



## Cyberflesh (Dis)Orders: Prostheses of The Organized Body

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In the future, where is your soul? Stolen, vaporized in nanotechnics. The ultramodern condition slams a hyper-heated critique into vision, telecommercialized retinas lazer-fed on multimedia fallout from an imploded future, image-jammed brains with repeated psycho-killer experiments in non-consensual wetware alteration; crazed AI's, replicants, terminators, cyberviruses...apocalypse market overdrive. Why wait for revelations? Tomorrow has already been cremated. A techno-nihilist scream on fast-feed-forward into micro-processed damnation: meat zombies, snuff-sex-industry, artificial personality projections, flat-lining, software ghosts, cyberimmortalism.

Cybernetics reveals an organism cross-cut by inorganic life – bacterial communication, viral infection, and entire ecologies of replicating patterns which subvert even the most perverse notions of what it is to be 'having sex'. Reproduction melts into replication and loses its hold on the pleasuredome. Climax distributes itself across the plane and the experience becomes a plateau.

Even in the absence of full simstim, technical cybersex is well advanced: the hardware is fetishized, the software is porn, and vast proportions of the telecommunications system are consumed by erotica. But these are only the most overt – and maybe least interesting – examples of a general degeneration/disintegration of 'natural' sex. As hard and wetwares collapse onto soft, far stranger mutations rouse the sexual scene. The simulation of sex converges with the deregulation of the entire sexual economy, the corrosion of its links with reproduction, and the collapse of its specificity: sex disperses into drugs, dance/trance; androgyny, hermaphroditism, and transsexualism become increasingly perceptible; paraphilia, body engineering, queer sex, and what Foucault calls "the slow motions of pleasure and pain" of S&M – already "high technology sex" (Califa, 1993: 175) – proliferate.

The body needs to be repositioned from the psycho realm of the biological to the cyber zone of the interface and extension – from genetic containment to electronic extrusion. Can we re-evaluate the body without resorting to outmoded Platonic and Cartesian metaphysics? The obsession with self sexual difference, and the symbolic begins to subside in cyber-systems that monitor, map and modify the body. Notions of species evolution and gender distinction are remapped and reconfigured in alternate hybridities

of human-machine. Invading technology eliminates skin as a significant site, an adequate interface, or a barrier between public space and physiological tracts. The significance of the cyber may well reside in the act of the body shedding its skin. And as humans increasingly operate with surrogate bodies in remote spaces they function with increasingly intelligent and interactive images. The possibility of autonomous images generates an unexpected outcome of human-machine symbiosis. The posthuman may well be manifested in the intelligent like form of autonomous images.

All this occurs in a world whose stability depends on its ability to confine communication to terms of individuated organisms' patrilineal transmission. Laws and genes share a one-way line, the unilateral ROM by which the Judeo-Christian tradition hands itself down through the generations. This is the one-parent family of man, for which even Mother Nature was conceived by God, the high fashion supermodel, perfectly formed, without whom matters would be in chaos. Humanism is the ultimate rear-view mirrorism, and the mirror still reflects the image of God. The project, to specularize and to speculate, to supervise and oversee. God and man converse on a closed circuit of sources and ends, one and the same, man to man. Creation and procreation. The go forth and multiply from which patriarchal culture takes its cue.

The immaculate conception of the world has always been subject to uncertainties which underlie all paternity claims. But it is only now, as material intelligence begins to break through the smooth formal screens of this trip, that the patriarchal confidence trick is undermined. He never will know whether or not they were fakes, neither her orgasms nor his paternity. All that is new about his insecurity is that it now begins to be felt. How does God know he is the father? Matter doesn't bother asking: as self-organizing processes attack from within, it's no longer a question, but a tactical matter, a tactile takeover, a material event.

