of capital? How is Rheingold's discourse in *Virtual Reality*, for example, situated in relation to American-Japanese competition over trade[30] in the very commodities such as VR systems that are being retrieved into industrial frameworks using representational models in the first place. It is perhaps worth being reminded that the Aristotelean *Poetics* and Platonic models being used here are precisely those playwright and political theorist Bertolt Brecht spent most of his life pulling apart, particularly because of the manner in which they prepared the way for uncritical participation in commodity culture[31]. How is it possible to think a way through from this normative freeze-frame of the representational to a more machinic, or rhizomatic, approach to technologies? It is to Deleuze and Guattari that I shall turn for an answer to this question in what follows.

The Bifurcation of Deleuze and Guattari away from Heideggerian Stratification

Deleuze and Guattari have both diverged from the standard interpretations of 'Heideggerian Being' in regard to the technological. For both of them, Heidegger's ideas do not always allow for the interaction they could[32]. Neither Deleuze nor Guattari deny the importance of the ontological project but both find problems with Heidegger's particular formulation, even as they themselves use it. For both the problem arises when the notion of Being heads thought towards the general or the transcendent. Both seek to reinstate difference. For Guattari (*CHS*), this entails a firm but simple rejection of the ontological superiority of Being over becomings, beings and

---

[30] To be fair here, these are questions that Rheingold addresses far more thoroughly, and more critically in *Virtual Community* (1994).

[31] See also Walter Benjamin's essay, 'The Author as Producer" (1978:220-238).

[32] As Jean-Clet Martin notes, 'There is no reason, according to Deleuze, to identify a civilisation, an epoch, or the history of a people with the radiation of an exclusive semiotic system, the way that Heidegger does." Martin goes on to quote *A Thousand Plateaus* - 'There is such mixture within the same period or the same people that we can say no more than that a given people, language or period assures the relative dominance of a certain regime" (1994:282).

assemblages. For Deleuze (*CEC*, *DR*), this entails an uprooting of Being into a stream where it can only affirm difference and constant becoming.

In an essay in *Critique et Clinique*, Deleuze mixes Heidegger's ideas with those of Alfred Jarry to produce a Heidegger redirected towards a series of 'becoming-minors'. This is done through Deleuze's normal method of the subtraction of the Major from the situation in question[33]. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari heads in a slightly different direction, simply subtracting entirely Heidegger's central concept, that of Being, from the equation of the technological. These two approaches can be seen as a bifurcation from the virtual potentialities that existed in Deleuze and Guattari's joint work on the machinic and on 'becoming-minor'. Although different they are not necessarily contradictory, simply divergent. Deleuze heads towards a clear affirmation of difference through a consideration of thought and language - as he has at least since his first book that did not primarily recount another's philosophy - *Difference and Repetition* (1994, first published in 1968). Guattari moves to a consideration of the primacy of the machinic. Both come together in affirming the ways in which relations between signs, language, phenomena and technologies need to be rethought in terms of their interactivity, not in terms of their extraction from the world and from each other.

"The Original Bicycle Assures the Passage from the Technical to the Poetic" [34]

In his recent article, "Un précurseur méconnu de Heidegger, Alfred Jarry" (in *CEC*:115-125), Deleuze reinflects the discussion surrounding Heidegger, the theatrical and technology in a unique fashion. In order to give this discussion a context, however, it is necessary, perhaps, to

---

[33] See Kowsar, 1986 for a full summary of Deleuze's views on the theatre and for a discussion of 'subtraction' as it relates to the theatre. See also *MM*.
[34] *CEC*:121-122.

first consider Deleuze's analyses of; Heidegger's thought in *Difference and Repetition*, Being in

Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, and becoming in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*.

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze injects a consideration of difference into Heidegger's

thinking through of Being. He criticises Heidegger's own critique of Nietzsche's concept of the

'Eternal Return', which Deleuze interprets not as the return of identity but as the return of

difference in repetition. Deleuze implies that Heidegger cannot tolerate the intensity of this return

of difference. This infusing of Heidegger's Being with more difference than it already allows for

is symptomatic of all of Deleuze's work. In fact, Deleuze turns most concepts towards their

maximum difference! For Deleuze, this difference is part of a univocal process. For Deleuze,

"There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal" (*DR*:35),

unambiguous.

However, it must be understood that what is univocal is not that which is identical. This is

because for Deleuze, everything is production, everything is process, and univocity is about

expression and affirmation, not exclusion (*EPS*:67). For Deleuze univocity is immanent (ibid.)

and its expressions are specific and may be quite different. "Thought, Extension and so on" are

"all univocal forms of being" (81). On the other hand (in regard to Spinoza) the "univocity of

attributes does not mean that substance and modes have the same being or the same perfection"

(165). This has a slightly different inflection to Heidegger's concept of Being, an inflection not

towards the passion of disclosure and 'Being-towards-death', or towards cultural transcendence

on the Greco-German line, but towards affirmation, immanence and community, in other words,

towards interaction.

> *The philosophy of immanence appears from all viewpoints as the theory of unitary*
>
> *Being, equal Being, common and univocal Being. It seeks the conditions of a genuine*

affirmation, condemning all approaches that take away from its full positivity, that is,

its formal community. (167)

For Deleuze, *Being is expression.* It has no relation to any transcendent Truth or causality - "Expression itself no longer emanates, no longer resembles anything" (180). Rather it is an expression of immanent community. For Deleuze here, following Spinoza, this expression is specifically opposed to revelation. Deleuze deviates from Heidegger's 'passion for disclosure' and for 'revealing'. For Deleuze Being is immanent and unmistakable, whereas "revelation is not an expression but a cultivation of the inexpressible, a confused and relative knowledge" (181). For Heidegger, Being somehow pre-inheres in revelation, and for this reason it can have had its inception with the Greeks, and later be revealed to, and taken up by, the Germans. According to Heidegger, for most of us there is a fog surrounding Being. For Deleuze, Being can only express, not be revealed. Being is not obscure. Expression, then, is not a question of the revelation of obscure (extensive) and constant truths but of the expression of the power of intensive quantities of the absolute (197). The univocity of Being is something that partakes of expression (and interaction), not the domain of signs (330) and revelations. In sum -

> *In Spinoza the whole theory of expression supports univocity; and its whole import is to*
>
> *free univocal Being from a state of indifference or neutrality, to make it the object of a*
>
> *pure affirmation, which is actually realized in an expressive pantheism or immanence.*
>
> (333)

It may be possible to sense the shadow of Heidegger behind this early work of Deleuze's. Yet the power of Spinoza's 'expression' is to free Deleuze's early conception of Being from revelation, a potential mysticism or territorialisation on the transcendent. This leads, in Deleuze's work with Guattari, to Deleuze's acquiescence to the machinic and the interactive - as affirmative expressions of immanent production rather than the revelation of the obscured depths of Being.

In Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983, first published 1962) this Being is, in fact, pure becoming. To understand how 'pure becoming' is the foundation of Deleuze's beloved Nietzschean 'eternal return' in the book -

> *...all we need to do...is to stop believing in being as distinct from and opposed to becoming or to believe in the being of becoming itself...Returning is the being of that which becomes. "* (48)

Here it "is not some one thing that returns but rather returning itself is the one thing which is affirmed of diversity or multiplicity" (ibid.). This means that it is a question of relations between forces (39-46) not of the revelation of a Truth as old as the Greeks. In this, Deleuze seeks a univocity of Being which is not just freed from objective presuppositions but from the subjective presuppositions that remain in Heidegger ("which are perhaps the same ones in another form" (*DR*:129[35])).

In *Difference and Repetition* this univocal Being is again more explicitly defined as the Being of difference, in which there is -

> *...a single 'voice' of Being which includes all its modes, including the most diverse, the most varied, the most differentiated. Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself"* (36).

