

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/4360>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

TOUCH-SENSITIVE:
Cybernetic Images and Replicant Bodies
in the Post-Industrial Age

SUZANNE LIVINGSTON

PhD Thesis - Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
Philosophy Department

December 1998

CONTENTS

Chapter		page
	Introduction	1
1	NEURAL DRAMA After Debord and the Integrated Spectacle	9
2	THE EYE OF THE STORM Simulation and the Powers of the False	44
3	THE DIGITAL SKIN Tactile Media and the Vanished Point	80
4	COGNITIVE DISSIDENTS Image, Affect and the Spinozist Body	114
5	DATA BURST The Cybernetic Image as Intensive Journey	147
6	CONCLUSION	185
7	Bibliography	190

ABSTRACT

This thesis uses Deleuzian cybernetics to advance upon post-modern accounts of the contemporary image economy. It begins with the hypothesis that the schizophrenic behaviours of late capitalism have induced an irreparable crisis in the inherited 'specular economy' (Irigaray). This is manifested as the breakdown of the laws of generalised equivalence between truth, value and meaning and the end of a stable signifier-signified relationship - theorised as the escape of reality into 'hyperreality', or the world become simulation according to Baudrillard.

It will expose the insufficiency of post-modern accounts which theorise this crisis in representation via methods which fail to escape their own always already representational terms and it will then rigorously follow through the implications of an image economy which is constituted by simulations which are 'genuinely' sourceless, which do not imitate a prior reality but which rather synthesise forces and relations. To escape the closed loop of representationalism, it will divert attention away from the signifier and will concentrate on the sub-representational power of images to re-engineer reality and to re-invent the limits of the body. Using the theory and practice of Deleuze, Spinoza, Bergson, Benjamin and Virilio, it will treat images as planes of corporeal becoming - as material entities, virtual avatars, possessional states and conductors of pre-personal affect.

Post-modern accounts which cite the overwhelming predominance of images sit uncomfortably with the theories of French anti-ocularcentrism - accessed here via Irigaray and Lyotard - which mark the demise of vision and its attached representational order. This paradox requires that a new perceptual relation be mapped - figured here as entirely corporeal, as tactile and synesthetic (McLuhan) and therefore immersive. Both 'affect' and 'intensity', as modes of pre-personal perception, will be treated as tactile interactions for these responses to images demand that a body be always 'in touch' with its environment, always anorganically altering its perceptual capacities by rules of feedback. It will be argued that in this reality studio, the body no longer perceives via a specular light source, solid form and assumed phallogocentric meaning.

The proposed synthesis between cybernetic imaging technologies, immanent perceptual criteria and the ever-changing state of the body requires an engagement with the female since she bears a privileged relation to this scenario. In the specular economy, women have been assumed, like faithful images, to secondarily reproduce an underlying, phallogocentric truth. However, it will be shown that just as images can work non-representationally, so too can female bodies; on the one hand appearing representational but on the other conducting radically subversive effects. Where bodies and images are such simulatory becomings it will be shown how the female is neither representationally ordered (social constructivism) nor essentially defined (biological reductivism) but is rather cybernetically engineered. Throughout, her privileged access to the virtual realm beyond language will be used to substantiate the major claim of this thesis that cybernetic simulation is more concerned with the material alteration of an environment rather than with the implementation of linguistic obligation.

Introduction;

BODY-IN-FORMATION

According to Luce Irigaray, writing in her most prestigious work, *'Speculum of the Other Woman'*, the Western reality studio has, since Plato, been host to the longest running show in human history. It is a show with a grand beginning, a self-contained unity, a transcendent means of illumination, a linear perspective, an ocularcentric design and it is most often played to only one observer at a time. It has been titled the 'specular economy'. It is so convincing that it cannot accurately be called an imposed order or structure, for its effects are finely laced into the trading networks which sustain reality itself. Its function is to isolate and uphold the firm boundaries of western identity. Whilst it purports to be convincing enough in itself and thus severs the connections between its participants and an offstage or outside of representation, it alludes to a founding truth - of its own construction but presented as entirely neutral and objective all the same. It is this notion of truth which seals the self. Rare access to it is gained via the phallic eye - the point of connection between man and his nature, or between the chosen member and his God or Ideal form. In this economy, as will be explored, all those bodies which have not been scripted a part in this show, are relegated to props - to the screen or backdrop of his self-securing view. Accordingly woman, the other, is the limit point or the boundary of the not self - the mass towards which man must feel repulsion or at least exclusion in order to secure his own dogmatic identitarianism in the face of her ill-defined boundaries.

The above claims will be explored with reference to one fundamental aspect of the specular economy - the role which the image plays. In its standard role as a mediator of truth, a secondary bit-part which indicates a negotiated or underlying reality with all its imposed structures of signification, it is a perceptual judgement and it requires finely honed methods to extract interpretation. As the representative of the specular, with its clear divisions between the true and the false, the apparent and the real, it is the arbiter of all that is observable. What cannot be contained by the representing image is understood to be either ineffectual or non-existent, for that which cannot be imaged falls outside our ability to judge - to categorise reality in linguistic concepts. It is this long embedded synthesis of visuality, linguistics and centred identity which Deleuze stands in opposition to. Via Foucault, he expressly discards the notion of "an original experience, a first complicity with the world...[which] would make the visible the basis

of the articulable (phenomenology, the 'World speaks', as if the visible already murmured a meaning which our language had only to take up..."¹

Deleuze's extended dismantlings of the metaphysical structures of a cave-bound reality are entirely effective in their intentions, but as will be proposed here, their effectiveness is dependent not on their situation in what are, without doubt, 'revolutionary' texts, but on their resonance with and contribution to material events in a post-industrial age. If the specular economy, with its rules of representation and second-grade realities is indeed based on trade, then the current mutation of capitalist behaviours from those based on production to those based only on circulation (as explored in chapter 1) would seem, as is evidently the case, to be breaking up the ground rules of what was once assumed to be a stable real.

Postmodernism observed the intensification of the role of the media image in the current economy - a shift succinctly marked out as a move from a reality represented *by* images to a reality constituted *as* images. Whilst many of these accounts tend to be restrained by the post-modern resistance to stepping outside of the sealed loop of subjective semiotics, the transition which they in first place observe would it seem now to be an accurate account of reality. Thus, in the current socius, where simulation *is* the real we witness the constitution of a reality which is 'genuinely' sourceless, in the sense that it cannot be secondarily ascribed to the inheritance of the specular economy - to the signifier or to Platonic truth. It has been absorbed by technologies which usurp man's first intentions and in so doing take their duty to reproduce reality far beyond itself to the point where the screen in itself is the plane of the real - not what is 'represented' by it. What will thus be investigated in chapter 1 is the concomitant theoretical shifts which move away from treating images as imitative or representative but instead treat them as planes which actively synthesise parts, forces and relations. This trajectory is laid out via an exploration of the spectacular in Debord, the hypereal in Baudrillard and the machinic image in Deleuze-Ballard.

It is acknowledged that standard signification structures may continue to proliferate, thus seeming to limit the realm of communication and engineered change to that marked out by the articulable and the observable but the pursuit of these persistent relics is beyond the intentions laid out here. What concerns us is the multi-valency or polysemiosis of semiotic systems - the effects of non-representational flow on the anachronistic remains of the specular's model of the real. What will be studied are the continually shifting means of reproduction alongside their subversive, post-semiotic

¹ Deleuze.G. - *Foucault*, tr. Sean Hand, (London, University of Minneapolis Press, 1988) p.55

effects, beginning with the familiar technologies of simulation - television, cinema, video, hypermedia, VR and continuing with the less familiar - the cutting edge of optical technologies such as aerial mapping systems, hyperballistic firing tunnels and cinemaradiographic flash equipment.

The most appropriate means to study the de-coupling of images from the stage of representation is via cybernetics. If, as Luce Irigaray suggests, learning “how the system is put together, how the specular economy works”² will provide the technical know-how to assist its downfall, then it is cybernetics which will demonstrate how identity, reality, the phallus, light and God have been bound together in order to secure their own authority at the expense of an active relation with the outside. The story of representation, of a primary and a secondary reality which both remain within the remit of man’s control, is flush with the story of autogenesis - of man giving birth to himself without contact with the leaking body of the female. Both fictions are products of an interiorised, self-deceiving subsystem which severs the connection with the outside of Oedipal identity in order to secure all that he supposedly knows under the remit of all that he can apparently see. This is the prime concern of chapter 2 which seeks to explore the relation between images, signs and bodies in the context of the implicit debate between Baudrillard and Irigaray. It will be proposed that the security apparatus of signification is dependent on the ‘closure’ of a system which may otherwise display opposing tendencies. It is dependent on severing those mechanisms which may make connections beyond the closed loop such that; “(a)ny feedback relationships between variables are strictly internal to the system or better still, this feedback (as in the relationship between the momentum of a projectile and gravity) has nothing to do with the matching or fitting of the system to the environment or of the environment to the system.”³

As will be explored such closure involves a massive reduction of the intensely complex processes which constitute material reality. It may, for the purposes of human history have been considered valid to freeze such chaotic and ever-changing behaviours in order to render them observable within the fixed spatial and non-temporal modes of classical science and it may have been considered necessary to man’s survival to provide him with a world of his own supposed creation, but as Elsasser points out, such attempts do not hinder escape. As he writes; “There exists regularities in the realm of organisms whose existence cannot be logico-mathematically derived from the laws of physics, nor can logico-mathematical contradiction be construed between the

² Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is not One*, (New York, Cornell University Press. 1985), p.75

³ Wilden.A. - *System and Structure; Essays in Communication and Exchange* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1972) p.357

regularities and the laws of physics.”⁴ Such is the case of a post-specular economy which is running beyond its structures, taking information - the unit of its trade - along with it, building new planes of reality in its process. As will be mapped, there are a great many realities which are not the solipsistic One of history and which are run by open feedback. They are able to ‘wire’ themselves to the elements of an environment which they consider to be other than themselves - to thus learn from connection and to adjust their future conduct and very constitution by the results of past performance⁵.

What is necessary therefore is a contextualisation of these behaviours within the contemporary imagescape for it can no longer be treated as a closed loop but must instead be acknowledged as a constantly re-formatting plane of differing virtual realities which variously meet to produce temporary agglomerations, evolutionary events, non-linear perceptual journeys, metastable flows and corporeal becomings. In chapters 3 and 4 it will be asked how a mapping of the asignifying image economy opens up an understanding of the body. It will be argued that the laws of interpretation are a minor event of the surface of a distributed body which tends towards the exploration of itself - to the immanent, tactile perceptual journeys indicated by Benjamin and Irigaray (chapter 3) and to the sub-representative, sub-cognitive image responses outlined by Spinoza and Guattari (chapter 4).

In the 1940s, cybernetics re-configured the body in terms of computation, biology and engineering with the intention of increasing the control of its behaviour. However, what was intended to regulate has in fact achieved more in exposing the weak links of a system. With its accounts of closure and yet simultaneous discovery of ubiquitous open systems, open-feed cybernetics exposes the tactical interface between his idealised reality and material flow. In doing so it has fractured the assumed wall between the appearance and the real, between the signifier and the signified and, as will be argued, it has used the screen of simulation technology as the plane of its engineering. In mapping a counter-theory to the history of representationalism, what will be offered is the other side of representation, the other side of the screen. Where images⁶ actively engineer and biotically re-configure, there remains an intervention yet to be staged - a multifaceted history and emergent future which acknowledges the instability of data flows and their capacity to produce images as virtual avatars, material entities, surfaces of affect - as therefore radical planes of becoming which pay no attention to their historical role as

⁴ qu. in *ibid.*, p.132

⁵ Fire is example of such open feedback which further explains Irigaray’s use of fire to distort the transcendent light source of ocularcentrism in *‘Speculum of the Other Woman’*. Also see Wilden.A; *op.cit* p.358

⁶ The term ‘image’ is retained as a technical term simply because it is a term which is less colonised by contradictory usage than the term ‘simulation’. It is of course severed from its standard application and re-occupied - used therefore not to refer to a secondary reality but to its intensive effects.

representatives of a lesser, emasculated reality. No single theory will navigate such a line of technical analysis - instead it will be pursued at the intensive site where theory, fiction, process, feminism and science meet and distort one another.

This convergence of systems theory introduces the double-edge as the tool of analysis - the diagram, therefore, of images which both display and contact, mimic and transfer, monitor and unleash. Since the proceeding analysis will consider the convergence between bodies and images, it will consider an organ which also has more than one reflective surface - the eye. For it too can both freeze and map movement, both capture and release. Attached to a map of the cybernetic image, the eye is a perceptual organ which - if it is acknowledged in its role as mediator of the many fleeting elements of a sensory environment overloaded by objects, information and simulation - emerges not as a discernible bodily function but as a field of practice. Contrary to a long philosophical tradition which treats it as the dominant sense, it is a complex, distributed organ more adapted to the demands of images which are immersive rather than distancing, which touch and shock rather than conceal. The analysis will thus track how the post-industrial age has ushered in the demise of the stage of ocularcentrism; how it has, by force, removed its solid objects, fixed boundaries, primordial light, observable criteria and non-temporal structures in order to replace them by vectors of commodities, desires and intensities which show that the performance of reality for the pleasure of a self-present beholder always was a fallacy. As images detach themselves from forms, they gather pace in streams of electronic data, in order to display not faithful reproduction but effects which are not necessarily linguistically overcodable and which ignore the historical distinctions between interior sensation and external sign. In short, they become transportational entities in themselves.

One key distinction between closed and open systems is, according to Wilden, the type of material which sustain their operations. Closed systems are energy-based models whilst open systems are dependent on information for their sustenance. In 1948, Norbert Wiener identified the latest stage in cybernetic development to be the age of communication and control (following the mythic Golemic age, the age of steam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the age of steam in the eighteenth and nineteenth). It is marked by a socio-industrial shift from power engineering to - the 'economy of energy' - to communication engineering based on an economy run by signal transmission. It is this shift which re-configures the body in terms which are not fuelled by energetic and homeostatic models of control⁷ but in terms of its' own open feedback information circuits. The body is thus sustained by the information which

⁷ Freud's compensatory model in *'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'* is an example.

passes through it. Consequently, as non-discrete components of data continually re-format the pixellated planes of the contemporary imagescape, they do so via the simultaneous re-engineering of a body's perceptual and non-perceptual limits. When information circuits and corporeal behaviours are functionally linked in this way, the body, like the screen, can be acknowledged for its rich and varied 'other side'; "...we are now coming to realise that the body is far from a conservative system and the power available to it is much less limited than was formerly believed."⁸ Neuro-informatic explorations have proved the point by showing that the brain (and thus body where the mind/ body distinction has been eroded) is a wealth of feedback mechanisms which continually learn from incoming information and then extend the remit of the body beyond its supposedly ascertainable limits.⁹

What emerges is a necessary synthesis of investigation - one that meshes technological/economic change in the means and function of imagistic reproducibility with change in what we know to be a body - one that takes seriously the proposition that the screen may function as a biotic component, a tool of immersion, which effectively re-formats and is re-formatted as it works. When a body is located directly 'in' an environment which actively constitutes it - image based or otherwise - it is immersed in that environment's highly unpredictable behaviours. The matter of the body is thus directly affected by the matter of technology, the matter of images, the matter of capitalism, the forces of change. What is required therefore is a map of the unrehearsed, non-semantic perceptual effects which are evident in a body constituted by material flow. Many of these effects, ranging from image shock and addiction to boredom and autonomic response, display cybernetically recursive properties in the sense that they demonstrate how a body captured by its environment may also be retro-actively stimulated by it - how a bored body may discover its secreted intensities, how a conditioned body may discover its sub-cognitive, autonomic responses, how a female body explores its unscripted potential. All such processes are located on the fine line of becoming where an apparently closed system, such as an autonomous body discovers its hidden dependence on the shifting dynamics of its immediate environment. The body beyond its assumed signifier does indeed require a radical change in perspective; "It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them, from above or up at them from below, or from left to right; try it, you'll see that everything changes."¹⁰

⁸ Wiener.N. - 'Cybernetics', *Scientific American* no.179; pp14-19, p.15.

⁹ see Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* tr. Brian Massumi (London, Athlone, 1992) p.15

¹⁰ *ibid.* - p. 23

To investigate the possibilities of a body which is fully functional outside of its ascribed role in the history of representation is to acknowledge its refusal to run to script - to therefore introduce a body which refuses to be a mere copy of its supposed male source. As explored in chapter 2, Irigaray makes good use of the ability of women to resource the technics of imaging differently - not to duplicate faithfully but to simulate states on one face in order instigate contrary states on the other. As a subsystem of broader concerns, it will be shown how current developments in image economies offer a means to map the female body on the outside of the either/ or double-binds of representation, in a way which takes seriously the post-phallogentric claims of women but in far more effective terms. Thus in chapter 5, it will be proposed that the intensive temporalities (Bergson) of global image flow offer a means to map the break down of the division between the body and its representation by suggesting that both sides of this now defunct dichotomy are fused by the capacity to engineer the real rather than represent or negate it.

What therefore emerges is the possibility of mapping the body, gendered or otherwise, outside of the polarised debates which typify some areas of feminism - debates which circle around either the social determinism of acquired gender (the specular structures of pure appearance) or the biological reductionism of essentialised sexual difference (a specular notion of fixed reality) or around the absence and lack of the Lacanian school. Since cybernetics presents the screen as the route beyond representation, the diagonal which has been proposed so far as running between appearance and reality, between the body and its technologies, can be extended into the sexual difference debates which emerge in a post-specular economy heralded by Irigaray, Plant and others. The emphasis will from here on be not on an essential body but on a situated body which is neither constituted entirely by language nor by a biological essence but is instead ever-changing around axes of temporary nodes of meta-stability. This is where 'the closed equation of representation' is replaced by an open equation which does not analyse "the world into discrete components, reducing their manyness to the One of identity and ordering them by rank, [rather] it sums up a set of separate circumstances in a shattering blow."¹¹

The effects of this blow will here be charted - beginning, in the first place with chapters 1 and 2 which are concerned as much with what has been inherited from the specular age as with what awaits us in the post-ocular era. They will thus offer some assessment

¹¹ 'Translator's Foreword', *ibid.* - p.xiii

of the laws of spectatorial positioning - the interiorised constructions of a stage which plays a consistent story of identity, objectivity and an autonomous single self.

Chapter 1

NEURAL DRAMA

After Debord and the Integrated Spectacle

From one simple paradox emerges an entire perceptual crisis; in this latest stage of post-industrial capitalism, television is on the one hand denounced as an instrument of spectacular control and deluding commodity fetishism and yet is on the other hand credited with the collapse of the said specular space and the consequent evaporation of the 'aura' which once graced the commodity. As the technology so instrumental to the entrenchment of the spectacle, it is paradoxically regarded to be the control tower of despotic rule and yet also to be beyond critique (symptomatic of a culture in which commentary as pseudo-critique is circulated "without ever apparently feeling the need to reveal its cause, to state, even implicitly, where it is coming from and where it wants to go..."¹)

These contradictions are exemplary of three distinct social processes - firstly, the tendency of cybernetic systems to dismantle the very operations which they seek to maintain; secondly, the outmoding of theory by practice and thirdly, the impure proliferation of signifiatory regimes. In demonstrating this last point, television, like any technology continues to operate with the signifier attached as a marker of identitarian reflexivity, but simultaneously, there are other modes of signification at work - modes which display "such diversity in the forms of expression, such a mixture of...forms, that it is impossible to attach any particular privilege to the form or regime of the 'signifier.'"² Saussure's signifier-signified equation, dependent on the arbitrary evolution and imposed relation of units of meaning, is only one account of communication procedures, contextualised here amongst a surfeit of non-arbitrary, functional alternatives which activate the signifier-signified relation in a fashion unrecognisable to itself.

These alternative modes of communication were in place even before Debord wrote his 1967 text, *Society of the Spectacle*. Indeed, there have always been processes at work which have been actively disobedient to the signifier. In theory, however, this has not been the case. The theoretical edifice which plots the common dynamic between images and

¹ Debord.G. - *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, (London, Verso, 1990), p.76

² Deleuze. G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* tr. Brian Massumi, (London, Athlone, 1988) p.111

capitalism as the desire “to establish a new set of abstract relations between images and things and to impose those relations as the real”³ and thus constitute the world as a chain of signifiers is of several lineages (traceable in the first instance through Marx, Weber and Althusser). Here, it will be mapped back to the founding use of the term ‘spectacle’ - to the appropriation of key theories by the work of Debord and the Situationists.

Situationism’s Marxist-Hegelian analysis of a frozen moment in history in which participation in or experience of a real, non-alienated life became impossible due to the intrusion of late capitalist dynamics into all areas of social experience, has harnessed many theories of how the media image operates in contemporary experience. These theories, conglomerated as a rich tradition of social semiotics, such as those provided by Barthes, Metz and Goffman, privilege the rules of organic representation (in dealing exclusively with the reader’s/ viewer’s relation to the image) over material behaviours and their disobedient tendencies. With the installation of transcendental materialism (Deleuze-Guattari) and a consequential shift in approach to the practice of language and theory - treating them as surface effects of non-observable phenomena rather than purely hermetic, overcoding procedures - a different set of processes and a different conception of the technological image may now be seen to be in operation.

This gradual integration of cybernetics into social theory and the attendant transformation in the analysis of capitalist behaviour has propagated a post-situationist theory of the media image - much needed, thirty years on - which has effectively left the origins of the Situationist theory unrecognisable to itself. Contemporary accounts of the interaction of image and capital and the attendant shifts in visual perception require an analysis of shifting and transformative dynamics - dynamics, tending from closed to open, from homeostatic to dissipative structures. These shifts map the demise of the spectacle and simultaneously, the changing role of theory itself, for it too has entered a cybernetic phase in which it is run by the processes which it seeks to describe - such that one side of the theoretical body “faces the strata, which doubtless makes it a kind of organism or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; [but] it also has a side facing the body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism...attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name, as a trace of an intensity...”⁴

³ Crary.J. - *Techniques of the Observer; On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (London, MIT, 1995) p.116

⁴ Deleuze.G.and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.4

In mapping the 'integration' of the spectacle as the spectacularising of the spectacle itself such that it is no longer an identifiable or critiquable phenomena, a set of unfamiliar images will emerge. Each image is perceived to have a very different function, in accordance with the industrial, post-industrial and cybernetic stages in capitalism. The realisation that the media image is not necessarily representative or obliged to a notion of the 'real' world has instigated a shift from the perception of the image as an ideological representation to a simulatory, meaningless surface. As screens are treated less for their semantic content and more as propagators of signaletic information systems, attendant cultural and economic shifts are marked. Inherent to these shifts is the subordination of power to control and hypercontrol, of extensive supplementary technologies to trans-boundary becomings, from visual distance to sensorial immersions which demand new perceptual configurations.

Tantamount to these shifts is the much needed exposure of the limitations of post-modern theory. Whilst such accounts describe an information based economy in which images are the basic commodity and therefore offer much to a materialist account of the contemporary image culture, they remain attached to a limited conceptualisation of the image by writing a fractured subjectivity in terms of text-based bricolage. Jameson, for example, inherits the impetus of Debord in identifying the new zone of commodification for multinational capitalism as representation itself. In a valuable advance beyond Marxist theory, he removes the tenets of ideological distortion and treats the marketing and consumption of cultural forms - particularly television - as themselves the conveyors of economic activity. Images then function as commodities in themselves, not as secondary expressions of underlying capitalist activity. Yet he remains attached to a notion of image as text, to a fractured though not yet disassembled subject. Thus, we are left to construct ourselves amongst the "...random play of signifiers which...ceaselessly reshuffle the fragments of pre-existent texts, the building blocks of older cultural and social production, in some new and heightened bricolage ...metatexts collate with other texts..."⁵ Subjectivity may be splintered, may have disappeared even, yet its ghost, the place where it used to be, remains preserved in a transcendent network of submolar coding.

Alongside these established theories which de-privilege process for seamless accounts of the world become image, there is the well charted demise of vision as the most 'noble' sense (typified by the work of Foucault and Irigaray, though the anti-ocular trajectory is

⁵ Jameson.F. - 'Reading without Interpretation; Postmodernism and the Video Text' in ed. Attridge, Fabb, Durant and McCabe - *The Linguistics of Writing; Arguments between Language and Literature* (Manchester, Manchester UP, 1987) p.222

strong throughout both 19th and 20th century French thought. As Martin Jay observes, “a great deal of recent French thought in a wide variety of fields is in one way or another imbued with a profound suspicion of vision and its hegemonic role in the modern era.”⁶) There emerges, therefore, not only a need for a new account of the post-specular, with its immersive power structures, but also a theory of a new perceptual configuration which is non-specular and which addresses what is emerging as a fundamental tension in contemporary theory. For whilst postmodernism has accounted for the intensification of the media image in the current economy, it has done so under direct challenge from a theoretical tradition which is writing the end of vision as the dominant sense. What must be asked is how an image may function differently - not therefore, via the specular coordinates of the eye but via the widely distributed networks of the body’s sensory openings. That a body may be engaged in such a way has a great many implications for an understanding of the body’s post-organic state. It takes seriously the possibilities of a perceptual event which is constituted by corporeal signal and neural charge prior ^{to} the structures of meaning and interpretation⁷.

Christopher Lasch’s mournful account of the end of the ego⁸ and implicitly, the end of bodily organisation at the hands of the intensive processes of image bombardment may therefore offer unexpected resonances with cybernetic theory. But in order to turn it against itself, such that Lasch’s account be read not as an extended protest but as a realist, and potentially optimistic account, what will emerge is the need to conceive not the death of the subject and the tyranny of the image as text - as Jameson and Lasch would have us believe - but the death of the subject and the emergence of newly released corporeal events and perceptual possibilities which directly exploit the alchemical trade between the organic and the inorganic. “It is only there that the BwO reveals itself for what it is: connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensity.”⁹ The integration of the spectacle accounted for by the most recent phase of capitalism has hosted the emergence of the image of post-specular production. It is an image so ubiquitous that it has itself become the real where the real = systemic surface or the artificial. It is therefore the asignifying image; “nothing less than a commodified transformational matrices in an escape from molarity.”¹⁰

⁶ Jay.M. - *Downcast Eyes; The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*, (London, University of California Press, 1994) p.14

⁷ There are connections here with Nietzsche’s comment that ‘the Christian has no nervous system’ thus ‘a Christian who is at the same time an artist does not exist’ in Nietzsche.F. - ‘*Twilight of the Idols*’, (Harmondsworth, 1968) p.72

⁸ Lasch. C. - *The Minimal Self; Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (London, Pan, 1984)

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.161

¹⁰ Massumi.B. - *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London, MIT, 1992) p.135

As a theoretical grid, the engagement of the body in image dynamics can be charted against the demise of alienation as the dominant mode of social analysis. It is the proliferation of dialectical separations and transcendent implementations which has hindered the body becoming within the remits of theoretical analysis. What is required is an analysis of the shifting perception of the image - beginning with what Massumi calls 'the life cycle of a plane of transcendence'; "(1) production of a coded image, 2) application of the code to bodies/ infolding into habit, 3) unfolding into life's paths, 4) reproduction of the code in new images (most likely with defects or selective modifications..."¹¹ and continuing with the shifts in the operations of power described by Deleuze and Foucault. This approach is a gauge which maps the susceptibility of bodies to intrusion, conjunction and involvement. It tracks the evolution of a body no longer cut off from the alienating power structures which surround it and only superficially alter it (the empty sham of 'communication without response', according to Debord, the unfeeling, apathetic gridlocks of Baudrillard, the numbed, auto-amputated bodies in McLuhan's technological assemblages) but which is instead responsive, simultaneously stimulated and stimulating and which fabricates intensive connection and conjunction with the environment via which it is constituted.

In Foucault's terms this is a transition which can be diagrammed by the power networks of the body. It is the shift from a specular disciplinary power which regulates and privatises according to the "ordering of 'human multiplicities'", the instalment and fixing of "anti-nomadic techniques" and the effective use of "procedures of partitioning and verticality"¹²- to a diffuse, desiring micro-power run by assemblages and molecular connections between the body and its stimulants. In this latter stage which operates "under the surface of images, [where] one invests bodies in depth"¹³ forms of control operate flush with the non-arborescent multiplicities of corporeal flow. Discipline is "organised as a multiple, automatic and anonymous power...its functioning is that of a network of relations running from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from top to bottom to laterally; this network 'holds' together the whole and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another; power...is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery."¹⁴ Here the body and its disciplinary mechanisms do

¹¹ *ibid*- p.114

¹² Foucault, M. - *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of a Prison* tr. Alan Sheridan (London, Penguin, 1997) p.218-220

¹³ *ibid.* - p.217

¹⁴ *ibid.* - p.177

not work independently of one another but together synthetically - just as the body is therefore re-made so too must the signs which refer to it be re-designed in function.

Thus, change in the structure of power operates flush with change in the perceptual system; shifts to more sophisticated modes of participative control are mapped by the response of a more susceptible body (“nothing more than a set of valves, locks, floodgates, bowls or communicating vessels”¹⁵) Participation here is taken to be far more than a communicative dialogue between image and spectator, subject and object. It is understood as a process of dismantling - a fully integrative, Spinozist¹⁶ plane of parts and indefinable wholes. It is an opening of the organism to new arrangements, surfaces and biotic components which Baudrillard refers to as the “cold, communicational, contactual, motivational obscenity of today.”¹⁷

The exact nature of such participation or reciprocity will, of course, continue to be a working problem - only specifically exemplified in the context of material examples. However, the shift from the managed perception of Debord to the intensive perception of Deleuze-Guattari can be assumed to involve radical changes in levels of attention, stimulation, distraction and shock. Each of these terms will gain clarity when treated as cybernetic process in the context of a Debord - Baudrillard - Deleuze trajectory which maps the adaptation of the organism to non-homeostatic environments constituted by image bombardment and intensive sensory intrusion. The standardised perception, suppressed excitation and absent nervous system of the ‘society of the spectacle’ is then seen to be superseded by the perceptual events of techno-capitalism which typify a socius increasingly saturated by sensory inputs and stimuli-response circuits operating in advance of themselves, indicating a new state of a body held in suspense.

These are shifts which can only be accounted for by a careful analysis of how the image treats the body, of how the spectacle treats the State in the period of post-Debordian analysis. With the emergence of the cybernetic image, our response changes; “No more hysteria, no more projective paranoia, properly speaking, but this state of terror proper to

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.153

¹⁶ see chapter 4 for full explanation of the use of this term

¹⁷ Baudrillard.J. - ‘The Ecstasy of Communication’ in Foster. H. (Ed.) - *The Anti-Aesthetic*, (Bay Press, 1993) p.131

the schizophrenic; too great a proximity of everything, the unclear promiscuity of everything which touches, invests and penetrates without resistance.”¹⁸

THROUGH DEBORD'S SEALED SPECTACLES

If the expansion of the economic contradictions inherent to the latest stage of global capitalism is to be taken here as the driving dynamic behind the re-conceptualisation of the function of the image as well as the gradual sensitisation of the body - its incorporation into networks of exchange and desire - then the work of Debord must be read as the prelude. Though it prepares the way for many postmodernist, structuralist and later post-structuralist debates, in itself, it remains true to its history, bearing traces of traditional Marxism - received through the work of Vaneigem and Lukacs - as well as the specular debates of earlier twentieth century French thought. Its revolutionary impetus, manifested, it is contended by the evidence of Situationist activity in the genesis of the '68 student uprisings is obliqued by what is, in this context, understood to be a traditional faith in the function of the image and its effects on what was perceived to be a passive, contemplative spectator. Situationism is an account of the most distancing image - an account of social reality as representation which denies response, participation or the possibilities of qualitative intensive change on either a micro- or a macro-level.

The recurring theme in Debord's 1967 text, *Society of the Spectacle* is that of pervasive separation - between the established bifurcations of worker and capitalist, production and consumption, consumer and commodity. From his perspective, at a distance from the world before him, the permeation of alienation into every aspect of social life such that “everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation”¹⁹ has instigated a phenomenon which one may contemplate but may struggle in vain to act upon. Writing forty years after the rise of fascism and the invention of television and twenty years after the introduction of automation, Debord posits the citizen/viewer in a new state of consumer hedonism, in which the buying and selling of their distorted desires has instigated a series of effects which isolate the participant from his/her environment. Spectators are no longer involved in the production of reality and are thus forced into a position of unilateral communication with a social environment produced by faceless corporate authority. The subsequent separation between the proliferating image economy and the required

¹⁸ *ibid.* - p.132

¹⁹ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, (Detroit, Black and Red, 1983) Th.1

experience of reality - a “global social praxis”²⁰ - is based on a series of mirrorings; “The social practice which the autonomous spectacle confronts is also the real totality which contains the spectacle. But the split within this totality mutilates it to the point of making the spectacle appear as its goal.”²¹ This redoubled separation is the “alpha and omega of the spectacle.”²²

The emphasis on the distancing, delusional power of representational structures is paramount throughout the Situationist account of alienated social experience. Debord’s account is of an image which, in its distant relation to an underlying reality, comes to dominate the social field to the extent that it threatens to irreparably displace the locus of the workers ‘real’ desire. In analysing the ubiquity of the commodified image which, in accord with established Marxist tradition, threatens to confuse appearance with reality, such that life itself becomes a questionable phenomena in the face of uninterrupted, fabricated manipulation, Debord accounts for a “moment at which the commodity completes its colonisation of social life...”. As the subsumption of reality by mere appearance nears completion, he writes with despair; “It is not just that the relationship to commodities is now plain to see - commodities are now all there is to see; the world we see is now the world of the commodity.”²³

It is in response to its own self induced need to avert crisis that capital is able to expand the realm of its activity and therefore its sustainability by extending commodity relations into all areas of discourse, work, leisure and culture. The intrusion is so complete that “nothing that actually happens becomes real until it is represented in the spectacle that is social life - after which it becomes unreal and passes into its opposite.”²⁴ It is this generalised circuit of capital inducing the degradation of being into having and then the subsequent “sliding of *having* into *appearing*, from which all actual ‘having’ must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function”²⁵ which Debord seeks to reverse. Such reversal is dependent on the treatment of the image as an ideological construct - on the belief in a state of real life which may, through struggle, emerge from beneath.

²⁰ *ibid.* - Th.1

²¹ *ibid.* - Th.7

²² *ibid.* - Th.25

²³ *ibid.* - Th.42

²⁴ Marcus.G. - *Lipstick Traces; A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, (London, Secker and Warburg, 1989), p.140-1

²⁵ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.17

The Situationist project never underestimates the problem raised in establishing a potent and effective opposition to the immanent totalisation of the world by commodified appearance. The project is perpetually threatened by the efficiency of the system, for as Debord states on several occasions, capitalism's reflective mirrorings perpetuate a seamless operation which embraces all that they encounter - primarily because all that they encounter actively embraces and is therefore determined by the spectacle in the first place. What lies behind these screenings, is, for Debord, capital itself; "no longer the invisible centre which directs the mode of production", it "spreads all the way to the periphery in the form of tangible objects."²⁶ What remains, therefore, is the tracing of the social; 'its portrait'. His persistent use of the language of representation restrains the escalative dynamics of the spectacle; a portrait refers to a sitter, and for as long as there is a face of reality it would seem that the escape into irreality (the move made later by Baudrillard) would be bound to be stopped in its tracks.

In taking seriously the full implications of these circuits, Debord observes that the spectator remains ignorant of the conditions of the spectacle - that (s)he is a wilful component in a scene in which they will not take part. Thus, he can claim that "the spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life,"²⁷ that "all activity is negated, just as real activity has been captured in its entirety for the global consciousness of this result."²⁸ For Debord, a spectacle can only be watched and enjoyed at a distance, just like any efficient charade of deception. Participation is simply the passive observation of the caricature of one's own passive desire. This can hardly be called participation at all - for it is simply a discourse of a de-sensitised body scanning stimuli which are pre-emptively familiar. Reality is rehearsed to the point of perfect performance and then regenerated in a new, commodified guise.

In elucidating this closed, encircling dynamic, Debord discovered what he feared most - the seeping of commodity relations into the consciousness of the spectator. Borrowing the argument laid out by Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* - that new forms of capitalist integration were rendering the conditions of alienation integral to consciousness itself - Debord sought to pre-empt the onslaught of such an irreparable stage which would finally play out the claims made by Marcuse that "this civilisation transforms the object world into

²⁶ *ibid.* - Th.50

²⁷ *ibid.* - Th.42

²⁸ *ibid.* - Th.27

an extension of man's mind and body (to the extent that it) makes the very notion of alienation impossible."²⁹

It would however be a difficult task. Bukatman treats these circuits of image and desire as mechanisms of addiction and in doing so he gives due weight to the penetration of capitalist process into the body itself. Following Burroughs, he identifies these loops of alienation and falsification as cycles of dependency. For if "junk is the ideal product...the ultimate merchandise. No sales talk necessary. The client will crawl through a sewer and beg to buy...the junk merchant does not sell his product to the consumer, he sells the consumer to his product..."³⁰ then the perpetuation of spectacular control can also be conceived as a cycle of calculated desire which instigates the further cravings required to fuel the machine. As Debord writes; "The spectacle proves its argument by simply going round in circles, by coming back to the start, by repetition, by constant reaffirmation..."³¹ It is vulnerability, caused, according to Debord, by a lack of 'faithful representation', which produces desperation and in turn induces the repetitive consumption of 'mere quantities'. The smooth running behaviour of the process depends on the cyclical occupation and inducement of the will of the spectator.

The process which Bukatman describes is a standard account of cycles of addiction which invert the order of need such that the object is privileged over the subject, in a procedure akin to reification. Yet also implicit to his account is a commentary on the behaviour of the organism in the absence of desiring-production or open feedback - when it is therefore locked into place by the negative feedback of addiction, by the closed circuitries of specular power. Via the programming of consumer choice into the market dynamic, addiction to the spectacle simulates involvement or response to such a fine degree that the possibility of productive, affecting conjunctions between the body and its environment is effectively wiped from the operation. The organism remains desensitised; qualitative, desiring transformation is avoided at all cost in order to perpetuate unilateral modes of subjectification. Through cycles of addiction, spectacular power exists as a sealed system of control - carefully dictating the inputs into the system and pacifying the observer in the process.

²⁹ Marcuse, H. - *One-Dimensional Man; Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, (Boston, Beacon Press), 1966, p.9

³⁰ Burroughs, W. - *Naked Lunch*, (New York, Grove Press 1959) p.8

³¹ Debord, G. - *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, (London, Verso, 1990) p.19

For all his attempts, Debord's writing never truly escapes these loops. Without the theoretical machine of cybernetics which can here be used to convert the closed network of the addicted body into the immanent, receptive, adaptive body, Debord implicitly continues to close down the body as a site of radical change throughout his critique. His great project, to write theory "...by developing critique of the spectacle which is the theory of its real conditions (the practical conditions of present oppression) and inversely by unveiling the secret of what this negation can be..."³² is dependent on the hope of a re-emergence of a state of 'real' wants and desires - on therefore, an impossible notion of a body retreating from cybernetic process altogether. It is therefore, without irony, that he can speak of imposed desire whilst simultaneously claiming that "objective reality is present on both sides."³³ His writing is peppered with the cautious and preventative measures of 'as ifs' and 'almosts'³⁴ as well as with references to falsities and deceptions which preserve what hope may once have laid behind them. All are dependent on a misled version of a body and a reality which is unfixed and unchanging.

It is with a similar sense of a stable, redeemable reality that he wilfully retains every classical notion of visual space. He persistently identifies the society of the spectacle as a coherent set of appearances which, despite their intrusion into consciousness, may be identified from some exterior perspective. His repeated use of the definite article, even in 1979, twenty years after his first critique, not only suggests a seamless network of global relations to which one may pose resistance, according to one's level of commitment to revolutionary consciousness, but it also embraces the language of the signifier which Deleuze and Guattari are so keen to overthrow - for them, the privileging of the definite article over the indefinite article is simply a means of reducing the proliferation of multiplicity, of therefore fixing nouns/objects over process. Like any operation of the order word, it is designed to create zones of hermetic isolation, to protect the mechanisms of identitarian reflexivity.

Debord's belief in such isolation preserves his pockets of revolutionary consciousness and though far from naive, it locates his obligation to the structures of representation in terms which are necessarily superseded by later approaches to the networks of global media hypercontrol. Whilst he is aware of the ability of existing networks of power to invert and

³² Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.203

³³ *ibid.* - Th.8

³⁴ As Plant (1992:36) notes "Whereas Debord argued that commodities circulate almost solely for the sake of abstract buying and selling, Baudrillard gradually removed all sense of the 'almost' and claimed that commodities have become pure signs which no longer even pretend to point to anything real..."

re-affirm the language and gestures of resistance, he and his Situationist colleagues firmly demonstrate a belief in acts which could potentially turn criticism against itself. By playing networks of capital at their own game, they attempted to meet their own claims that subjective forces could overturn the logic of the commodity by the elaborate staging of desires and pre-meditated situations. Many of their techniques bear superficial resemblance to Deleuze-Guattari's subversive use of the surplus value of code manifested as acts of piracy, plagiarism and a tactical occupation of territories otherwise in use. But where, for Deleuze, such 'highly perverse activity' may be an affirmation of a malfunctioning signification structure and an installation of the artificial in order to further sever the responsibility to whatever nominal notion of truth existed in the first place, for Debord, plagiarism is an act of correction. It is an act of creative artistry - exemplary of the powers of non-alienated judgement over the oppression of the spectacle; "Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it. It embraces an author's phrase, makes use of his expressions, erases a false idea and replaces it with the right idea."³⁵ Such a reclamation of meaning proved, for the Situationists that though "the ruling society has proved capable of itself, on all levels of reality, much better than revolutionaries expected..."³⁶ the possibility of change was not a hopeless cause.

The contemplative and passive lies of the spectacle reflect every ideological impulse in its Marxist-Hegelian root. The varying degrees of falsity in image production which Debord posits, from "the common ground of the deceived gaze"³⁷ to states beyond this - deception indistinguishable, "become actual, materially translated"³⁸ - must, for Debord be challenged by the attempt on the part of the spectator to occupy representational structures on his/her own terms (this, of course sets up the problem of how a mirror system of representation may be able to overthrow the dominant mode in terms subversive enough to maintain revolutionary change. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the pursuit of alternative models of representation are bound to fail, for though they may provisionally present a challenge, they maintain the dominant signifier-signified relation.³⁹ The key therefore is to jar the signifier-signified relation to the extent that each term becomes operationally defunct. The

³⁵ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th. 207

³⁶ 'Instructions for Taking Up Arms', *Internationale Situationist*, 6.Aug, 1961 and *Situationist International Anthology*, Berkeley, Bureau of Public Secrets, p.63 qu. in Plant - *The Most Radical Gesture; The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*, (London, Routledge, 1992) p.77

³⁷ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.2

³⁸ *ibid.* - Th.5

³⁹ see Deleuze. G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.91

result therefore is desiring production or the active constitution of the real rather than its mere representation). Lacking any operational notion of desiring production, Debord's assessment of the false image can only instigate a return to the subject and its perceptual limitations rather than a productive alliance on a plane of deterritorialisation. It can only produce a mourning, therefore, of the loss of "all lived truth" beneath "the real presence of fraud ensured by the organisation of appearance."⁴⁰

Haunted by calls for the representation of a more authentic living, Debord is unable to advance beyond the single mode of communication which he seeks to demolish. In failing to realise that "a society is defined not by its amalgamations but by its tools"⁴¹ his belief in a subjective desire can only secondarily trace the orchestrated exchanges between a spectacle which uses a spectator to pursue its own ends and a spectator who may potentially use the spectacle as a tool against itself. There is little room for active intervention since for Debord, the web of interminglings which proliferate throughout the ambiguous hinterland where autonomous identities and zones of activity fail to be defined, where the absence of representational practices release a body from top-down control and obligations to structure, is an uncharted field. He remains unaware of the possibilities of "...an assemblage (that) has neither base nor superstructure, neither deep structure nor superficial structure; it flattens all of its dimensions onto a single plane of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out."⁴²

In accounting Situationist attempts to re-install 'feeling' into social experience, Marcus cites the Situationist practices of 'derive' or 'drift' as experiments in free response to unmediated stimulation. As 'participants' wandered the streets without direction or intent, "the new city would be a psychological amusement park; before that it would be an affective black hole."⁴³ However, the success of these exercises is, by implication of the argument laid out here, limited, for the Situationists were not truly concerned with the unrehearsed sensations and perceptual possibilities of the body. Indeed, Marcus' comment reveals one of the most important elements of the society of the spectacle; the disaffected, unco-operative organism - protective, preventative and warding off of potential lines of conjunction.

⁴⁰ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.219

⁴¹ Deleuze. G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.90

⁴² *ibid.* - p.90

⁴³ Marcus.G. - *Lipstick Traces; A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, p.364

Since their veiled indebtedness to accounts of ideology limited their ability to radically change the state of material participation in spectacular relations, the Situationist account of boredom is typically pessimistic. Above all else they identified the limitations placed on the subject - the absence of sensual and non-alienated involvement with an environment. For Debord, capitalist authority perpetuates power by extending alienated relations beyond the realm of commodity production and into the domain of commodity consumption. Whereas 'free' or 'spare' time had previously been perceived as a holiday from the alienated relations in which workers spent their working life, capitalism demands a 'surplus of collaboration',⁴⁴ an additional occupation of leisure activities, supplementing alienated production with alienated consumption "as an inescapable duty of the masses."⁴⁵ Since the reverse of 'free' time is a pre-emptively controlled simulation of a vacation, boredom becomes an endemic social pathology.

Since Debord's account of the society of the spectacle is ultimately constrained by the ideological distinctions between real and false desire, it is of no wonder that it fails to forge potential lines of escape - that in the search to find or to instigate non-mediated sensation it gets entrenched by its own theoretical position and can only identify new forms of leisure tirelessly recuperated as forms of work and boredom. And as Marcus asks, "What could be more productive of an atomised, hopeless fatalism than the feeling that one is deadened precisely when one ought to be having fun?"⁴⁶ The bored spectator, lacking in affective possibility encapsulates a great deal of situationist theory; it is a factual observation but one which it cannot change. Even in Debord's theory of revolution, the subject is distanced, searching for a previous self and therefore locked into closed and implosive circuitries of pre-fabricated pseudo-needs and pre-ordained models of choice - perceptually, consciously and socially incapacitated by an ever retreating landscape of short term pleasures and desireless manipulations. "The spectacle is the nightmare of an imprisoned modern society which ultimately expresses nothing more than its desire to sleep."⁴⁷ Like Deleuze and Guattari, Debord attributes such an affectless, numbed experience of social reality to a surfeit of quantification procedures over the possibilities of qualitative change. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Debord equates the homogenising effects of quantification with the "'stationary' zone of representation."⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th. 43

⁴⁵ *ibid.*- Th. 42

⁴⁶ Marcus.G. - *Lipstick Traces; A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, p.50

⁴⁷ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.21

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.219

Thus, in a world of false images which separates us from our true selves, perceptual possibilities, especially of the visual sense, are enormously limited by processes of standardisation and automation. Like Foucault, Debord identifies the experience of the atomised individual to be one calculated and homogenised by quantification procedures and statistical processing; "The loss of quality so evident at all levels of spectacular language from the objects it praises to the behaviour it regulates merely translates the fundamental traits of the real production which brushes reality aside: the commodity form is through and through equal to itself, the category of the quantitative. The quantitative is the commodity form and it can only develop within the quantitative."⁴⁹ By only focussing on the increase in quantitative procedures, to the detriment of seeking out renegade qualitative change, it is of no wonder that he cannot imagine the corporeal transformations which may otherwise be triggered by an image.

This, however, is not to undermine the full effects of capitalist quantification, for it is via the precise automation of time such that its pre-industrial cyclicality is lost and replaced by uniform and exchangeable units that spectacular power instigates such far-reaching effects - carving up subjective experience, managing sensation, rationalising perception. The automation of labour and time quantifies the body by assuming that it can be treated as a standardised unit which resists qualitative change, or in Debord's terms, relief from boredom⁵⁰. It is a development inherited from the panoptic power structures which Foucault documents - structures which atomise the individual and make she/ he responsible or his/ her own carefully patrolled desires. It is the moment when "the normal took over from the ancestral and measurement from status, thus substituting for the individuality of the memorable man that of the calculable man, that moment when the sciences of man became possible is the moment when a new technology of power and a new political anatomy were implemented."⁵¹

Debord's extended commentary on the homogenisation of time and suppression of qualitative change as distinctions in the experience of spectacular consumption draws on processes of quantification in place since the nineteenth century - processes, which as the agents of capitalism sought to privatise the socius, striate the field according to a template of cellularity. Industrial research dating back to the 1880's sought to make of the eye - a

⁴⁹ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th. 38

⁵⁰ the intensive relation between qualitative and quantitative change is explored in chapter 5.

⁵¹ Foucault.M. - *Discipline and Punish*, p.193

previously unpredictable organ subject to the disturbances of the body - a manageable instrument, adaptive to techniques of optimal industrial production.⁵² The continued effects of these apparatus are seen to be instrumental to the mechanisms of spectacular consumption for they are the templates which standardise human experience, treating all deviations from the 'norm' as irregularities to be corrected. The observer is reconstituted in terms calculable and regularisable; human vision in equal units, measurable and exchangeable such that "[t]he time of production, commodity-time is an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals. It is the abstraction of irreversible time, all of whose segments must prove on the chronometer merely their quantitative equality."⁵³

Debord's appeal for experiential change in social life continues to be heard throughout his successors - the postmodernists and post structuralists of French theory. However, the success in finding or instigating such change does, in retrospect, require a change in tact - a change which may leave the revolutionary tenets of Marxism behind and begin on a new footing. The problematic objectives of Debord's text, have, since the time of its writing, triggered an alternative approach which begins with a pragmatic, realist account of a world constituted by signs and images and suggests that in theorising the construction of mediated reality, learning to play amongst the ruins may now be the only place to start. We must then leave behind previous hopes for a reality which once was, and focus instead on the pockets of potential change which emerge from the 'unnatural' fusions between bodies and their surrounding machines - thus using qualitative change to produce new tools of analysis. The post-specular trajectory, beginning with Baudrillard, analyses a previous unrecognised set of processes - processes attached not to notions of ideology but to practices, assemblages - cybernetic circuits of desire. They take seriously the possibilities of social life which were starkly omitted from Situationist analysis and suggest that the power of the spectacle may fundamentally lie in its ability to dismantle the subject - to construct a locus of desire, once known as the observer, which may serve as its precondition and through which it itself is constituted. Only then will the potential of the spectacle be fully realised - to spectacularise its own means of production and ultimately to undermine its own conditions of existence.

⁵² The new emphasis placed on physiological optics in the later nineteenth century, most notably by Helmholtz, Fechner and Marshall Hall, was continued throughout the 1930's with extensive research carried out by James McKean Cattell on the management of attention spans. From this period on, tests were performed on the behaviour of retinal after images, peripheral vision and binocular vision. Each study was concerned with establishing quantifiable 'norms' according to which the average worker was regulated and gauged against optimal performativity. - See Crary.J. - 'Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory' *October*, vol.50, 1989, pp.97-107. p:102

⁵³ Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th. 147

THE TRADE IN PURE SURFACE

Writing nearly two decades after the *'Society of the Spectacle'* and contemporaneously with Debord's later version of his 1967 critique - *'Comments on the Society of the Spectacle'*, Baudrillard writes with equal dosages of despair and wit, with deflected, oblique responses to a situation of spectacular entrenchment in which the mechanism of power has become completely unrecognisable to itself. Despite his tendency towards commentary which behaves erratically and with a sense of its own helplessness, Baudrillard manages to take the observations of Debord more seriously than Debord himself. By affirmatively occupying the Situationist position that 'change' may be instigated from within already defined networks of power, Baudrillard manages to forge a 'critical' position which simultaneously validates and denounces itself, but he additionally erases the need for a non-alienated space of existence to which a Situationist must return, in order to begin the circular search for revolutionary justice once again. He recognises that change to control mechanisms will always take place within the system and on its own, already defined terms.