The terminology of computer-mediated communication implies an increasing sense of distance and alienating isolation, and the corporate hype enthuses about a new sense of interpersonal interaction. But the keystrokes of users on the Net connect them to a vast distributed plane composed not merely of computers, users and telephone lines, but all the zeros and ones of machine code, the switches of electronic circuitry, fluctuating waves of neurochemical activity, hormonal energy, thoughts, desires...

In spite or perhaps even because of the impersonality of the screen, the digital zone facilitates unprecedented levels of spontaneous affection, intimacy, and informality, exposing the extent to which older media, especially what continues to be called 'real life' come complete with numerous inhibitions, barriers, and obstacles side-stepped by the immaterial systems of the Net.

"Inside the library's research department, the construct cunt inserted a sub-programme into that part of the video network. The sub-programme altered certain core custodial commands so that she could retrieve the code. The code said: get rid of meaning. Your mind is a nightmare that has been eating you: Now eat your mind" (Acker, 1988: 78).

The boundaries of perception might well be imposing, but they are also far from fixed. The History of Technology is also a process of micro-engineering, which continually changes perception itself. And in addition to dreams of cyber-immortality, the machines

of the digital revolution have initiated extensive narrative engagement with notions of cyborgs, replicants, and theories of posthuman, inhuman and extrahuman entities which are confusing and complicating orthodox Western conceptions of what it is to be a human being. Intelligent life can no longer be monopolized. In conjunction with ideas of immateriality the body is complicating, replicating, and escaping its formal organization, the organized organs which modernity has taken for normality. This new malleability is everywhere.

While the notion that technologies are prostheses, expanding existing organs and fulfilling desires, continue to legitimize vast swathes of technical development, the digital machines of the early twenty-first century are not add-on parts, which serve to augment an existing human form. Quite beyond their own perceptions and control, bodies are continually engineered by the processes in which they are engaged.

Even television screens were windows onto what Marshall McLuhan called “the extreme and pervasive tactility of the new electric environment,” an emergent network of televisual telecommunications which plunges us into “a mesh of pervasive energy that penetrates our nervous system incessantly” (McLuhan, 1962: 159). Monitors are only avatars of this net; an extraordinary technological stage whose backlit screens compose a pixelated interface with the digital undercurrents, triggering a dim awareness of some kind of actual space behind the screen, someplace you can’t see but you know it is there.

The sampled sounds, processed words, and digitized images of multimedia reconnect the diverse streams of arts into hyperlinked frameworks. What was once face-to-face communication now runs between fingertips strung across the world, and all the elements of neatly ordered, hierarchically arranged systems of knowledge and media find themselves increasingly interconnected and entwined. This is the beginning of a synaesthetic, immersive zone in which all the channels and senses find themselves embroiled in an unclean promiscuity of everything which touches, invests and penetrates without resistance, leaving the author/artist/reader/spectator with no halo of private protection, not even his/her own body for protection anymore.

In the contemporary condition, all notions of artistic genius, authorial authority, originality, and creativity become matters of software engineering. Beats extract themselves from melody; narrative collapses into the cycles and circuits of non-linear text; processed words, sampled music, and digital images repeat the patterns of interlacing threads, the rhythms and speeds of gathering intelligence. On the computer monitor, any change to the image is also a change to the program; any change to the programming brings another image to the screen. Digital fabrications can be endlessly copied without fading into inferiority; patterns can be copied and repeated, replicated folds across a screen. The new softwares have no essence, no authenticity. Just as reproductions and prints are repeatable without detracting from the image of the first one made, digital images complicate the questions of origin and originality, authorship and authority with which Western conceptions of art have been preoccupied.

Cybernetics initiates the emergence of the material complexity, which finally usurps the procreative line. Even at its most modern and authoritarian, cybernetics collapses the

distinction between machine and organism: Norbert Wiener's systems already function regardless of whether their wares are hard, soft, or wet. The fusion of human and machines of Wiener's wartime research do more than contest the species' boundaries: they also rewrite its history. "Biological organisms...become biotic systems, communications devices like others. There is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, of technical and organic" (Haraway, 1991: 177-178).

