Chapter Five

Vibrations in the Air - Cracks in the Subject

...orgiastic representation...no longer refers to the limitation of a form, but to the ***convergence*** *towards a ground; no longer to the distinction of forms but to the correlation of the grounded and the ground; no longer to the arrestation of power but to the element in which power is effectuated, on which it is grounded.* (*DR*:43)

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental ***encounter****.* (*DR*:139)

The fetishised 'new' in 'new technologies' is perhaps their least interesting aspect when considering their interactive and ethical potential. As I have suggested the fetishised 'new' has more to do with transcendent teleology than immanent becoming. This chapter recounts the recent work of artists Rebecca Horn, John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Joyce Hinterding, Marina Abramovic and Ulay in order to to assess more positively the possible levels and nature of interactivity in performance using technology. The technologies used in such work are sometimes new, sometimes old, sometimes startling and sometimes banal. What is always new, however, is the way in which plan(e)s of a high degree of interactivity and consistency are created.

Rebecca Horn and the Open Plan(e)

Rebecca Horn's work performs a series of immanent counter-actualisations in interactions between the body and technology. Her work makes no attempt to transcend such interactions. It therefore provides different answers to the problems posed by Stelarc's work surrounding the body, machines, the virtual, the animal and the elemental. In Horn's work, as in Stelarc's, the body is often presented as dysfunctional or constrained. However, machines, far from being more perfect than the human, seem to become tired and worn out, or to have their own little idiosyncracies and desires. The virtual is highlighted not as evolutionary possibility but as dream, myth, abstract machines such as the medical, cultural and personal history, or even simply as electrical current or electrostatic charge. The 'animal', absent in Stelarc's work, is foregrounded in Horn's. It is sometimes presented as whole (for example, snakes are fed mice) but more often in pieces, such as in the fragmented form of wings and feathers. The elemental and cosmic operate not as future extra-terrestrial teleologies but as an existing and immanent landscape, in processes as diverse as vegetation or electricity (lightning rods, for example). Finally, in Horn's work there is nearly always the reduction of the whole (animal, subject, machine) to its parts so that these parts can conserve the percepts and affects of interaction. There is little attempt to freeze some unity or teleology into Being. Horn works with bits of the past, bits of machinery, bits of animals, all subtracted from their usual unifying discursive framework. In this, Horn reintroduces a kind of fragmentary subject, or, at least, the percepts and affects of a subject stripped away from that subject so as to 'vibrate'. The immanent specificity also allows for the emergence of processes of gender fragmentation.

Black Widow (La Petite Veuve), 1988. Feathers and motor, 35 x 80 cm (open), 40 x 43 cm (closed).

Figure 3 - Rebecca Horn - **Black Widow** *(1988) - taken from* **Rebecca Horn** *(exhibition catalogue) New York:Guggenheim Museum, 1993/1994 (unpaginated)*

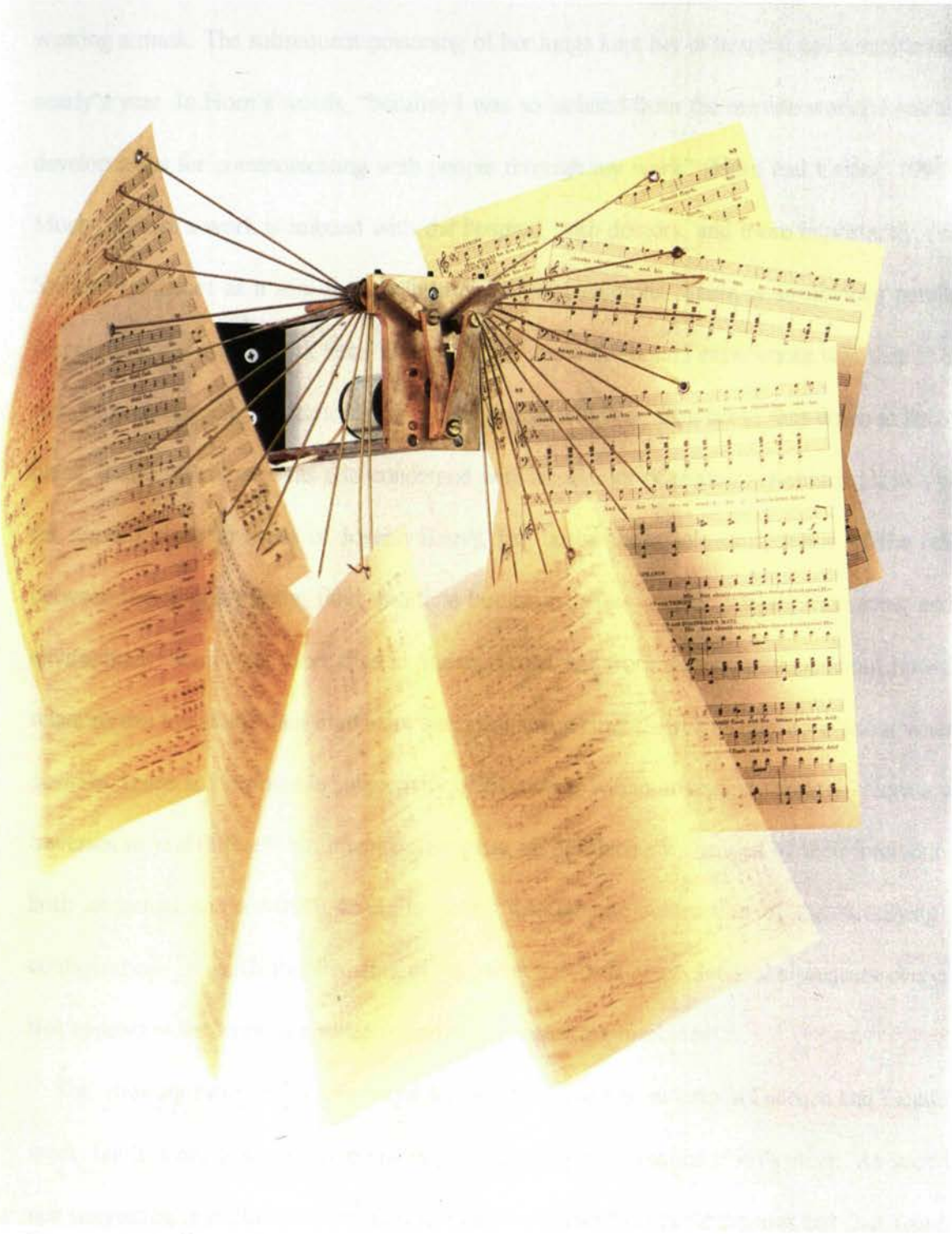

Figure 4 - Rebecca Horn* - Floating Souls *(1990) - taken from* Rebecca Horn *(exhibition catalogue) New York:Guggenheim Museum, 1993/1994 (unpaginated)

Horn herself has had to negotiate the boundaries between fragmentary body, subject and art. As an art student Horn was badly advised and worked with polyester and fibreglass without wearing a mask. The subsequent poisoning of her lungs kept her in hospital and a sanitarium for nearly a year. In Horn's words, "because I was so isolated from the outside world, I started to develop ideas for communicating with people through my work" (Horn and Celant, 1994:15). Much of Horn's work is imbued with the hospital, with doctors, and more importantly, (unlike Stelarc's) with art as a tool for the transmutation of relations. There is an obvious parallel to Joseph Beuys' life and work here. One of Beuys' most celebrated experiences was that of being rescued and treated by Tartars during the Second World War, after being shot down in his Stuka plane. Beuys, of course, was also concerned with art as a set of relations. Rebecca Horn's work, for reasons close to those of Joseph Beuys, has raised the whole problematic of the relation between the (fragile) body; fluid, multiple but nevertheless specific subject fragments; and the environment. Somewhat more than in Stelarc's case, her work raises questions about how these relations can transform their immanent historical specificities as well as questions about where to position desire and a possible subjectivity of becoming within immanent relations. Horn's work traverses several different but inter-related areas, all of which are changed by their interaction, at both an actual and a virtual level. In short, through the subtraction of the stratifying pre-configurations in which the elements of her work are usually involved, she presents everything that appears in her work as a series of connecting "desiring-machines".

The "desiring-machine" is, of course, a (in)famous and crucial term in Deleuze and Guattari's work, but it is one that may have had to be invented in any case for Horn's work. As such I am not suggesting that Horn's work illustrates Deleuze and Guattari's theories but that there is a useful series of relations between them.

Deleuze and Guattari discuss the desiring-machine right at the beginning of their first collaboration (*AO*:1-8). For the purposes of our discussion here the important aspects of the desiring-machine are that it erases neat distinctions between such realms as the animal and the machine, and that it is always (at least) a coupling causing a flow. Writing about Büchner's *Lenz*, and writing against Lacan's claims that everything is language (Lacan, 1977:124) they assert that -

> *Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines - all of them connected to those of his body. ...There is no such thing as man or nature now, only a process that produces one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever.* (2)

and that -

> *Desiring-machines are always binary machines...one machine is always coupled with another. The productive synthesis, the production of production, is inherently connective in nature: "and..." "and then..." This is because there is always a flow-producing machine, and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of this flow (the breast, the mouth). And because the first machine is in turn connected to another whose flow it interrupts or partially drains off, the binary series is linear in every direction*[1]. (5)

In all this, the flow is constant but the interruptions and connections are constantly dynamic and transforming.

[1] Note that this series is linear in every direction, not just in one direction.

This is the case in Horn's work. In some pieces, she transfigures the body with various forms of wrapping, constriction and extensions. In *Arm Extensions* (1968) she has extended the arms so that they are grounded on the floor in the same binding that wraps and constricts the naked body, giving a stillness which induces a new relation to the ground. She has encased heads or bodies in layers of feathers in manners which refer to flight but also suggest that a simple reference to flight would be too simple a way out of the new relations that are requiring consideration. She has strapped very long unicorn-like extensions to the heads of performers as in, for example, *Unicorn*, 1971 (Goldberg, 1988:175). She has manufactured from felt a 'horned' connection between her breasts and her mouth, enabling her to communicate with her breasts more directly, even with the warmth of the breath, in *Cornucopia - Seance for Two Breasts* (1970). In *Overflowing Blood Machine* (1970) she made exterior clear tubes surround the naked body which were filled with red liquid which emphasise the "mechanics of fluids" [2] that normally takes place hidden within the body. In all these works inhibitions of the body's normal organisation enable the consideration of relations which are not prefigured.

Horn also transforms the qualities of space and of specific spaces, be they galleries, the open environment, controversial historical spaces or even spaces that have ramifications for Horn personally. Thus, her 1994 exhibition at the Guggenheim in New York utilised the whole of that museums' uniquely constructed space. At the centre of the space "every few seconds one drop of milky liquid" fell "through the building from two large breastlike funnels suspended in the building's cupola, onto the tip of the jet of water in the fountain below" (Horn and Morgan,

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[2] The title of an essay by Luce Irigaray (1985b:106-117) which gives another theoretical link to Horn's work. Irigaray counters the normal, masculine approach to culture and subjectivity in terms of solids (such as the phallus) - things which are things as such and stand alone as things - with an attempt to give a description of relation in terms of fluids and flows as a basis for understanding actual and potential cultural practice. Horn works literally with fluids at times, often with water in ways similar to Beuys' use of honey as an 'environmentalising' agent, and in particular with large flows of mercury, for example, in *Rivers of the Moon*, a piece to do with the ebbs and flows of her own memories of desire in a hotel in Barcelona (where she returned to exhibit this installation). See also Bruno, 1994:90. In many ways Horn's work seems a much fuller (or perhaps *less* full) realisation of a fluid 'BwO' than Stelarc's.

1994:25). She even used the basement as a kind of 'inferno' for a further installation and says herself that her installations are often site specific. Her piece *River of the Moon* (1992) was installed in several rooms of a Barcelona hotel. Her films are often an exploration of particular spaces, such as the sanitarium in the film *Buster's Bedroom* (1990).

Probably the most remarkable transformation of a space, which involved a quite specific subtraction of the normal social figuring of a space as it had existed within the entire history and cultural life of the site involved, was her installation in Münster entitled *Concert in Reverse* (1987). Here she *opened up* a tower which had been closed up and left bombed out since the end of the Second World War, primarily because it had served as a place for the torture and execution of the victims of the Gestapo. Horn found that the interior of the tower was lushly vegetated. She installed, amongst other things, a cage with two live snakes that were each fed a Münster mouse each day. There was a scandal. Ostensibly at least, the scandal in the town became the feeding of the mice to the snakes. Of course, this 'scandal' only served as a distraction from other forced transformations that were occurring in relation to the tower's historical signification - its centrality to the town's history and its own repression thereof.

All of Horn's works exemplify the process of subtraction that is involved in becoming. As Massumi (1992:103) suggests[3] -

> *Stop the world. Becoming is about movement, but it begins with an inhibition. At least some of the automatic circuits between regularized stimuli and habitual responses must be disconnected, as if a crowbar had been inserted into the interlocking network of standardized actions and trajectories constituting the World As We Know It.*

[3] Mathieson, 1995,by whom this quote was first made clear to me, makes this central to his argument.

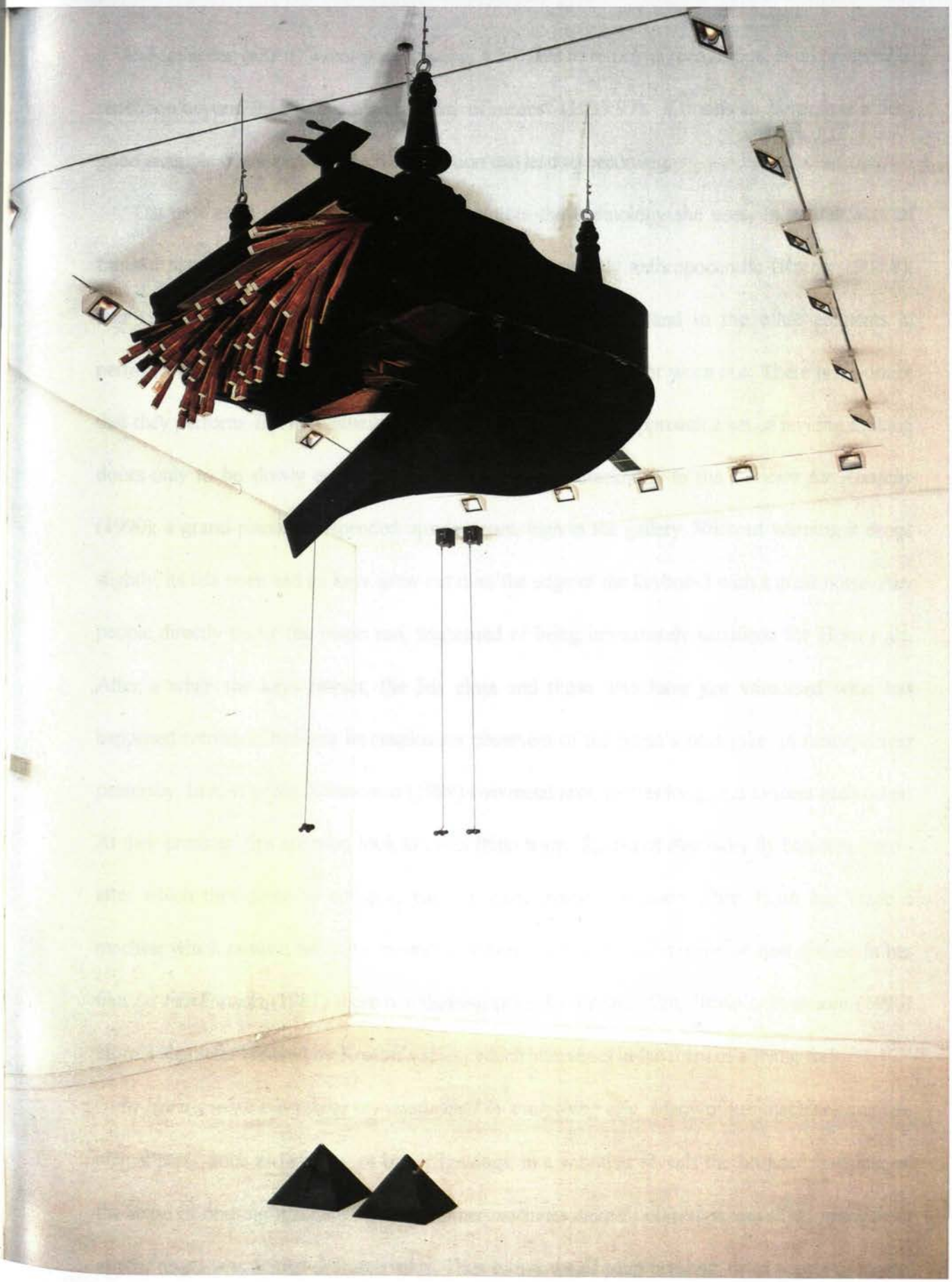

Figure 5 - A Rebecca Horn 'piano piece'* - Rebel Moon *(1991) - taken from* Rebecca Horn *(exhibition catalogue) New York:Guggenheim Museum, 1993/1994 (unpaginated)

As Mathieson puts it "What goes missing, what fails to return as recognition, is taken up by a repetition beyond the organism's economy of means" (1995:97). *Concert in Reverse* is a very good example of the way in which subtraction can lead to becoming.

The new economy created by Horn embraces the technology she uses. In further acts of transformation Horn constructs 'machines' that are arguably anthropocentric (Krens, 1994:8), that seem to have subject-elements that relate to each other and to the other elements in performances and installations. They become, for example, tired or worn out. There is no doubt that they perform. In *The Chinese Fiancée* (1976) participants approach a set of inviting looking doors only to be slowly enclosed within them in utter blackness. In the *Concert for Anarchy* (1990), a grand piano is suspended upside down, high in the gallery. Without warning it drops slightly, its lids open and its keys spew out over the edge of the keyboard with a great noise. Any people directly under the piano run, frightened of being immediately sacrificed for Horn's art. After a while the keys retract, the lids close and those who have just witnessed what has happened retreat to become inconspicuous observers of the piano's next joke on unsuspecting passersby. In *Kiss of the Rhinoceros* (1989) two metal arcs, metres long, rise to meet each other. At their proximal tips are what look like real rhino horns. Sparks of electricity fly between them - after which they seem to collapse, passion spent, away from each other. Horn has made a machine which raises a tail in the manner of a peacock but this tail is made of steel spikes. In her film *La Ferdinanda* (1981) there is a dancing table. In her later film, *Buster's Bedroom* (1990) Horn's character is saved by Keaton's spirit, which intervenes in the form of a flying fork.