He approaches the same problem as Debord, but in reverse. Thus, he no longer privileges surplus value as tied straightforwardly to the production of goods but he instead treats it as tied to the consumption/ circulation of goods. Goods therefore no longer have any authentic worth. He situates his work in what remains of a system previously running according to the laws of utility, rather than in the effort to restore dying capitalist distinctions. In this sense, he is no longer terminally confined with the strictures of debates concerned with the perpetuation of ideology and the means to overthrow its effects.

In broad terms, his work is an elucidation of the move Massumi makes in replacing the logic of Marx's commodity - money equation with the terms of image circulation. This change in the functioning of capital is mapped out in two steps. The first is a transition from 'C-M-C' (commodity - sum of money - second commodity) - from the emphasis on buying alone in order to acquire and own during the period of industrial expansion, to that of 'M-C-M' (sum of money - commodity - second sum of money) where the principle is that of selling in the later period of capitalist accumulation. This shift is then transcoded onto the image as the primary unit of exchange in the information age. 'C-I-C' - the use value which images can attribute when they are indebted to a faithful reproduction of

goods- then shifts to “I-C-I” - the pure circulation of commodities and images which have been severed from reference to past use-value and which perpetuate their own circuits of exchange. This latter stage is the ‘production of consumption for consumption’s sake’, to use Massumi’s term.⁵⁴ What occupies Baudrillard is exactly this state of entrenched spectral power and more specifically, what means of survival must be brought to bear on such a system in which surplus value is no longer connected to living labour, but is dispersed amongst the desires and pre-personal affections which the circulation of images and commodities instigate in the participant.

The atomisation of the socius, the dispersion of aggregate power, the standardisation and quantification of temporal human experience, the absorption of reality into its image; all are processes which Baudrillard acknowledges but in terms far more ‘realist’ than Debord. He senses Debord’s circular motions; “When freedom is practised in a closed circle, it fades into a dream, becomes a mere representation of itself...”⁵⁵ and impacts it further, fascinated by the motivational possibilities secreted in the play of contradictions; “Everything is in motion, everything is changing, everything is being transformed and yet nothing changes. Such a society, thrown into technological progress accomplishes all possible revolutions but these are revolutions upon itself.”⁵⁶

Like Debord, Baudrillard may despair of the lack of engagement, possibilities of response, openings to sensation, of the absence of qualitative, transformational difference. However, he seeks the surplus value in a situation without hope, citing the standardisation, quantification, simulation of reality as all that remains but in doing so reserves the right to play amongst the ruins and siphon the unused possibilities and emergent behaviours. That the model, norm, template, mimic or fake may now be all there can be is for Baudrillard a situation of loss, at the hands of the cybernetic bio-functionality he so deplures. Yet Baudrillard remains fascinated by the circuitries in which he writes and ultimately he may perversely enjoy the recuperation of his work into systems which may allow ironic games and fatal strategies and yet will ultimately beat the player at his own game.

Despite his shortcomings - particularly his misgivings and subsequent under-exploration of a resource such as cybernetics - Baudrillard’s work offers much to an account of the

⁵⁴ Massumi. B. - *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. p.200

⁵⁵ Debord.G. - *Sur le passage, Oeuvres*, 1959,pp.21-22 qu. in Marcus.G. - *Lipstick Traces; A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, p.174

biologising of the spectacle. Whatever hold the false image and the alienated visual field may have had over the response mechanism of the Situationist subject has, by the time of Baudrillard's writing been evaporated, opening up a zone of intermediacy in which the body no longer tries to free itself according to endlessly failing escape combinations nor straightforwardly subjects itself to the brandings of disciplinary power, but is instead treated by the image on a material level. It is therefore absorbed into the technology which constitutes it and in being so creates new perceptual conditions for itself. What was once the spectator/ citizen becomes a node in a "terminal of multiple networks."⁵⁷ Though Baudrillard is strictly limited by the model of late capitalist circulation he sets up for himself - a model which is hyper-efficient and prohibitive of disturbance - the integration of the organism into the machinic network and the interpenetration of the organic and the inorganic, life and death opens up possibilities, alien connections and unrehearsed conjunctions which are beyond his wildest imagination.

Even if Baudrillard does not encourage their exploration, he does at least uncover the openings of the body, sensitising it and engaging it in processes in which it has otherwise not been considered to be involved. Debord may be outraged by the "fact that his own gestures are no longer his but those of another who represent them to him,"⁵⁸ but for Baudrillard, "the displacement of bodily movements and efforts into electric or electronic commands"⁵⁹ is the arrival of a new resonance of power, one that responds to rather than necessarily instructs the reflexes, attention spans, neural switches of the body. Thus emerges the 'proteomic' era of networks - "...the narcissistic and protean era of connections, contact, feedback and generalised interface that goes with the universe of communication."⁶⁰

As Hamilton-Grant points out⁶¹, in reality, the spectacle can only spawn its own spectacular criticism, issuing, in the process, its own spectacular replicant. Whatever possibilities there are to be explored by the immersion of the State in the spectacle, the body in the matrices from which it first came, are dependent on a final relinquishing of the myths of separation which first sustained the Situationist project. The intractable absorption

⁵⁶ Baudrillard.J. - *Le Systeme des Objets*, (Paris, Denoel - Gonthier,1968) p.217 qu. in Plant - *The Most Radical Gesture; The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*, p.35

⁵⁷ Baudrillard.J. - *'The Ecstasy of Communication'*, p.128

⁵⁸ Debord - *Society of the Spectacle*, Th.30

⁵⁹ Baudrillard.J. - *'The Ecstasy of Communication,'* p.128

⁶⁰ Baudrillard.J. - *'The Ecstasy of Communication,'* p.127

⁶¹ Hamilton-Grant .I. - *'Los Angeles; Demopathy and Xenogenesis - Some Realist Notes on Blade Runner and the Postmodern Condition'*, unpublished paper, p.12

of the citizen into the sites of revolution is heralded by Baudrillard with cries of “Reality is situationist, not us!”⁶² Amongst the key fundamental moves which Baudrillard makes in his early texts is the dispersion of a preserved space of lost use-value into a field of free-floating signs which was previously grounded.

In the *'The Mirror of Production'* (1975) Baudrillard calls for an end to all attempts to delude “men with a phantasm of their lost identity, of their future anatomy,” declaring the futility of investing in notions of “man as dispossessed, as alienated [as related] to a total man, a total Other who is Reason and who is for the future.”⁶³ Dismissing with contempt any protective notions of Otherness, separation or scenic landscapes concealing hidden mechanisms of reality, Baudrillard trades alienation with obscenity, flattening out deceiving layers onto flat, monolithic surfaces. Exclusive signs systems lodged within secure social hierarchies are, for Baudrillard, written out with the end of the Renaissance. Since the nineteenth century, new kinds of sign have emerged - signs which undermine what Debord wrote even before he began to write. These signs have denied the reign of the signifier by the persistent proliferation of indefinite series of seemingly identical objects. It is to the post-representational semiotic system of simulation that Baudrillard attaches the global processes of capital and in doing so, he operates a previously unrecognised scopic regime about which Bogard is emphatic: “We are not dealing here with a distortion - an idea still labouring under the sign of ideology and false representation - but an apotheosis of perception, a transfiguration moreover, of mythic proportions.”⁶⁴

Baudrillard's denial of the false image, of a representation of a reality which, according to Althusser “represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them) but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them”⁶⁵ - of therefore, an image for which falsity fails to be an affirmative, non-referential condition already effectively removes the revolution from Debord's writing. In taking Debord's observations less as a final scenario against which the revolutionary will establish systems of defence, Baudrillard treats his work a pragmatic starting point. In advancing on his writing by entrenching the processes of spectacular consumption, Baudrillard accounts for the absorption of the self-sufficient commodity - once a ‘congealment’ of forces - into

⁶² Gane.M. - *Baudrillard Live*, (London, Routledge,1993) p.170

⁶³ Baudrillard - *The Mirror of Production*, (Telos, St.Louis, 1975) p.165-66

⁶⁴ Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.56

⁶⁵ Althusser.L - *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, (London, NLB, 1971) p.155

the dynamism of force itself. He thus outlines the dissolution of representation into pulsional signalisation such that television, once the fortress of semantics and signification may now be run entirely as a switchboard of pulses, flickerings and prescribed indexes of content - as the routinised rearrangings of the soap opera plot.

No longer is the mapping of reality a reflection off a surface. It has become a matter of inhabiting the surface itself. Money, image and commodity synchronise along lines of simultaneous abstraction - each flattened out and cut loose from prior obligations. In this environment, "use value is only a cruel and disillusioning moral convention which presupposes a functional calculation in all things."⁶⁶ What is replaced therefore is a version of the image, or the visual field (for it cannot be separated from the image) which is immersive (exemplarily 'cool' and involving in McLuhan's sense), experienced entirely as the real itself and is detached from the spatial obligations which for so long upheld the concretions of time and perspective. Along with Debord's notions of pervasive separation, "...the scene and the mirror no longer exist, instead, there is a screen and network. In place of the reflexive transcendence of the mirror and scene, there is a non-reflecting surface or immanent surface where operations unfold - the smooth operational surface of communication."⁶⁷

The introduction of simulation as a pivotal role in social theory is the key advance which Baudrillard makes on Debord. Whilst there is some debate over whether Debord ever used the term⁶⁸, it is a concept, much more fully installed by Baudrillard, which irreparably undermines the cautious account of spectacular power which Debord continues to make even his later '*Comments*'. Against Marx, Baudrillard cites simulation as the driving force of capital, privileging it beyond processes of production, bureaucratisation or rationalisation which continue to suppress the possibilities of the body throughout its spectacular accounts. Attached to the pivotal role of simulation, to the fabrication of completely new scenes is a clear evolution of power and surveillance. The flattening out of spectacular power, simultaneous with the implosion of the visual field is clearly resonant with the accelerative, signalisation of panoptic power. By the time of Baudrillard's writing, the striated control structures of Bentham's panopticon have evolved into diffuse arrangements of space and light - a dispersed network of consensual responses in which

⁶⁶ Baudrillard.J. - *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, (New York, Semiotext(e), 1983) p.78

⁶⁷ Baudrillard.J. - '*The Ecstasy of Communication*,' p.127

⁶⁸ see comments by Bracken.L. - *Guy Debord; Revolutionary*, (Venice, CA, Venice House, 1997) p.228

the body need no longer be ranked and filed and normatively controlled according the rules of best productivity.

In hyperreality, Baudrillard is clear about the hyper-efficiencies of power, the tightened circuitries of a reality produced by the image's own imagination. In an observation machine "for which an 'outside' no longer exists [where] nothing is left to control because everything is under control from the very beginning"⁶⁹ power mutates into a form unrecognisable to itself. Baudrillard is therefore emphatically dismissive of Foucauldian nostalgia, in which power "is still turned towards a reality principle and a very strong truth principle; it is still oriented towards a possible coherence of politics and discourse...while it is no longer despotic in nature, it still belongs to the despotic order of the real"⁷⁰ and he refers implicitly to the effacement of panoptic spatialisation by signaletic, anticipative code. For Baudrillard, this marks the "... (e)nd of the old illusions of belief, perspective and depth (spatial and psychological) bound to the perception of an object, now it is the entire optic, the view become operational and the surface of things, it is the look become molecular code of the object."⁷¹

What interests Baudrillard most about simulation as the control panel of reality is its persistent and often successful attempts to disassemble its own medium. The transformation of the look, or of specular representation into molecular coding procedures involves a set of shifts which undo both technology and communication as autonomous, straightforwardly identifiable structures of the real. As television tends towards screens which extend beyond the parameters of peripheral vision and immerse the body in high definition surround sound and light, the perceptual system defamiliarises itself with the notion of a screen at all, perceiving only an immersive image, unmediated and fully realised. This binding of eye and screen, of the organic and inorganic is exemplary of one of Baudrillard's major claims - that of the disappearance of the spectacle into the biologic fabric of a simulated reality.

This process in which "...the notion of the object vanishes on the horizon of microphysics...where the subject of observation is annulled...No more object of knowledge, no more subject of knowledge...."⁷² is the 'becoming-imperceptible' of the

⁶⁹ Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, p. 24

⁷⁰ Baudrillard.J. - *Forget Foucault*, (New York, Semiotext(e), 1987) p.12

⁷¹ Baudrillard.J. - *Simulations*, (New York, Semiotext(e), 1983) p.143

⁷² Baudrillard.J. - *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, p.31

medium itself. It is the ambiguous status of reality which occurs when the participant is flicking between channels, between soap opera plots, between catastrophe scenarios on flight simulators - when it is not clear exactly who is controlling or being controlled in the chain of effects. It is a reversible state of interaction between any simulating body and any technology of post-spectacular surveillance and in Baudrillard's terms is a pre-emptive, anticipative construction of reality in advance of itself - the installation of a programme of recovery for a body which has not yet shown the symptoms of its expected illness. These diagnostic predictions which mark out a virtually actualised moment in the future and re-install it in the present effectively remove the definite article from the spectacular vocabulary. Relics of the spectacle or remnants of a recomposable Debordian subject have disappeared without a trace. The surface or the plane of contact is thus all that remains, removing any observable detritus of distanced subject or a tangible technology.

For Baudrillard, it is the possibility of promiscuous trade between apparently separate elements in a network which undermines the carefully measured exchange mechanisms of political economy. In *'Requiem for the Media'*, he expresses his frustration at the limitations of McLuhan's 'medium is the message' theory in that it terminologically maintains the message as an identifiable element in a communication exchange. In terms which recall his use of the cybernetic theory of Anthony Wilden, Baudrillard uses the work of Enzensberger to elaborate a theory of systems "which are capable of constructing, or are required to construct, their own 'wiring' to an environment, once they have decided that it is 'other' than themselves."⁷³ The modes of communication which are tentatively suggested by Debord's work are thus, by the time of Baudrillard's critique, entering a new phase of subversion in which the transmitter and the receiver are no longer identifiable. Baudrillard writes at a moment in the evolution of capital when the absorption of the masses into the screens of media technology marks the end of "bureaucratic models - or an original form of exchange...because there are neither transmitters, nor receivers but only people responding to each other."⁷⁴ The feedback circuits, anticipatory dynamics and ergonomic fittings between the body and its conversion into information for the machines initiate a mode of reciprocity which for Baudrillard is "...ultimately deconstructive of all codes, of all control and power, which always base themselves as the separation of terms and their abstract

⁷³ Wilden.A. - *System and Structure; Essays in Communication and Exchange* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1972) p.359

⁷⁴ Baudrillard.J. - *"Requiem for the Media' in For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (St.Louis, Telos, 1981) p. 182

articulation....”⁷⁵ As the media reprogram the nervous system, technology invades. Untouched material can no longer survive.

The status of the body and its organicist, spectacular inheritance remains ambiguous here. Whilst it could conceptually be on the brink of the pre-personal, pushed to the point where the trade between body and machine produces an entire wealth of unforeseen states, much of Baudrillard’s work on simulation appears to pull back and prevent access to a wealth of post-organicist possibilities. This is primarily because he remains pessimistic with regards to the capacity of the control mechanisms of late capitalism to undermine themselves and thus produce radically new states of becoming. He persists in the use of a model of feedback which remains closed in its operation and delimited by object orientations (see chapter 2) and though he may implicitly contest this model, he fails to escape its effects. His discomfort with the notion of a cybernetic system which may operate beyond the instructions according to which it was first programmed evidently stalls his experimentation in networks in which the circuitry is not so tightly and efficiently bound to the maintenance of models, norms and templates but may trigger events and interactions in which every part of a network may interact with every other part triggering unanticipable consequences.

As such, the ‘participant’ in the Baudrillard’s post-specular environment is no longer bored in the Situationist sense - it is of use to the system exactly because it can be stimulated, excited and opened up to new sensation and no longer because it may suffer separation from its ‘true’ desires. Yet it retains a clear sense of de-sensualised helplessness or apathy in the process of undergoing systemisation. With every possible route laid out in advance - such that the participant is scripted by pre-programmed games and loops of unavoidable predestination, Baudrillard’s work is circuited through the fatalist inevitability of front-ended cybernetics in which contingency no longer exists because its simulation has been planned out long in advance. The ‘citizen’ is constitutively absorbed by this process but in a way which suppresses unplanned manoeuvrings.

Baudrillard’s position in *‘In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities’* considers the lack of volition in this scenario to be a site of affirmative action which implicitly reoccupies Debord’s account of unilateral communication without response. It locates simulation, contact or participation in the planned inevitability of simulated circuitries such that “....this

⁷⁵ *ibid.* - p.180

absence of response can be understood as a counter-strategy of the masses themselves, in the encounter with power, and no longer at all as a strategy of power....”⁷⁶ This immersion in power is subject to the same theoretical transitions which account for immersion in the network of the media - to the removal of spectacular structures, to the ambient, biologic infiltration of closed circuitries of controlled information; “Information is exactly this. Not a mode of communication or of meaning, but a mode of constant emulsion, of input-output and of controlled chain reaction, exactly as in atomic simulation chambers.”⁷⁷

Whilst the entrenchment of the spectacle by the Baudrillardian version of simulation is subject to a set of hindrances more fully explored in chapter 2, it does make the fundamental move beyond Debord - the removal of a faith in a non-alienated state.

However, in remaining committed to a model of reality production which is programmable and within the remits of his observing critique, he locates himself in a liminal position - free from the reminiscences of Debord, with much to offer a theory of materialist simulation, but unable to free himself from the object relations and controlled sequences which haunt so much of post-modern theory. The bricolaged identities and power structures of postmodernity may well offer routes away from the molar subject, but their tendency is to remix it according to networks of subcodes which are dependent on the consumer’s buying power. The field of consumption is thus apparently set up to produce difference yet what emerges remains so much of the same.

Like Spectacular Optical, the fictional conglomerate in Cronenberg’s film, ‘*Videodrome*’, Baudrillard’s account acknowledges technologies which do indeed cultivate information on a biological level. Yet, according to him, their manifestation in late capitalism retains regulated lines of control which, though undetectable from any single position, are tightly bound to pre-determined goal seeking behaviours. As Spectacular Optical uses televisual signal to nurture a tumour in the brain of its audience, the body becomes the medium itself, folding within itself previously separate distinctions. As neurological disturbance is precipitated by the growth of the tumour, the viewer enters an entirely fictional reality, a reality constructed by it’s own hallucinations which have anyway, already been circuited through the company’s recording technology. What is then systematically received by the company via neural implants is fed back once more through the viewer’s perceptual system. Apparently separate stages of reality production are in practice indistinguishable in a perfect circuit, ‘perfected’ all the more by its’ initiation and patrol by the company itself.

⁷⁶ Baudrillard.J. - *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, p.105

⁷⁷ *ibid.* - p.24

All is at least apparently running to plan, in two directions, yet one direction. Baudrillard sets the controls for such an operation.

For Baudrillard, these carefully managed surfaces of contact between the organic and the inorganic - the nodes of his integrated circuit - are events in themselves. Images are detached from their signified and in this latest hypereal stage of simulation run, with all conviction, as reality itself. Yet the closedness of the system in which they are perceived to operate is never actually ridden of the traces of the structure of meaning from which they seek to escape. It is not until image and bodies are treated as actively immersed in the bio-functionality of open system cybernetics that they can be removed from the protective mechanisms which stall their intensive possibilities. In these environments images function as deterritorialised elements - viral, impure and assaulting on the perceptual system of the participant. For it is here that spectacular remnants are dispensed with, and are finally effaced by the switching procedures of intensity production.

IMAGE IS VIRUS

Whilst Baudrillard and Debord provide fascinating examinations of the specular and post-specular economies, there is a modality of the image which has long since been in operation independently of its theoretical management and which seems to have escaped both of their accounts. This mode of an image produces effects in a system in spite of its conceptualisation as an ideological construct or a relic of an object relation. It is a precipitant of effects rather a precipitate of theory. A stark emphasis on processes and practises is omitted from most critical theory, but it is exactly by stripping away overarching speculation and by approaching the image-scape simply as a set of speeds, slownesses, resolutions and affects that a treatment of the image emerges which most helpfully accounts for the dynamics of techno-capitalism and the dispersal of the subjectified body.

Deleuze and Guattari treat capitalism no longer as a mode of production nor as a closed circuit, delimitable by the orientation of perceivable elements but as a dissipative process, operating at the quantum level rather than according to the quantitative or qualitative distinctions which occupied Debord. By installing a notion of desire freed from the negativised pre-symbolic conceptions attached to it by Lacanian psychoanalysis, they

affirmatively celebrate the spiralling energies of pure commodity circulation. They venerate the unleashed behaviour of a system “which continually seeks to avoid reaching its limit while simultaneously tending toward that limit...”⁷⁸ and relocate the impulse of revolution in terms radically contradictory to those of aged spectacular methods. For if, as Foucault argues, capitalism is a system which is ever more retreating into the bodies and consciousness of its participants, then it is also ever more vulnerable to the unpredictable behaviours of those territories. A body without limits is not so easily controlled. In spite of being persistently theorised as a mechanism of suppression and denial, it can produce lines of flight and challenges to its own internal dynamic. Thus, the most effective route to change must be by playing it at its own game.

This requires an occupation of previously imperceptible zones - zones which may on the one hand utilise the techniques of subjugation but on the other hand, explore the unpredictable behaviour of desire. According to Deleuze and Guattari, people’s emotions are not necessarily stolen from them in an act of alienation but are deterritorialised by previously unrecognised alliances between desire and the desire of its own repression. This dynamic greatly complicates the Situationist notion of freedom. It re-writes the terms of revolution not in terms of heroism nor nostalgia but in terms of practical survival. This in effect is a molecular strategy, starkly differentiated from Situationist techniques. In rejecting the established terms of the class struggle, Guattari insists the cause must ‘break away from the dominant models, and especially from the model of that models, capital (which consists in reducing the multiplicities of desire to a single undifferentiated flux - of workers, consumers etc.’⁷⁹ The ground plan of Situationist revolution is here replaced by a far more complex and unpredictable method of survival which resources the de-stratifying potential in a desiring network of flows, channels and molecular behaviours.

The acknowledgement that there no longer are criteria outside of those which are immanently produced is a radically pragmatic approach to the plane of global information dynamics. Images are most often recuperated by ideological conceptualisation - in this current scenario, however they may be finally be released from their obligation to either rules of resemblance or the dialectical negation thereof. They can be treated simply as systems of desired effects - transitions, movements in the network in which they function. In beginning with the proposal at which Baudrillard ends - that the human being is no

⁷⁸ Deleuze.G and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London, Athlone Press, 1984) p.34

⁷⁹ Guattari.F. - *Molecular Revolution; Psychiatry and Politics*,(Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984)p.85

longer a delimitable entity - Deleuze and Guattari finally remove the longing for a field of observable operations. In dismantling all previous notions of a coherent spectator, processes of desiring production deny any biunivocal operation "that would fit production into the mold of representatives...the only subject is desire itself on the body without organs in as much as it machines partial objects and flow...following connections and appropriations - that each time destroy the fictitious unity of a possessive and proprietary ego."⁸⁰

By opening up the territory of the image beyond its ability to represent, delude or negate its assumed meaning, it may be finally acknowledged as encompassing a great deal more than visual referencing. In assuming that its function in the reality studio is not necessarily to stabilise the construction of the real but is to instigate dynamic transitions which disrupt overcoded conceptions of spatio-temporal co-ordinates, the image may effectively embrace words, thoughts, music, flows, perception and bodies. It is no longer committed to an image of an object, of a commodity or of capital - capital is after all imageless - but is fundamentally a mode of non-interiorised affect. It is gauged according to ability to impact, disrupt and forge new connections between a body and its network.

"The television screen and the car windshield reconciled visual experience with the velocities and visual experience of the market place...they have both become apertures that frame the subject's transit through streams of disjunct objects and affects, across disintegrating and hyper-abundant surfaces..."⁸¹

In his critique of Situationism, Mark Downham documents the subsumption of the spectacle beneath the strictly material effects of the media image, treating it, like McLuhan, in terms of its ability to inflict itself upon the perceptual-consciousness system. By grafting together the car and the television - the dominant machineries of 1960's capitalist representation - he treats them, not as disciplinary mechanisms which regulate space but as apertures opening out onto modes of transit saturated by disjunct objects and affects. Like Deleuze, he undermines a coherent account of spectacular production by dealing with processes of propagation and reception. Affect - the sensual, prepersonal involvement with the material elements of an environment, "corresponding to the passage from one

⁸⁰ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus*. p.72

⁸¹ Downham.M - "Cyberpunk", *Vague* 21, London, 1988, p.43

experiential state of the body to another...impl[ies] an augmentation or a diminution of that body's capacity to act."⁸² As will be explored in chapter 4 it is a much neglected entity in much of the theory concerning the relation between the images and the body. The ability of the affecting image is to reformat the perceptual field and cause changes in a body demands a specific set of critical machines. These are tools which privilege fiction over theory, hallucinations over realisable observations.

Where Deleuze and Guattari engineer, Ballard narrates. His 1969 novel *'The Atrocity Exhibition'* is an exemplary text mapping the interface between Baudrillard's crystallised, smooth-running circuitries and the intensive switching planes of Deleuzian cybernetics. His account of personological breakdown amidst the obscene, blown-up image complexes of the 1960's media-sphere opens up the planes of a fractalised, contiguous reality studio. It fully explores the affecting conjunction of automatised speed and televisual transit which so interests Downham. For Ballard, this assemblage, later to become the study of a novel, is most directly activated by the impact and sexualised intensity of the car crash. For as the concentrated locus of the intense sensation which is so apparently lacking from a mediatised reality, he treats the car crash as a singular event which holds great allure. "Their violence, and all violence for that matter, reflects the neutral exploration of sensation that is taking place now, within sex as elsewhere."⁸³

Despite his writing contemporaneously with Baudrillard, Ballard is very differently situated in the then pervasive environment of image blitz and perceptual breakdown. Less wry and twistedly ironic, his tone is cold, overlit and scientific, recalling the language of invented empirical data which so fascinates him. There are traces of both Debord and Baudrillard in his work - in, for example, his interest in commodified cycles of violence and recuperation ("...the tragic photograph of the Saigon police chief shooting a Viet Cong suspect in the head was soon used by the London Sunday Times in a repeated logo keying its readers to the Vietnam features in the newspaper...the tilt of the man's head was slightly exaggerated like a stylised coke bottle or tail fin..."⁸⁴) but fundamentally his writing is an inventory of the possible geometries and postures which couple the organic and the inorganic. It refuses value judgement or self-conscious critique, instead recording monotone, fatalistic accounts.

⁸² Deleuze.G and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.xvi

⁸³ Ballard. J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition*, (London, Flamingo, 1969) p,87

⁸⁴ *ibid.* - p.16 margin note

In a scape where images are no longer false or haunted by meaning but are active perceptual components mistaken for and by body parts, there is an equivalence of every part which saturates the scene. Image components and perceptual architectures smear across surfaces fending off routinised order and evolutionary habits, instead seeking out new skeletal configurations. The media scape becomes a zone of experimentation, aligned with the speed and unaccountable behaviours of the BwO. As the main character, Travis breaks down (even his name shifts in spelling from one chapter to the next) he seeks out “...relationships so lunar and abstract...mere extensions of the geometries of situations...”⁸⁵ that the angles of body and environment meet in positions awkward and disjunct; “...the planes of his face failed to intersect, as if the true resolution took place in some as yet invisible dimension, or required elements other than those provided by his own character and musculature...”⁸⁶ Yet since every surface is available for libidinal investment, failed conjunctions need only be a temporary state before an assemblage is broken apart and re-topologised once again. Every momentary arrangement is simply one amongst many, lacking the search for coherence and syntax which implicitly haunts more conservative postmodernist texts.

Where for Debord the quantification and standardisation of spectacular space and time was a suppression of subjective experience, for Ballard, such homogenising statistical processes hold an altogether different fascination in their perverse alteration of the way the body works. Drawing out the implications of Baudrillard’s vision of the socius as a scanning and filtration, programmed to the smooth manoeuvrings of models, norms, templates and questionnaires, Ballard explores the implications of Bogard’s observation - “More and more you are what you enter into a computer; you are the electronic transactions you make...you are the endless forms you fill out...”⁸⁷ - but in more machinic terms.

In this reality the image is a bit-part accrued by the perceptual field or clinically discarded according to the immediate needs of an operation. The entire reality studio may be broken down and reassembled in parts. As for Deleuze and Guattari, this exemplifies the loss of the organic. Human identities are stripped of the personological interpretations. Thus, one of the novels protagonists, Karen Novotny is marketed not as a name or an identity but as a sex kit of body parts; “It consists of the following items: (1) Pad of pubic hair (2) a latex

⁸⁵ *ibid.* - p. viii

⁸⁶ *ibid.* - p.2

⁸⁷ Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, p.74

face masks (3) six detachable mouths (3) a set of smiles...”⁸⁸ For Ballard these impersonalised, detached listings of scientific data are realist accounts of his emptied out landscapes. In being “...very obsessive, which in a way is reminiscent of very hard core porn - of the type where no bodies appear...”⁸⁹ they are catalogues of the possible modulations of the real, irretrievably cut loose from the anchorings which haunt Baudrillard’s work. For where his writing charts the end, yet never sufficiently rids itself of the representational practices of the organic, Ballard’s distracted accounts are absent of signifiatory structures. Criteria of likeness and resemblance are dissolved as the lumbering, mechanical semiotic practises of the spectacular are replaced by the speeds and functions of post-semiotic practises, assembled according to the effects which they instantaneously induce in the system.

Whatever attempts are made, therefore, to read the blow-up signs in Ballard’s landscapes will fail indefinitely. In a sense, the spectacular processes identified by Debord have become so efficient that they now reign supreme, editing out human attempts to make sense of them. Ballard’s landscapes, swamped by the icons, blow-ups, advertisements of the 60s, epitomise the dissolution of legibility; “...human beings have shrunk to the point of invisibility while the images they have made of themselves, grotesquely enlarged to gigantic dimensions, are no longer recognisable as human images at all, they take on a life of their own...”⁹⁰ The environment is shot through by a sense of schizophrenic delirium, in which the opacity of parts can no longer be read as a text and in which no single element can claim significance over any other.

For Deleuze and Guattari, these illegible marking systems are symptomatic of capitalist semiotics. The images and machine parts of Ballard’s landscapes communicate by flickerings, repetitions and impacts - by the exposed electronic mechanisms of digital technology rather than the transparent plot lines of semantised television screens. For Ballard, the image blitz which so fascinates him is a language of such unimaginable richness that no single term or signifiatory model would sufficiently map its operation. Like Deleuze and Guattari, he asks “What language could embrace all these, at least provide a key; computer code, origami, dental formulae?”⁹¹ His working solution to managing an infinitesimal web of diverse communicative modulations is to let these

⁸⁸ Ballard. J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition*, p.59

⁸⁹ ‘*Re/Search: J.G. Ballard*’ - No. 8/9, (San Francisco, Re/Search, 1984), p.10

⁹⁰ Lasch.C. - *The Minimal Self; Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*, p.137

⁹¹ Ballard.J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition*, p.95

illegible marking systems run through his texts unchecked; to follow these offshoots of “...geometric and algebraic writing systems (which) had begun to run off in all directions...”⁹² Like any investigator of processes which continue to operate in spite of the remains of the spectacle, Ballard realises that “...behind statements and semiotisations there are only machines, assemblages, movements of deterritorialisation that cut across the stratifications of various systems and elude both the co-ordinates of language and of existence.”⁹³

Thus, in relinquishing the familiar orientation lines of an interpretative media-scape, Ballard implicitly explores the semiotics of function. Amongst his flattened out hoardings in which “...a single gesture such as the uncrossing of one’s legs will have more significance than all the pages of War and Peace...”⁹⁴ there is the detectable evidence of the dissolved linguistic structures of Hjelmslev’s post-Saussurian undertaking. “Because it abandons all privileged reference. Because it describes a pure field of algebraic equivalence that no longer allows any surveillance on the part of a transcendent instance...Because it substitutes the relationship of reciprocal condition between expression and content for the relationship of subordination between signifier and signified...”⁹⁵ the Ballardian semiotic operates flat with the set of effects which it instigates - it means nothing outside the immediate environment in which it operates. Therefore, prior knowledge of prescribed coding systems are of no use - proliferating effects may only be mapped. As Baudrillard points out, drawing on the micro-biological communication transaction analysed by Jacques Monod, some “...information has nothing to do with signification. It is something else, an operational model of another order, outside of meaning and the circulation of meaning properly speaking...like any genetic code, it is what it is, it functions as it does: meaning as something else, coming afterwards in some way...”⁹⁶ What remains when all interpretative baggage is stripped down to pure functionality are exactly the trademarks of Ballard’s exhibition - images, logos of capital and corporate brandings which now proliferate the socius as marks not to be read but as pattern and signal to be felt. The ‘Nike’ boomerang now trades without the company name - it is simply an illegible signal on the landscape, a non-interpretative marking of post-specular capitalism.

⁹² Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.143

⁹³ *ibid.*- p.148

⁹⁴ Ballard. J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition*, p.25

⁹⁵ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 242

⁹⁶ Baudrillard. J. - *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, p.93

As the inheritance of spectacular entrenchment is finally discarded by the acknowledged emergence of such signalling procedures, the body is successfully coaxed open and encouraged to experiment. The circuit between the keyboard and the body is, according to closed, proto - cybernetic accounts a relation to be treated with great caution. The wariness of Debord is only partially advanced on by Baudrillard due to his fear of the viral propagations which otherwise disturb the workings of his smooth running system - but in the context of Deleuze-Guattari event propagation, this connection is continually in a state of latent and potentially volatile disequilibrium. When, in the film 'Videodrome', Wren's body opens up, to be inserted by a video cassette programme, the post-human body becomes the environment for the mutation and reproduction of machines. Far from being defined by its ability to ward off alliance or intrusion, it is here revealed to be a host for an environment which is not its 'own' - it is literally, to use McLuhan's phrase, the relocation of the organism in someone else's insides, where this someone is defined as such only by its ability to be partially animate and not necessarily to be human.

What Ballard effectuates to a much more functional degree than either Baudrillard and Debord is a theory of an image's capacity to shock⁹⁷. In his intensive, perceptual environments, the organism is not an isolated or safeguarded element. It has been exposed, forced into circumstances which make it necessarily receptive to energy. As Bogard observes from current technological developments, the task is now how "to construct better, more interactive imagination machines and sensation amplifying interfaces."⁹⁸ Most distinctly, the circuit between the image and the participant is no longer a closed dynamic, based a fixed amount of energy exchange and rehearsed responses. In Ballard's media-scapes, as in Deleuze and Guattari's image networks, the relation is open - it is responsive to the 'outside', unbalanced, unfamiliar and not delimited by fixed semantic code. It takes seriously the possibility of an image inducing a change in a body.

According to Freud's metapsychological work, '*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*', the organism is situated in an environment which is a persistent threat to its stability. It is thus equipped with a protective shield which functions as a defence mechanism. Like Debord's distanced observer, the preservation of its boundaries is critical. Thus interaction with its environment is cautious, its feelers "all the time making tentative advances towards the

⁹⁷ see chapter 5 for more on the technics of shock

⁹⁸ Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, p. 158

external world and then drawing back from it.”⁹⁹ The process seeks to control stimuli and ward off the unfamiliar - therefore upholding the established rules of representation. But in excess of its ability to defend itself is its susceptibility to shock - its enforced receptiveness to sensation. This is exactly the relation to the outside which Ballard accounts. It is this absorption of the organism into the alchemical, even toxic possibilities of a perceptual field which requires a theoretical account which must, in actuality, fall short of its purpose. The issue is how to immanently, and thus not predictively, manage such a volatile circuit of exchange - how to activate exploration and yet also to cultivate an ‘art of dosages’ (Deleuze) How, therefore, to put into practice the implications of Deleuze and Guattari’s manual for survival.

In the post-spectacular age a new set of processes are mapped which have so far only been identified in terms of ends - the end of alienation, authority, recognition and memory. The procedure now is to begin with the open system, with Travis’ broken down body - only then may the informed relations and virtual pleasures of techno-capitalism be fully explored. The thus far accounted terrains of Ballard’s media-scape expose exactly where current theories of media and representation fall short, for so many such theories fail to rigorously engage with the unintended, perverse realities which are produced by such processes. When images begin to operate in reverse, by referring not therefore to a signifiable or negated reality which was once was but to a future reality which has not yet arrived, they clearly exceed theories which persist with the limited notion of what an image is once *thought* to be. The cybernetic approach to material dynamics proposes that external events, such as images, can directly impact on the body to such an extent that they are corporeally assimilated. Thus, for as long as the body remains conceptually absent from accounts of visual culture, analytical methods which persist in privileging the phallogentric, the observable and the perceptually familiar over the sub-cognitive, the unpredictable and the perceptual journey remain in place without question - blind therefore to a wealth of processes which dismantle the mimetic models of reality wherein one type of body is a poor imitation of another.

In pursuing a body and communication assemblage which is open to becoming and to the unknown of itself, it is necessary to continue the investigation with a body which is already outside of the masculinist solipsism which has so rigidly structured much of the Western reality studio, for this is a body which is receptive to change. As the next chapter will

⁹⁹ Freud.S. - ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ in *Complete Psychological Works*, vol.XVIII (London, Hogarth

explore, many of the re-inventions of the body by information technologies are already in evidence in the many formulations of the female body - which is, primordially perhaps, always mediating, conducting reality as a technology which does not represent exclusively but which engineers, manipulates an environment, producing mutation as required. The female body has, it seems, always been prepared for the emergence of the era of simulation - of technologies that efface an objective, underlying reality and break down the fixed phallogentrism which has been in place for centuries. Indeed, as will be suggested, it is via her body, which is always already removed from a state of objectivity, that such technologies have been instantiated as the primary means of reality production in the post-industrial age.

If an image is more than its linguistically ascribable sign and if a body is potentially more than that which can be signified at any one time, then the interface between the image and a non-stratified body is one which takes place on the outside of representation. It displays how images which do not represent but become reality in themselves are not fixed by signs but are able to change constantly, conducting imperceptible effects from realities which are not yet actualised. Debord was right to have "the vague feeling that there has been a rapid invasion", that there had occurred some unidentifiable shift "experienced rather like some inexplicable change in the climate, or in some other natural equilibrium, a change faced with some ignorance knows only that it has nothing to say"¹⁰⁰ and it is of no wonder that within his terms, he is left inarticulate. What remains to be seen is by no means spectacular for it does not draw attention to itself. It is simply the quiet surface effect of the happenings and intensity productions of a different plane - a plane of immanence obliged to little of the inherited structures of an organised perceptual field, least of all to a field of vision labelled human.

Press, 1920-1922) p.299

¹⁰⁰ Debord.G. - *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, p.4

Chapter 2

THE EYE OF THE STORM

Simulation and the Powers of the False

If Ballard's profoundly affective, contiguous, coldly shocking image- scapes are to be taken as valid documents of everyday reality, then it must be asked how images which function as more real than real (in the sense that they are more than fantasy but less than a stable reality) do not perpetuate the same or the copy, with its obligations to the original, but radically de-familiarise the body such that it knows only the affirmatively false as an embodied, desubjectified experience. How is an image more than the original or the same and therefore radically artificial? How do we arrive at the notions to be discussed; non-imitative imitation, sensuous mimeticism, materialist simulation? What is required is a careful analysis of the hybridity of semiosis; the ability of an image to appear as one thing and yet also do a great deal more than the other, in all its facets - semiotic, physical, rhythmic, gestural.

It is by treating images as simulations, as potential becomings and by acknowledging the body to be a prime site of image effect that the representational models of Western thought come under direct critique. It is thus necessary to address the specific workings of those structures which construct an interiorised self and an externally representable world. The persistent absence of the body from theoretical models will here be explored via Irigaray's critique of representation, focusing specifically on her dismantling of the stage of Platonic reality and on her implicit argument with the tenets of Baudrillard's hyperreality. For Irigaray, such a model of the real may suggest that the world has become all image, that it has escaped its phallogentric ground-rules but all the while it undermines its argument by refusing to circuit its attacks on a supposedly stable reality through the materiality of the body.

Following Irigaray, it will be claimed that woman is not the direct copy of man, that the image is not the direct copy of reality - beyond his representational structures there is a mass of activity which fractures such simple relations. In these territories, a body is more than a copy and also more than a sign. By contextualising this claim within a provisional history of simulation, dating from the Platonic to the Deleuzian, it will be suggested that images in the post-industrial age exceed representation and offer becomings which

altogether undo the remit of the body as we conventionally understand it to be. Once the body is not representationally ordered by an environment which aspires to truth and its faithful appearance, it is in direct communication with its own great unknown.

Such images show that the structures of phallogentric representation do not in fact have any material basis - that simulation may be read as a remnant of the signifier, but all the while it can be instantiating physical changes in material reality. Post-modern images may well be haunted by the copying processes outlined by such theorists as Jameson¹, but they are also able to subvert these structures by affirmatively occupying only the false - the copy side of such equations. Where images are only considered as traces of a truth that once was - the very assumption of which has rendered woman the poor copy of man - it must, in response, be proposed, via Deleuze, that an image in an assemblage can free itself from such models, thus becoming not the untruth of truth but only the false with no grounding relation.

Deleuze raised this issue even before the texts of imploded postmodernism were written, isolating the fault in representation to be one of directionality - that of a harking back to the supposed site of an original even though the arrival at this site is perpetually postponed. What Deleuze suggests alternatively is exactly the first instruction for the production of the corporeal image - the fast forwarding of the manufacture of reality to autonomous, affirmatively fake machine units of reality, committed not to the representational imaging 'of' a scene but the immanent and constituent imaging 'as'. It is a procedure which necessarily requires exploitation of its mercantilist contexts - the ruthless mobilising of a machine part, whether corporeal, imagistic or informatic (all three at once in actuality) such that the arrangement is not indebted to a model but is a relay of semiotics where practical production is set in motion and kept going. "It is not a question therefore, of whether or not we can follow de Certeau and combat strategies with everyday tactics that fill with personal matter the empty signifiers of postmodernity, because the everyday is a question not of universal semiotics but of capitalist mimetics."² Such capitalist mimetics are for Deleuze the sinful 'truth' of man, revealing amnesiac semiotics for which no source can be found. In

¹ In such accounts, the role of the original is typically negated though not removed. Copies may be copies of copies but at no point do such copies take an entirely independent existence from the structures which first spawned them. Each stage of re-presentation is therefore a filtering device through which the original may have been effaced, weakened even, absent in a rare moment, yet it still remains the key to the closure of the representational loop. What transcendental materialism or cybernetic process teaches us is that it requires more than negation to remove the original from the system.

² Taussig.M - *The Nervous System*, (Routledge, New York,1992) p. 147

this reality, we are familiar with the non-truth of truth; “...man is [made] in the image and the likeness of God, but through sin we have lost the likeness while remaining in the image. ..Simulacra are precisely demonic images, stripped of resemblance...”³

As the circulation of commodities continues to flounce copyright laws and objects of piracy, irony and blatantly disobedient replication become fetishised as desirable goods in themselves, it is necessary to begin with the assumption that in late capitalism ‘similarity’ or ‘imitation’ as an aesthetic category or rule of faithful reproduction is an irrelevancy. The search for standard mimesis effectuates itself as the perfect closed loop - a simulation of logical reasoning which may efficiently support its own conception but will only remain so for as long as it remains firmly closed to the outside. Apparent resemblance to other parts of a system is only one thing that a pirated object or non-signifying image can do. There is the other side of resemblance which activates itself not according to the terminology of a copy once or even twice removed but according to the technics of effective physical change - as ‘substantial connection’ or ‘material transfer’, to use Taussig’s terms. One side of this simultaneous operation, the commitment to meaning, negated or not, has been well theorised - deterritorialised and reterritorialised by Baudrillard’s account of simulation which will be further considered shortly - whilst the other side, the contagious and disruptive effect of an image which manufactures a new set of operations remains largely untrammelled territory, though the very unreasoned existence of it is enough to starkly challenge the premise of Baudrillard’s implosive circuitries.

That an image or bit part of reality can appear the same yet act differently is exemplary of a mode of simulation which uses its radical proximity or contiguity to create expansive differences in identity. It is the fabulatory process which Massumi calls ‘the transporting machine’ whose “operating principle dips into the world’s quantum level, into its pools of virtuality, to create an as yet unseen amalgamation of potentials [thus] producing a new body or territory from which there is no turning back.”⁴ This is the semiotic of capitalist piracy, of renegade parts whose apparent similarity is of minor import with regards to the return which they can make. What is required is a theory of the image which is an account of the affirmation or exploitation of the false - of affectivity, of mobilisation, material transfer because of falsity rather than in spite of it.

³ Deleuze.G. - *Difference and Repetition* (London, Athlone Press, 1994) p. 127

⁴ Massumi.B. - *The Simulacrum according to Deleuze and Guattari*, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html,p.8

The dynamics of these various behaviours converge in a zone which has long sought to overturn dominant systems of representation. Like Deleuze, certain modes of feminist theory, specifically here the work of Irigaray, have sought to undo Platonism and rethink the image in terms of the body. In the process, they embrace the surplus value, capitalist and otherwise, of being the fake or the fraud as the 'second grade' image of man. If operations of simulation, masquerade and substantive change are circuited through the female body, they expose the deeply problematic nature of standard debates around representation and corporeality. It is the very concern with the behaviours of the body which render these feminist debates a helpful place to begin a project which charts the move beyond the duplicative role of the image.

Whilst many post-structuralist debates remain within the signifiatory techniques of image production, Irigaray's work strives to offer something more, questioning therefore the very notion of the image itself, but only through the specificity of the body, for if the image is assumed to operate in a strictly delineated way, so too will the body be theoretically restricted in effects. Thus, in her works, changes in the functioning of representation, radical changes as will be proposed here, are not isolated phenomena but are necessarily circuited through the body itself, placing new and disruptive demands on perceptual systems and corporeal organisations as will be discussed in chapter 3. It is then, with all seriousness and awareness of its implications, that she writes, "...if an *other* image, an *other* mirror were to intervene this inevitably would entail the risk of mortal crisis..."⁵ This other image is the radically dis-orientating image of the current simulation age and it is indeed inducing a crisis in the philosophical structures of western thought.

Throughout the twentieth century, the relation between the female body and the image has, according to Alice Jardine, been one of attack and negation rather than occupation or tactical affirmation. This is an observation which emerges from a certain set of assumptions which imply that the image may only be male and therefore fixed and phallogentric; "...the concept of 'woman' or the 'feminine' [has been used] both as a metaphor of reading and topography of writing for confronting the breakdown of the paternal metaphor - a tool for declaring war on the image within the more general twentieth century iconoclastic imagination."⁶ Such assumptions are treated carefully by Irigaray for in her negotiation of such complex territories her intention is never to set up an alternative system of

⁵ Irigaray. L. cited in Jay.M. - *Downcast Eyes; The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (London, University of California Press, 1994) pp533-4

⁶ Jardine. A. - *Gynesis; Configurations of Women and Modernity* (London, Cornell University Press, 1985) p.34

representation to the side of the male inheritance, but is instead, like Deleuze and Guattari, to use the already existent structures of power for their unrecognised, emergent properties - their very unrecognisability being the carrier of radically transformative behaviour.

By proceeding cautiously along a finely delineated materialist line, Irigaray seeks to intervene in a system of masculinist representation and reposition the mirrorings, the fragile beliefs in models and copies which have so tightly secured it, to the side of themselves. It would seem that such meticulous realignments of the angle of vision would be enough to bring the entire system down simply by re-iterating or intensifying already existent operations such that they flip over, exceed themselves and unexpectedly produce something new. She seeks to brighten his reflections to the point where they begin to infinitely echo themselves and distort the supposed original source - always therefore pushing mimicry and modes of simulation beyond their desired effect. All that she needs to initiate transformation already exists and since women are more than their representation, more than their reflection but are not rigidly defined outside of it, they are in a privileged position to reformat the material of image production. They demonstrate how image systems which appear to repeat representational laws in fact take these laws beyond themselves to the point where they in fact behave very differently and with unfamiliar corporeal effects.

It is by occupying this liminal position - neither entirely within nor entirely without 'the economy of the same' (to use a phrase which Irigaray shares with Derrida) - that Irigaray places the debates very specifically within wider feminist theories. Her silent intention is to cut through the stratified positions which divide themselves, ironically, into two, the half or the double, the one or the other. Thus, Irigaray directly addresses the constructivist/essentialist elision which posits women as either entirely appearance or entirely fixed reality; "It would be necessary for women to be recognised as bodies with sexual attributes, desiring and uttering, and for men to discover the materiality of their bodies. There should no longer be this separation; sex/language on the one and, body/ matter on the other. Then perhaps another history would be possible."⁷

What Irigaray is proposing here is an end to masculinist philosophies which treat woman as the poor copy of man, as the poor copy of his much superior image of God. She is instead proposing a version of body- sex which destroys man's fated belief that he is the original

⁷ Interview with C. Venn in *Ideology and Consciousness*, No.1, May, 1977, p.76

One. In her economy, there is no longer a need for an phantasmatic original, fixed source - neither for him, or for her and it is in this way that Irigaray avoids essentialism.

Accordingly, she demonstrates an openness, emergent from a body-sex which is neither essentially defined nor entirely socially constructed which maps the diagonal of the corporeal image as mobile and adaptive. Woman as the false copy of man or as simulation of herself (in western philosophy, she has never had her own original) becomes woman as more than simulation where simulation is a mode of becoming which is open and responsive to its cultural environment and yet more than this, is responsive to its quantum environment, to the specificity of the flows, desires, circuits which it channels. This is the image as libidinal flow, as therefore, a means of engineering reality rather than secondarily representing it.

Here Irigaray marks out a trajectory which holds a great deal in common with the work of Deleuze (though their differing treatment of gender has prevented subtle explorations of the alliance, with the exception here of the work of Elizabeth Grosz⁸) for it is an experiment in the material effects of one key theoretical move; the reversal of the Platonic system of representation. By outlining how Being, Good and the power of the Father are fictions produced by a restricted male mind with no sense of its material source; "...[it is] condemned to look ahead at the wall opposite, toward the back wall of the cave - the back which is also the front...which will serve as a backcloth for all the representations to come..."⁹ Irigaray implicitly reveals neglected flip side to reveal not only the matter which constitutes man's copy but also to reposition it in the foreground. She thus places the veil of falsity before the veil of truth and argues, like Deleuze, that the truth may have been thought to have existed but in western history it has been identified and termed wrongly for it has always, in fact, been the false. She does therefore treat the economy of simulation outlined at the end of chapter 1 as an environment which has always been in place - always artificial, since the truth never truly existed. It has since been mistaken for what, in actuality, is "...a series of falsifications...[All truths] falsify pre-established ideas - [It is therefore] a reflected series with two terms, or a series of several terms, or a complicated series of bifurcations."¹⁰

⁸ see her book *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1994) and footnote 104 here.

⁹ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p.245

¹⁰ Deleuze.G. - *Negotiations*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York, Columbia University Press, 1995) p.126

What must be charted therefore is an acute awareness of the different modes of repetition - the modes of simulation which pervade beneath accounts and are able to both interface with and arrest dominant modes of representation. As with any participative dynamic operative within an open image circuit constituted by a set of relations that are in a state of continual transformation, it is question of sensitivity to the shifts, changes and affects which undermine the atemporal, transcendent version of the Real. It is a question therefore of accounting how material process exceeds representation; how a body is more than its image; how it may use an image to instantiate change; of how simulation can provide planes of becoming which simultaneously re-invent standard notions of the capacity of an image and the limitations of a body.