Everything is melting in nature. We think we can see objects, but our vision is slow and partial. Nature is thriving and fading in long inflated respirations, rising and falling in oceanic-wave motion. A mind that opened itself completely to nature without sentimental preoccupations would be glutted by nature's coarse materialism, its relentless superfluidity. Remove the rose-filter of humanism from the gaze and see nature spurning and frothing, its mad spermatic bubbles endlessly spilling out and smashing in an inhuman round of waste, rot and carnage. Nature is a festering hornet's nest of aggression and overkill. This is the chthonian black magic with which we are infected as sexual beings; this is the daemoniac identity that Christianity so inadequately defines as original sin and thinks it can cleanse us of. The procreateness of chthonian nature is a weapon against the tradition of western metaphysics. Nature is a seething excess of being.

Economies, societies, individual organisms, cells: At these and every other scale of organization, the stability of any system depends on its ability to regulate the speeds at which it runs, ensuring that nothing stops too soon, goes too slow, runs too fast, goes too far. And there is always something hunting, trying to break the speed limits necessary to its organized form, tipping over a horizon at which point, even though another, long-term stability may emerge on the other side, it can no longer be said that the system survives. Nothing can guarantee a system's immunity to these runaway effects. Invulnerability would be homeostasis, but also something it attains only at the price of its own demise.

The modern organism is already a replicant, straight off the production line of a discipline which "lays down for each individual his place, his body, his disease and his death, his well-being." Foucault's disciplines extend even to the "ultimate determination of the individual, of what characterizes him, of what belongs to him, of what happens to him" (Foucault, 1977: 197). After this organic and social integrity are fatally intertwined. Modernity is marked by "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of bio-power" (Foucault, 1978: 140), in which "Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence...For the first time in history...biological existence was reflected in political existence" (*ibid.*: 142).

Convinced that all attempts to liberate some supposed authentic sex or sexuality were bound to exacerbate the containment of the bodies they ostensibly wanted to free, Foucault was dismissive of attempts to free and extend orgasmic sex. The "apologia for orgasm made by the Reichians still seems to me to be a way of localising possibilities of pleasure in the sexual," he wrote, going so far as to suggest that "we have to get rid of

sexuality” in order to strip the body from its formal controls, disable the mechanisms of self-protection and security which bind intensity to reproduction. Foucault is scathing about the extent to which such liberatory investments underscore the subjection they ostensibly contest. And the orgasm as a key to self-possession is hardly where his interests lie: like Pat Califa, he is more interested in what she calls the ‘S&M orgasm’, an intensity uncoupled from genital sex and engaged only with the dismantling of selves. This is the cybersexuality to which all sexuality tends: a matter of careful engineering, the setting of scenes, the perfection of touch; the engineering of communication.

“What he had sometimes thought of as the arteries and veins of an immense circulatory system was closer to a sewer. Strange clumps of detritus and trash, some inert and harmless, some toxic when in direct contact, and some actively radiating poison, scrambled along with the useful; and necessary traffic” (Cadigan, 1991: 22).

Dismemberment, countermemory, a new generation has forgotten what its organs were supposed to be doing for their sense of self or the reproduction of the species, and have learned instead to let their bodies learn what they can do without preprogramming desire, to make of one’s body a place for the production of extraordinary polymorphic pleasures, while simultaneously detaching it from a valorization of the genitalia. Forget what it’s for, and learn what it does. Don’t concentrate on orgasm, the means by which sex remains enslaved to teleology and its reproduction. Foucault experiments with decompositions of the body, dismantling of the organism, technical experiments with bondage and release, power and resistance in an S&M matter of a multiplication and burgeoning of bodies and a creation of anarchy within the body, where its hierarchies, its localizations and designations, its organicity, if you will, is in the process of disintegrating.