In Horn's work everything is transformed by everything else. Many of her machines animate animal parts, such as feathers, or butterfly wings, in a way that reveals the broader machinic, in the sense of desiring-machines, in both. Other machines animate objects in ways that make them appear to possess animal characteristics. Thus two rows of paint brushes, or of sheets of music,

become wings. Her works are nearly all performance as well as sculpture, in which the performance is as much a question of the dynamics of idiosyncratic machinery as it is the mythological allusions of human interaction with that machinery. Her machines even do abstract paintings and most of them can make you laugh, for example, in the comic way in which thin little brushes at the end of very long steel tendons throw paint at a wall. Finally, Horn makes films in which objects and the space perform as much as the actors within them. In all this work the amazingly high degree of interaction in and between both virtual and actual series creates tremendous vibration - percepts and affects are created in every direction and what is conserved is the very sense of the strange interaction between body, machinic subject (which only ever includes the human subject but does not *exclude* other components of subjective formation and shift), space - both natural and cultural, culture, myth and gender, animal and machine. In ways similar to Beuys' work everything in Horn's work conserves its own transformations by something else, conserves an open-ness to transformation and relation. These transformations are given highly specific inflections which one would say were highly gendered if they did not become even more specific than that. This, as several critics have pointed out, is both a rejoinder to, and a way forward from, masculine formations of artistic practice which are based upon non-relation to anything but a masculine ability to co-ordinate its own (non-relational) path through the world with as little interaction as possible.

In this sense Horn confronts an entire history of masculinity's complicity with modernity and art, as revealed in the cult of modernity as alienated (male) artist, or more simply, flaneur or bachelor. This dates at least from Baudelaire's famous poem "A une Passante" which describes an inaugural moment of modernity, as Baudelaire sees a passing woman and is thrilled, in part because he realised that he will probably never see her again. As Benjamin writes, this is not so much love at first sight as "love at last sight" (Benjamin, 1983:45). In other words it is his lack

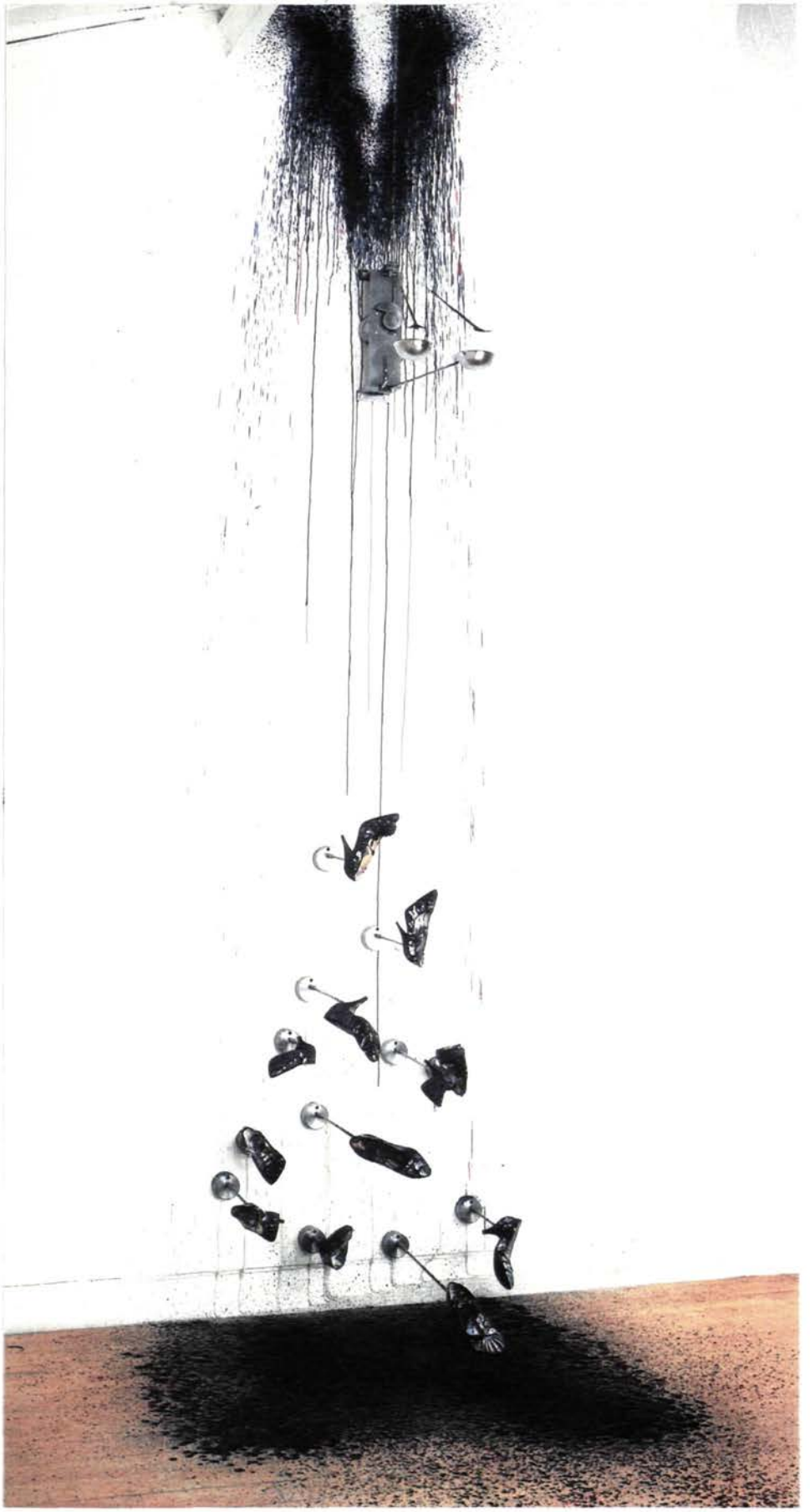

Figure 6 - Rebecca Horn - **The Prussian Bride Machine** *(1988) - taken from* **Rebecca Horn** *(exhibition catalogue) New York:Guggenheim Museum, 1993/1994 (unpaginated)*

of relation to the woman which constitutes his modernity and, as in Lacan's theories[4], it is the plenitude of lack which constitutes his jouissance, its "trembling as a madman thrills" (ibid.). Nancy Spector, in commenting on the extent to which Horn's machines are constituted by their hybridity, dates this same problem in the visual arts to Michel Carrouges' derivation of the term 'bachelor machine' from Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (1915-23) (Spector, 1994:58). Spector points out that this artistic world is a world of auto-eroticism and auto-despair, a "domain without women" (ibid.). Spector goes on to demonstrate how this figure of the woman-denying, relation denying bachelor-machine is a recurring one, from the dandy to the bohemian. Spector claims that Horn displaces this not by simply reversing the gender roles and "fabricating specifically 'feminine' mechanisms" (59), but, in a way reminiscent of Donna Haraway's cyborgs, by "appropriating 'male' technology for [her] own emancipatory ends" (60). The difference is that work such as Duchamp's is based, according to Spector, on separation and autonomy, whilst, in Horn's work, similar elements are made to fuse, to relate, to come out of themselves, so to speak[5]. For Carrouges, the bachelor machine "is a fantastic image that transforms love into a technique of death". Horn's work could be said to consist not of images but of *events* which transform death into techniques of love[6]. Giuliana Bruno (1994:80), following Constance Penley and Michel de Certeau, points out that this 'bachelor-machine' is also at the heart of the cinema, the essence of which can be seen to be its

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[4] Elizabeth Grosz explains that "It is the movement from one signifier to another, which Lacan claims is the very movement of desire, the endless substitution of one object of pleasure for another, none of which is adequate to fill the original lack propelling desire - the lost or renounced mother" (Grosz, 1989:24).

[5] For a discussion of how this fundamental masculine approach is repeated in mainstream theatre, see my own "Lost in the Fatherland: Naturalism, Theatre and the Body" (Murphie, 1987).

[6] There is a similar tension between various elements within post-structural philosophy, between for example, Lacan's famous assertion that there is no relation between the sexes and that which Jane Gallop points out is "Irigaray's reading of Freud (that) seeks that 'relation between the sexes'" (Gallop, 1982:66). I would claim that there are similar tensions between theorists of absence such as Derrida and Barthes (who present arguments based upon a closed assumption of textuality priority), and theorists more inclined towards a textuality or semiotic system which is openly interactive with other elements, such as Deleuze and Guattari.

functioning as a "mechanical scopophilic toy" (ibid.). Horn re-inflects the machinic away from its bachelorhood with her creation of "Bride Machines" (ibid.) - machines that open out rather than close down.

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Deleuze gives a different perspective on this in his essay on Heidegger and Jarry. Here, in what is a highly problematic moment that truly reveals that there *is* a problem with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming-woman", despite its value in other ways, he reinflects a kind of bachelor-machine to an indifferentiation of the sexes. With Horn it is rather a case of the proliferation of sexes without the abandonment of the feminine. Running through all this, in Deleuze-Guattarian terms, but perhaps exceeding them, is a 'becoming-woman' of all the elements involved. The movement is not towards the unity of masculine alienation but precisely towards the ambiguities of the feminine in relation to the elements involved. To put this simply, Horn is creating art which conserves the percepts and affects of relation rather than alienation, whilst also conserving at the same time the difficulties and ambiguities of those relations as the very dynamic that underlies them. Thus, the repetition of the meeting of rhino horns and electricity in *Kiss of the Rhinoceros* (1989) is never without its 'difference in repetition' in relation to its own forward dynamic in relation to the supposed (cultural) alienations between subjective forms (desire), technology (electricity) and the natural (Rhino horns - which far from being phallic and unitary are shown to be two and *only dynamic when two*). Horn's pieces demonstrate that subjectivity is machinic to the extent to which it is not fixed in a relation of transcendence or surface and depth, but instead dispersed fluidly and dynamically throughout a field, or on what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'plane of consistency'. In Horn's work machines participate in the subjective *field* to such an extent that they themselves seem to become invested with their own fragmentary subjective *dynamic* conserved through percepts and affects. Indeed, when subjectivity is exteriorised and mobilised to this extent one

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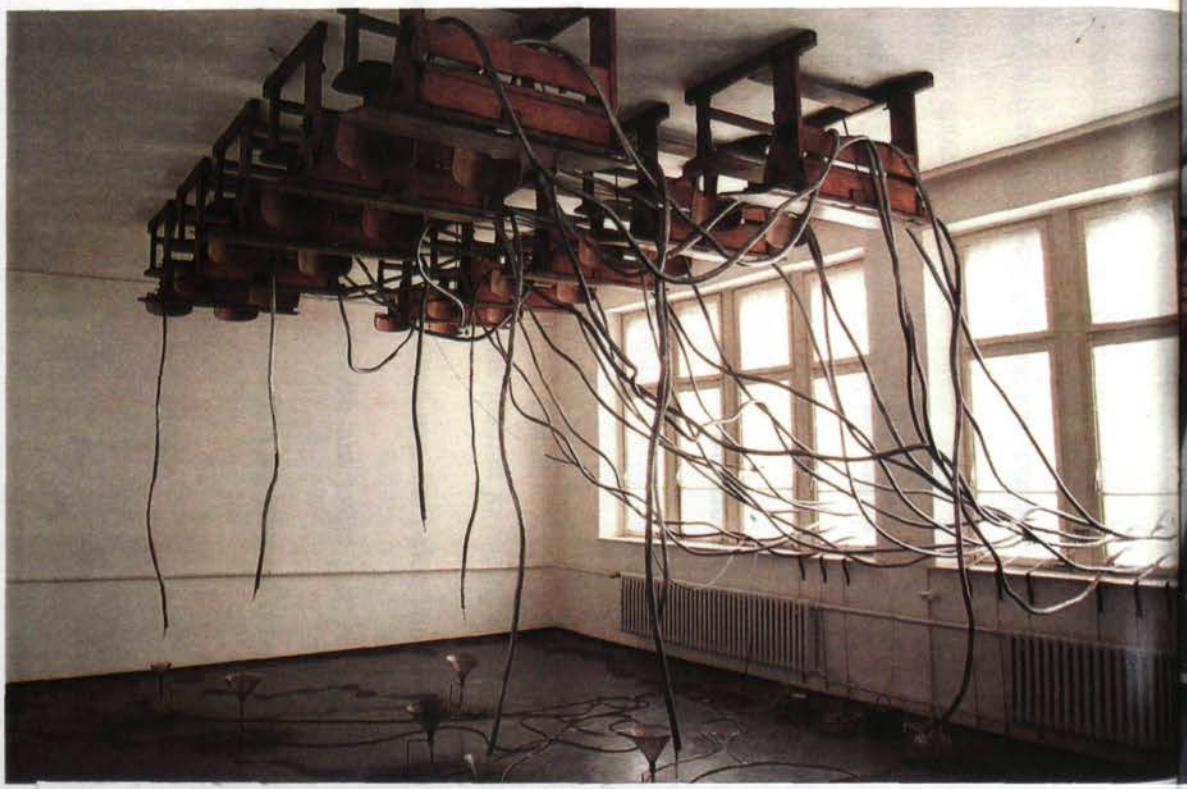
The Moon, the Child, and the River of Anarchy (Der Mond, das Kind, und der *anarchistische Fluß*), 1992. School desks, plastic tubes, ink, glass funnels, lead tubes, and mercury, dimensions variable. (Left) Interior and (right) exterior *views of site-specific installation* for Documenta 9, Kassel, 1992.



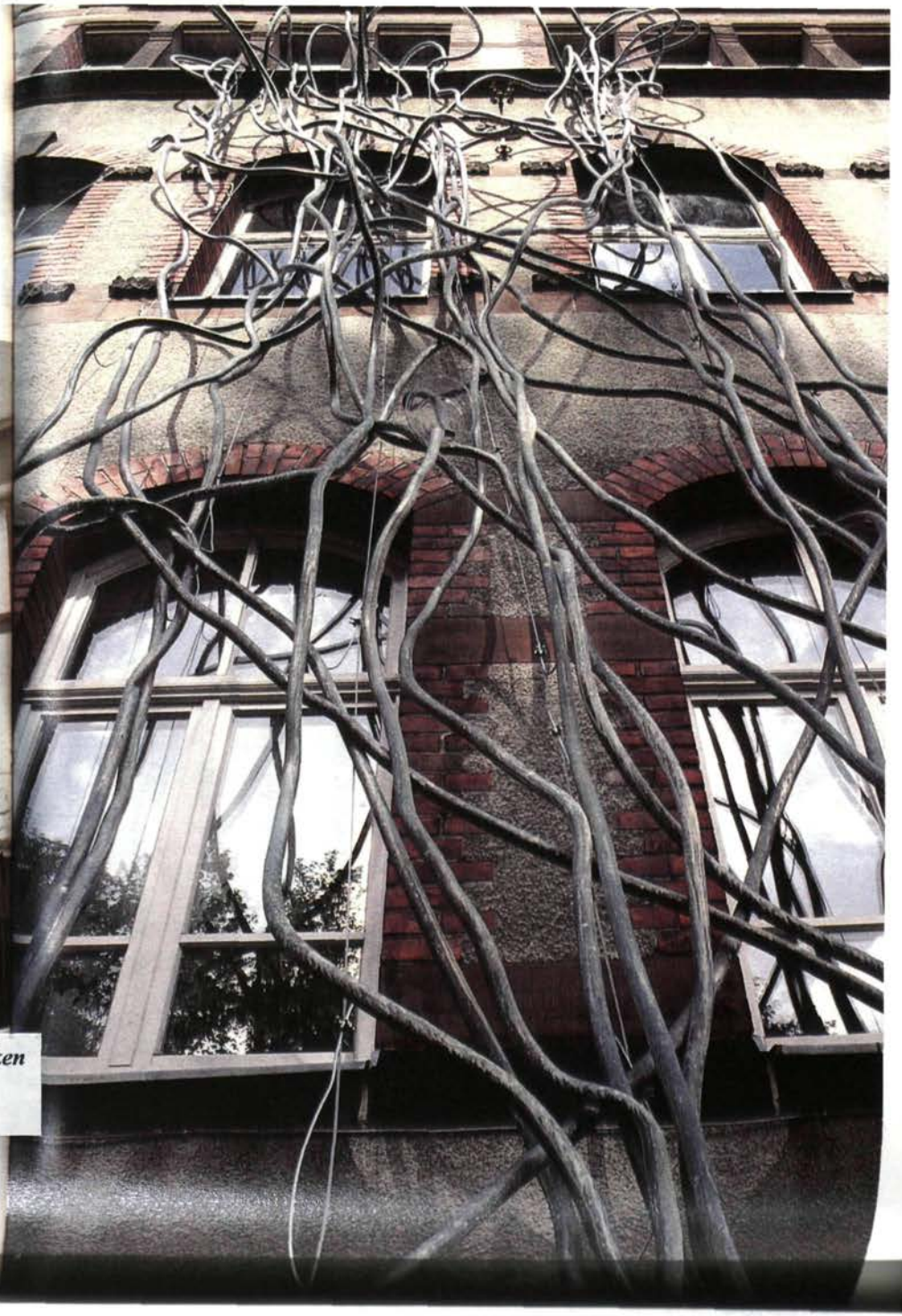


Figure 7 - Rebecca Horn and 'flows'* - The Moon, the Child, and the River of Anarchy *(1992) - taken from* Rebecca Horn *(exhibition catalogue) New York:Guggenheim Museum, 1993/1994 (unpaginated)

would have to say that it is perhaps not subjectivity per se (thus Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on the fact that percept and affect are not at all the same as subject based perception and affection). Or perhaps one could say that this new form of subjectivity is so changed that it is based primarily upon the fluidity of percept and affect as they escape from stratified structures. At this point comedy and whimsy become dynamic transformational, interactive machines.

Interactivity is always a becoming

In all this, it is important to realise that it is not a question of representation, of creating an accurate picture or resemblance. This would not involve much in the way of becoming. Becoming always occurs through affect, not through the affections of a unitary subject which are predicated upon some sort of constancy, nor upon an invisible movement between two highly visible 'States'. For Deleuze and Guattari, the "affect is not the passage from one lived state to another but man's nonhuman becoming" -

> *...becoming is an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. André Dhotel knew how to place his characters in strange plant-becomings, becoming tree or aster: this is not the transformation of one into the other, he says, but something passing from one to the other. This something can be specified only as sensation. It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons...endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an affect...art itself lives on these zones of indetermination.* (*WP*:173)

This zone of indetermination describes what could, perhaps incorrectly, be perceived as some of the more mystical moments of performance art[7]. These supposed mystical moments are, in reality, attempts at conserving sensations which are specific and interactive rather than interpretive and generalising representations. What seems mystical is therefore perhaps best seen an interactive and ecological.

To give an example, there is Cage's movement away from interpretation, and away from perception and affection, to his use of both natural environment and socius as equal points in a general field of sensation. This field, however, is not primarily in the service of the subject, or *even a mourning of the lack or loss of that subject.* This is where Cage differs from some other postmodern practitioners and theorists. It is perhaps useful to note here that there are different kinds of fragmentation, different engagements with the aleatory and the contingent, both in aesthetic practice and in theory. The first kind of these involves a kind of mourning of unity, in a sense a hostility to the contingent, as arguably found in Lacan's formulation of the split subject and the irrecoverable 'petit objet 'a", or Baudrillard's mourning of the passing of a world in which signifiers refer to something other than themselves. Despite the deconstruction in such cases there is still a passion for meaning. In fact, some deconstructive acts are nothing but the trace of this passion. The second kind of understanding involves the passion of *objectivity*, and here it is perhaps possible to incorporate the work of those such as Deleuze and Guattari.