The non-organic account of sensual interfaces, dynamic screens, technological or otherwise, which pervade the work of Irigaray, Deleuze and to some extent unknowingly in the work of Baudrillard, requires an immersive contact with the virtual - here contextualised as the virtual reality of women. What lies behind the screen of simulation, that which evades meaning, is not necessarily formed for it has not yet been actualised, yet its constitutive elements are pre-emptively instrumental in reality, for they are the emergence of the virtual which ensures the unfaithfulness of the copy - the transport of material elements elsewhere. It is that which "resists infinite reflection; the mystery (hysteria) that will always remain modestly behind every mirror and that will spark the desire to see and know more about it."¹¹ And when knowledge is the appropriate mode of access, Taussig suggests its components, "...not so much sense as sensuousness; an embodied, somewhat automatic knowledge that functions like peripheral vision, not studied contemplation, a knowledge that is imageric and sensate rather than ideational...making anew, acting, reacting..."¹²

BAD MIMICS; Repetition is not always the Same

Irigaray's texts are resolutely complex assemblages which refuse narrow engagement with predefined debate. Her early works (taken here to be *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1991), *Is the Subject of Science Sexed?* (1986), *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985), and *This Sex which is not One* (1977)) are distinctly the richer resource concerned less with defining a second subject, or a relationship or ethic between two subjects - what

¹¹ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*,p.103

¹² Taussig - *The Nervous System* p.142

she herself calls the second and third phases of her work¹³ - but with a rigorous critique with the auto-monocentrism of Western culture and an implementation of cybernetic methods of subversion.

These early, invasive machinations are very precisely located in relation to the established socius, taking as resource, man at his own word. Her performances therefore - her word plays, signalling systems, ciphered codes, wit, sarcasm, her rhythmic outpourings occupy and disturb his language in ways which are at once sympathetic to the feminist tradition but which also roam across trajectories secreted elsewhere. Manuel de Landa identifies the key phase change which transfers linear processing models into the distributed networks of the simulated parallel computer to be instigated by processes of 'vectorising'. This is the materially and now evidently ubiquitous procedure of cracking apart the linear order of a sequentially ordered informational routine, and the stacking of these parts simultaneous and flush with one another so that different tasks may be accomplished at the same time. Such an architecture not only exemplifies the operations of open system cybernetics but identifies the processes at work in the early texts of Luce Irigaray - processes which she herself refers to as the mechanics of fluids: the open circuit.

It is its efficiency, like any functioning nodal point in a network, to perform more than one task at a time which explains the diverse appropriation of her work into differing schools of feminist thought; into the rear-guard, decentering tactics of the Derridean, the disciplinary analyses of the Foucauldian, the linguist reclamation struggles of the feminist psychoanalyst. It is also this multi-valency which has led Margaret Whitford to ask, in confusion, if Irigaray's statements are "empirical descriptions (women as they might become), descriptions of the reigning imaginary (women as defined by man), prescriptions (what women ought to become), or perhaps simply metaphors again?"¹⁴ In actuality, Irigaray's statements perform all such tasks simultaneously so that none can be specifically identified at one. They operate at a higher level of abstraction beyond, therefore, the standard categories of classification and standardisation which have so confined theories of bodies¹⁵.

In the context of this chapter, which re-installs Irigaray's cybernetic techniques within the dynamics of the image, *'Speculum of the Other Woman'* is the most potent text. It is

¹³ see Interview with E.Hirsch and G.A. Olsen in *Hypatia*, vol.10, no.2, 1995, p.7

¹⁴ Whitford.M. - *Luce Irigaray; Philosophy in the Feminine* (London, Routledge, 1991) p.102

¹⁵ such procedures are more fully analysed in chapter 5

massive dismantling of the Western metaphysical tradition which via Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Kant is understood by Irigaray to have installed a rigid programme of feminine obliteration - positioning woman as the object, matter, a mirror or unit of trade against which the masculine subject defines itself¹⁶. This trajectory is the history of knowledge according to the illuminated criteria of Reason - the path of neutral light which enlightens the mirror game of speculation. Where she re-thinks the image most effectively, in terms which radically undermine standard notions of copies and simulations, is in the final section in '*Speculum*' - Plato's Hystera. It is here that she asks how long it will be before a logocentric visual experience is put under scrutiny and when the problem will be raised "about the relationships between mimicry, representation and communication"¹⁷.

It is in this section of her writing that she so rigorously exposes the self-securing function of the long-standing elisions between reality and appearance, image and original, signifier and signified. As Grosz explains; "This duplication is required to mediate between unusually incompatible terms (the real and the ideal, the social and the individual, symptom and cause) but if their relation is constructed as a direct and unmediated one, this double world is necessary."¹⁸ Whilst this double world may be necessary for the perpetuation of the male ideal, Irigaray uses '*Speculum*' to proliferate what is more than its single other side. The side which refuses to duplicate has many other facets explored by more than two faced females who claim "once more to reverse the optics" - to "give exclusive privilege to the fake, the mask, the fantasy because at least at times they mark the nostalgia we feel for something more true."¹⁹ These women put to the test Deleuze's proposition that "Becoming other is a simulation that overthrows the model once and for all, so that it can no longer be said to be a copy even in approximate terms. It is a declaration of bad will towards sameness, in a full deployment of the power of the FALSE."²⁰ They demonstrate how the current simulation age need no longer be haunted by the tenets of a previous specular economy, but may use its simulations to produce new realities, bodies and new becomings all of which are affirmatively false in their nature.

¹⁶ In '*Speculum*', she sets up themes which continue to run through her later texts - projects such as a working reversal of the privileging of the intelligible over the sensory, the Idea over the body; an immanent practice of 'écriture féminine', paralleled by the work of Helene Cixous; a conceptualisation of a female Imaginary such that women may enter a Symbolic relevant to their own experience of desire and like Kristeva she also develops a notion which is central to chapter 3 - that the female experience is not dominated by the visual sense but draws on the alternative sensory operations of the body.

¹⁷ Irigaray.L - *Speculum*, p.258

¹⁸ Grosz.E. - *Volatile Bodies*, p.180

¹⁹ Irigaray. L. - *Speculum*, p.269

²⁰ cited in Massumi - *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.181, n.12

The notion of falsity in Irigaray's work is by no means a concept which serves merely to negate the truth in the fashion which many post-modern texts have made familiar. Instead it has a material instantiation as the back wall of Plato's cave. In the metaphysical thinking which has dominated Western thought since Plato, the distorting tremors of the material have served as the signal on which to stage an escape towards sensible reality and the world of Forms - towards, therefore, a treatment of reality and its technologies as mere continuations of the laws of representation. Plato's cave is the sealed space of State philosophy: the analogic mirrorings of a doubled identity constructed anticipatively to reflect already existent images of the Same. The subject and its external objects are constructed to share their own internal essence; the common attributes of self resemblance. The back of the cave, in all its manifestations, as the interior of the eye, as the wall of the womb, as matter itself is, for man, an unnecessary distortion of what he fails to recognise as a fragile and precariously rigid reality system - the behaviours of matter being far more unpredictable than the behaviour of a trained mind.

In Irigaray's account of the birthing procedure from Plato's cave - the staged managed entrance of man into the world of truth, the resonating system of self resemblance is dependent on strategically placed elisions or cuts in the relation between material parts. The resulting self reflections are the angles and planes of western reality constructed around the cosseted, imprisoned male. It is only with constant re-iteration that such a version of reality may stay sealed. The male offspring of Plato's cave are therefore trained for the world of forms via a regime which remains central to the male initiation into the world - that of the projected, perpetual male fantasy. Via complex systems of copies orchestrated by the magicians, projected onto the screen in front of the back wall of the cave via the shadows of the fire, the prisoners are subjected to a dramatic spectacle of "posturing heroes, salacious gods, claptrap warriors, wily adventurers, seducers of nymphs."²¹

Irigaray despairs of man's blind acceptance of such phantasmatic structures; "Socrates is dreaming...but he does not know it, does not want to know it...he no longer sees what he no longer sees (nature). This double negation founds the order of philosophy as such."²² The screening of a privatised projection is dependent on a determined 'forgetting' of the nature of the screen, an unshaken assumption that it is all but a silent and uneventful blank

²¹ Nye.A - 'Birth and Death in the Field of Vision' in ed. Levin - *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, (London, University of California Press, 1993) p.361

²² Irigaray cited in Whitford - *Luce Irigaray; Philosophy in the Feminine* p.118

surface which maintains the reality studio without dissension. It is a forgetting which must stay sealed as a closed box of lost memory, a hermetic interiority; "The Idea of Ideas, alone, is itself in itself. Confusing signifier, signified, referent, Idea holds nothing outside of itself. It neither indicates nor indexes anything other than itself however akin. And needs no other heterogeneous vehicle, no foreign receptacle, in order to represent itself...Certainty of self-identity unassisted by any mirror..."²³

What is actually outside of his airless economy is always effaced by a projected outside. This 'Idea' is considered to be the original measure of all things, the criterion against which depreciated versions of Ideal reality are gauged. The experiential world is mere appearance compared to the Idea in spite of the fact that it is a criterion of truth which remains outside of human experience. As such its role as a stable reference against which the adequacy of a copy may be measured, would seem to be an impossible criterion to apply. Even as the most apparently rigid of models, Plato's system functions according to a tenuous construction with an idealised and unsubstantiated notion of truth. Irigaray despairs; "Copy of a copy of which one will never see, never know the original. Sign of what? Of whom? Coming from where? Signifiers of what sense?...."²⁴ It is of no surprise to Irigaray that such laboured attempts to solipsise the male experience should induce a need to escape in the minds of the viewers - to replace the dizzying, disorientating labyrinth of reflection with the cool light of Reason; "How can these prisoners, for whom nothing exists but fakes, but words associated with projected shadows, how can these men hallucinated by voices whose tricks of reproduction-production they cannot hear, how can these madmen, these children deprived of all education be freed of their chains and cured of their insanity?"²⁵

With the imminent possibility that their despair of such a manipulated reality may cause some inquiry into the constitutive elements of such a mirage - the maternal itself - the neophyte philosophers are offered clarity and escape from sensualised reality by the master philosophers. The final Platonic moment of emergence into truth - announced by spectacular pyrotechnics - is the self confirming elision freeing the male from dependency on the mother's womb. The copulating penis becomes the intrusive eye of phallogentrism. Light from the eye is met by light from the sun severing previous reliance on sensory perception for knowledge and insight. Not even a screen is required to echo the projections of the magicians. The initiation into the 'ideal copula', cut loose from the avatars of

²³ Irigaray.L. - Speculum, p.298-9

²⁴ ibid. - p.287

²⁵ ibid. - p.268

becoming manages reality in suspension. Even the medium of transmission, the unspeakable disturbance of sexed bodies, is eliminated by what will effortlessly inscribe and affirm itself: as the disembodied logic of the copula.

It is according to such logic that vision would be the sense considered most able to de-sensualise the body, for it is supposedly the sense most oblivious to the 'holes' of man's signifying economy - what cannot be seen from the outside is assumed not to exist, including therefore, the forgotten passageway which enabled his entrance into the copula. Here, the material environment is necessarily assumed to have fallen away - it is after all, appropriately invisible "eluding all effort to observe it, present where none can look, unseen for all our gazing."²⁶ It has been replaced by a vision so illuminating, so self-sustaining that it has no need for support nor engagement with the body. Its potentially erotic, communal, non-objectifying qualities, to which Irigaray often alludes, are peripheralised, relegated to the unenlightened domain of material sensation. The Ascent to the defining moment of self illumination requires a fundamental transition in the operation of perception; the replacement of the "ocular-membrane-screen"²⁷ of the body - the material support of the repetition of images in the cavern - by the "specular screen"²⁸ of the soul - the suspended reality studio of a hermetic world of Platonic truth. This allows the containment of the signifier and the signified within security apparatus which require no indebtedness to the outside and which attribute reality itself to the male. Her role as the very possibility of his simulations as well as the tangible excess of such operations is removed from the scene as a measure to ward off the very threat which she poses. The severity of her suppression is indicative of her privileged position for she is, at once, the simulation, the means of his simulation and the 'spare' non-discursive element which fundamentally ensures or disturbs the smooth runnings of his system.

The staging of a world of Forms which apparently allows objects to be looked upon as objects in themselves; ("he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water or phantasms of it in alien settings but in and by itself in its own place."²⁹) to be endowed with the status of being the origin to all things, is according to Irigaray, the elision of the other from the 'other of the other'. Against the tripartite structure of the Platonic myth (the cavern, the world and the Forms) she poses a different schema -

²⁶ *ibid.* - p.168

²⁷ *ibid.* - p.317

²⁸ *ibid.* - p.318

²⁹ cited in Whitford - *Luce Irigaray; Philosophy in the Feminine*, p.105

the 'same', 'the other of the same' and 'the other of the other'. It is as the third element, as a subversive mode of mimicry, unbound by the echoings and repetitions which serve both the self and the object, that the female has been erased from the founding story of his phantasm. It is of course a procedure necessary to ensure the correct directionality of the Platonic system - should the male be prevented from travelling both forward and upward to the enlightened realm, the stage may undergo collapse or face re-absorption back into the matrix.

'The other of the other' is a reflection of a different kind pointing not in the 'right' direction but inwards, reflecting the matter of the cave wall itself. It is not a copy or semblance or likeness of either the Idea (copula) or of the same (cave). It is a different mode of repetition; a mode which does not perpetuate itself according to the phantasmatic projection of form, but according to parthenogenetic processes which do not require the inception of the male. It is a blatant embrace of her status as a copy without an original. Untied to the male journey towards light she may operate a different reality studio, "inconstant and indeed inconsistent in nature...And though it is possible to subject it to a few laws, to make it adhere to a few propositions, it is quite essential not to ask it to fix its own rules..."³⁰ It is its inconsistency which is the making of a very different simulation; a simulation-becoming, which is, as in the current digital age, reality in itself, where reality is unfixed, unstable and never entirely observable at any one time.

In turning a blind eye to a mode of repetition which is not committed to a reproduction of the same but which installs and breeds itself according to the tactical requirements of an ulterior female motive, man has assured himself that the veil, the woman as copy of himself, is all that exists. It is of urgent necessity that such a phantasm be maintained for to be presented with a point of exit from his own self maintained circuitries of truth would be to expose the workings of matter and with them the threat of castration. Without the backdrop of marked veils and sheaths, how else would man maintain his interior of visibility as the arbiter of the means of reproduction? The 'nothing to see' is the other's body organs - imperceptible, indistinguishable and shrouded in mystery as to how they work. For as long as this shroud protects against the horror of its removal and the leakage of a reality which would put pay to the misconception that static appearances is all that there is, then it can maintain the great communal myth of male identity - that women are the indeterminate remains of the determinate. Admittedly, she is deceptive and scheming in

³⁰ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p. 335

being so but according to his account, she, the non-truth of truth, is no more than a medium of transmission directing him in the right direction on his journey upwards, towards a higher realm.

'Veiled Lips' - the central section in *'Marine Lover'* - is an attack directed at Nietzsche and his delusional reading of the veiled woman, of woman as an appearance which is pleasing and complicit with the mind of man. It is a text which comes from the future for it is a pre-emptive account of the unravelling of postmodernity by technologies which masquerade as pure appearance but which in fact dispense with their role as the 'other of the same'. Instead they acquire skills in the ruthless accumulation of resources which refuse to subscribe to the criterion of being apparently human, not least apparently female. In the light of his observation, "From the beginning, nothing has been more alien, repugnant and hostile to women than truth - her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty,"³¹ Irigaray reverses the optic; "Neither falsehood nor appearance and beauty are 'foreign' to truth. They are proper to it, if not its accessories and its underside. And the opposite remains caught in the same.." ³² Irigaray thus challenges Nietzsche's position that the mask which he can see is all that she is and claims that this limited perspective is another example of the most inefficient methods of masculinist self-deception - that of reflecting what he supposes to be untruth only in order to verify his own pre-selected version of truth. In being the lie she in fact occupies a far more corrosive position than he is willing to give credit for.

It is implicit to the writing of *'Speculum'* that whatever the avatars of truth, whether they stand revealed in Platonic accounts of reality, or faintly concealed in anti-Platonic critiques - and here should be included certain readings of postmodern pluralism - the *scene* of representation will remain the 'same' (in Irigaray's technical sense) unless tools are taken to the construction of the real itself. This involves tackling the backdrop of the male stage and coming into contact with processes which both contain and exceed the Platonic Real but appear to be discursively barred from operating inside the solipsistic structures of Idealism. Her processes have always instigated effects but persistently so on a level that matters rather than on the level of introspective male intelligibility. For Irigaray, it has always been

³¹ Nietzsche.F. - 'Beyond Good and Evil' in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* tr. Kauffman.W. (Random House, Modern Library Giant, 1968) p.232

³² Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, tr. G.C.Gill, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991) p.77

a matter of time³³ - a question of exactly when western male philosophy would begin to recognise the fractures in its own crumbling edifice. Baudrillard, to whom *Marine Lover* is partly addressed, was here advised that attempts to undo the economy of truth had to be meticulously placed - retreating not to the safe haven of man's projection ("Femininity will put up the security..."³⁴) but locating themselves in the tears of the fabric which expose his neglected body to harsher climbs, outside of representation. He obliged momentarily, positioning himself on cusp of desire, describing the encounter; "If you were to see written on a door panel; 'This opens onto the void' asks Baudrillard, "wouldn't you still want to open it?"³⁵ But what prevented his body from making an exit? How did the false not yet become more than the opposition of the true? How did the woman not yet emerge as more than her mere appearance, more than her simulation - as the exemplary replicate-becoming? How were the laws of representation not entirely overthrown?

BAUDRILLARD'S ANXIETIES; The Other Side of Simulation

Baudrillard's 1979 text '*Seduction*' has all the trappings of a world apparently constituted by images which have exceeded their scripted role and have produced a new set of desiring behaviours. It is the one text which Baudrillard commits to an exploration of the relation between simulation, the body and the female. There appears to have been a replacement of alienation and meaning with active surfaces, compositions, and fabulatory conjunctions - and of bodies which exceed their signs and take themselves on new perceptual journeys. 'Appears' here is the operative word. The issue of woman and the feminine is as good a test as any of the commitment of a text to an affirmatively fraudulent exit from the appearance/ reality constraints of western representational structures. Baudrillard's treatment of her and his dealing with Irigaray presents an interesting set of problems and an unanticipated set of emergences, which continue his dialogue with Irigaray despite his intentions to the contrary. But his commitment, ultimately, is only to an 'apparent' resolution.

'*Seduction*' is a sophisticated text which reveals Baudrillard to be the experienced strategist that he is. Written partly in response to the then contemporaneous efforts of Irigaray, Deleuze and Foucault to perpetuate what is mocked as the nineteenth century "destruction

³³ in every sense here - see ch. 5 on the relationship between the simulacrum and time

³⁴ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.94

³⁵ Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, tr. S.B.Singer (New York, St.Martin's Press, 1979) p75

of appearances”³⁶, ‘*Seduction*’ plays out the supercession of the second order of simulation - the order which maintains an oblique relation to an underlying signifier by the third order of simulation, that severed from truth or the signified. It is a continuation of the subversive function of his notion of symbolic exchange. The supercession of models of truth by the artificial is superficially a radical move. It is “,...a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say, of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short circuits all its vicissitudes.”³⁷ As Baudrillard claims, it removes the pretence from dissimilitude and installs reality as pure simulation. There is no truth or source beyond Baudrillard’s third order of simulation; as such, it appears to be a rapid dismantling of the aspiration of the philosophers in Irigaray’s womb/ cave to strive towards the world of Forms, to the supposed reason behind everything.

In this game, Baudrillard’s woman (an inheritance from Nietzsche) is well-equipped, for she, apparently, has always been what seduction is - the un-production of production, the cancellation of value, the mobiliser of appearance without substance. Baudrillard uses her position in reality to launch an aserbic critique of all that considered itself constitutive of and therefore something more than artifice - all that “wanted us to believe that everything was production...[that] the play of productive forces is what regulates the course of things.”³⁸ It is with this superficiality in mind that he argues that it has been of great disadvantage to woman that the feminist movement has perceived her to be anything more than what she superficially seems.

In an order of simulation which has emerged from nowhere and which can perpetuate itself ruthlessly, unhindered by indebtedness to models, Baudrillard’s women, in their nefarious superficiality are graced with all the winning tricks. They are able to play appearance against itself, producing more superficialities, destroying the orders of social truth-seeking. It is with this in mind that Baudrillard is able to dismiss the tactics of the feminist movement as a blatant complicity with power, suppressing her actual power beneath calls for normalisation and the grossly misguided rights of man. For Baudrillard, the unprized and neglected weapon of woman is located not in her self determination but in her very lack of it. Anything excessive to this, especially in the realm of the body organs is a tragic

³⁶ Baudrillard.J. - *Simulation and Simulacra*, tr. S.F. Glaser, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1994) pp.160-1

³⁷ *ibid.* p.2

³⁸ Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, p.84

underestimation of the power in being “but appearance” representing nothing and therefore being the thwart of “masculine depth”³⁹ Since his model of simulation is not yet active, conducting or openly cybernetic, the body via which it is instantiated is neither changing nor expansive - it is limited to its simulation; without foundation maybe, but limited all the same.

In eluding all discourse and being endowed with the “privilege of never having acceded to truth or meaning,”⁴⁰ Baudrillard’s woman is apparently graced with the power to manipulate. She stands outside to use and be used by tactics of challenge and play, appearance and reversibility. As the “mistresses of this possibility of eclipse, of seductive disappearance and translucence”⁴¹ and the hidden order of the symbolic universe, her power lies in her ability to bend both ways. Thus, not only does she “provide radical evidence of simulation” but she also provides “the only possibility of overcoming it.”⁴² Here Baudrillard reveals his limited conceptualisation of simulation, believing not that it contains lines of flight within itself, but only the means of escape via its own demise (and the then possible return to a reality which once was).

Such possibilities are, however, strictly limited by the rules which he himself has laid out in advance. By imprisoning woman as an end point in the procedures of his simulation, as a sex-free truth effect serving to conceal the fact that there is no truth at all, Baudrillard never allows her to run what Irigaray calls “[t]he risk; [that] those body organs can take over as they are taken over.”⁴³ He never allows the mutating materiality of her body to overrun the model of reality which he prescribes, to reveal that imaging procedures can be as much about subversive engineering as faithful or negated imitation. He therefore never allows contradiction to his observation, “Freud was right; there is but one sexuality, one libido and it is masculine...there is no use dreaming of some non-phallic, unlocked, unmarked sexuality.”⁴⁴ Baudrillard repeats an already old line; indetermination always as the preference to meaning, yet fails to see that this indetermination that he so enjoys is only ever the flipside, a mute collaborator with the order which he seeks to escape.

³⁹ *ibid.* p.10

⁴⁰ *ibid.* P.8

⁴¹ *ibid.* p.88

⁴² *ibid.* p.11

⁴³ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.109

⁴⁴ Baudrillard - *Seduction* p.6

Baudrillard's woman is thus never allowed to be anything more than the key player in an infinite game of signs which fails to acknowledge that it is constituted by more than the empty, imploding signifiers of negated meaning. Thus for Baudrillard, 'overcoming simulation' - 'the woman's special ability' - is the use of simulation to destroy the world of phallogocentric meaningful but only, in fact, to produce meaning on different terms. She may be able "to haunt them from without, and from deep within its forsaken state, threatening them with collapse"⁴⁵ but it would seem that such threat is never made real. For Irigaray, with her tactics of subversive mimicry, it is a different matter, destroying not truth, as Baudrillard would wish, but appearance, as he would preserve. She does so, not of course, to return to truth but to escape both terms altogether and to use simulation as a mode of becoming. Here she releases the potential in a body and its image environment which is now emerging as the machine of the digital age. Compared to that of Baudrillard, Irigaray engineers a much more complex systemic breakdown; "...she threatens the stability of all values...[T]ruth, appearances, will, power, eternal recurrence...will collapse. By mimicking them all more or less adequately, that female other never holds firm to any of them univocally...."⁴⁶

Baudrillard's plea that there be not a body nor a representational system which exceeds the powers of his own analysis is nowhere more evident than in his section 'The Secret and the Challenge'. Here the technique of his own private viewing - that of looking and seeing nothing ("Prostitutes, their thighs open, sitting on the edge of a platform. Japanese workers in their shirt sleeve...permitted to shove their noses up to their eyeballs within the woman's vagina in order to see better, but what?"⁴⁷) is exposed as both determinedly resolved and precariously fragile. The secret, her secret, what for Irigaray eludes discourse and re-permeates as the most active secret, is for Baudrillard not worth the unknowable respect that it is due but is posited as the mere underside of discourse - 'nothing therefore'. It is thus in profound error that he claims that in the place "where meaning should be, where sex should occur, where words point to it and where others think it to be - there is nothing."⁴⁸

Due to his lack of persistent inquisitiveness or receptivity to processes which he does not know, Baudrillard is content to believe that appearance or simulation is all that there is, for that which he cannot see is neatly concealed within a box - finite and belonging to the past.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, p.2

⁴⁶ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.118

⁴⁷ Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, p.31

⁴⁸ *ibid.* - p.80

For as long as thinks that he was the only One worth concealing the secret from, he will be bound to categorise all processes and effects (of which he seems to have some awareness) which are as yet unfamiliar as the machinations of a woman who is dangerously misguided. For him, there is no other side to the secret - no side at least which eludes the pure simulation and any woman who operates otherwise is simply acting as bound by her biology - bound fatefully by body organs with no place in discourse except as the relics of a supposedly objective reality, a source which is clearly of no relevance in a world gone hyperreal...

The inability to think beyond the play of appearance/reality, constructionist/ essentialist debate, to realise that the secret is a great deal more than it appears to be - neither organically determined to a teleological body nor bound by the rules of a merely indeterminate discourse reveals the extent to which Baudrillard fails to grasp the secret granted female by Deleuze and Guattari. He fails to acknowledge the power of the imperceptible - of the ability of that which he cannot see to be always re-formatting a reality and its signs in ways which he cannot entirely know. He fails to see that apparently finite contents have, in fact, many imperceptible modes and even then of a highly specific kind; that simulation can be more than meaning or the negation thereof. Well defined contents traced by relative positions and defined perspectives can also behave in the most nebulous of fashions - de-localising themselves, constructing fine and diffuse webs of escape...

In realising that the scene is not as precarious as Baudrillard would have us believe - in the sense that it exists far beyond indeterminate discourse, Deleuze and Guattari treat the secret as a secretion, as a "pure moving line"⁴⁹ They give that which does not appear due respect and thus take seriously its potential to distort the visual field, "...a woman can be secretive while at the same time hiding nothing, by virtue of transparency, innocence and speed...there are woman...who tell everything, sometimes in appalling technical detail [in Baudrillardian obscenity?] but no one knows more at the end than at the beginning...they have no secret because they have become a secret in themselves...."⁵⁰ What they understand is that a woman, as a non-essential body, is able to use the unpredictabilities and unrehearsed formulations of her body to escape and decode the stage of representation in ways which they will not always recognise.

⁴⁹ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.290

⁵⁰ *ibid.* - p.289

The Deleuze/ Guattari installation of desiring- production into the treatment of reality such that appearance is not all, that veiling is only a surface effect, offers a breach in Baudrillard's system; a tear in the fabric which can not so easily be mended. As they say to Baudrillard (amongst others): "There is always a perception finer than yours, a perception of your imperceptibility, of what is in your box"⁵¹ and by way of example, they point to an Irigarayan technique, to a use of the secret as a "doubling by flight or echo [which] give(s) the secret its infinite form, in which perception as well as actions pass into perceptibility."⁵² This is, of course, Irigaray's 'different' mode of repetition - her renegade interfacing with reality and her use of the same to very different ends.

It is not beyond Baudrillard's imagination to entertain the possibility of a female secret or a mode of female operation which does not obey the laws of meaning, negated or otherwise. In reluctantly sensing that his text cannot be absolute, Baudrillard seems to silently acknowledge a margin of threat to his system, though it is difficult to assess how seriously he expects his flirtations with this threat to be taken - though he does fatally suggest that he may "...end up losing himself in the strategy, as in an emotional labyrinth..." that he may have "invent[ed] that strategy in order to lose himself in it..."⁵³ Irigaray echoes his cause, "I am coming back from far, far away. And say to you: your horizon has limits. Holes even."⁵⁴ She has located the site of potential to be exactly where Baudrillard places the female - as the circuit breaker, the limit point or medium of transmission. She has spotted a point of entry on the premise that it only takes the most imperceptible crack in his system for her effects to begin leaking in. She will thus be able to show that appearance, discourse or meaning is not all. There are other modes at work.

By his own admittance, seduction - the text - is a closed system; "Seduction/simulacrum: communication as a functioning of the social is a closed circuit, where signs duplicate an undiscoverable reality."⁵⁵ But his very acknowledgement of such closedness points to a further admittance; that seduction - the process - may be something above and beyond its signs, for what, it must be asked is Baudrillard implying that the circuit of the social must be closed to?

⁵¹ *ibid.* - p.287

⁵² *ibid.* - p.288

⁵³ Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, p.98

⁵⁴ Irigaray.L.- *Marine Lover*, p. 4

⁵⁵ Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, p.163

The digital age, the age of such dread, is the site of Baudrillard's most furious gaming for it is here that he encounters forms of seduction which outplay his plans. In actuality, these modes threaten the subject, he who has silently maintained his projections for so long, because they do not subscribe to learned strategies or pre-defined contracts. The digital age is, for Baudrillard, the prising open of his system - no simulation can be expected to perform on instruction in an environment which is constantly re-wiring such instructions and redistributing them promiscuously across a network. In their capacity to engineer reality rather than represent it, the machines of advanced capitalism - the modes of seduction which Baudrillard would prefer not to exist - silently manufacture the elision or the gap in the system between the subject and his control. As reality becomes the switchboard or the testbed of random functioning, of strategies in which the "0/1 or binary of digital systems is no longer a distinctive opposition or established difference... no longer a unit of meaning."⁵⁶, seduction is no longer a matter of ceremony but of survival - a struggle to maintain a point or position in a network rather than control over how a network is constituted.

As digitality initiates the unprecedented exposure of forms of seduction previously unrecognisable and as the role of the outside or blank female is revealed not just to be the silent support, but even as pure mimic, to be an active, corrosive agent, Baudrillard becomes embroiled by the cycles beyond those which he can control. As his fascination with tragic scenarios such as 'Death at Samarkand' reveals, he knows that in trying to avoid his own fate, he becomes all the more complicit with it. He knows that ultimately seduction will seduce itself by undoing the very processes which produced it in the first place. As an unknowing(?) proponent of the purest cybernetics who treats the feedback structure of digitised, virtual reality as a compensatory loop - a move in one direction triggering a recursive move in another, he announces that the 'cycle of seduction cannot be stopped' and he momentarily acknowledges the full implications of this process: "There is no active or passive mode in seduction, no subject or object, no interior or exterior: seduction plays on both sides and there is no frontier separating them..."⁵⁷ Yet when he is faced with the possibility that reality itself may become seduction, that process may take over previously identifiable parts, he attempts to withdraw the circumference of his circuit in order to ensure that the system's energy requirement will sustain itself without connection to the outside. Thus the plane of signs which has been voided of value never becomes more than remains - it stops short of building new connections and constructing

⁵⁶ *ibid.* - p.165

⁵⁷ *ibid.* - p. 81

new assemblages. Desire or production is however, not entropic in this sense - a female is not so easily deterred.

It is with fear and fascination therefore, that Baudrillard predicted that the object, his woman, was to take revenge by refusing to be a useful thing. Indeed, he affects a certain unspoken relish at the prospect that the 'object' is only one of her many faces - faces "already scattered into x number of places, that are never gathered together into anything that she knows of herself..."⁵⁸ It is however beyond the remit of his efforts to track these metamorphoses that new questions emerge - new mobilisations which seize simulation from out of its captured use, which engage lines of movement which are neither fixed nor indeterminate, neither appearance nor reality, essentialist nor constructionist but which instead treat simulation as the real, as Baudrillard had done, but more than this, treat simulation as artifice and the real as the unmarked, non-invested term. These realities, which emerge from without are becomings and the images which they proliferate are simulatory and something more - they are fabulatory transportations.

CIRCUIT BREAKER; The Body as More than a Sign

*"He watched zeroes pile up behind a meaningless figure on the monitor..."*⁵⁹

William Gibson - Burning Chrome

Irigaray's careful use of intensive simulation - of mimicries which double previous simulations and in so doing transport the image or bit-part of reality to a new hyper-artificial reality, are dependent on her role as circuit breaker. Her essay 'The Mechanics of Fluids' (*This Sex*) is most relevant here. The part she plays "only as an occasion for mediating, transaction, transition, transference"⁶⁰ is both the enabler and the disabler of the circuit which has for so long kept male phantasmatic reality sealed. This gap which she occupies is not the void of meaning but the zero degree; the "partially unexplained, eluded moment" of suspension from which "the machine has in some way borrowed energy"⁶¹

⁵⁸ Irigaray - *Speculum* p.227

⁵⁹ Gibson.W. - *Burning Chrome* (London, Grafton, 1986) p.217

⁶⁰ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 1985) p.193

⁶¹ *ibid.* - p. 115

and in being so it is a site of massive potential. In appearing as nothing but in fact being everything, this “gap, break, fault (which) is well known to him since he has made use of it and closed it off in his systematics”⁶² is in fact the gatekeeper of reality - the source of its much needed sustenance without which it would be unable to maintain itself. The laws of representation are dependent on the apparent seamlessness of the circuit, the invisible gap (maintained by female camouflage) which, should it be acknowledged, would give the game away. Yet as it becomes clear through Irigaray’s text and the behaviour of the machines of advanced capital, that neither the interval “...the zero nor the ‘not’ is correlative to nothing, to a simple absence of something, or to a simple exclusion,”⁶³ woman can be acknowledged to simulate according to different rules, engineering a reality studio which is no longer obedient to his transcendent gaze.

Irigaray’s use of dissipative structures or non-homeostatic, energy importing systems as a means to map the ‘dynamic exchanges’ and ‘reciprocal resistances’⁶⁴ of feminine sexuality demonstrates how the properties of simulation or the proliferation of copies for which no original can be identified can be used in ways which do not reliably serve to mirror the predictive order with its mechanisms of repetition and meaning. Dissipating systems, which Irigaray treats as the ‘real’ structure of reality (despite man’s projected closure of them) “import energy from an environment to fuel changing orders of organisation...(thus elaborating) new structures of morphogenesis.”⁶⁵

Such immanent processing installs levels of behaviour which are not mathematically predictable. At a critical point in speed, the change in pressure causes “the random flow of moving liquid (to) give way to the intricately ordered patterns of turbulence....”⁶⁶ It is an action which itself operates according to simulation and proliferation without model; “Turbulent flow, long considered a form of chaos is now known to possess an intricate structure of vortices and eddies within other vortices and eddies...The spatial structure of turbulence is made of small copies of itself ...[It displays] the fractal properties of self-similarity.....”⁶⁷ From deep within these processes of replication and code repetition emerges a dynamic of a very different order, one not so simply located within the remit of control. Baudrillard clearly never reached these open, dissipative properties of simulation.

⁶² Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p.228

⁶³ Wilden. A - *System and Structure*, p.178-9

⁶⁴ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*,p.114

⁶⁵ Wilden.A. - *System and Structure*, p. 140

⁶⁶ De Landa.M. - *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York, Swerve, 1991) p.7

⁶⁷ *ibid.* - p.17

His use of the term 'precession' in relation to the behaviour of simulacra may have grasped at a circular dynamic, ('precession' is the mathematical term for the slow retrograde movement of a spinning object such as a top losing speed and starting to wobble) but he never acknowledged the ability of spin to produce more spin, gaining pace and producing an altogether new, emergent set of turbulent properties. Only Irigaray knew how the virtual could replicate itself.

"The body of a replicant does not allow for complete differentiation. They are both part of the set-up while not being part of it. They become, therefore, a mediating moment. Their filmed presence allows them to be the same but only in their moment of differentiation. Equally that presence allows them to be different by presenting them as the same..."⁶⁸

Andrew Benjamin - 'At Home with Replicants'

"If only you could see what I have seen with your eyes..."

Roy Batty, Blade Runner

Replicate-becoming involves the use of mimicry, the interface with the same in order to express the unique. Like the off-world replicants in Blade Runner, who, as Massumi points out⁶⁹, return to earth to find out the secrets of their own making - their 'morphology,' (Irigaray also makes special use of this term, interestingly) their 'inception date' - in order to undo the instructions of their own built-in obsolescence, Irigaray's women imitate in order to reoccupy, to free themselves and then engineer a new existence.

Irigaray's use of mimeticism - of turning standard representational structures against themselves - has been criticised often as being too subservient to the patriarchal voice. She is allegedly "a patriarchal wolf in sheep's clothing" according to Monique Plaza⁷⁰. It would seem that her urge to "assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation and thus to begin to thwart it..."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Benjamin.A. - "At Home with the Replicants", *Architectural Design*, vol.64, no.11/12, Nov-Dec 1994, p. 25

⁶⁹ see Massumi.B. - *The Simulacrum according to Deleuze and Guattari*, unpublished paper, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html

p.3

⁷⁰ cited in Moi.T.- *Sexual/Textual Politics;Feminist Literary Theory*, (London, Routledge, 1988) p. 146

⁷¹ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*, p.76

would need to display more perceptible results in order to convince her critics. It is, without doubt, a precarious and ambivalent strategy, one that Deleuze and Guattari are also proponents of⁷², but then, as they would agree, it would need to be so in order to achieve the intended results. Irigaray's women don masks with ease - they have, after all always been shrouded - but as strategists, their self-initiated veilings are calculated and adaptive to their immediate context. Perceptibility is only a realm which she weaves herself in and out of; "Women can, it seems, (only) imitate nature. Duplicate what nature offers and produces. In a kind of technical assistance and substitution. But this is paradoxical. Since Nature is all. But this 'all' cannot appear as no thing, as no sex organ, for example. Therefore woman weaves in order to veil herself, mask the faults of Nature, and restore her in her wholeness..."⁷³ Simulation is therefore more than an imitation, negated or otherwise.

Despite the metaphysical problems, Irigaray posits woman as an immanent sex - responsive, contiguous, adaptive, mobile. What she will use with the utmost care is her ability to proliferate and replicate - doubling herself many times, acting imperceptibly in order to trigger effects. Artifice is dependent on a reflection of the same which is then pushed to the point of producing something different - a new semiotic all of its own. "Through her acceptance of what is in any case an ineluctable mimicry, Irigaray doubles it back on itself, thus raising the parasitism to the second power..."⁷⁴ - to the powers beyond, as well, for Irigaray's "different" mode of repetition needs only be triggered in its first revolution before it will gain its own pace, miming its own mimes of mimes etc.

The ability to appear as One and to act as another - to be "the daughter who (only) gives herself out to be what she is not; a simulacrum borrowed by God to help him in his work..."⁷⁵ is an application of replicate-becoming most useful to the digital age. As Bogard points out, it is only by the ability to perform more than the allocated role, to "hyper-conform" in other words, that the fake locales, blind spots and ambivalent regions of the networked socius will be found; it is only by 'appearing' to be working at full capacity that a moment's relief may be granted⁷⁶; it is only by donning a familiar proper name that a bogus identity may be released through the network.

⁷² see Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.42; "...you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. *Mimic the strata*. You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying..."

⁷³ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*, p.115

⁷⁴ Moi.T. - *Sexual/ Textual Politics*, p.140

⁷⁵ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.102

⁷⁶ Bogard cites the simulatory practice of 'la perruque' as an example here. This is the art of "looking busy", "looking productive" or "going through the motions at work". He writes; "It is the point where a job or task

“Whoever defines woman seem to be able to clothe her in a mask and to reserve the right to make use of it from time to time. To take it back, when the moment or the desire demands...”⁷⁷ According to Irigaray, he may take back as many masks as he likes, but the female will never be as unveiled as he would like us to believe, but will, in fact, produce new masks, of her own manufacture. With “her inexhaustible aptitude for mimicry”⁷⁸, she is granted with an ability which he, locked behind his own private phantasms, will never gain access to. This is the ability to be more than she claims; to always have some ‘spare’, to fit any bill, but in doing so, to be always already more than she imitates.

The division between what is visible and invisible, manifested secondarily as the division of labour, of truth and false, of appearance and reality has always been a finely managed by the delusion that man may be able to control what comes into fruition. Criteria built upon the notion that ostensible, visibly manifest reality is where it ‘really’ happens emerge from the structure of truth which binds seeing with saying - such that what is seen is that which can be articulated and thus managed. Man has believed that what is allowed into the remit of the real may be patrolled or “screened” for “(t)ruth and appearance, according to his will of the moment, his appetite of the instant...”⁷⁹ It has, however, been a fearful project, as Baudrillard’s own anxieties have shown. There has always been a foreboding sense of the very substance behind the screens - that the mask, the simulation or current face, with no source of its own may be only one of many, all of which are far from obliged to operate according to the laws of visibility or specularly. Not all images fit his criteria and it has been with an acquired grace that women have been able to utilise those that do in order to veil those that do not.

“What are they and what do they do behind this screen? They make themselves into an imperceptible and intelligible surface, which is a way of fading; they eclipse themselves, they melt into the shallow screen.”⁸⁰ These references to ‘making themselves’, ‘fading’ and ‘eclipsing themselves’ are references to the manufacturing abilities of women which Baudrillard fails to understand. Whilst he grasps the appearance of simulation, what he fails to investigate is the means or the very possibility of it - primarily because it is not a

becomes theater, or play, or reverie, or daydream, or any multiplicity of other things...it silently accompanies the labour process like its hidden double...” - see Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, p.110-113

⁷⁷ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p.115

⁷⁸ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.118

⁷⁹ *ibid.* - p.118

⁸⁰ Baudrillard.J. - *Cool Memories* (London,Verso, 1990) p.86

process for which he has access to the correct switch. But as Irigaray observes, it is the ability of women (as commodities) to take themselves to market and do as the machines do (- “If machines, even machines of theory can be aroused all by themselves, can women not do likewise?”⁸¹) which initiates a very different set of behaviours which radically reclaim the hinge between the perceptible and the imperceptible. For him, it is an ominous prospect, for this hinge, installed by the western security system, is necessarily everywhere. By implication, then, so are her manufacturings. They are emergent from behind every painted face, every veiled text, from behind every computer screen; “the spectacles are stirring...” writes Plant, “...there is something happening behind the mirrors, the commodities are learning how to speak and think...”⁸² As capital disentangles itself from its strictly ascribed uses, so too does woman and the simulation which she uses.

THE IMAGE AS REPLICATE-BECOMING

The notion that there is something going on within and behind the screen is an enchanting one. It removes the notions of intention, will, discernible cause, controlled realities, managed physicalities which have so maintained the western reality studio at the expense of acknowledged contact with the other side. But as the other side introduces itself, without prompt, the cybernetic image or materialist simulation reveals its magic side. In this guise, tactical mimesis as material transfer is no where more evident.

It is, for Taussig, with his particular interest in the sensuality of mimesis, the work of Frazer which maps this type of imaging - a magical type, enchanting (to use Irigaray’s term) which binds likeness to substance in a way where here echoes the matter of simulation. Frazer divides two modes of sympathetic magic into “imitative” or “homeopathic” magic on the one side (the practice of magic via the image of its destination - whether person or place) and “contagious” magic on the other (ritual using material parts of its targeted body whether bones, nails or hair) and then through the course of his text, “*The Golden Bough*”, demonstrates that these modes are very rarely used in isolation from one another. Objects of ritual are most often imitative *and* contagious, mimetic *and* substantial. Taussig cites the example of the Malay charm sculpted into the image of the victim using his collected body excuviae. The damaging effects of the ritual are then transmitted during the following seven nights of slow burning. “It is not wax that I am scorching, it is the

⁸¹ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p.232

⁸² Plant.S. - ‘Weaving Women and Cybernetics’ in Featherstone and Burrows - *Cyberspace/ Cyberbodies/ Cyberpunk*, Routledge, London, 1995 p.58

liver, heart and spleen of so-and-so that I search.”⁸³ It is this fabulatory binding of likeness and contagion which here emerges again at the end of the twentieth century. It is exactly the semiotic of piracy, the semiotic of tactful camouflage, notably one thing, imaged as such but more actively another, independent, contagious, physically effective in its construction and destruction of reality.

Of the contagious side of the screen, Irigaray writes, that it “...already moves beyond and stops short of appearance and has no veil. It wafts out, like a harmony that subtends, envelops and subtly ‘fills’ everything seen, before the caesura of its forms and in time to a movement other than scansion in syncopations. Continuity from which the veil itself will borrow the matter-foundation of its fabric.”⁸⁴ It has been the fear of man and perhaps the repressed sense that the other side of the screen was always a contagious entity which has sealed such a concept as the abyss, the black hole - what is, quite simply, in Freud’s terms, “nothing”. It must here be insisted that that which is not actual, that which does not appear on his stage, is not nothing but is, in fact, the virtual - unformed as he had suspected, but more than that, rich in potential as the virtual materiality of a woman that can manifest herself in any number of ways and still be more than that number. Plant identifies these manifestations as most prominent in this latest digital stage of capitalism for if man is its hardware, the element most quickly rendered redundant, she is its software - adaptable, renewable and infinitely applicable.

As an engine for producing difference, the computer is the site of replicate-becoming. With its networks, modes and complexities which extend and continue to extend beyond man’s ability to identify and categorise them, its screen is on the one hand user-friendly whilst on the other, a wealth of terrifying virtuality. Cyberspace, both within the machines and beyond, extending back into the everyday real is, for Plant, the feminisation of reality. Whatever models of representation, of the manifest copy and the lacking fake she was intended to maintain according to laws of his creation, are in virtual reality (reality itself, as virtual actuality) destroyed by a proliferation of fakeries without homes - simulations of the body which are seen on the screen but which reformat themselves constantly.

⁸³ cited in Taussig.M. - *The Nervous System* p.147

⁸⁴ Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover*, p.116

If Baudrillard's simulation was the indeterminate negation of meaning and, at least in the first place, little more, Plant says that she can do that as well - but this will merely be another mask of his fantasies, placating him on the one side, transporting her on the other. In mapping what will soon be shown to be the Deleuzian simulation, Plant grasps the magic of simulation, its contagious quality, at all times insisting that the appearance of humanity is only one of her many faces. Accordingly woman's special skill, the key to reality - hers and by implication, his - are her mimetic abilities which throw her "into a universality unknown and unknowable to the one who knows who he is; she fits any bill, but in doing so, she is always already more than what she imitates. Woman, like the computer, appears at different times as whatever man requires of her. She learns how to imitate; she learns simulation."⁸⁵ The screen therefore, so often perceived as the scene of projected neutrality is active. It is invested by a wealth of possible transformations, all of which are restless and open. It is the method, therefore of many a 'motionless voyage'⁸⁶ and fakery - in fact it is the vision of the real outside his fantasy. And if he thinks he can join in, he will be severely disappointed for "as soon as her mimicry earns her equality, she is already something, somewhere other than him."⁸⁷

This accounting of simulation as exactly what it is - more, therefore than it appears - both compensation and concealment, appearance and disappearance, mimicry and transfer is the Deleuzian simulation. In sharing Irigaray's project to 'reverse Platonism' and to reveal the functioning of the cave wall, Deleuze runs Baudrillard's proposal that simulation is more real than real but he removes it from its philosophical problems by insistently taking it simply at face value. As Massumi point out, on these terms, the 'more-real-than-real' does not escalate into the nowhere of the hyperreal but is materially grounded in a sensuous, experiential reality - desiring-production itself. As Deleuze and Guattari write in '*Anti-Oedipus*'; "It carries the real beyond its principle to the point where it is effectively produced."⁸⁸

The opening up of simulation as receptive and effective in realms which are not entirely secret nor attached solely to the negation of meaning reformats reality in terms replete with possibility. In analogue reality, the liking of like with like is an end in itself, but in Deleuze's digital reality, traits of similarity are little more than an 'illusion' or a by-product/

⁸⁵ Plant.S. - 'Weaving Women and Cybernetics' in *Cyberspace/ Cyberbodies/ Cyberpunk*, p.59

⁸⁶ see chapter 5 for an exploration of this term

⁸⁷ Plant.S. - 'Weaving Women and Cybernetics' p.63

⁸⁸ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 87

surface-effect of a far more complex operation. It is the installation of an entirely new realm of phenomena - copies which are no longer twice removed but which are renegade bit-parts of reality always just about to be produced. In arguing, like Irigaray, that the 'model' of reality was always a phantasm, that the attachment of the originary to the copy was always a male security apparatus, Deleuze argues (most closely in '*Difference and Repetition*') that there never was anything but repetition - it was always engineering independent domains and triggering acausal and unrecognisable effects but in ways so complex that it could, for the purpose of proliferating its own activity, be misinterpreted by the legislator -interpreter as securing the reality studio.

The assertion that simulation has always been operating differently - manufacturing "(at least) two divergent series on which it plays [along which] all resemblance [is] abolished so that one can no longer point to the existence of an original and copy"⁸⁹ is, for Deleuze, proven to be in full operation by the subterfuge activities which he discovers in Plato himself - "anti-Platonism at the heart of Platonism" as he calls it⁹⁰. It is with great satisfaction that he identifies the suppressed behaviour of pseudos, copies and fakes which fail to refer back to where they came from but do indeed become new, autonomous models in themselves; "Nevertheless, it did appear, if only momentarily, like a flash of lightning in the night, testifying to the persistent activity on the part of the simulacra to do their underground work and to the possibility of the world of their own."⁹¹

Deleuze's treatment of simulation, not as an agreed, non-negotiable phenomena but as an unpredictable, sub-representative domain which must be acknowledged for its ability to induce critical points and phase changes between different modes of reality re-iterates Irigaray's message on the illusive but highly charged semiotics which exist beyond representation. Just as her turbulent flow becomes vortical and transforms itself to display the most unexpected of mathematical properties so too, according to Deleuze, should the "artificial...always a copy of a copy...be pushed to the point where it changes its nature and is reversed into the simulacrum."⁹² But whilst she focuses on its behaviour with regard to the subterfuge of women, Deleuze opens up the plane of its operation to encompass every possible becoming in post-humanity. Simulation as replicate-becoming is, for Deleuze, not only the special case of women, because as he controversially argues, there

⁸⁹ Deleuze.G. - *Difference and Repetition*, 1994, p.69

⁹⁰ see Theaetatus 176c and Timaeus 28b ff -

⁹¹ Deleuze.G. - *Difference and Repetition*, p.127

⁹² Deleuze.G. - *Logic of Sense*, tr. Lester.M. and Stivale. C. (London, Athlone, 1989)p.265

are state of becoming beyond that of women - stages of phase transition and renegade becomings which exceed the question of gender altogether⁹³. Thus, plant, animal or vegetable may simulate one state in order to become, enact and be inhabited by another.

As with all modes of Deleuze's practical philosophy, this proposition has a strictly materialist manifestation. For it is through drawing on the biological rather than the representational traits of simulation - for example, the ability of a reptile to simulate its jungle surroundings, as a means to gain further predatory ground - that he attributes to simulation an entirely functional machinic code. In this way, it is treated as mode of activation; "in order to become apparent, [an entity] is forced to simulate structural states and to slip into states of forces that serve it as masks; underneath the mask and by means of it, it already invests the terminal forms and the specific higher states whose integrity it will subsequently establish."⁹⁴

In this sense, simulation is always on the move elsewhere, building new contexts, seeking out more fusions, adding to an already wealthy environment of reciprocal topographies. It is of no wonder, therefore, that strategic mimesis is such a depersonalising experience - as Caillois argues and with whom Deleuze and Irigaray would no doubt agree. In his famous paper, "*Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*", Caillois grasps the full, embodied implications of camouflage as tactical simulation in the animal world. Realising, in much the same way as Frazer does in his attachment of imitative magic to contagious magic, that simulation at the level of the image pre-emptively involves both stimulation and simulation at the level of the body, he assesses what is effectively the phenomenon of personality breakdown. As he writes, "Morphological mimicry could then be, after the fashion of chromatic mimicry, as actual photography, but of the form and the relief, a photography at the level of the object and not of that of the image."⁹⁵ What he charts here is clearly the

⁹³ Where Irigaray argues for a 'sex/gender of immanence', retaining a functional notion of the specificity of the female, Deleuze and Guattari argue for the 'immanence of sex/ gender' arguing that there are states of becoming which go further, escaping the category of sex/ gender altogether. This difference is often taken to be an impasse between the two methods of thinking the female. However, there would seem to be a useful diagonal in between which is implicit throughout this text. This is that specificity is itself a mode of becoming - open, mobile, responsive to its environment. Accordingly, Gatens prompts us to follow Spinoza, to treat sex and gender in relational terms only; "A partial or extensive organisation of bodies will be paralleled by certain intensive powers and capacities". She adds that it is necessary to understand "gender as the powers, affects and dispositions that are the intensive parallel of a certain extensive organisation of sexed bodies..." (Gatens.M - *Imaginary Bodies*, (London, Routledge, 1996) pp149-150) This approach sets up a dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari and unleashes the specificities of women by producing connections which are much more dynamic and useful in this context.