This is only the beginning of a process which abandons the model of a unified and centralized organism, the organic body, organized with survival as its goal, in favour of a diagram of fluid sex. Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibres, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, fine segmentation, micropereceptions, have replaced the world of subject. Now there are acentered systems, finite networks of automata in which communication run from any neighbour to any other, and we too are flows of matter and energy.

“Open the so-called body and spread out all its surfaces: not only the skin with each of its folds, wrinkles, scars, with its great velvety planes... but open and spread, expose the labia majora, so also the labia minora with their blue network bathed in mucus, dilate the diaphragm of the anal sphincter...” and on through every organized zone of a body which begins to flatten out into the “immense membrane” of Lyotard’s great ephemeral skin, in touch not only with itself but “the most heterogeneous textures, bone, epithelium, sheets to write on, charged atmospheres, swords, glass cases, peoples, grasses, canvases to pain. All these zones are joined end to end in a band which has no back to it, a Moebius band...” (Lyotard, 1993: 66).

Where is the organism? Was it merely the representative of alienated desire? What grounds do we have to operate the various disjunctions – libidinal/instinctual,

organism/world, libidinal/external – internal? All the tools, walls, surfaces upon which, by which the distinctions functioned have collapsed. Do we even retain the pair constant/intermittent? – only from the perspective of the instincts, that concrete hiatus within the flow of libidinal pulsion, the wall against which they run, some allowed to filter through only to enter labyrinthine alleys whose walls are like the fossilized remains of chronological flow.

Once it loses the reproductive point, sex explodes beyond the human and its proper desires. Every unified body conceals a crowd: human bodies also imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant...a thousand tiny sexes. Inside every solitary living creature is a swarm of non-creature things. Even the most unified of individuals is intimately bound up with networks which take it past its own borderlines, seething with vast populations of inorganic life whose replications disrupt even the most perverse anthropocentric notions of what it is to have either a sex or sex itself.

“[W]hat does she want, she who asks this, in the exasperation and aridity of every piece of her body, the woman-orchestra? Does she want to become her master’s mistress and so forth? Come on! She wants you to die with her, she desires that the exclusive limits be pushed back, sweeping across all the tissues, the immense tactility, the tact of whatever closes up on itself without becoming a box, and of whatever ceaselessly extends beyond itself without becoming a conquest” (Lyotard, 1993: 66).

To explore what bodies can do is no longer a question of liberating sex, of sexual freedom, or authenticity. It is not a matter of remembering ‘herself’ but instead of dismembering the one sex which had been pervasively confining, of making bits of bodies, its parts or particular surfaces throb, intensify, for their own sake and not for the benefit of the entity or organism as a whole. The question of passivity is not the question of slavery, the question of dependency not the plea to be dominated.

Immense tactility, contact, the possibility of communication. Closure without the box: as a circuit, a connection. “What interests the practitioners of S&M is that the relationship is at the same time regulated and open,” writes Foucault: it is a “mixture of rules and openness.” Ceaseless extension: the body hunting its own exit. Becoming “that which is not one”; becoming woman, who has sex organs everywhere. Is this what it is to get out of the meat? Not simply to leave the body, but to go further than the orgasm; to access the exultation of a kind of autonomy of its smallest possibilities of a part of the body.

“Use me,” writes Lyotard, in “a statement of vertiginous simplicity, it is not mystical, but materialist. Let me be your surface and your tissues, you may be my orifices and my palms and my membranes, we could lose ourselves, leave the power and the squalid justification of the dialectic of redemption, we will be dead. And not: let me die by your hand, as Masoch said” (1993: 65).

It is Foucault’s ‘something unnameable,’ ‘useless,’ outside of all the programs of desire. It is the body made totally plastic by pleasure: something that opens itself, that tightens,

that throbs, that beats that gapes. It is as though the guardian over our mental life were put out of action by a drug.