In aesthetic practices such as Cage's or Horn's it can be seen that there is an opening out to contingency. This is an opening out to the small details which structure, in Cage's case through chance operations, the participation of the work in the environment and the socius. The individual becomes a part of these, not a substitute for them, as with Romantic artist. This can be seen in nearly all Cage's work, from his "playing" of an amplified cactus needle with a feather,

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[7] Or even the "matrix" in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

Figure 8 - Joseph Beuys **- Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me -** ***taken from Goldberg, 1988:151***

to his more recent piece *Whether/Weather* (1992), in which the piece was to be performed outdoors and simply canceled if it rained. Cage said "I am willing to give myself over to weather. I like to think of my music as weather, as part of the weather" (Retallack in Perloff and Junkerman 1994:244). It is also important to remember that Cage never excluded the technological from this environment.

One can also see in Joseph Beuys' work the importance of interactive becomings, and if Cage's work tends to move in the direction of percept, Beuys', starting from similar desires for increased interactive sensation, moves in the direction of affect, of becoming, the becomings for example of fat, which becomes absorbed into everything that surrounds it, or of felt, which absorbs everything that surrounds it, even sound, and is itself a multiple becoming right from the start. In Beuys' work with animals one can also see this double becoming. It is what was conserved in such work as *I like America and America likes Me*, his celebrated piece in which Beuys explored America by spending a week in a gallery with some felt, straw, newspapers and a coyote. The point was not one of environmental perception, nor of some Oedipalisation[8] of the coyote as a representation of American subjective experience. Rather, the work focused upon the affects that were conserved in a double becoming between Beuys and the coyote. These affects shifted the emphasis to the possibility of transformation and co-existence between the human and the non-human, rather than it being a question of one dominating, or representing, something of the other[9]. In *7,000 Oaks* (1982), where Beuys began the planting of 7,000 oaks, each with its own accompanying basalt block, a piece completed after his death, Beuys was attempting to

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[8] By this I mean the rendering 'human' of the coyote within a patriarchal framework - the addition of the coyote to Man's perceptive accumulation.

[9] Thus one can see in regard to the question of "becoming-woman" that if this process involves the subtraction of the Masculine so that interactions can occur between all sexes, one can concede Deleuze and Guattari's point - that is, everything must go through this initial subtraction and first become-woman in order to become anything else, patriarchal systems being so culturally dominant. If, on the other hand, as it seems in some of their work, this is a process more available to men than to women, there is a simple reterritorialisation of what we may call a 'deterritorialised patriarchal' form.

create the sensations of a landscape, specifically of trees, which had its own 'rights'. With this work one can also understand perhaps what Deleuze and Guattari mean when they say that eternity can co-exist with the short duration of the material. The event of planting the trees is conserved in the material, in the vibrations that will emanate from interactions with this material afterwards, even if those people or things vibrated have never heard of Joseph Beuys. The trees intervene in the nature of eternity. One could say something similar of Cage's *4' 33"*. In this piece, built very precisely out of a series of musical rests in three movements which were determined by chance operations (Cage, 1990), eternity coincides with the piece's short duration every time it is played because an event of complete openness as to the structure of time is what is conserved in the percepts and affects, which are, of course, different for every performance. In both pieces, as events, a different eternity arises and is conserved in the emanation of percepts and affects. Here interaction and production take over totally from representation in that what is conserved is the precise possibility of the transformation of any moment. Each percept is a marker of its singularity and resonance across the infinite plane of that moment. Cage, following the Zen teacher D.T. Suzuki, called this interpenetration and unimpededness (Cage, 1968:46). It is the result of a careful plan for the conservation of indeterminacy.

For Beuys, in perhaps a much less pure fashion, 'interpenetration and unimpededness' were equally important. In Guattarian terms, the environment, the socius and the individual human subject were all equally important so far as they transformed each other. Beuys' entire artistic style also had its own specific accompanying concept, namely that of "social sculpture" (Stachelhaus, 1991:61-70) which consists precisely in a notion of the interactive nature of all beings and things *as sculpture* and sculpture *as this interaction*. Sculpture, for Beuys, was not a question of creating a statue or even necessarily an installation, but of this interaction, and Beuys constantly hoped to broaden its base, its plane of immanence. Beuys' notion of social sculpture

(as a concept) and his interactive practice (as percepts and affects) - with people (discussion was often part of his installations and actions), politics (particularly Green politics), social institutions (such as his attempt to admit all students who applied for his course without regard to University admission quotas or procedures - an action that led to his final dismissal as a teacher at the Düsseldorf Academy in 1973), machines (such as the Honey Pump) and, of course, animals - were themselves interactive. Part of his artistic practice would consist of talking about his concepts of social sculpture. Many of his more political actions were meant to invoke some sort of conservation of percept and affect which might in turn lead to the creation of concepts (the percept and affects of *7,000 Oaks* leading to a new conceptualisation of the interaction between urban space and trees, the introduction of a new eternity).

Harald Szeeman calls Beuys' work a time machine of raging fire ("La machine thermo-ardente à explorer le temps") (Szeeman, 1994). Szeeman retells the story of H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, in which the time traveler realises that if one went far enough forward in time one would surely find a cold and dead planet (35). This is the problem with thinking in these teleological terms in regard to technology. Szeeman points out that Beuys' work attempts to create *lateral* connections rather than just explore the standard linear model of technical progress (which in a way is what Stelarc can be seen to do). Beuys creates warmth rather than seeking the teleology of cold. This is often the case with performance art, precisely because it *must* create lateral connections, having situated itself within the contingent. Many performance artists see this contingency as a positive ethic. For example, of walking (on the *Great Wall Walk*, which is discussed later in this chapter), Ulay wrote "The state of walking seems to keep worldly possessions and commitments, concepts of straightened space and catastrophe, far away. You are a child and protected by what and how I'm not really sure..." (Ulay, 1989:46). For Deleuze and Guattari this heading away from stratified behaviour towards the 'becoming-minor' of a

'becoming-child' is freeing precisely because it allows interaction with the environment in which it takes place. 'Walking' here could be seen to be like a refrain-assemblage that enables what Ulay goes on to call the protection of an "invisible field of innocence" (ibid.) to constantly maintain its auto-consistency - that which is Deleuze and Guattari's 'plane of consistency'. Szeeman writes of Beuys that -

> *The biased scientific approach to the human spirit and energies, which thinks only of progress, opens out onto coldness and death. Very often, Beuys had expressed this and had made an appeal to some contrary images, to warmth, to a machine of raging fire to explore time, one which does not spin in a linear fashion at top speed along a temporal axis but rather, once stopped, discovers at last some spaces for the imagination, but which, on the other hand, in a reverse space and a supertemporality, knows how to divert the present and the past from the future, towards warmth, the quality of love, which are alone capable of getting the upper hand on the cold which kills, and of saving the earth from its numbness.* (Szeeman, 1994:35 - my translation)

This is perhaps best summed up in his piece, *Honey Pump at the Workplace* (1977). In this piece "several hundred gallons" of honey was pumped through see-through tubes that "ran from the basement to the roof" [10] while another motor "rotated a crankshaft coated in thick layers of fat" (Stachelhaus, 1991:164). In a room through which all the honey passed Beuys gave lectures and had discussions for a hundred days about his ideas for a Free International University [11].

In this complex piece it can be seen that even concepts and statements become part of a series of becomings regulated by the transformed and transforming material of honey. Whilst Cage is

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[10] In *Rivers of the Moon*, Horn has mercury pumped around the exhibition space.

[11] The pump and some of the piping is conserved in another sense to Deleuze and Guattari's in Copenhagen's Louisiana Gallery. It is exhibited in a room somewhat bizarrely, and inertly, as a pump and some piping. This is a good example of how the percepts and affects involved do not reside in objects or subjects but in the vibrations created when these objects perform in a series of relations.

careful to interact through the subtraction of subjective interference, Beuys makes the subjective collide head on with that which has no hope of leaving it intact once interacted with. Can a city think the same way about itself when 7,000 oaks have drawn attention to themselves? It is perhaps possible to conclude that some meetings of skins are delicate and some are rather more grating.

Exposed to the Elements

It can be seen that skin referred to in chapter three is really any plane of interaction that enables becoming. This skin is literal and this becoming is always real, whether it is actually real or real on the virtual (incorporeal) plane. There is a sense here also in which, once the machinic dimension of the production of becoming on this skin is acknowledged, installations and objects can perform as much as human bodies or voices. This is something that can be demonstrated in a short consideration of the work of Australian artist Joyce Hinterding.

Most of Hinterding's work is involved with auditory vibration and electricity. In the buzzing and crackling that is often produced in her work by the interaction of her stunning visual installations with various electrical phenomena, the conservation of certain percepts and affects is very obvious. Often it is the literal thin skins involved in her work which enable the auditory vibrations to gather resonance. Thus, in *Siphon* (1991) three hundred glass jars were painted with a thin graphite covering and interconnected. Current was run through them, turning the whole exhibition into an enormous capacitor which smelt of electricity. The low hum was amplified (Lumby, 1993:48). *Electrical Storms* (1992) incorporated a "custom built high voltage

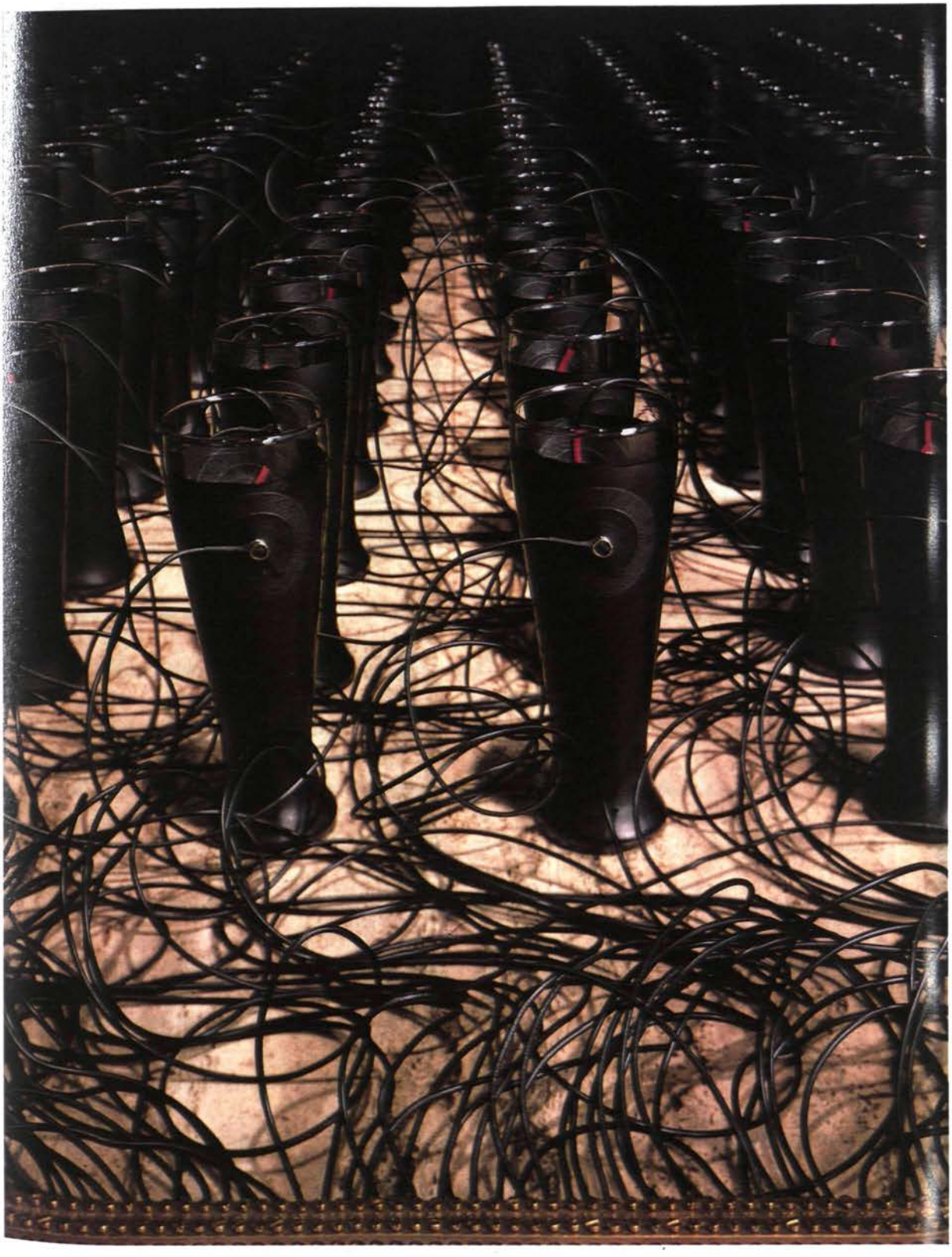

Figure 9 - Joyce Hinterding - Siphon *(1991) - taken from Lumby, 1993:48*

electrostatic sound system and an aerial system that detects and manipulates electrical turbulence in the atmosphere" (Hinterding cited in Seaman, 1994:359). Here the skin consisted of large flat, electrostatic speakers which performed the amplification. In *Circuit* (1990-1993) and *Oscillators* (1995) Hinterding drew a large diagram of a circuit which actually functioned when current was passed through it - emitting a low hum. All this work is highly interactive in the best sense. Its focus, a little like Stelarc's, but perhaps with the more contemplative style of Cage, is on facilitating the conservation of the percepts and affects of the basics of technology. This is especially of what it is that exists outside of human technology which is still, however, machinic, such as atmospheric disturbance as a broader plan(e) of consistency on which human engagements with electricity exist. Hinterding's work literalises, in percepts and affects, the world working in the machinic realm that connects the art process with other active processes from outside the human. Of the *Electrical Storms* piece, Hinterding said that she was interested in working with "electricity we didn't make" (cited in Lumby 1993:51). Lumby calls this an "abiding fascination with uncontained electricity" (ibid.). In order to achieve this Hinterding subtracts from her work exactly what fascinated others (such as Stelarc and even Heidegger). She does not seem to do this in order to reflect upon technology from some conceptual and transcendent position. Rather her work reveals the very basics of both interaction and mediation as they involve the various energies of technologies and the environment. She works not with the latest technological advance that is rushing us into the future but with a series of mediations between her own artistic work and the basic elements of technology (and the advice of engineers and scientists (Sofia, 1994:366)). Thus, she draws basic circuit diagrams, or painstakingly sets up her three hundred jar capacitor which "could have been replaced by an 80-cent component from any hardware store" (Lumby, 1993:52). As Sofia puts it "Hinterding's work reminds us of the possible heterogeneity of technological means and ends" (Sofia, 1994:368). Perhaps this

interaction between the environment, the technological and the human was most clearly shown in one of her early pieces, *Shh/Ratios of Luminance* (1987), which "incorporated sea shell headphones and pre-recorded tape material" (Coyle, 1995:20). Whilst Heidegger is waiting for jets to take off to tell us the truth, Hinterding is drawing our attention to smaller, and perhaps more telling, events of sympathetic resonance (Sofia, 1994:368; Lumby, 1993:50). Paradoxically it seems to be only once Heidegger's waiting for a revealing of truth is abandoned that the real practical affects of interaction can be felt.

An Ethics of Interaction

Here is the beginning of an ethics of interaction, which will be elaborated upon in chapter eight. There is a clear line here from aesthetics to ethics. In *Spinoza:Practical Philosophy* Deleuze calls Nietzsche, Kleist and Hölderlin "Spinozists" (a very favourable term for Deleuze) because -

> *...they think in terms of speeds and slownesses, of frozen catatonias and accelerated movements, unformed elements, nonsubjectified effects...Writers, poets, musicians, filmmakers - painters too, even chance readers - may find that they are Spinozists; indeed, such a thing is more likely for them than for professional philosophers. It is a matter of one's practical conception of the "plan".* (*SPP*:129)

The point here seems to be that a Spinozan ethics exceeds the bounds of philosophy, creating a relation with non-philosophy, in short between concept and affect (130). Ethics is a question of the aesthetics of movement and process, of speeds of connection, rather than of stable moral judgments. It seems to me that Deleuze-Guattarian ethics are interpreted in all kinds of wild and

whirling ways (or interpreted as missing in (desiring) action[12]) because the extent to which they are not content with a hermetically, and philosophically, sealed ethics it is not quite understood. When Deleuze writes of the meeting of concept and affect in Spinoza one thinks also of the mediations between philosophy (concept) and art (affect and percept) in *What is Philosophy?*. There are also Guattari's ethico-aesthetic paradigms, such as those in *Chaosmose*, which do not treat the realms of art, philosophy or ethics as hermetic but rather interactive. In short, it is not such a great leap from Deleuze's early discussion of Spinoza's ethics to Guattari's final ethico-aesthetics. Desire is about specific, if multiple, connections and affects which matter in terms of the way they *connect*.

Patton calls Deleuze and Guattari's ethics a postmodern ethics. In part this is because "the principle of a post-modern system of value should be aesthetic" (1986:32). It should allow for the kind of constant creation that has already been discussed. To sum this up, Deleuze and Guattari are arguing for a position which maximises creativity (thus the aesthetic) whilst recognising the contingency of present-day interactive ecologies. For them, in short, art is a practice of relation.

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[12] For a recent example of this as regards ethics and popular music, which is the subject of my article on the refrain (Murphie, 1996), see Jordan, 1995. Jordan repeats the common misunderstanding that with Deleuze and Guattari, having no foundation in some kind of outside standpoint, in the end, anything goes. When one considers the specifics of interaction, taken from an immanent position, it is quite the opposite. Nearly every book they have written is very careful to delimit activities according to their interactive ethical value. Most of the critiques of Jordan's kind seem based upon a reasonably loose reading of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* books. This, firstly, ignores the numerous warnings about lines of flight leading to possible black holes, fascisms and so forth, which complicate the supposed free flight of desire that Deleuze and Guattari are supposed to be rampantly pushing us all towards. Secondly, this ignores the highlighted involvement of capitalism in ethics as something that, though a major deterritorialiser, reduces (reterritorialises) everything on the full body of capital and thus excludes other possible interactions. Thirdly, this ignores Deleuze and Guattari's other works such as *Spinoza:Practical Philosophy* and *Chaosmose*, not to mention their practical work, such as Guattari's constant involvement in political affairs as well as his (anti)psychiatric practices at La Borde.

Art as a Practice of Relation

> *It is Ideas which lead us from the fractured I to the dissolved Self. As we have seen, what swarms around the edges of the fracture are Ideas in the form of problems.* (*DR*:259)

Art as a practice of relation has a particular resonance in the work of Marina Abramovic and Ulay, in which massive actions of subtraction occur in order to focus on the transformative interactions occurring, sometimes somewhat brutally, at the skin. Abramovic calls this "emptying the boat" (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:59). Ulay has said that "I always try to subtract from things, to make it more open for people to communicate, rather than add and narrow it and make it like 'this is mine, you must understand what it means'" (Abramovic and Ulay, 1988:16). Thomas McEvilley notes that their "Relation Works sustained a performance ethic that attempted to instill art and life directly into one another" (McEvilley, 1989:75).