⁹⁴ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus* p.91

⁹⁵ Caillois.R. - "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia", *October* 31, Winter 1984, MIT Press, p.23

effects of tactical resemblance beyond the level of what he considers to be the representational image.

Such effects penetrate not just the animal's perception of space but also its own constitution within that space. It is a phenomenon which arises from occupying and temporarily becoming that which it is trying to resemble. It is of no wonder then, that this enactment, which is supposedly 'outside' of itself should result in the miming creature becoming "dispossessed of its privilege [to order space through visual identification] and literally no longer know where to place itself..."⁹⁶ As the mimetic creature escapes itself (and here Caillois refers to humans) and becomes its environment, it undergoes what is to be taken as a schizophrenic breakdown, the occupation of "the other side of his senses"⁹⁷ - the shift to the post-human.

In this scenario, with its due disrespect for distinction between the imaginary and the real, the reality studio is always continuous with the 'observer'. The image is attributed with full power to manipulate a set of reality co-ordinates according only to their relation with the material environment. It becomes quite clear therefore that "the simulacrum is not a static copy. It harbours a positive power which denies the real and the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction."⁹⁸ Here any model which once served to explain the workings of the simulacrum becomes defunct. It simply becomes a transformative, machine part of reality, run not according to its relation to the referent but via its connection with the external unpredictabilities of an energetic and open system. The performative role of simulation is thus reformatted constantly according to the incoming of flow. As it 'genuinely' has no relation to a posited substructure, it become a vehicle for becoming - in Deleuze's words, "...a mask expressing a process of disguising where, behind each mask, there is yet another."⁹⁹

Canetti treats simulation exactly on these terms. In realising that the 'image' of an 'exterior' entity cannot, when practised non-representationally, avoid imposing states of change on the body, he cites the shamanic or possessional rituals of tribal man as examples of contagious, non-imitative imitation or simulation as the vehicle of transformation. It is this state of the 'primitive' body as receptive to a state of arousal, to the sense that "there was

⁹⁶ *ibid.* - p.28

⁹⁷ *ibid.* - p.30

⁹⁸ Deleuze.G. - *Logic of Sense*, p.262

⁹⁹ *ibid.* p.283

nothing but movement everywhere and that his own being was in a state of continual flux”¹⁰⁰ which reformats the simulation of exterior states and bodies in terms which combine as many potentials as possible. For Deleuze and Guattari, this is the function of becoming, not therefore as a matter of mimicking objects, images or things or of rendering their meaning unfixed and indeterminate, but as an incorporation or enactment of traits which remove the body from itself and insert it into a continual a state of motion on the way elsewhere.

“It is not a question of representation :don’t think for a minute that it has to do with believing oneself a wolf, representing oneself as a wolf. The wolf, wolves, are intensities, speeds, temperatures, nondecomposable variable distances. A swarming, a wolving.”¹⁰¹

Deleuze and Guattari - A Thousand Plateaus

“You see what we’re talking about here is an organism which imitates other life forms. When this thing attacked our dogs it tried to digest them and in the process shape its own cells to imitate them. That, for instance, that’s not dog; that’s imitation...”

“It could change into any one of a million life forms at any one time...it needs to be alone and within close proximity of the life form to be absorbed...”

The Thing

This mode of replicate-becoming or habitation of the simulating entity is, for Deleuze and Guattari, a mode which women operate with particular skill. They are able to occupy renegade states in order to divert the established order completely. As Deleuze writes in ‘*Logic of Sense*’ ; “...That to which they pretend (the objects, the quality etc.), they pretend to underhandedly, undercover of an aggression, an insinuation, a subversion ‘against the father’ and without passing through the Idea. Theirs is an unfounded pretension, a dissimilarity which is an internal imbalance.”¹⁰² Clearly, according to the strategies of becoming, the emphasis here is not on either pretension or divergence but on

¹⁰⁰ Canetti.E. - *Crowds and Power* (London, Penguin, 1984) p.443

¹⁰¹ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.32

¹⁰² Deleuze.G. - *Logic of Sense*, p.257

insinuation or actual bodily enactment of libidinised semiotic. It is by taking this theory of simulation back through the work of Irigaray that the full implications of corporeal mimicry or material simulation as the female body become clear. For it would seem that women have always been responsive to calls the enactment of 'graphic physical processes'¹⁰³ having been occupied, periodically throughout history, by hysteria, devils, demons and divine entities.

In the most important sense, materialist simulation is the somatisation of incoming images and it is this which accounts for the tactics of female possession. In 'La Mystérique' (*Speculum*), Irigaray argues that the domain of female mysticism has always held a particular appeal for women because it necessarily involves the dissolution of the subject/object, appearance/ reality distinction. Indeed, in excelling at such intervention more frequently than men, mysticism has been "the only place in western history where woman speaks and acts in such a public way."¹⁰⁴ That it should be publicly acknowledged is surprising in a sense, since it functions through closed eyes, outside of specular representation. As Irigaray writes, if the philosopher should wish to emulate the practices of the mystic, he must escape from his philosophy in a "blind flight out of the closed chamber of philosophy, of the speculative matrix where he has enclosed himself in order to clearly consider the all."¹⁰⁵

More than mimicry of the image of God or the image of the devil, the woman in the role for which she seems to be most apt (responsive "...to unusual changes, closures, openings, exudings..."¹⁰⁶) encapsulates in entirety the somatic image. Whilst Elizabeth Mayes rightly identifies the deeply corporeal and unreasoned experience that these modes of possession can exemplify - as "a circuit between multiple nervous systems, channelling neural impulses without conscious mediation into bodily experience and thence into public space, there to be perceived and internalised as exciting images"¹⁰⁷ her confusion about whether the process is either representative or essentially corporeal reveals a potentially diagonalised route through a familiar dichotomised impasse; "...does the Devil act literally and substantially in the material world, or does he only create delusions in the minds of humans

¹⁰³ Walker Bynum.C. - 'The Female Body and Religious Practice' in Feher.M., Naddaffi.R., Tazi.N. (eds.) - *Zone 3:Fragments Towards a History of the Human Body* (New York, Zone, 1989) p.163

¹⁰⁴ Irigaray - *Speculum* p.238

¹⁰⁵ cited in Moi.T. - *Sexual/ Textual Politics* p.136

¹⁰⁶ Walker Bynum.C. - 'The Female Body and Religious Practice' p.166

¹⁰⁷ Mayes.E. - 'Witchcraft, Possession and Exorcism: Transformations of a Voluntary/ Involuntary Dialectic' in *Body and Society*, vol. 3, no.4, Dec 97, p.94

which alter their perceptions of that world? Is his realm of action that of the embodied real, or of image?"¹⁰⁸ Neither, in actuality it seems, for such somatized imaging processes are routes to the realm of becoming. It is necessary therefore not to assume the historically familiar route and treat these processes as a woman being divided from herself, as being weakened as a subject or as being projected as the 'outside' but to treat these seizures and manifestations as one mode of becoming amongst many others.

Like hysteria, to which modes of possession are considered to be akin, these practises are the mimetic manifestations of an exterior entity deep within the body. In exactly being a poor copy of the male, the hysteric exists as a place of transformation or transportation - destroying in the process, the stability of his system. It is, according to Canetti, this practice of "flight-transformation which give hysteria its characteristic colour. It also explains one of the most striking features, namely the frequency of the transition from processes of an erotic to those of a religious nature."¹⁰⁹ It is exactly by pursuing Canetti's blending of the terms and functions of simulation, transformation and possession that the female body may be thought of not as an effaced subject but as a mode of replicate-becoming. It must always be asked what more a female body can do.

*"He knew - he remembered - as she pulled him down to the meat, the flesh the cowboy mocked. It was a vast thing, beyond knowing, a sea of information coded in spiral and pheromone, infinite intricacy that only the body, in its strong, blind way would ever read."*¹¹⁰

Gibson - Neuromancer

The female body as the testbed of replicate-becoming demonstrates how an image can conduct a vast range of sub-representational activities which emerge at the interface between the image as it addresses the body and the body as it reciprocally alters the effects and behaviours of the said image. This clearly is an image-becoming which extends beyond the theoretical remit of the legislator-interpreter of modernity for it is an image which replaces analytical distance with direct corporeal effect. It is no longer a passive surface but is instead as the site of sensation and libidinal desire which is in constant interaction with non-representational semiotic practice.

¹⁰⁸ ibid - p.87

¹⁰⁹ Canetti.E. - *Crowds and Power*, p.399

¹¹⁰ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London, Harper Collins, 1993)p.285

The debate between Baudrillard and Irigaray - between the socially constructed appearance of her empty sex and the specificity of her body is temporarily resolved here by simulatory planes of becoming which engineer the image and the body as an entirely open process committed not to specular models (though these will no doubt continue to exist in phantasmatic form) but to multi-valency - its ability to appear as like but in fact behave differently, manufacturing affections, affinities, enactments, becomings. From here on, the perceptual journeys instigated by images which are replicate-becomings can be considered in terms of the becoming-woman of the body involved - its opening up therefore to forces of change which operate beyond the solipsism of the male mind. No longer can the double be assumed to be a faithful duplication of the same. No longer can the image continue to be perceived as static when it can clearly instigate such a wealth of fabulatory transportations. It is the effects and events of these transportations which must now be assessed in the context of a body which must surely escape to what Caillois calls 'the other side of the senses' - to where the configurations of perceptions, the sensations of compositions and the intensities of time undergo parallel journeys.

THE DIGITAL SKIN

Tactile Media and the Vanished Point

Irigaray's sustained exposure of the matter of simulation - its ability to induce insinuation, distraction and becoming - cracks open the sealed spaces of a western reality system and demands that the tools of perception be figured differently. The persistent insufficiency of representational accounts of environments which may be fitted up according to laws of semantic interpretation but which simultaneously manufacture entirely functional modes of asignifying communication has led to a neglect of the body as a site of perceptual becoming. Postmodernism, for all its guises has done little to escape these insufficiencies. It may have acknowledged the body, inserted it accordingly, yet it continues to neutralise its effects - turning it, along with the rest of the material world, into signs which defer to other signs. It fails therefore to see anything more than the image of itself.

If, as has so far been argued, there is a valid though currently underwritten account of how the technological image actively stimulates and induces change in the body, then a fundamental element to this argument is the shift which occurs in the perceptual system as a result of stimulation by images not received through the eye but via organism-wide shock effects throughout the body. This parallel treatment of the image and the perceiving body is a technical necessity, for if a cybernetic theory of perception is to be fully developed, then the open feedback loop which integrates what was once a stable perceiving subject throughout the mobile parts of its environment manifests changes in one part of the system as changes in every neighbouring part also. Thus, change in the function of an imaging system or model of (post-)representation is manifested as change in the perceptual function of the body.

The possessional states which typify the Deleuzian simulation described in chapter 2 are markedly incongruous with a history of perception dominated by the visual sense. For an entire body to become immersed in the alter-reality of a simulated screen space requires a far greater depth of involvement than that which the visual sense alone would allow. It is for this reason that the era of digitality can be treated as the demise of a history of visual predominance based on an organ which has been theorised and valued for its perpetuation of contemplative distance, fixed perspective and stable temporal order - the security apparatus of the observing subject. As the monitors of mass media and the screens of synthetic holography, flight simulation, virtual environments,

ballistic tracking methods and computer animation (amongst others) produce not reference to a greater outside reality but to supplementary realities operational in themselves, the visually organised body no longer has a stable position from which to contemplate and effectively distanciate itself. It is for this reason that the body must now make use of what have previously been viewed as much subordinated sensory orders - the tactile domains which rely on corporeal contact and immersion within an environment. As will be outlined, there is an account of the ability of an image to operate not primarily through sight but through touch - impacting, manipulating and probing the skin - and it must here be read alongside the contemporary shifts to the digital body. The tactile image producing the tactile body and vice versa, according to the rules of feedback.

Whilst tactility and the emergent sensory order of digital technology can be accounted for purely as bodily process - as the biological sense of touch¹ - it also extends its effects far beyond what has been considered to be the remit of the human body. It is the concept of tactility as an interfacing with other bodies, human or otherwise, which gives it major theoretical weight. If tactility is to be considered in its full implications, then it must carry the privilege which Irigaray assigns to it in *'The Mechanics of Fluids'* - that if a part in an assemblage is oriented according to rules of touch rather than by laws of vision, it produces an immanent set of relations. Change in the system is induced by localised and emergent interactions rather than by external over-arching commands - contrary therefore to distanciating frameworks of visibility. These relations undermine the authority of the subject instead of perpetuating the fixed positions of interiority and exteriority which secure western reality. The full implications of this alternative, materialist mode of reality production must be unfolded in several ways.

If a history of ocularcentric perception has depended upon discernible distinctions between subject and object, upon managed perception and rationalised sensation, then the immersion of a tactually receptive organism in a tactile environment produces lines of continuous webbing or assemblage production for which there is no position of exterior observation. Tactility as a phenomenon akin to Riemann space, i.e. as a

¹ There is some theoretical debate around what constitutes the sense of touch. Baudrillard distanciates it from its corporeal function; "this tactile fantasy has nothing to do with our sense of *touch*; it is a metaphor for the 'seizure' resulting from the annihilation of the scene and space of representation." (1979; 63) McLuhan is also cautious about its relation to the body; "It begins to be evident that 'touch' is not skin but the interplay of the senses, and 'keeping in touch' or 'getting in touch' is a matter of a fruitful meeting of the senses, of sight translated into sound and sound into movement, and taste and smell." (1964; 60) Whilst this lacks strong emphasis on the corporeal, McLuhan's notion of touch as synesthesia is most useful here. It is considered to be akin to Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term 'haptic space' in which neither sight nor touch are singularly privileged. In the following argument, the 'tactile' and the 'haptic' are considered to be the non-specific interplay of the senses. Synesthesia as perceptual process will be considered in the next chapter.

coefficient of transformation effectuated by step-by-step local relations, sets up two key processes which irreparably undermine the stable position of a human observer. Firstly, it establishes relations between the organic and the inorganic which render each mutually constitutive of the other. Secondly, it perpetuates an open feedback model which dismantles the foundations of a representational reality. There is no fixed staging mechanism in existence prior to its immanent engineering. As will be explored, both of these traits radically reformat our notions of organic perception. As has already been suggested in chapter 2, in this scenario, the image must be considered to function as an anorganic, biotic component, moulding and effectively producing the body. Accordingly, its production and perception must be figured as synonymous procedures, emergent out of a perceptual assemblage with no fixed object, background or transcendental conditions of existence. Only then may a theory of immersion in digital image environments be possible.

FROM THE EYE TO THE FINGER

*“Use all your fingers’, it told her,
She obeyed, touching the fingers of both hands to the wall. The wall
indented, then began to open.”*

*“The walls...responded to her touch now by growing inward along a
line of her sweat and saliva drawn along the floor. Thus the old walls
extended new ones, and the new ones would open or close, advance or
retreat as she directed.”*

Octavia Butler, *Dawn*²

The manner in which modes of imaging and the rules of representation model the body and its perceived interaction with the world is a concern which occupies Irigaray throughout her early work. By implicitly taking on some of the theoretical contradictions which emerged at the time of her writing, she can be read as dealing with the paradox of a burgeoning image culture and a declining faith in the power of vision not only by positing a version of reality production which had no need for established semiotic credentials but which figures a different sensory calibration of the body; “...the predominance of the visual, and of the discrimination and individualisation of

² Butler.O. - *Dawn* (London, VGSF, 1988) p.107, p.131

form, is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman takes more pleasure from touching than from looking...”³

Where philosophy had previously written its environment according to constructions which it could recognise - thus subordinating the multiplicity of everyday perception to single lines of visual perspective structured by rules of resemblance and self-sameness, Irigaray ventures into the faceless, tactile territories of Deleuze and Guattari’s haptic landscapes, into desert spaces without horizons, where the eye can no longer orient the stable space-time structures of an upright body. It is with marked trepidation that the philosopher has accepted her invitation to enter spaces without specular boundaries, to experience “the pleasure of merging endlessly with the other, of touching and absorbing each other without any privileged identification...”⁴ It requires radically new, precisely emergent methods of orientation to find a way through “that shapeless flux that dampens, soaks, floods, channels, electrifies...”⁵ whereby neither “one (male or female) nor the other is assumed as a term, any more than their passage into each other...”⁶ It is an environment which no longer operates according to the hegemony of the gaze.

“Theatricality and representation, far from having to be taken as libidinal givens, *a fortiori* metaphysical, result from a certain labour on the labyrinthine and Moebian band, a labour which prints these particular folds and twists, the effects of which is a box closed upon itself, filtering impulses and allowing only those to appear on the stage which come from what will come to be known as the exterior, satisfying the conditions of interiority.”⁷ Recalling the preservation tactics of the organism documented by Freud in ‘*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*’, in ‘*Libidinal Economy*’, Lyotard accounts for how it is the closure of the organism or the persistent filtration of exterior stimuli which maintains due separation from the stage of western representation. Debord demonstrated the operation of these structures, as described in chapter 1. Lyotard’s interests lie in undoing this closure, in replacing Freud’s entropic story of the organism with a libidinised surface of continual affect, re-organising itself constantly in accord with the demands of its environment. In doing so, he maps similarly intensive spaces to Irigaray but to different effect, subordinating therefore, the highly specific relation between the female and desire to the neutering effects of techno-capitalism. Despite this difference, which does carry significance, they share a common and therefore

³ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*, (Ithaca, New York; Cornell University Press, 1985) p.25-6

⁴ Irigaray. L. - *Speculum of the Other Woman*, p.234

⁵ *ibid.* - p.238

⁶ *ibid.* - p. 234

⁷ Lyotard. J-F. - *Libidinal Economy*, tr. Ian Hamilton Grant (London; The Athlone Press, 1993) p.3

theoretically valuable insistence on pushing the body towards the domains outside of itself - to the faceless underside where surfaces and planes produce complex geometries which never relent to the pressures to produce perspectival depths or self-securing voids.

Both Irigaray and Lyotard map the processes outlined in the previous chapter - the other side of representation and its invasive, contaminating corporeal effects. If, technological screens can both display and contact, monitor and unleash, filter and intrude, then, as Irigaray argues, the power to visualise is a minor event on a body which is as yet unexplored. Screens may well be protectionist according to one of their facades (as Irigaray writes; “Doesn’t the universe work by coping defensively with light? Doesn’t sameness of colour and shape work to banish light’s powers? To protect us from it’s potential ability to illumine, diffuse, touch, breed, transform? And warm?”)⁸ but they would seem to have need to be in the face of what is reaching in from the outside.

For Irigaray, theatricality or a suitably realistic staging of reality is born from an autogenetic splitting from the mother and an enforced entry into “[the] first canonical Imaginary formation, which takes place at the mirror stage when the infant forms an image of its own body for the first time...[this] is directly based on the production of an effective image, the specular image.”⁹ It is a transition which attaches the eyes to the mirror, fixing the body in stature and posture. The semantic rules of the symbolic order are then imposed, always referring back to this self confirming reflection. Should the body contort into any other shape other than the protrusioned, phallic one to which it must prescribe, its eyes may be directed elsewhere. The body image may disappear from view and therefore its assigned role in a specular economy.

It is this closing up of the erotogenic surfaces of the Moebius skin - the replacement of a libidinised, kinaesthetic set of speeds, thresholds and eddies by the extended visual expanses of a subject initiated into a specularly organised discourse which inspires in Irigaray an assault on visibility. What Lingis calls “a suicide, a losing oneself in the stagnant element of an image,” for the sake of a “figure posited at a distance, integral and identical, substantive and ineffectual,”¹⁰ sustains her assault which begins with the story of Oedipus and then rallies against the work of Freud with his synonymy of the eye and the penis (seen particularly in his works on the uncanny and the mutual fear of blindness and castration) and also against the work of Lacan on the structure of the Imaginary and the formation of a mirrored identity.

⁸ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum* p.150

⁹ Aumont.J. - *The Image*, tr. Claire Pajackowska (London; BFI Publishing, 1994) p.85

¹⁰ Lingis. A - *Foreign Bodies*, (New York, Routledge, 1994) p.116

By insisting that the data-collection of the other senses be no longer subordinated to the forms and authority of the visual with its criteria of distanced recognition, frozen temporal moments and distinction only of the lines and protrusions of fixed form, Irigaray dismantles the staging mechanism of vision on four counts. Firstly, because it is the sense which posits the female as lack because of her inability to display 'visible' genitalia; secondly, because it operates according to a logic of gestalt and absence privileging that which is seen over that which is not; thirdly, because it sustains the scopophilic male fantasy and fourthly, because it is the sense which is assumed to operate without contact, working most efficiently when it can distanciate and define an object in a stable environment¹¹.

Her pragmatic response to the insufficiency of these representational criteria is therefore to figure a body which maps its environment in a different way. She is interested in tactile interactions which do not necessarily need vision at all. She argues that the sense of touch is of fundamental importance to the body - indeed it is functionally more valuable than the sense of sight. After all, a blind person can continue to perceive without sight, relying entirely on the sense of touch, though the reverse situation would be inconceivable - an inability to touch would be equivalent with a state of unconsciousness. For Irigaray, the tactile body is rich in unexplored potential. As an opening into itself, it is a body abstracted from its prior obligations and it is thus able to manufacture new sets of connections. Should it need to see, it can do so as well, but via a different sensory order (or disorder) - an immersed state which is open and responsive, building its environment as it emerges rather than in advance, according to pre-emptive, ocularcentric distinctions. As Irigaray states, "I can see only through the light."¹²

"The regularised, necessary and useful actions of the human body will hinge in one way or another on its upright bi-pedal posture - its usual way of counteracting gravity. Interrupt that and you have profoundly disconnected the human body from its normal realm of activity."¹³ Though Massumi writes in a different context, with this statement he could just as validly be referring to the cracking apart of the visual field by Irigaray's careful engineering. Hidden within the body, beneath its distinctive landmarks, if Lyotard too is to be believed, is a body unfamiliar to itself. This is a body with holes,

¹¹ see Grosz, E. - *Volatile Bodies*, p.106

¹² Irigaray, L. - *Ethique de la difference sexuelle* (Paris; Minuit, 1984) p.155

¹³ Massumi, B. - *The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason* (unpublished paper) available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html

but with holes conceived of not as female lack or as specular absence but as temporary formations on a vast libidinal surface or plane. Irigaray's interest is never with the finitude of a body - its boundary points and self-confirming distinctions - but with the effects which it can produce through the merging and coupling, the assemblage production, of what have been perceived to be distinguishably separate parts.

This philosophy of flow privileges surface over interiorised depth. It treats the body as a Moebian band "covered with roughness, corners, creases, cavities which when it passes on the 'first' turn will be cavities but perhaps on the 'second', lumps... The interminable band with variable geometry (for nothing requires that an excavation remain concave, besides, it is inevitably convex on the 'second' turn, provided it lasts) has got two sides, but only one, and therefore neither exterior nor interior."¹⁴ It is on this band, with her speculum and its distortion of the convex pyramids of vision by a concave surface which burns light, that Irigaray's tactics are to be found. By privileging the skin with its complex distribution of sensory and sexual organs, Irigaray departs from fixed rules of the specularity. She instead makes practical use of the turbular and open dynamics which the body's surfaces are, by their inherent twists and foldings, always already producing; "Everything then, has to be re-thought in terms of curl(s), helix(es), diagonal(s), spiral(s), roll(s), twist(s), revolution(s), pirouette(s). Speculation whirls round faster and faster as it pierces, bores, drills into a volume that is supposed to be solid still."¹⁵

The privatised body - discrete, hygienic and inoffensive to its surroundings - is a body with a clear sense of its own identity and of its apparent inability to instigate intensive change. With Irigaray's insistence that the female is, in practice, neither dialectically structured, nor biologically reduced nor entirely absent as the Lacanian would posit her, comes a version of corporeality which is based on the indiscernible and non-possessional ability to tell whether a component in an assemblage is either one thing or another. By drawing out the full implications of a body, that for as long as it is conscious, is always in touch, Irigaray uses a "nearness so close that any identification of one or the other, and therefore any form of property, is impossible"¹⁶ in order to map a body in its most receptive state. In bypassing the eyes as the prime site of sensory interaction, Irigaray treats the female lips, of which there are many, as the ports of intensive connection.

p. 12

¹⁴ Lyotard. J-F. - *Libidinal Economy*, p.3

¹⁵ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum*, p.23

¹⁶ Moi. T. *Sexual/Textual Politics; Feminist Literary Theory*, (London, Routledge, 1988) p.144

As the webs of reciprocal bonding, her lips constitute an erotica which undermine the spatial and temporal obligations of a visual order for they are never removed, blinkered or dependent on light. They are always therefore, participatory, requiring that "she re-touches herself without ever constituting herself, or constituting herself in another kind of unity."¹⁷ Without the scanning procedures of visual orientation, "[s]imultaneity would be her 'property'. A property that never fixes itself in the possible identity of the self to another form."¹⁸ Without the invasion of temporal distinctions, the female body is able to instantaneously manufacture new corporeal geographies - bodily landscapes which forge flat intensive connections with the enfolded behaviours of the Moebian band. Each of its manifestations may be considered as an entry-point to a new state which exists only for as long as it immediately resonates with the varying effectors of the surrounding environment. These geographies are more fully explored in chapter 5.

If the tactile body is the body in exploration of itself - of therefore its proprioceptive, synesthetic and kinaesthetic states which operate outside of its perceived top-down control - then its emergence as the dominant mode of interaction with the touch sensitive screens and haptic dimensions of digital technology has implications for the future of an inherited body which has for so long been perceptually managed by the rigours of representational structure. Where the predominance of the visual required distance, perspective and practised skill in discernment (the written word, as a particularly good example of analogic visual communication, demonstrates the need to be visually trained in what the appearance of a word means - the arbitrary relation between the appearance of a word and the signified object to which it defers requires a long acquired sense of visual recognition) tactile modes of communication are dependent less on the ability to differentiate, privileging instead states of contact, impact, immersion which do not prescribe to the precise cognitive procedures of visual ordering. It is these latter modes which Lyotard treats as the forces of libidinal currency for they depend not on regimes of substitution which subordinate the thing to the sign nor on the regimes of replacement which Irigaray so carefully critiques with her attack on Platonic structures of forgetting. Tactile interactions operate instead via the material behaviour which occurs in spite of the sign. Since "meaning is never present in flesh and blood"¹⁹ and since for Lyotard "[w]here there is a message, there is no material,"²⁰ there remains a wealth of uncharted territory outside of signification - communication events revealed only to the touch.

¹⁷ *ibid.* - p.145

¹⁸ *ibid.* - p.145

¹⁹ Lyotard. J-F - *Libidinal Economy*, p.43

²⁰ *ibid.* - p.44

ASSIMILATING THE INORGANIC; THE TACTILE IMAGE

*“Lost, so small amid that dark, hands grown cold, body image fading
down corridors of television sky”²¹*

William Gibson - *Neuromancer*

The invasive surgery performed by the contemporary image economy was in preparation long before the digital technologies of a multitude of virtual realities began to target the flesh of the participant ahead of his/ her specular and cognitive faculties. The current advances in haptic simulation, a field which far exceeds that of visual simulation in terms of research and investment extend a technological fascination in the sensuous interface of a human body which can be traced back through the phantasmagorias, optical illusions and perceptual experiments of the nineteenth century - developments which treated the eye purely as a corporeal organ and in doing so, often induced sensational responses throughout the body. In theory, the interest in the tactile impact of visual stimuli dates back at least as far as the 1920s and to the work of Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer.

By 1940, Kracauer had accounted for the shock value of cinema by treating the viewer not as a viewer *per se* but as a “corporeal-material being”. It was as a “human being with skin and hair”²² that the witness of a film responded to its sensuous affects. Bypassing the accepted spectatorial methods of visual distancing, Kracauer produced a radical theory of an image which could afflict or impose itself without consent; “The material elements that present themselves in film directly stimulate the material layers of the human being; his nerves, his senses, his entire physiological substance.”²³ This treatment of the skin as the site of image reception was also precisely explored in Benjamin’s famous essay “*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*”. An essay primarily resourced by postmodernist proponents who treat it as the prime commentary on the end of authorship, it has much to offer a cybernetic theory of the image because it treats the image as a material entity rather than an intangible sign. Indeed, his singular approach to the image economy is based on highly valuable, though minor tradition in art criticism. Typified by the work of Wilhelm Worringer and Alois Riegl it privileges neither the work of art in itself as the focus of analysis nor the producer as a the romanticised, creative subject. Instead, it sets up a feedback between

²¹ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London; Harper Collins, 1993) p.43

²² Kracauer qu. in Featherstone.M. and Burrows.R. - *Cyberspace. Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk* (London, Sage Publications, 1995) p.180

²³ *ibid* - p.180

the two, treating changes in the cognitive organisation of the material of perception as indicative of changes in the manner in which the human relates to its 'objective' environment.

In Benjamin's essay, this systematised, corporeal approach exposes the emergent tactility of the image - "the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly."²⁴ In a moment of pure synthesis with Deleuze and Guattari's call to expose the material force of the image - the point "where it ceases to be the image of the image, so as to discover the abstract figure, the schizze-flows that it harbours and conceals"²⁵, Benjamin announces the potential of image to become "an instrument of ballistics", an entity able "to hit the spectator like a bullet, to reverse the roles, such that it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality...based on changes of place and form which periodically assail the spectator..."²⁶ If, "the history of western media was [up to the end of the twentieth century] also a visual history of western human consciousness"²⁷ and if there is some hope in his claim that "late twentieth century transformations of the human body are linked more or less directly to the development of advanced imaging systems,"²⁸ then the work of Benjamin and Kracauer mark a theoretical beginning to the predominance of tactile modes of perception along with their associated though as yet largely unformulated post-representational semiotic.²⁹

As though in reference to the possessional qualities of the Deleuzian simulacrum described at the end of chapter 2, Benjamin asks, "now the reflected image has become separable, transportable...where is it transported?"³⁰ Having departed the ground rules

²⁴ Benjamin.W - 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Benjamin.W. and Arendt.H. - *Illuminations* tr. Zohn.H. (London, Fontana, 1973) p.223

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari - *Anti-Oedipus*, p.271

²⁶ Benjamin.W. - 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', p.238

²⁷ Tomas.D. - 'Art, Psychasthenic Assimilation and the Cybernetic Automaton' in (eds.) C.Gables Gray, H.J.Figuerou-Sarriera, S.Mentor - *The Cyborg Handbook* (New York; Routledge, 1995) p.262

²⁸ *ibid.* - p.264

²⁹ A contemporary example of the tactile impact of the screen can be found in *The Guardian* newspaper (7th Dec 1997) "More than 700 Japanese children suffered epileptic fits after watching a cartoon programme which featured a character with rapidly flashing red eyes. The fits, triggered in sufferers of photo-sensitive disorder caused panic among parents as children had convulsions and seizures after watching the 30 minute programme." This kind of perceptual shock epidemic is now a growing problem. Film and television companies are placing tight controls on the speed of flicker in publicly distributed programming. This development adds a new dimension to Shaviro's comment that even the cutting speed of normal movement as portrayed on screen inflicts a tactile impact upon the eye; "Violence is at work even on the most basic physiological level, in the much disputed phenomenon of 'persistence of vision'. Film movement appears continuous only because of the eye's retention of virtual images. When I watch a film, images excite my retina, 24 times a second, at a speed that is slow enough to allow for the impact and recording of stimuli, but too fast for me to keep up with them consciously. Perception has become unconscious. It is neither spontaneously active nor freely receptive, but radically passive, the suffering of a violence perpetrated against the eye."- Shaviro.S. - *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis; University of Minesota Press, 1993) p. 50

³⁰ Benjamin.W.- 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' p.231

of the visual organisation of western thought, the tactile image no longer need subscribe to a fixed rate of value nor to an object in whose place it must operate. As it explores its rich potential as a virtual agent or avatar of new becomings, it takes the body with it, insinuating itself in the process in order to become a biotic component. It binds the body to emergent machinic environments within which it must create new perceptual conditions for none are mapped out in advance. This produces a sense of feeling in the dark, of feeling and necessarily responding to sensation before identifying its source - what Benjamin calls a "feeling of strangeness", an "estrangement felt before one's image in the mirror."³¹ More than this, it is the breaking down of a body image which has for so long secured human identity. To lose sight of oneself in the mirror is not only to disrupt the laws of Lacanian initiation, it is a loss of orientation of limbs and organs. Tactile relation to one's image involves a sense of body which is not organised but which re-configures itself constantly - beyond the remits of what were previously considered to be its boundaries.

Michel Heim accounts for the material effects of this identity crisis as 'Alternate World Syndrome' - a condition which emerges from frequent contact with virtuality. It induces a rupturing "of the kinaesthetic from the visual senses of self-identity...[mixing] images and expectations from an alternate world so as to distort our perceptions of the current world, making us prone to errors in mismatched contexts..."³² As he writes of his own experience immersed in a virtual simulator; "after three hours, my optic nerves are imprinted with brightly coloured structures...I can later summon the computer generated images with the slightest effort - or see them in unexpected flashes of cyberspace. Hours later, I still felt a touch of perceptual nausea."³³

Such an account clearly reveals the ability of a tactile environment to transport a body elsewhere; back down, in fact, to the Moebius band where it must find its own way through its submerged expanses of foldings and intensive geometeries. Where a body must transfer onto the speeds, reaction times (the hand has, after all, always been faster than the eye³⁴ ...) and proprioceptive mechanisms of a sensory system which has for so long remained subordinated, it shuts down its visual sorting system in order to supplicate itself on a plane which is "infinite and contrary to the representative code," upon which "intensities run...without meeting in a terminus, without ever hitting the

³¹ *ibid.* - p.230

³² Heim.M. - 'The Design of Virtual Reality' in Featherstone.M. and Burrows.R. - *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk* p.67

³³ *ibid.* - p.67

³⁴ The eye cannot detect motion at faster speeds than 30 Hz whilst the hand can detect vibration at up to 200-300 Hz. (Dodsworth.C. - *Digital Illusion; Entertaining with High Technology* - New York; Addison Wesley 1998) p.301

wall of absence.”³⁵ For Benjamin, mass produced images trigger such bodily exploration. They “demand a specific kind of approach; free floating contemplation is not appropriate to them. They stir the viewer: he feel challenges by them in a new way.”³⁶

Considering Heim’s account of Alternate World Syndrome, with its visual attacks and perceptual nausea, it is of no wonder that the immersive, all-encompassing tactile qualities of an image have for so long been feared. It is surely with a profound sense of the potency of an image and a misguided faith in the power of semiotic containment that Kaja Silverman can claim that “within cinema there are, of course, no tactile convergences and the gap between the viewer and the spectacle remains irreducible.”³⁷ Shaviro, in arguing a materialist theory of cinema points out that according to such a tradition, “Images are kept at a distance, isolated like germs...Images are condemned because they are bodies without souls or forms without bodies. They are flat and insubstantial, devoid of interiority and substance, unable to express anything beyond themselves.”³⁸ In exploring the full implications of these points, Shaviro exposes the dangers of an image that can inflict itself without will, inducing new perceptual demands. It is this germ like quality- this ability to touch and transform on impact, to be contagious and trigger becomings which causes irreparable damage to notions of a controlling subject.

“There is nothing more that man fears than the touch of the unknown. He wants to see what is reaching towards him, and to be able to recognise or at least classify it. Man always tends to avoid physical contact with anything strange. In the dark, the fear of an unexpected touch can mount to panic. All the distances which men create around themselves are dictated by this fear...”³⁹ In the contemporary socius, undergoing what McLuhan calls the re-tribalising effects of new technologies, these taboos on contact continue to resonate. Described by Freud as ‘what is demonic’, ‘what may not be touched’⁴⁰, the taboo prohibiting contact with an assigned object or person of power would seem to continue to fuel contemporary fears that images may be more than de-sensualised, readily interpreted components. That we keep them at such distance, as Silverman insists, would seem only to confirm a power which attaches itself “to persons in particular states, to the states themselves, as well as to impersonal objects.”⁴¹

³⁵ Lyotard J-F - *Libidinal Economy* p. 4

³⁶ Benjamin.W. - 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' p.226

³⁷ cited in Shaviro.S - *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p.53

³⁸ *ibid.* - p.17

³⁹ Canetti.E. - *Crowds and Power* (London; Penguin, 1984) p.15

⁴⁰ Freud.S - *The Origins of Religion (vol.13)* (London; Penguin, 1990) p.123

⁴¹ *ibid.* - p.86

The sublimated acknowledgement of the disrupting effects of the power of touch and of the subsequent sanctions on its activity, is according to Freud, “obviously not to be understood in an exclusively sexual sense but more in the general sense of attacking, of getting control and of asserting oneself.”⁴² It can only give extra force to Irigaray’s argument concerning the endless, leaking surfaces of the body that a totemised object, image or person may be able to infect or inhabit the body of the toucher such that qualities of one are manifested in the other. Since the breaking of a taboo boundary is the spreading of a virus (“...anyone who has violated a taboo becomes taboo himself because he possesses the dangerous quality of tempting others to follow...”)⁴³ it would seem that touching is able to produce effects in the body which removes its agency and places it elsewhere - a process which is figured here as a re-immersion, or a surfacing of the complex connection which sustains it outside of the visual field.

It is at this level of imprinting upon the skin by an external agent - imagistic or otherwise - that Burroughs writes, insisting therefore not on the distinction between perception and sensation, image processing and the impact upon corporeal surface. In doing so, he fully exploits the sensuous and at times dangerous behaviour of an image on the body - its ability to transmit possessional states which operate not on the level of signs but on the level of neural, autonomic reaction. Of the image’s contagious qualities he writes; “we first took our image and put it into code....this code was written at the molecular level to save space, when it was found that the image material was not dead matter, but exhibited the same life cycle as the virus.”⁴⁴

By referring to the process whereby an image is replicated in the body of a ‘spectator’, therefore altering not only the ‘individual’s’ neural make-up but that of other entities which come into contact with it, Burroughs operates the very fleshiness of the image, functional long after the relic of Platonic idealism has died away. The skin, the Moebian band, is very much the surface of inscription not of hyperreal signs, as the postmodernist would read but of physical changes triggered by avatars of becomings; “These colourless sheets are what flesh is made from - Becomes flesh when it has colour and writing - That is Word and Image write the message that is you on colourless sheet determine all flesh.”⁴⁵ Accordingly, such processes are hooks into the body, hooks which attach to feedback circuits to which, on its own, the body would not aspire. But then a body afflicted by memes of contagion spread through touch, is a

⁴² *ibid.* - p.130

⁴³ *ibid.* - p. 86

⁴⁴ Burroughs.W. - *Nova Express* (New York; Evergreen Black Cat, 1964) p.48

⁴⁵ *ibid.* - p.30

body sustained, unknowingly, by the forms of image addiction against which it would seem, there is no protection.

“Junk is concentrated image and this accounts for its pain killing action - Nor could there be pain if there was no image.”⁴⁶ Like Benjamin, Burroughs treats physical changes in the participant’s body as manifestations of the connection between images, impact on skin and the tactility or immanence of communication. What fascinates both commentators is the necessity of habit which fuels the cycles of post-industrial life - habit-inducing loops of consumerism, desire and media-tised realities which incorporate the participant, not to the point of passivity as Debord’s bleak account would have us believe but to the point of sensitisation, response or to use Benjamin’s term, active ‘distraction’. “Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit,”⁴⁷ he writes. He treats the tactility of mechanical reproduction as a product of the contemporary need to become closer and closer to the image, to respond to it with an ever increasing sense of involvement; “...the ability to master certain tasks in a state of distraction proves that their solution has become a matter of habit...Reception in a state of distraction, which is increasing noticeably in all fields of art and is symptomatic of profound change in apperception, finds in the film its true means of exercise.”⁴⁸

It is the ability of an image to place demands on the viewer, to break into his/her preserved notions of autonomy such that the participant may no longer have a “detached point of view. They are wholly with the object. They go empathetically into it. The eye is used, not in perspective but tactually as it were...”⁴⁹ which breaks up the notion of an interpretative subject. It would seem that the supplementary realities of media-tised image circuits are so demanding upon the perceptual tolerances of the body, that, as Burroughs suggests, it would be appropriate to talk of the image-body loop as a cycle of dependency. The body is, therefore, perpetually in a state of adaption to the ever renewing demands of the post-industrial image culture. It is necessary to map this relation not in terms of a theory of “addiction”⁵⁰ - the term which Burroughs uses, but which in this context, is too invested by unilateral control models to be helpful - but in terms of a theory of “habituation”. Images which operate via habit are not external forces of enslavement but are instead assimilable, anorganic components. They both exceed and instantiate the body as they intrude into the perceptual system.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* - p.49

⁴⁷ Benjamin.W. - ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, p.240

⁴⁸ *ibid.* - p. 240

⁴⁹ McLuhan.M. - *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1962) p.37

⁵⁰ see chapter 1

The association between a theory of habituation, rather than a theory of addiction and the technics of image dependency are substantiated by Sedgewick's account of habituated action as the cybernetic diagonal which cuts through the will/compulsion dialectic. For if habit, "demarcates the space of perceptual and proprioceptive reversal and revelation - revelation at which introspection can itself never arrive,"⁵¹ then it also charts the theories of open-ended feedback which so fascinate Deleuze and Guattari. It is exactly according to an immanence of reciprocating criteria, or to a notion of future event modelling past action that habit produces "a version of repeated action that moves not toward metaphysical absolutes but towards interrelations of the action and the self acting within the bodily habitus, the apparelling habit, the sheltering habitation."⁵² That an image may become so seductive a force that a body may become irreparably and perpetually altered by the attraction which it feels towards it, is testimony to the power not only of an image to substantiate itself sub-cognitively but also of a body to build itself in response to exterior libidinal stimuli - just as Freud documented in '*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*'.

It is this practice of always being in touch and always being touched - of treating the image as an instigator of continual transformation which informs the 'tactile appropriations' of Benjamin and the flesh images of Burroughs. Like any addictive substance, most of which are filtered through circuits of consumption on a daily basis, the image is able to produce neural adjustments which alter and prepare the organism for further dosages of subsequent image blitz. In what is clearly the driving mechanism of late capitalism, the effects of one dose of image habituation reciprocates upon the next. The perceptual assemblage is here always under construction emerging not from images to be surveyed by a stable legislator-interpreter but from the screens, surfaces and flesh images of immersive environments which instantiate themselves according to new couplings and abstract sensations.

It would seem therefore, that the body is always in some capacity open to sensation which extends it beyond the specularly organised image of itself. If, as Freud writes, the living organism is shielded by a "surface turned towards the external world [which] will from its very situation be differentiated and will serve as an organ for receiving stimuli,"⁵³ and if "the grey matter of the cortex remains a derivative of [this] primitive superficial layer of the organism and may have inherited some of its essential properties" then as he concludes, "as a result of ceaseless impact of external stimuli on the surface of the vesicle, its substance to a certain depth may have become permanently

⁵¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick - 'Epidemics of the Will' in (eds.) Cary.J. and Kwinter.S. - *Incorporations*, p.592

⁵² *ibid.* - p.591

⁵³ Freud.S. - '*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*' p.26

modified.”⁵⁴ It is the special quality of skin itself to be able to channel the effects of its non-organic surroundings deep within the structure of the organism for it is only ever partly organic - much of its function depends on its contactual interfacing with the non-organic. As Hardin argues, “sensation arises when the shaft of the hair, moving in its follicle (sheath) touches the nerve net that surrounds it. This mechanism is a convenient way of extending the sense of touch beyond the limits of the living body by means of non-living tissue. An exaggerated instance of such mechanism is seen in the long ‘whiskers’ of a cat, which enable it to move around in tight, dark places.”⁵⁵ Should as Lyotard argues, the body’s interior, even its cortical regions, be merely enfolded arrangements of formerly exposed surfaces - surfaces which did anyway, only function via their assimilation to the non-organic, then Freud’s model of a body being permanently modified as its surface effects are internally incorporated would seem to contribute to a functional account of the tactile body - constituted by the system-wide rippling effects of immanently reciprocating criteria.

The weaker elements of McLuhan’s otherwise highly valued argument - his persistent use, for example, of the term ‘extension of man’ would here seem to be lacking the influence of Freud’s anorganic surfaces. His terminology is problematic not simply because of its gender bias but because it acknowledges solely the extension, rather than the complimentary intension or intrusion of the non-organic such that each apparently contradictory tendency would cancel the other out to be replaced by laws of immanence. By assuming a stable centre from which an extension would emanate, it closes an otherwise open model of the body; “[e]ven McLuhan’s evocation of an extended nervous system retains a metaphoric resonance which is lacking in the cybernetic concept of the organism as ‘local enclave in the general system of entropy’ (Wiener 1954; 95)”⁵⁶ What McLuhan would have benefited from would have been not only a precise use of the enfolded anorganic structures which Freud observes but also a supplementary use of the observations of Norbert Wiener for it is he who also grants the sensory organs, all of which are taken here to be in some degree tactile, as being the primary sites of assemblage construction and therefore bodily modification.

Wiener’s work has much to offer because it simplifies perception to its purely cybernetic functions, treating it not as visually dominated or agency led but solely as a medium for the regulation of open-circuit feedback. The remit of the body is therefore,

⁵⁴ *ibid.* - p.26

⁵⁵ Hardin.G. and Bajema.C. - *Biology; Its Principles and Implications*, (San Francisco, W.H. Freeman, 1978) p.576

⁵⁶ Tomas.D. - ‘Feedback and Cybernetics; Reimagining the Body in the Age of the Cyborg’ in Featherstone.M. and Burrows.R. - *Cyberspace, Cyberbodies, Cyberpunk* p.34

not always attached to organic flesh; “..where his power of perception goes, to that point his control and in a sense his physical existence is extended.”⁵⁷ Accordingly, if the power of perception should be technologically supplemented or manipulated, then the definition of the organism, ‘his physical existence’, must be extended to incorporate the newly acquired component. If, according to Freud, “all the forms of auxiliary apparatus which we have invented for the improvement or intensification of our sensory functions are built on the same model as the sense organs themselves or portions of them....For example, spectacles, photographic cameras, trumpets,”⁵⁸ then they will be incorporated into the operation of the living organism, as though to provide a new trans-organic surface of feedback modulation. As Wiener argues; “Th[c] control of a machine [or organism since these modes of organisation were by analogy interchangeable terms]...involves sensory members which are actuated by motor members and perform the function of *tell-tales* or *monitors* - that is, of elements which indicate a performance...these mechanisms...control the mechanical tendency towards disorganisation...produc[ing] a temporary and local reversal of the normal direction of entropy.”⁵⁹ It is then, in the context of such perceptual prosthetics that the body-imaging machine assemblage is built with the image/ screen as the interface of corporeal change - altering not just the construction of the body but the manner in which the body relates to its now unmistakably tactile environment.

Again we see Freud’s map of the organism at work - feeding back the inorganic effects occurring at the surface of the organism deep into its recesses and apparently hidden operations. Like the Möbius strip, interiority and exteriority are functionless terms with regards to the working of a twist, or curl or helix. So too, for Wiener are the distinctions between the live and the dead. These terms become meaningless analogies upon the surface of a trans-organic continual skin which treats the machine and the organism as functionally equivalent states - hard distinctions become continually varying constitutive degrees of the cybernetic assemblage. McLuhan may have persisted with the notions of an extended self but in a moment of utter clarity he described with exactness this very process; “After centuries of being fully clad and of being contained in uniform visual space, the electric age ushers us into a world in which we live and breathe and listen with the entire epidermis.”⁶⁰ Inhabiting this epidermis is always an opening up of libidinous flesh, of seeking the plane of continual anorganic skin. It is a

⁵⁷ Wiener, N. - *The Human Use of Human Beings; Cybernetics and Society* (New York; Doubleday Anchor, 1954) p.97

⁵⁸ Freud, S. - *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis (vol 11)* (London: Penguin, 1984) p.430

⁵⁹ Wiener, N. - *The Human Use of Human Beings; Cybernetics and Society* p.24-5

⁶⁰ McLuhan - *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man* (London; Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1964) p.122

process from which Sandy Stone concludes, “to put on the seductive and dangerous cybernetic space like a garment is to put on the female.”⁶¹

Such assemblages place a new inflection on the effects of image addiction which Burroughs so carefully describes, for it would seem that the alliances which occur in the habituated body function according to the same enfoldings, extrusions and incorporations of Freud’s encrusted organism. Both bodies are involved in building connections of dependency which subsequently alter the temporal structures of its individuated make-up such that future events determine past actions. Furthermore, it is the capacity of an image to imprint the skin, to instigate molecular effects throughout the body aside from cognitive assimilation procedures which is here demonstrated by the trans-organic boundaries of Freud’s skin bound living vesicle. What effects an ‘inorganic’ effector may have on the surface of the organism are, due to the twisted, enfolded structure of its inner recesses, directed inwards, altering therefore the ‘deep’ structures of the perceptual consciousness system. Such corporeal modifications - such profound changes which occur in the perpetual system raise the question which Butler raised in his highly sophisticated discussion of the man-machine assemblage and the operations of non-organic life written in 1872. It is a question which has always been answered on the material level, but is only now demonstrating its effects within the remit of theory: “Is it not possible then that there may be even yet new channels dug out for consciousness, though we can detect no signs of them at present?”⁶²

TV; THE IMMANENCE OF TACTILE PERCEPTION

Benjamin’s account of the effacement of the original work of art by the mechanically reproduced image is at its most proto-cybernetic in its discussion of such possible new form of consciousness. With the end of the authentic and the installation of an image which disperses its origins by rules of radically transporting, non-imitative replication, Benjamin maps the de-structuring of perception - the shift, therefore, which occurs when a new mode of image production or reality manufacture produces shifts in the operation of the body. These shifts are here discussed in terms of the assimilation of the inorganic, the end of vision-centred perception and the emergence of close-up vision, tactile dimensions and haptic space as the perceptual requirements of the digital age.

⁶¹ Stone qu. in Plant . S - ‘On the Matrix; Cyberfeminist Simulations’ in (ed.) Shields.R. - *Cultures of Internet; Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies* (London, Sage, 1996) p.180

⁶² Butler.S - *Erewhon* (London; Penguin 1985) p.198

Benjamin postulates that it is the demand for tactile perception, instigated by the then contemporaneous image technologies which has triggered the decline in the 'aura' of the image. The 'aura' - the authentic, contemplative qualities of a work of art - is removed by two accumulating trends; firstly, "the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly ... just as ardent as their bent towards overcoming the uniqueness of reality by accepting its reproduction..." and secondly, the growing urge "to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction..."⁶³ Benjamin's observation on the demise of the visually-organised aura and the emergence of the tactile as the mode of technological perception bears out many of the stated principles of anorganic image production. This is because Benjamin's use of the term 'tactile' is directly related to Alois Riegel's notion of 'haptic space'. It is therefore by contextualising tactile perception within Riegel's work that it can continue to be argued as a mode of perception which is very much about negotiating a line of continuous variation between the organic and inorganic. By treating Benjamin's analysis of tactile perception in such radically disorienting and dehumanising terms, it is possible to draw out the full implications of his observation that imaging technology produces an overwhelming challenge to the senses, demanding irreparable changes in the structure of the perceptual system.