In this sense we can see the univocity of Being as an uprooting that is distinctly unHeideggerean, a "nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy" (37) - an anarchy which in Deleuze's essay on Jarry and Heidegger falls on the side of Jarry, as opposed to Heidegger's falling towards Nazism (*CEC*:117). For Deleuze, Nietzsche's eternal return, critiqued by Heidegger, is, in its affirmation of difference in repetition, essential to an understanding of Being (*DR*:41). If, then, Deleuze does

---

[35] See also *DR*:321.

accept Heidegger on occasions early in his work (64-66), it is only tentatively and in a way that makes Heidegger sound suspiciously like Spinoza, Nietzsche or Leibniz, invoking difference, and at that, difference as a folding or pleating between Being and beings. As will be discussed shortly, Deleuze will later accept more of Heidegger by redirecting Heidegger's thought through the anarchism of Jarry[36].

Earlier in his work, however, Deleuze harbours doubts about Heidegger's project, asking -

> *...does he effectuate the conversion after which univocal Being belongs only to difference and, in this sense, revolves around being? Does he conceive of **being** in such a manner that it will be truly disengaged from any subordination in relation to the identity of representation? It would seem not, given his critique of the Nietzschean eternal return.* (ibid.)

Heidegger's rather despotic differentiation between Being and beings makes Heideggerean differences seem somewhat hierarchical rather than interactive and 'inter-folding'. As opposed to this, in his early works, Deleuze affirms a univocity of Being but one which is expressive not revealing. This univocal Being has the relation of a fold to being[37], one of the return of the different rather than a Being incepted on a major line of the history of the Same.

---

[36] What Deleuze does admire in Heidegger is his direction to think in a questioning way in which problems rather than presuppositions are developed (*DR*:144, 200-201), this being the ontological determination of difference (65). He writes that 'we regard as fundamental this 'correspondence' between difference and questioning, between ontological difference and the being of the question" (66, see also 117).

[37] The fold is one of Deleuze's major concepts, one which he develops in his book on Leibniz (*FLD*). In this book, the idea of the fold arises out of a consideration of the question of how that which is Univocal can provide both for variation and singularity. The simple answer is that the univocal can be both folded and unfolded. This occurs both on the level of states of affairs (and bodies) and ideas (or virtual events). Thus, for example, 'knowledge is only known where it is folded" (49). Singularities in any sense are accounted for here by their being foldings or unfoldings in a more general material. This is a highly interactive notion, one which means that everything is connected in a very literal way. For Deleuze, the notion of this interconnected folding of variations provides a clear break between the classical, which is ruled over by the law of distinct forms, and the baroque, which highlights the interplay within the folds. As Deleuze notes, 'Point of view on a variation now replaces the center of a figure or a configuration" (20). As regards technology, the 'status of the object is profoundly changed", with the result that 'fluctuation of the norm replaces the permanence of the law; where the object assumes a place in a continuum by variation" (19). This will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

It is hard to know how much of Deleuze most extended consideration of Heidegger, "Un précurseur méconnu de Heidegger, Alfred Jarry" is a sophisticated joke at Heidegger's expense[38], and how much it is taking Heidegger more seriously than Deleuze has ever taken him before. In this essay, Deleuze subjects Heidegger to the impure contagion of the 'anarchist' Jarry and his creation, Ubu. Perhaps it is only by repositioning Heidegger in this fashion that Deleuze can make Heidegger's discourses and concepts become carriers of difference and becoming. Ubu is he "who represents fat being, the issue of the metaphysics of a planetary technicity and science totally mechanised, the science of machines in a sinister frenzy" (*CEC*:11739). Through this process, rather than being fixed in the facing of the 'Being-towards-death' unable to be shared[40], Heidegger seems released from the totalitarian-tragic binary machine. Some of his thought, including that surrounding technology, opens out to the event of difference.

If it is uncertain as to how seriously Deleuze takes Heidegger, however, there is little doubt that Deleuze, unlike most commentators, takes Jarry, one of the great influences on Antonin Artaud's thought and work[41], very seriously indeed. Throughout the essay, Jarry's pataphysics, the science of imaginary solutions, is given thoughtful explication as a precursor to Heidegger's thought - but to which thought of Heidegger? The commentary on Heidegger is constantly

---

[38] See Droit for a description of the way in which Deleuze uses other philosophers. Droit writes that Deleuze's philosophical references are "...no more those which philosophy usually recognises as its own...between theory and fiction, or between philosophy and literature, the demarcation line is displaced, blurred..." (1995:11).

[39] All quotes from this article are my own translation. Ubu is, of course, Jarry's great character creation, a character which Jarry came to 'play' himself in real life. Ubu (Jarry, 1968) is a gross, fat, comic character whose actions seem, at first sight, entirely predicated upon appetite - and entirely devoid of contemplation or, indeed, any thought of any kind except for the basics of strategy and cunning. However Ubu, who during the course of the plays in which he features becomes both King and slave, is the very embodiment of Jarry's own philosophy of pataphysics - the science of imaginary solutions. The possible joke in Deleuze's article is in the very juxtaposition of two such different philosophers as Jarry and Heidegger, together with the degree to which this forces the serious thinking through of Jarry's pataphysics in a Deleuze/Heideggerian context.

[40] Lyotard, after Jean-Luc Nancy, points out that 'the 'being-towards-death' signals the fact that 'one takes part in death, one does not share it'" (Lyotard, 1990:91).

[41] Artaud named his theatre Le Théâtre Alfred-Jarry in 1927 .

qualified, both explicitly (as in Deleuze's comments that Heidegger "appeals to the Greeks more than Husserl as his authority" (*CEC*:115) or that Heidegger understands the essence of technique to be found in Nazism) and implicitly, through the highly unusual juxtaposition with Jarry. In addition it should be noted that the work of Heidegger's most referred to is the essay "Time and Being" (1972, originally published in 1969, a year after *Difference and Repetition*). This essay represents the thought in the *last* period of Heidegger's life, in which he seriously modified his notions of Being, making it somewhat subordinate to time and the event. In short, Deleuze subtracts from Heidegger the reterritorialisations of Being on static lines and State conflicts or stale nationhoods and notions of a 'West' which must be preserved. The concept of Being remains but is re-situated. In the essay, theatre and life (anarchism), representation and production, technology and Being[42] are not opposed but interactive, not differentiated absolutely but folded, unfolded and refolded.

---

[42] There is a difficulty here in translating from the French the various words and phrases 'L'Étre", 'l'être" and "étant". The last is the easiest and always refers to the present participle of the verb 'être" (to be), which also occurs in the article, although Deleuze uses 'étants" sometimes in the plural, as an equivalent of Heidegger's 'beings", as it appears in English. Both 'L'Étre" and 'l'être", as nouns, seem to indicate different approximations to Heidegger's 'Being". 'L'Étre" appears in this essay only in quotes from, or references to, Jarry and in Deleuze's reference to the special place Being has for Jarry as thinking (which is again like Heidegger's Being except that its grandeur and scope have been subtracted by the intrusion of the self-showing existence of the epiphenomenon). The subtle shift in Deleuze's whole rewriting of Heidegger can be read here in his removal of the capital letter 'E" in some of his references to Heidegger's 'Being". Previously, in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie* (90), for example, Heidegger's distinction between Being and beings has been rendered as between 'L'Etre" and 'l'étant".

In *Chaosmosis* (109), the translators, Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, are sometimes forced to translate both 'l'Étre" and 'L'être" as Being, because 'L'être" appears at the beginning of the sentence and the distinction is lost between them. (Although at other times Bains and Pefanis render the Heideggerian 'being" without its capitalisation (*CHE*:72 and *CHS*:47)). The difference between 'l'Étre" and 'L'être" is, however, consistent in the original, *Chaosmose* (152), and this difference will perhaps serve an understanding of what is going on here. For Guattari, "*L'être* [my italics] est d'abord auto-consistance, auto-affirmation, existence pour-soi déployant des rapports particuliers d'alterité...(Being is first of all auto-consistence, auto-affirmation, existence for-itself deploying particular relations of alterity)". This immediately relates to that which Deleuze calls, in this article, the 'epiphenomenon'. However, as for 'l'Étre", it is this which must be done away with. L'accent n'est plus porté sur l'Étre, comme équivalent ontologique général...(The emphasis is no longer placed on Being, as general ontological equivalent)". *Chaosmose* will be returned to subsequently. To save confusion, I am here translating 'l'être" as 'existence", despite its correct translation as 'being", particularly as it has as much to do with the phenomenon's own self-showing (the epiphenomenon) as with any relation of a human Dasein to that phenomenon, and 'étant" shall be translated as 'being", in the everyday sense.