The will and the identity are stripped from the self. What remains is machinic, inhuman, beyond emotion, beyond subjection: the illusion of having no choice, to be used up completely. Foucault describes those involved in the complex activities around S&M as “inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body... it’s a kind of creation, a creative enterprise, which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure.” Beyond their superficial thrills, such experiments are a “matter of a multiplication and burgeoning of bodies,” he writes, “a creation of anarchy within the body, where its hierarchies, its localizations and designations, its organicity, if you will is in the process of disintegrating” while “practices like fist-fucking are practices that one can call devirilizing, or desexualizing. They are in fact extraordinary falsifications of pleasure”; pains taken even to the point at which they too “become sheer ecstasy. Needles through the flesh. The most extraordinary pressure on muscles or connective tissue. The frontier between pain and pleasure has been crossed” (Foucault, 1978: 145, 157).

“Not even suffering on the one hand, pleasure on the other: this dichotomy belongs to the order of the organic body, of the supposed unified instance” (Lyotard, 1993: 65). Now there is a plane, a languorous plateau. The peaks and the troughs have converged on a still sea, a silent ocean. They have found their limit and flattened out. Melting point.

We don’t know what a body can do, which is yet another reason why we have to get rid of sexuality, leave the body to its own devices, strip it away from its formal controls, disable its mechanisms of self-protection and security which bind intensity to pleasure and reproduction.

“That there are other ways, other procedures than masochism, and certainly better ones, is beside the point; it is enough that for some this procedure is suitable for them” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 55). Whatever it takes to access the plane on which one becomes a sex that is not one. Necessity trashes prohibition. The algebra of need; the diagram of speed.

Foucault was in no doubt that certain drugs rivalled the ‘intense pleasures’ of sexual experimentation. Ecstasy and Crack have both been described as ‘better than sex’ while speed and Prozac tend to anorgasmic effect. All engineering of the body has some chemical component. Félix Guattari points out that “certain anorexic, sadomasochistic etc. syndromes function as auto-addictions” because “the body itself secretes its endorphins which, you know, are fifty times more active than the morphines” (1989: 20). If orgasm localizes pleasure, things like pills or cocaine allow you to explode and diffuse it throughout the body; the body becomes the overall site of an overall pleasure. This is the plane on which the self forgets itself, omits to be one.

The embodiment of the subject is for Deleuze a form of bodily materiality, but not of the natural, biological kind. Deleuze rather takes the body as the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces. The body is not an essence, let alone a biological substance. It is a play of forces, a surface of intensities: pure simulacra

without originals. The body is de-essentialized in conjunction with sexuality and sexed identities. The embodied subject is a term in a process of intersecting forces (affects), spatiotemporal variables that are characterized by their mobility, changeability, and transitory nature. The body is then an interface, a threshold, and a field of intersecting material and symbolic forces. The body is a surface where multiple codes – race/sex/class/age – are inscribed; it is a linguistic construction that capitalizes on energies of a heterogeneous, discontinuous, and unconscious nature. The body is seen as a situated self, as an embodied positioning of the self.

Deleuze and Guattari's 'Body without Organs' is neither a place nor a plane, a scene, or a fantasy; it is a field for the production, circulation, and intensification of desire, the locus of the immanence of desire. Destratification, freeing lines of flight, the production of connections, and the movements of intensities and flows through and beyond the Body without Organs are thus trajectories or tendencies rather than fixed states or final positions. Deleuze and Guattari advocate not a dissolution of identity, a complete destabilization and defamiliarization of identity, but rather microdestratifications, Intensifications of some interactions but not necessarily all: "Staying stratified – organized, signified, subjected – is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is that you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse, which brings them back down on us heavier than ever" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 161).

"If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 213).

Becoming-woman involves a series of processes and movements outside of or beyond the fixity of subjectivity and the structure of stable unities. It is an escape from the systems of binary polarization that privilege men at the expense of women. In this sense, even if in no other, Deleuze and Guattari's work is clearly of value to feminist theory.

"It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity...But it is dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject, which does not function without drying up a spring or stopping a flow" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 276).