Beginning with the cutting of a communist star around her navel whilst naked in front of 500 people in her native Yugoslavia (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:57), Abramovic constantly tested and tormented her own and others' bodies and subjective formations in order to realise something that was the sensation of a 'pure' event, 'pure' activity[13]. For example in *Night Sea Crossing*, Abramovic and Ulay sat without moving facing each other for up to seven hours at a time and for 90 days (not consecutive). Ulay had "two big scars on my bum from sitting on my two bones" (Abramovic and Ulay:1988:16). Other people were sometimes incorporated into these performances. For example, in one performance, in Amsterdam that lasted for four days in

[13] Abramovic believes that by the 21st century there will be no art-objects at all, just a direct transference of energy from artist to audience "like the Samurai in old Japan, looking at each other and transmitting energy" (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:57). She doesn't call her object based pieces sculptures but "transitional objects" (63).

1983, a Tibetan Lama and an Australian Aboriginal elder sat with them at a round table. A snake sometimes roamed around the gallery.

In their first performance, *Relation in Space* (1976), Abramovic and Ulay repeatably ran naked at full speed into each other. The disjunction between depth and surface, organs and skin is brought to the fore, acknowledging subjective formations as it subtracted them and bringing the event of becoming, of interaction, to the surface as a conservation of sensation. In their piece *Relation in Movement* (1977) Ulay drove a car in a small circle for sixteen hours whilst Abramovic, from inside the car, called out the number of circles driven over a loudspeaker (Goldberg, 1988:165). In such work, in the sense just mentioned, Abramovic and Ulay are also "Spinozan" artists, as "...they think in terms of speeds and slownesses, of frozen catatonia's and accelerated movements, unformed elements, nonsubjectified effects..". Their work, through this variation in speeds, allows a profound degree of interaction.

This sometimes carries them into areas of high risk. In 1974 Abramovic allowed 'spectators' to "abuse her at their will for six hours, using instruments of pain and pleasure that had been placed on table for their convenience" (Goldberg, 1988:165 [14]). In a piece called *There is a Criminal Touch in Art* (1976) Ulay stole one of Hitler's favourite paintings from the Berlin National Gallery and hung it in the home of a Turkish family, at the same time hanging posters of the painting at the entrance of the Academy of Fine Art (Abramovic and Ulay, 1988:17). The anti-terror brigade was called in (by the Museum Director) and Ulay went to prison for twenty

[14] According to McEvilley (1989:76) this took place in 1975 for two hours, with an audience drawn at random from the streets of Naples. It finished when a fight broke out at the moment a member of the audience was holding a gun muzzle to the inside of Abramovic's mouth. According to Abramovic, the purpose here was not to shock but lay in "experiencing the mental and physical limits of the human mind and body" (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:59). According to Abramovic this performance, *Rhythm Zero*, took place in 1973 for six hours (Abramovic and Ulay, 1988). As McEvilley was a friend of the artists involved, one can only assume that there will always be differences between the interactive practice and the subsequent narrative practice - the performance as 'trace and overflow' (Féral, 1992:152).

four hours. These interactions are confrontations with the limits both of the subject and of the State, and even of art itself.

Another relational direction they have taken in terms of their interaction is that of 'the lover'. For them this is a description of the personal interacting with their working life, but it culminated somewhat paradoxically in their final parting in *The Great Wall Walk* (1988) in which they walked from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China, crossed, and planned never to see each other again. Their speeds of walking and the interaction of wall and environment determined the final course of their relationship. Of this Abramovic said -

> *The wall was called the dragon, the life serpent...the whole line is the mirror image of the Milky Way. Actually it is a marriage. The dragon is the marriage between earth and sky. And there is a very strong female and male principle in it. Our work too had a lot to do with male and female. The conjunction was that Ulay started from the fire-side, from the Gobi desert, and I started from the seaside and then we met. This project took eight years to realise. Finally our lives went apart, everything went apart but we made this walk anyway.* (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:60).

This project's place in Abramovic and Ulay's relationship gives a very clear indication of the nature of double becoming in performance, one which in its specific social determinations seems absent in work such as Stelarc's. As McEvilley notes, Abramovic and Ulay's relationship had been one of "intense symbiosis" (1989:76), one of the constant confrontation of limits through interaction but -

> *...now that relationship...had a past of its own, from which only a similarly radical change could liberate them. Whereas once it had suspended causality, it had now spawned a difficult causality of its own...It seemed increasingly clear that the Walk was not only going to symbolically end Marina and Ulay's symbiosis once and for all, but*

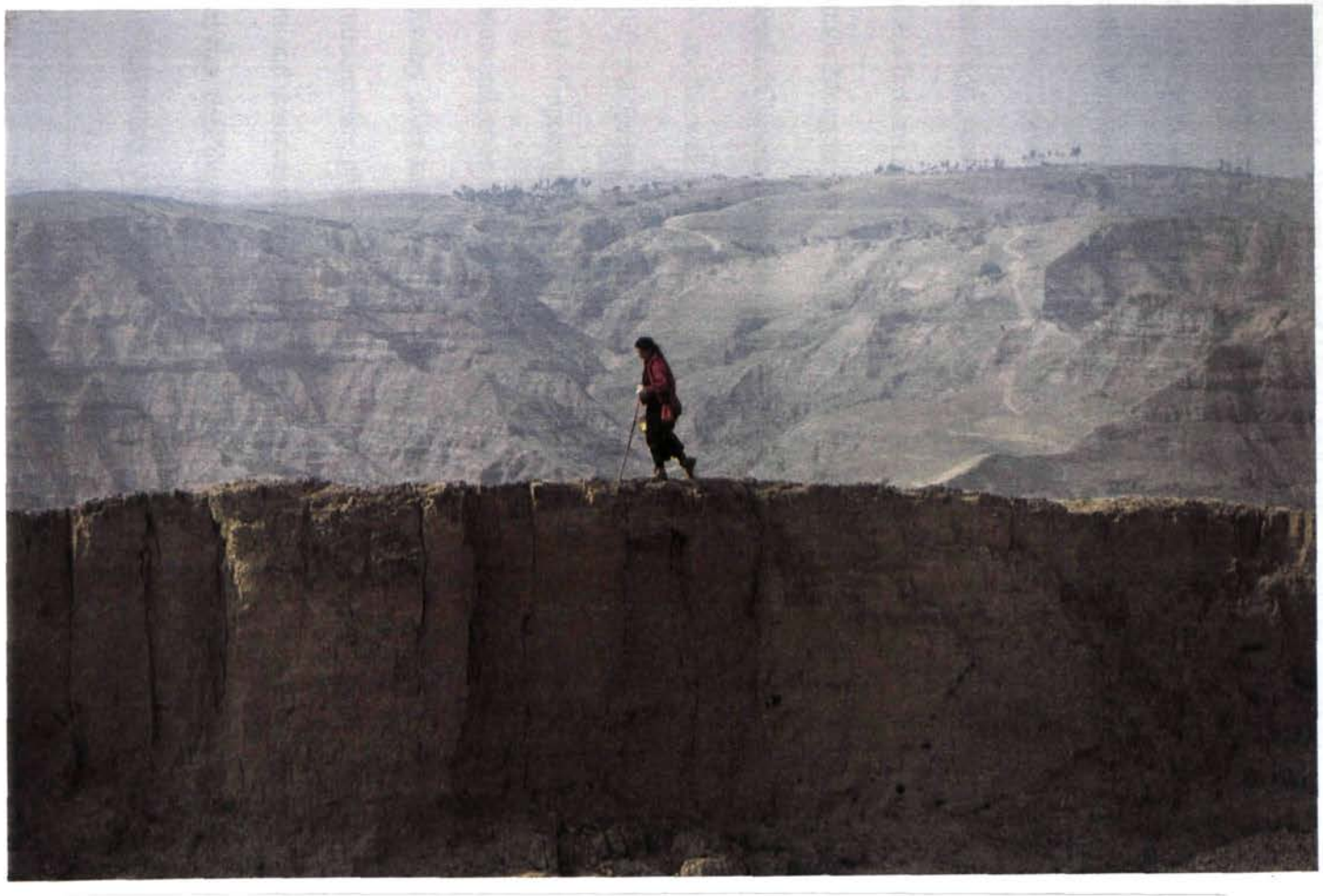

Figure 10 - Marina Abramovic on the Great Wall of China - **The Great Wall Walk** *(1988) - taken from* **The Lovers** *(exhibition Catalogue) Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1989:169*

that it was also going to function as a cauldron in which each of them would be cleansed for new imprint or identity. (1989:76-77)

In some ways, Abramovic and Ulay's wall walk[15] could be considered the prime example of an interaction between technologies (in particular the wall), socius (in particular the conflicts of old and new China, of Ulay's post-war German background and Abramovic's privileged but detested socialist Yugoslav background[16]), and environment.

They walked through deserts and mountains on what is really an astounding piece of technology[17], one which is still 'machining'. The wall was originally built to part warring Chinese factions and then to keep out suspect and threatening influences from the West (starting with the Mongols who were, however, not kept out). McEvilley claims that the Wall is the great symbol of Chinese "isolation from and fear of the outside world" and that Abramovic and Ulay's walk on the wall would "appropriate it into the contemporary discourse of the western art world" (McEvilley, 1989:99). He later suggests that the "symbol of exclusion has become a symbol of opening" (113). Ulay and Abramovic's walk staged a conflict over this process of Western influence. This conflict was entirely unpredictable in its interactive results. For example, McEvilley gives an account of Ulay one day, feeling besieged by the Chinese bureaucrats who surrounded him, physically attacking one of them. This unfortunate bureaucrat was only trying - in the end unsuccessfully - to stop him walking through a radioactive area of the wall. McEvilley notes that the "degree of misunderstanding between these representatives of different cultures was staggeringly out of control" (1989:97). And this was not the only conflict. The event also

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[15] For a complete description of this huge work see the catalogue from the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam for *The Lovers, The Great Wall Walk*, Marina Abramovic and Ulay. Josette Féral (1992) gives some commentary on the way in which this piece forms part of the recent evolution of performance art. She suggests that it challenges the nature and finality of art (151), and that the lack of an audience shows the way in which the performative phenomenon often operates as "a trace, as an overflow" (152).

[16] See McEvilley, 1989:106 for an account of the way in which China depressed Abramovic because of certain social and architectural resemblances to the former communist Yugoslavia.

[17] It is worth noting that the Great Wall of China is often claimed as being the only large human structure which is visible from the moon.

provoked completely different approaches in the two artists' preparations, with Ulay gathering masses of specialised camping equipment, much of which he never used. Abramovic found this ridiculous, focusing more upon her state of mind. In many such ways it can be seen that the wall walk machined all those involved. Whilst Ulay seemed to approach this with all the possible assistance from technological progress he could muster, Abramovic (who was to return inspired to produce installations from quartz crystals) had an approach which could incorporate what was already there, in a manner which perhaps relates to Hinterding's "electricity that we didn't make" [18]. In the end an acceptance of contingency was perhaps forced upon both of them due to the intensity of the interactions involved. This is not that surprising considering the fact that this intensity has marked all their relational work rather than an obvious transformation of *objects* such as the wall itself. Mignot (1989:175) has remarked that "Hardly any transformation of the medium occurs. A heightened form of reality is the medium".

The actual 'trace' of the *Great Wall Walk* was the exhibition, *The Lovers* (1989) towards which both contributed[19]. Abramovic, claiming sensitivity to the minerals around her during this walk, returned to produce work in this piece and in others such as *Black Dragon* (1990). The interaction here is very clear.

> *Abramovic fixed copper objects on the wall for people to lie, stand or sit on while their heads rested on a quartz block. The public was no longer simply observing, but was more directly involved than it had ever been in the performances. The audience could experience the energy of the metal and the crystals, thus re-energising their bodies.* (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:55)

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[18] This also, of course, exemplified the usefulness of Heidegger's understanding of technē and poiesis.
[19] These pieces are documented in *The Lovers*.

The idea of 'lovers', which Deleuze and Guattari might call double becoming, has also informed a rather complex interaction with other cultures[20] (Abramovic and Ulay, 1988:15). This can be seen in a borrowing of many techniques, different senses of times and speeds through to a realisation, through interactions, that there will always be misunderstandings, and that Abramovic and Ulay would always be Europeans despite these interactions. Ulay at one point realised that he "could not function in what I am doing in those ethnic groups, there is no place for this, maybe no understanding for it" (ibid.). Writing about the Great Wall Walk, whilst admiring a particular group of Chinese people who lived a very simple, and very poor, life in a hostile environment of yellow clay, Ulay professes that "they are what I never can be, not anymore" (Ulay, 1989:59). The *Night Sea Crossing* pieces, to take another example, came out of a visit to Australia in 1981, during which they spent four months "in the central and western deserts amongst tribal Aborigines" (Marsh, 1993:99). Yet they felt that this work was not really well understood in Europe (Abramovic and Ulay, 1988:15). This demonstrates that double becoming is not a simple exchange of positions, messages or subjectivities. Double becoming for Deleuze and Guattari is an interaction in which the endpoint is unknown, unfinished, except for the fact that it can not be either where one started, or where that interacted with was. One does not become literally Aboriginal in an interaction with Aboriginal people, but neither does one remain a comprehensible European. Neither does one become European through an interaction with Europeans if one is not one[21]. Through performance work such as Abramovic and Ulay's, it can

[20] Mignot (1989:177) notes that it "seems as if Marina and Ulay's once so self-absorbed relation to each other, which was able to find its own form of artistic expression, has gradually but irreversibly become permeated by ties with other cultures. Above all with qualities fading from western civilization or already gone, such as natural attachment to the earth, knowledge of the forces of nature and magic, the experience of cosmic consciousness, meditation...Each possesses the potential to process a relation into a form of expression. Their attention has been diverted progressively from each other to the world outside".

[21] Neither do men become women in a "becoming-woman".

be understood that the becomings involved in interaction cannot be predetermined, but will always be becoming towards some *new* other that is not the same as the other interacted with.

Just as for Hinterding, Abramovic and Ulay's attitude to technology is based upon how it interacts immanently with the human and the environment. It is not based upon a transcendent teleology. When such interactions are not predetermined by narrative, but a question of energy transmission, strange things can happen. Abramovic tells the story about -

> *...1965 when we got television in our home in Yugoslavia for the first time. At that time television was a complete miracle for us. So this television arrived at our home and my father switched it on and it shows a test picture, as there was only a one-hour programme during the day and again in the evening. But we, my brother and I, were sitting in front of this test picture, waiting and just looking at it. I experienced my first meditation in Yugoslavia watching that test picture. It's really funny but it's true.* (Abramovic and Pijnappel, 1990:60)

As mentioned, some of Abramovic's more recent work, which resonates with the 'new age', has involved the use of quartz crystal as a re-energiser. This is not just a move to older and more established traditions, but a fundamental argument as to what technology should do in the future - what its practical ethical basis should be. Such work provides us with more useful models of what interaction is than those derived from a bland interpretation of the classical theatrical.

Transformations at the Skin, Transformations of the Skin

Any interaction between art, human subjective formation, technology and environment must take place at the skin, at the surface, whether this is the surface of the human or animal body, the surface of the technical, of even Capital as a kind of body, or the more general surface of the

earth. What this means is that no one element in these interactions can be considered without the others. Even the interior of the body cannot be considered as the residence of truth and solidity but instead must be understood in the light of its flows and folds that cannot be numbered.

A generalised economy must therefore be taken into account before one can develop a full ethics of interactions, which consists in one sense precisely in creating a space in which the in-between, the skin, is charged. Thus -

> *It is not even enough to do what psychoanalysis does and give forbidden objects to itemized affections or substitute simple ambivalences for zones of indetermination.* (*WP*:174)

The task is rather to "wrest the percept from the perceptions, the affect from the affections, the sensation from opinion" (176). This is in order to reconstitute not just the relations which might exist, but what relations *are*. It is not, therefore, a matter of different, even contradicting, opinions within an existing order, or even of dialectical transformation, with its dependence upon ambivalence rather than indetermination. It is a matter of the production of relations, of concepts, the conservations of sensations in the production of artistic zones of indeterminacy that do not limit becomings to a becoming-previously known (which in any case is not possible in a Deleuze-Guattarian framework). Thus, in Deleuze and Guattari's notions of becoming-minor, it is not just a matter of interactions between major and minor. Neither is it a matter of interactions between minor and minor in a reconfiguration of positions, but not of what those positions signify in terms of a Majoritarian-dominated social order. Men (or women for that matter) are not subject to a becoming-woman in order to change position, to 'gather' more position or more 'power' within one framework. A fundamental transformation must occur at the skin, and in relation to the importance of the skin and the flows beneath it that open out to other flows, as opposed to 'subjective' depths. It can be understood, therefore, that "flesh is not sensation...what constitutes

sensation is the becoming animal or plant" (178-9). Sensation is not flesh as constitutive of subjective feeling and the beginning of depth. It is rather the skin as transformation, becoming, a literal in-between. The importance of the surface here cannot be over-estimated. It is the surface, the skin, that gives the interactive potential for the universe. It is therefore "like a passage from the finite to the infinite, but also from a territory to deterritorialization" (180-181). The skin makes possible the event which connects various possibilities of movements which actualize becomings and events. It is at the skin that cosmic forces interact, not in the depths. Deleuze and Guattari, Horn, Cage, Abramovic and Ulay, Hinterding and Beuys, situate the human always within a much wider framework *as one element interacting in a broader cosmos*. This gives a positive dimension to post-humanist conceptualisations of human becomings entirely missing from some other post-structuralist work mourning the failure of depths to produce cosmic connection. For Deleuze and Guattari "The clinch of forces as percepts and becomings as affects are completely complementary" (182). As such "flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation".

The conservation of sensations is, then, also a production of different becomings. These two come together in the refrain[22], which, conserved, enables the play of the in-between *over* a territory such as the flesh. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari give a clear explanation of the role and function of the refrain of art in the interplay of territories.

The refrain, such as when a child sings to itself to ward off fear of the dark on a journey home (*ATP*:311), forms a certain territory as somewhere where certain transformations can be conserved in their production. The refrain is connective. It is not just another projection of the human subject. Rather, for Deleuze and Guattari the refrain inevitably comes from the animal,

[22] See my own article (Murphie, 1996b) for an extended analysis of the refrain.

"the whole of the refrain is the being of sensation" and "art is continually haunted by the animal". More than this -

> *Every territory, every habitat, joins up not only its spatiotemporal but its qualitative planes of sections: a posture and a song for example, a song and a color, percepts and affects. And every territory encompasses or cuts across the territories of other species, or intercepts the trajectories of animals without territories, forming interspecies junction points.* (*WP*:185)

Thus all activity is predicated upon interaction, and an ethics of interaction must always take into account the three ecologies of the environment (different territories), fields within the socius, and the individual (*TE*). In Deleuze and Guattari's view, artistic production shares with nature an interaction between the highly specific and the general -

> *House and Universe, Heimlich and Unheimlich, territory and deterritorialization, finite melodic compounds and the great infinite plane of composition, the small and the large refrain.* (*WP*:186).

The "sole definition of art" is therefore "composition" (191). It is art, through refrains, that composes a conservation of sensation which, in its percepts and affects, is an interactive series of vibrations which constantly transform relations between the individual and the cosmos.