For both Deleuze and Guattari something has to shift with regard to Being. There is perhaps a hint as to why this is so in Palbart's remark that Guattari, in particular, aimed to destroy all reterritorialisations on the universal by abandoning capital letters. Being and beings should not be hierarchised. This subsequently allows more play between metaphysics and technique, without them having to be dichotomised. For Deleuze and Guattari, *metaphysics is technical and technique has a metaphysical dimension*. Jarry's Pataphysics and Heidegger's ontology arise from this play. In both, metaphysics and technique work together but are also overtaken, because they can no longer be simply defined against one another.

A detailed description of Deleuze's essay on Jarry and Heidegger, which is currently only available in French, will be given as it is crucial to the argument. Deleuze suggests that in general, Jarry's pataphysics has for its aim "the grand turning point, the exceeding of metaphysics" (115) and that Heidegger's work can be considered a development of this. The two oeuvres have three resemblances which concern "the existence of the phenomenon, planetary technique (technicity), and the treatment of language" (ibid.). Deleuze very quickly begins folding these resemblances, however, and makes any possible placing of them under the activity of an over-riding human perception (as in Dasein) impossible. He writes that the phenomenon is not, as normally conceived, an appearance or an apparition to that which perceives it, but "that which shows itself in itself" (ibid.). Phenomena do not "return to a consciousness but to an existence, an existence of the phenomenon which consists precisely in this self-showing" (ibid.). The question raised here is that of what a phenomenon is when we are not perceiving it. The answer for Deleuze is that there is a difference in a phenomenon's disclosure to humanity and its showing in itself. In other words, a phenomenon's existence is not equated with humanity's consciousness of it.

Metaphysics confuses being and existence because it supposes something behind the phenomenon, something *else* to which we can think through, which will give the phenomenon a

direct relation to our conception of it. An example is Plato's theory of Ideal Forms. Another

example is our conception of a 'God' behind phenomena. However, following Heidegger,

Deleuze proposes that phenomena return not to the place of God or the realm of Ideal Forms

when they have finished showing themselves to us but to their own existence. *In a sense the*

epiphenomenon thinks itself. This can only be understood in a post-humanist context where

thought itself is something that occurs between fields, outside or across a field and not as a

relation between a human interiority and a secondary 'world' outside of that interiority. Thus the

purpose of phenomena is not the revelation of a Truth to man, not disclosure in this sense, but

self-showing as existence of the phenomena qua phenomena.

This self-showing phenomenon is what Jarry calls the "epi-phenomenon". It is not something

specifically directed towards human use or consciousness (116). For Deleuze "the

"epiphenomenon is the existence of the phenomenon" while the phenomenon as we normally

conceive of it is "perception, to perceive or to be perceived" (ibid.). This in turn is different to

Being "which is thought" (ibid.). Thought ("Being") is a kind of realm of non-being. So there

are three concepts differentiated here. Firstly, there is the phenomenon/being/perception.

Secondly, there is the epiphenomenon/existence, which does not depend upon being perceived.

Thirdly there is thought, or Being, which is also non-being. Thought is non-being because we can

only think an experience as it retreats (moves on to become something else), but in that retreat its

being also disappears. In short, we can only think something after it has happened, as its tide is

already receding. Metaphysics, in positing a (somewhat) stable reality behind perceived reality,

refuses to acknowledge the difficulties imposed upon metaphysics by the transience of

phenomena. In fact, existence, as in the existence of the epiphenomenon, is also more a state of

non-being than of metaphysical being.

Metaphysics is an error which consists in treating the epiphenomenon like another phenomenon, another being, another life. In truth, rather than consider existence as a superior form of being which would found the constancy of other perceived beings, we must think of it as an Emptiness or Non-being, crossing the transparency in which singular variations play, "the iridescent mental kaleidoscope which thinks itself". (ibid.)

Existence is not *shown itself* as existence, but shown only in retreat. There is a sense, more colloquially, in which existence, as the permanent perceived state of something, does not exist. As Deleuze writes, "one could say that being bars existence, puts it to death and destroys it, or that life kills thought, so much so that we cannot think any more" (116). Metaphysics is always caught by this retreat of existence, because "it confounds existence and being" (ibid.).

It is here that technique comes in, and here that Deleuze is able to show how metaphysics can be realized, despite its error[43]. "Technique as the effective mastery of being is the inheritor of metaphysics: it achieves it, it realises it" (117). It is only when metaphysics is reduced to a technical procedure that metaphysical thoughts can attain a state of realisation. Technique is the process whereby the metaphysical virtual becomes a *procedure* within reality. One *proposes*, for example, the constancy of an ideal form in order to annihilate the difficulties of a phenomenon's fluctuating existence. Yet this is not a realisation of 'truth' but a technique.

On the other hand, technique is that which only enables this through an immersion in the moment of being at the expense of any permanence of thought. Techniques lead us to forget where we are, what we are doing, so that we can, for example, drive a car and think about something else entirely. It is therefore through technique that metaphysics can be both realised *and overcome*. One can *think* beforehand of a *particular cycling journey* but the repetition of *the*

---

[43] In fact, the only 'error' of metaphysics, if a great one, is its assumption of permanent truth. This does not, of course, mean that metaphysics has any more *or less* discursive consistency or effect than any other discursive form.

action of cycling (as technique) may carry one into a space of pure technique - of forgetting - and one may not know where one may end up. Technique then, is that which "has killed thought" and Jarry's grotesque caricature, Ubu, is in this sense technique's most extreme representative. Ubu is the practitioner not of thinking but of technique. Anarchy, because it operates against known forms of power, is also the comprehension of technique, even of the bomb (117). This is an anarchy which "makes Being decay within the being of science and technology" (ibid.). Deleuze now makes an extravagant claim for Jarry's extreme relation to technique, equating Heidegger's 'four parts'[44] with the bicycle frame. The bicycle frame here becomes a frame*work*, the ultimate technique, enveloping and developing, "effecting the great Turning Point of the earth" (ibid.) as it wheels along. The bicycle in motion becomes a kind of emblem and technique of Nietzsche's eternal return, which for Deleuze, of course, is the eternal return of difference in repetition. The wheels of the bicycle repeat their turning but always in journeys over different terrain. Deleuze claims that the bicycle (which Jarry was famous for riding around Paris[45]), is the sign under which Jarry fills his work with machines, science and technique. The bicycle is even capable of transforming metaphysics. It "transforms the Passion as the Christian metaphysics of the death of God in a course of eminently technical stages" (ibid.). Here Deleuze repeats the saving power of Heidegger's question concerning technology, but in the work of Jarry it becomes something slightly different. Here "existence shows itself in technique by virtue of the fact that it retreats" (117). Existence, as epiphenomenon, *is* this retreat. It is a

---

[44] This refers to the way in which technique brings together 'Earth and sky, divinities and mortals" (cited in Ihde, 1993:109). This echoes Deleuze's "quadripartite fetters" in which "difference is crucified". These are "a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude" (*DR*:138). They form the basis of representation and of theories of negation.