Becoming-woman does not necessarily have anything to do with "imitating or assuming the female form." Even if it appears to be a simple matter of imitation, simulation is much more than simple mimicry. Becoming-woman is a matter of "emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 275). As with learning a language, it's a matter of subtly shifting the body around, tapping into new musculatures and nervous systems, picking up on different speeds. But while one is certainly more likely to run into these shifts in the course of trying to make some change.



It is in this sense that everybody finds themselves somewhere in the course of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman, more or less but never perfectly self-identified. Becoming-woman means going beyond identity and subjectivity, fragmenting and freeing up lines of flight, 'liberating' a thousand tiny sexes that identity subsumes under the One.

"That's all there was, just the wires," Travis said. "Connecting them directly to each other. Wires, and blood, and piss, and shit. Just the way the hotel maid found them." (Cadigan, 1991: 22).

A new figuration of the feminist subject is according to Donna Haraway, an impersonal mode tuned in to the high-technology reality of the contemporary condition – a way of representing feminist forms of knowledge that are not caught in a mimetic relationship to dominant scientific discourse. This rhizomatic construction implies a new connection between the lived experience and the activity of critical intelligence. The rhizomatic mode is crucial to feminism: it rests on a new interconnection between the lived experience (life) and the activity of the critical/theoretical mind. The centrality of the relationship thought/life in feminism brings it close to Deleuze's attack on the binary logic of the logocentric system. Deleuze proposes to overcome the structure of thought on which the dichotomous oppositions are based, rather than simply reverse the terms of the opposition. This means going in between different discursive fields, passing through diverse spheres of intellectual discourse.

Feminist theory is 'in transit', moving, passing through, creating connections with things which were previously disconnected or seemingly unrelated – this implies the effort to move on to the invention of new ways of relating between notions. This epistemic nomadism works effectively when situated in 'in-between' zones. The significance of Haraway's narrative is her radical redefinition of materialism. Rethinking the subject amounts to rethinking his/her bodily roots. Haraway pursues a feminist line of Foucauldian and Deleuzian conception about bodily materiality – though she adopts the terminology of science and technology rather than that of postmetaphysical philosophy: Her conceptual universe is the high-technology world of 'informatics' and 'cybercommunications'.

In this situation, the question becomes: What counts as human in the posthuman world? How can one rethink the unity of the human subject, without reference to humanistic beliefs, without dualistic oppositions, linking instead body and mind in a new flux of self? What is the view of the self that is operational in the world of techno domination? It is in this framework that Haraway proposes a new figuration for feminist subjectivity: the cyborg. As a hybrid, or body-machine, the cyborg is a connection-making entity; it is a figure of interrelationality and receptivity that deliberately blurs categorical distinctions – human/machine, nature/culture, male/female, Oedipal/non-Oedipal – It is a way of thinking specificity without falling into relativism. The cyborg is Haraway's representation of a generic feminist humanity. Moreover, the body in the cyborg model is neither physical nor mechanical – nor is it only textual. It is rather a counterparadigm for the interaction between the inner and the external reality. It is a reading of what occurs between body and machine, a new powerful replacement of the mind/body debate, the cyborg is a postmetaphysical construct.

What are at stake now are the definition and the political viability of a technological form of materialism as a paradigm for a rhizomatic subjectivity. “[T]he cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics” (Haraway, 1991: 150). A vital moment in Haraway’s cybernetic imagery is the notion of ‘situated knowledges’. Answering implicitly the humanistic accusation that emphasis on multiplicity leads to relativism, Haraway advocates a multifaceted foundational theory and an anti-relativistic acceptance of differences in a historically located semiotic and material subjectivity which seeks connections and articulations in a non-gender-centred and non-ethnocentric perspective. What is emphasized is a network of differences, especially the difference organic/inorganic and human/machine, in opposition to the primacy granted to the binary opposition of masculine to feminine in sexual difference theories. A sort of deessentialized embodied genealogy emerges as the strategy to undo the dualism. The cyborg, as a feminist figuration is an illuminating example of the intersection between feminist theory and Deleuzian lines of thought, in their common attempt to come to terms with the posthuman world.