> *The great refrain arises as we distance ourselves from the house, even if this is in order to return, since no one will recognize us any more when we come back.* (191)

Art therefore has an interactive purpose, not primarily a representational one. The use of aesthetics in thinking about new technologies would be better concentrated not on models of representation such as Aristotle's, but on models which are truly interactive such as Deleuze and Guattari's, and, it is suggested, on philosophers such as Spinoza and Nietzsche. Art practices as models of ethical interaction would be better sought out in the realm of performance art and

installation than in the classical theatre, which is concerned with the representation of characters, truths, or the tragic. The purpose of art is not to delimit experience in order to set up narrative representations or 'characters' in cyberspace, but to "pass through the finite in order to rediscover, to restore the infinite" (197), to establish interactions between "the composite sensation" and the "plane of composition" which are in "strict coexistence or complementarity, neither of them advancing except through the other" (196). If in art there are correspondences between the aesthetic and the conceptual these are not exactly between representations on the one side and reflection or opinion on the other. Rather they are interactions between different forms of production - "thought as heterogenesis" (199) - which must take into account both the specificities and cosmic conditions of their creations. The purpose of all this is not to open interaction to chaos, but to give enough consistency to create planes of potential for further productive interactions. This is to enable the *transportation* through chaos, the surfing of a wave on a plane of composition, the coming together of skin, technology and environment. Thus "art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes, as Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos - neither foreseen nor preconceived" (204). The creation of a chaosmos is what interactive art and work with new technologies should head towards, as only then can outcomes be protected from chaos without turning interaction into a choice of alternative stratified opinions[23]. The brain is "the junction - not the unity - of the three planes" of art, philosophy and science (208). Thought is therefore the interaction between them. For Deleuze and Guattari, thought is a material process of interaction but one not just determined in the depths, but by the interactions of different surfaces. It is a kind of involuted skin, in which "sensation is no less brain that the concept" (211). The brain and thought are

[23] As is so often the case with 'interactive art' or even with new technologies. There is a dimension to hypertext on the World Wide Web which simply amounts to a larger range of choice between connections. all of them, however, prestratified on institutional or Capitalist frames.

therefore exteriorised as contacts between specific planes and an infinite universe, which is totally interconnected, not mystically, but materially.

> *Not every organism has a brain, and not all life is organic, but everywhere there are forces that constitute microbrains, or an inorganic life of things...in the final analysis, the same ultimate elements and the same withdrawn force constitute a single plane of composition bearing all the varieties of the universe.* (213)

The planes of art, philosophy and science are planes that extract certain compositions from this general and single plane of composition. In all this activity, what is important is the creation of surfaces and the recognition of the flows that move through them.

Theatrical metaphors will always refer to a depth behind representation, one which will mitigate against the emergence of the "people to come" who are far more embodied in the "nonthinking thought" (218) which is the work of the like of Cage, Abramovic, Ulay, Beuys, Horn, Hinterding and Stelarc. For such artists, the point is not to allow increased interactive access to fewer interactive choices based upon the norms of Capital, marketing or individuality predicated upon an primarily Oedipal subject. Rather, it is to allow contact at the skin between the individual, as specific surface or plane, and the chaosmos. To interact rather than to compete. To transform rather than to communicate the statements of imperial language.

III

The Machine in the Ghost

Chapter Six

Machining Multiplicity

Monastic machines which passed down memories from antiquity to the present day, thereby enriching our modernity ... Were they not the computer programmes, the macroprocessors of the middle ages? (*RPS*:18)

...it is conceivable that there might one day be a single super-information-machine that could be used by hundreds of thousands of different researchers ... This does not mean that we are not witnessing a general drawing inwards in the field, not of the real, but of the imaginary at its most regressive...The more capitalism follows its tendency to 'de-code' and 'de-territorialize', the more does it seek to awaken or re-awaken artificial territories and residual encodings, thus moving to counteract its own tendency. (*MR*:36 - first written in 1966-1968)

Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the machinic can be somewhat startling[1]. In the above, for example, Guattari enables a conception of machinic consistency and lineage - in this case the 'information machine' - which surpasses the specific technologies in which it is

[1] Although if one consults a standard dictionary Deleuze and Guattari's work with the notion of the machine may not seem so strange. Here are some of the ways in which The *Macquarie Dictionary* (1981:1051) defines the machine - "an apparatus consisting of interrelated parts with separate functions...a device which transmits and modifies force or motion...a contrivance, esp, in the ancient theatre, for producing stage effects...some agency, person, incident or other feature introduced for effect into a literary composition...any complex agency or operating system: *the machine of government*...the body of persons conducting and controlling the activities of a political party to other organisation...".

incarnated, such as medieval monasteries or computers. He also appears to possess an almost prophetic understanding of machinic tendencies that enables him, over 25 years ago, not only to predict the internet, but to diagnose its tendencies in a manner that remains acute today. In the next three chapters I intend to extend the discussion of the machinic and technology given in the first five chapters in order to provide a precise Deleuze-Guattarian framework by which technology can be positioned within broader machinic considerations. This chapter will outline the general notion of the machinic in Deleuze and Guattari's work in much more detail than the accounts given in the previous chapters. If this covers some ground that seems basic to many other discussions of Deleuze and Guattari's work (such as Massumi, 1992), this is in order to give a coherent view of their notion of the machinic on which to base subsequent discussion, as well as to avoid the error of aligning the machinic with pure technology or with a simplistic mechanics of desire. This theoretical groundwork will enable, in the seventh chapter, a more specific theoretical account of notions of the virtual and more generally, an approach to the use of technology in the arts. The eighth chapter will specifically discuss interaction, although this is a discussion that forms an undercurrent to all the chapters. None of this, however, is meant to be a detailed or explicit discussion of actual technologies. It rather suggests a theoretical framework in which they can be placed. This is a theoretical framework which poses an alternative to the aspects of work, such as Heidegger's, which appear to become trapped within the totalitarian-tragic double bind, or the aspects of the work of those such as Laurel, who work within a 'classical theatre' framework that places representation before interaction.

The Machine is neither Technology, Metaphor nor Structure

As discussed in chapter one, it is necessary to separate the machinic and the technological in Deleuze's and Guattari's understanding of the machine, because their conception of the machinic is very broad. The technological envelope has appeared to exceed both the 'social' and the 'natural' in recent times but for Deleuze and Guattari the machinic exceeds all three. The formation and development of all three are incomprehensible without an understanding of the pre-existing formations, and changes, in the machinic that inheres within them all.

It would be tempting at this point to take Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the machine as a metaphor for organic or social occurrences, but this would miss the point. They repeatedly warn against taking their ideas - which are machines themselves - any less than literally[2]. 'Machines' are neither metaphors nor models. For "machinic reasons are entirely different from logical reasons or possibilities" (*ATP*:286). Machines are literally the connections between matter, in both its virtual and actual processes, as they *really* occur. It is for this reason, for example, that Deleuze and Guattari write that the "life-assemblage", that is, life, "is theoretically or logically possible" with a silicon base instead of a carbon base, but it is not possible machinically (ibid).

Neither does the machinic follow the logic of either the representational or the subject. Both are inadequate to the movement and connective power of the machine. Of representation Guattari writes in *Molecular Revolution* that -

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[2] See, for example, *KF*:126, in which Deleuze and Guattari comment that "all the effort of Kafka" is directed to "kill the metaphor...all the evolution of Kafka consists in effacing them, to the profit of...a machinism that no longer passes through them" (my translation). See also *AO*:36. For Deleuze and Guattari, machines exceed metaphors.

> *...the movement of desire is sterilized by a relationship of representation; the image becomes the memory of a reality made impotent, and its immobilization establishes the world of dominant significations and received ideas.* (87-88)

This is a *structure* that for Deleuze and Guattari is opposed to the dynamism of the machinic. Neither is the subject adequate to the machinic. Guattari notes that the subject is enclosed by "the structural process of de-totalized totalization" (*MR*:111). In other words, the subject is actually cut off from that totality it is supposed to determine. In both the cases of representation and the subject all that is given is a segmented, 'frozen' form, based on identity and similitude, of an active machinic process. This latter is based on change and difference. It is only with the machine that *time* enters in any real way.

> *The subject is always somewhere else. Temporalization penetrates the machine on all sides and can be related to it only after the fashion of an event. The emergence of the machine marks a date, a change, different from structural representation.* (112)

On the other hand, it is because the emergent machine marks change or an event that all metaphors, representations, and subjects can be seen to exist in a machinic dimension themselves. They should be considered as such, in their immanent connective and productive dimension. In short, then, all relations - technical or social, subjective or natural - are literally machined *before* they are anything else.

In part these ideas derive from Guattari's Lacanian training and its attacks upon the Humanist subject. In Lacan's work, the 'subject' can only exist as a partly illusory formation of a pre-existing machine (that is, language). In part also, this derives from Deleuze's work on Spinoza and Nietzsche. From Spinoza several notions are taken. Firstly, relations are considered as a question of affect. Secondly, the body is considered as consisting of a setting up of ratios between smaller bodies (ad infinitum) and therefore of a kind of constant interaction. Finally the

mind/body relation is considered as that based on a kind of "spiritual automaton" [3] (Spinoza, 1910:255). The mind is inescapably linked to the body, and is without the kind of free will, detached from bodily relations, associated with Descartes. In other words, there is no 'thinking' without a direct relation to bodies and to affect or interaction. Ethics, for Spinoza, consists in accepting the path of the spiritual automaton's connection to the body, which in Deleuze-Guattarian terms, is like becoming a highly evolved desiring-machine, capable of connecting with more and more other machines, without the illusions of being an enhanced, if passive, subject accumulating representations[4] from the distance of 'pure' mentality. Similarly, from Nietzsche is derived a theory of forces as they determine existence as a kind of constant affirmation of force, process and change. For Deleuze's Nietzsche, subjectivity as formed through negation and domination (the master-slave dialectic of Hegel) is only a denial of the constant deployment of affirmative forces in nature, and a historically and socially specific denial at that.

In many analyses of technology it is the *meaning* of a new technology that is analysed - that is, what it *represents* to us as *subjects* somehow distanced from its affects. For Deleuze and Guattari, technology is implicated in a machinic question of "collective creations" (*PP*:229) in the fluid, but real, time and space of bodies and affects from which we cannot divorce either representations or subjects. A discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's view of language will clarify the relations between the social, the body and the machinic. It will furthermore begin to give a

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[3] Deleuze (*SPP*:85) writes that "the mind is said to be 'like a spiritual automaton,' since by unfolding the autonomous order of its own ideas it unfolds the order of the things represented". For Spinoza there was an exact relation between ideas and matter that made this possible. See also *EPS*:152-153 and *EPS*:132 where Deleuze notes that this "implies an identity of logic, material and ideas, in which the true content of ideas is material". Deleuze takes this to the point where "the soul is a kind of spiritual automaton, which is to say: in thinking we obey only the laws of thought, laws that determine both the form and the content of true ideas, and that make us produce ideas in sequence according to their own causes and through our own power, so that in knowing our power of understanding we know through their causes all the things that fall within this power" (*EPS*:140).

[4] See *EPS*:335 where Deleuze writes that the "body has a mechanism in reality, there is an automatism of thought in the order of ideality." The connections between the two occur not at the level of representation but of sense (ibid.).

clear idea of both the 'abstract machine' and 'machinic assemblage' and provide the basis for a further discussion of the virtual and the actual in chapter seven.

Order as Command - Language, Bodies and Machines

In the chapter "Postulates of Linguistics" in *A Thousand Plateaus*[5], Deleuze and Guattari provide machinic contexts which allow for the co-determination of the relations between bodies and language. Their notion of desire *as production* allows for a complex and rational account of the relations between body and language which undercuts the dualistic framework that often surrounds them.

Everything comes down to a complication of the incorporeal and matter. Ronald Bogue (1989:54) draws attention to the fact that Proust's world for Deleuze is not one in which thought and bodies are separate but a world in which they are mutually dependent. Deleuze himself writes of this world that -

> *everything is implicated, everything is complicated, everything is sign, sense, essence. Everything exists in obscure zones into which we penetrate as if into crypts, in order to decipher their hieroglyphics and secret languages...Neither things nor minds exist, there are only bodies; astral bodies, vegetal bodies. The biologists would be right, if they knew that bodies in themselves are already a language. The linguists would be right if they knew that language is always the language of bodies. Every symptom is a word but all words are firstly symptoms. (MP:*110 - my translation)

[5] See Grisham, 1992 for a discussion of this chapter's relation to linguistics, especially to linguistics as formulated by Chomsky, Labov, de Saussure, Hjelsmlev and Volosinov.

For Deleuze and Guattari the artist is neither 'linguist' nor 'biologist' but somewhere outside of the dichotomy between mind and body, sign and thing. He or she is rather "the first person to set out a boundary stone, to make a mark" (*ATP*:316) that is both sign *and* thing.

As has been noted, the notion of 'structure' is insufficient to describe this complexity. Deleuze and Guattari's linguistic and philosophical projects oppose a linguistics or philosophy of homogeneous constants and overwhelming systems. These are replaced with variation and instability. This is not just a change of emphasis. As Foucault points out, Deleuze does not merely indulge in a reversal of Platonism, placing appearances above permanency. He disrupts the whole process of discovering the permanent. Deleuze focuses on the "delicate sorting operation which precedes the discovery of essence...in its separation of false simulacra from the multitude of appearances" (Foucault, 1977a:167). As has been previously discussed, the real reversal is not between the permanent and the world of appearances. It is between appearances tied to an 'indwelling permanent' and the false simulacra which are 'bad copies'. If one *welcomes* this "cunning assembly that simulates and clamors at the door" (ibid.) (false appearances) what enters is variation, change and instability in the form of the event.

> *...the incorporeal will dissipate the density of matter; a timeless insistence will destroy the circle that imitates eternity; an impenetrable singularity will divest itself of its contamination by purity; the actual semblance of the simulacrum will support the falseness of false appearances.* (167-168)

This support of the false simulacra disrupts the whole notion of a transcendent system and structure, in favour of the instability of the event. And it is precisely as event that Deleuze and Guattari depict language.

For a start, language is not made to reflect the world, or to gain credence in any way "but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience"(*ATP*:76).

> *Language is not life; it gives life orders. Life does not speak; it listens and waits. Every order-word, even a father's to his son, carries a little death sentence.* (ibid.)

Deleuze and Guattari's theories of language are firmly grounded in an acknowledgment of such contingent social realities. For them -

> *There is no signifiance independent of dominant significations, nor is there subjectification independent of an established order of subjection. Both depend on the nature and transmission of order-words in a given social field.* (ibid.)

As they point out, the idea of an individual who enunciates from a discrete and stable position is incommensurable with the power and dynamism of the social field. So the "collective assemblage" that enunciation implies (80), is a collective assemblage which is defined by its interactivity, as opposed to any stability that might otherwise be implied. Social relations, and the order-words that imply them, are thus mobile.

Behind these relations are the -

> *...set of all incorporeal transformations current in a given society and attributed to the bodies of that society. We may take the word "body" in its broadest sense (there are mental bodies, souls are bodies, etc.).* (ibid.)

The 'incorporeal' here perhaps needs further definition than has already been given. For Deleuze and Guattari, the incorporeal seems to work in several different ways. To recall, for them, a body is a question of affects, of a multiplicity of *relations* between smaller bodies, of a differential applied between these smaller bodies. It could be suggested that this *relation as body* is already less corporeal than a body defined, as it more usually is, as a stable, discrete object. For Deleuze and Guattari, the paradox is that every body is always a set of relations, while at the same time every relation gives rise to a body. Thus, as I have discussed, there are always two sides to a process - bodies as states of affairs on the one hand, and the incorporeal on the other.

Incorporeal here can mean *un*corporeal, but it could equally be interpreted as that which inheres *within* the corporeal and animates it, energises its relations, as well as that which is uncorporeal because it forms the in-between or *inter*corporeal.

There are, then, incorporeal transformations that run through and between bodies. Yet they do *not* come from a world of ideals outside of bodies. Foucault elucidates this point in commenting on *Logique du sens*. He writes that "phantasms" -

> *...must be allowed to function at the limit of bodies; against bodies, because they stick to bodies and protrude from them, but also because they touch them, cut them, break them into sections, regionalize them, and multiply their surfaces; and equally, outside of bodies, because they function between bodies according to laws of proximity, torsion and variable distance - laws of which they remain ignorant. Phantasms do not extend organisms into an imaginary domain; they topologize the materiality of the body. They should be consequently freed from the restrictions we impose upon them, freed from the dilemmas of truth and falsehood and of being and non-being...*(Foucault, 1979a:169-170)

Once freed from the requirements of transcendent judgments of truth and being, transformation can be analysed for what it is. What Deleuze and Guattari provide is an incorporeal domain which, though immanent, is, strictly speaking, neither language nor body. Nevertheless, these incorporeal transformations apply *to* bodies and are "immanent to language" (*ATP*:82). Because they are transformative and active (in some ways they are life itself), the collective assemblages are "in constant variation". They lie between and within both language and the body, so that neither can be said to dominate the other.

> *Only one side of the assemblage has to do with enunciation or formalizes expression; on its other side, inseparable from the first it formalizes contents, it is a machinic assemblage of bodies.* (140)

Deleuze and Guattari call the open study of this constantly transforming assemblage 'pragmatics', elsewhere equated with schizoanalysis. Pragmatics is also "a politics of language" (82). For Deleuze and Guattari, politics is neither about defining a rigid system, nor about the taxonomies of language or representation which would make it appear to be stable. Instead, pragmatics, as a political, linguistic or a substitute for psychoanalytic, practice is defined by variation; of redundancy, of resonance, or of lines of flight. The main aspect of pragmatics is what Foucault might call a 'micro-politics' - that is a politics based upon the twin specificities of variation and the event at a local level. Thus language is not a constant unchanging field, from which the meaning or function and power of individual speech acts can be deduced, but rather an "aggregate of the circumstances" which form "implicit presuppositions" (ibid.) which change over time through the event. Neither is language merely to do with the signifier, however unstable that signifier may be. With Lacan's splitting of the subject and Derrida's destabilisation of the signifier in philosophy we are only part of the way towards pragmatics. For the pragmatic implications of a linguistic act -

> *...can only be evaluated .... in relation to the implicit presuppositions, immanent acts, or incorporeal transformations it expresses and which introduce new configurations of bodies.* (83)

In other words statements can only be analysed in the same way as performance events.

Paradoxically, certain variables in the assemblages of enunciation can determine what, at first, appears to be a fixed field. For when these variables enter into certain "determinable relations", different assemblages may combine to form a certain "regime of signs or semiotic machine".

Yet, once again, this is not a stable set of meanings but rather a machine which produces social relations through its pragmatics. As such, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the regime of signs is dynamic and active, and semiotics is a question of "force" rather than "signification", as Derrida might write (1978:3-30). In addition, these regimes of signs are several and mixed in any society, and, of course, subject to variation through "new order-words" (*ATP*:84). The order-word is crucial. It is the "indirect discourse" which underlies any direct discourse. And this is discourse taken not as structure but as *expression*. Following the Danish linguist, Louis Hjelmslev, Deleuze and Guattari do not distinguish so much between stable forms and contents, as between the shifting forms of content and forms of expression.