"By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieux under the ingenious guidance of the camera...[image techniques have] burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling."⁶⁴ For Riegel, and secondarily Wilhelm Worringer, close-up or haptic perception recalls an ancient relation between the human and the world. He exemplifies this relation by extended reference to Egyptian art - to the flat, geometric surfaces of pyramidal abstraction, to an undeveloped notion of space indicative not of a comfortable, sovereign position in the world (later acquired with Renaissance perspective and at its most accomplished by the time of Impressionism) but of an anxiety inducing sense of the overwhelming force of inanimate matter. Far from the optical confidence of subjective, distanced contemplation - a naturalistic or imitative approach grounded by "constancy of orientation, invariance of distance through and interchange of inertial points of reference, interlinkage by immersion in an ambient milieu, constitution of central perspective,"⁶⁵ Riegel's use of haptic perception indicates a much more 'objectified' relation to the world.

⁶³ Benjamin.W. - *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p.223

⁶⁴ *ibid.* - p.236

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.494

Egyptian abstraction emerges not from subject centred perspective but from a sense of the crystalline, debilitating effect of an objective environment. The viewer is thus positioned not at a distance but at the nearest possible viewing point - the effect is not contemplative but immersive, immediate and threatening. With the insertion of the technological machine into the perceptual apparatus it is clearly to these overwhelming effects of the inorganic which Benjamin refers. In quoting Abel Gance he comments on the re-emergence of a primitive de-organised communication; "Here, by a remarkable regression we have come back to the level of expression of the Egyptians. Pictorial language has not yet matured because our eyes have not yet adjusted to it. There is as yet an insufficient respect for, insufficient cult of, what it expresses."⁶⁶

The association being established here would seem to connect Benjamin's observations on the emergence of the tactile straightforwardly to a theory of perception which privileges the 'inorganic' or the 'inanimate' (both problematic terms in themselves) as an overwhelming force upon the organism. However, as it has so far been argued, tactile modes of perception are based upon a productive interaction across varying modes of the anorganic - neither the organic nor the inorganic can be straightforwardly privileged. What is required therefore is a relation between 'man' and the 'world' (to use Riegel's terms) which is neither straightforwardly sovereign, optical or humanistic nor uniformly crystalline and ruled by 'inanimate' matter. Deleuze and Guattari, who make ample use of the work of both Riegel and Worringer offer a third way. They suggest that the haptic mode of perception - immersion in smooth space - is not to be entirely appropriated to modes of Egyptian abstraction but is to be exemplified by Gothic modes of perception; "...for Worringer, the abstract line seems to make its first appearance in the crystalline or geometrical imperial Egyptian form, the most rectilinear of forms possible. It is only afterward that it assures a particular avatar, constituting the 'Gothic or Northern line' understood very broadly. For us, on the other hand, the abstract line is fundamentally 'Gothic' or rather nomadic, not rectilinear."⁶⁷

It is this reassociation of the haptic or of smooth space with the Gothic (demonstrated by "changes in direction and local linkages between parts"⁶⁸) which prevents this current formulation of tactile modes of contemporary image production from being locked into a system of perception which privileges the object over the subject rather than producing a line of continuous variation which renders otherwise separate elements indistinguishable. Worringer identifies the traits of the Gothic; "...[it] has no organic

⁶⁶ Benjamin.W. - *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* p.227

⁶⁷ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.496

⁶⁸ *ibid.* - p.496

life that draws us gently into its movement; but there is life there, a vigorous urgent life, that compels us joylessly to follow its movements. Thus, on an inorganic fundament, there is heightened movement, heightened expression.”⁶⁹ Here there are degrees of organicism and inorganicism, variable combinations of human and machine - the infinite and twisted enfoldings of the continual skin.

The potentially overwhelming tactile dimensions of the media image identified by Benjamin find themselves in full Gothic mode by the time of McLuhan. If tactile immanence is an occupation of space where “one is never ‘in front of’ anymore than one is ‘in’”⁷⁰, then it finds itself being played out in front of and in McLuhan’s television. Following his observation that Gothic architecture was concerned primarily with light directed through surfaces rather than light on⁷¹ and his despair that with the introduction of the visually biased media of printing and writing, “the new visual intensity will require light on everything”⁷², McLuhan celebrates the new ‘diaphanous’ qualities of the media image. As he writes, “the TV image is not a still shot...It is a ceaselessly forming contour of things limned by the scanning finger. The resulting plastic contour appears by light through, not light on and the image so formed has the quality of a sculpture or icon rather than of a picture. The TV image offers some three million dots per second to the receiver. From these he accepts only a few dozen each instant, from which to make an image.”⁷³ For McLuhan, it is the mosaic, pixellated lattices of the TV image which bear paradigmatic status - they alone instigate a major shift in perception; “The mosaic can be seen as dancing can, but it is not structured visually: nor is it an extension of the visual power...It is discontinuous, skew and nonlineal, like the tactual TV image.”⁷⁴ It is, like any machinic assemblage which builds itself across the anorganic continual skin, always in formation, always on the way elsewhere.

Deleuze and Guattari compare the televisual semiotic to the fluidics of gas, recalling in the process, the reciprocating immanent relations outlined by Irigaray in *The Mechanics of Fluids*, for it is a fabrication which becomes “figurative only in a particular constellation that dissolves in order to be replaced by another one. Three

⁶⁹ Worringer.W. - *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (London; Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1967) p.77

⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.493

⁷¹ McLuhan - *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1962) p.105

⁷² *ibid.* - p.107

⁷³ McLuhan.M. - *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man*, (London; Routledge and Keagan Paul , 1964) p.313

⁷⁴ *ibid.* - p.334

million points per second transmitted by television, only a few of which are retained.”⁷⁵ It is of no wonder that the skin, the site of its reception, also consists of a diaphanous mesh made up of touch receptors or membranes “in which there are a number of tiny holes, or at least potential holes. Like a piece of Swiss cheese covered with cellophane”⁷⁶ - for the meeting of image and body is then, therefore, the perfect connection - a Gothic meshwork of the organic and the inorganic.

“They ascended lattices of light, levels strobing, a blue flicker.

‘That’ll be it’ Case thought.

“Wintermute was a simple cube of white light, that very simplicity suggesting extreme complexity.

‘Doesn’t look much, does it?’ the Flatline said. ‘But just you try and touch it’

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*⁷⁷

In treating television as a set of virtual realities and thus making precise use of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of being ‘in’ the plane - immersed, surrounded, stripped of standard orientation procedures, McLuhan uses the notion of participation in a technically specific way - a move which Benjamin prompted; “The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation.”⁷⁸ As has been demonstrated, participation is not here a mannered, consensual level of attention but is very specifically concerned with taking the role of a part or component within the broader production process. The televisual environment, like any virtual reality, does not therefore exist in advance of the microspecifics of perceptual conditions through which it is constituted. McLuhan describes the allure of such a process as a “convulsive sensuous participation that is profoundly kinetic and tactile.”⁷⁹ It demands that the viewer “...pore... probe...slow down and...involve themselves in depth.”⁸⁰ It is, by all accounts, a mode of involvement which the ‘viewer’ is ill-equipped to resist - its ‘coolness’ (McLuhan’s own term for the involving effects of a medium) or sensuousness has a sexual quality which McLuhan exemplifies by a unusual semiotic - that of the ‘open-mesh silk stocking’. He explains it as “far more sensuous than smooth

⁷⁵ Deleuze and Guattari - *Anti-Oedipus*, p.241

⁷⁶ Montagu.A - *Touching; The Human Significance of Skin* (New York; Columbia University Press, 1971) p.84 qu. in Plant.S. - *Zeros and Ones; Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (London; FourthEstate, 1987) p.187

⁷⁷ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer*, (London, Harper Collins, 1993) p.140

⁷⁸ Benjamin.W. - *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p.239

⁷⁹ McLuhan.M. - *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man*, p.314

⁸⁰ *ibid.* - p.308

nylon, just because the eye must act as the hand in filling in and completing the image, exactly as in the mosaic of the TV image.”⁸¹

By diagramming a culture of absorption in this way, McLuhan effectuates a transversality of image production which remaps the televisual assemblage as a set of undetermined emergent properties. The TV image is partly constituted by the viewer and the viewer is partly constituted, for as long as he/she is attached to the assemblage, by the television, but the connection between the elements is not entirely sealed off from its environment. The connection between image and body is only ever a temporary affiliation amongst a much wider set of networked possibilities. Baudrillard has had a great deal to offer a conceptualisation of this process. His version of ‘The Tactile and the Digital’ (*Symbolic Exchange and Death*) is a massive, internalising configuration of what has already been discussed here as the network of operationalised need and desire. However, by privileging the object - the TV in this case - over the subject and by endowing it with capacity to perpetually test and interrogate all that comes into contact with it, he systematically reduces the complexities of this human-machine assemblage to a network of anticipatory, pre-emptively scripted reactions which do not absorb or even dismantle the subject but which merely control and thereby affirm his existence: “Contemplation is impossible, images fragment perception into successive sequences and stimuli to which the only response is an instantaneous yes or no - reaction time is maximally reduced.”⁸² For Baudrillard, this tactile mode lacks engagement with the unpredictabilities of the body’s open and chaotic feedback loops. His simulations, therefore, remain as just that - they never enter the realm of stimulation which shifts the staging of reality from the hyperreal to the openly cybernetic.

Walter Ong, a great influence on McLuhan and an accomplished theorist of the rise of literacy also identified the testing of the consumer by the market (what Baudrillard terms as cellular programming) but he takes his observations in a different direction. This alternative approach explores the contingencies and open dynamics of an image network which incorporates a body but which runs, libidinally, on its own, rather than according to Baudrillard’s scripted routine⁸³. For a moment, Ong sounds like Baudrillard - he describes the testing of a game show audience; “...not any old recipient will really do: the recipient must fit a certain mold, be assimilated to the show through his or her proper grooming. And thus the entire show is somehow carefully screened, so that whoever from those in the audience receives a prize is properly attired in

⁸¹ *ibid.* - p.29

⁸² Baudrillard, J. - *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, ^{intro} Mike Gane (London: Sage Publications, 1993) p.63

⁸³ see chapter 1

effective television garb..."⁸⁴ He is thus well aware of the complex artificiality which television can simulate, rehearsing realities to the point of control but beyond this, Ong proposes that such control is not strengthened by its methods of perpetuation, but is broken down to the point where apparent subordination on the part of the viewer is apparent no longer. Television does not project a reality - it utilises realities outside of itself in order to produce itself; "This is what television essentially is: interplay between actuality and image. The more such interplay, the more the medium is true to itself."⁸⁵

Here television is not a predictive, consistently anticipatory form of control, but is instead an open system. It works as the Moebius band of Lyotard's neither inside nor outside enfolding bodies; "A Klein bottle is a construct, well known in mathematics, made by passing the narrow end of a tapered tube back through the side of the tube and flaring out the narrow tube end to join the other end from the inside.. As a Moebius strip is a surface with no other side, a Klein bottle is a container with no bottom...(t)he television audience and the television show can likewise contain one another, as we have seen. In elaborated Kleinform, a tube containing part of itself can in turn be contained in another part of itself, or can emerge from itself again and re-enter. In Kleinform, closures are open. The analogy with television, if not total, is nevertheless apt."⁸⁶ Television is therefore no longer a medium in itself - it inserts itself virally, seeking out new mediums - bodies, surfaces, cells, machines - along which to transmit itself.

"Your techniques is very characteristic," he said, "I've sampled some of your game simulations, tasted them inside out. If you input a keyboard, I can tell its you by your touch, the patterns of your input, the amount of time between one symbol and the next..."

Pat Cadigan, *Synners*⁸⁷

Where Baudrillard accounts for media-tised realities as massive networks of consumer manipulation, striating needs and desires into routinised and pre-rehearsed knitting patterns which form the post-industrial socius, it is necessary to offer an alternative dynamic - a dynamic which grasps the Moebius qualities of television and the immanent relations which it induces in the body of the participant. It is valuable therefore that

⁸⁴ Ong.W. - *Interfaces of the Word; Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977) p.321

⁸⁵ *ibid.* - p.319

⁸⁶ *ibid.* - p.320

⁸⁷ Cadigan.P. - *Synners* (London; Harper Collins, 1991) p.169

Mcluhan's perception of the TV image as a mosaic places the emphasis on the pattern, the emerging order out of chaos, which structures the operational rules of the perceptual assemblage. It develops the notion of machinic perception as an emergent sculptural process which does not seek fixed forms but instead seeks traits as they are produced by the surrounding environment.

What so disturbed Irigaray - that light in itself and the object in itself be viewed by western phallogentrism as existing in advance of the material conditions which produce them - is here radically remixed by a mode of image production which assumes no fixed screen, representational background or transcendental conditions of existence. It is of no coincidence that Vasselou, in explaining Irigaray's dismantling of stable modes of perception should use the example of pattern and texture as the properties of an emergent order: "Texture is at once the cloth, threads, knots, weave, detailed surface, material, matrix and frame. Regarded in this way, light is not a transparent medium linking sight and visibility. It is not appropriate to think of light as a texture either perspectively as a thing, or as a medium which is separable from things. In its texture, light is a fabrication, a surface of a depth that also spills over and passes through the interstices of the fabric...As a texture, the naturalness of light cannot be divorced from its historical and embodied circumstances. It is neither visible nor invisible, neither metaphoric, nor metaphysical. It is both the language and material of visual practice..."⁸⁸

Where an image is a texture or pattern, a fabrication or pixellation, it entwines many of the strands which distinguish a tactile mode of perception from its previously visual inheritance. These strands together produce a system of production marked by its ability to stimulate the skin, to induce abstract sensation, to produce emergent properties, to respond directly only to the factors of its immediate environment. These are qualities to which, according to Irigaray, the female has always held a special relation. It would seem to be a relation which can be historically mapped, for in Camhi's fascinating account of an epidemic of female kleptomaniacs at the end of the nineteenth century, during which women indulged their passion for the feel of fine textures by obsessively stealing precious fabric items from department stores, she quotes a fragment of Clerambault's analysis of the 'problem' which offers a further insight into a perceptual pleasure which is both tactile and addictive; "The fabric seems to work upon them with its intrinsic qualities, its consistency, shine, smell and sound - but even most of these are secondary to its tactile qualities. These tactile qualities are certainly very variegated,

⁸⁸ Vasselou.C. - *Textures of Light; Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau -Ponty* (Warwick Studies in Philosophy ed. Andrew Benjamin) (London; Routledge, 1998) p.12

subtle, complicated, innumerable for a fine epidermis...”⁸⁹ It is of course of no surprise that these qualities inspires an erotic compulsive behaviour in the shoplifter; “She felt herself drawn toward it, and seized it without any foreign or superior consideration intervening to hold her back. She took things by chance, as often useless objects of no value, as well as useful and valuable objects.”⁹⁰

It would seem that the body’s sense-making faculties have always operated by seeking its environments textural, sculptural and immersive properties - centuries of visually-hierarchised legacy, would, however, have us believe otherwise. Burroughs observation that, “It has been shown experimentally through the viewing of random white dots on a screen that man tends to find patterns and picture where objectively there is none - his mental process shapes what he sees...”⁹¹ would it seems, be directly born out by neuro-physiological account of cortical process; “...the picture must result from a dynamic process carried out in a distributed fashion over many cortical areas. In other words, the picture one ‘sees’ does not exist as a single, complete representation somewhere in the brain, rather, it is an emergent property of the system.”⁹² Such a model of emergence remains absent from much cultural and semiotic theory. If, as has been outlined, machinic perception is taken to be not some “transcendental, conceptual array above and beyond individual acts: quite the contrary, it is co-extensive with those acts, parts of their very being”⁹³ - if, in other words, the assemblages which connect amongst other elements, the image to perception to culture are to be conceived outside of fixed geometrical arrangement, then they can helpfully be thought of as a multiplicity; “They are not just compounds built up from their co-existence but are inseparable from ‘temporal reactors of derivation’ and when a new formation appears... [it] never comes all at once...but emerges like a series of ‘building blocks’...[thus] no formation provides the mould for another.”⁹⁴ Accordingly, a new mode of semiotic is emerging which requires careful analysis. For Deleuze and Guattari, this is the tactile, or haptic (to use their term) semiotic of capitalism.

THE SEMIOTICS OF SKIN; PROXIMITY AND CONTIGUITY

If imaging technologies based on the tactile interface materially demonstrate two theoretical moves as operational practices - firstly, the immanence of reciprocating

⁸⁹ Camhi.L. - ‘Stealing Femininity’ in *Differences*, vol.5, no.1 (Brown University 1993) p.40

⁹⁰ *ibid.* - p.34-5

⁹¹ Odier.D. - *The Job; Interviews with William Burroughs* (London, Cape, 1970) p.169

⁹² Finkel - ‘The Construction of Perception’ in (eds.) Crary.J and Kwinter.S. - *Incorporations* (New York, Zone, 1992) p.401

⁹³ Polan.D. - ‘Powers of Vision, Visions of Power’, *Camera Obscura*, vol.18. 1989 pp.107-119, p.108

⁹⁴ Deleuze.G. - *Foucault*, p.21-2

criteria in an open network and secondly, the assembling of a perceptual system within rather than exterior to the imaging procedure occurring at a specific moment, then the full implications of these moves must be differentiated from a semiotic theory which in many ways remains a relic of a previous verbocentric period in history. It is by applying the rules of multiplicities to an inherited representational system that a body which has for so long been ruled by the phallus - and thus accordingly by a linguistically structured eye - is finally acknowledged not to be an organism trained to a precise resolution of cause-effect, form and substance, but is instead revealed to be under continual construction. The body is thus continually adapting to the specific conditions in which it is sustained. In response to the touch sensitive screens of the contemporary image economy, this process involves the perpetual re-calibration of the senses - the non-hierarchised use of vision, sound and touch or the interplay of many more senses as required. The relation of such sensory disorder to cognitive procedures will be discussed in the next chapter in context of synesthesia.

The accounts of standard semiotic systems which have dominated theory are those which have, correspondingly, dominated the body, replacing a wealth of corporeal communication systems with a privileging of vision as the legislator-interpreter's most prized possession. It is within this verbo-ocularcentric tradition that the image has been traded and valued according to what it is commonly perceived to mean rather than what it can do - according, therefore, to the credibility of its role in functioning as the image of an object rather as the image as entity, avatar or plane of becoming.

Correspondingly, theoretical emphasis has been placed on semiotic systems which striate the body, mould its potential to laws of visualisation which are unquestioningly associated with access to meaning, contemplation and self-securing distance from the object.

Deleuze and Guattari map the binding of meaning to vision as a surface effect of a different socius - a previous imperialist socius which functions very differently to the contemporary capitalist economy. If vision is treated as the dominant sense-making faculty (and it must be pointed out that this cannot be seen as its only function - as will be explored in the next chapter) then its position as the top of the sensory hierarchy is a result of communicational practices which have, throughout history, shifted from modes which were once primarily oral, aural and manual to modes which require the semantic clarity of visual distanciation. Where pre-literate cultures had successfully maintained an independence of the voice, the hand and the eye, allowing therefore, the proliferation of different communicational practices across a polysemiotic field, it is with writing that an overcoding is installed which not only requires massive adaptation

in cognitive ability but also installs a use - a use-value - of the body which radically distorts its interaction with its environment.

Writing is a communicational method which requires practised skills in visual discernment. If a semiotic mode can provisionally be taken to be a gauge of linguistic abstraction - registering therefore the degree of abstraction between the 'real' and its representation, it is with the invention of writing that many of its analytic criteria are installed. This is because it is a practice which depends on finely delineated distinctions between itself and the reality to which it refers. Deleuze and Guattari share McLuhan's fascination with the effects of the written word - the way in which "[l]iteracy had made of the enlightened individual a closed system and set up a gap between appearance and reality..."⁹⁵ but they show a deeper interest in its technical substantiation as a mechanism of perceptual management. This they attribute to the introduction of a phonetic alphabet and to the consequential effacement of an oral culture, which, where once dependent on the intensive qualities of the voice, is suppressed by the laws of phonetic learning.

It would, it seems, be impossible to underestimate the power attached to the installation of phonetic units which have been inscribed as the arbiter of an educated society. It is after all, via the "visual enclosure of non-visual spaces"⁹⁶ via, the binding of separate pictographic symbols such that 'bee' and 'leaf', to the phonetically sound and arbitrarily composed word 'be-lief' that our notion of modern meaning is produced. Infomatic units which previously bore direct, analogue relation to that which they refer are transformed into arbitrarily composed units of visually recorded sound. These latter word units require careful learning - they are not operative prior to acquired skills in cognitive sorting. The meaning, therefore, is a form which can be isolated, prescribed arbitrarily and personalised to a single author - assurance, if it were needed, of the loss of pre-literate signs, which as in the most basic pictograms contain the exact characteristics of the object to which they would, in a literate context, be seen to refer. With writing and what has been accounted as the concomitant economic shifts to the beginnings of empire, the eye is trained according to the laws of monosemiotic culture. It is therefore, able to discern between an object and its shadow of writing.

The literate socius is thus based on either co-operation on the part of the interpreter or cultural exclusion from social networks of meaning. Because phonetic literacy is a long acquired skill requiring that the interpreter be finely tuned to the complex laws of

⁹⁵ McLuhan.M. - *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1962) p.278

⁹⁶ *ibid.* - p.43

arbitrary relations, communicational practices are limited to those which require a stable subject to discern meaning. Each arbitrary or non-motivated sign must be learnt preemptively, thus preparing the perceptual system long in advance of its arrival and sealing the perception of sign and image material to one side of its corporeal effects. It must always be read rather than felt. Pain, or direct sensation, a communicational mode which motivated many pre-literate sign systems, sometimes in the form of tattooing or scarring, is removed from the socius. As McLuhan's account concludes; "The phonetic alphabet is a unique technology. There have been many kinds of writing, pictographic and syllabic, but there is only one phonetic alphabet in which semantically meaningless letters are used to correspond to semantically meaningless sounds. This stark division and parallelism between a visual and an auditory world was both crude and ruthless..."⁹⁷

"Writing has never been capitalism's thing. Capitalism is profoundly illiterate. The death of writing is like the death of God or the death of the father; the thing was settled a long time ago, although the news of the event was slow to reach us..."

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*⁹⁸

"He went to the mirror (of his hotel room in Istanbul)...there was another hotel across the street. It was still raining. A few letter-writers had taken refuge in doorways, their old voice printers wrapped in sheets of clear plastic, evidence that the written word still enjoyed a certain prestige here. It was sluggish country..."

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*⁹⁹

If writing - the royal mark of representation - with its attached subject, phallus and gaze were to be sustained as a paradigm of control, it would require what is now proving to be impossibly protectionist security scenarios in order to ensure that the levels of abstraction which maintain its laws of arbitrary association and non-motivation remain in place. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, in late capitalism, writing can function only as an archaic relic because it is composed from units of information which, unlike machinic code, are simultaneously too abstract and yet not abstract enough - too abstract to function without acquired skills in linguistics; yet not abstract enough to function as

⁹⁷ McLuhan.M. - *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man*. p.83

⁹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari - *Anti-Oedipus*, p.240

⁹⁹ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London; Harper Collins, 1993) p.108

stripped down data streams of code. Capitalism, however, has long since realised that laws of fixed rates of value and significant meaning are boundaries which need no longer constrain its behaviour. It has for some time been attached to rules set not by the book but by the info-bits of digital information.

These are patterns of behaviour which produce events and distortions prior to meaning or scripted instruction - they are the complexities of a culture beyond the remits of literate means of expression. As with any tactile, immersive environment, in which an occurrence is only ever an emergence from its immediate surroundings, the constitutive elements depend on a degree of abstraction which render them as non-arbitrary and as functional as possible - the parts must function by combination rather than by substitution in order to instantiate the semiotic of McLuhan's TV mosaic. Each part may be ambiguous but it is not arbitrary - it is therefore able to perform many functions at once. Message is thus emergent from the accumulation of pattern, network or order of asignifying bit-parts whether these are zeros, ones, pixels, flashes or signals. Deleuze and Guattari describe this post-literate shift in information as such; "The abstraction has not ceased to be what it is, but it no longer appears in simple quantity as a variable relation between independent terms; it has taken upon itself the independence, the quality of the terms and the quantity of the relations."¹⁰⁰ Stable word units measured against gridded laws of signification which in themselves induce no change to an environment are replaced by infomatic bit-parts which are not independently identifiable outside of the change which they induce throughout a network.

If tactile screens can be considered to be mechanisms of attachment - attaching bodies to planes, eyes to bodies, images to matter, simulation to becoming - they are here considered to be the attaching parts between the 'content' and 'expression' of a semiotic system. For if capitalist representation, "...calls into play couplings between qualified flows, interactions that are exclusively indirect, qualitative composites that are essentially limited, and organs of perception and extrachemical factors that select and appropriate the cellular connections..."¹⁰¹ then as has been argued, it sets up a radically new relationship between the material constitution of a perceptual system and the communication which emerges from it. If the subject and the object are no longer distinguishable parts, then the effects of their melding must be evident throughout the entire system of a western representational model which is premised on distinction between the signifier and the signified.

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze and Guattari - *Anti-Oedipus*, p.227

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* - p.249

For Deleuze and Guattari, the signifier-signified relation is no longer the site of activity in any operational sense. They privilege the relation of content (formed matter - 'substance, insofar as these matters are 'chosen' and form, insofar as they are chosen in a certain order') to expression (functional structures - 'the organisation of their own specific form, and substances insofar as they form compounds'¹⁰²), and relocate the force of capitalist semiotics outside of the signifier-signified relation altogether. Their motivations lie with Guattari's specific interest in the work of Hjelmslev¹⁰³ whose position they directly adopt as the semiotic of destratification. When a mode of communication is functionally able to produce its own medium and thus instantiate both its content and expression as precisely tailored elements of its own transmission, it is demonstrating the Hjelmslevian position according to which content and expression exist in mutually presupposing relation. Neither mode functions without dependence on the other. Should this become the case, the result would be an installation of the signifier. Mutually reciprocating content-expression nodes constitute the semiotic of digitality. The sign instantiates the object (which, from a specular perspective, it would be seen to refer) in the very process of its operation. Sign and object, image and reality are no longer distinct. They are bound by the mutual force of production - engineering reality rather than representing it.

If signification can be taken to be an imposed law of power which homogenises diverse semiotic systems on the plane of content-expression, then material intensities function beyond the territory of signification. The specific effects of content-expression couplings are intensities to which monosemiotic cultures remain blind. But then, as it has been shown, since the visual field is no longer the prime site of cultural engineering and the specular eye is the least sensitive organ to flows of communication which function via radical proximities, it makes sense that signs which function by the touching or interfacing of their component parts should be called, in Hjelmslev's terms, 'contiguous signs'. These signs can manifest themselves as imaging systems which are effectuated first within the body, inducing shock and disorientation and adapting the body's sense of perceptual tolerance long before they are scanned for meaning. As Genosko writes; "Indices direct one's attention to their objects by 'blind compulsion' - they exercise a certain force"¹⁰⁴

As with the symptoms of a disease, whether real or not, simulated or emergent from a 'genuine' cause, these are sign systems which can induce change without subscription

¹⁰² Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.43

¹⁰³ see chapter 1

¹⁰⁴ Genosko, G. - *Baudrillard and Signs; Signification Ablaze* (London, Routledge, 1994) p. 53

to law of discernment. When Weiner identified the cybernetic socius as dependent on an economy functioning according to the 'accurate reproduction of a signal'¹⁰⁵ he was implicitly identifying the prevalence of 'contiguous' signs. Like the signal, "a function that departs from the field of merely passive communication and information...it has a purpose to produce an immediate reaction in the viewer..."¹⁰⁶ such signs do not "stand for but stand; that is to say, they function through their material and its organisation. Their subject is nothing other than a possible formal organisation (not an inevitable or necessary organisation): and it conceals no content, no libidinal secret of the work, whose force lies entirely in its surface. There is only surface."¹⁰⁷ Contiguity is the sign system of the continual skin.

That the field of semiotics should now be run primarily according to the rules of optimal functionality - codes which always put the material flows of a communicational activity in touch with its instantiated expression - is a means of de-stratifying or continually re-organising the body. The body has become the medium of transmission. As such, the emergent properties of the immersive environment of tactile screens are not merely surface effects of a deeper set of processes - they are motivated events which instigate the advance or complexification of wider cultural/ biological networks. Similarly, the stripping away of the eye from its imperial association with phallus and the signifier is not a side effect. It is a means of rendering the body a more open circuit for the thoroughfare of capitalist flows. As writing becomes code, the eye is opened up to the pain of direct sensation, the hand becomes adjusted to contiguous communication tailored to the sensitivity of skin, the ear frees itself from the gridlocks of phonetic literacy. The body becomes not inorganic but anorganic. It is constituted not by the hierarchy of *organisation* which has so firmly shaped the civilised man, but is emergent from the states that its machinic environment requires.

Mcluhan spotted the tendency towards such corporeal distribution long before the situation reached its current critical state; "Once we have surrendered our senses and nervous systems to the private manipulation of those who would try to benefit from taking a lease on our eye and ears and nerves, we don't really have any rights left. Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests is like handing over the common speech to a private corporation, or like giving the earth's atmosphere to a

¹⁰⁵ Weiner.N. - *Cybernetics; or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (New York; Doubleday Anchor, 1954) p.50

¹⁰⁶ Frutiger.A. - *Signs and Symbols; Their Design and Meaning* (London; Studio Editions, 1989) p.345

¹⁰⁷ Lyotard.J-F. - 'Beyond Representation' in A Benjamin (ed.) - *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989) p.158

company as a monopoly.”¹⁰⁸ But as monopolies flatten out across smaller scale competitive trading units, the organs of a body are distributed across a far greater expanse than McLuhan ever imagined. The body has no single owner. As organs soften onto planes of contact, their one distinct sensory role is cancelled out against organism-wide sensory responses. As McLuhan rightly claimed, touch is more than its common perception. It is the very interplay of the senses - distributed, synesthetic, action-reaction circuits scripted to no set rule or fixed organ hierarchy.

The role that the image plays in this capitalist exploration of the sub-terrains of the body would seem to have resonance with a notion which Benjamin long yearned the loss of; aura. For as the effects of mechanical reproduction smear into the code flows and assemblage construction machines of digital replication, there would seem to be an opening up once more of this lost commodity. For if the aura of an image is, for a moment, definitionally removed from the context of Benjamin’s famous essay and taken, according to Aumont’s definition, to refer to the ability of an image to emanate quality or to “radiate, emit particular vibrations”¹⁰⁹ then it would seem to have re-emerging relevance. For if the notion of aura is, as must surely be the case, taken to be not an unchanging concept but indicative of a degree of image power specific to the technological assemblage which it works in - whether it be primitive, literate or cybernetic, then its capacity to emanate vibration would indeed still be in full working order. Indeed to a more intense degree than ever before.

Cybernetic aura does of course have no relation to the notion of an original or authentic creative production but it would still seem to carry every quality of uniqueness which defined the special qualities which inspired Benjamin. Here however, uniqueness is taken at face value - as a singularity or as a precisely delineated moment of radically new effect which transforms the assemblage within which it operates not by its aesthetic superiority but by its ability to induce corporeal change, to direct material flow onto a previously unexplored path. In this way, Benjamin can be turned against himself, for what he failed to realise is that the shift from the age of the authentic image with its contemplative distances, unapproachability and unique phenomena to a tactile economy is not marked straightforwardly by a loss of aura. It is simply that aura is instantiated differently. The very mystical, cultic quality of an image which inspires awe and wariness - many of the totemic characteristics which Freud identified - continue to manifest themselves but they do so by instigating ‘real’ effects. They now simply operate in close up. The image was indeed always able to emanate - now however, the

¹⁰⁸ McLuhan.M. - *Understanding Media*, p.68

¹⁰⁹ Aumont.J. - *The Image*, p.230

viewer is not contained at a distance so the effects must be received directly, as transformations, shifts and unrehearsed abstract couplings across the surfaces of a tactile body.

COGNITIVE DISSIDENTS

Image, Affect and the Spinozist Body

The account of immersive image dynamics initiated in the previous chapter opens up a wealth of investigative possibilities which do not end with the thus far charted immanent and open feedback rules of perceptual criteria but which begin with their practical application. The circuit which tactually connects the intensifying processes of the contemporary image culture with the unrehearsed sensory calibrations of the participant's body is a micro-specific set of behaviours which requires careful analysis. It will be thus be shown exactly how a body receives and accommodates an image in all its non-specular facets. Since cultural analysis has, for the most part, remained true to its logocentric inheritance by focusing its account of capitalist behaviour on the exchange of meaning and interpretation rather than on the material behaviour of ultra-functional cybernetic process, there is a zone of image dynamics which remains uncharted. This zone is the interface between familiar modes of image reception which utilise the interpretative and cognitive faculties which so define the human and entirely different modes of image-body interactions or mixings which bypass the sense-making skills altogether and instead directly activate libidinal response in all its affecting, intensive and non-consensual facets.

Since materialist simulations and synthetic images render, than represent reality, they demand a participation of the body which, as has been shown, is entirely 'inside' the method of production. The 'rendering' of such realities is emergent from a flatness or non-transcendent synthesis between how the image is produced by phyllic¹ activity and how it is operated by the participant's body, such that one side of the anorganic perceptual equation is always adjusting in its interactions with the other. It is a process which allows no exterior position, critical distance or objective plane of signifier-signified relations. It is operative in advance, therefore, of the reflexive faculties which are so often assumed to demonstrate the sophistication of the human mind - for these operate in latter response to ground level neural activity. Accordingly, immersive image components target sensual capacities which operate both additionally to, and in spite of, recognisable cognitive procedure. They thus open up the perceptual circuit to an infinite field of unanticipated consequences and somatic effects. The body is not 'reflected' by the image and the image is not 'reflected' by the body. They are linked by channels

¹ see chapter 5 for an exploration of this term

which are constantly seeking to undermine the assumed predictability of the analogue relation. These non-signifying networks therefore induce unknown sensations and visceral responses - they “go beyond the surface fixities of a culture and find those forces, those energies, those fluxes, those sensations that specific socio-historical inscriptions blocked and reified into social etiquettes and stultifying patterns of representations.”²

The account which Shaviro offers - of a severance of the link between sensation and the reflective consciousness of such sensation - opens up territory which, in the context of the current argument, is implicitly already familiar. He directs attention to the susceptibility of a perceiving body to “affect, excitation, stimulation and repression, pleasure and pain, shock and habit”³ and in so doing offers an inventory of the effects of the insistently novel perceptual experimentations which typify the image-based products of post-industrial capitalism. For if as Massumi suggests, “(r)esistance is manifestly not automatically a part of image reception in late capitalist cultures. But neither can the effect of the mass media and other image and information-based media simply be explained in terms of a lack; a waning of affect, or a decline in belief, or alienation,”⁴ then the marked absence of resistance can be accounted for less in terms of an ideologically masked inability to refuse the allures of an image environment and more in terms of a pliable co-operation with their sensuous interfaces. Accordingly, it is the non-mediated sensations which Shaviro identifies which have become the privileged channels of synthetic image reception. These modes, always agitating, stimulating and often traumatic are gathered here under the category of affective response.

Affect, even as it is most superficially understood, emerges as a fundamental element in the constitution of a cybernetic image economy. What is OED defined as; ‘to assume (character)’, ‘to move/ touch (in mind) and ‘to produce material effect on’ would seem to be a quality which inherently describes the immersive, possessional states of materialist simulation thus far described. It is additionally defined, by the OED, as a “feeling, emotion or desire” and this is indicative of an ambiguity in terminology which is increasingly familiar in the fields of cultural studies and cognitive psychology⁵.

² Polan.D. - ‘Francis Bacon; The Logic of Sensation’ in ed.Boundas.C.V and Olkowski.D. *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy* (London, Routledge, 1994) p.231

³ Shaviro.S - *The Cinematic Body* (London, University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p.26

⁴ Massumi.B. - *The Autonomy of Affect*, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html

p.28

⁵ Even Spinoza’s Ethics, so clearly a manual of somatic engineering, can be misread in this way since he directly associates emotion with affectus (affect). It is only on close examination that his definition of emotion is revealed to be quite different from its common conception. In ‘Definitions of the Emotions’, he speaks with frustration at the insufficiency of terms; “But my purpose is to explain not the meaning of words

Whilst the term 'affect' will be used here in its Deleuzian-Spinozist sense - to produce material effects and induce feelings as described, but more specifically, to produce a set of relations which are non-specular, non-linguistic and which are, as such, radically unfamiliar - its more common cultural usage remains captured by its assimilation to 'emotion' as a means to qualify post-human perceptual behaviour.

Thus, in most such discourse analyses, the 'emotional' element of information exchange is treated as the irrational underside to the reception of messages via channels of conventional meaning. It is treated as the less easily controlled or quantitatively measured element in communication - the subsystem of activity which, to the frustration of those intent on the analysis of signifying practice, demands a shift in attention away from the 'content' of a message - from 'what' is being transferred, to 'how' it is being transferred.

This strain of emotional readings of affective behaviours has occupied the analysis of affect and post-industrial image cultures in a way which has prevented access to the processes which are actually instigating material effects. However, as Massumi points out in his fascinating account of affect as autonomous process, affects are functional only as unqualified, sourceless perceptions which may produce emotions secondarily but only as a side effect rather than as a machinic exchange. Even Grossberg, who fails to fully detach emotion from affect claims that "unlike emotions, affective states are neither structured narratively nor organised in response to interpretative situations."⁶ More intelligent entities, notably the replicants in the film *Blade Runner*⁷ have realised

but the nature of things, and to assign to things terms whose common meaning is not far away from the meaning I decide to give them. Let this one reminder suffice." (1992; 145- Exp.Pr.59.III) 'Emotions' in the Spinozist sense would often seem to refer to sensations which cannot be identified - which, as with all affective investments, we have not yet recognised. Thus as Feldman in his introduction (p.28) writes, "(i)t certainly seems odd to speak of 'the emotion of desire' and this is a sufficient indication that 'affectus' is not quite the equivalent of our 'emotion'".

⁶ Grossberg.L. - *We Gotta get out of this Place; Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (London, Routledge, 1992) p.81

⁷ The Voight-Kampff empathy test is used by the blade runners in the film to test the authenticity of human identity. In practice, it is less a test of emotional response than an indicator of leaking post-human affect for it reveals the increasing indiscernability between human and replicant identity. To the blade runners, however, trained to detect the markers of human identity, the locating of empathetic response is the arbiter of controllable human reaction. It indicates, as Worringer wrote, a confident, subjective position in the world - a feeling that "(m)an was at home in the world and felt himself its centre" (1967; 102) - a position from which he is able to project his own vital sensations by identifying an emotional cause for them in advance of their emergence. For Worringer this process is a "transference of man's organic vitality onto all objects of the phenomenal world." (1967; 128)

Thus, for the replicants simulating humanity, the synthetic production of emotion is the key to their own programmable disguise. Tyrell explains the machine parts of the construct Rachel; "If we give them the past, we create a cushion or pillow for their emotion and consequently we can control them better." (Silverman.K. - 'Back to the Future' in *Camera Obscura*, 27 Sept, 1991p.117). What the replicants realise is that to treat affect as emotion is merely a protectionist mechanism. Its register on the Voight-Kampff machine is no more than a measure of the magnitude of what a human does not know and what he fails to recognise. For as emotion attempts to seal the subject, affect is building post-human connection. Unlike humans, the replicants realise

that to tactically re-situate and qualify affects as emotions provides a means to conceal anti-humanist tendencies under what are recognisable and therefore unthreatening 'human' characteristics.⁸

Affective participation demands an analytical emphasis on its ability to break down what is known to be the linguistically based human subject. What is of most importance here is the instantiation of affect as a set of asignifying, de-subjectifying effects, as a "prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation of diminution in that body's capacity to act."⁹ It is its ground-level role in the constitution of a body which dismantles secondary level responses as the overriding function of the human. As Spinoza writes, "mental decisions are nothing more than the appetites themselves, varying therefore according to the varying dispositions of the body."¹⁰ The role of affect in perpetuating the circuits of consumer desire which run global capitalism instigates an investigation of the effects of a machinic image which operate to the side of intended meaning. Kracauer's observation, made in 1927, is a suitable preface to what is a now fundamental engagement with the complex and unpredictable occurrences which hinder an image from having its intended, interpretative effects; "Never before has a period known so little about itself...the 'image idea' drives away the idea; the blizzard of photographs betrays an indifference toward what things mean..."¹¹

"It is generally assumed that war coverage, for example, is driven by a desire to see, know and consequently form an opinion. Of course, this is occurring, but so too are other processes. There may, at the same time, be inhibitions on the capacity to know or to think what is known."¹² Imagistic processes which divert around the capacity to know and instead target the body's susceptibility to dosages of pleasure-unpleasure operate by a direct stimulation of the optic nerve, which whilst in practice is hard to ignore, in theory has been neglected - though even Roland Barthes, a major influence on semiotics, acknowledged the need to experience photography "not as a question (a

that affect has no name. It is the irrepressible transmission of alien sensation and automonic anorganic connection.

⁸ Here the film perpetuates a thematic technique which has been used to distinguish humans from post-humans since the 1950s - through sci-fi films such as 'Invaders from Mars' and 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' to Gibson's *Neuromancer* ("Hate'll get you through", the voice said, 'So many little triggers in the brain and you just go yankin' 'em all. Now you gotta hate.' (1993; 308)) and still later in *Alien 4*. See Bukatman - *Bladerunner* (London, BFI, 1997) p.69

⁹ Massumi.B - Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments, in Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F, *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.xvi

¹⁰ Spinoza.B - *Ethics, Treatise of the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1992) Sch. Pr.2, III, p.106

¹¹ Kracauer qu. In Robins.K - *Into the Image* (London, Routledge, 1996) p.117

¹² *ibid.* - p.125

theme) but as a wound...”, as a conductor of “tiny jublations... as if they referred to... an erotic or lacerating value buried in myself.”¹³ However, in a move which will here be irrevocably challenged, his momentary engagement with the ‘pricking’ sensation of an image’s material effects is then captured back into a narrative of interpretation which privileges the subjective experience of an image over unrecognisable sensation.

It is a recuperative move which bears some resemblance to that of a Kantian sublime; the subject may be overwhelmed and pained by what he sees before him and his first instinct may be one of the fear of being unable to make sense of what confronts him - “our ability to resist becomes an insignificant trifle”¹⁴ - yet there remains a place of retreat from such awesome forces. This is an affirmation of the sense of self in the face of exterior threat rather than a dissembling of its boundaries and an incorporation of its environment. The sublime may involve direct confrontation with a vast and terrifying object, but the supersensible state of mind enables impending threat to be transformed into self-preservation; “Though the irresistibility of nature’s might makes us, considered as natural beings, recognise our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature that is the basis of a self preservation quite different in kind...”¹⁵ Thus, we “found in our mind a superiority over nature itself in its immensity.”¹⁶

Since cybernetics, as the machinery of immanent perception removes this position of retreat or exteriority from the system, a philosophy of immersive image dynamics must sever the threat of a perceived environment from its ‘safer’ Kantian readings. Shaviro’s account of interaction with an imaged environment offers a far less autogenetic, protectionist scenario. It is instead a pragmatic analysis of the instability of perceptual becomings; “...virtual images do not correspond to anything actually present, but as images, as sensations, they affect me in a manner that does not leave room for any suspension of my response. I have already been touched and altered by these sensations, even before I have had the chance to become conscious of them.”¹⁷ Since the synthetic image involves a targeting of the body ahead of what has been previously understood to be a separate cognitive faculty, the form or content of conventional discourse - imagistic or otherwise - may be subtracted, for the purpose of analysis, from a wider set of processes which are always already at work. What has been understood as the ‘cognitive’ or interpretative domain can provisionally be taken to

¹³ Barthes.R. - *Camera Lucida; Reflections on Photography*, (London, Jonathon Cape, 1982) p. 16

¹⁴ Kant.I. - *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Pluhar.W.S. (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing, 1987) p. 120

¹⁵ *ibid.* - p.121

¹⁶ *ibid.* - p.121

¹⁷ Shaviro.S - *The Cinematic Body* p.46

operate on a separate level which runs contrary to the much less clearly delineated registering of sensuous affect.

The body-image coupling which exists in excess of its sense making faculties is a radically different body to that previously accounted for by phenomenological approaches. For Hegel¹⁸, writing in the section 'Perception' in '*Phenomenology of Spirit*', the body in its fluid form, prior to stratification was a radical impossibility. He engineered a welding of sensation to the pre-requisite, transcendental structures of cognition by means of a system in which there was no possibility of identifying a 'here' or a 'now', 'this' or 'that' without the gridlocked parameters of a space-time and a subject; "...if in the course of perceiving it [the object] something turns up which contradicts it, this is to be recognised as a reflection of mine...Through the fact, then, that we regard the characteristic of being a universal medium as our reflection, we preserve the self-identity and truth of the Thing, its being in One."¹⁹ Experience is thus screened and inoculated against its own rampant potential and is locked back into linguistic articulation. Sensation is forced up a one-way street - it can only be acknowledged as dependent on these transcendental conditions of knowledge because it has been described in terms of such frameworks in the first place. The organism thus produced is buffered by a human centred phenomenological perception, neatly organised according to the familiar, the repeatable and the self reflexive.

The body which Deleuze engineers is radically disregarding of such hierarchical ordering mechanisms which filter sensation through linguistic and textual concepts. Since, for Deleuze, following Spinoza, the body is a conductor of process rather than an inhibitor, it cannot 'know' all that comes into contact with it and we cannot 'know' all of what it is capable of becoming. This model of the body, "...does not imply any devaluation of thought in relation to extension, but, much more importantly, [implies] a devaluation of consciousness in relation to thought: a discovery of the unconscious, of an unconscious of thought just as profound as the unknown of the body."²⁰ Since the exact constitution of an 'external' stimuli cannot be known at the site of reception, the nature of the stimuli itself remains an unknown quantity. In this context, images can be acknowledged to induce effects beyond those which, if a source could be found, were 'originally' intended and bodies as the manifestation of such effects are accepted as leaking beyond a set of behaviours observable at any one time. This opens up a vast

¹⁸ Whilst the work of Kant and Hegel is clearly of important relevance here, its full implications ^{are} beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁹ Hegel - *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller. A.V. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977) p.72

²⁰ Deleuze. G. - *Spinoza; Practical Philosophy*, tr. Robert Hurley (San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1970) p.18-19

and unchartable territory of sub-cognitive interactions between a body and its environments which, aside from specific examples, can most helpfully be discussed under the term 'affect'. As will be outlined, when affect is privileged so fundamentally, it draws attention to the behaviours of an 'open' body - to a body run by its traumatic assimilation to the outside. The role of the affecting image in inducing such bodily states by way of perceptual trauma and sensory disorientation or synesthesia will be fully explored.

The appropriate beginning to this mapping of this relation between image, image reception and affect is a complexification of the notion of the body's capacity to act. If, as Massumi helpfully points out, resistance to the seductions of post-industrial capital is not an observably widespread phenomenon, then capitalism has found means to either divert around or suppress the will to resist for the purpose of its own proliferation. This is not to suggest that the participant would resist interaction with his/her environment if s/he knew what the actual motivation was - merely that capitalism has found ways to make best use of the body, engaging a wealth of sub-systemic corporeal processes which often work in contradiction to the assumed dominant cognitive behaviour. Neither activity nor passivity is at issue here since affect works to the side of such categories - much to the frustration of cultural studies approaches to image dynamics which tend to perpetuate such notions as 'active viewers' or 'passive consumers'. Since affect evades reflexivity or secondary level notions of will, it is not, as Guattari argues, a passively endured state. It is a complex "territoriality of proto-enunciation, the site of a work of potential praxis."²¹

There are many specific examples of contemporary consumerist behaviours which demonstrate the emphasis which capitalism places on this practice of non-reflexive behaviour - on therefore, doing more by thinking less. Indeed, the company which leads the field in post-representational semiotics with its asignifying logo - the Nike swoosh - has adopted a most desubjectifying slogan; "Just Do It" - do more by thinking less, bypass the rational decision making process²². Current trends in advertising would

²¹ Guattari.F. - 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects' in Genosko.G.(ed.) - *The Guattari Reader* (London, Blacwell, 1996) p.166

²² The ability of a body's capacity to act in spite of its best knowledge is demonstrated by Kornhubers 1965 experiment. He set up means to measure the time difference between conscious and unconscious decision making. The space in between he called 'readiness potential'. The experimental subject was told to move a finger whenever s/he felt the urge. Separate measuring devices registered the conscious movement as well as the unconscious 'electric potentials' which occurred before and after the movement. The disparity between the two times revealed the brain to be preparing to move the finger up to one second in advance of a conscious motor decision being made. It is this one second, filled with the build up of brain activity which adds to the process of self degeneration. It is one second of unconscious, predictive activity which is in full operation before the 'subject' tells the finger to move. It shows how a brain may move ahead of it 'self', autonomously

also seem to be targeting the subconscious, unknown responses of the body ahead of 'higher' cognitive function. When Siamac Salari, a major innovator in advertising claims; "what counts is not what people do, but what they nearly do"²³ he taps into what is, in this context, referred to as the subsystems of affective response - the unpredictable processes which sever the connection between an image and its anticipated effects.

For Spinoza, so much of corporeal mutation, or mixing with other bodies takes place outside of the conscious realm. Massumi points out that in the 'Ethics', an 'affection', as the state of the body induced by a particular transportational affect is activated simultaneously with the 'idea' of the affection - marked out by a corporeal trace or physical manifestation of its effects. However, neither the corporeal trace nor its physical manifestation may be consciously recognised. It is only at a secondary level that it reaches the zone of consciousness. Conscious reflection, for Spinoza, is a procedure which occurs at a remove (but not autonomously) from material process itself. This mode of reflection, 'the idea of the idea' is "nothing other than the form of the idea so far as the idea is considered as a mode of thinking without relation to its object. For as soon as anyone knows something, by that very fact that he knows that he knows, and at the same time he knows that he knows, and so on, ad infinitum."²⁴ Since affects are functional at the lowest form the knowledge, the imagination, they are operative long prior to the abstraction of conscious reflection. This however, as Spinoza's argument makes clear, does not diminish their role in the material production of a reality constituted by a body and its interactions. Indeed, since for Spinoza, the mind is an idea of the body - it "does not know itself save in so far as it perceives ideas as the affections of the body"²⁵ - it is dependent on the fragmentary, prepersonal behaviour of affect to provide the material of conscious reflection. In this order, the unknowable, unidentifiable activity of the body is instantiated latterly as the reflexivity of the mind. This is in stark contrast to the reverse Hegelian scenario in which, via autogenetic illusion, unrecognisable stimuli are supposedly prevented from gaining entry into the sealed space of an autonomous mind.²⁶

processing future decisions such that conscious awareness of the process is only an after-effect. See Cytowic.R.E. - *The Man who tasted Shapes* (London, Abacus, 1993)

²³ Yates.R - "A typical family scene. Mum and Dad in the kitchen making tea, kids in the living room watching telly. And a strange man with a camcorder lurking in the shadows..." *The Observer Review*, April 12, 1998, p.5

²⁴ Spinoza.B - *Ethics*. (Sch. Pr 21. II) p.82

²⁵ *ibid.* - (Cor. Pr 29. II) p.84

²⁶ Here Irigaray's attack on the hermeticism of the western reality studio continues to resonate. It demands, by implication, the introduction of immanent Spinozism to the precarious notion of what a limited male body can do.