[45] Jarry invoked the very techniques by which the bohemian lifestyle could come into being. He drank as a discipline, ate fish from the river Seine, kept owls, wore a cyclist's costume, or, on occasion, women's shirts, as he found men's shirts too confining. He often carried pistols with him, which he occasionally shot and, at times, adorned his bicycle with a phallus (no doubt Lacan as well has a lot to be grateful to Jarry for). As a result of all his idiosyncracies, present in his lifestyle, his philosophy and his techniques, he was revered by many writers and artists of his time. See Shattuck, 1955, for a brief biographical account.

case of "I cycled through it, therefore it was". This is something that can only be understood "pataphysically" (Jarry) or "ontologically" (Heidegger), but never "metaphysically" because metaphysics can only see being, not existence. In short, metaphysics will never discover the permanent truth of 'what is' because 'what is' is constantly in retreat into what has been. It is changing in interaction. The bicycle can never cross exactly the same territory in exactly the same way twice. Technique, however, is able to negotiate interaction.

There are differences of emphasis upon Jarry and Heidegger here. While "Heidegger finds the essence of technique in Nazism (the populist tendency), Jarry finds it in anarchism (the right-wing)" (117-118). While Heidegger bemoans technique gone wrong, distracting from the disclosure of Being (even if this leads to technology's 'saving power'), Jarry understands that technique and pataphysics have an inextricable relation - and "Ubu invents pataphysics at the same time as he promotes planetary technicity" (117). For Deleuze, what is in common between Heidegger and Jarry, however, is that *technique is a site of combat*. It is here that we can come to a clear turning around of Heidegger's thoughts on technique, so that they can be brought out of his gloom as regards Being.

> *One could say, with these two authors, that technique is the site of a combat where sometimes existence loses itself in forgetting, in retreat, and sometimes on the contrary it shows itself or reveals itself. It is not sufficient in effect to oppose existence and its forgetting, existence and its retreat since that which defines the ruin of existence is rather the forgetting of forgetting, the retreat of retreat, while retreat and forgetting are the manner in which existence shows itself or may show itself. The essence of technique is not technique, and "harbours the possibility of that which saves rising on our horizon". This is then the achievement of metaphysics in the technique which renders possible the overtaking of metaphysics, which is to say pataphysics. From whence*

comes the importance of the theory of science and the experimentation with machines as

an integral part of pataphysics: planetary technicity is not simply the ruin of existence,

but the event of its salvation. (118)

Deleuze, though he wishes to overtake it, enables us to take metaphysics seriously, not as Truth, but as something that performs a certain function, that produces certain relations and even certain techniques. This function can be conceived of in two ways. Firstly, existence has a relation to metaphysics as the latter retreats to the past - to the "always already thought of the Greeks" (ibid.). Secondly, however, existence also has a relation to the future through technique, in its retreat (self-showing and transformation) into "in an inassignable future, pure imminence or the possibility of a thought always to come" (ibid.). Technique is a bridge which in one direction connects to the already thought past. In the other it builds new connections to unknown future. It is at this point that the knotty problems of existence, being and non-being are 'overtaken' - in technique. Deleuze here suggests that technique in fact becomes very important to Heidegger late in his writings, that -

In his later writing Heidegger talked no more of metaphysics or of the overtaking of

metaphysics since existence ("l'être") at its turn must be overtaken, to the profit of a

Being-Able-To-Be which has no rapport with anything except for technique. (ibid.)

Likewise, Deleuze writes, Jarry even abandons Pataphysics when he discovers the Possible beyond existence, and "shows, in his last writing, *The Tassel*, how the Possible goes beyond the present and the past to produce a new morning" (118-119). In sum, one reinflects metaphysics, pataphysics and ontology towards the future and finds that, through technique, they may have a shaky relation to what 'is' or what 'has been' in any permanent sense. They can, instead, be transformed in a relation to what *might be able to be*. In short, the potentialities which we allow

for within our interactions with things will determine how much those potentialities of becoming are available to us.

This all seems a little incomprehensible until it is realised that Deleuze, when talking about the Possible, is talking about virtualities, which, in his earlier writings at least, are not at all the same as possibilities.

> *The virtuality of an Idea has nothing to do with possibility. Multiplicity tolerates no dependence on the identical in the subject or the object. (DR:191)*

The possible is merely an extrapolation from the actual. We can imagine it precisely, although it is *not* real. The virtual is real, but not yet being actual, cannot be imagined in this way. It will always be different, or at least, like the combination of genetic code in the production of children, produce differently. The possible is that which takes "the negative form of an empty opposition, rather than that of filling differential positions around a threshold" (205). The possible is the alternative to that which is actually happening. The virtual already inheres, in its multiplicity, within what is actually happening. It is that left over from actualisation, within actualisation, to actualise once again. However, the "process undergone by the possible is therefore [only] a 'realisation'" (211). Deleuze goes on to say that the *virtual* is already fully *real* in itself and can be *actualised* rather than realised. If my own use of the terms 'virtual' and 'possible' fluctuates it is because Deleuze's also does over the timespan of 25 years. However, the clear difference here is between the known alternative (always the possible) and the real virtual (sometimes 'virtual', sometimes 'Possible') which has the potential to be actualised into the unknown and new.

The actual consists of bifurcations of the virtual, which are not predicated upon a reterritorialisation on the past, but on new creations that arise out of the old, even as the old is abandoned. For example, there are many possible meals which can arise out of a set number of

vegetables and recipes but we never know exactly how these meals may turn out. Sometimes

sadly, however the meal turns out, there is no going back.

In this Heidegger's mistakes, and subsequently his work as a whole, are both amended, but

only at the cost of being exceeded. The whole problematic of Being with a capital B, of its

relation to pasts and present, is replaced with a Being-Able-To-Be which allows the generation

of the virtual from these pasts and present, of the production of difference that defines the

univocity of Being in *Difference and Repetition*. And technique is here essential - its saving

power, which in Heidegger seems to arise only out of technology's negation of the disclosure of

Being, here arises out of technique's ability to exceed Being, to carry beyond being into the

actualisation of the virtual in the "eventuality of the Event".

This is indeed the direction in which Heidegger heads in *Time and Being* when he shifts from

Being to "Ereignis" - the "event of Appropriation" (Heidegger 1972:19). The event of

Appropriation is something that occurs in time. One could even consider it *as* time as the horizon

of Being. In shifting his focus from Being to Appropriation Heidegger is trying to abandon

metaphysics. As Joan Stamburgh notes -

> *Henceforth, metaphysics, ontology, and theology are identical, characterized by the god*
>
> *of philosophy which is* ***causa sui*** *and the* ***summum ens***[46].
>
> *It is this kind of philosophy - metaphysics and onto-theology - which Heidegger*
>
> *wishes to give up, not overcome...The end of philosophy is* ***not*** *the end of thinking.*
>
> *Thinking must take the step-back out of metaphysics as the history of Being and pay*
>
> *heed to Appropriation which is strictly non-metaphysical.* (Stamburgh in Heidegger,
>
> 1972:viii)

---

[46] These can be translated as the 'self-caused' and the 'highest Being'. That which is its own cause is the
highest Being.

In attempting to "give up" metaphysics and onto-theology Heidegger shifts from what is the

more static and in some ways, unshareable realm of Being to what we can consider the realm of

production, interaction or *relation*. Here the relation - as Appropriation - takes priority and

interaction becomes a priori. It is possible to begin to move away from metaphysics because the

question is no longer "what is...?" [47] but 'what connections are formed through becoming?'.