One example they discuss is that of geological stratification. They then extrapolate the notion to other areas, (such as the geology of morals). In the formations of layers of the Earth's crust, there is a form of content, which is the structure of the substance of rock, sediment and so on, which make up the substance of the layers of stratification. The form of expression is the form in which layering or stratification occurs. Of course, on another plane, both forms of content and forms of expression each have both their own forms of content and forms of expression. For example, the sediment, which is the form of content in the broader layers of stratification, possesses its own forms of expression at the molecular level, in terms of how certain molecules (as forms of content) express themselves *as* sediment. In turn, these molecular substances have their own form of expression at another (atomic) level. Neither the forms of content nor expression are permanent. There is, of course, geological change; earthquakes, faults, erosion, volcanic activity, etc.

Deleuze and Guattari's expression "becoming-molecular" can therefore be taken literally as a pragmatics in, for example, the dust that escapes to form *lines of flight* in its interaction with the wind blowing over stratified rock. Moreover, by acknowledging a division between form of

content and form of expression rather than upholding the more normal form/content dichotomy, literal force, in all its forms, can be analysed both in terms of content and expression. In other words, forces can be seen to 'fold' and shift, to form sediments, to stratify and to destratify and become molecular.

In relation to bodies, the differentiation made is between bodies as formed content with passions and actions, and the form of expression of statements as incorporeal transformations which "apply to bodies, and only to bodies. They are the expressed of statement but are attributed to bodies" (86). Objects - bodies as general content/forms of any type - do not just interact as mute matter in collisions between discrete forms (which would merely return us to undynamic formalism and pseudo-stable taxonomies). *Expression comes first* - expression as affect, as interaction through incorporeal transformations, which are only then attributed to bodies. Such a theory of expression poses an explanation of the dynamics and ethics of interaction which takes interactions as a series of events in their own right. It gives interaction, in other words, an ontological reality, and enables a pragmatic analysis of interactive ethics. For "signs are at work in things themselves just as things extend into or are deployed through signs"(87). Both forms of content and forms of expression are determined not by their fixity, but by a "movement of deterritorialization" which mobilises them and carries them away - giving them redundancy and resonance which lead to further forms of content and expression. This deterritorialization is what enables the two forms to communicate, intervene and operate upon each other - in other words, to interact[6]. Thus, in order to understand interaction one must understand that it is not so much an alignment of different interests or bodies, as a becoming of both of them through deterritorialization or destratification.

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[6] This is a similar notion to that in Deleuze's discussion of Foucault, where different systems are determined both by a relation and a non-relation, by the communication which takes the form of deterritorialised quantum from non-relating systems. This is interaction, for example between the system of light and system of language in Foucault.

It is at this point that one can understand the precise positioning of the 'assemblage' as inhering both within and between bodies.

> *On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both territorial sides, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and cutting edges of deterritorialization, which carry it away.* (88)

This productive connecting and intermingling is also Deleuze and Guattari's version of desire, or desiring-production. It will be noted that at no point in the system is anything 'lacking'. Desire is positive in that it always involved this production both of and through the relation (which at another level, of course, is both a relation and the deterritorialization of a non-relation). Thus the machinic relates not to "the production of goods" but to "the intermingling of bodies in a society" (ibid.). Everything needs to be determined in terms of a pragmatics rather than as a simple question of "tools"; new or old (90). In short -

> *...a society is defined by its amalgamations, not by its tools...there is a primacy of the machinic assemblage of bodies over tools and goods, a primacy of the collective assemblage of enunciation over language and words..that is why a social field is defined less by its conflict and contradictions that by the lines of flight running through it.* (ibid.)

Deleuze and Guattari propose that linguistic factors are not at the deepest level of the assemblage, because they cannot determine in themselves their own pragmatics, let alone the pragmatics of bodies and the social field. The underlying machine - understood in a sense that

takes in both the deepest level and that at, and even beyond, the surface - is easier to understand in the terms of physics or mathematics, rather than linguistics. It is called the *abstract machine*. This -

> *...abstract machine pertains to an assemblage in its entirety: it is defined as the diagram of that assemblage. It is not language based but diagrammatic and superlinear.* (ibid.)

Lest this machine be through of purely as another tool we are reminded of its "superlinearity" or rhizomatic quality - "in other words, a plane whose elements no longer have a fixed linear order" (91). It is the dynamism of this machine which provides the force of variation in the social field. An obvious example is found in Foucault's discussion of Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon' but a concept such as Cage's 'silence' would also be an abstract machine.

More broadly this continuous variation, assisted by the discontinuous variable of the event, is easily seen in the operation of language as an abstract machine working both through the corporeal and the incorporeal. Deleuze and Guattari write that the only real unity of language is primarily political, not scientific, that the first as order-word and imposition of grammars always accompanies the second, and that the real division of languages (and much else, including ethics) is between the major and the minor.

> *The first would be defined precisely by the power (pouvoir) of constants, the second by the power (puisssance) of variations.* (101)

Here it is clearly the major languages that depend upon the minor languages to set them in variation, despite their efforts at times to repress or codify - to stratify - the minor languages. Here also we see Deleuze and Guattari's approach to constancy and variation. Constancy is not in opposition to the variable but "a treatment of the variable opposed to the other kind of treatment, or continuous variation" (103). There is, in fact, no constancy. Constancy is nothing but another form of variation - just as stillness is just another variation of speeds, and so on.

Indeed it seems that the more 'constant' a thing is, the more open it is to burrowing, variation, deterritorialization or destratification. Again the silence that opens out totally to contingent 'noise' in Cage's *4'33"* is a good example[7]. In the case of language, the more major it becomes "the more it is affected by continuous variations that transpose it into a 'minor' language" (102). Here they give the examples of Irish English or indeed the whole city of New York. The law that comes out of this is that -

> *You will never find a homogenous system that is not still or already affected by a regulated, continuous, immanent process of variation.* (103)

The consequence of this is that, through the perceptions of the major and minor as ethical terms, the debate surrounding interactivity is shifted away from subjectivity to the question of subjection (to the Major) versus becoming-minor. In practice, for example, this means not territorialising the 'minors' onto the stratifications of the Major. This would just be another form of subjection, of domination. It is a question of allowing the becoming-minor or deterritorialization of the major-language, or the emergence of its minorities as a becoming-minor.

This may occur in any case, because "the order-word" of subjection is also "a death sentence" (107), in other words a death sentence to becoming through regulation and stratification. Yet it is not only a death sentence. Also included in the order-word, as a *consequence* of its nature as death sentence, is its nature as a "warning cry or a message to flee" (ibid.), to take a line of flight away from.or through, the death it attempts to impose. Death sentence and warning cry can coexist simultaneously because death is the incorporeal transformation *par excellence* through which "a subject must pass in order to change its form or state" (ibid.). Death becomes a positive figure - the "noncorporeal attribute that limits and

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[7] Or Cage's attempts to 'hear' nothing in an anechoic chamber where, for the first time, he heard the noises of his nervous and circulatory systems (see Revill, 1992:163). For Deleuze, the only initial ground is groundlessness and variation. For Cage, the quieter it gets, the noisier it becomes (in another sense).

completes the body" (ibid.) of becoming. For it "is always by means of something incorporeal that a body separates and distinguishes itself from something else", in other words, creates lines of flight. So in the very death of the order-word lies a kind of zero degree of subjection which in turn provides the basis for creating lines of flight. Death forms a kind of zero-limit that forces transgression[8]. Death can, in fact, define a movement, a plane, or a "body without organs" that outlines the possibility of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari's theory is not really just about endorsing wild schizophrenic anarchic activity. Becoming in their work is a carefully worked out activity that also understands moments of stillness, death and limits, as the necessary prerequisites for becoming. It is this *becoming* which is the essence of the machinic, not any structure or, even less so, any particular actualisation in technology.

The Machine and the World

As discussed, the idea of connection which informs Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the machinic is first described in geological terms in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In a kind of folding process, of which the formation of the earth's crust is one example, form is produced through 'stratification', the formation of strata. These -

> *...consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities...Strata are like acts of capture, they are like "black holes" or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach.* (*ATP*:40)

As with machines, strata should be taken literally. These strata necessarily come at least in pairs and the geological version is obviously suggestive of the more general folding which Deleuze is

[8] Transgression in itself is not being defined here as inherently political radical but in these terms, radicality must begin at least with transgression as movement away from the limits of the Major. This is true even if the transgressive movement is that of staying still (when the order-word is, as it so often is, 'Move!').

to elaborate in full in his book on Leibniz' philosophy (*FLD*). Each fold is a double articulation as a fold doubling up on itself, creating an inside and an outside, for example. It is also doubly articulated in that it existed molecularly (*as* a particular kind of sediment that is 'subtracted' from a general particle flow in a layer of sedimentary rock for example) and on a molar level, as the form of the layer as a whole, or even of the way many layers are folded.

It is now that the machinic assemblage in general can be understood. It lies between the strata, *or* between the strata and a more general outside - the chaosmos (for example, the ocean which wears away at the cliff wall). In this the surface is once again paramount.

> *The surface of stratification is a machinic assemblage distinct from the strata. The assemblage is between two layers, between two strata; on one side it faces the strata ... but the other side faces something else, the body without organs or plane of consistency...* (*ATP*:40)

Thus the machinic assemblage, at and between the surfaces of stratification, is the thing that determines, and is determined by, interaction and connection. This is dynamic and constantly processual. The machine determines the fold. The fold determines the machine. It is simultaneously a question of consistency and variation. For example, the organic "stratum" has -

> *...a specific unity of composition, a single abstract Animal, a single machine embedded in the stratum, and presents everywhere the same molecular materials, the same elements or anatomical components of organs, the same formal connections.* (45)

This abstract Animal machine is not any particular animal, but that which organises the consistency which allows for the variation we call animal. Variation then, is always a combination of different machinic processes which in turn produce double articulations which are mutually and interactively defined.

Machines in general, as opposed to the specifically abstract machine, exist on all levels, from the abstract to the level of specific formations or assemblages. In the end it is always a question of what a machine connects with - how a multiplicity is machined - and this describes Deleuze and Guattari's approach to everything from art to politics. It is always a question of function, production and connection rather than meaning. For example, in regards to a book, they are not so concerned with "what a book means" because -

> *...we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge...A book itself is a little machine; what is the relation (also measurable) of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc. - and an abstract machine that sweeps them along?* (4)

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is nothing other than this kind of series of specific connections between these various machines, again, always as a double process, connections between at least two machines (for example, the breast machine and the mouth machine). This is desiring-production, and the concept shifts the emphasis from discrete entities to the machinic processes whereby they interact. It should be analysed with precision. Discrete entities are only by-products of these interactions and themselves subject to further interaction, further double articulations or folds.

This inverts the relation between the machine and living matter, as it is normally conceived. Because living matter is constantly folding, that is, in process, it can be regarded *as more machined than various mechanisms*[9]. The machinic here is once again the process of machining

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[9] *In Molecular Revolution*, Guattari notes that a machine is "a very different thing!" (89) to a mechanism. A mechanism is that which would "fix the fluxes, determine the interactions, identify certain fixed points, stabilize the structures and provide a reassuring feeling of having at last got hold of something quasi-eternal" (89-90).

itself, separate from what we might normally consider to be a mechanism. A passage from Deleuze's *The Fold* makes this clear -

> *If plastic forces can be distinguished, it is not because living matter exceeds mechanical processes, but because mechanisms are not sufficient to be machines. A mechanism is faulty not for being too artificial to account for living matter, but for not being mechanical enough, for not being adequately machined...it requires...an external determination...The living organism, on the contrary, by virtue of preformation has an internal destiny that makes it move from fold to fold, or that makes machines from machines all the way to infinity.* (8)

A favourite example of the living organism that "makes machines" is the egg, as has been discussed.

Machines are, in fact, always machines of machines. The world is conceived of as an endless and interconnected series of machinic processes - processes that due to the interruptive affect constantly produce new relations, new machinic connections between forms, and thus a production which is also a variation. Connection is all important, and desire is this connection. It is not even the desire *for* connection; it is the actual connection itself that is desire.

Some *social* machines, however, once formed, resist this process of desiring-production. These "are not formed in the same way in which they function" whilst for desiring -machines "use, functioning, production and formation are one and the same process" (180 -181). Thus, many social formations are, as previously discussed, 'antiproductive'. They are, of course, always also examples of production but *what they produce is antiproduction* - the restriction and containment of other productions in favour of One - for example, when all industry is geared towards war-production.

There is a complex set of relations between these Molar social formations as machinic processes and desiring-machines. Whilst in the former formation and function are not the same, as processes social machines are "identical with the desiring-machine" (151). So ethically it is not even a question of always favouring the desiring-machine. This would lead to being in favour of everything and anything. Rather interaction is examined in the light of whether it enables more connectivity and production, or as opposed to this, contains productivity (through antiproduction) in order to use its surplus in the service of social formations such as Capitalism or the State.

Social and desiring-machines are sometimes discussed as operating on different levels. Social machines tend first and foremost to operate on the Molar level, and what are called desiring-machines on the molecular.

> *Desiring-machines are the following: formative machines, whose very misfirings are functional, and whose functioning is indiscernible from their formation, chronogeneous machines engaged in their own assembly (montage)...; machines in the strict sense, because they proceed by breaks and flows...when a machine appears as a single object, and a living organism appears as a single subject...then desire does not need to project itself into these forms that have become opaque. These forms are immediately molar manifestations, statistical determinations of desire (proceeding by means of large heavy aggregates - selecting, excluding and organizing statistically) and of its own machines.* (286-287)

Of course, it is obvious that the *term* "desiring-machine" itself connects with other terms slightly differently at times. Such terms in Deleuze and Guattari's work are not terms of constancy or truth but are machines themselves.

This is also true of the term 'sexuality', which is given a 'geophilosophical' rather than psychoanalytic definition. As I have discussed previously, for Deleuze and Guattari sexuality is "everywhere" (293) and "desire does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses" (292). It is this broad conception of desire that must be specifically analysed as machinic, and it is in the end the machinic which seems to be the primary analytic term.

> *The schizoanalyst is not an interpreter, even less a theater director; he is a mechanic, a micromechanic.* (338)

This primacy of the machinic is again articulated by Deleuze (or Parnet) much later -

> *...it is objected that by releasing desire from lack and law, the only thing we have left to refer to is a state of nature, a desire which would be natural and spontaneous reality. We say quite the opposite: desire only exists when assembled or machined. You cannot grasp or conceive of a desire outside a determinate assemblage, on a plane which is not pre-existent but which must itself be constructed.* (*DL*:96)

Once this notion of desire is grasped, it is a short step to an understanding of the machinic question of the body, which in post-Spinozan terms is understood not as "one of part -objects but of different speeds" (*ATP*:172)[10]. This relates to the fact that the assemblage is an assemblage of machines, something which is producing, and therefore moving. A body is not a collection of part-objects, but a collectivity of smaller bodies all of which are constantly machining themselves

[10] See *SPP*:127: "In short, if we are Spinozists we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and its functions, nor as substance or a subject. Borrowing terms from the Middle Ages, or from geography, we will define it by *longitude* and *latitude*. A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of the body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between *unformed elements*. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body as each moment, that is, the intensive states of an *anonymous* force..."

in a fixed ratio of speeds[11]. Thus the body varies as the speeds vary. *Rates of change are the only constants* - the ratios of change within the body itself, or between the smaller bodies which comprise it (and are of course, comprised in turn by smaller bodies, and so on). Death occurs when these ratios are altered drastically enough so that the different speeds form a new body. To take Spinoza's famous example[12], the human body is decomposed by poison because poisons attacks its ability to maintain its ratios of change, at which time it deterritorialises to join the broader body of the earth.

Furthermore, the movements produced in order to produce a specific body are "movements of deterritorialization" (ibid.). They literally enable, for example, the animal or human to move; increasingly the more deterritorialising these movements are. Thus the "lips-breast" connection enables a deterritorialization which is part of the relation of speeds in being an upright animal. Technology, as a series of tools, correlates to this process. For example the "club is a deterritorialized branch" for the "prehensile hand" (ibid.). Thus a tool is only a small part of the entire machinic process. By now it should be obvious that "the technical machine is only a piece in a social assemblage that it presupposes and that alone deserves to be called machinic"[13] (*NM*:82).

One can begin to see, however, that rather than technology it is *deterritorialization* that is an essential part of the machine. Not only is everything *connected* in the broader web of machines

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[11] See Spinoza, 1952:378: "Bodies are distinguished from one another in respect of motion and rest, quickness and slowness, and not in respect of substance". See 378-380 for Spinoza's discussion of this issue.

[12] See *EPS*:248, where Deleuze writes, "When a poison decomposes my body, it is because a natural law determines the parts of my body in contact with the poison to take on a new relation which itself combines with that of the toxic body".

[13] Thus the bow of the amazon is only one part of the "fearsome woman-bow-steppe assemblage" (*ATP*:71). The abstract machine here is the "set of potential operations (affects; vectorial relations between points; abstract dynamism)" (Massumi, 1992:22) that enables this to come about. Here it is the plan which allows the Amazons to amputate a breast in order to "adapt the organic stratum to a warlike technological stratum", whilst the amputation and subsequent marriage of woman and bow is the machinic assemblage which carries this out.

and folds, but everything is also capable of specific *disconnections*. Machines form and unform chains from one to the other and on. Many of Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical models are a questioning of exactly how these chains of machines are arranged. For example, a despotic machine tends to submit chains to one general arrangement of social production, in the process destroying chains of production that might lead away from its domination, and, of course, blocking the more general connectivity of desiring-production. There is an attempt by a "despotic signifier" that "destroys all the chains, linearizes them, biunivocalizes them, and uses the bricks as so many immobile units for the construction of an imperial Great Wall of China" (*AO*:40) to gain control of production[14]. 'Schizos' follow the 'pure' machinic nature more closely, breaking fragments off the despotic arrangement, and using them in entirely new connections (and thus deterritorialising them, as opposed to the reterritorialisation process which restricts their flow to certain parameters). These fragments can of course, be fragments of language, body, rock, computer code, colour, or anything else that can enter into desiring-production and in this way Deleuze and Guattari provide an extreme of materialism when they provide an explanation of the machinic which goes far beyond linguistics. Linguistic elements are only some elements amongst others present in various machines, and it is not therefore what these elements mean or what their grammatological function is that is important but what their machinic functioning consists of in particular situations (*PP*:35). Indeed, this is also true of philosophy, which is why Deleuze always claims that philosophy has nothing to do with revealing truth, but everything to do with creating concepts which in turn are creative themselves. That is, philosophy is also seen as a machine. Even the book *Anti-Oedipus* itself is specifically referred to as a machine (*PP*:36), something that should be used to make other machines.

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[14] Abramovic and Ulay's walk across this wall could be seen as a deterritorialisation of imperial process.