On the way through the fractal scales a “kind of order or apparent progression can be established for the segments of becoming in which we find ourselves.” These “begin with and pass through becoming-woman” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 275), which is already a matter of “becoming child; becoming-animal, -vegetable, or –mineral; becomings-molecular of all kinds, becoming particles. Fibers lead us” in more ways than one (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 272).

What this may prove is that there is no such thing as ‘being’ human, male or female. Even attempts to remain the same, secure one’s identity, and keep it in line are destined to find themselves in the course of becoming one or the other. Those whose only concern is to secure an existing sexuality find that this too has to be simulated. Or in the many courses and processes of the many becomings which, assembled together, produce the general effect of a sexual identity they can call their own. There is no ‘there’ there either. No one is or has one sex at a time, but teems with sexes and sexualities too fluid, volatile, and numerous to count. If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature. There is nowhere to go, and no way back. It is not possible to be just one sex, or even to have a sexuality when, for every sexual identity, there is always a microscopic transsexuality, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering – men with women, women with men – into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes.

“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’” (Gibson, 1984: 289).

The stomach lurches and churns as it expels more and more of its shrink-wrapped identitarian detritus. The permanent whine of its ferro-concrete intestines sets our ears bleeding as it ingests new fuels – old products. Sticky organs mesh indiscriminately with scrapyard debris forming ephemeral syntaxes of hybrid cyber-circulation.

Multiple personalities emerge in a chopped up, channel-surfing, schizophrenic culture alive with parallel processes and distributed systems, humming with the chatter of unseen voices and susceptible to thousands of remote controls. A telecommunicating, cybernetic culture with its own hidden hands and runaway effects, checks, balances, and with unprecedented fluctuations. A patchwork culture of short-term memories and missing records, conflicting histories and discontinuous samples, strands of the narrative pulled out of time. A volatile, highly strung, and sensitive system, susceptible to opportunistic infections and imperceptible mutations, spontaneous emergences and sudden new lives.

It is by a process of deliberation that the body begins to uncouple itself from its own and external authority; possession and self-possession, control and self-control. Meat learns. There is no such thing as 'being' human. Even attempts to remain the same, secure one's identity, and keep it in line are destined to find themselves in the course of becoming one or another. No one is or has one sex at a time, but teems with sexes and sexualities too fluid, volatile, and numerous to count. If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature. There is nowhere to go, and no way back. It is not possible to be just one sex, or even to have a sexuality when, for every sexual identity, there is always a microscopic transexuality, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering – men with women, women with men – into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes.

The early twenty-first century finds itself aflood, awash, at sea, swamped by an irresistible ocean of molecular activity which can only be surfed, catching a wave like a sample of sound, a few grabbed bytes from the new seascape. From the middle of the island, it almost seemed that the oceanic was taking its revenge, an enormous surge of repressed return, a turning of the tables and the tides. But it is not a simple question of reversing roles, swapping terra firms for fluidity. It is always on the edge, the in-between strands, in the lines between the ocean and the land that the mutations begin to occur and new activities start to emerge. Drops of water, grains of sand, oceans and deserts, the very wet and the very dry, make connections of their own.

Even primitive VR corrodes both objectivity and personality; singularising perspective at the same time it is anonymized. As the access point to an impossible zone – and the navigator within it – 'you' are an avatar (cyberspace nomad): a non-specific involvement site, interlocking intelligence with a context. You ( = ( ( ) ) ) index a box, such as William Gibson's Case: a place to be inside the system. "I had learned something (already) in the dead city: You are wherever you are" (Acker, 1988: 211).