> *Appropriation does not designate a "realm" as does Being, but rather a relation, that*
>
> *of man and Being. What is radically new and non-metaphysical about Appropriation is*
>
> *not only that it is an "activity" - a non-static process - Appropriation is non-*
>
> *metaphysical because in the relationship between man and Being as appropriated to*
>
> *each other, the relation is more fundamental than what is related.* (Stamburgh in
>
> Heidegger, 1992:x)

If this relation, *which exceeds that which is related*, is extended to a broader notion of relation

than just that between Being and man, that is, to that between Being, beings, and all 'things' then

one will approach Deleuze and Guattari's theories of the machinic, which will be described in

chapter six. It is sufficient for the moment to note that in Deleuze's version of Nietzsche we can

understand the will to power and its relations of forces to hold some equivalence to Heidegger's

Appropriation. This connective relation between forces through the will to power is "differential

and genetic" and it "is in no way anthropomorphic" (*NP*:51). This means that we are no longer

dealing with a centrally important Dasein here, which authenticates itself through the constant

'passion for the disclosure of Being' that so animates Heidegger's "The Question Concerning

Technology". We are dealing with processes by which the new is actualised *out of* the old, but

---

[47] See *NP*:75-78 for a description of the 'what is...?" of metaphysics and how the question is badly posed when it relates to an essence, leading Plato to his theory of ideal forms. Deleuze writes that a better question, from Nietzsche's point of view, would be 'which one?" because this refers 'to the continuity of concrete objects taken in their becoming" (76) and not to some ideal form. This latter question asks - 'what are the forces which take hold of a given thing, what is the will which possesses it" (77). Here 'essence is determined by the forces with affinity for the thing and by the will with affinity for these forces" (ibid.).

not in form of identity *with* the old. Neither are these processes directed, even in the realm of perception, by 'Man'. 'Man' merely participates in them. Here, Deleuze, Nietzsche, Jarry and Heidegger approach each other in an understanding of the way in which all things interact; animal, thing, discourse, machine, human, even 'god' -

> *According to Nietzsche the inhuman and the superhuman - a thing, an animal or a god - are no less capable of dramatisation than a man or his determinations. They too are transformations of Dionysus, symptoms of a will which wants something. They too express a type, a type of forces unknown to man. The method of dramatisation surpasses man on every side. A will of the Earth, what would a will capable of affirming the Earth be like? What does it want, this will without which the Earth itself remains meaningless?* (*NP*:79)

This is a will we could perhaps call *ecology*. And it is in this connection of forces[48] that *dramatisation* and *ecology* make their return, *not as a revelation of the permanent but as an exploration of the virtual-actual.*

Dramatisation, then, is not the same as that which I have labeled the 'classical theatre'. Jarry was not only a little known precursor to Heidegger in his investigation of technique, he was also a well-known precursor to new ways of thinking about the theatrical and the performative in the twentieth century. In many ways practices such as performance art, (which could be summed up as the performance of the previously undetermined - the exploration of Possible solutions, the actualisation of certain virtuals) or the "Theatre of Images" (Marranca, 1977; Brecht, 1978) of those such as Robert Wilson would not have been possible without Jarry. For Deleuze, dramatisation is a method based upon the question "What do you will?" (78) - what relations of force are capable of expression. The dramatisation, which has "all the Christian and dialectical

---

[48] The analysis of this itself can be analysed as one of the forces involved.

pathos" removed from it, does not have as its aim an "object, an objective or an end...What a will wants.. is to affirm its difference or to deny what differs" (ibid.). This is also an ecological question because it returns us to relations with the Earth, and with others. In this it is also interactive, about whether we affirm the production of difference or its obliteration. For example, it asks if we can connect with bio-diversity or obliterate it through a "denial of what differs". Put simply it is not about finding Being in the sense of the essence of 'what is...?' but about finding, according to Jarry, the "science of imaginary solutions" that is pataphysics and its exceeding, solutions to things that are becomings, the creations of new potentials that do not just follow old methods even if they are produced out of them. So dramatisation here is not about representing the world in order to distance oneself from it, to freeze it into the same, but about connecting with the world in order to affirm its difference.

This is why the aesthetic plays an important role in Deleuze and Guattari's thought. It is also the reason why the machinic dimension is so important to them as an acknowledgment that nothing is frozen in identity - that technique is needed to forget the past and exceed it at times, as with Jarry's travels on his bicycle - that there is a dimension of duration to the whole process of becoming. To give a more recent example, it is very hard to tell as yet how the Internet will actualise its becoming, although it has a very real virtuality. The 'virtuality' of Virtual Reality, also, is something else that is open to debate from this point of view, depending, of course, on the relation of forces chosen to operate within it, and whether it affirms difference or denies them.

In his essay on Jarry and Heidegger, Deleuze shows how there are stages in a method undertaken to open up to the diversity of the virtual. First one must do away with the reterritorialisation of Being on Universals such as the Greeks or National Socialism. When metaphysics is not reterritorialised on the general and distant (as it is in Plato's theory of ideal

forms) then metaphysics can become both pataphysics, the science of imaginary solutions, and a

Heideggerian ontology capable of exceeding its own limitations. Following this, through a

subsequent acknowledgment of the relations between metaphysics and technique, pataphysics

and ontology - which are shown here *as dynamic relations in time*, pataphysics and ontology can

be left aside in favour of the dramatisation (which is more like a ritual than that which I have

called a classical theatrical presentation) of the Possible[49] and the event. These arise from the

past's irruption in the present but lead to the creation of the new.

It should be obvious by now that technique is crucial. For Jarry "this opening of the possible

needs technicised science" (119). Likewise, Deleuze takes Heidegger's example of an aeroplane

on the runway and shows how, in it, it is possible to see the "aeroplane as the possibility of flying

in all its parts". Heidegger, positively now for Deleuze, "defines technique by the showing of a

'depths' which effaces the object, to the profit of a possibility of existence" (119). Here Deleuze

attempts to save from Heidegger that which Guattari dismisses[50]. This is not, however, in order

to disclose Being, but to give a *possibility* to the existence of the Possible (when the Possible is,

as in this essay, taken to be the virtual). The technical, according to Deleuze's reading of Jarry,

through *operating* processually[51], can show the virtualities in all the parts of an object, reconsider

their possible relations of force. By distracting us from our attempts to compare resemblances

with some frozen Universal in the past, technique participates in "the revealing of tracings which

correspond to the potentialities or molecular virtualities of all the parts of the object" (ibid.). In

other words, merely by bicycling we can get somewhere new. We can connect the territory

through which we pass differently with every cycling adventure. Here the virtual is truly

---

[49] Which here is more a question of the virtual than the possible as it is discussed in *Difference and Repetition*.
[50] To be discussed in the next section of this chapter.
[51] In that which Guattari calls 'machinic heterogenesis'.

considered as that which is real, not as something which obviously follows from the past, but as something giving the potential of the new that can come from a re-arrangement of the past.

> *The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual...Indeed, the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object - as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension...The reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements...and relations along with the singular points which correspond to them...When it is claimed that works of art are immersed in virtuality, what is being invoked is not some confused determination but the completely determined structure formed by its genetic differential elements, its 'virtual' or 'embryonic' elements. (DR:208-209)*

The bicycle, with its rider and the terrain it crosses and makes, composes a journey from both its differential elements (tyres and ground, rider and pedals, other cyclists, an animal or car that suddenly crosses the road, something interesting that arises to look at, in short, plan(e)s and their changes) and its singularity (there is only ever one crossing). Both are specific if contingent. Technique and the technical here allow not so much a revelation of the permanent as an actualisation of this contingency. They allow one to by-pass given assumptions about what is predictively possible in favour of an actualisation of the virtual. It is perhaps not always as useful as Heideggereans often seem to think to re-apply given assumptions about 'modern technicity' to the context of new technologies. Rather, one must first dramatise virtualities without always pre-judging them, not theatricalise them in the sense of restricting them to a well-worn or predictable script (the 'well-made play'). Here the bicycle provides an excellent "model", composed as it is of "rigid articulated bars and wheels animated by a rapid movement of rotation" (*CEC*:119). The bicycle provides an almost perfect model of the relations between technology, being and the earth in its performance of the eternal return of difference. And as with all technologies, including

and especially the new, the question must be asked not 'what is...?'. Rather, what are the relations in this technology to other machines, beings and the earth? Which are appropriated to/with these technologies? What possibilities of Being-Able-To-Be do new technologies provide that are not just attempts to deny the different, to repeat the same? For Deleuze, technique considered from this point of view is "the place of reversals, of conversions or of turning points" (ibid.), and machines are "essentially machines to explore time" (ibid.).

