

**Bio/Techno/Logo:
Writing and the Face in the Human/Machine Relation**

Grayson Cooke

A Thesis

in

the Humanities Doctoral Programme

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ABSTRACT

Bio/Techno/Logo: Writing and the Face in the Human/Machine Relation

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Concordia University 2005

This thesis asks the question of the relation between humanity and technics, and the role of writing in mediating this relation. Since Plato, this relation has been a concern of philosophical thought. More recently, it has been brought to the fore by technoscientific and biotechnological practices, and contextualized in terms of the cyborg, the posthuman, the hybrid. Using a deconstructive methodology, and conducting analyses of filmic, literary, promotional, theatrical and critical texts, this thesis argues that humanity and technics are codetermined and codetermining. The thesis is divided into two parts, each of which follows this argument through different realms.

Part One focuses on the concept of 'the writing machine'. Writing, as a *tekhnē*, has often been derided for its supposed status as external to the present, human subject. Through analysis of key texts by Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler amongst others, this thesis demonstrates that writing and thus technics are not external *to* the human but are rather determinants *of* the human. In contemporary biotechnological discourse, technics has come to function as a primary metaphor in the understanding of biological and human 'life'. Again however, it is writing that conditions, powers and instantiates this technical rendering of life.

Part Two focuses on the concept of 'the face'. The face is one of the most crucial scenes in which the relation between the human and the technical is played out. The face is the representative of the human being. The face implies and implicates the human, it is the seat of communication and language, and in contemporary cosmetic culture, it is the locus of striving for ideals of public appearance. But appearance is far from simple. The fact that faces 'have' an appearance suggests that appearance is a matter of seeming and resemblance, that is, of representation. The human face is always mediated by technical systems and medical cures, it is promised by technics and kept in abeyance by technics, in one and the same movement. Through the face, the human remains always a spectre, there by not being there, mediated by technological becomings and virtual projections.

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Introduction

It was as if, by taking pen in hand, the “archons” were summoned. Yes, the archons! Those mysterious entities, those cosmic enzymes, who are at work in every seed, who engineer the creation, structural and aesthetic, of every flower, every plant, every tree, every universe. The powers within. An everlasting ferment from which stemmed law and order.

Henry Miller, *Nexus*.

An Improper Introduction: Human - 1; Cyborg - 0

When, circa 1995, I began my studies on what I then called ‘cyborg theory’, it seemed as if I had found a new ‘outcast’ to champion. The shifting border and contamination between what I referred to as ‘humanity’ and ‘technology’, seemed like a suitably fresh and adventurous border-crossing for the skirmish I was planning. In the manner of all good budding academics, I had been searching for, and thought I had found, my ‘area of specialization’, my ‘object of study’, the cultural figure or character I was going to rescue from the margins of academic and cultural discourse. The cyborg. Perhaps here I could ‘make my mark’. Here I would take my stand.

I also knew that this object of study was simultaneously something out there - in the world, in discourse, in culture - as well as in here, within me, my own becoming-cyborg, the marks of my pre-occupation with technology. It appeared that I was already marked, and this in some way seemed only fair; why be tricked into thinking your studies don't relate to your self? What foolishness that would be; of course I was a cyborg, it was too late to turn back and I didn't want to anyway, I had already seen "the wiring under the board" (McKenna).

It was a heady time. Cyberpunk, with its alternately utopic and dystopic visions of a technological future set to a throbbing Industrial beat, was well into its reign as the subculture *du jour*; I had spent the previous few years in Wellington, New Zealand, frequenting dark cold warehouse parties, either listening to or contributing to the noise of heavy guitars, throbbing bass and electro-trash-can drums. Bands like *Laibach* and *Einstuerzende Neubauten* had left the indelible imprint of European techno-nihilism in me. A visiting scholar to Victoria University of Wellington, Timothy Luke, had earlier introduced me to the work of Bruno Latour and Deleuze & Guattari, who together presented a worldview in which humans and machines co-existed in a networked symbiosis of meshing limbs and gears; a cyborg theory for a cyborg world. At numerous gigs around Wellington I played my drums and, under the lights, in the midst of sound, in the middle of rhythm, always inbetween one time or another, I theorized my relation to the drums, my becoming-rhythm, the abstract-machine of player, stick and skin, my self as purely a conduit for other phyla.