What will emerge from a Spinozist approach to the body is a network of liminal and subsidiary activities which do not, as such, end anywhere. They propagate and perpetuate themselves in a fashion which clearly suggests that the transcendental and phenomenological structures which claim to regulate perception are merely an after thought - an application placed on the assemblage which we call a body, long after the fact of unconscious corporeal mutation. If, as is argued, our engagement with media-tised image environments is only secondarily a semantically ordered thought process - a latter stage following immersion in far more immediate and invasive perceptual stimuli, then it is these libidinised subsystems which are the primary site of image reception. They open up a field of investigation which produces zones of only temporary stability marked out not by organs or by organisations but by dynamic thresholds, cusps of transformation upon which a body changes state. This is where “the body is as immediately as abstract as it is concrete; its activity and expressivity extend, as on their underside, into an incorporeal, yet perfectly real dimension of pressing potential.”²⁷

SYNESTHESIA SEMANTICIDE;

Affect and the Disorganised Body

As has been suggested, the plane of affective relations requires a body which persistently evades its representational obligations. A body will only be receptive to its affects if it is unable to unleash itself from acquired perceptual conditioning - for only then will it be able to form entirely new compositions with otherwise unforeseen surrounding attractors. The cognitively ordered body, with its linguistically structured eye as the dominant sense is clearly the least receptive to sensation which it cannot ‘know’ because it is striated by “sensory organs [which] function to diminish intensity; they are solidified channels which as such bind and filter force. As long as the reception of stimulus is controlled, facilitated, the production of representation - that is the recognition of that reception - can continue; but if this stimulus exceeds the capacity of the secondary organisation, damage occurs and shock is registered”²⁸ - and intensity is produced.

As will be outlined, it is the very capacity of affect to shock the body into the open networks of its own disorganisation which produces an assemblage which is altogether more receptive to that which it cannot recognise. As with all cybernetic processes, the mutually reciprocating relation between affect and the body requires an immanent

²⁷ Massumi.B - *The Autonomy of Affect* p.11

²⁸ Millett .N. - ‘The Fugitive Body; Bacon’s Fistula’ in ed. A.Benjamin *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts; The Body* (London, Ernst and Sohn, 1993) p.46

modulation of degrees of intensity. Incoming affects must be powerful enough to induce change and thus increase the body's capacity to act and the body must continue to be receptive to that which acts upon it. In its optimal state, it is unhindered by organs which have been trained to perform one function only. By processes of positive feedback, the unfamiliar breeds new connections and the body's striated organisation is stripped back onto a plane of recompossibility. Single organs become multiplicities or featureless planes which can then turn themselves to any function which should be required at a particular moment: "It is no longer a question of organs and functions and of a transcendent Plane that can preside over their organisation only by means of analogical relations and types of divergent development...It is a question of elements and particles which do or do not arrive fast enough to effect a passage, a becoming or jump on the same plane of pure immanence."²⁹

"Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breath with your belly...The BwO is what remains when you take everything away..."

A Thousand Plateaus³⁰

Where affect as prepersonal intensity meets tactility, as the creation of perceptual conditions specific to rather than exterior to particular circumstances, would, it seem, be on the terrain of synesthesia. For if as McLuhan argues, touch is a "matter of a fruitful meeting of the senses, of sight translated into sound and of sound into movement and taste and smell"³¹ and if, as Massumi argues affect implies "a participation of the senses in each other; the measure of a living thing's potential interactions is its ability to transform the effects of one sensory mode into those of another (tactility and vision being the most obvious examples, but by no means obvious examples; interoceptive senses, especially proprioception are crucial)"³² then the application of affect to the argument of chapter 3 would seem to extend the notion of touch beyond that of immersion and on towards the zone of subcognitive interactions which occupies us here.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p 255

³⁰ *ibid.* - p. 153

³¹ McLuhan.M. - *Understanding Media* (London, Routledge, 1964) p.60

³² Massumi.B. - *The Autonomy of Affect* p.16

To be touched affectively by an imagistic stimuli demands a whole range of open body responses which will here be categorised as synesthesia - as an unrehearsed sensory disorder which bypasses the reflexive faculties and operates as an unmediated, libidinised response. As will be outlined, synesthesia is the direct manifestation of affect not only because it destroys standard ocularcentric readings of the image but also because it is entirely non-representational in function. It renders the linguistic brain defunct for the duration of its operation and therefore induces corporeal mutations which are autonomic, intensive and entirely unrehearsed. As the synthesis of the senses, it emerges as the prominent sensory experience of image environments which dismantle rather than confirm standard spectatorial positioning.

Michel Chion, in noting the unacknowledged ability of film to engage the body in the “transsensorial or even metasensorial mode...[in which] there is no sensory given that is demarcated or even isolated from the outside”³³ goes on to ask if there is “such a thing as ‘visualists of the ear’, the opposite of ‘auditives of the eye?’”³⁴ Within the field of film studies, his question remains largely unanswered, buried beneath a tradition which has neglected the affects of the screen and the strange sensory mutations of the body in favour of safer stories of a psychoanalytic subject. What Chion realises is that the analysis of the image cannot be separated from the realisation that the brain, as an inherently synesthetic system, is a leaking network of interconnected nerve bundles - nodes therefore which can be activated in any such combination as is required by the stimuli of the surrounding environment.

The ability of an image to directly access these non-specific leaking networks was an issue which Deleuze also addressed in the work of the painter Francis Bacon. Bacon was himself a proponent of the agitating, neural capacities of an image to operate prior to its representational obligations. As he claimed, “One of the things I’ve always tried to analyse is why it is that, if the formation of the image that you want is done irrationally, it seems to come onto the nervous system much more strongly than if you knew how you could do it.”³⁵ For Deleuze, the synesthetic body is a body which has learnt the ‘logic of sensation’. It has freed itself from the necessities of identification and recognition and has opened itself up to a set of movements, vibrations and resonances which directly impact upon the most detailed workings of the body.

³³ Chion.M. - *Audio-Vision; Sound on Screen* tr, Claudia Gorbman (New York, Columbia University Press, 1994) p.137

³⁴ *ibid.* - p.155

³⁵ Sylvester.D. - *The Brutality of Fact; Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1987) p.104

Interestingly, in his discussion of the corporeal effects of Bacon's work, Deleuze locates synesthesia within the rhythmic functions of a body- rhythm being amongst the activities which may continue to be in full operation even after the nerve endings which connect the spine (the source of rhythmic activity) to higher cognitive functions have been severed³⁶. It is therefore entirely autonomic in behaviour. As he writes, the sensation of Bacon's images emerges from a power which "overflows all domains and traverses them. This power is that of Rhythm which is deeper than vision, audition etc....A 'logic of the senses', Cezanne said, 'that is non-rational, non-cerebral'"³⁷ Synesthesia is here demonstrated as an intensive journey into the interior of the body. It does indeed redirect its workings away from routinised organisation and down towards a previous body - to an undifferentiated, germinal state where rhythmic movements replace linguistic order. The journey into the synesthetic limbic systems is the journey down Ballard's spine - to the autonomy of affect; "I am convinced that as we move back through geophysical time so we re-enter the amnionic corridor and move back through spinal and archeophysical time, recollecting in our unconscious minds the landscapes of each epoch..."³⁸ - every one of which is a "radically new environment, with its own internal landscape and logic, where old categories of thought would merely be an encumbrance."³⁹

Synesthesia is, as accounts have shown, a ubiquitous phenomenon which has been distortedly treated as a 'higher' mental state or as an idiosyncratic perceptual problem. As Schilder wrote, "...there does not exist any primary isolation between the senses. The isolation is secondary...the isolated sensation is the product of analysis. In the scheme of the body, tactile, kinaesthetic and optic impulses can only be separated from one another by artificial methods..."⁴⁰ Cross modal associations, which for example, allow us to connect the lightness of an object to the sound of its fall or recognise the taste of an apple via its smell are often confused with synesthesia. However, these associations only occur via semantic recognition - the 'concept' of apple, by association, produces the connection of taste and smell. Would these semantic lines be the source of synesthesia, there would be near universal agreement amongst synesthetes

³⁶ Weiss (1941) investigated this phenomenon by showing how different parts of the body work independently of each other, without central command or external stimulation. His transplant of embryonic spinal cord into the dorsal trunk musculature of an intact axolotl alongside Sherrington's 1906 experiments based on the severing of a cat's spinal cord, demonstrated that the cord could operate independently of the brain. The automatic nature of some motor activity has continued to be investigated and it has been since asserted that "there is proof that rhythm is at least in part controlled by the intrinsic activity of the spinal cord which, though normally reinforced by proprioceptive reflexes, could keep up with the rhythm after severance of the afferent nerves" (Tinbergen - *The Study of Instinct*, London, 1969) p.71

³⁷ Deleuze, G. - *Francis Bacon; Logique de la sensation* (Paris, Editions de la Difference) p.31

³⁸ Ballard, J.G. - *The Drowned World*, (London, Dent, 1962) p.44

³⁹ *ibid.* - p.14

⁴⁰ Grosz, E. - *Volatile Bodies; Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, (London, MIT Press, 1993) p.67

as to the one-to-one sensory translations to be made. A synesthetes bilingual dictionary would be possible, converting sensory meaning from one sense to another. However, synesthetes do not agree. Synesthesia, by contrast to cross-modal associations is located deep in the body - it is operative in spite of the thought associations made by a subjectivised mind.

What is so distinctive and depersonalising about synesthesia is the fact that as a process, it has no meaning. It is pure affect. Synesthetes remember objects/ colours/ sounds which induce synesthesia by the strange sensation which they cause, rather than by their name. The name is no more than the semantic baggage arbitrarily attached to it. In the 1980s, the realisation that synesthesia is direct, pre-cognitive and apersonal re-directed research away from the centre of semantic mediation and towards the parietal lobes association area of the brain which vision, touch and hearing momentarily converge. It is long established that almost any mental activity causes some increase in the blood flow or cortical metabolism in the cortex. However, according to Cytowic, under Cerebral Blood Flow conditions during which a patient experienced synesthesia for eight and a half minutes, a previously unknown phenomenon was discovered - a drop in blood flow in the cortex to a degree 18% lower than the baseline. The most lethargic of depressant drugs can, at the maximum, depress the flow by 10%. It was found that during synesthesia, the cortex and its rational processing faculties are more or less cut off, rendered defunct as the brain operates predominantly through its subcortical tissue, the limbic system. This is where the body loses its organs.

As has been shown during experiments simulating sensory deprivation, the brain of the synesthete operates by a gatekeeper system. In normal circumstances, the brain regulates the flow of neural messages from the cortex to the limbic system such that what has been called the 'emotional' behaviour associated with the limbic system remains unconscious. In synesthetes, the flow from 'below' to 'above' is greatly increased so that normally unconscious behaviour dominates familiar, conscious perceptions. The cortex becomes ineffectual as the brain transfers to the limbic drive. Something of a parallel situation is observed in the subjects of sensory deprivation experiments who feel pain waves more intensely after experimentation; "If the blocking action [of the reticular formation in normal circumstances] is reduced [by a lack of stimulation], the result may be an increased ability to perceive incoming events... Thus after a period of sensory deprivation, the neural event that resulted from the pain stimuli encountered less blocking and was therefore able to produce sensations at a lower level of intensity."⁴¹ In the synesthete, like the sensorily deprived, the importance of

⁴¹ Vernon.J. - *Inside the Black Room; Studies in sensory deprivation* (London, Pelican, 1966) p.142

subcortical neural events is greatly enhanced. There is an unimpeded feed-forward of neural transmission from the limbic area, such that the predominance of the cortex and cognitive operations is bypassed. Sensory separation fails to occur. The body runs in response to the stimuli of prepersonal intensities or affects.

In what is a helpful demonstration of the Spinozist principle of 'univocity of being', synesthesia exposes the nested networks of corporeal activity. In a sense, all conscious perceptions work in the way that synesthesia demonstrates - as emergent activities drawn from many different levels of subcortical activity. However, since a body can be trained to maintain an auto-sufficient version of itself, it can suppress its immanence beneath a grid attached to mono-functional sensory organs. McLuhan identifies this layer of stratification as sensory hypnosis - as the installation of a trance like state caused by enforced concentration in a single sense such that the human sensorium extends too far in one direction only. In the synesthetic body, the self-deceptions of the conscious subject are eradicated by its openness to intensity. The body has lost its organs - consciousness operates not additionally but immersively.

If, as Deleuze explains, Spinoza replaces the breaks or categorical distinctions of species and genus with grades or degrees of mixing such that, "between a table, a little boy, a locomotive, a cow, a god, the difference is solely one of degree of power...each being reali(sing) one and the same being [God], the same being as the other beings since being is said in one and the same sense except for the difference in degree of power,"⁴² then the synesthetic body can be considered to be operative on exactly the same plane of immanence. Percepts and affects cannot be subordinated to an externally created notion of linguistic order as the subject's mechanism of making sense of its environment. Since the limbic system (the location of the hippocampus where sensory information converges prior to separation and ordering in the cortex) has more inputs into the cortex than the other way round - demonstrably so when synesthesia is occurring - higher cognitive activity is a mere surface effect of a wealth of sub-systemic activity. It is merely one stratum emergent from neural functions which differ in degree and not in kind. The mind is no longer an isolated entity. The body reformats itself constantly, aside from linguistic command.

Since CBF techniques exposed "the direction of flow for the first time as well as the precise origins and target of various transmitters...[i]t turns out that every single division of the nervous system, from the frontal lobes to the spinal cord contains some

⁴² Deleuze.G. - *Scholasticism and Spinoza* ;unpublished seminar session, Vincennes, 14January, 1974 available at <http://www.imagnet.fr./deleuze/TXT/ENG/130181.html>.4

component of the limbic system.”⁴³ Here the body emerges as a radically open system; each part contains the whole. Each specific and highly refined function contains and is indeed run by the remnants of an earlier, distributed brain which responds to inputs via corporeal mutation rather than by linguistic patrol. The quantities of the connections leading up from the limbic system have finally been granted full significance as a source of bodily mutation; “despite evolutionary changes in itself and other brain components, the limbic brain remains the terminal brain of information processing, the stage for suppressing automatic, habitual response in favour of new alternatives when the unexpected happens...”⁴⁴ In the brain of the synesthete, a stimulus causes a rebalancing of regional metabolism, releasing indistinct neural transmissions from the limbic area which are oblivious to most people. Higher cognitive processes are overwhelmed by the draw of a body back to its spinal, autonomic past. Synesthetic neural patterns are immanent to the environmentally receptive circuits of the body. As the ‘normal’ perceptual model of a rational knowing subject emerge only as an assumed blocking, inhibiting or vetoing on a set of unhindered activities which will continue anyway, the body acquires rules of cybernetic composition - the sensitivity therefore to seek affect and intensity as the conductor of otherwise unforeseen toxic states.

SENSATION(ALISM) AND IMAGE TRAUMA

“Considerable interference has been noted with TV reception over a wide area during the last few weeks’ Webster explained, pointing to the map, ‘This has principally taken the form of the modification of plot lines and narrative sequences of a number of family serials. Mobile detection vans have been unable to identify the source, but we may conclude that his central nervous system is acting as a powerful transmitter.’”

The Atrocity Exhibition⁴⁵

It is the synesthetic body, as the leaking, non-specific network of the distributed brain which, in spite of overcoding mechanisms which may obscure its perceptible role, is responding constantly to the intensive transmission of cybernetic image environments. Since there is a great deal more to a body than a subject, there is a great deal more to an image landscape than its textual order. The eye may well be interpreted by a signifying

⁴³ Cytowic.R.E - *The Man who Tasted Shapes* (London, Abacus, 1993) p.157

⁴⁴ *ibid.* - p.168

⁴⁵ Ballard.J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition* (London, Flamingo, 1993) p.97

image, but in the meantime, either additionally or alternatively, the nervous system may be assaulted by the contagion of an image-event. In its sub-cortical operations, an image is able to produce a synesthetic, autonomic hallucination which frees an “unformed, unorganised, non-stratified or destratified body and all its flows; sub-atomic and sub-molecular particles, pure intensities, pre-vital and pre-physical free singularities.”⁴⁶ This is where sensation is traded in spite of the self, where the eye turns inward towards the flesh.

Where image environments demand that a body be stripped down to its most receptive state, the success of infomatic transmission is gauged by the level of galvanic response. Since an image which deals first in chemical trade and direct neural action is “not cognitive, since the conditions of subjectivity and objectivity are no longer fulfilled; [it operates instead] ‘in the breach’, [as] an intensive distance, or contagious intensive surface,”⁴⁷ its emanating sensations, which persistently alienate themselves from the ‘known’ territories of the body, are registered only as vibration. For it is vibration, as intensive movement, which is the autonomic reaction of the sub-cortical, synesthetic body. It is in this sense, as the body’s interior or spinal journey, that affects are transmitted from image to body.

Capitalism would seem to be shot through with processes which transform themselves from laws of signification to rules of vibration in order to improve the viral efficiency of their proliferation. These processes may have once been intended to have a desired set of effects but they most often escape their prescribed role to run instead on the affects and intensive journeys which they discovered they could produce by rules internal to themselves. Indeed, as Ballard points out, the tendency of well-meaning intention to mutate, contradict itself and radically undermine the process by which it was first conceived requires a technique of survival unto itself. He cites the example of Reagan, a politician of gesture more than words; “Reagan was the first politician to exploit the fact that his TV audience would not be listening too closely, if at all, to what he was saying, and indeed might as well assume from his manner and presentation that he was saying the exact opposite of the words actually emerging from his mouth.”⁴⁸ For Massumi, Reagan’s jerking body is exactly immanent to the image dynamics which transmit it for both are, at the point of reception, subjected to synesthetic processing - to a body therefore which may work more on its own, aside from conscious decision making, than in collusion with the mechanisms of representational stratification.

⁴⁶ Millett N. - ‘The Fugitive Body; Bacon’s Fistula’ p.42

⁴⁷ *ibid.* - p.45

⁴⁸ Ballard.J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition* p.119

In this context, the inducement of the synesthetic body, with all its sub-cortical and autonomic behaviours, all its lines of intensive affect, is demonstrated by Massumi's analysis of the work of Hertha Sturm. Her research does, without doubt, provide the evidence to materially substantiate Shaviro's claim that "Images have an excessive capacity to seduce and mislead, to affect the spectator unwarrantedly."⁴⁹ The results are unmistakable confirmation of the penetration of the image into the function of the nervous system - of its ability to produce a set of corporeal effects which simultaneously reprogram the cognitive sortcodes operative at any one time. It is the necessary accounting of image reception as a multi-levelled process engaging modes of infomatic assimilation in often contradictory ways. It thus introduces theory to behaviours which capital had discovered and exploited long ago.

The distinctions between the various neural modes of image reception can, it seems, be tested empirically. Of Sturm's findings, the most useful here involve the distinction between images provided with simultaneous verbal narrative and those without. The research, which tested the bodily responses of children to image tracks, both silent and dubbed, provides a wealth of contradictions - but only for as long as a representationally ordered self is taken to be the benchmark of corporeal interaction with an environment. The children were asked to respond, both consciously and unconsciously to three versions of a story. One was accompanied by a simple audio narration of the events shown, one was silent and the other was presented with an emotional account of the tale. The version of the given story which was accompanied by a neutral report was, by the children's response, judged to be the least pleasant - less pleasant therefore than either the silent image sequence or the track provided with an emotive narration of the events. When their articulated response was marked against the readings of electronic sensors on their skin which measured corporeal response, the least pleasant, narrated image track induced the fastest heartbeat as a register of concentration. What, it seems, emerged as the most unexpected result was the low level of response at the level of the skin - the gauge of autonomic reaction. The narrated version of the story produced the least autonomic reaction in the behaviour of the body. The non-narrated sequence of events, meanwhile, produced the greatest register of autonomic affect and most pleasant sensations in the bodies of the recipients.

Massumi concludes, in Spinozist terms, that the demands placed by the narrated image sequence to respond as a rational, linguistically ordered subject reduce the capacity of a body to act as an unrehearsed, constantly mutating assemblage; "Matter of factness

⁴⁹ Shaviro.S. - *The Cinematic Body* p.17

dampens intensity. In this case, matter of factness was a doubling of the sequence of images with a narrative expressing in an objective a manner as possible the common sense function and consensual meaning of the movements on screen. This interfered with the image's effect"⁵⁰ - where the effect, to follow Massumi's emphasis, must in the first place be analysed somatically. Sturm's research, like Chion's observations on the synesthetic effects of cinema, confirms the hypothesis that the image may intrude into the body prior to the mind - prior, therefore, to its accommodation by long rehearsed cognitive sortcodes.

The results of Sturm's simple experiment are not isolated incidences. They reveal a dense network of unanticipated effects and affective behaviours which traverse the realities which constitute the contemporary media landscape. At the technological forefront, a wealth of lucrative developments target the sensuous interfaces of bodies which demonstrate themselves to be rich in synthetic effects, producing micro-responses and internal mutations - producing therefore, new compositional channels for the transmission of information. But whilst surround sound screens, 360 degree film theatres, high definition TV sets and virtual reality environments seek to expose the synesthetic body and exploit its potential, more pedestrian media continue their own exploration of the body, producing their own autonomic reactions and perceptual mutations. Accordingly the mass opinion which is run by these circuits is running less and less to script and more and more on sub-cortical, bodily decisions. What Reagan learned through his own TV image - the disparity between representation and material effects - now manifests itself in consumer targeting techniques which seek to make a sale in advance of consumer decision. What emerges here is the necessity of a theory of capital which can predict only when the unpredictable will occur; only when a body will behave in opposition to its desired script, only therefore, when it will behave according to affect; "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body."⁵¹

Considering the ubiquity of such processes, it would seem strange that theorists who would seem at least partially equipped to analyse the compositions of these networked bodies should make the observation that post-industrial culture is suffering from a 'waning of affect'. Both Jameson⁵² and Ballard refer to the waning of affect as one of

⁵⁰ Massumi.B. - *The Autonomy of Affect* p.4

⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p. 257

⁵² Jameson comments that the waning of affect is a symptomatic of a culture saturated by a depthlessness of image and simulation. At moments he writes with an implied equivalence between his notion of affect and the

the defining phenomena of our time; “Voyeurism, self-disgust, the infantile basis of our dreams and longing - these diseases of the psyche have now culminated in the most terrifying causality of the century; the death of affect.”⁵³ According to Ballard, the decline in affect manifests itself as a radical indifference or de-sensitisation of the body - a state which would seem to render it incapacitated to many of the processes here described for they so clearly depend on an alertness or receptivity in bodily states. On further investigation however, this contradiction is not so simple for whilst these accounts may apparently retain a representational notion of ‘humane’ response, of feelings only as recognisable emotions, they also suggest a further dimension of complexity to the operation of affect. Implicit in Ballard’s texts, particularly, is an unexpected account of the operation of affect aside from representational control. This further explains how image material (as Sturm’s research has shown) can operate on many different levels, some of which can be consciously read and some of which can be unconsciously felt.

If, as Massumi suggests, affect can be instigated by the shock of an image as a synesthetic breaking through of the cognitive shield (he cites Benjamin’s comments on image bombardment as an earlier account of such processes) and if for Millett, in describing Bacon’s work, sensation as affect is “a shock [as either Freud’s shock, Lyotard’s event or Deleuze’s encounter] that overflows or bypasses the organ being neither the essence of the sensible nor the sensible itself but in excess of recognisable (extensive) sensations,”⁵⁴ then it would seem necessary to ask why Ballard should mourn the ‘waning of affect’ when his most important novels, with their disintegrating protagonists, are above all else about the shocking effects of the media landscape in contemporary life. This apparent contradiction focuses attention on the exact nature of shock as a complex compound of both good and bad affect, of both numbness and radical corporeal mutation. Ballard may distortedly refer to a decline in feeling and emotion as a waning of affect, but as will emerge, his comments are in one sense correct. For it would seem that we are undergoing a decline in feeling, but only in those feelings which we can recognise. It is the contradictory amalgam of feeling and unfeeling which concerns less the waning of affect than its very intensification.

Benjaminian ‘aura’ - a move which is clearly misguided; “The end of the bourgeois ego, or monod no doubt brings with it the end of the psychopathologies of that ego - what I have been calling the waning of affect, But it means the end of much more - the end, for example, of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal, the end of the distinctive individual brushstroke (as symbolised by the emergent primacy of mechanical reproduction). As for expressions and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society from the older anomie of the centred subject may also mean not merely a liberation from anxiety but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling.” Jameson.F, - *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of late Capitalism*’ (Durham N.C.; Duke University Press, 1991p.15)

⁵³ Ballard.J.G. - ‘Introduction to Crash’ in *Re/Search* No.8/9 (San Francisco, Re/search, 1984) p.96

⁵⁴ Millett N - *The Fugitive Body; Bacon’s Fistula*’ p.46

Implicit to Ballard's limited engagement with affect is a familiar perspective on the effect of shock - not as a conductor but as an inhibitor or blockage of energy. For it is shock, a direct effect of "industrial production no less than modern warfare, ...street crowds and erotic encounters...amusement parks and gambling casinos ..."55 which acts as a protection mechanism on the organism, buffering it against the effects of overstimulation and reducing its capacity to act as a means of self-protection. It is in this sense that it is the producer of bad affect or a reduction in the body's capacity to act. Walter Benjamin, in his work on Baudelaire, writes of shock as exactly this capturing procedure; "...the greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions, the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli; the more efficiently it is so, the less do these impressions enter experience, tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one's life."56 George Simmel was also fascinated by the solipsism of shock defence - his comment is almost a character brief for one of the dazed protagonists in Ballard's novels; "...we see that the self-preservation of certain types of personalities is obtained at the cost of devaluing the entire objective world, ending inevitably in the dragging of the personality downward into a feeling of its own helplessness."57 The decline in feeling and emotion which Ballard identifies seems to be the result of an organism undergoing continual shock and thus withdrawing itself from outside stimuli such that "...its goal is...to deaden the senses, to repress memory; the cognitive system of synesthetics has become rather one of anaesthetics."58

It is, however, too hasty to end the account here. The tension which Ballard establishes between a decline in feeling and the proposed intensification of affect is resolved by re-contextualising shock or numbness within the material context which first produced it - within, therefore, the traumatic environment. It is the introduction of trauma which exposes shock to be a great deal more than an absence of feeling. For whilst the body undergoes trauma, it is exposed to massive doses of intensive stimulation. It is therefore undergoing two processes at once - corporeal alteration and enforced numbness; a material instantiation of effects and a subjective absence from the site of those effects. Lyotard identifies the contradiction; "Shock is, par excellence, the evidence of (something) happening rather than nothing at all."59 The behaviour of capital demonstrates the complexity of this process for it is inherent to the cycle of

⁵⁵ Buck-Morss.S. - 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered' *October* no.62 Fall 1992 p 16

⁵⁶ Benjamin.W. - *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London, NLB, 1973) .117

⁵⁷ Bukatman - *Bladerunner* (London, BFI, 1997) p.71

⁵⁸ Buck-Morss.S. - 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered' p. 18

⁵⁹ Lyotard.J-F qu. in Petro.P. - 'After Shock/ Between Boredom and History' in Petro.P. - *Fugitive Images; From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press) p.275

consumerism that numbness induces the need for the new and the fetishised and the then consequential bombardment of novelty re-introduces the states of numbness and indifference. The two processes are inseparable as Lefebvre, in a moment of proto-cybernetics, has shown; “The days follow one after another and resemble one another, and yet - here lies the contradiction at the heart of everydayness - everything changes. But the change is programmed: obsolescence is planned. Production anticipates reproduction; production produces change in such a way as to superimpose the impression of speed onto that of monotony. Some people cry out against the acceleration of time, others cry out against stagnation. They’re both right.”⁶⁰

This looping of effects or interrelatedness of opposing tendencies can clearly be demonstrated at the level of image dynamics. Petro points out that it was the tendency of boredom or numbness to induce interruption or a demand for new stimuli which became the subject of several of Warhol’s favourite films - themselves a comment on the behaviour of post-industrial capital. Films such as ‘Empire’ which was simply eight hours of footage of the Empire State Building and ‘Sleep’ - six hours of a man sleeping - were perverse experiments in the processes described. In being virtually unwatchable - for they produced a deep sense of agitation and instability in any viewer who could sit through them - they exposed the trauma inherent to the experience of numbness. They demanded that the body seek new affects as a means to induce change in its system.

“If shock appears as the subject’s way of parrying the assault, or flooding within, of mechanisms of mass reproduction, trauma appears as the subject’s assimilation to these mechanisms (‘the transfer of what is inside us into the machine’). Accounts of shock or trauma hesitate at this point - hesitate on whether this assault is a matter of representation or event (projection; ‘influencing machines’ or implantation; ‘machinic influence’).”⁶¹ Whilst shock is the result of a sufficiently efficacious barrier against stimuli, trauma results from a breach in the shield; “(t)here is no longer any possibility of preventing the mental apparatus from being flooded with large amounts of stimulus, and another problem arises instead - the problem of mastering the amounts of stimulus which have broken in and of binding them, in the psychical sense, so that they can be disposed of.”⁶² It is this side of shock which is the instigator of intensive change. It is a flooding of affect which overwhelms the body in its regularised habit to produce an unanticipated set of corporeal effects.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* - p. 276

⁶¹ Seltzer.M. - ‘Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere’ (*October* 80, Spring 1997, pp 3-26) p. 18

⁶² Freud.S. - ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud vol. XVIII* (London, Hogarth Press, 1955) p.38

Freud's explanation of how the body deals with trauma raises an important point since the body's manifestation of affect or of its potential mix and reconstitution of itself through stimuli from the outside is not necessarily always beneficial. There is an 'art of dosages' to be practised which, on the one hand renders the body as receptive as possible and yet on the other, prevents it from being destroyed by overstimulation. Deleuze's warnings against sustained exposure to bad affect (his warnings against the black holes of drug addiction are examples⁶³) raises many of the issues more fully explored in chapter 5 - concerning intensive relations and infinite wholes but here they raise the issue of the intensity of reality production in traumatic environments and of how bad affect, like the delibidinising effects of shock is, by rules of feedback, looped into the pursuit of good affect or the increased ability to make connections; "It may be necessary for the release of innovative processes that they first fall into a catastrophic black hole; stases of inhibition are associated with the release of crossroads behaviour."⁶⁴

Trauma, as the intensive catalyst of shock may be effectuated at one level as a numbness or an inability to feel but this does not equate itself with a waning of affect. It is, in a sense, the hierarchical, organised body becoming absent from itself, leaving behind a corporeal assemblage which can undergo continual re-construction. The leaking in of the outside is, according to Freud, a state of flux to which we are compulsively drawn. It is a return to a state which preceded life - to an earlier, amorphous body which works independently of organised sort codes and protection strategies. It is this return to an 'inanimate' state which is a yearning for an "old state of things, an initial state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads."⁶⁵ With return there emerges a earlier trauma-brain - a distributive, non-specific brain. This brain, which is of course, as much body and brain, renders reality rather than represents it. As Porush describes it, it demonstrates an absolute immanence of criteria- "the rules of the world out there, its physics, were not challenged by the rules of the world in here."⁶⁶ As Spinoza describes it, this is a body which learns as it re-mixes itself, thus refusing stability at any one time.

⁶³ see Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* p.285

⁶⁴ *ibid.* - p.334

⁶⁵ Freud.S. - 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' p.38

⁶⁶ Porush.D. - 'Telepathy; Alphabetic Consciousness and the Age of Cyborg Illiteracy in Broadhurst.J. and Cassidy.E.J. - *Virtual Futures; Cyberotics, Technology and Post-human Pragmatism* (London, Routledge, 1993)p.46-7

Where the body is here used as a surface of reception by intensive stimuli and not by a subject for his projected representation, there occurs an irreparable rupture between causality and representation. The subject is thus no longer the producer or decoder of representation - he is reduced (or infinitely expanded) to a channel for cybernetic flow. Seltzer describes the reversal as a rendering of the subject as a duplicating machine; "as a reproduction of external events turned outside in"⁶⁷ (quite the opposite, incidentally, from Buck-Morss' description of the other side of trauma - shock - during which "(m)imetic capacities, rather than incorporating the outside world as a form of empowerment or 'innervation' are used as a deflection against it."⁶⁸) The physical instantiation of events via trauma involves no discernment according to which level of reality they operate at. This is evident in popular accounts of trauma which often emphasise the capacity of victims to be able to relive specific traumatic incidents many years after their suggested occurrence. The stark reality of traumatic recollection can outweigh the judgement of authenticity of the original event. The trauma itself is reality itself - false memory or otherwise. Seltzer's claim, that "trauma and virtual reality are two ways of saying the same thing"⁶⁹, is here born out by material events. For it would seem that trauma is no more than a vent for the cybernetic real as a synthetic imaging procedure. It is an end therefore to the distinction between production and processing - a development which Wiener forecast in 1934; "the distinction between material transportation (bodies) and message transportation [codes] is not in any sense permanent and unbridgable."⁷⁰

To maintain such distinctions would be merely to maintain a blindness to the autonomy of such processes - a belief in an exterior and removed position external to a set of immanent relations. As has been demonstrated, the shocked body, like the synesthetic body, is a body overwhelmed by affect which has learnt to behave in absence from itself. As a body attuned to the reception of alien sensation or inarticulable stimuli it is able to do many things at once. That it may apparently be shut off temporarily does not mean that it is ineffectual - merely that it is autonomically responding to the influx of its own connections. As Seltzer makes the fundamental point, that trauma is above all else the failure of distance, the emergence of tactility, he implicitly introduces a machinic Spinozism which "...on the basis of reasons from his physics, does not believe in action at a distance; action always implies a contact and is even a mixture of bodies...."⁷¹ The images of an environment are thus used to produce a body and the

⁶⁷ Seltzer.M. - 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere' p.9

⁶⁸ Buck-Morss.S. - 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered' p.19

⁶⁹ Seltzer.M. - 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere' p. 12

⁷⁰ *ibid.* - p.17

⁷¹ Deleuze - unpublished seminar notes 24 January 1978 Deleuze.G. available at <http://www.imaginet.fr/deleuze/TXT/ENG/130181.html>.4

neural capacities of this body are simultaneously fed back into the perceptual experimentation induced by ambient image material. Images here function not representationally but as active perceptual components, producing unidentifiable reactions and as yet unknown neural alterations.

SPINOZA'S IMAGE-BODY CONSTELLATIONS

"....all junctions, whether of our own soft biologies or the hard geometries of these walls and ceilings, are equivalent to one another."

The Atrocity Exhibition⁷²

"Of the individual components of the human body, some are liquids, some are soft and some are hard...."

Spinoza - Ethics⁷³

With Spinoza's consistency on the implications of a relation between mind and body which is dependent on direct bodily awareness comes a revision of the insufficient subtlety of current vocabulary. Much of what has been argued so far circles around the ability of an image to produce an affective, tactile, autonomic response. Spinoza's '*Ethics*' requires that this relation be carefully thought within the very terms of immanence which it so radically produces. His key move is a parallelism (a term later used by Leibniz) of mind and body - an immanence of bodily criteria according to which "a knowledge of the powers of the body," enables us to discover "in a parallel fashion, the powers of the mind that elude consciousness, and thus to be able to compare the powers."⁷⁴ It subverts any Cartesian notion of a split which would assert that any affection of the mind need not necessarily be manifested as an affection of the body, so that passion may not have any corporeal effects; "an action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion in the body is necessarily a passion in the mind."⁷⁵ For Spinoza, therefore, the image is not responded to 'with' affect; it is physically instantiated 'as' affect, and therefore, as specific states of the body: "Images of things are affections of the human body, the ideas of which set before us external bodies as present; that is, the ideas of these affections involve the

p.5

⁷² Ballard.J.G - *The Atrocity Exhibition* p.61

⁷³ Spinoza.B. - *Ethics* p.76 (Post.Pr. 13 II)

⁷⁴ Deleuze.G. - *Spinoza; Practical Philosophy* tr. R.Hurley (San Francisco, City Lights, 1988) p.18

⁷⁵ *ibid.* - p.19

nature of our own body and simultaneously the nature of the external body as present.”⁷⁶ Since affection can be defined as “the form ‘taken on’ by some thing, a state of that thing and therefore logically posterior to that of which it is an affection,”⁷⁷ this Spinozist principle returns us not only to the asignifying effects of traumatic image consumption but also to the possessional states of simulation-becoming discussed in chapter 2.

For Spinoza, images, like affects are the lowest form of knowledge since they function as conclusions without premises. Spinoza’s system operates along a plane of immanence with no harshly delineated breaks between the modes of nature. Whilst images remain immanent to and remotely attached to the higher forms of knowledge (common notions and intuition), they are at the forefront of the most confused domain of understanding - the imagination. As such an “image is the idea of an affection which makes an object known to us only by its effect. But such knowledge is not knowledge at all, it is at best recognition.”⁷⁸ However, since Spinozism does not demand some teleological journey to higher modes of existence, the image is not in itself irrelevant to practice of ‘ethology’⁷⁹ - it is as much a vehicle or conductor of effects as any other element in the system. Since the mind is an idea of the body, the relation which is of most importance here is Spinoza’s “distinctive emphasis on the continuities between the understanding of ‘facts’, through reason and the sensuousness of lower forms of knowledge.”⁸⁰ The complete corporeal instantiation of reason in Spinoza’s system makes the image a prime instigator of bodily consciousness, a plane of sensual affect which demonstrates many of the bodily manifestations of cybernetic image culture.

There is a valid and much explored zone in Spinoza’s system which treats the least resolved mode of knowledge - the imagination - as a site of political engineering. As Lloyd suggests, in the manner of Negri and other feminist commentators, it is in this realm of organised meanings, opinions and conventions (the domain akin to Plato’s ‘doxa’) that the most effective claims to difference can be made. This however, is only one level of the Spinozist image economy. For whilst the image, as a vehicle of the imagination may mediate conventionalised discourse, it is its surplus potential, as an inducer of corporeal change which allows a re-formulation of the image, not as a limit-

⁷⁶ Spinoza.B. - *Ethics* p.119

⁷⁷ Feldman.S. - introduction to *Ethics* -p.24

⁷⁸ Deleuze.G.- *Expressionism in Philosophy; Spinoza* (New York, Zone, 1990) p.147

⁷⁹“In the same way that we avoid defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects. This kind of study is called ethology.” Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p.257

⁸⁰ Lloyd.G. - *Spinoza and the Ethics* (Routledge, London 1996) p. 52-3

point marking out representational thought, but as a conductor of non-representational affect.

The image may operate on the 'lowest' plane, but it does not operate on a separate plane from Spinoza's wider assemblage. Since this system involves a pervasive elimination of representational analogue principles, the image carries within it immanent principles of production which allow access to 'higher' states of knowledge. Deleuze focuses on the 'attributes' as a way of demonstrating such non-representational principles. He suggests that each attribute, in its own way, expresses the essence of substance. It accomplishes this by rules of cybernetic functionality - by therefore instantiating the characteristics of the object, in this case, substance, as the material of its own production. Images also function in this way - not by referring to an object but by producing themselves out of the same substance out of which it is made; "the body is affected by the image in the same way as if the thing were present."⁸¹ As has been described in chapter 3 - in relation to capitalist semiotics - what is expressed by an attribute is also enveloped in the expression, like the tree in the seed - not, therefore, as passive analogue reflection but as a mobile and active articulation.

"(F)rom one image or idea to another, there are transitions, passages that we experience, durations through which we pass to a greater or lesser perfection. Furthermore, these affections, images or ideas are not separable from the duration that attaches them to the preceding states and makes them tend towards the next state."⁸² The cybernetics of the synthetic image is, in a sense no more than this - the transportation of image as affect and thus as a vehicle or transport to a new and constantly shifting plane of effects. It is for this reason that the sub-cortical capacities of an image do not remain external to an organism but instead actively reformat its very constitution. Structuralism has considered it sufficient to overlook the activity of such fields of transition which exist beyond the signifying plane of an image's intended message, but since Spinoza "makes the cuts differently than others,"⁸³ removing therefore the breaks in nature which have sealed the subject, an image's first meaning is subordinated to the network of connections which it makes elsewhere in a system, ordered by a relation to an intellectual love of God.

In itself, the image is not a sufficient carrier through the second and third forms of knowledge, for once thought has been achieved at these levels of functionality, the body does not operate in response to the corporeal traces of images, but according to its

⁸¹ Spinoza.B.- *Ethics*. (Sch.Prop.18 III) p.115

⁸² Deleuze.G. - *Spinoza; Practical Philosophy*, p.48

⁸³ Deleuze.G. - *Spinoza and Scholasticism* - unpublished seminar 14 January 1974 p.5

own initiated manoeuvrings - auto-affectations to use Deleuze's term - which are 'knowingly' (in the corporeal sense) informed by their own cause. But what is of most importance here is that although the image "is not formally explained by our power of comprehending, does not materially express its cause and remains attached to an order of fortuitous encounters instead of attaining the concatenation of the Idea,"⁸⁴ what is perceived to be its representativeness, objectivity or discursive value does not explain anything about its nature. It thus contains much more within itself (or without itself) than we can actually know - it is always on the way elsewhere, responding constantly to the leaking in of the virtual, as will be explained in chapter 5. Insufficient knowledge on the part of the recipient is thus superseded by an active material transition in corporeal states - much as Sturm's research on the autonomy of image reception discovered.

What, at the lowest level of knowledge is mistakenly perceived to be representative or resembling is, in its operational relation to higher modes of bodily understanding, reconfigured as a transit-point or threshold shifter which radically opens up fields of corporeal engagement, rather than, in the fashion of a subject, closing them down. Here the image is figured as a source of links - hyperlinks - which expand the body's possible geometries and affective states. In this zone, what is conceived to be image and what is not remains operationally ambiguous - units which were once understood only in terms of their ability to resemble become viral carriers engineering new networks of effects. Lloyd describes the role of the image in relation to the sliding scale of degrees of substance as such; "...flourishing images assisted by clear and distinct understanding form lively connections with other images allowing us to bring it about that all the body affectations are related to the idea of God."⁸⁵

"[N]obody as yet has determined the limits of the body's capabilities; that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do, without being determined by mind, solely from the laws of its nature in so far as it is considered as corporeal."⁸⁶ Since Spinoza's account is one of the ability of an image as an affect or transportation mode to produce a set of specific relations with other bodies which at first appear unassimilable, it functions equally as an accurate study of the intensive effects of trauma. Spinoza identifies a level of image interaction which he would consider parrying, or destructive to the ability to act - much as the previous account of image shock as a numbing experience has demonstrated. However, what interests him more, in writing a manual for survival, is the compositional side of trauma - of

⁸⁴ Deleuze, G. - *Spinoza; Practical Philosophy*, p.75

⁸⁵ Lloyd, G. - *Spinoza and the Ethics* p.114

⁸⁶ Spinoza, B. - *Ethics* (Sch Pr.2 Part III) p.105

therefore, the ability of an image to produce anorganic virtual links which are compulsively re-organised in response to the demands of an incoming environment. Where the body responds to the image outside of signifiatory territory, it is in a state of perceptual deviation, triggered by autonomic interaction which the mind, if it is treated as an emergent property, is the last to initiate. Since, for Spinoza, to have images at all, is to be corporeally aware of other bodies together with our own and since the more a body builds common links with other bodies, the more it is capable of adequate knowledge, the image can be treated as the first gate of experimentation - discarded eventually, but necessary to the practice of ethology all the same.

The 'art' is a matter of sustaining the experimentation or, in other words, perpetuating those relations which ensure an open future and continue to enable the formation of new anorganic compounds. The passage to adequate understanding involves the body becoming entirely immersed in the environment which constructs it, thus directly looping the inputs of sensuous interaction with the sortcodes of an intuitive brain. As the body becomes more active, it is less a matter of passive response to an environment (the common view of the capacity of the imagination) and more a cybernetically attuned conduction of stimuli. According to Guattari, the self becomes a tributary. Stimuli which can never be definitively identified act upon a body which is never straightforwardly delimited - action-reactions circuits are, therefore, submerged beneath a plane of sustained and indiscernible circulation. In such circumstances, the body does not simply expand to infinitely accommodate new affecting elements, it rather becomes absent from itself - existing more in the terrain of what it is not, or rather what it can become rather than, what at any singular moment, it is perceived to be. It is no wonder therefore, that the perceptual system of this body-web is synesthetic for this is the sensory network of a body prior to completion or separation. As it recedes into virtuality, all of its modes are operative at once, leaving behind narrowly defined sensory organs as the relics of a previous body.

GUATTARI AND THE BLEEDING IMAGE

Guattari utilises the transivist nature of affect to account for a mixing of images and bodies which is entirely appropriate to virtual, cybernetic environments and which demonstrates, in the process, specific examples of image-body relations. He warns against psychoanalytic accounts of affect which treat it as a "qualitative expression of a quantity of cathecting energy (the libido)"⁸⁷ and treat the field of operations as

⁸⁷ Guattari.F. - 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects' in Genosko.G.(ed.) - *The Guattari Reader* (London, Blacwell, 1996) p.159

assimilable to the ego such that the ego becomes no less than the whole wide world. Instead affect is to be undertaken in terms of its 'hazy', 'atmospheric' quality, its ability to produce hyper-complex links which render any hope of a subject meaningless. Since he places the emphasis on the process of affection, rather than on the assumed product, he concentrates on the 'enunciative' component of communication - the 'inbetweenness' of transmission which disturbs the fixed zone of signifier-signified relations. He thus shows that the application of affect to the already deteriorating listener/speaker, image/viewer dichotomies induces the emergence of totemic qualities (far removed, however, from their Freudian identification) referred to in chapters 2 and 3. As such, he shows that Spinozist image relations are not merely abstract accounts - they are demonstrable aspects of an image economy which is operative across the surfaces of a distributed body and which interacts affectively rather than interpretatively.

By elaborating on the subtle distinctions between affects as emotional, empathetic identifications and affects as ambient systems of virtual linkages, Guattari draws out the pre-personal webbings which compose body-image assemblages. Affect is infectious rather than empathetic; according to Spinoza, "he who conceives another as effected with hatred, will thereupon be affected himself with hatred; he who hates a man will endeavour to remove or destroy him."⁸⁸ Common circuits of affect or sub-systemic intensity are, in this way, operative long in advance of value-laden capture systems of identity. They proliferate rapidly producing not just isolated moments of synthesis but ambient, resonating effects.; "Hence it follows that the human perceives the nature of very many bodies along with the nature of its own body."⁸⁹ Since these bodies need neither be distinguishably organic or non-organic, Guattari draws out the anorganic telepresent networks which are secreted in Spinoza's ethics - webs of relations determined not by exterior entities, either subjects or objects, but by the affective impact points produced in between bodies. It is for this reason that affect can always be located to the side of a discernible body, to the zone where at any one moment it is distortedly assumed not to be. It is always concerned with the coaxing of that body into unrehearsed agglomerations of part objects which can be perpetually re-combined without regard to a previous script.

It is as such "unlocatable transferences, unlocatable with regard to their origin as well as with regard to their destination"⁹⁰ that affects are manifested as a series of thresholds which produce a previously uncharted relation between body and image. This relation is

⁸⁸ Spinoza qu. in *ibid.* - p.158

⁸⁹ *ibid.* - p.77

⁹⁰ *ibid.* - p.158

cryptically alluded to by Hamilton-Grant as ‘affect-bleed’ (the way that images bleed)⁹¹. Whilst the de-organicising of the body has so far been accounted for at length, the role of affect in organicising or to use a more accurate term, in ‘mechanically animating’ the image remains a perplexing and illusive concept. Like his rendering of the Gothic written with Deleuze, Guattari’s account of the material operation of affect allows a valuable elaboration of this process. Since sensations as affective attractors need not necessarily be attached to organic bodies (“*Somewhere* (added italics) there is hatred in the same way that, in animist societies, beneficent or noxious influences circulate through the spirit of ancestors and concurrently, of totemic animals, or through the ‘mana’ of a consecrated place, the power of a ritual tattooing, a ceremonial dance, the recounting of a myth etc.”⁹²) inorganic components such as images may be endowed with what have previously been perceived to be ‘organic’ or animate capacities.

Such power or ‘liveliness’ means that not only are the effects of such images instantiated corporeally, as various autonomic reactions and libidinal investments, but that the images themselves are somatically active even before they enter the participant’s body. There are many examples of images which behave as animate entities by weeping, bleeding, perspiring or even eating. Since an image need neither be identifiably attached to a producer nor to a spectator, it is, to use Guattari’s phrase, an emergent property, just like any de-stratified body, of a ‘multi-polar affective composition’. It can therefore acquire traits of organicism or affective animism in the same fashion that the organic body necessarily acquires the traits and components of the inorganic. Where the body meets/ instantiates itself as image, it is the fluctuating intersection of many different levels of phylic activity - most of which are extra-linguistic in nature, some of which are the products of exactly this trans-organic trade in reality production. Affect would, it seems, always be the enabling force - the means of synthesis between otherwise impossible anorganic compounds.

“[T]he primary purposiveness of an Icon of the Orthodox church is not to represent a Saint, but to open an enunciative territory for the faithful, allowing then to enter into direct communication with the Saint...[it works] ...as a shifter - in the sense of a ‘scene changer’ - in the heart of a palimpsest superimposing the existential territories of the proper body upon those of personological, conjugal, domestic, ethnic and other identities.”⁹³ That an image need not represent but may instead open up enunciative or performative territories of communication is a phenomenon which can be traced through

⁹¹ Hamilton-Grant.I. - ‘Los Angeles, 2019; Demopathy and Xenogenesis; Some Realist Notes on Bladerunner and the Postmodern Condition’ - unpublished paper, p.20

⁹² Guattari.F. - ‘Ritornellos and Existential Affects’ p.158

⁹³ *ibid.* - p.165

a rich tradition of animated image production. Freedburg offers many account of images coming 'alive' and thus rendering realities which do not represent but which demand new enunciative organisations between participant and medium. He cites the examples of an icon in an Albanian Church in Chicago which, as witnessed by up to 5000 people a day, emitted an oily substance from its eye and hands in 1986; of the ancient Icon of St.Nicholas which, according to Ceasarius, when taken to the home of a pregnant woman "turned its face to the wall, as though to avoid seeing the women in labour"; of the image of the Virgin Mary offering her breast to a praying St.Bernard, who was recorded as receiving physical nourishment from what could be perceived to be no more than a representation.⁹⁴ There are also several fascinating accounts of the twelfth and thirteenth century custom of venerating images as capable of full 'emotional' and expressive potential - as therefore, being active embodiments of realities internal to themselves. Such accounts can be read as succinct examples of Guattari's ritornellos in which the image or icon is exactly, as he refers to it, a "scene-shifter", a manifestation of a particular relation of body and image which far exceeds its interpretative capacity and which uses its 'inbetweenness' to fully exploit its affective and somatic potential.

At one level, Freud has accounted such animist activity with a rigour that is helpful here. In *'The Uncanny'*, he even identifies such effects (uncanny being the term for the physical manifestation of animist tendencies) in somatic terms which recall the autonomic nature of affect previously outlined - they "excite in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity."⁹⁵ But where he deviates from Guattari's pre-personal affective mappings is where he interprets such processes as a means to capture their effects back into the remit of the ego. This is achieved by reading animism not as affective an-organicism but as a narcissistic omnipotence of thought; "Our analysis of instances of the uncanny has led us back to the old, animistic conception of the universe. This was characterised by the idea that the world was peopled with the spirits; by the subject's narcissistic overvaluation of his own mental processes; by the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and the technique of magic places on that belief; by the attribution to various persons and things of carefully graded magical powers, or 'mana'; as well as by all the other creations with the help of which man, in the unrestricted narcissism of that stage of development, strove to fend off the manifest prohibitions of reality..."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Freedburg.D. - *The Power of Images; Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London, University of Chicago Press, 1989) p.300-305

⁹⁵ Freud.S. - 'The Uncanny' in *The Complete Works* vol.17 (London, Hogarth Press 1917-19) p.226

⁹⁶ *ibid.* - p.240

Such an egotistical account of animist realities demonstrates the empathetic tendencies which Worringer identified as the motivation behind humanist, representational art. It is born from a firm belief in the notion that the ego may be all and that the multitude of facets of non-organic life can be functionally subordinated to the narcissistic projections of an autogenic self. For Baudrillard, to closet doubles and spirits under the auspices of the subject's shadow is exactly "how psychology, our authority in the depths, our own 'next world', this omnipotence, magical narcissism, fear of the dead, this animism or primitive psychical apparatus, is quietly palmed off on the savage, in order then to recuperate them for ourselves as 'archaic traces.'"⁹⁷ It is a method which attempts to capture affective entities under the much safer readings of man's own projection. Here, the 'nocuous influences' which Guattari identifies as the means of transportational contact between the various parts of an assemblage are diverted back through an ego as their source and therefore, their inhibitor.