Here it must be remembered that an event does not just take place on a known line of history, within *time as we have know it* - there is a sense in which an event (re)creates time. An event changes the context of the 'lines' and therefore cannot always be explained by either what comes before or after it in literal historical time[52].

For Deleuze, both in the essay on Jarry and much earlier, in his book *Bergsonism* (1988, first published in 1966) past, present and future have another existence which is "the co-presence or simultaneity of three ecstasies, existence ("l'être") of the past, existence of the present, existence of the future." (*CEC*:119) All three of these exist in the present and an event changes all three. The three dimensions are, in this sense, constantly created simultaneously. In this sense there is a time behind our everyday conception of it. This Time, like Being, is univocal, but produces a multiplicity of 'times' -

> *Being, or Time, is a multiplicity. But it is precisely not "multiple"; it is One, in*
>
> *conformity with its type of multiplicity.* " (*BE*:85)

So the machine transforms time in order to perform the "ultimate transformation...when the existence of time...converts itself into Being-Able-to-be, in the possibility of being in the future" (*CEC*:120). The reason that the machine can transform this time is that duration is the

---

[52] If one, for example, was to replace the benign bicycle with a less benign tank, one can see in which the technique of 'tanking' can lead to many events which change the territory, tank invasions in the First and Second World Wars being a kind of event which changed the notions of speed, time, history and territory themselves. A more pleasant example is that in which a simple holiday journey can rearrange one's sense of history and time itself. One returns from a holiday with a different sense of time...

coexistence of past and present in the present (*BE*:51-61). The machine works on this co-existence - technique enables it to function -

> '*Duration is the transformation of a succession in reversion - that is to say: the becoming of a memory*'. *This is a profound reconciliation of the Machine and Duration.* (*CEC*:120)

The machine keeps going outside of thought (or alternatively, we can think of thought as one machine amongst others). The machine liaises between the virtual and the actual, it produces production itself. In this the "rapport of man with the machine gives way to a rapport of the machine with the existence of man" (ibid.). Here we have moved from the usual interpretation of Heidegger with which we began, in which technology seems the enemy of Being, to Deleuze's interpretation, in which the machine has a profound rapport with man's existence. For Deleuze, it is because technique *is* this constant succession and becoming - this shifting between the virtual and its actualisation - that existence, *as a process*, shows itself as it retreats[53]. For example, the memory that is actualised retreats in its actualisation. It is the place of art (in the form of "the Thing or the Sign") to show technique's "inexhaustible possibility" (121). This art does by "prolonging technique...(or) transmuting or converting it" (ibid.). In Deleuze's interpretation of Heidegger, technique is more than the object it employs because it reveals the depths from which objects arise and disappear. However, this makes it hard for us to perceive technique as that which it produces retreats at the same time as it is produced. Art is better at maintaining the showing because "it makes a world arise which is without depth" (ibid.). The sensations of art preserve the world[54]. Art conserves relation at the surface, makes the 'hidden depths' coincide with that which arises from them, the ground with that which it grounds. As with Jarry,

---

[53] This is also a common Heideggerian notion.
[54] This will be discussed at length in chapter three.

...the technical machine makes virtual lines surface which reunite the atomic composites

of being ("l'étant"), while the poetic sign displays all possibilities or powers of

existence ("d'être") which, reuniting themselves in their original unity, constitute "the

thing". (ibid.)

When Jarry converts the bicycle into the sign of art; when his life, as it were, becomes both a

poetic sign and an artistic object, we can see how, in a path from technique to art, "the original

Bicycle...assures the passage from the technical to the Poetic" (122).

Finally Deleuze carries this "theory of the Sign" of Jarry's to a consideration of language. He

suggests that there are only two languages from this point of view - "the living and the dead".

Yet these dead languages are like memory - they do not exist in the past which has gone, but co-

exist in the present - "The old language affects the actual, which produces under this condition a

language to come" (ibid.). Just as Heidegger makes ancient Greek transform German, Jarry

makes old French and Latin play in French in order to produce the possibility of something new.

This is not a matter of *any* play whatever within the language, however. It is not a matter of the

dead language confirming the living, but of the dead language transforming the living. Here -

...a linguistic element A comes to affect the element B in such a manner as to make it

render an element C. The affect (A) produces in the current language (B) a marking of

time, of stammering, an obsessing tom-tom beat, as a repetition which will not cease to

create something new (C). (124)

So language "acquires signs in creating them", always producing a language which is

"astonishingly foreign" (ibid.). In this one "can no longer distinguish between language, speech

and word" (125) because, virtually, they all occur at once. Furthermore, while language is in a

constant state of producing "a new language in its heart...all language is carried to a limit". This

limit is "the Thing in its mutability - vision." (ibid.).

For Deleuze, everything is involved in production: machine, technique, art, language and existence. The only constancy is this constancy of production itself. In this way Deleuze perhaps realises Heidegger's thoughts' 'saving power' as well as the fullest realisation of technology's 'saving power'.

Deleuze's bifurcation away from Guattari, then, as regards Heidegger, heads towards language and the (very qualified) preservation of Heidegger's philosophical project. If Guattari's realises different potentialities in regard to Heidegger, diverging almost totally from Heidegger's notion of Being, it is perhaps because Guattari's project is less philosophical but more directly concerned with the politics and practices of the machinics of process that Deleuze so carefully describes.

From Purity to the Chaosmotic - From the Mysteries of Being to Machinic Heterogenesis

Deleuze seems to escape the mystification of Heidegger's Being by placing it within a relation of forces: by removing its capital letter. As shall be seen, Guattari is more dismissive of the whole project, yet for Guattari as for Deleuze the relation between technē and art is also crucial. Guattari is deeply suspicious of a discussion of the work of technē and art which places it ultimately in the service of Dasein - the passion for the disclosure of Being. He does not, however, dismiss the whole ontological problem. Neither does he differ with Deleuze about the production of difference.

To recall, for Heidegger, through Dasein, truth was revealed *to the human perception* as a deep ontological process, just as in Greek drama stability was provided to chaos through the deeper perceptions of fate within the context of the Greek community attending an act of theatre.

This attachment to the revealing of a universal truth to humans is something that Guattari (*MH*) was to specifically criticise as being ontologically problematic, and consequently something which differentiates Deleuze and Guattari's project as regards the machinic from Heidegger's. Peter Pal Palbert has written -

> *Guattari spoke of an ethic in relation to being - but not in the manner of Heidegger, for whom being-there* (Dasein) *becomes the shepherd of Being. BEING, considered as a general ontological equivalence, does not exist: BEINGS exist. And, in this sense, there is nothing sacred about an ontological ethic; on the contrary, it's diabolic. It operates to diabolically intensify the multiplication of instances, the composition of the universe, of the process of singularisation, of differentiations, of the creation of the possible. The great enemy is always the reduction...realised by the signified, which subsumes under its filter the totality of the real with all its intensities, its dimensions, its varieties; or the reduction of which the origin lies in the idea of Being, of Reason, of Energy, of Information, of Communication...The operation proposed by Guattari consists in destroying all capital letters, which is to say to destroy all despotic reterritorialisations on the Universal.* (Palbart, 1994:178 - my translation)

It can be seen how this exceeds Heidegger's own 'response' to his work in *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and even "Time and Being". Despite questioning the primacy of Being Heidegger can never quite, in these works, abandon it[55].

As Guattari's response to Heidegger is crucial to my argument as a whole I will give an extensive account of it. Guattari writes that -

---

[55] Marten (1992:175) writes that in fact Heidegger completely misinterprets Aristotle on Being - that there is, for Aristotle, no Being beyond beings.