As for the subject, it is only a residuum produced alongside the machine and functioning as a part adjacent to the machine, subject itself to constant change as the machine produces[15] (*AO*:40-41). Once again it can be seen that Deleuze and Guattari's whole conceptual machinery depends upon the multiply interactive rather than more fixed entities such as the subject. *Interaction is the very nature of the machine itself.*

Abstract Machines

Abstract machines have already been discussed in general terms, but it is perhaps necessary to devote brief sections specifically to both the abstract machine and the war machine, as these have a terminological priority in Deleuze and Guattari's work. Guattari gives a description of abstract machines in an essay written in 1975, "Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire" (*MR*:82-107). For Guattari, "...abstract machines...constitute the spearhead of machinic de-territorialisation, prior to semiotic formations and material fluxes" (97). These diagrams acting as machines, are rules of "plan(n)ing" [16] (*ATP*:70). As such they both plan and construct a plane of unformed intensities - what is termed the 'plane of consistency'. An example would be the undifferentiated black intensity of the night in which our planet (along with so many of our darker dreams and fantasies) is placed, and which seems so foreign to us, or the blindingly intense light of solar energy. A choir, or a radar screen, even a nightclub could form more mundane examples. The plane of consistency is, at times, equated with the abstract machine. It is a plane that is -

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[15] Although this is not a denial of the existence of the subject, merely an acknowledgment of its political and contingent nature. Guattari in particular saw the need for an ecology of the subject in his later work. He wrote - "How, then, ought we talk about the production of subjectivity today. Clearly the contents of subjectivity have become increasingly dependent on a multitude of machinic systems. No area of opinion, thought, images, effects or spectacle has eluded the invasive grips of computer assisted operations such as datamatics and telematics. This leads one to wonder whether the very essence of the subject, the infamous essence so sought after over the centuries by Western Philosophy is not threatened by contemporary subjectivity's new machine addiction" (*RPS*:16).

[16] In French the word 'plan' can mean both plan or plane.

> *...everywhere, always primary and always immanent. In addition the plane of consistency is occupied, drawn by the abstract machine; the abstract machine exists simultaneously developed on the destratified plane it draws, and enveloped in each stratum whose unity of composition it defines...*(ibid.)

Here what is called the 'machinic assemblage' is an *actualisation* of the abstract machine. The relation between the abstract machine and machinic assemblage can be understood as non-exclusive. Whilst their obvious difference is one of the abstract versus the concrete, what is abstract and what is concrete will depend upon which set of relations is the focus of attention - thus the necessity for a highly specific analysis of the abstract machine and machinic assemblage relation, which varies from situation to situation. An example is the prison or hospital - both of these can function as both concrete assemblage and as abstract machine. Foucault's 'Panopticon' can be seen to exist as both an abstract machine and a concrete set of machines. In short, though the abstract machine is the "principle of becoming" as a kind of "equation" (Massumi, 1992:22), it is the assemblage which organizes flows. The abstract machine is therefore a malleable concept itself, and there would be no abstract machines without machinic assemblages and vice versa[17].

This apparent confusion is cleared up when it is seen that it depends upon whether a machine is operating as a diagram or an assemblage as to whether it is abstract or concrete. This is as much as to say that they are different processes and whilst the machine is abstract its effectuations are quite specific[18]. Even if an abstract machine is "almost blind and mute" it can

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[17] An example is the current technology buzzword "digital convergence" (Rheingold, 1994:75). This is an abstract machine which forms a plan(e) whereby digital applications allow the 'convergence' of many different technologies (a recent example is the computer which is also a television set). From another angle 'digital convergences' can be seen as a series of actual assemblages effectuating the abstract machine of Capital. Rheingold cites John P. Barlow as being "fond of saying, 'Cyberspace is where your money is'" (ibid.). Rheingold goes on to note, quite correctly, that money itself is becoming more of an abstract machine due to digital media convergence (ibid.).

[18] De Landa (1991:234-237) uses concepts drawn from physics, in particular from the work of Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers on chaos theory (which also profoundly influenced Deleuze), to explain the

still make others "see and speak" (*FO*:34). So Foucault's Panopticon - or rather its abstract formula which aims "to impose a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity" is an abstract machine, a "diagram" which is "no longer an auditory or visual archive but a map, a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field" (ibid.).

The assemblage which effectuates the abstract machine "does not have to be optical; but it is an assemblage of organs and functions that makes something visible and conspicuous". And here it is important to note that the abstract machine can simultaneously form a diagram for several machinic assemblages. An example is the simultaneity of systems of language and systems of light, the delineation of which Deleuze claims is one of the main achievements of Foucault's work (58).

An understanding of the usefulness of this can be gleaned from an examination of the *production* of a 'soul'. Through this interaction between abstract machine and assemblage, there may be a kind of formation of an incorporeal *machine of the soul* in relation to the body. This is a 'soul' which, as a concept, has a full incorporeal immanence. For example, for Deleuze -

> *In the Baroque the soul entertains a complex relation with the body. Forever indissociable from the body, it discovers a vertiginous animality that gets it tangled in the pleats of matter, but also an organic or cerebral humanity (the degree of*

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abstract machine. De Landa equates the 'abstract' machine with the 'virtual' machine. This machine is "a particular set of attractors and repellors" (236) which gives a "visual representation called a 'phase portrait'" (234) (which in physics is used to discuss the behaviour of such phenomena as sub-atomic particles). This phase portrait is basically an indication of likely patterns of behaviour that will be induced around attractors and repellors. For example, a particle is likely to be drawn towards an attractor. Turbulent behaviour is produced by "'strange' or 'chaotic' attractors" (236).

One of the examples of an attractor given by De Landa is a "circular attractor" which "represents an 'abstract oscillator' which may be physically incarnated in many different forms: the pendulum in a clock, the vibrating strings of a guitar" (ibid.). More important than attractors, however, are "so-called symmetry breaking bifurcations" which "represent events in phase space in which one kind of attractor (say, a point) is transformed into another attractor (a circle, for instance)" (ibid.). Bifurcation is important because it represents a shift in a system - "phenomena of self-organization occur whenever a bifurcation takes place". There are thus "three distinct 'entities' inhabiting phase space: specific trajectories, corresponding to objects in the actual world; attractors, corresponding to the long-term tendencies of those objects; and bifurcations, corresponding to spontaneous mutations of the long-term tendencies of those objects" (ibid.). Both attractors *and* bifurcations make up abstract or virtual machines (237).

development) that allows it to rise up, and will make it ascend over all other folds. (*FLD*:11)

Deleuze's notion of the Baroque allows a machinic analysis of the formation of the soul that is important to a consideration of contemporary cultural processes. We have not done away with the soul's equivalent so easily. Deleuze considers that -

> *...we have a new Baroque and a neo-Leibnizianism. The same construction of the point of view over the city continues to be developed, but now it is neither the same point of view nor the same city, now that both the figure and the ground are in movement in space.* (136)

From this kind of thinking machinically can be extracted a machinic model of culture which incorporates change, language, light, the corporeal and the incorporeal. As with Spinoza's substance, Leibniz's soul is deterritorialized, made quite specifically contemporary, and subjected to the contingencies of speed and movement which constitute the act of performance of which language only subsequently forms a part. The abstract machine in this performance is a singularity of relations between intensities and speeds. It can be dangerous. Once these singularities are organized on a plane of consistency it remains only for the "abstract machine of overcoding" to ensure -

> *...the homogenization of different segments, their convertibility, their translatability, it regulates the passage from one side to the other, and the prevailing force under which this takes place* (*DL*:129)

This was written about the abstract machine which is anti-productive and determines the State. When not always homogenising, however, the abstract machine can bring about the *passage* of movements; movements of deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation, 'capture', movements of the State, the nomad, art, of bodies, affects, visibilities or enunciations. In short it describes the way

in which performance as movement, of body and soul, of language and light is animated by various abstract machines.

To sum up, whilst the assemblage produces content and expression, the abstract machine is "distinguished solely by movement and rest, slowness and speed" (*ATP*:254). Each abstract machine is -

> *...linked to other abstract machines, not only because they are inseparably political, economic, scientific, artistic, ecological, cosmic - perceptive, affective, active, thinking, physical, and semiotic - but because their various types are as intertwined as their operations are convergent. Mechanosphere.* (514)

Finally, abstract machines tend ethically towards two poles; they are linked either with the State apparatus, relying on transcendence and control, or with the deterritorialising war machine.

The War Machine

It is no surprise that Deleuze and Guattari should go from geological formations to the machinic at the beginning of *A Thousand Plateaus* because one of the main functions of the machinic is to produce and arrange territory[19]. For them the "territorial machine is therefore the first form of socius, the machine of primitive inscription, the 'megamachine' that covers a social field" (*AO*:141).

It is in their relations to territory that war machines define themselves. Specifically the notion arises from a relation between space, war, and the state. Firstly, the war machine always arrives "from without". This 'without' is here determined from the position of an outside "smooth" space, the "nomos", rather than a striated space, "polis" or "state" (*ATP*:353). Thus the war

[19] See my own, Murphie, 1996b in which this is discusses at length in relation to popular music, film and national sovereignty.

machine is nomadic or rhizomatic and its lines consist of 'lines of flight' over a smooth space. The war machine must "conjure away the territorial organization of the State" (392). It is creative and productive as opposed to the antiproductive striations of the state. Thus in an operational sense it is completely different to the state at every level - on the level of state power, state philosophy or even state aesthetic practice. The war machine always exists, as does the abstract machine, 'between the States' (ibid). Nevertheless it can be, and often is, appropriated by the State, and indeed is essential to many of the operations of the State. This is precisely because it enables the traversing and creation of smooth space, or space in-between, of deterritorialization and destratification. For the State, this allows the subsequent reterritorialisation and restratification through the surplus value, or simple territory, that is attained to the State through use of the war machine. What makes the war machine a war machine, whether in the service of the State or not, (and also what makes it a constant danger to the State, especially when appropriated), is the war machine's consistency as a machine which operates to -

> *...make the outside a territory in space; consolidate that territory by the construction of a second, adjacent territory; deterritorialize the enemy by shattering his territory from within; deterritorialize oneself by going elsewhere....Another justice, another movement, another space-time.* (ibid.)

This movement, which constitutes the war machine, will always be a threat to the antiproductive, striating apparatus of the State. As such the war machine is attached to the *nomadic*.

If war machines have "a danger which is proper to them", this is death. This is, of course, not because of a wild romanticism or because "they are imaginary, but precisely because they are real and in their reality" (*DL*:140). It is the reality of the war machines' deterritorialisations that always involves some sort of death, that is, a dismantling of speeds and relations in the

construction of the new relations of the line of flight. Furthermore, the danger of the state appropriating the war machine lies in the fact that, given no other object but war, the war machine "substitutes destruction for mutation... frees the most catastrophic charge" (*ATP*:230). Thus the appropriation of the war machine, the attempt to make it "a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution" (ibid.) is the very thing that sets up the condition Virilio has labeled as "Pure War" (Virilio and Lotringer, 1983), where the entire state apparatus becomes predicated upon the operation of a dynamic series of war machines, with the consequence that nearly all social, technical and other desiring-machines are directed towards the enhancement of the war machines' ability to increase speed (Virilio, 1986), or to direct movement. At this point "the war machine reforms a smooth space that now claims to control, to surround the entire earth. Total war itself is surpassed, toward a form of peace more terrifying still" (*ATP*:421) and "it is peace that technologically frees the unlimited material process of total war" (467). This once again has an exact parallel in Virilio's work (Virilio and Lotringer, 1983 Virilio 1986) which describes a world where speed as the object of politics goes beyond actual battles to a system of peace where almost every human activity, every resource is implicated in some way in human exploitation under the form of a *virtual* war. Here what is primarily terrifying about the rapacious peace that replaces battles is its ecological outcome[20]. Andrew Ross demonstrates this in his discussion of how different modeling systems of different potential climactic "disasters" have been highlighted, funded and publicised according to whether they would favour the US economy as it conflicted with other economies (1991).

[20] Guattari notes that "one can still imagine international capitalism managing to 'resolve' in its own way the problems of raw materials and major technological change, or to re-draw the world map of industrial installations - but it is hard to see how it could find solutions to the political , demographic and ecological problems in which it is now becoming bogged down" (*MR*:247-248).

Unlike Paul Virilio, however, Deleuze and Guattari see a more positive side to the war machine. When it is allowed to be multiple, it seeks out other, more creative relations of becoming at the same time as bringing "a furor to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (puissance) against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus" (*ATP*:352). In short the war machine's celerity and power or force will bring it up against many possibilities of relations. If, for example, the machine is harnessed to fascism then the only possible relation outside of the singular is annihilation of the different (which will continue until either all difference, even amongst the fascists is annihilated or the Fascist basis itself is annihilated). If, however, these relations are understood not as primarily object (despot) based, but based upon the machinic view of speeds, movements and forces (ongoing relations), then the important ethical necessity of the multiple becomes obvious. It is only in the process of multiple becomings that the war machine or nomadic wandering actually conserves a possibility of relation itself. Here the general context of power can be of crucial importance in determining the ethical value of specific interactions. Here becoming and multiplicity are mutually dependent, as ethical terms, because they are about a process which always involves both, if it is not to involve annihilation. It can also be seen that becoming is always becoming-minor, as becoming-major will always be an act of domination by the One of the multiple. It is this One, be it the king, despot, or stable subjectivity, that the war machine must betray in order to construct itself as "a pure form of exteriority" (354) able to traverse unknown territory.

In this the contemporary war machine may sometimes construct nature as what Wark has called "third nature" (1993, 1994a), where systems simulate nature in order to participate in not only the 'standing reserve' but the *simulations* of nature which themselves act as powerful abstract machines. Of course, there is never just one war machine, just as there is never one abstract machine. If it seems that way, it is perhaps only because the machines of Capital and

State apparatuses provide systems of representation which exclude other possibilities from cultural presence. In fact, the "war machine has an extremely variable relation to war itself" (*ATP*:422). At one pole it "takes war for its object" (ibid.), but at the other is -

> *...the essence; it is when the war machine, with infinitely lower "quantities", has as its object not war but the drawing of a creative line of flight, the composition of a smooth space and of the movement of people in that space.* (ibid.)

War and creativity are, then, the two poles of the war machine. The links between these two very different possibilities are, in fact, not always easy to pull apart. However, it is still possible that war *against* the State can take the form of artistic action, even and especially in a situation of a 'terrifying peace'. Or war machines might, as Wark suggests, take the form of "the articulation of new vectors of perception to new, more abstracted collectivities created out of the vectors of communication which constitute third nature" (1994a:129). It is perhaps no coincidence that Beuys was a Stuka pilot before an artist, ecologist and peace activist. One cannot always avoid the complications of creativity, force and the machine.

> *...an "ideological" scientific, or artistic movement can be a potential war machine, to the precise extent to which it draws, in relation to a phylum, a plane of consistency, a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement.* (*ATP*:423)

The war machine can take the form of "thinking, loving, dying, or creating machines" so long as these challenge the "conquering state" (356). Thus ethical practices could be defined, in one sense at least, as those forms of thinking, loving, dying, creation which challenge the conquering State, in becoming and in the forming of multiplicities.

Yet this is complicated by the fact that the State is quick to seize upon new interactive possibilities. The State needs extremes of organization (387). But in order to have these it paradoxically needs the war machine (which must be understood now as not only an instrument

of war, but also of artistic production or anything that decodes or destratifies). In short, *the State also needs becomings*. It organizes smooth space and extends into the general population through technology, and interaction, in the very process of appropriating nomads or the war machine. It in fact uses interaction and technology to organize the whole of the population *as* a war machine. Far from extolling the war machine without reserve, Deleuze and Guattari warn that -

> *...smooth space and the form of exteriority do not have an irresistible revolutionary calling but change meaning drastically depending on the interactions they are part of and the concrete conditions of their exercise or establishment* (387)

This will be taken as a theoretical axiom. In this respect such acts of resistance as Marina Abramovic cutting a star in blood around her navel, in a public square in what used to be Yugoslavia, are highly important acts in which it is often and repeatably first necessary to retrieve the war machine from the State.

Capitalism and Art

The first task of art, then, could be said to be the reclamation of the independence of the desiring-machines from the various regimes of signs or semiotic machines which restrict them (through order-words (*ATP*:76), etc.). A good example of this is Rebecca Horn's *Concert in Reverse*, in which she reclaimed the tower in Münster previously used as a place of torture. Art either reinforces, or takes lines of flight from, the paranoid social assemblage. The latter is, of course, not an easy task, and Deleuze and Guattari, often criticised for the utopian nature of their liberation of desire[21], spend a great deal of time explaining how it is next to impossible. This is

[21] See, for example, Kellner and Best, 1991:104-107.

firstly because the State machines perform massive exercises in coding that retrieve lines of flight. Nothing must escape them (*AO*:142). This is secondly because of the Capitalist machine.

The Capitalist machine is infinitely more complex than the State. It enacts a more complete capture of the war machine and a more dangerous playing with decoding and deterritorialization of flows - in order to produce the massive amounts of surplus value and surplus labour it needs. For example, Capitalism moves workers around the world to enhance their exploitation, or builds factories in the third world tied to diplomatic and military complexes. Capitalism as a social assemblage is very malleable. Deleuze, in his later discussions of Foucault, gives an example of Capitalism's malleability. Here Deleuze follows Foucault's models of the different social formations of the West in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1979), but qualifies them. He writes, following Foucault's last work, that we are now moving out of Capitalism's phase of discipline (of which psychoanalysis and art have, of course, been crucial components, if at times adversaries), towards the society of control. This is being achieved through the capitalist machine's shift from the use of discipline machines of subjection to technological machines of control (communications, media, video-missiles, computer software, etc) (*PP*:236).

In all cases, Capitalism always forms a kind of limit-machine in an extreme see-sawing between production and antiproduction, capable of subsuming most of the other machines. Because, however, it so actively appropriates the deterritorialising machine to both enact its limit and change it, Capitalism *as function* always presents a danger to itself.

The rapid development of new technologies can be placed within this framework. In all this, the rise of the technological in the age of Capitalism is largely explained by the vast amounts of code that has been decoded by the capitalist machine in order to produce more surplus code, as, for Deleuze and Guattari, technology depends upon pre-existing flows of code. It is these flows that require technology and bring it into being (*AO*:232).

The trouble in the current social assemblage is that in Capitalism, both decoded and coded flows are "for the benefit of capitalism and in the service of its ends" (*AO*:233). So the critics who see Deleuze and Guattari, even in *Anti-Oedipus*, as celebrating *any* outpouring of desiring-production, any "line of flight", *any* "war machine" have missed this fundamental point[22]. Capitalism in fact thrives on all these things. They form an essential part of its own particular machinery. It is this, not the technology itself, that the artist or philosopher must be aware of. This means that the complex and most compelling task of art, philosophy, or ethics for that matter, is not just to 'liberate desiring-production' but to nurture its flight within, and away from, the terrritorialisations and deterritorialisations of particular Capitalist machines. That flight should also not lead to a 'black hole', death or fascism, as it sometimes seems to for Heidegger, in lines of abolition. In addition, the extreme contingency of the circumstances in which ethical, pragmatic decisions are made means that what is 'right' will change rapidly over time - it is a question of seeking the lines of escape of each moment. Thus, as Deleuze writes -

> *Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affects on the plane of immanence. That is why Spinoza calls out to us as he does: you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what body or mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination.* (*SPP*:125)

It is perhaps the specific analysis of how social and desiring-machines interact - what affects are allowed or disallowed at every point - that is crucial here. It is not enough, for example, to try and save technology by appealing to State philosophical machinery, as Laurel does in *Computers*

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[22] See Bürger, 1985; Frank, 1983.

as Theatre. We will not really know then 'what our new bodies can do' in each situation. On the other hand it is important to remember that -

> *There are no desiring-machines that exist outside the social machines that they form on a large scale; and no social machines without the desiring-machines that inhabit them on a small scale.* (*AO*:340)

There is no utopian outside to the mechanosphere as a whole.