Since Spinozist affect does not recognise the limits of the ego and therefore instigates new geometries or compounds of realities which refuse to defer to Freud's projective versions, the open enunciative territories which these totemic and iconic images ("bleeding images") induce are new corporeal states in themselves. They are phase changes, threshold points which produce new compounds and varying mixtures of the organic and the non-organic. What sustains their energetic circulation is their unrecognisability - their escape therefore from grids of projection or lack - and their capacity to transmit vibration, sensation and autonomic hallucination which floods the organism and demand that it adapt without a body which can only recognise itself as representationally ordered.

For Deleuze it is the 'iconism' of an image which is the 'ambient', 'hazy' quality of affect - the ability to transmit the effects of an object by instantiating the material constitution of that object as image and thus as affect in itself. That affect is then transmitted far beyond any single contact point between affect, body and image. The affect-image is in this sense always a leakage, for it "expresses in itself the bipolar quality of movement, either quality or power as affect expressed in the image without being actualised there."⁹⁸ On the plane of intensity, where every percept and every image is equivalent to each other and always reacting one to the other, neither the perception nor the image (if the distinction can be made) is either a projection of an ego or a secondary reality. Instead, is each a momentary constellation within a breeding network of synthetic reality production. The relation between body and image is thus

⁹⁷ Baudrillard.J. - *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, tr. Hamilton-Grant.I. (London, Sage Publications, 1993) p.143

⁹⁸ Rodowick.D.N. - *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, (London, Duke University Press, 1997) p.63

always under revision, producing somatic states, libidinal investments and affective responses which in themselves render new reality components.

Since the intensive relations produced by these communication systems continue to perpetuate themselves, bodies as images and images as bodies exist in a constant state of combination and experimentation. They produce unrehearsed, sensuous realities which can neither be structured or contained. As has been outlined, this is a process which operationally demands the unravelling of the body from the mind, as well as the concomitant recomposition of the mind in terms of the transit-points and virtual links of the body. Where postmodernism kept the body safe, patrolled by the post-structuralist relics of a cognitive order, Spinoza enables process to flow back through their overcoded laws such that the age of simulation be figured differently - in the context, therefore, of the contemporary body-image-machine complex run by the intensive and traumatic effects of techno-capitalism. For here, most fundamentally, the image becomes the experimental software of the body, operated not representationally by a mind answering to itself but by a mind operative through the ideas of a body - as therefore an organism wide set of combinations which distribute the human and assimilate the non-human in a fashion that requires radically new micro-specific modes of cybernetic survival.

Chapter 5

DATA BURST

The Cybernetic Image as Intensive Journey

“An intensive trait starts working for itself, a hallucinatory perception, synesthesia, perverse mutation or play of images shakes loose, challenging the hegemony of the signifier. In the case of the child, gestural, mimetic, ludic and other semiotic systems regain their freedom and extricate themselves from the ‘tracing’, that is, from the dominant competence of the teacher’s language - a microscopic event upsets the local balance of power...”

Deleuze and Guattari¹

“...look only at the movements...”

Deleuze

The constellations of bodies and images which emerge from the previous chapter demand that the present focus of analysis be specifically placed on the single constitutive variable of synthetic image production which underlies the many features of its operation. Non-representational biotic components may well be able to touch, immerse, affect, shock and bypass the standardised functions of a body but above all else they are able to induce motions - speeds and slownesses - which demand that a body never stay stable across time. Its survival depends on its continual mutation to the demands of its immediate image environment. If synthetic images are able to undercut the inherited, solipsistic notions of consciousness and thus inscribe alterations of which an interiorised self may only be secondarily aware they may do so because they are manifested as speed in itself.

In this sense, they operate as intensities, thresholds, gradients which do not move or initiate movement without initiating a concomitant change of state both in themselves and in the environment in which they work. The effects of images have long been quantitatively measured², but in treating them as biotic components, the emphasis must

¹ Deleuze and Guattari- *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalsim and Schizophrenia* (London, The Athlone Press, 1992) p.15

² see chapter 1 on quantification procedures

be placed on the qualitative change which they trigger³. Since they can instantiate direct corporeal effect, they are not single isolatable units which remain constant and representational no matter what arrangement they constitute in the media scape - they are trans-organic, mobile conductors which may be divided up, recombined, but in doing so they change in state and produce new effects. Gradients of imagistic effect thus replace single image units where the effect is not equal and constant across each image, but fluctuates and changes according to the image assemblage in which it operates. Such fields of intensive movements thus break down the fixed phenomenological plane of perception with its centre of observation and quantifiable, fragmented world. The libidinal images of chapter 4 which are able to infiltrate the perceptual system prior to cognitive assimilation do so because they are manifested as propagators of intensive effects and non-linear time. The perceptual assemblage in which they work is able to mutate in many different ways, bypassing the routines of standardised perceptual process and operating flush with the chronological fissures which characterise the plane of immanence.

If the representative image demands a perceptual order, the non-representational materialist simulation can induce radical perceptual disorder by encompassing many different moments in time simultaneously. Since global imaging networks do not pursue single events in linear time, the synthetic image can be taken to be a node which fuses disparate times and places in hyperspace as telepresent geographies which are functionally as 'real' as those standardly connected to land mass. As distance and time spans are synthetically re-formatted, the body must respond to communication inputs which locate it in several places at once, distributing it, therefore, across an infinite expanse.

Spinoza's implicit account of how communication and bio-technologies cybernetically re-invent the body privileges their capacity to induce motion and thus transformation in relation to the participant's ability to act and be acted upon (affect). 'Ethology' is the practice not only of increasing an individual's capacity to affect and be affected but also of heightening his/ her receptivity to speeds which demand a constant re-adjustment of the body's parameters; "To every relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness grouping together an infinity of parts, there corresponds a degree of power...to act."⁴ Here, the body is a composite assemblage aggregated from a range of parts and images

³ As S. Brandon Canterwell states in response to a Harris Poll conducted in France in 1992 which revealed that 43% of viewers would experience nausea if they were deprived of television and that 64% experienced nausea after watching it; "Even though it is difficult to contest the impact of television, we don't know how it works: no doubt we need to look at qualitative methods in order to understand it." Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor*, tr. Julie Rose (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995) p.63

⁴ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.256

which communicate motion by continually enacting one as another. These temporal changes are not subordinated to the space in which they occur or the distance which they are assumed to cover. If they were, they would always be observable and quantifiable by the laws of the specular economy. Instead, they are excursions in time which are independent from the standard obligation to space. Events do not occur one after the other in non-linear time - they occur simultaneously, often imperceptibly, in environments where the space is omni-directional and non-extended.

This ability of image and information circuits to function as intensive speed induces unimaginable effects in the relation between space, time and a stable, geographically locatable body. Since the quantifiable effects of a cybernetic image are inseparable from the qualitative changes which it instigates and since these latter changes are effectuated in bodies themselves - as hallucinations, synesthesia, telepresences and trauma, the analysis of intensity and the image extends far and wide; "It is no longer even appropriate to group biological, psychochemical and energetic intensities on the one hand, and mathematical, aesthetic, linguistic, informational, semiotic intensities on the other. The multiplicity of systems of intensities conjugates or forms a rhizome throughout the entire assemblage the moment the assemblage is swept up by these vectors or tensions of flight."⁵

It is helpful therefore to pursue the analytical lines established in the previous chapter - that of treating the body as image and the image as a corporeal component and of acknowledging the reciprocal metamorphosis. If Spinoza aids the mapping of this configuration, his model shares much in common with Bergson, as will be explained. It is, however, not only as direct Bergsonism that the body may be considered as all image and thus directly responsive to an image's non-chronological effects. Several commentators have recorded the breakdown of a coherent body into its parts as image - thus effectively treating the image as matter itself and the body as a screen equivalent to any other which transmits the contemporary mediascape. Ballard catalogues the female body as a series of image transmissions; "(1) stepping from the driving seat of the Pontiac, median surfaces of thighs exposed, (2) squatting on the bathroom floor, knees literally displaced, fingers searching for the diaphragm lip, (3) in the tergo posture, thighs pressing against Talbot (4) collision; crushed right tibia against the instrument console, left patella impacted by the handbrake"⁶ This instantiation of the body as image and both elements therefore as superconductive media is also noted by the 'mapper of America's pathological public sphere' - the novelist Steve Erikson for whom there is a

⁵ *ibid.* - p.109

⁶ Ballard.J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition* (London, Flamingo, 1993) p.22

“deep fault line running from my psyche through my brain out my door...straight to Melrose Road and the feet of Justine...Justine is a billboard.”⁷ Both Ballard and Erickson realise that to suggest that the body’s reality has been effaced by the corporeal effects of images is not to return once more to the impasses of postmodernism where the world becoming image is a de-materialisation of reality but is rather more to open up the body to the virtualities and perceptual possibilities of the era of materialist simulation.

If the body is an image and hence is, in the Spinozist sense, a set of actions and reactions then the post-human, like the post-modern has also become all image. However, it has done so not as a recent development, haunted by a reality that once was, but because it always was all image where the image is a non-representational simulation capable of breaking down time boundaries and instigating intensive corporeal journeys. ‘*Blade Runner*’ is, obviously, the account of such processes for it “insists that Deckard is fully as much a replicant and a copy of Rachel. His identity, like hers, is a composite of images that comes from elsewhere...”⁸ Here the photograph, most often accounted for as the most stratified version of representationalism abandons all prior obligations and functions corporeally, as “the smallest essential unit through which the film’s materiality is constructed - its DNA.”⁹ When Deckard enlarges a photograph of an empty room in order to uncover and reconstruct Zhora’s face, he undermines the observable ‘truth’ of photographic appearances and thus induces an identity crisis in himself, for he too is as much a fabrication as that which appears before him - he too is constitutionally dependent on the unreliable schema of the photograph, rather than, by the law of any representational scheme, the reverse.

Clearly, the body is bound for intensive journeys if its constitution can be configured as a conglomerate of images and such images are no more than signaleptic units of intensive motion which demand that they be virtually navigated rather than remotely observed. Whatever the speed an image may propagate, it must do so via the matter of the body which receives and continues to transmit it. Thus, Virilio makes the claim, with enigmatic regret, that both body and image are bound for the speed of light. If “[s]peed is not a phenomenon, [but] is the relationship between phenomena,”¹⁰ such that there is no other reality other than that constituted by the relation between oscillating elements, then time becomes its own intensive simulation. It is no longer relative, therefore, to an

⁷ Seltzer.M. - ‘*Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere*’ (October 80, Spring 1997, pp 3-26) p. 15

⁸ Silverman.K. - ‘*Back to the Future*’ (Camera Obscura, 27 Sept, 1991) p.128-9

⁹ Marder.E. - ‘*Blade Runner; Moving Still*’ (Camera Obscura, 27 Sept, 1991) p.97

¹⁰ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky*, tr. Julie Rose (London, Verso 1997) p.140

underlying logic of linearity since it has every possible path open to it within the limits of the earth's own energy resource. Time itself, as implemented by data flow, becomes a new plane of becoming; "the implementation of absolute speed in signal transmission eliminated the relative speed of the circulation of products, goods and people...Information suddenly looked like the same thing as its limit speed"¹¹. Images are then redefined in terms of the electronic light of laser holography or integrated circuit computer - where it is speed alone which "...appears as the primal magnitude of the image and the source of its depth."¹²

Interestingly, the principles of Virilio's analysis may be fed back into the workings of more apparently pedestrian media, for if the 'speed' of the image is considered to be not its linear ordering in space but its ability to destroy space and to operate its own non-linear time span, then cybernetic TV is also a medium of speeds and slownesses in the Spinozist sense. As 'real-time' TV produces chronological and quantitative fissures, it induces new perceptual processes and unrehearsed durational configurations. Like the Bergsonian scenario of the world as meta-cinema in which ostensibly separate frames on an image track function as a great deal more than the sum of their parts, thus transforming themselves into pure movement and venting otherwise imperceptible effects, television can also synthesise or stack otherwise separate realities as simulated, non-chronological environments. Channel changing can thus be treated not as interior to the television set but as a formatting of reality itself, much as Scott Carpenter describes his experience of space flight; "...I had the strange impression time was being compressed, as though speed had the effect of piling up moments spent inside the capsule on top of one another. All the time I had the feeling of being rushed from one event to the next as they popped up, like ducks on a shooting gallery."¹³

Like net surfing, multiple-user interfacing and audio sampling, television, here treated as a mode of navigation, is a process which grabs an excerpt of reality but does not then sever it from its surrounding durational possibilities. "[E]ach perception is surrounded by a fringe of unlikelihood, of impalpable possibility," writes Massumi, "Perception shades off into a systematicity whose exact contours can only be thought."¹⁴ What is delivered to the perceptual system by these rich, ambient image environments emerges from a switching between real-time scenarios - increments of information are here sifted from a dense web of possibilities. It is the retention of these possibilities, such that the

¹¹ Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor*, p.138

¹² Virilio.P. - *War and Cinema; The Logistics of Perception* tr. Patrick Camiller, (London, Verso, 1989) p.16

¹³ Virilio.P. - - *Open Sky* p.68

¹⁴ Massumi.B. - 'The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason' available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html p.5

selection of one involves always being on the brink of another, which produces reality as a virtual and intensive journey which operates beyond the co-ordinates of a pre-figured spatial order. Different time potentials remain flush with one another and resist the representational effects of a single, stable time order.

If television can be treated as a surfing of reality itself then the recent technological development known as GIS or 'Geographic Information Systems' can be posited as a definitive superconductive medium of speed for it even further develops the simultaneous time loops of multiplicitous broadcasting. It processes different real-time durations simultaneously and then displays the result on a constantly updating single screen; "Almost certainly by the end of the decade, the largest metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, will be using geosynchronous LANDSAT systems to manage traffic congestion and oversee physical planning. The same LANDSAT-GIS capability can be cost shared and time shared with police departments to survey the movements of tens of thousand of electronically tagged individuals and their automobiles."¹⁵ If, for a moment, GIS, as a surveillance apparatus, would seem above all to be a coloniser of quantifiable space rather than a conductor of non-quantifiable time - able to locate distant individuals with an accuracy of less than twenty inches by the end of the century - then Virilio's observation confirms its more significant dis-orienting potential; "...in the case of a declaration of war against the United States, the Pentagon automatically reserves the right to tamper with what amounts to a 'public service' by falsifying indications of proximity in order to guarantee the operational superiority of its armed forces..."¹⁶ Here the mapping of many parallel temporalities is used to re-write the standard laws of three-dimensional, continuous space.

"You don't have bodies, you are bodies!"

"You have no speed, you are speed!"¹⁷

If the effects of new imaging technologies are instantiated corporeally, then as has been argued, the body too is a manifestation of speed itself. If "...the reality of information is entirely contained in the speed of its dissemination,"¹⁸ and if, as Virilio argues, the era of simulation can be characterised as the slippage of the individual into the path of such speeding information, then the participant's body is necessarily "endowed with a second skin; with a muscle and nerve interface that fits over his own cutaneous layer.

¹⁵ Davies.M. - *'Beyond Blade Runner; Urban Control, The Ecology of Fear* available at <http://www.mediamatic.nl/Magazine/8'2/Davies-Urban.html> p.15

¹⁶ Virilio - *The Art of the Motor* p.156

¹⁷ Riech qu. in Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(e), 1991) p.43

¹⁸ Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor* p.140

For him...information becomes the sole 'relief' of corporeal reality, its unique volume."¹⁹ The body as information as speed is thus the conductor of intensive movement. Where bodies are immersed and re-composed by image technologies, 'speed' is understood not as a subordination of time to space (the law of linear time) but of space to time. The body is therefore subject to an infinite number of possible qualitative changes which are triggered by an alteration in the rates of its movement. When the perceptual system becomes ergonomically aligned with the virtual time lapses of a machine's digital potential, it too is able to flick between different durational layers which cut through the acquired perceptual habits of linear space-time. New developments in pilot technology lead this field, with the recent invention of an artificial intelligence system which replaces "the instrument panel and its sundry indicator lights with a helmet, a sort of virtual cockpit whose transparent visor would display flight parameters at the precise moment these become indispensable, the rest of the time clearing the pilot's visual field of all signal interference."²⁰ Here, in the manner of all affective phenomena, perception has shifted from cognitive relay as the inhibitor of speed to direct action where action is treated as a state of receptiveness and conductivity to unfamiliar inputs rather than as closed loop of previously rehearsed responses. The result is a body which can be in many different places, pursuing many different tasks at any one time.

To isolate speed as the prime variable of image dynamics is to finely engage with the technics of becoming. Many of the possessional states, immersions and transversal co-existences which have so far been identified as the perceptual journeys travelled in an age of simulation depend upon a direct corporeal response to the varying speeds of an environment. This is a pursuit of the emerging intensities in a network rather than an imposition of stability from a location outside of its immediate operation. Deleuze and Guattari use the example of 'becoming-dog' to demonstrate that the acquisition of, and thus assimilation to, the traits of an incoming entity involves the pursuit of speeds and slownesses which resonate with those of the entity rather than the immobile imitation of its apparent characteristics; "I must succeed in endowing the parts of my body with relations of speed and slowness that will make it become dog, in an original assemblage proceeding neither by resemblance nor by analogy. For I cannot become dog without the dog itself becoming something else..."²¹

Since the inherited Western prison-house of consciousness operates by dissecting the world into fragments and then giving each of these fragments a name which bears no

¹⁹ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky* p.105

²⁰ *ibid.* p.93

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.258-9

functional relation to the characteristics of the said object, our acquired linguistic network is unable to communicate the continuous, non-fragmented, non-linear nature of becoming. Samplings of the world are severed from their attached fields of potential and mutation, making the expression of change and mobility impossible. In contrast, Deleuze's account of reality as a labyrinth of constantly mutating becomings begins with a mobile starting point and allows for the tired routines of structuralism to be thought differently. For if 'becoming-dog' is to be a 'real' possibility and if the body-becoming constituted by the images and environments which impact upon it is to be analysed as a material event, then the signs and images which enable such movements must be acknowledged not as static bodies and immobile units but instead as transit corridors which enable new fusions and intra-organic compounds. The motive force in this scenario must be duly acknowledged - it is the capacity of such signs and images to manifest themselves as multiplicitous durations which frees them from the constraints of fixed relations and unobservable analogies.

In these infinitely expanding networks of potentials, signs and images need no longer remain attached to the surfaces from which they were first thought to emanate. Indeed, it is as an increment of mobile energy that a "sign or packet of signs detaches from the irradiating circular network and sets to work on its own account, starts running a straight line, as though swept into a narrow, open passage..."²² Here signs and images can be treated as propagators of energy which have as much effectivity as any chemical process. However, what they demand for as long as they operate in this way, is a network or field of effects and immanent relations. Images as energy are demonstrably ultra-functional as parts of a network but only for as long as they are not limited to the representational parameters of the screen which transmits them. The screen here must be treated as the vent for movement-matter or the entry-point to the journeys which lie behind it. It is an interface or hinge between the perceptible and the imperceptible. Its folding technique reveals the expanses of virtuality as an ever uncoiling realm of potential - the 'unseen' of matter, the unexplored terrains of the body as a plane of immanence.

It is the ability of this screen, as a plane of durational experimentation, to immerse the body directly in zones of unrehearsed becomings which has led Virilio to announce that we are witnessing, or rather participating in, the emergence of a 'superconductive' medium "that will do away with any kind of 'telluric' landmark, as well as any geophysical 'surface record', since the screen itself is already fading and will soon

²² *ibid.* p. 121

disappear”²³ Deleuze would suggest alternatively that the screen as the medium of speed is not disappearing but is relocating inside the body; “The screen itself is the *cerebral membrane* where immediate and direct confrontations take place between the past and the future, the inside and the outside, at a distance impossible to determine, independent of any fixed point. The image no longer has space and movement as its primary characteristic but topology and time.”²⁴ The two comments are not as incongruous as first may appear for what they demonstrate is the retreat of the fixed surface of signification into the body and the then subsequent subjection of its laws of analogy to the unpredictable motions and behaviours of that particular body. The screen is thus no more than the point of embarkation for the body’s intensive journeys. It is only a medium in the most technical sense - a medium of a “phosphorescence diffused in every direction that becomes actual only by reflecting off certain surfaces which serve simultaneously as the screen for other luminous zones (Sartre)”²⁵ Whatever appears as an image on such a screen is not an image in the standard sense for it is itself an image which exists in advance of its overcoded function as a signifying unit and as such it retains many of the signaletic, luminous, graphic, acoustic and visual qualities which are perceivably lost by the mono-functionalism of acquired linguistic meaning.

If the processes which have been thus far introduced can be taken to be a ‘reversal’ of standard perceptual procedures, in the sense that the object is not followed by its image but the image as intensity exists in advance of the object, then the proceeding focus of analysis must fully investigate the temporal effects of such reverse causalities - the end of a localised screen as the neutral surface of signification; the intensive journeys which are triggered in a complicit perceptual system; the realities of a body which knows no fixed boundaries. Where the contemporary technological events of the machinic phylum meet the legacy of Bergson, there will be seen to be a fundamental shift in the workings of perception and the workings of the body - a shift which Virilio identifies as a transition from retinal persistence to bodily persistence, from the mechanical journeys of the cinematic eye to the digital journeys of the simulated body. If Bergson accounts the world as meta-cinema, the age of simulation engineers the body as virtual reality. It instigates the withdrawal of the projection screen into the folds of the body itself such that the limits of the viewer’s eye and the material constitution of the cinematic screen are open to an infinite realm of possibility. As ‘Virtual Light’ emerges as a potentially widespread technology of the future and thereby installs the projection of images directly onto the back of the retina, the body’s recompositions are not simply induced by the screen before it but by the screen within it.

²³ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky* p.134

²⁴ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* (London, Athlone, 1989) p.125

²⁵ Rodowick.D.N. - *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine*. (London, Duke University Press, 1997) p.33

FROM OPTIC RAYS TO LASER WAVES

The prelude to the account of contemporary image technologies as vehicles of intensive perceptual journeys is found in Deleuze's writings on cinema for it is here that Bergson's anti-representational account of image dynamics is applied to a technological development with full effect. If the history of cinema theory is dominated by psychoanalytic and linguistically based accounts of spectatorship which altogether miss the body as the site of reception of cinematic effect, Deleuze's writings in '*Cinema 1; The Movement-Image*' and '*Cinema 2; The Time-Image*' site an approach on different territory beginning in the first place with an interesting critique of Bergson. What he then succeeds in demonstrating is that even those media which would seem so clearly to demonstrate the training mechanisms of stratified perception can all the while be doing something radically different.

By fusing elements of Bergson's argument which he himself would have considered irreconcilable - his disdain for the 'cinematographic illusion' laid out in '*Creative Evolution*' with his account of the durational possibilities of virtual perception outlined in '*Matter and Memory*' - Deleuze paves the way for a theoretical treatment of the technological de-stratification of the body accomplished by later cinematic and post-cinematic technologies. This means that Deleuze's despair of the declining radicalism of cinema - what he called a slow death from "quantitative mediocrity"²⁶ - need not be taken to be as a final announcement of the closure of perceptual intensity as a cultural phenomenon. Instead, the production of such intensity has been shifted elsewhere - to technologies of digital simulation, which like cinema, use the apparent repetition of the same to radically different effect. As Rodowick writes, "cinema's history of images and signs is ...both the progenitor of audiovisual culture and perhaps the source of its unbounding as a simulacral art...[such] art must extract from the habitual repetition of the everyday 'a little time in a pure state', an event or virtuality in the passing present, deeper than any interior, farther than any exterior..."²⁷

The relocation of cinema's intensive journeys in the image technologies of global telepresence - in the perpetual virtuality of machines such as GIS marks the further retreat of intensive change into the workings of a body, whose perceptual possibilities are no longer limited by the human speeds of cinema viewing nor by the

²⁶ Deleuze, G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* (London, Athlone, 1989) p.164

²⁷ Rodowick, D.N., - *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* p.202

electromagnetic parameters of the organic eye. Cinema may well have instigated the moving perception of the otherwise unseen, but the qualitative and quantitative changes which it could induce in the perceptual apparatus of the viewer are now open to a far greater range of synthetic possibilities due to the implementation of technologies which have no regard for the biological limits of human perception.

In spite of the technological limitations inherent to the cinematic apparatus, it is, according to Deleuze, the starting point from which to account the technological de-humanising of perception and sensation. Where Bergson dismissed cinema as mere mechanistic illusion, Deleuze insists that it can be a medium of unnatural perception. In this sense, the two philosophers reflect the differing relationship between science and time which was specific to the eras in which they respectively wrote. For Bergson, cinema was yet another misconceived invention which emerged from a reductionist version of the world in which time was reduced to a series of separate moments strung together by deterministic law. As though a reflection of Einstein's disapproval of Niels Bohr, "I shall never believe that God plays dice with the world"²⁸, cinema could do little more than mimic time's supposedly linear progression. It thus decomposed movement into immobile sections and then reconstructed the motion of that which it sought to represent by adding it secondarily as a separate variable.

Whilst Bergson attached the cinematic model to a static image which was faithful to Newton's universal law of motion, Deleuze makes direct use of the theories of thermodynamic systems and probability physics which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and treated time itself as an unpredictable and creative force. He uses this knowledge to re-think systems which had previously be understood only in the most linear of terms. He thus re-configures cinema as the medium of durational experimentation. The conceptualisation of cinema as an awkward mechanical process of immobile sections + abstract time (demonstrated most clearly at the time of Bergson's writing by the time/motion studies of Frederick Winslow Taylor) is thus discarded and replaced by a model of cinematic perception according to which the image track cannot be broken down into immobile sections. Movement is immanent to the arrangement of such irrational divisions and what was once taken to be an isolatable unit - a quantifiable frame - becomes a 'bifurcation point' in the development of the film. It is a moment at which it is impossible to know which direction either the image track or the unfolding narrative will take. Despite the fact that Bergson's perspective on cinema was no doubt limited by an overly scientific use of film in the period up to 1907 when he wrote '*Creative Evolution*', Deleuze is frustrated by the dismissal of cinema which he outlined

²⁸ *ibid.* - p.20

in this text; “The discovery of the movement-image beyond the conditions of natural perception was the extraordinary invention of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* [1896]. Had Bergson forgotten it ten years later?”²⁹

What ‘*Matter and Memory*’ offered to a theory of cinema was two crucial moves beyond a conceptualisation of images as immobile sections of movement. Deleuze’s transcoded these moves into two key concepts - the ‘movement-image’ and the ‘time-image’. They mark out the changing relation between technology, the viewer and time, or in Bergsonian terms, between the eye, brain and matter. The ‘movement-image’ - typified by the avant-garde cinema of the 1920s - produces an automatism in image dynamics by seeking to actively manifest rather than secondarily represent movement itself. It uses montage to draw together multiplicitous image sources in order to produce a Whole which is more than the sum of its parts. By then mediating different realities, movement-images pre-empt and then deny signification, for they are “...not yet bodies or rigid lines, but only lines or figures of light.”³⁰ Interestingly, this type of image is only an intermediary moment on the path towards the configuration of image as absolute speed. Since there remains a notional element of linearity within each segment of imported montage, Deleuze points out that the movement-image is not entirely freed from its spatial co-ordinates. Blocks of images are no longer immobile, they manifest themselves as movement but they do not yet engender themselves as time as an independent variable. For this reason, the movement image is called the ‘organic’ regime.

For Deleuze, it is the ‘time-image’ which provides the most radical opportunity for intensive perceptual journeys. It is marked out by a fissure located at around 1950 which divides the narratives of organic cinema from a non-organic or crystalline cinema in which aberrant movement reveals time to be the force of dominant change. Where the movement-image tended to reduce the unique to the familiar, time to space, the time-image marks a departure by which the irrational divisions which constitute an image track refuse simple relation to one another. Division is singular and irreducible and at every moment produces a wealth of potential directions which the film may pursue; “This time-image puts thought into contact with the unthought, the unsummonable, the inexplicable, the undecidable, the incommensurable. The outside or obverse of images has replaced the whole, at the same time as the interval or the cut has replaced association.”³¹ This type of image is no longer ‘viewed’ in the straightforward sense. It could be said that centre of perception has been transferred from the cinema spectator to

²⁹ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986) p.2

³⁰ *ibid.* p.60

³¹ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* p.214

the characters which are internal to the narrative - for they are now subject to an entirely new range of unanticipated circumstances. The character has lost his/her familiar response to situations and is instead secondary to a set of unexplored durational possibilities which are inherent to the film's unpredictable life - here montage is no longer imposed from the exterior; it has become inherent at the molecular level.

This latter version of the operation of an image places the parts of the perceptual assemblage - eye, brain and matter - in intensive relation with one another. Since the continuum of images cannot be reductively analysed from the outside, the viewer is forced into a relationship with the cinematic apparatus which is akin to his/her 'real' experience of time as a creative process which produce the new and the unpredictable at each emergent juncture. It is an experience of cinema as "an uninterrupted series of instantaneous visions which are part of things, rather than of ourselves,"³² - where ourselves is here taken to mean removed from the action. Where Bergson criticised cinema for its complicity with reductionist models of linear time, Deleuze used his criticism against itself by showing that the Bergsonian model of duration could be actively demonstrated by cinematic flux. If cinema could provide the immersion which Deleuze suggested, manifesting itself, therefore, as a "world of universal variation, of universal undulation, universal rippling [in which] there are neither axes, nor centre, nor left, nor right, nor high, nor low"³³ then "[t]he observer has ceased to be an innocent registrar of his objective observations but has, rather, come to take an active participation in the experiment."³⁴ What he proposed therefore was the ability of a film not to mimic the world according to a linear chronological analogy, but to vent the matter of the world by producing a wealth of virtual possibilities which exist above and below the observed image experience at any one time. What is seen on the screen at any particular moment is thus not truly indicative of the journey which it instigates on the part of the participant, because it is the movement which is in excess of the individually seen unit which constitutes the leaking in of the virtual realm.

Since, according to Bergson "(m)ovement is no less outside me than in me: and the self itself in turn is only one case among others in duration,"³⁵ and since the image is a temporary manifestation of that movement, the body is continually in a state of transit between phenomena. If, at any moment the particular image or intensive movement

³² Bergson.H.- *Matiere etMemoire* p.67 qu.in Kolalowski. L. - Bergson, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985) p.40

³³ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986) p.58

³⁴ Wiener.N. - *God and Golem Inc; a comment on certain points where cybernetics impinges on religion* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1964)p.89

³⁵ Deleuze.G, - *Bergsonism* (New York, Zone, 1991) p.75

should be captured back into the striations of representation, then that movement is frozen for the purpose of securing an exterior position of objectivity from which the participant can remove him/ herself from the process. Thus “[t]hat which distinguishes it as a present image, an objective reality, from a represented image is the necessity which obliges it to act through every one of its points upon all the points of all images, to transmit the whole of what it receives, to oppose every action in equal and contrary reaction, to be, in short, merely a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe.”³⁶ The emphasis here is on the matter which precedes the image - on the activities and flow which are anterior to all signification. It is assumed that the image may function flush with the raw atomic matter which is its basic constitution, in order therefore to instigate global effects - for it is via this meshing of image, state and object that “the smallest subatomic particles are caught up in a changing whole with the gravitational effect of one galaxy upon another.”³⁷ In this scenario, the image is manifested as absolute speed - not, therefore, as an isolatable image but as a propagator which alters not only the behaviour and constitution of bodies which touch it but also the function of itself. It thus collects effects in order to reciprocate and multiply itself throughout the wider network.

As an intensive process, the time-image manifests its behaviour not only as an interval of speed but also as an increment of temperature. Like temperature, it changes in nature each time it is divided. It thus changes in state independently of the quantitative means which are reductively used to measure it. Deleuze asks; “What is the significance of these indivisible distances that are ceaselessly transformed and cannot be divided or transformed without their elements changing in nature in time? Is it not the intensive character of this kind of multiplicity’s elements and the relation between them?”³⁸ That an image can act as a gauge of intensive temperature changes is a development which Deleuze treats not metaphorically, but materially. Just as the image maps out the presence of luminous blood via heat-detecting cameras which detect the presence of humans in the film ‘*Predator*’, so too can the cinema image operate by responding to changes in the molecular state of its imaged environment - to, therefore, the changes in state of impending realities. What Deleuze terms as ‘gaseous perception’ is an example of such image dynamics which continually change in nature. It is named as such because it is activated by the freest molecular state between images. Deleuze describes the shift from the liquid to the gaseous state as such; “The whole screen is filled by the photogramme of fire, which disintegrates in slow motion into a very granular soft

³⁶ Bergson.H. - *Matter and Memory* (New York, Zone, 1994) p.36

³⁷ Rodowick.D.N. - *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* p.31

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.31

form.”³⁹ Here the image is not a hardened, exteriorised form but an emergent property thrown up by the molecular dynamics of the reality which it maps. It is not imposed from the outside, but is merely a surface effect of a set of evolving transformations.

The ability of an image to induce molecular and thus corporeal change has been thoroughly accounted within the broader discussion of materialist simulation. Here it is helpfully recontextualised within Deleuze’s cinematic use of Bergson because it would seem that Bergson’s most pertinent thesis concerns this very process of prosthesis - of a body to itself, of an image to itself and of a body and an image in artificial coupling with each other. Bergson’s implicit account of bodily re-invention instigated by the burgeoning image technologies of the current simulation age is dependent on a thesis which has so far remained submerged but now appears with clear resonance - that there is a material equivalence between matter and image. It is by making this assertion - itself an invention produced by the rules of cybernetic engineering - that the body and the image become indiscernible. They function as aggregates or clusters in constant interaction with each other and thus resource the unpredictable realms in one to induce unexpected change in the other. Bergson posited the equation $MATTER=IMAGE$ in part to resolve what seemed to be an irreconcilable dichotomy between the respective materialist and idealist positions which striated philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century. This split in approach to the question of representation produced two distinct versions of a world in relation to its image - either the materialist position of a reality mediated by images which exist statically and thus independently of the body or that of the idealist position which situated the image firmly within the phantasmatic mind, as a projection of man’s best interests.

Bergson’s diagonalised alternative appears simple; “the object exists in itself...the object is, in itself, pictorial, as we perceive it; image it is, but a self-existing image...matter exists just as it is perceived; and since it is perceived as an image, the mind would make of it, in itself, an image”⁴⁰ - matter and image are thus consistent with one another. By thus removing the materialist certainty of the body and the idealist stability of the representing mind - by therefore, subordinating the spatial obligations of both to a durational multiplicitous sense of time - Bergson instigates a series of effects which not only radically revise the perceptual possibilities of a world become cinema but also technically extend the body into territories where the human eye is a defunct organ.

³⁹ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986) p.86

⁴⁰ Bergson.H. - *Matter and Memory* p.10

To then treat images as non-metric units of Bergsonian duration is to expose their full alien and de-humanising potential. They are no longer produced inside us since they are not the forced products of a solipsistic interiority cut off from the material world. Instead they are radically dis-orienting entities which transmit an unknown world prior to its perception. In this way, their relation to a delimitable consciousness becomes a secondary bit-part of a wider unrepresented reality. In the fashion of Spinoza, images do not necessarily need to be perceived in order to exist; “It is true that an image may be without being perceived - it may be present without being represented and the distance between these two terms, presence and representation, seems just to ensure the interval between matter itself and our conscious perception of matter.”⁴¹ Since an image is not entirely produced by us, nor is it entirely dependent on conscious perception in order to instigate effect, it may produce radically unrecognisable change in the assemblage in which it operates. It may herald “the rise of situations to which one can no longer react, of environments with which there are now only chance relations, of empty or disconnected any-space-whatevers replacing qualified, extended space.”⁴²

Whatever alien movement an image itself may instantiate is thus directly manifested as the unknown of the body since the laws governing even the body’s conscious perceptual mechanisms - the synaptic transportation systems which transmit energy along neural paths - are no different in kind from the rules of movement which connect bodies and images. What Bergson therefore establishes is a hyper-sensitive field of perceptual and sub-perceptual response mechanisms which produce actual bodily conjunctions between acting parts. In no other system other than the one in which matter is an ‘aggregate of images’ - the perception of which “referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body”⁴³ - could perception produce such corporeally instantiated becomings which demand that the body become prosthetic to its own, unknown realms.

In these networks of connectability, the sight of an object becomes a bodily connection, which requires the development of a new sensory tentacle composed by the objects perceived parts. This new sense-probe can then be re-invented should the act of perception be machinically augmented to allow the exploration of one of the many other differential conjunctions which emanate from that particular object. This modelling of a corporeal consciousness which functionally extends what would be commonly understood to be a body is dependent, for its sustenance, on a perceptual building of new relations with an environment. Kolakowski explains that this state of perceptual

⁴¹ *ibid.*- p.35

⁴² Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* p.272

⁴³ Bergson.H. - *Matter and Memory* p.22.

connectibility is not necessarily a state to which we must aspire - it is instead, the 'true' nature of an environment operative prior to the solipsistic installation of a sealed consciousness. This 'true' world, without an external observer, is a world perfectly identical with itself at all times. It does not contain a pre-ordained structure which transports the perceptual apparatus from one moment to another along a linear time track. For Bergson, this 'entering in' to an aggregate of movements is what he terms 'intuition' - "a sympathy whereby one carries oneself into the interior of an object to coincide with what is unique and therefore inexpressible in it. Analysis, on the other hand, is an operation which reduces the object to elements that are known and that the object has in common with others."⁴⁴

In terms of building a non-specular perceptual geometry this intuitive mode of interaction is a means of subtracting a dimension from a scene. It is only by standing 'outside' that an environment appears three-dimensional in the conventional sense. For Deleuze and Guattari, this is the installation of two otherwise redundant dimensions which have no active function other than to perpetuate representationalism. The Bergsonian system of intuition is, by contrast, a laying out of parts, without privilege or structure, which can be recombined, constitutively and dimensionally over an unfixed period of time. The difference is clear; "Unity always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding)." By contrast, the intuitive model is a multiplicity which "never allows itself to be overcoded, never has available a supplementary dimension over and above its number of lines, that is, over and above the multiplicity of numbers attached to those lines."⁴⁵ Virilio rightly attaches this collapse in spatial dimensions to a temporal fracture in time. He suggests that it is directly due to the action of 'teletopical technologies' that "...following the crisis in 'whole' spatial dimension and the resultant rise in 'fractional' dimensions, we will soon see a crisis in the temporal dimension of the present moment."⁴⁶

Deleuze's two part account of cinematic perception is based on the proposition that cinema can induce such intuitive states. It is clear that the movement-image is unable to fully accomplish dimensional collapse and thus absolute multiplicity for it "exists only as the first dimension of an image that never stops growing in dimensions"⁴⁷ - it does not therefore maintain its mono-dimensionality and cybernetic immanence. However, the time-image as the direct image of time, is an emancipation of time which instigates

⁴⁴ Kolakowski. L.- *Bergson* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985) p.24

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.89

⁴⁶ Virilio.P.- *Open Sky*, p.14

⁴⁷ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* p.22

otherwise impossible continuities as emergences from an entirely flat plane of parts; “all reference of the image of description to an object assumed to be independent does not disappear, but is now subordinated to the internal elements and relations which tend to replace the object and to delete it where it does appear, continually displacing it.”⁴⁸ It is in the context of the specific time of his writing that Deleuze may express such faith in cinema as a technology of immanence. As will be argued, it may be that his mapping of an image as immanence is not fully born out by cinema per se but by the later developments of technologies of simulation. In its original form, Deleuze’s account depends on an interesting disregard for the capacity of the film camera, as the medium, to limit the perceptual parameters of the human eye. It may be able to excerpt and intensively process events occurring in different time zones but in doing so it must process only those events which operate in the realm of the electromagnetic spectrum which is humanly visible light. As such, it is able to process only those perceptual speeds which register on the retina. This limits its capacity to be entirely immersed in the environment which constitutes it.

What occupies us here are the speeds of activity which are both too fast and too slow to be captured by the camera’s recording mechanism. With this in mind Deleuze’s comments in his conclusions of *Cinema 2* are of particular interest, for it is here that he acknowledges a ‘beyond’ of the time-image and thus a state of immanence which exceeds its cinematic version. It is the as yet “unknown aspects of the time-image”⁴⁹ which he points to in the “electronic image, that is, the tele and video image, the numerical image coming into being [which is able] to transform cinema or to replace it, to mark its death” - by it would seem, mapping a previously undiscovered realm of non-optical speed. Deleuze claims that he is not “producing an analysis of the new image,” but wishes only to indicate, “certain effects whose relation to the cinematographic image remains to be determined.”⁵⁰ Such effects are beyond the parameters of cinema as a means of production which is identifiably a single medium, which is dependent on the human domain of the spectrum and which is unable to escape the confines of pre-recorded image production.

THE SCREEN AS INSTRUMENT PANEL

There is without doubt a necessary recontextualisation of Bergson’s thesis within the network of image technologies which Edmund Couchot calls ‘immedia’⁵¹ - referring to

⁴⁸ *ibid.* - p.22

⁴⁹ *ibid.*- p.266

⁵⁰ *ibid.* - p.265

⁵¹ *ibid.* - p.331

the numerical and digital images which emerge without a discernible medium to transmit them. Since these images use the body itself as the means of their transmission, they provide a new environment to be analysed in terms of its intuitive behaviours; “The new images no longer have any outside (out-of-field), any more than they are internalized in a whole; rather they have a right side and a reverse, reversible and non-superimposable, like a power to turn back on themselves. They are the object of a perpetual re-organisation in which a new image can arise from any point whatever of the preceding image.”⁵² For Deleuze, this emancipation of “‘omni-directional space’ which constantly varies its angles and co-ordinates”⁵³ is instigated by the radical deterritorialisation of the screen as a surface of reception - for what had once so clearly been structured around the constraints of human posture, assuring therefore a vertical axis and linear perspective, has in the electronic age been abstracted to a form unrecognisable to itself. It “rather constitutes a table of information replacing nature... and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing the eyes of nature.”⁵⁴ What was ‘read’ by the interpretative eye becomes instead a biotic component of a brain prosthetic to itself - this is the body become tactile, operative not according to identifiably stratified sense organs but by perpetual re-composition within an environment which is always already adjusting its co-ordinates.

The conversion of the cinematic screen into a digital instrument panel via which a constant stream of images can be cut, converted and re-distributed through differentiated time zones is, for Virilio, simultaneous with a motorising of sight itself - the instantiation therefore of perceptual experiments once sited before the spectator on the screens of cinema, as ‘true’ perception itself, via radically disordered sensory organs; “...far from being satisfied with retinal persistence alone, as formerly with the illusion created by the unwinding film reel, specialists in computer graphics have now managed to motorise sight.”⁵⁵ This is the cinema screen on the inside of the body, where therefore it is no longer discernibly “cinematic” but where it is the propagation of light itself, prior to its projection on a screen. It is the technical virtualising of sight as a sensory organ - the introduction of retinal messages which can beat the messenger, of synthetic computerised speeds which operate above and below the rates of the human brain.

The biologist would argue that there are clearly demarcated limits ^{on} non-human perception; “On the human scale, anything that lasts less than about a tenth of a second

⁵² *ibid.* - p.265

⁵³ *ibid.* - p.265

⁵⁴ *ibid.* - p.265

⁵⁵ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky* p.93

passes too quickly to form a visual image and is thus invisible; if the duration is less than a thousandth of a second or so, the event becomes too fast even for subliminal perception and is completely outside of the human sphere.”⁵⁶ In our compressed world, the nanosecond, picosecond or femtosecond is far beyond our perceptual capacity and yet the environment is heaving with infinite layers of such speedy microactivity. It is the technical exploration of these speeds which detaches the body from what appears on the screen and re-installs it behind the screen to where “...the real action lies...in the immanent nanotechnological miniaturisation of integrated circuits that will promote the iconic insemination of ‘consumer’ information, not so much in situ, as previously, but in vivo, with the grafting of visual interference rounding off the implanting of organs and sensory prostheses.”⁵⁷ As perception switches on to the ‘real-time’ transmissions of aerial mapping system which allow the spontaneous acceleration or deceleration of 54000 images; to hyperballistic firing tunnels which launch scale models of re-entry bodies as 5000m/s in full view of cinemaradiographic flash equipment shooting at 40 million images/sec; to the televisual synthesis of simultaneous, instantaneous satellite links, optical technologies reel out phase, converting the attention span into a machinic input. What was once known as human perception becomes a component of infinite potential. Realities once recorded by the film camera are here infinitely unfolded by digital technologies which reveal the densities, frequencies, flows and speeds of realities which remain imperceptible on a film screen running at 24 frames/sec.

“Soon the only thing left will be for us to forget the specious distinction between the propagation of images or waves and that of objects or bodies since from now on all duration will be measured in intensity.”⁵⁸

If the screen could once have been attached to a space, a central perspective and a linear chain of events, it is the reduction of its constitutive parts to no more than a set of electronic lines (Couchot) which removes it as an identifiable part in an assemblage. It is replaced simply by the flow of information itself. When “the optic nerve [is] irradiated by laser beams reproducing on the screen of the occipital cortex that fine line of light once produced by the old main projector,”⁵⁹ then the assumed form of visual appearance is precluded by neural impulses which replace the phenomenological with the materially hallucinogenic. This shift from the limits of an eye which has not yet been fully networked to an eye which is programmed straight onto the circuit takes its body to deeper levels of corporeal immersion - it is no longer “observing” shifts in duration

⁵⁶ Reid.T.R - *Microchip; The Story of a Revolution and the Men who Made it* (London, Collins, 1985) p.21

⁵⁷ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky* p.99

⁵⁸ Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(e), 1991) p.74

⁵⁹ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky* tr. Julie Rose (London, Verso 1997) p.94

but physically experiencing them as reality. This is the shift “from retinal persistence which permits the optical illusion of cinematic projection to the bodily persistence of this terminal man: a pre-requisite for the sudden mobilisation of the illusion of the whole world telepresent at each moment, the witness’s own body becoming the last urban frontier.”⁶⁰

As computerised visual implants take the eye, or more specifically the body, on unimaginable excursions through durational zones both above and below those once familiar, the body is not transported by the currents of extra-optical electromagnetic waves, it is instantiated as them. It is here required to function as a “superconductive medium...[as] an immaterial medium whose fluid mechanics has little to do with water or air and much more to do with the waves that carry information,”⁶¹ In finding the medium within itself and by then subtracting the overcoding mechanisms of subjectivity in order to ensure that that medium works at full efficiency, the body technically becomes little more than this - little more than the waves which it conducts; “...now thanks to the progress of hypersonic speed, the more minute layers protecting the living organism’s insides have become less than nothing in the face of the implementation of the absolute speed of electronic impulses. As though the speed limit of electromagnetic waves had once and for all overtaken the imperceptible limit of cutaneous tissue.”⁶²

Virilio’s comment on the folding back of bodies and images to reveal only the path of electromagnetic waves is not without key theoretical significance. To treat the body as a multiplicity of journeying, electromagnetic waves is to abstract out its most multiplicitous geometries and to subject it to the demands of ultra-functional re-invention since waves themselves, “...are vibrations, shifting borderlines inscribed on the plane of consistency as so many abstractions. The abstract machine of the waves... is simultaneously in this multiplicity and at its edge, and crosses over into the others.”⁶³ Deleuze writes that the receptivity of the Body without Organs is dependent on its behaviour as an undulating wave; “A wave of varying amplitude surrounds the Body without Organs; it marks out zones and levels which follow the variation in amplitude.”⁶⁴ Since the shift from a meta-cinematic version of the world to a machinically interactive field of communication technologies which function aside from the prescribed medium is, in effect, the retreat of electromagnetic waves into the folds of the body, it would seem that the electronic image, as Deleuze suggested, would be

⁶⁰ *ibid.* p.11

⁶¹ *ibid.* p.134

⁶² Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(e), 1991) p.130

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.252

⁶⁴ Deleuze .G.- *Francis Bacon; Logique de la Sensation* (Editions de la Difference) p.34(author’s translation)

able to both affirm and intensify the intuitive processes which establish direct relations between a participant and an object.

This heightened intuitive state is due to the fact that the wave is intensity per se. It operates, not by traversing a stable and delimited, extended space without alteration to its own state, but instead by moving on the spot. Space does not stay stable whilst it moves; the wave stays still whilst space adapts to its fluctuation in dimensions. It is therefore a stockpiling of time - it is 'at' many points simultaneously and does not operate by a linear series of discontinuous successive states. It is, quite clearly, no longer to be "confused with the space which serves as its place nor with the actual present which is passing: the time of the event comes to an end before the event does, so the event will start again at another time...the whole event is at it were in the time where nothing happens." There is therefore "a present of the future, a present of the present of the past, all implicated in the event, rolled up in the event, simultaneous and inexplicable."⁶⁵ To reconfigure bodies and images in terms of the waves which transmit them is to treat them as non-metric units of absolute immanence - parts of system which do not stay spatially fixed over time but which instead mutate as they move, covering a range of states at any one time. For Virilio, the retreat of the image into the body, to the detriment of a discernible medium, is the final stage required to achieve this state of immanence or Bergsonian intuition. It is the engineering of a field of operations which must now be referred to as post-optical; "We cannot see the world as it goes by. We cannot naturally perceive it speeding up, any more than we can perceive what might be the reality of time itself in which movement occurs. Movement is blindness."⁶⁶ There is therefore no longer any stable position or standard measure by which to quantitatively gauge changes in the rate of movement.

"Through restlessness one loses mastery."⁶⁷

*"I do not know its name
I call it DAO
Painfully giving it a name
I call it 'great'
Great; That means 'always in motion'
'Always in motion' means 'far away'
'Far away' means 'returning'"⁶⁸*

⁶⁵ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* p.100

⁶⁶ Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor*,p.68

⁶⁷ Lao Tzu - *Tao Te Ching; The Richard Wilhelm Edition* (London, Arkana, 1989) p.38

⁶⁸ *ibid.* p. 37

To map the intensities of a body in terms of its wave formations is to remove it from the grid of its previous spatio-temporal co-ordinates. If it was once situated in a world apparently run by technologies operating at increasingly accelerative rates, it here refuses to gather pace. Instead, it slows down and populates itself with a series of 'motionless voyages'. Since becoming-wave involves durational excursions which take place 'on the spot', electronic bodies are transmitted as much by slowness as by speed - even "the most absolute immobility, pure catatonia, is part of the speed vector, is carried by this vector, which links the petrification of the act to the precipitation of movement."⁶⁹ Virilio figures this state of durational immobility as a terminal condition, a fatal passivity of a body which never need move because, "...[f]rom now on, everything arrives without our ever having to leave. But 'what' arrives is already no longer a stopover or the end of the trip; it is merely information, information-world, no, information universe!"⁷⁰ He goes on to explain; "currently, with the instantaneous broadcasting revolution, we are seeing the beginning of a 'generalised arrival' ...[produced by] the nineteenth century's elimination of the journey (that is, of the space interval and of time) combining with the abolition of departure at the end of the twentieth century, the journey thereby losing its successive components and being taken by arrival alone."⁷¹

This state of generalised immobility, of arriving without leaving is, for Deleuze and Guattari, a field of immense intensity and corporeal potential. Space and time are under perpetual re-construction, the body is in a state of continual sensory development. For Virilio, however, whose concerns are of a very different kind, this immobility is only a condition of passivity. It is the death of the body, an ill-fated inertia since it melts all the spatial co-ordinates from which some subversive effort to redress the effects of such technologies may be staged. Since "...all positioning is, in fact, beginning to find itself in an impasse, causing a crisis in all position forecasting"⁷², Virilio asks, with grave concern, "how do we locate ourselves?"⁷³ What Virilio fears above all else is not that these processes may herald an intensive distribution of what we know as the human body but a disappearance of the body altogether - for then we may no longer have the rules and parameters according to which we can find and delimit its boundaries.