> *...more recent systemist conceptions reserve the category of autopoeisis (or self-production) for living machines ... whereas the older Heideggerian mode of philosophy entrusts techné, in its opposition to modern technicity, with the mission of "unveiling the truth," thus setting it solidly on an ontological pedestal - on a Grund - that compromises its definition as process of opening. (MH:13)*

As noted at the beginning of chapter one, Guattari situates 'modern technicity' or, as he calls them later -

> *...technical machines ... at the crossroads of the most complex and the most heterogeneous enunciative components. Heidegger, who well understood that it was not only a means, came to consider technics as a mode of unveiling the domain of truth. He took the example of a commercial airplane waiting on a runway: the visible object hides "what it is and the way in which it is." But does this "ground" of the machine really reside in an "already there," in the guise of eternal truths, revealed to the being of man? (22)*

Guattari presents his own map of machinic logic, in which "machines speak to machines before speaking to man" (ibid.). This logic does not attempt to contain material interactions within an ultimate revealing of some kind of stable and true dimension. Guattari's map is essentially "transmachinic" (26) and consists of a "smoothing out of the ontological texture of machinic material and diagrammatic feedback as so many dimensions of intensification" (26). In other words, what was an ontological question of what *is* becomes a question of the intensity of interactions *between*. Essentially, Guattari is trying to reach beyond the unified transcendental (or philosophical, mystery perceiving) subject to a different notion of the relations between being and the machine - one which is not based upon representations *to* that unified subject of other beings

and things, but upon the production of relations *between* them. In a sense here he is both affirming and denying the logic of Heidegger's thought. He writes -

> *Through smoothing out, a being beyond comes into play, a being-for-the-other, which makes an existing being take consistency outside of its strict delimitation in the here and now. The machine is always synonymous with a constitutive threshold of existential territory against a background of incorporeal reference universes....Smoothing out is like an ontological ritornello and, thus, far from apprehending a univocal truth of Being through techné, as Heideggerian ontology would have it, it is a plurality of beings as machines that give themselves to us once we acquire the pathic and cartographic access to them.* (26)

Guattari put this more simply in an interview when he said that he differed from thinkers such as Heidegger in that "I do not believe that the machine is something that turns us away from being. I think that machinic phylums are the productive agencies of being" (in Zahm, 1994:61 - my translation). And this is a being "not only for self, but for the whole alterity of the cosmos and for the. infinity of times" (*CHS*:26). In this Guattari's difference is, of course, not with Deleuze but with aspects of Heidegger. Guattari is not denying the importance of the ontological, merely trying to untie it from its hierarchical patterns. For Guattari, neither processual opening nor the multiplicity of machinic interactions prioritise the tragic unified subject of knowledge. Thus, in a sense, Guattari (and, following him, Deleuze) takes from Heidegger (and from the Greeks) part of the notion of techné, but removes it from its specific Humanist, or even post-humanist[56], ontology. Put simply, Guattari retains an interest in humans but not in Humanism. It could be said that whilst Heidegger's interest was primarily in Being, with little interest in beings, allowing him to retain a general Humanism, Guattari approaches the issues involved from the

---

[56] A 'post-humanist' ontology could be defined as one which based itself negatively upon the absence of the Human. This absence, however, would remain central.

opposite point of view, and is far more interested in, and affirmative of, beings in their difference. This is, however, not a trivial question of emphases. As with all theories, once their value as truth is abandoned, the question of where they apply their force becomes paramount.

This is also extremely important for an understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's aesthetics, which are not generated, as in Heidegger, as a way of saving the Humanist subject from the technical, but rather as a way of entering the subjective into 'machinic heterogenesis'.

For Heidegger, philosophy, as a privileged arena, remains central in the philosopher's disclosure of Being (through thinking). Guattari however, is more concerned with the socius, the individual and the environment - not with essences but with practices. In this, Guattari is not so concerned to preserve Dasein. In fact, his psychiatric practice leads him to conclude that "with psychosis the world of standardised Dasein loses its consistency" (*CHS*:63). Rather, as with Deleuze, "Alterity, as such, becomes the primary question" (ibid.). It is this experience of alterity that leads them through their whole ethics of the 'schizo' in the Capitalism and Schizophrenia volumes (*AO, ATP*). In *Chaosmosis* Guattari clearly views the machinic as a necessary counter to essentialist thinking, writing that "Psychosis is not a structural object but a concept; it is not an irremovable essence but a machination" (*CHS*:64). For Guattari the subject is maintained and developed by pre-producing machinic, interactive processes. In *Chaosmosis*, the ethico-aesthetic paradigm is that which allows the process of interaction, of machinic heterogenesis, to sustain itself.

For Guattari, the machinic (though this is not precisely the same as technology, as will be discussed later), although it is highly *expressive*, cannot be subsumed within either language or philosophy.

No couplet - Being-being, Being-Nothingness, being-other, can claim the status of an

ontological binary digit. Machinic propositions elude the ordinary games of discursivity

and the structural coordinates of energy, time and space. (*CHS*:38)

Guattari is moving away from the dominance of such binary, discursive ways of thinking and

practice for ethical reasons. In this he sees little difference between Platonic ideals and some

philosophical concepts which are based upon material*ism*, in that both share a "similar

ethicopolitical option" (*CHS*:29). All of these, which include the likes of the "true, the good, the

beautiful" as well as "Capital, the Signifier or Being"... " are empty referents, they create a

void, they install transcendence in the relations of representation" (ibid.). Capital disallows

difference in the realm of value and "valorisation". The Signifier "silences the infinite virtualities

of minor languages and partial expressions". As for Being - "Being is like an imprisonment

which blinds us to the richness and multivalences of Universes of value which, nevertheless,

proliferate under our noses" (ibid.)

Guattari proposes instead the concept of "ontological intensity" (ibid.). This is both an ethical

and aesthetic concept and one which focuses on the interactions that can be made possible within

enunciative assemblages. In this way Guattari refuses to reterritorialise production and creation

on anything but themselves. Guattari is quite willing to limit the importance of both sides of the

Heideggerian binary machine - of Being and being. For him "Being - as general ontological

equivalent...envelops, encloses and desingularises the process" (109). On the other hand the

"phenomenological apprehension of being existing as inert facticity only occurs in the case of

limit experiences such as existential nausea of melancholic depression" (ibid.). Both miss out on

the intensity and shifting nature of machinic production. For Guattari, this is a question of

"virtual ecology and ecosophy" (ibid.). Of course, this machinism is not the same as the

mechanistic. It "implies a double process - autopoietic-creative and ethical-ontological" (108). It

is with this double process, along with a Deleuzean/Nietzschean 'dramatisation', which opens out onto a continuous virtuality-actuality relation, that we can perhaps replace, what now seems the more mechanical 'tragic-totalitarian binary machine'. This is so even if it is through and within the transmutation and conversion of the latter that we have been able to create the former.

Computers Are Not Theatre

In order to distill some kind of clarity, then, out of this massive series of noisy interactions between discourses, concepts and machines - where, in fact, discourses and concepts *are* machines - I will suggest that computers are not primarily theatre, as much as various philosophical and corporate energies would like to have it that way. Neither are new technologies only simulating something[57]. They are, rather, new ways of connecting with the world and with each other, new ways of producing experience, or to put it in creative terms, of expressing.

There are at least two reasons for moving away from classical theatrical or representational models in considerations both of new technologies and of interaction in general.