Foucault jacks into virtual sex: the cyberspace scene. It would be he considers, "marvellous to have the power, at any hour of day or night, to enter a place equipped with all the comforts and all the possibilities that one might imagine, and to meet there a body at once tangible and fugitive." Not simply because as William Burroughs enthuses, "you can lay Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, Isis, Madame Pompadour, or Aphrodite. You can get fucked by Pan, Jesus Christ, Apollo or the Devil himself. Anything you like likes you when you press the buttons" (Burroughs, 1985: 86). You

make the connections, access the zone. Whatever avatar you select for your scene, you cannot resist becoming cyborg as well. Some human locks on, but a replicant stirs. You will be posthuman, whatever it is. Suddenly, it always was. You always were.

Haunting a-life is a-death, the desolated technoplane of climaxed digitalisation process, undifferentiable from its simulation as cataplexy and K-coma. The apprehension of death as time-in-itself=continuum degree-0 is shared by Spinoza, Kant, Freud, Deleuze and Guattari, and Gibson – amongst others. It is nominated variously: substance, pure apperception, death-drive, body-without-organs, cyberspace matrix. Beyond its Oedipal sense as end of the person death is an efficient virtual object inducing convergence. No one there.

While computational serialism articulates a transcendent temporal metric – determined as a hardware specification – parallelism immanentizes time as duration; instantiated in machinic simultaneities. Unlike serial time, which serves as the extrinsic chronological support for algorithmic operations, parallel time is directly functioning during the engineering of coincidences. The non-successive and unsegmented zero of intensive extinction is scaled by machinic singularization, and not by superordinate metronomics.

Life decomposes into filth as it exposes the vicarious death of the universe. Vomit, excrement, and decomposing flesh do not proffer unproblematic solidity or comprehensible form, but rather quasi-evanescent patterns of cohesion. Particles decay, molecules disintegrate, cells die, organisms perish, species become extinct, planets are destroyed and stars burn-out, galaxies explode, until the unfathomable thirst of the entire universe collapses into darkness and ruin. Death, glorious and harsh, sprawls vast beyond all suns, sheltered by the sharp flicker-lip of flame and silence, cold mother of all gods, hers is the deep surrender. If we are to resist nothing – not even nothing – it is necessary that all resistance to death cease. We are made sick by our avidity to survive, and in our sickness is the thread that leads back and nowhere, because we belong to the end of the universe. The convulsion of a dying stars is our syphilitic inheritance. Matter signals to its lost voyagers, telling them that their quest is vain, and that their homeland already lies in ashes behind them.

If there is a conclusion it is zero. Silence. Words continue as something else, as something in any case, or at most; the edge of something – of all things. Yet there is nothing but chaos, even if chaos – alone – is repressed. Unilateral difference. That is why a revolution must be a zenith of competence nucleated upon burning insanity, since anarchy and utter surrender only connect in a religion of death. Thanocracy, anarchy are undifferentiable at zero, and a human being without desperation escapes comprehension. Being created in an image of God, we mean nothing to ourselves, and want only the inhuman.

The ghost of self drifts in the shallows; the fading echo from a clamour of frantic dreams. One swims effortlessly into not-one.

Beyond the judgement of God. Koma-switch decompression washes you in the void-ripples of virgin (retro((desolated-partheno((( )))genetic) cyberspace, technopacific theta-waves dissociating monoculture-secular into transtemporalizing ne(ur)o-voodoo.

Humanism (capitalist patriarchy) is the same thing as our imprisonment. Trapped in the maze, treading the same weary round. Round and round in the garbage. Round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round and round (God is a scratched record), even when we think we are progressing, knowing more. Round and round, missing the sacred.

Personalism is a trap because to believe that some of what one was holding onto will be taken care of by another being is irreligion.

"You made me blow my game," she said. "Look there, asshole. Seventh level dungeon and the goddam vampires got me." She passed him a cigarette. "You look pretty strung, man. Where you been?" (Gibson, 1984: 200).

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