⁶⁹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.400

⁷⁰ Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor* p.131-2

⁷¹ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky*, p.16

⁷² Virilio - *The Art of the Motor*, p. 155

⁷³ *ibid.* - p.127

It is to the detriment of Virilio's theory that he here confuses the immanent distribution of a body with its complete disappearance, thereby confusing non-locatable intensive flows on the phylum of a machinic economy with inertia and immateriality. Virilio otherwise has a great deal to offer a theory of speed - in some quarters, his account of 'dromology' defines it for his work, is, in many senses, solely concerned with mapping the immediate proximities outlined here. What he call 'dromology' refers to the siphoning of the body through the mechanisms of speed based power structures, mediascapes and war machines. The result is the mutation of the body into a classless cyborg endowed with a 'dromocratic consciousness' in which biological rhythms are subordinated to a logistics of machinic perception. For Virilio, speed is always the accelerative drive behind these mutations - projectively taking the body, culture and power to the point where their unrecognisable traits shatter into a universe of abstract control where the only remaining dimensions are those of time.

It is with a charismatic conservatism, therefore, that he withdraws from the full implications of the scenario which he lays out. He forfeits the possibilities of speed based lines of flight secreted within even the most rigid of power structures in order to pursue a reactionary conservatism which seeks the return of a body and a consciousness which we already know is operationally defunct. It is distinctive to Virilio's writing that he should consider the most effective line of survival to be 'inside' the very speed dynamics which he so carefully accounts. He would thus seem to gain theoretical force by grounding his moral concerns so clearly within his own self styled rhetoric of speed - indeed he follows these vectors so intently, that, at times, his nostalgia is near imperceptible. It may be that, like Baudrillard, writing in '*Seduction*', he acknowledges and perversely encourages processes which he knows, ultimately, 'humans' will be unable to stop. However, such moments of fatalism do not advance what could have been an extremely powerful force in his work. When he cannot see a body, he does not engineer a new opening for material process. Instead, like Baudrillard, he assumes a closedness in operations. The body "is thus emptied out, turned into a blank 'metabolic' vehicle, a speedway absorbing all of the infrared signs of the media scape, trapped in a closed horizon which moves according to technological and not biological time."⁷⁴

Despite a rigorous materialist accounting of the meshing of cinema and war technologies, synthetic and human perception, the body remains subordinated to the point of its own collapse. If, for Virilio, "cinema means pulling a uniform over your

⁷⁴ *ibid.* - p.31

eyes [and] television means pulling on a straitjacket”⁷⁵ and “...[i]f being present really does mean being close, physically speaking, the microphysical proximity of interactive telecommunications will surely soon see us staying away in droves, not being here for anyone, locked up, as we shall be, in a geophysical environment reduced to less than nothing.”⁷⁶ Since Virilio can only conceive of the horizon of dromology as closed, and since therefore he maintains a split in terms between truth and reality such that an image can be no more than a commonly conceived image and a body can be no more than the flesh which we already know, he cannot fully exploit the full alchemical potential which is secreted in his writing. What he fails to grasp is that the motionless voyage of a virtualised body does not mark its demise, but marks instead its radical opening up to speeds, durations and telepresences which extend far beyond that which it already knows.

IMPERCEPTIBLE NOT INEFFECTUAL

“Do you know who Frank (Stella) thinks is the greatest living American?” Of course I didn’t. “Ted Williams...[He] sees faster than any other living human. He sees so fast that when the ball comes over the plate - 90 miles an hour - he can see the stitches. So he hits the ball right out of the park. That’s why Frank thinks that he’s the greatest living American.”⁷⁷

Michel Fried

“The vampire reached across the table and gently brushed an ash from the boy’s lapel, and the boy stared at his hand in alarm. ‘Excuse me’, said the vampire. ‘I didn’t mean to frighten you’

‘Excuse me’ , said the boy, I just got the impression suddenly that your arm was abnormally long. You reached so far without moving’.

‘No’, said the vampire, resting his hand on his crossed knees, ‘I moved forward much too fast for you to see. It was an illusion...You have experienced a fundamental difference between the way you see and I

⁷⁵ Virilio - *Open Sky* p.97

⁷⁶ *ibid.* p.62

⁷⁷ Krauss.R. - *The Optical Unconscious* (London, MIT Press, 1993)p.7

*see. My gesture appeared slow and languid to me. And the sound of my finger brushing your coat was quite audible.”*⁷⁸

Anne Rice - Interview with the Vampire

Fundamental to mapping the super-corporeal expansion of the body is the realisation that it contains within it and its field of existence an infinite number of alternative rates of movement, perception and metamorphoses which, although imperceptible, are by no means ineffectual. These stockpiled modes of alternate corporeal states are, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the reverse causalities of intensive processes which “demonstrate that what does not yet exist is already in action, in a different form than that of its existence...”⁷⁹ For Virilio, the switching of the body to these states of the virtual and unfixed is a subsumption of itself to the unilateral power structures of technomachinism. What he fails to realise is that what is in operation is less an effacement of the body than a series of unrehearsed couplings - attachments of its liminal territories to the speed and non-metric time span of machines which are reprogrammed by the body as much as the reverse. Both machines and bodies are virtually composed by layers of phyllic activity which, although only perhaps through implication, continue to engineer their behaviour at any selected moment.

For Bergson, an identifiably singular body is the momentary product of a perceptual act which neutralises and thus isolates a single plane of reality at any one time; “We perceive the thing minus that which does not interest us as a function of our needs...”⁸⁰ The fact that consciousness is a subtractive process - a means of reflection and reduction - has been unacknowledged as such for centuries. This oversight has maintained the solipsistic pillars of Western thought. What in actuality, or rather in virtual actuality occurs is far more destabilising, for if as Bergson states, “outside us one would find nothing but space, and thus simultaneities, of which one may not even say that they objectively succeed each other, as any succession is conceived of by comparing the present to the past,”⁸¹ then any single perceptual act is always already at the brink of other perceptual and corporeal possibilities. It is a momentary actualisation of a dosage of virtuality marked out by what can only be a transitory limit on what is perceived; “In short, things and perceptions are prehensions, but things are total

⁷⁸ Rice.A. - *Interview with the Vampire* (Warner, London, 1995) p.30

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.431

⁸⁰ Deleuze - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986) p.63-4

⁸¹ Bergson.H. - *Essai sur les donnees immediates de la conscience* qu. in Kolakowski.L. - *Bergson* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 16

objective prehensions, and perceptions of things are incomplete and prejudiced, partial, subjective prehensions.”⁸²

We are long accustomed to the mistaking of the thresholds of perception with the limits of the body, but what Bergson indicates and what Virilio unknowingly perpetuates are the unseen corporeal existences which extend throughout the realms of everyday perception which appear to be missing. Since reality can only be accounted in terms of motions which are both “[s]low and rapid [and therefore] not quantitative degrees of movement but rather two types of qualified movement,”⁸³ then the ability of a body to find the unexplored speeds within itself is simultaneously the means of its own mutation. It is its method of summoning new bodies both within and without itself. The non-human speeds of perception induced by synthetic and electronic images are thus not just modes of transport but biotic alternators.

Virilio’s term for these journeys into the chasms of alternate speed or non-chronological time is ‘picnolepsy’. As a perceptual habit most familiar to the child it demands that the stratified subject be hi-jacked from his familiar spatio-temporal context and be inserted into the in-between corporeal states which are triggered as the background or the virtual realm of reality emerges as the primary engineering force. Virilio figures these journeys as moments of becoming absent, but in a way that is most helpfully re-contextualised here as separate from the equivalence which he assumes between absence and the end of corporeal existence. It is rather as trauma⁸⁴, or as a state of withdrawal from familiar perceptual response that the body is coaxed into new becomings. It does not become absent; it merely loses its knowable self⁸⁵ and mechanically “demonstrates the incompatibilities existing between our existence in the world and the various levels of a certain anaesthesia in our consciousness that, at every moment, inclines us to see-saw into more or less extensive absences, more or less serious, even to provoke by various means instantaneous immersions in other worlds, parallel worlds, interstitial, bifurcating...”⁸⁶ Since the electronic image is able to synthesise varying simultaneities

⁸² Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* p.63-4

⁸³ *ibid.* - p.371

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Schivelbusch expressly points out the connection between speed and trauma evident during the nineteenth century expansion of the railroad; “One of the essentially new stimuli of the train journey was its speed, which expressed itself as the dispersed perception of foreground objects, as the feeling of the annihilation of space and time...gradually everything connected with the new velocity became psychically assimilated; as Freud would have said, the stimuli burnt their way into the skin layer and ‘its substance to a certain [depth] may...become permanently modified’. The train passenger of the late nineteenth century who sat reading his book thus had a thicker layer of skin than the earlier traveller, who could not even think about reading because the journey was still, for him, a space-time adventure that engaged his entire sensorium.” (Schivelbusch.W. - *The Railway Journey; The Industrialisation and Perception of Space and Time* (L’Spa; Berg. 1986)p.165)

⁸⁵ as explained in the previous chapter

⁸⁶ Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(c), 1991) p.76

in the single expansive instant of real time broadcasting, it is capable of re-formulating the body across different time spans and different qualitative bifurcation points such that it is in a state of tension, in between time - after before but before after - in a moment of forgetting which suspends animation.

In diagramming the body as a non-linear series of qualitative changes operative across an undetermined expanse of implicated presences, it is productive to re-contextualise it in the physics of chaotic activity. When a body is laid out upon a machinic field of potential, rich in image conductors which switch from the standardly spatio-temporal to the haptic and the non-linear, its journeys are exactly those of a self-organising physical system. Its gaps are moments of indecision during which it may pause, effectively perceive itself and select one of an infinite number of possible behaviours in which to continue its motion. The change of state occurs aside from the anticipative grid of behaviour laid out in space.

‘Benard instability’ is an example of such a pause during modal change when a system ferments within its own tightly packed realm of possibility. It occurs when a heated liquid undergoes a phase change in its internal motion which marks a shift from diffusive behaviour to spontaneously ordered convective pattern. The moment or cause of this shift is not explicable in terms of the laws of heat diffusion alone. Technically, it is a change in state which is considered near impossible. But that is according to a gauge which predicts events according to previously repeated behaviours. Theorists of dissipative structures⁸⁷ suggest that at a particular non-forecastable moment, the instability of the convection process renders the liquid untypically sensitive to the effects of gravity. This previously sidelined force in the system is suddenly brought to the fore, to produce a locally negentropic effect; order emerges on the system’s very own terms. The emergence is the system’s adventure within itself for at no external moment can the transformation be predicted.

This system, like the Body without Organs is absorbed solely in its own behaviour. It runs on no externally registered program or hierarchy of function. Every quantitative change which occurs within the system, every alteration in energetic input is met by a fed back change in the qualitative state of the system, “...like a speed or a temperature, which is not composed of other speed and temperatures, but rather is enveloped in or envelops others, each of which marks a change in nature...”⁸⁸ This is not a perceptual field where the observer remains unchanged and untouched by the object in front of

⁸⁷ See Prigogine.I. and Stengers.I. - *Order Out of Chaos*, (London, Flamingo, 1985) p.142-3

⁸⁸ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p. 31

him. This is the reversal or bleedback of perception - the inclusion of parts and influences within each other. Here the eye has access to the entirety of a field with all its spatial and temporal possibilities from which one must be grasped for the circuit to begin again. Until this is done, the system will remain in the virtual gap outside of the perceivable, extensive circuit, where it is unable to overcode the unpredictable behaviour of matter itself. It will continue to act, not outwardly, according to physical laws, but inwardly, on its own futurity.

“Case Hit the simstim switch. And flipped into the agony of a broken bone. Molly was braced against the blank grey wall of a long corridor, her breath coming ragged and uneven. Case was back in the matrix instantly, a white-hot line of pain fading in his left thigh.”

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*⁸⁹

“I’m touching you, that’s quite enough to let me know that you are my body.”

Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is Not One*⁹⁰

As the flickering screens of contemporary image technologies switch in and out of the durational possibilities which lie above and below the strata of human perception, they not only expand the body - they multiply it by putting it in touch with simultaneous selves which exist within the expanded version of durational time. A body never absorbs a past and creates a future on its own - it does so in response to the activities of other bodies which process its activities at the same time as their own. Virilio’s account, though nostalgic, is accurate when he speaks of “[m]eeting at a distance, in other words, being telepresent, here and elsewhere, at the same time, in this so-called ‘real-time’ which is, however, nothing but a kind of real space-time, since the different events do indeed take place, even if that place is in the end the no-place of teletopical techniques (the man-machine interface, the nodes or packet-switching exchanges of teletransmission).”⁹¹ The notion that a body can be acting in one place and simultaneously be acted upon elsewhere opens its up to unknown local transports, all of which take place in the temporal fissure in which past, present and future do not follow suit but overlap and reverse simultaneously.

⁸⁹ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London, Harper Collins, 1993) p.82

⁹⁰ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is not One*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1985, p.209

⁹¹ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky*, p.10

This intensive, telepresent body is by no means a new invention. Whilst image technologies may be a prime instigator of new corporeal geographies and parallel temporalities, the effects which have been charted have long been at work in the woman's body - her dispersed existence, her differential speeds, her infinite virtualities are evidence of her specific relationship to technologies which mediate and conduct rather than stabilise and secure. It is by acknowledging her special relevance here to machinic processes which engineer new temporalities on their own, that she re-emerges as a key interface with realities that exist elsewhere from that which can be seen or analysed at any one time.

Both Irigaray and Deleuze-Guattari chart the female as a temporal fissure - as, therefore, a body which is not punctuated by definable limits and which, as a plateau, is neither sexually or corporeally, "interrupted by any external termination..."⁹² She does, it seems, always exceed the threshold of perception; "A girl is late on account of her speed; she did too many things, crossed too many spaces in relation to the relative time of the person waiting for her. Thus her apparent slowness is transformed into the breakneck speed of our waiting..."⁹³ Whatever time span she appears to occupy, she perpetually exceeds all patriarchal attempts to measure and delineate the parameters of her effects. Irigaray writes of the alien speeds which she secretes in her apparent immobility; "the centre of these 'movements' corresponding to zero supposes in them an infinite speed which is physically unacceptable."⁹⁴ Since her temporalities will not subscribe to "fixed and congealed intervals,"⁹⁵ her boundaries and topologies are always changing - infinitely expanding, responding, incorporating parts and components which she touches in a network or finds within her own unexplored self. Like the molecular journeys which typify 'Benard instability', she is not predictable or linear. She operates not by cause and effect but by constantly exceeding herself and the thresholds of his limited perceptions. She is therefore always a function of something else, concerned not with "imitating or assuming the [supposed] female form, but [with] emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity,

⁹² "A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word 'plateau' to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end...It is a regrettable characteristic of the Western mind to relate expressions and actions to exterior or transcendent ends, instead of evaluating them on a plane of consistency on the basis of their intrinsic value." (Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.21-2) Taoism - the 'philosophy of intensities' is directly concerned with such practices of perpetuation, particularly those of the sexual kind which are not directed toward climax. In this sense they place a special privilege on the female body. (See Lyotard.J-F. - *Libidinal Economy* tr. Hamilton-Grant, London, Athlone, 1993 p.201-210)

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.271

⁹⁴ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is not One*, p.109

⁹⁵ *ibid.* - p.108

of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman.”⁹⁶

“[T]hat punctual quality of the instant is quite foreign to the dilations of time which persist in the presence of our relations. The instant - stroke of lightning, bursts of thunder, intuition or ecstatic jouissance - closes up the expansion which sweeps aside, pushes away, overflows the point in time. Fluid density which overturns habitual space-time, and yet always already takes place in it. It has all its form elsewhere, is it all the elsewhere?...How can we return to the so-called present time, when we know the other time?”⁹⁷ If woman remains ill-defined, it would seem that she has used her imposed and assumed anamorphosis to her own advantage. For as a set of speeds which constantly exceeds the calibration of his standard horizon, she can use her lips as a “form that is never simply defined - rippl[ing] outwards as they touch and send[ing] one another on a course that is never fixed in a single configuration.”⁹⁸ Within the remit of her activities she has an indeterminable number of virtual trajectories which together make up the limitless and unchartable realm of her body, but which, in the eyes of linear time, remain imperceptible and thus redundant. She is thus always producing a creative body which is continually testing its own limits; “Alone, I discover my mobility. Movement is my habitat. My only rest is motion. Whoever imposes roof over my head wears me out. Let me go where I have not yet arrived.”⁹⁹

Just as Deleuze figured that cinematic and electronic images could produce clusters of immanent and intensive behaviours which perpetually re-organise themselves in omnidirectional space, so too does Irigaray map the female body as a direct simulation of such processes. It responds to new inputs via qualitative change rather than by the quantitative subtraction or addition of a standard set of variables. Irigaray repeatedly reminds us that this body, “..is unending, potent and impotent owing to its resistance to the countable; that it enjoys and suffers from a greater sensitivity to pressures; that it changes - in volume or force, for example, according to the degree of heat...that it allows itself to be easily traversed by flow by virtue of its conductivity to currents coming from other fluids or exerting pressure through the wall of a solid...”¹⁰⁰ Since such qualitative changes in state demand that a body find new parts of itself or of others, it is never alone in its operations. It is always in communication, running contrary to linear time, finding its own futurity before it has arrived.

⁹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus* p.275

⁹⁷ Irigaray.L. - *Elemental Passions*, tr. Collie and Still (London, Athlone, 1992) p.72

⁹⁸ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum of the Other Woman*, tr. Gillian.C. Gill (New York, Cornell University Press)p.230

⁹⁹ Irigaray.L. - *Elemental Passions*, p.16

¹⁰⁰ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is not One*, p.111

Changes in state demand a synthesis of implicated presences so that a body is provided with as many possible routes of metamorphosis at any one time. In a sense, therefore, the body is always responding to its own internal real-time screening of reality - receiving transmissions from other parts of the network and then assimilating them to its own non-linear narrative. That Case should feel himself inside Molly's body, experiencing her pains, affects and even motor movements is, in this sense, his becoming-woman. It is akin to the flickering virtual reality scenarios in Cadigan's novel *'Fools'* in which image-based interfaces between various realities produce new bodily experiences for the participant involved. Image interfaces which function without media are the becoming-media of the body itself - the introduction therefore of real-time global networking into the molecular structures of corporeal matter. What is thus transmitted by a body or an image at any one time is at an infinite number of other places simultaneously. Irigaray's women are always sharing their bodies and their simulations; "we feel the same things at the same time. Aren't my hands, my eyes, my mouth, my lips, my body good enough for you?"¹⁰¹

Virilio is notably receptive to the unfamiliar speeds of the female body. He embraces her ability to conduct molecular flow by referring to her as the 'mistress of the passage'. He considers her a necessary siphon of virtual reality; "The body of the woman becoming one with a communication body is the ideal vector between man and the world - it's no longer simply a matter of a couple, but of a sort of triangle."¹⁰² If woman has, as he claims, "until now effectively organised all that speed is," Virilio considers her to be a "major departure from humanity, the beginning of a navigation of body and sense from something immovable towards another category of Time, a space-time essentially different because it is sensed as unstable, mobile, conductive, transformable, the creation of a second universe..."¹⁰³ Virilio's enigmatic account of the female body maintains two established positions at once. Like Baudrillard, he identifies the special ability of woman to be her skill in seduction - her capacity to dismantle the established signification regime by installing zones of meaninglessness and inertia. Unlike Baudrillard, however, he extends the function of seduction beyond that of questions of signification and into the realm of speed. In some senses, he taps into the intensive lines of Irigaray by aligning "the body vector of the woman" with her capacity to "leave regular hours behind"¹⁰⁴ and thus exist conductively, expansively and unpredictably. In this sense, he treats her as the agitator - as a propagator of speeds

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* - p.209

¹⁰² Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(e), 1991) p.77

¹⁰³ *ibid.* - p.76-7

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* - p.79

which are both faster and slower than the limited few available to men, able therefore to access other realities and leak back their effects to the detriment of his own.

Unsurprisingly, however, Virilio does not follow through the concomitant implications of the woman mapped as speed in itself. He thus reads her instability as a threat to her own identification. What was once perceived to be her sexuality has, according to Virilio, been directly transferred onto the machine, not in order to produce a new coupling but in order to remove her from the network completely; “that is the disappearance of human intermediaries and the emergence of a sexuality directly connected to the technical object, provided that the latter is a motor, a vector of movement.”¹⁰⁵ In a different context, the effacement of a single sexuality would seem to introduce the possibility of many other co-existent body-sex becomings dispersed across a multitude of signs and a multitude of bodies. However, in *‘The Aesthetics of Disappearance’*, Virilio promptly shuts down these opportunities because he cannot understand the notion of woman in terms other than the those of the identitarian frameworks which have closeted her all along. Should the signs of her mono-functional identity be removed by forces of speed, then the woman has no other means by which to lay claim to herself. Like Baudrillard’s masked woman, Virilio’s female construct is nothing without her signs. All he can do is chart her fatal disappearance as “the unavoidable outcome between the metabolic and the technical, an absolute valorisation of rites-of-passage and their number, to the detriment of bodies, themselves and their presence in the world.”¹⁰⁶

Aside from Virilio, it is necessary to configure the expansion and metamorphosis of bodies and images in terms which take into account their very material behaviour and thus speak not of disappearance but of mutation. Both images and bodies need not be defined by assumed signification or by essential form; they are gates or bifurcation points in networks of continual change. They are lines of transmission. They are however, also more than this, since whilst they transmit they also complexify, producing temporary zones of activity which display some identifiable consistency. The female may be liminal to zones of identitarianism and discernible behaviour, but according to Irigaray, she remains a woman - her own becoming does not remove her own specificity. It would appear similarly contradictory that we have been able to talk of images when so much of the behaviour which would identify them as such takes place on their other, imperceptible side behind the screen. The question remains then, of

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.* - p.78

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.* - p.86

how these networked bodies and images retain some temporary stability such that their constitutive parts can be identified as such, at least momentarily.

Many of the problems of specificity, especially with regard to the female body, have been explored via systems which demonstrate 'metastability' or zones of local intelligence. These zones hold together temporarily stable agglomerations of parts but still allow those parts to continually change in place and state¹⁰⁷. These types of systemic mutation are extremely useful in advancing the work of Irigaray for they offer a means to deal with the problem of how a woman may operate as a network - in being neither essentially nor constructively formed - and yet still may be able to make a claim to her body-sex. It is indeed as a variable of intensive, non-chronological time that such collectively individuated structures are formulated. Simondon writes an account of 'metastability' and transductive assemblages as a theory of being which exists immanently and prior to any logic. Often he writes in distinctively Irigarayan terms - in which "[t]he living being is presented as a problematic being, at once greater and lesser than the unit."¹⁰⁸ Whilst it is not written directly as such, his writing offers an 'anexact yet rigorous' formulation of the female body, in which, according to Irigaray, "...we are always several at once...One cannot be distinguished from the other, which does not mean that they are indistinct..."¹⁰⁹

"It is never a step or a stage, and individuation is not a synthesis or return to unity, but rather the being passing out of step with itself, through the potentialisation of the incompatibilities of its pre-individual centre...time itself is considered to be the expression of the dimensionality of the being as it becoming individualised."¹¹⁰

Simondon's corporeal geometries are of bodies which are at once both partially and relatively resolved and yet also incompatible with themselves. They continually seek out new connections which function according to the rules of Bergsonian intuition. Thus they are dispersed through time, they invent their own dimensions as required and they communicate with disparate elements by processes of cybernetic feedback. What Simondon additionally accounts is the means by which such distributed bodies avoid being thrown into irrecoverable chaos by the energy which fuels their distribution in the first place. His writing is a warning against the black hole effects of the too many inputs and too many changes which, in many cases, can result in the death of the organism. In

¹⁰⁷ Deleuze notes the inherent contradictions of such behaviours; "If we consider the infinity of simple bodies, we see that they are always grouped in constantly changing infinite wholes. But the whole of these wholes remains fixed, this fixity being defined by the total quantity of movement, that is, by the total proportion of movement and rest, which contains an infinity of particular relations." (Deleuze.G. - *Expressionism in Philosophy; Spinoza* (New York, Zone, 1990) p.210

¹⁰⁸ Simondon.G. - 'The Genesis of the Individual' in *Zone; Incorporations*, p. 307

¹⁰⁹ Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is not One*, p.209

¹¹⁰ Simondon.G. - 'The Genesis of the Individual' p. 314

this sense, it can be helpfully read alongside the Deleuzian- Spinozist lessons in the 'art of dosages' which seek to encourage the body to find consistency within itself, to continually change but to do so according to the immanent rules of temporarily stable formation.

Simondon's use of 'metastable' models is radically anti-hylomorphic; "we must consider the being not as a substance or matter, or form, but as a tautly extended and supersaturated system, which exists at a higher level than the unit itself, which is not sufficient unto itself and cannot be adequately conceptualised according to the principle of the excluded middle."¹¹¹ It uses a system's own internal referencing as the principle of its survival, in order to ward off the dangers secreted within a structure which is changing all of its facets all of the time. In these potentially dangerous, total positive feed scenarios, there are no stable means by which to reference and thus process 'new' information. A certain amount of redundancy or meta-stability in a system is thus always beneficial to its survival - it perpetuates productive rather than burn-out feedback; "The more elegant the set of redundancies...then the more variability the system can process, the more positive feed it can take without going into runaway/ inspin/ rigidification."¹¹²

Simondon notes that this stage of productive redundancy in a system occurs when it is running on the lowest amount of energy possible - when all its potentials have been explored and actualised and transformation is temporarily paused. At this time, the system displays a certain 'internal resonance' - a harmony which is not objective but which displays a certain pattern distinctive to that particular system and that particular time¹¹³. It is at this meta-level that Irigaray locates the specificity of woman; "The living being can be considered to be a node of information that is being transmitted inside itself - it is a system within a system containing within itself a mediation between two different orders of magnitude."¹¹⁴ These unpredictable moments of resonance are, according to Simondon, neither a priori nor a ^{er}posteriori but a presenti - they are produced by the system as it operates. They are both the agent and the theatre of their own effects, the means of their own production, the message therefore of their own medium.

¹¹¹ *ibid.* - p.301

¹¹² Ryan.P. - *Birth and Death and Cybernation; Cybernetics of the Sacred* (New York, Gordon and Breach, 1973) p.134

¹¹³ This emergent pattern compares with the TV image described in chapter 3.

¹¹⁴ "...that of the cosmic level (as with the luminous energy of the sun - for example) with that of the intermolecular level." - Simondon.G. - 'The Genesis of the Individual' p.318

The problem which Irigaray presented in figuring a version of the body which is neither entirely essentialist nor entirely signifiable is advanced by Simondon's theories in a most beneficial way. The body which can pass out of phase with itself, which can continually break its own boundaries in relation to a centre is a body constituted by non-chronological time fissures which hold it in a state of suspension, forever on the brink of actualising one of many corporeal possibilities. It thus can never fully be defined either as biological form or as a linguistic construct. What has been proposed here is that many of these re-inventions of the body have been induced by communication technologies, as materialist simulations and synthetic interfaces which take the body on journeys into its own potential by synthesising temporary configurations of trans-global time zones and non-human speeds of perception. Just as bodies have become unquantifiable territories as a result of the operations of intensive communication which intrude directly into the body, images too have become indiscernible entities - more recognisable as the states they produce, the speeds which they proliferate than stable objects in themselves.

When Virilio rightly asks; "But can we still talk of images when there are no longer any pixels, the laser beams directly stimulating the retinal rods and cones of the eye?"¹¹⁵ he echoes Deleuze; "But how is it possible to speak of images in themselves which are not for anyone and are not addressed to anyone? How is it possible to speak of an Appearing since there is not even an eye?"¹¹⁶ Jonathan Crary also raises the problem of terminology - of linguistic shortcomings in relation to new technological developments; "The rapid development in little more than a decade of a vast array of computer graphic techniques is part of a sweeping reconfiguration of relations between an observing subject and modes of representation that effectively nullifies most of the culturally established meanings of the terms observer and representation."¹¹⁷ What has emerged as the circumstance of such theoretical concerns is the dismantling of representational structure by qualitative or intensive transformation. Parts, bodies, images which were once clearly identifiable now emerge as only temporary elements which are constantly being transformed by an economy of flow.

If, as Bergson posits, bodies are constituted entirely from images then, as has been argued, such images must necessarily be reciprocally re-configured as active, biotic components. Both bodies and images are then 'temporary' entities on the plane of immanence where 'temporary' does not mean insubstantial but metastable. The layers

¹¹⁵ Virilio.P. - *Open Sky*, p.94

¹¹⁶ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image*, p.59

¹¹⁷ Crary.J. - *Techniques of the Observer; On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (London, MIT, 1995) p.1

of potential which surround a body-image assemblage are as much a part of its constitution as that which appears to be so at any one time; “If ‘images’ do not appear to anyone, that is to an eye, this is because light is not yet reflected or stopped, and ‘passing on unopposed [is] never revealed’. In other words, the eye is in things, in luminous images in themselves.”¹¹⁸ When an image is figured in this way - as an intensity on a flow which both contains and exceeds its operation, it is an image which is both anterior to all signification and not yet subject to a will or a consciousness; “It is an image derived from the movement of molecules, the propagation of radiation, the exchange of heat, and the pull of gravity. It is an image warmed by the molten core of the earth and illuminated by the cold light of the stars light years distant.”¹¹⁹ It is impersonal, indiscernible and non-mimetic. It carries within it traits of becoming which take a body outside of itself, from a becoming woman to a becoming imperceptible.

This type of image is then subject to the unpredictabilities and lines of flight which populate that flow of base matter which Deleuze and Guattari call the machinic phylum - the plane of contact between humans and machines which is mediated, in part, by the screens of image technology for they put the ‘human’ in touch with flow. According to Deleuze and Guattari, metal, the very conductor of energy in digital technology, is the phylum’s constitutive element. Indeed it is its pervasiveness which explains the phylum’s de-stratifying behaviour. As a material ruled by its intensive qualities - its capacity to change state in the presence of heat - it is located outside of the world of stable forms. It therefore has the power to raise “to consciousness something that is only hidden or buried in other matters and operations.”¹²⁰

As the machinic phylum is a population of “critical points in the flow of matter and energy, points at which these flows spontaneously acquire a new form or pattern,”¹²¹ its effects cannot be limited to an assigned plane of activity - indeed it saturates every element which operates upon it, even at the highest level of stratified behaviour. Since, then, phyllic “operations are always outside of the thresholds, so that an energetic materiality overflows the prepared matter and a qualitative deformation or transformation overflows the form,”¹²² the node of activity which has been isolated here - between the electronic image and the participating body - is always in a state of potential, constantly producing new configurative possibilities prior to their actualisation. For this reason, when an image is contextualised on the machinic phylum, it can be treated as matter

¹¹⁸ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image*, p.60

¹¹⁹ Rodowick.D.N. - *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine*, p. 30

¹²⁰ Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.410

¹²¹ De Landa.M. - *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines*, (New York, Swerve Editions, 1991) p.132

¹²² Deleuze and Guattari - *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.410

itself, as flow itself, or even as light itself. The set of changes instigated by the feedback circuits connected through images and bodies are always “deducted from the flow - selected, organised, stratified - in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention.”¹²³

This notion of an image as a temporary avatar of a long submerged stratum of molecular behaviour returns us to the temporal journeys which occupied us in the first place. Above all else, this cybernetic model is of an image as a material time lapse, an entry point to the engineering practices and bodily behaviours of both previous and future ages. Both bodies and the screens of their communication are at their deepest and most diffuse levels constituted by the same forgotten motor of the real - matter itself. Thus, whilst both have been previously scripted into a self-perpetuating and atemporal mirroring complex which confirms the limits of one in the face of the other, it is in the current environments of global image flow that their ‘true’ material workings are always just about to emerge. In data streams which are always just about to deliver information and then render it redundant on arrival, the capital-image-technology assemblage is always on the verge of the next transition, always therefore presenting the body with a multitude of options - time spans, perceptual speeds, unfixed dimensions - from which, the body, as it becomes female, need never definitively select, for it will always be on several different journeys at once.

¹²³ *ibid.*p.406

CONCLUSION

... we are in a sense playing at being what we designate as matter. We are entering the forms of the mighty phenomenon around us and seeing how near we can get to being a river or a star, without actually becoming the sudden extinction and neutralisation that awaits you as matter, or as the machine...”¹

It is by mapping the foresaid relation between global image networks and the multiplicity of phyllic activity that a theory of the post-specular economy must begin, and by the nature of the relation, never end. For, as has been argued, no predictive or definitive account of the cybernetic simulation can be offered since it is always changing in state, capacity and affect according to a series of translated movements. It is its asignifying, sub-systematic behaviours, operationally matched by an immanently constructed perceptual apparatus, which have been shown to be the micro-machine of true effects, always manifesting change in surrounding bodies and environments, and always therefore refusing the closure of analysis.

The early sections of this thesis have proven themselves to be nestings in a wider system of open ended cybernetic activity. The analyses of the specular age, examined here through Situationism, Baudrillard and post-modernism are both ‘about’ the closure and thus stratified simplification of a vastly more complex reality but are also, in many interesting ways, also complicit with it. Since such accounts never explicitly escape the debates or representation, they never ‘truly’ reach beyond themselves to produce an entirely new plane of reality. In technical terms they fail to replace a tradition built on techniques of negation, reversibility and indetermination with an active relation with the outside. This, however, is not to suggest their irrelevance to the current concern of mapping the machinic behaviour of the post-specular age. Indeed it is of particular interest here that they may in fact be playfully compliant with wider cybernetic behaviours. Thus, in the process of attempted subversion, they may be actively demonstrating their own redundancy and thus covertly encouraging the unpredictable anti-representational effects of open-ended flow. If this is the case (and, as has been argued, Baudrillard may well be full of such manoeuvres), then those accounts which remain both implicitly and explicitly attached to the terms of

¹ Lewis.W. qu.in Willcott.G.-McLuhan, or Modernism in Reverse, (London, Uni.of Toronto Press, 1996)p.44

representation shrewdly demonstrate just how precarious their very foundations are. They may then be treated as works which play out their own demise in order to supplicate themselves to processes they knowingly cannot control.

In this sense they demonstrate both how insistent blindness to cybernetic recursivity has produced a fatally introspective economy of manufactured truth, meaning and fixed form and a body attuned to informational values known only by the specular eye, but also how this is at the cost of an ever more sustained dependency on that which lies behind itself, on what will ultimately instigate its downfall. Man may well have used techniques of emergence to see only that which he wishes to see, but as has been shown, it has been at his own expense that he has failed to acknowledge the matter from which his phantasms came. Case thus describes how he focussed his own eyes on the plane of deception ; “If he looked directly at that null point, no outline would form. It took a dozen quick, peripheral takes before he had it; a shark thing, gleaming like an obsidian... reflecting faint distant lights that bore no relation to the matrix around it.”²

As Case seeks a code which will give him access to the outside, to therefore, the vast matter of cyberspace, he realises that the image which first appears on the monitor is a block to his access. What he seeks is the matter behind the image - matter which can never be seen in one take but which, with careful engineering, can provide access to the ‘inviolable substrata’ of molecular behaviour, to energy itself. It is this force, the machinic phylum, which allows even the most stratified behaviour to come into being, for even such apparently controlled behaviour is “based on a strange loop, an interaction between levels in which the top reaches back down towards the bottom level and influences it, which is at the same time being determined by them...[producing therefore] a self-reinforcing resonance between levels.”³ As has been shown, these lower levels of behaviour are the glitches in a presumed smooth-running system and as Hofstadter warns; “such clean hierarchical levels can take you by surprise and fold back in a hierarchy violating way.”⁴ Case knows this and will not be satisfied by the image which he first sees. He knows that it has been created to seal access to the code and he know^S_^ that that to which he needs access is beyond the perceptible.

² Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London; Harper Collins, 1993) p.216

³ Hofstadter.D. - *Godel, Escher, Bach; An Eternal Golden Braid*, (London, Penguin Books, 1989) p.709

⁴ *ibid.* - p.691

As has been argued in chapter 3, emergent activity produces not the validation of man's first attempts, though this may be all that he chooses to see, but rather more networks which find means to supplement their apparent communication with the organic with manoeuvres which engage the sub-representational, the sub-cognitive and the sub-organic to produce wholly unknown perceptual journeys. In these sub-terrains, the sealed system of representation and its compliant body is simply one minor version of much vaster wealth of alternative temporal realities, laid out along a gradient of abstraction, each bearing direct material effect on that which preludes it; "The whole is not a closed set, but on the contrary is that by virtue of which the set is never absolutely closed, never completely sheltered, that which keeps it open somewhere as if by the finest thread which attaches it to the rest of the universe."⁵ If woman has always been posited on the outside, in the deep midst of such activity, it is of no wonder that she is the gatekeeper to an entirely new information age.

"On the Sony, a two-dimensional space now faded behind a forest of mathematically generated ferns, demonstrating the spatial possibilities of logarithmic spirals..."⁶

*"The screen bleeped a two-second warning...
Then he keyed the new switch...
The abrupt jolt into other flesh...
The sensation made him catch his breath..."⁷*

In outlining the possibilities of images as becomings, conductors and virtual avatars, the emphasis has necessarily been on the corporeal shifts which can occur in the transition from one sub-procedure to another - from consciousness itself to the pre-personal domain of pure neural signal; from interpretative meaning to the molecular transmission of electronic pixels alone. Thus the perceptual journeys charted here, marking out the passage from the visual to the tactile, from the non-temporal to the telepresent, from rehearsed response to affective interaction are in each case above all concerned with the cracking through of the anorganic shield which protects one supposed closed system from another. This is trauma itself, as has been explained in terms of image effect in chapter 4.

⁵ Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986) p.10

⁶ Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* p.67

⁷ *ibid.* - p.71

Since trauma, as the trigger of shock is above all the body becoming absent from its familiar self, it can be figured here as the precise dynamic of a body shifting between cybernetic modes. Via trauma, the body loses its prescribed location in one apparently closed representational loop in order to enter into the unrehearsed machinations of an open loop at a lower level of abstraction. This is, by consequence, a jump in dimension, a move away from the three-dimensionality of fixed space-time transcendence towards the one-dimensionality of decoded flow where the medium of image transmission and its message are one and the same self-programmed thing. This latter scenario requires, by deferral, that the body be the receptor of direct rather than secondarily represented effect.

What has been figured therefore, is the capacity of an image to re-attach an understanding of consciousness to the matter which constitutes it. Where images can produce new corporeal awareness and new nested versions of a previous reality, they are translators of movement, as has been explained in chapter 5. What they are in themselves bears little direct relation to the webs of effect which they can instigate beyond their apparently delimitable surface. This shift in behaviour, manifested by the vast image environments of late capitalism demands that the body find the affective and intensive sub-procedures within itself. These lines of super-corporeal reception have indeed always existed - they have simply though calculatedly been forgotten for the purpose of stripping down a body to that which can be safely classified by closed analytical loops.

When a body successfully shifts mode and discovers its own highly instrumental role in constructing the reality which surrounds it, it effectively finds the media within itself. Outside of imposed closure, it realises its material reality rather than its enforced role as a reflector of a pre-existent, pre-scripted, phallogentric real. It recognises that its ability to function as a testbed of effects is an "occasion for mediating, transaction, transition, transference."⁸ It is a rich resource to be used to great effect for it can play its environment at its own game by being always receptive to which ever unknown machinations it may invent. As has been shown in chapters 2 and 5, this relation between the outside, woman and simulation is an ever expanding tangle of behaviours, continually multiplying the realm of imagistic effect and the limits of a distributed body according to the tactical moves made at any one time. The female body, in its role as agitator, has emerged not simply as the disruption of established territory, but also as a finely skilled technician, able to use the

⁸ Irigaray.L. - *Speculum of the Other Woman* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1985) p,227

relics of post-semiosis to produce new metastable formations which are both more and less, and thus always detrimental to what has been perceived to be the whole.

Where the screen and the body thus mesh to produce images directly out of the matter of the cerebral membrane, the stable structures of a phallogentric specular economy are finally broken down into their constitutive parts. They are converted into base matter for cybernetic data flow. If such an economy was once identified by assumed fixed forms, linear temporalities, by a use of light as a means of illumination above and beyond the conditions which produced it and by spectacular displays for male only observers, then it is the circular, recursive processes here described which are converting such appearances into not yet emergent virtual realities.

Here everything folds back into its own submolecular context such that no part functions without the reciprocating activity of the other parts of the system. Webs of non-linear temporality produce bodies and image ahead of prescribed function and in advance of signification: as therefore tools of continual erosion against the self-reflecting certainties of a previous specular age. It is through the immanent analysis laid out here that the material behaviours of the current image-scape have revealed themselves to be constituted not by intention or imitation but by synthetic forces which display temporary agglomerations and evolutionary events, all of which are entirely dependent on molecular flow for the source of their motion and invention. Thus what was once so assuredly seen is always linked to a series of movements - to material departures, terminations and resumed excursions, all conducted and conducting on the other side of the phosphorescent screen.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Aumont.J. - *The Image*, tr. Claire Pajackowska (London; BFI Publishing, 1994)
Ballard.J.G. - *The Atrocity Exhibition*, (London, Flamingo, 1969)
Ballard.J.G. - *The Drowned World*, (London, Dent, 1962)
Baudrillard.J. - '*Forget Foucault*', (New York, Semiotext(e), 1987)
Baudrillard.J. - *Cool Memories* (London, Verso, 1990)
Baudrillard.J. - *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St.Louis, Telos, 1981)
Baudrillard.J. - *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, (New York, Semiotext(e), 1983)
Baudrillard.J. - *Seduction*, tr. S.B.Singer (New York, St.Martin's Press, 1979)
Baudrillard.J. - *Simulation and Simulacra*, tr. S.f. Glaser, (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1994)
Baudrillard.J. - *Simulations*, (New York, Semiotext(e), 1983)
Baudrillard.J. - *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, tr. Hamilton-Grant.I. (London, Sage Publications, 1993)
Benjamin.A.(ed.) - *Journal of Philosophy and the Visual Arts; The Body* (London, Ernst and Sohn, 1993)
Benjamin.W. and Arendt.H. - *Illuminations* tr. Zohn.H. (London, Fontana, 1973)
Bergson.H. - *Matter and Memory* (New York, Zone, 1994)
Bogard.W. - *The Simulation of Surveillance*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996)
Boundas.C.V and Olkowski.D. (eds.) - *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy* ed. (London, Routledge, 1994)
Broadhurst.J. and Cassidy.E.J. - *Virtual Futures; Cyberotics, technology and Post-human Pragmatism* (London, Routledge, 1998)
Bukatman - *Bladerunner* (London, BFI, 1997)
Burroughs.W. - *Naked Lunch*, (New York, Grove Press 1959)
Burroughs.W. - *Nova Express* (New York; Evergreen Black Cat, 1964)
C.Gables Gray, H.J.Figueroa-Sarriera, S.Mentor (eds.)- *The Cyborg Handbook* (New York; Routledge, 1995)
Canetti.E. - *Crowds and Power* (London; Penguin, 1984)
Chion.M. - *Audio-Vision; Sound on Screen* tr, Claudia Gorbman (New York, Columbia University Press, 1994)
Crary.J and Kwinter.S. (eds.) -*Incorporations* (New York, Zone, 1992)
Crary.J. - *Techniques of the Observer; On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (MIT, London, 1995)
Cytowic.R.E. - *The Man who tasted Shapes* (London, Abacus, 1993)
De Landa.M. - *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York, Swerve, 1991)
Debord.G. - *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, (Verso, London, 1990)
Debord.G. - *Society of the Spectacle*, (Detroit, Black and Red, 1983)
Deleuze.G. and Guattari.F. - *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* tr. Brian Massumi (London, Athlone, 1992)
Deleuze.G and Guattari.F. - *Anti-Oedipus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London, Athlone Press, 1984)
Deleuze.G, - *Bergsonism* (New York, Zone, 1991)
Deleuze.G.- *Expressionism in Philosophy; Spinoza* (New York, Zone, 1990)
Deleuze.G. - *Logic of Sense*, tr. Lester.M. and Stivale.C. (London, Athlone, 1989)
Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 1; The Movement-Image* (London, Athlone, 1986)
Deleuze.G. - *Cinema 2; The Time-Image* (London, Athlone, 1989)
Deleuze.G. - *Foucault*, tr. S.Hand, (London, University of Minneapolis Press, 1988)
Deleuze.G. - *Francis Bacon; Logique de la sensation* (Paris, Editions de la Difference)
Deleuze.G. - *Negotiations*, tr. M.Joughin (New York, Columbia University Press, 1995)
Deleuze.G. - *Spinoza; Practical Philosophy*, tr. Robert Hurley (San Fransisco, City Lights Books, 1970)
Downham. M. - *Vague*
Featherstone and Burrows - *Cyberspace/ Cyberbodies/ Cyberpunk*, (Routledge, London, 1995)
Feher.M., Naddaffi.R., Tazi.N. (eds.) - *Zone 3:Fragments Towards a History of the Human Body* (New York, Zone, 1989)
Foster. H. (Éd.) - *The Anti-Aesthetic*, (Bay Press, 1993)
Genosko.G. - *Baudrillard and Signs; Signification Ablaze* (London, Routledge, 1998)

- Foucault. M. - *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of a Prison* tr. Alan Sheridan (New York, Pantheon, 1976)
- Freedburg.D. - *The Power of Images; Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (London, university of Chicago Press, 1989)
- Freud.S - *The Origins of Religion (vol.13)* (London; Penguin, 1990)
- Freud.S. - *Complete Psychological Works vol.17* (London, Hogarth Press 1917-19)
- Freud.S. - *Complete Psychological Works, vol.XVIII* (London, Hogarth Press, 1920-1922)
- Freud.S. - *On Metapsychology:The Theory of Psychoanalysis (vol 11)* (London: Penguin, 1984)
- Gane.M. - *Baudrillard Live*, (London, Routledge,1993)
- Gatens.M - *Imaginary Bodies*, (London, Routledge, 1996)
- Genosko.G.(ed.) - *The Guattari Reader* (London, Blackwell, 1996)
- Gibson.W. - *Neuromancer* (London; Harper Collins, 1993)
- Grossberg.L. - *We Gotta get out of this Place; Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (London, Routledge, 1992)
- Grosz.E. - *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1994)
- Irigaray.L. - *Elemental Passions*, tr. Collie and Still (London, Athlone, 1992)
- Irigaray.L. - *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, tr. G.C.Gill, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991)
- Irigaray.L. - *Speculum of the Other Woman* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1985)
- Irigaray.L. - *This Sex which is Not One*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 1985)
- Jay.M. - *Downcast Eyes; The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*, (London, University of California Press, 1994)
- Kolalowski. L. - *Bergson*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985)
- Lao Tzu - *Tao Te Ching; The Richard Wilhelm Edition* (London, Arkana, 1989)
- Lasch. C. - *The Minimal Self; Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (London, Pan, 1984)
- Levin - *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, (London, University of California Press, 1993)
- Lingis. A - *Foreign Bodies*, (New York, Routledge, 1994)
- Lloyd.G. - *Spinoza and the Ethics* (Routledge, London 1996)
- Lyotard. J-F. - *Libidinal Economy*, tr. Ian Hamilton Grant (London; The Athlone Press, 1993)
- Marcus.G. - *Lipstick Traces; A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, (London, Secker and Warburg, 1989)
- Massumi.B. - *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (MIT, London, 1992)
- Mcluhan.M. - *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1962)
- Mcluhan.M. - *Understanding Media; The Extensions of Man*, (London; Routledge and Keagan Paul , 1964)
- Moi.T.- *Sexual/Textual Politics;Feminist Literary Theory* (London, Routledge, 1988)
- Ong.W. - *Interfaces of the Word; Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press, 1977)
- Petro.P. - *Fugitive Images; From Photography to Video* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1995)
- Plant - *The Most Radical Gesture; The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*, London, Routledge, 1992)
- Plant.S. - *Zeros and Ones; Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (London; FourthEstate, 1987)
- Robins.K - *Into the Image; Culture and politics in the field of vision* (London, Routledge, 1996)
- Rodowick.D.N. - *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, (London, Duke University Press, 1997)
- Ryan.P. - *Birth and Death and Cybernation; Cybernetics of the Sacred* (New York, Gordon and Breach, 1973)
- Schivlebusch.W. - *The Railway Journey; The Industrialisation and Perception of Space and Time* (L'Spa; Berg. 1986)
- Shaviro.S - *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis; University of Minesota Press, 1993)
- Shields.R.(ed.) - *Cultures of Internet; Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies* (London, Sage, 1996)
- Spinoza.B - *Ethics, Treatise of the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 1992)
- Sylvester.D. - *The Brutality of Fact; Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1987)
- Taussig.M - *The Nervous System*, (Routledge, New York,1992)

- Vasselou.C. - *Textures of Light; Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau - Ponty* (Warwick Studies in Philosophy ed. Andrew Benjamin) (London; Routledge, 1998)
- Virilio.P. - *Open Sky*, tr. Julie Rose (London, Verso 1997)
- Virilio.P. - *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, tr. P.Beitchman (New York, Semiotext(e), 1991)
- Virilio.P. - *The Art of the Motor*, tr. Julie Rose (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995)
- Virilio.P. - *War and Cinema; The Logistics of Perception* tr. Patrick Camiller, London, Verso, 1989)
- Wiener.N. - *Cybernetics; or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (New York; Doubleday Anchor, 1954)
- Wiener.N. - *The Human Use of Human Beings; Cybernetics and Society* (New York; Doubleday Anchor, 1954)
- Wilden.A. - *System and Structure; Essays in Communication and Exchange* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1972)
- Worringer.W. - *Abstraction and Empathy; A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (London; Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1967)

PAPERS

- Benjamin.A. - "At Home with the Replicants", *Architectural Design*, vol.64, no.11/12, Nov-Dec 1994
- Buck-Morss.S. - 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered' October no.62 Fall 1992
- Callois.R. - "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia", October 31, Winter 1984
- Crary.J. - 'Spectacle, Attention, Counter-Memory' October, vol.50, 1989, pp.97-107.
- Davies.M. - 'Beyond Blade Runner; Urban Control, The Ecology of Fear' available at <http://www.mediamatic.nl/Magazine/8'2/Davies-Urban.html>
- Deleuze.G. - *Scholasticism and Spinoza* ;unpublished seminar session, Vincennes, 14January, 1974 available at <http://www.imagnet.fr/deleuze/TXT/ENG/130181.htmlp.4>
- E.Hirsch and G.A. Olsen - *Interview with Luce Irigaray*, *Hypatia*, vol.10, no.2, 1995
- Marder.E. - 'Blade Runner; Moving Still,' *Camera Obscura*, 27 Sept, 1991
- Massumi.B. - 'The Evolutionary Alchemy of Reason' available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html
- Massumi.B. - *The Autonomy of Affect*, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html
- Massumi.B. - *The Simulacrum according to Deleuze and Guattari*, available at http://www.anu.edu.au/HRC/first_and_last/links/massumi_works.html
- Mayes.E. - 'Witchcraft, Possession and Exorcism: Transformations of a Voluntary/ Involuntary Dialectic' in *Body and Society*, vol. 3, no.4, Dec 97
- Seltzer.M. - 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere', October 80, Spring 1997, pp 3-26
- Silverman.K. - 'Back to the Future' *Camera Obscura*, 27 Sept, 1991