It is possible to see why Deleuze and Guattari valorise art and creativity, as well as love, as being able to escape the State and Capitalism, at least for a time. Artistic methods are the best because of their creation of the new *within* that which they inhabit; new planes of consistency, smooth spaces, speeds and relations of speeds, bodies without organs, lines of flight or abstract machines; the Klee abstract machine, the Cage or Beuys abstract machines, the Abramovic-Ulay abstract machine, the Stelarc abstract machine (and has Stelarc's work ever been discussed except by him in terms other than the simple technological?), the rap or reggae music abstract machines, the dance abstract machine, the independent music scene in Sydney as an abstract machine. None of these rely on a first 'appropriation' *of* the State for their political effect. They rather appropriate *from* the State.

The kinds of ethically useful abstract machines created then by artistic practice are those which will go a different way from the various forms of social inscription from the first instance. An example in pedagogical practice might be Joseph Beuys' complete reluctance to apply entrance criteria or quotas to his courses at art school, thereby productively undermining the basic tenets of academic and artistic elitism, not to mention ties to government funding, etc. The entire work of John Cage can be seen as the construction and operation of a robust abstract machine, which tends to ignore the repressive determinants of antiproduction, simply in order to "listen" to the molecular level of desiring-production itself (that which is normally deemed silent in music -

between the notes). Likewise, Brian Eno's approach in the recording studio is often determined as a systematic circumvention from the first moment of the normal structural and hierarchical impediments to nomadism in music (1976). Perhaps the very basis of this is once again unimpeded (Cage's "unimpededness") movement and constant interaction producing change. *It is constant escape which constantly produces more escape in interaction.* Paradoxically this means that art in the normal sense of producing meaning or stability, of giving purpose to life, or even lasting a long time as a canonised, state masterpiece must fail. Only then, when the abstract machine is predicated upon failure, can it succeed.

> *As Cage says, it is the nature of the plan(e) that it fail. Precisely because it is not a plan(e) of organization, development, or formation, but of* ***nonvoluntary transmutation****...So the plan(e) - life plan(e), writing plan(e), music plan(e) - must necessarily fail for it is impossible to be faithful to it; but the failures are part of the plan(e) for the plan(e) expands or shrinks along with the dimensions of that which it deploys in each instance...*(*ATP*:269 - my bold)

One thinks immediately of Eno and Peter Schmidt's "Oblique Strategies" where he will determine the recording process in the studio by chance, using a pre-arranged deck of cards with suggestions printed on them - or of punk music, whose immanent plane(e) was always based upon certain failures[23]. For nothing can become until certain overwhelming systems of organisation have failed.

For Guattari it is a matter of developing appropriate "paths/voices" of self-reference, in his terms, in "relation to the first two modes of power and modes of knowledge" (*RPS*:20). This third mode of self-reference enacts a creativity appropriate to a self-consistent and genetic

[23] Cage puts it more simply, saying "we make, of course, failures and we make mistakes, but we sometimes get glimpses of what we might do next" (Revill 1992:304).

transformation. It is the self-reference of the nomad who maps explorations rather than tracing those already marked out.

> *...self-reference is the most singular and the most contingent path/voice, the one that anchors human realities in finitude and ... it is the most universal one, the one that effects the most startling crossings between heterogeneous domains. This third one is the richest in what may be called universes of virtuality.* (ibid.)[24]

In other words, self-reference is the path through which one works with one's own constantly contingent position within desiring-production, participating most immanently within the machinic. It relates to that which has previously been discussed as 'counter-actualisation'.

What does this, then, make the technical in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking?

Technology

> *The history of technology shows us that a tool is nothing without the variable machine assemblage which gives it a certain relationship of vicinity with man, animals and things...*(*DL*:104)

Although there is nothing inherently unethical about technology itself for Deleuze and Guattari, it is hard to escape their hostility to apparatuses of social control, or the fact that they see much new technology as being an essential part of these apparatuses[25]. However, as

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[24] Guattari is pessimistic about the likelihood of finding appropriate creativities for this voice, writing that "there are very few indications of a shift away from oppressive mass media modernity towards some kind of more liberating post-media era" (*RPS*:22). For Guattari, however, as there has never been any essential subjectivity to return to, "it is my guess that it is only through 're-mappings' of the production of computerized subjectivity that the path/voice of self reference will be able to reach its full amplitude" (ibid.).

[25] For example, Guattari wrote that "Subjectivity today remains under the massive control of apparatuses of power and knowledge, thus consigning technical, scientific and artistic innovation to the service of the most reactionary and retrograde figures of sociality. In spite of that, other modalities of subjective production, processual and singularizing ones, are conceivable. These alternative forms of existential re-appropriation and self-valorisation may in the future become the reason for living for human collectivities and individuals who refuse to give in to the death like entropy characterising the period we are going through" (*RPS*:35).

discussed in chapter three, it is not the new technologies' simulations in themselves, the dislocation from some ideal or real, that disturbs Deleuze or Guattari. For Deleuze and Guattari the value of free movement in nomadism is perhaps *tainted* by the late twentieth century's preoccupation with constantly accelerating speed as power (as politics) which in fact annihilates what for them is the value of space - but this does not involve a critique of speeds or movements in themselves. This is left to Virilio. For Virilio, this speed, the analysis of which he in part discovered, makes any produced nomadism thoroughly ambiguous and dizzying (1991a:108).

In general, while Virilio and Deleuze and Guattari share some similar political views of what is happening in the world as regards technology, Virilio casts these in a much more apocalyptic light. Only on the relations between State and technology in war do their views closely coincide (indeed Deleuze and Guattari derive much from Virilio in this area). Virilio's views are *similar* to Deleuze and Guattari's theories about how different technologies may be produced by a simple abstract machine -

> *One could go on forever listing the technological weapons, the panoply of light-war, the aesthetic of the electronic battlefield, the military use of space whose conquest was ultimately the conquest of the image - the electronic image of remote detection...It is subliminal light of incomparable transparency, where technology finally exposes the whole world.* (Virilio 1989:88)

Virilio's political analysis, however, stops short with such discussions of the negations of sense and the known world through movement. Deleuze and Guattari, whilst finding this useful, can accommodate a more complex view of relative speeds and movements[26] (not everything, for example, is speeding up). In some ways what is for Virilio a rather frightening "aesthetics of

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[26] Deleuze and Guattari also differ from another theorist often linked with them in this area; Jean Baudrillard.. Unlike Baudrillard (1988), Deleuze and Guattari can provide *differing* ethical evaluations of simulacra depending upon their precise points of appearance in social machines. For Baudrillard, simulacra seem to all amount to much the same thing, once 'simulation' takes over the social.

disappearance" (1991a) is for Deleuze and Guattari, just another shift in the ongoing relations between simulacra, movements (captures and stratifications), and social machines.

Thus the new technologies of simulation are not so much unnatural for them, as reflective of a different social machine. Progress (or decline) for them is never technical but is always conceptual. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari there is no sense of teleological progress but only the modulations of concepts and abstract machines in interaction with others, only changing relations between planes of immanence and machinic assemblages. In this respect, specific technologies can be seen to occupy the extreme pole of the organising assemblages.

Technologies are about maintaining the consistency of flows through repetition. However, this is never repetition as a production of identical flows so much as a production (and perhaps regulation) of heterogeneous flows; flows of matter, of discourse, of subjections, of codes, of simulacra themselves.

The doubling that every technology is capable of, from the hammer to the television[27], is not, then, an act of reflection or representation but an act of coerce, of connection and disconnection, of the joining or breaking of flows. In this respect it is always at least a doubling, but may be a tripling, and so on. As with even a simple cake mixer or a washing machine, this coerce is once again an act of folding. Technologies can be seen as particular foldings which direct both capture or release (through unfolding) certain flows or multiplicities. Technologies themselves are in turn folded much as one double articulation can form the basis for the next.

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[27] In that the hammer is capable of performing the 'same' stroke ad infinitum, and the television repeatedly replenishing the pixels on the screen. More generally, both hammer and television call forth a certain machinic context as their 'double'. One's actions with a hammer are a 'double' of that hammer. Watching television, one becomes a 'double' of the television in one's machinic participation with it. So if in the example of television the technology is the refreshing of the screen with pixels and so forth, *which* sorts of pixels and their compositions and transformations is a complex machinic question.

It is because of this folding and unfolding that many new technologies apparently threaten our prevailing inside/outside dichotomies. An example is the 'inside' of the subject threatened by the 'external' communications network which preexists that subject's possibilities. This communication network is now a technological other as fierce as Lacan's other of language. Another example is the inside of the body invaded and opened out to various technologies as so revealingly enacted in Stelarc or Orlan's[28] performance work. However, this inside/outside dichotomy which seems threatened is itself, of course, the result of folds, not of threatened transcendental ideals.

It is not a question in the arenas of either aesthetics or ethics, then, of a correct ethics of representation, of truths being abandoned to our peril, or of the threat of the false or the simulated, especially once one has accommodated the phantasmal world to the material realm. It is rather a question of an ethics of interaction, of the guidance of flows and multiplicities, of their release from repressive social apparatus, of the freedom of expression and connection divorced from absolute (though not pragmatic) moral or political values.

The political issues involving technologies have a further dimension. The conflict between a Capitalist *axiomatic* or machine and the minorities enslaved by its technologies is not one for Deleuze and Guattari of a conflict of axiomatics. It is the contest *of an axiomatic versus a process of becoming* (becoming-minor) (*ATP*:471). This goes further than Heidegger's attempts to enhance human subjectivity in its recognition of the inhuman, because there is a point that Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-minor, particularly as desiring-production, *welcomes* and interacts with the inhuman; perhaps as the 'natural', the 'technical', the 'animal', or the 'molecular'. There is a becoming-outside quite distinct from Heidegger's *return* of the unknown *to* the philosophical subject, even if that subject is questioned in the process. For Deleuze and

[28] A French performance artist who consciously undergoes plastic surgery as performance. See Gray, 1996.

Guattari, it is in fact this inhuman outside that enables the construction of desiring-machines (*AO*:355). As such, all the elements of becoming-minor can be used to construct desiring-machines in spite of, and as lines of flight from, the Capitalist axiomatic. I have already discussed such elements of becoming-minor in relation to artists and performers from Cage to Horn and Stelarc. These elements, of course, include the technical.

Expressive Vibrations and Perceptive Bodies

The body is central to a consideration of this complexity of desiring-machines and can now be more precisely described. As has been alluded to already, in Deleuze's early work he constantly returns to the question of what a body can do, and says through his commentary on Spinoza that until this question is considered "Moral chattering replaces true philosophy" (*EPS*:255).

For Deleuze and Guattari 'what a body can do' is, of course, given a somewhat machinic definition, one in which multiplicities are conjoined -

> *A body is not defined by the form that determines it nor as a determinate substance or subject nor by the organs it possesses or the function it fulfills. On the plane of consistency, a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude: in other words the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude). Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds.* (*ATP*:260)[29]

[29] This quote is very similar to that quoted earlier from Deleuze (*SPP*:127). The constancy of these ideas is obvious.

Such a cartography allows the body to be considered in its multiplicities and its intensities. It is also precisely these multiplicities that define the machinic as a "synthesis of heterogeneities" (330). The machinic can be differentiated from the technological by this cutting through to heterogeneic alterity, as a series of becomings as opposed to the technological's repetition of the same.

In *The Fold* Deleuze confronts Newton's mathematics with Leibniz's (preferred) ability to include metaphysics, writing that "Leibniz's calculus is adequate to psychic mechanics where Newton's is operative for physical machines" (*FLD*:98). It is in the relations between the physical and the psychic that it is possible to broaden the understanding of the machinic as a general movement and multiplicity, rather than just a series of mechanisms.

In *The Fold* Deleuze asserts that the organic body is developed *by its perceptions*, in a kind of statistical accumulation of materials in response to vibrations. These accumulations become organs which are equipped to receive the vibrations, that is, the perceived. For Deleuze's Leibniz, this endowment of the "monad with organs or the organic body corresponding to its perceptions" (ibid.) follows from what Deleuze would see as the clear expression of the surroundings of that body[30]. As discussed in chapter two, it can be seen that Deleuze understands the body, the metaphysical (incorporeal transformations, etc) and the environmental to be in a continuous machinic set of relations, multiplicities, speeds, connections. Bodies are only distinguished by certain singularities, which are clarities of expression drawing together certain multiplicities, under the aegis of an event.

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[30] Deleuze writes of Spinoza also that, although ideas and things are separate they are parallel expressions of the same substance - "For every idea there corresponds some thing, and to everything an idea" (*EPS*:116). For Deleuze, "the corporeal mechanism and the spiritual automaton are most *expressive* when they find their 'sense' and their 'correspondence' in the necessary reason that was everywhere lacking in Descartes" (335).

Just as bodies can be seen as machinic, so too does the machinic depend upon bodies wrought out of vibration by the clarity of expression of events. And bodies here are any clear expression drawn from the machinic. Deleuze seems fascinated with Leibniz's fold because it is an immanent and infinite connected field, one of clear and obscure perceptions in which certain virtual events create clear zones of expression; singularities, bodies or organs. These clear zones of expression in turn express the interconnectivity of the world.

This gives a more specific understanding of the way that abstract machines and machinic assemblages relate in the realm of bodies and perceptions.

> *I possess a clear and distinguished zone of expression because I have primitive singularities, ideal virtual events to which I am destined. From this moment deduction unwinds: I have a body because I have a clear and distinguished zone of expression. In fact, that which I express clearly, the moment having come, will concern my body, and will act most directly on my body, surroundings, circumstances, and environment.* (ibid.)

This conceptualisation of the relations between bodies and perceptions, the machinic and the event presents their concatenation as a kind of performance. Performance in essence consists of precisely the interactions of these components, and an expression of these interactions, of the connections and vibrations that they are. Such performances are intimately linked to the creation of bodies[31]. Seen thus, a machine is therefore not a technical apparatus, but something which tends both towards connection, vibration and singularity.

It can be seen that the other movement of connection realised in this folding process is that between the abstract event and the corporeal state of affairs, between the creation of new concepts, so dear to Deleuze and Guattari (*QQ*:8), and the actualisation of vibrations through events in bodies. For example, it is not the apparatuses that 'machine' in music involving an

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[31] "The eye is an implicated light or the expression of a possible light, while the ear is that of a possible sound." (*DR*:260)

instrument and a voice. Rather, through vibrations as deterritorialised blocks of becoming, the instrument and the voice are both machined by each other (*ATP*:307). It is at this point of becoming that both voice and instrument are "becoming-molecular". This becoming-molecular, as an opening up of the possibilities of the body, constitutes a "new threshold of deterritorialization" (308). The organic and the machinic, actualised in the instrument's technology and the voice's technique, create a new plane. It is at this point that it becomes possible to differentiate between machinic expression on the one hand and signification on the other.

Deleuze and Guattari describe the ways in which different instances of technology are brought about in a particular "machinic phylum" or "technological lineage" such as the 'information machine' with which this chapter began. Machinic phyla occur -

> *...wherever we find a constellation of singularities, prolongable by certain operations, which converge, and make the operations converge, upon one or several assignable traits of expression.* (*ATP*:406)

As in the relation between instrument and voice, however, expression is not the same as signification. Both Deleuze and Guattari are totally opposed to the reduction of expression to signification, and consequently the reduction of the machinic to the textual. In some ways the entirety of their respective and joint oeuvres could be summed up by this - discursive defenses of expression against its reduction to signification[32]. Of course, for them, as for Foucault, signification is still an *index*, not of truth or its lack, but of power, of regimes of signs, of collective assemblages of enunciation or bodies, of despotism, Capitalism and so on. Nevertheless, if all signification is machinic, not all the machinic is signification. The machinic is rather always expression. Thus the extended and repeated attacks on Lacan in particular and

[32] Even Alex Callinicos (1989:68) recognises this, although a staunch opponent of Deleuze and Guattari.

linguistics in general in Deleuze and Guattari's work. Thus, the attacks on Marxism or any philosophy when it comes to signify as 'Truth', or operates as a force which appropriates multiplicity to the despotic signifier of one person or group of persons. In such operations Deleuze and Guattari object to the manner in which when the immanence of force throughout the Natural or machinic is hidden behind transcendence exercises in power 'from a distance'. Opposed to such operations, Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the machinic is the gateway leading to an understanding of "the real world" away from "structure" (*MH*:23) and signification.

The radical nature of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the machinic can be understood here in all its complexity. It allows for a philosophical and practical understanding of how the machinic forms, deforms and reforms time-space arrangements in the very process of heterogeneic interaction. This is without a necessary recourse to pure textualism or the theoretical despotism of the signifier or even of a more general semiotic. For Guattari, for example, there are links *between* the semiotic machines and *other machines* which do not reduce themselves to the semiotic. These are performed by that which he terms the fifth form of semiosis, where -

> *...the superlinearity of asignifying substances of expression, where the signifier sheds its despotism, where informational lines can retrieve a certain parallelism and work in direct contact with referential universes that are in no way linear and that tend, moreover, to escape any logic of spatialized ensembles..*(ibid.)

These then are "asignifying semiotic machines", between the semiotic and "a series of material machinic processes"[33]. The simple example Guattari gives is the number assigned to a

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[33] This is present also in the earlier work of Guattari -

> *Signs are involved in things prior to representations. Signs and things engage one another independently of the subjective control that agents of individual utterance claim to have over them.*
>
> *A collective agency of utterance is then in a position to deprive the spoken word of its function as imaginary support to the cosmos. It replaces it with a collective voice that combines machinic elements of all kinds - human, semiotic, technological, scientific, etc.* (*MR*:76).

credit card which *works* an automatic teller machine. We are reminded of Deleuze and Guattari's "Postulates of Linguistics" which are based not a priority of a linear structure of meaning, whether diachronic or synchronic, but on the priority of order-words in which language is seen to operate and express before it signifies. Thus, also, asignifying machines express orders. They operate. They "issue starting and stopping orders and, above all, they provoke the 'setting into being' of ontological universes" (24).

We are now in a position to ask what new technologies do when they are not only signifying to (postmodern) subjects. We can now ask - what exactly is 'new', if anything, in 'new' technologies? What is virtual about them, and what real affects do they involve? This will be done in the next chapter.

It can be seen that this forms the basis for Guattari's new form of analysis - one that analyses more than chains of signifiers or semiotic elements - and is why he writes that "I wish to condemn psychoanalysis only on behalf of a different kind of analysis, a micro-political analysis... On behalf, in other words, of a genuine analysis" (78). See also 90ff.