The first is that representation *fixes* relations according to traditional patterns. Sometimes, and, one could argue, perhaps primarily, these are traditional patterns of relations *within representation* that are based upon an irremediable distance between that represented, the representation itself and that represented to. For example, in the work of Foucault (1979:135) it is the gaze, the notion of observing and being observed that produces docile bodies in the framework of the conditions in which they are *represented* to be. Brecht, one of the centuries

---

[57] See Baudrillard's *Simulations* (1983b:11), for example. Baudrillard rightly suggests that simulations are effective producers but seems nostalgic for a time when everything was not *only* simulated - when there was something that reflected the 'real' in an uncomplicated way.

major thinkers about the theatre, attacked the passive giving in to the State of things that such

representation could induce[58]. Brecht hated the effect of representation separating the audience

from - and accommodating it to - its everyday life with all its conflicts. He attempted to

circumvent the subsequent release of the potentially revolutionary steam these conflicts produced

in the audience through an Aristotelean "catharsis" (1965:8). Brecht did not want more

economically productive but docile bodies, as much public discussion of technology seems to

promise. His much misunderstood 'alienation effect'[59] was not something that kept the audience

away from that represented - outside of the spectacle - but precisely the opposite. It was a series

of techniques for interrupting, as Walter Benjamin (1983) put it, a distancing effect that was

already occurring *through* the theatrical. The anthropologist Victor Turner (1982) put this

another way when he lamented the division in twentieth century culture between the lived and the

theatrical. For Turner, performance was divided from 'real life' by being determined as leisure, an

afterwork activity, much as Aristotle saw the representation of an action as something that

occurred on the sidelines of the citizen's proper civic activity. Turner points out that the roots of

the theatrical in ritual have an entirely different conception of the relation between performance,

---

[58] Of course, it is necessary here to mention that, as in the case of Brecht, it is often the effect of Aristotle's *Poetics* that is being attacked rather than the poetics themselves. In Brecht's case, it was perhaps a matter of attacking the Greek basis, that is, as has been discussed previously, the cultural guarantee of something else - namely the naive forms of naturalism that Brecht found himself surrounded by. Aristotle's theories are, of course, much more complex than their interpreters often allow. For example, the concept of the 'imitation of an action' seems to oscillate between the imitation of men (Aristotle, 1965:5) and 'not of men, but of actions, (of life, and of felicity)" (9). It can be seen that Heidegger follows the complexities of Aristotle's notions of mimesis perhaps more closely here than Brecht, in that it would seem that Brecht's theatre work itself *could* be considered under the notion of an imitation of an action despite his critique of the idea. Heidegger, on the other hand, like Aristotle, situates his work precisely in this gap between 'men' and the more general action of life that surrounds them. The whole notion of mimesis here is, perhaps, another problematic from the orbit of which it may not be so easy to escape. Nevertheless, certain *priorities* both in Aristotle's work and in its cheaper imitations themselves, *as* imitations, misrepresentations which in themselves demonstrate the problematic of the mimesis, must be resisted - perhaps used as a departure point rather than a point of arrival.

[59] This is sometimes misunderstood as a distancing effect, as if the audience must just be distanced from the action represented before them. 'Alienation' is, in fact, only half a translation of the German *Verfremdung*. It is better considered as a 'making strange', which does not preclude involvement in the action on the stage. As Walter Benjamin (1983:3) points out, this is a matter of an interruption of the action more than a distancing from it.

life, and acting out. This is one of a connection with life-events through performance and a gaining in affect. In other words, in ritual performance is productive work, civic activity.

The falling apart of the 'human story' - *as* story in particular - in the face of late twentieth century technology can also be viewed in terms of representation and production. It is essential, but impossible, that the representation which seeks to give the *illusion of consistency* in the representation of Truth, of permanency through time, or of identity (the representation that is true because it equals, or mirrors itself in an essential way), hide its productive relations with the field of the real from which it produces this illusion. This is just as the puppeteer remains hidden for the sake of the 'life' of the puppets. This production is of what Deleuze and Guattari would call anti-production[60], that which seeks to limit the production of the field to certain fixed notions of subject, socius or world. Yet it perhaps produces more lines of escape the greater its frenzy to control such notions.

Despite these lines of escape, the imposition of self-completing lines through representations that trace existing conditions and attempt to repeat them[61] is extremely problematic from the point of view of interaction. Interaction is also, of course, extremely problematic for the lines which deny its priority. Yet, as I have argued, concepts derived from Aristotle's (1965:10) notions of beginnings, middles and ends, when combined with his notions of the "unity of the fable" and of the action (10-11) provide a particularly powerfully anti-productive prescription. Brecht's anti-prescriptive 'interruption' may prove an antidote here. Or his endings such as the ending of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (Brecht, 1965) which do not finish the action *within* the imitation but draw attention to what is being produced in the theatre.

---

[60] This is discussed at length in *Anti-Oedipus*. Deleuze and Guattari write that 'the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process (of production) *appears* to emanate from this recording surface" (10) - my parentheses and italics.

[61] Such as in Heidegger's attempt to join the Greeks and the Germans, or in Gibson's alignment of cyberspace with the genre of the Western.

Brian Eno, one of the subtler theorists of interactive practice, wonders if the contemporary formulation of interaction is not fatally tainted particularly by the idea of finished actions. He writes -

> *In a blinding flash of inspiration, the other day I realised that "interactive" anything is the wrong word. Interactive makes you imagine people sitting with their hands on the controls, some kind of gamelike thing. The right word is "unfinished". Think of cultural products, or art works, or the people who use them even, as being unfinished. Permanently unfinished. We come from a cultural heritage that says things have a "nature", and that this nature is fixed and "describable." We find more and more that this idea is unsupportable - the "nature" of something is not by any means singular, and depends on where and when you find it, and what you want it for... I can imagine the hypertext consciousness spreading to things we take in, not only things we read. I am very keen on this unfinished idea because it co-opts things like screen savers and games and even archives, which are basically unfinished pieces of work.* (Eno and Kelly; 1995:151)

Performance art, non-Western cultural performances, real time performance and its many variants, including many forms of alternative theatre - even popular music performances - may provide us with more useful understandings of the "unfinished" than the classical theatre. Such performance practices will be the main practical focus of the next section of this thesis. They are all 'unfinished'. They could all be repeated yet, in their repetition, would be different. They are all about being conscious of assemblage and interaction and the possibilities of producing something new. On the other hand, the classical theatre of foregrounded and uncomplicated illusion, more

often than not, sidelines itself into re-producing pre-established social relations - maintaining a

politics clearly positioned 'on *the* line'[62].

The second reason that it is imperative to move away from theatrical models of performance

when theorising new technologies is precisely the seductive nature of the classical theatrical. This

is especially present in the cathartic effect that takes place within the spectator which reaffirms

the social power of that represented - as so accurately observed and formulated by Aristotle.

These catharses are powerful because they draw on a coincidence of affect, represented social

power and a collective assemblage of bodies. We need to ask what is happening under their

cover today - which catharses are we having, and why do we need them? Where do they leave

us? Critical philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (1988a, 1988b, 1989)[63] has, for example, time and time

again pointed to a history as long as philosophy itself, whereby an imposition of masculine forms

of representation, indeed of representation itself has stifled the expression of women's desires

and bodies. More generally, it has stifled a working through of awareness and questioning of

desires and bodies per se - of what a body can do when it is not immediately passified and

submitted to dominant social representations.

In sum then, it is not just a question of *what* is represented here, as many commentators such

as Laurel seem to suggest, but of the relation *between* representation and production, of the

problems with having representation as an a priori consideration in the first place. Thus the

question concerning technology - its interactions and the ethics that surrounds it - is not as

simple a question as that of 'which representation?' - of substituting one representation for

another[64]. Staying with this question would be just to reinstate the whole machinery of the

classical theatre, which, whatever the representation, still very effectively produces the very

---

[62] See *On the Line* (OL), for a description of the politics of the line.

[63] Amongst many others, such as Luce Irigaray (1985a, 1985b).

[64] Witness, to this effect, Irigaray's withering critique of Plato's Cave, the latter's specular deferral of production at the very moment that it instates productive relations of sexual prejudice in *The Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985a).

relations that we should use Aristotle's insights to problematise, not to re-produce. This is still the case even if we are reproducing a slightly more gender friendly version of a very unfriendly American corporate machine. Haraway recognises this in her "A Cyborg Manifesto", where she emphasises that it is a matter of *connecting* differently both to machines and to each other. It is in a consideration of our fundamental interactions that we will necessarily and profoundly challenge received representations of all kinds - of the human and the non-human kind, let alone the gendered.