In popular culture, the cyborg frequently appeared as the much-maligned figure of 'technology out of control', the offspring of some Promethean delvings into the unknowable, or some Faustian bargain with the devil in the machine. Like many others, I had basked in the apocalyptic musings of Japanese filmmaker Shinya Tsukamoto in the cult classics *Tetsuo: Iron Man* (1989) and *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer* (1992). Metal shards projected through bulging flesh, the grimy muzzles of weapons emerged from bloodied wrists. I watched, fascinated and enthralled, as the cyborg became a mechanism through which cultural attitudes to and fears of technology were expressed, romanticized and purified, frequently being projected onto scapegoat figures of a dubious rhetorical status. *Robocop* (1987), *The Terminator* (1984) *Terminator II* (1991), and more prosaically but of equal importance, *Cherry 2000* (1987); a horde of shiny figures erupted across our screens, both feeding and allaying concerns about the increasing technologization of everyday life.

Perpendicular to mass culture's preoccupations with the simultaneously Faustian and Promethean problem of technology, the predominant attitude among academic theorists of the time was that the figure of the cyborg heralded a grand new era of emancipatory and transgressive posthuman subjectivity. A renegade in the halls of subjective power, the cyborg was touted as a border-crossing figure, a new form of outcast needing to be brought in from the cold – Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles and others put forth the rallying cry to take note of the cyborgs all around us, and within us. Similarly, the Extropians and the Children of Mind were revelling in their newfound status as unlikely seers of an uploaded future, a stark or glorious future (depending on how you chose to

look at it) in which human beings left behind the ‘meat’ and uploaded their brains to live in the miasma of the Net. I remember the calculated cool of these Extropian meat-haters, raised on an ascetic diet of William Gibson and Marvin Minsky; the debonair abandon with which they shucked off all that the rest of the human race held so dear; their bodies, their flesh; salt, sweat, scent. How little did they hold these fundamentals of existence, that they could so blithely, and with such futurological certainty, speak of a time to come when bodies would be ‘immaterial’ – that is to say, when bodies as physical things would be both irrelevant, and ‘virtual’ (in the pop-culture understanding of the word), re-fantasized on the other side of the cyberspatial divide, brighter, brainier and (*quelle surprise*) with bigger muscles and dicks.

The cyborg was touted for some years as the ideal figure around which many of these transgressive and posthuman figures could crystallize. With the advent of what has popularly been referred to as ‘virtual reality’, ‘virtual’ communication and the internet, the cyborg as a hybrid of human and machine seemed the perfect ‘mechanism’ through which the array of technologically-mediated subjectivities could be theorized and thus ‘actualized’. The cyborg became some kind of saviour from the strictures of identity and identity politics; fluid, changing, malleable identities fast became the principle foci of exchange in ‘virtual’ realms.

After a few years in this mode of study, I put my studies on hold to pursue experience in the IT and Web industry. The debate was still going strong. The process of bringing cyborg studies to the fore of cultural studies was well under way; theorists from many

disciplines and inter-disciplines were finding the cyborg a useful figure through which to describe the hybrids appearing almost daily in our magazines, newspapers, screens, bodies and lives. Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern*, a highly important text of its time, begins with an account of the profusion of hybrid subjectivities and forms encountered during a simple read of a daily newspaper:

On page eight, there is a story about computers and chips controlled by the Japanese; on page nine, about the right to keep frozen embryos; on page ten, about a forest burning, its columns of smoke carrying off rare species that some naturalists would like to protect; on page eleven, there are whales wearing collars fitted with radio tracking devices; also on page eleven, there is a slag heap in northern France, a symbol of the exploitation of workers, that has just been classified as an ecological preserve because of the rare flora it has been fostering! (Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* 2)

Like Latour, I too saw hybrids everywhere. The medical industry, the biotechnology industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the beauty industry, the fashion industry, the computer industry; all these industries and many others proliferated what I saw as cyborgs and forms of hybrid being at an astounding rate. The recognition that 'we are all cyborgs' became my catch-cry, my way of showing that 'humanity' and 'technology' were never as simple and monolithic as the larger commercial and media powers would have us believe. The recognition that humankind has always lived in relationships of reciprocity with technologies and machines of many sorts became the founding

understanding for my emerging ‘cyborg theory’, because it allowed me to in some way work around the dominant ideology of the ‘human’ and all that this concept has been used for. Indeed, the cyborg seemed to promise the end of the human, the apocalypse of the human, and many scholars took this promise at face value and began to theorize a ‘posthuman’ world.

A small problem soon arose: Now that we are all ‘cyborgs’; now that the ‘human’ has been so elegantly gifted a postmodern end (along with all the other metanarratives that had been so blithely done away with, *in the academic world at least*), what does it even mean to be a cyborg? What does it mean to use that term to encapsulate all that we are, to have found something we can all be, to attempt to install the cyborg in the place of the human? Has anti-totalizing thought not turned back on itself and re-totalized? Now that the cyborg has been brought to the fore, now that it appears it was always there, that ‘humans’ have always been ‘cyborgian’, to what use can we put this figure? And more poignantly; in the interest of *who* or *what* does the ideology of ‘we are all cyborgs’ work?

It was at this point, this ontological impasse, that I put my studies on hold, and began working with a web and multimedia design company. I wanted to experience a life lived inches from the screen, as if I could somehow manifest the cyborg within, bring it to the fore, experience it at the core and on the surface of my being, and in so doing, gain some fundamental insight into what it might mean for us all to be cyborgs. Enough of this writing, enough of this reading! BECOME what you see around you, find out what it does to you, how you will be re-written, how your body and mind will be re-shaped. Live

the code, touch the pixels; life at 72dpi. This was 1999, the height of the dotcom boom. In fact, it was almost past the height, the balloon was nigh to bursting, the fruit rank and overripe, the fantasies beginning to crumble. The VC funds were drying up, the big investors were cannily jumping ship and leaving the small investors to squabble over an eternally deferred return, which predominantly took the form of debt.

Friday the 14th of April, 2000, the day the tech bubble finally burst. Wall Street experienced its biggest ever fall in one day, ending a week in which the market lost over \$2 trillion in what was briefly known as 'value'. Ironically, I have no memory of that day because I never experienced it. As Friday the 14th of April unfolded around the terrestrial world, I was in an aeroplane bound for New Zealand, adrift in that characteristic no-time of 30,000 feet; I spanned 3 calendar days in this fashion, returning to earth on the 15th. I should, perhaps, have taken this as some kind of omen, for as it turned out, I wasn't a very good cyborg. I didn't like the other cyborgs and I didn't like doing business with them. Like a tin-man trapped in the lion's den, I didn't have the heart for it. I was also concerned for the state of my brain; I began to wonder whether my own obsession with technology, and with this vision of myself as the dutiful dotcomborg beetling away in my dotcomborg world, wasn't so much anything particularly deep, any cataclysmic ontic shift, but was more a matter of fashion, a matter of certain narratives of technological transcendence and nihilism. What was the nature of my love-affair with technology, and did this have anything to do with my desire to 'merge' with it in this fantasy of a civilized capitalist cyborgian future? From this standpoint, my motives, and the motives of those around me, began to look a little suspect.

Returning to my chosen ‘object of study’ after a hiatus of a few years, I found the landscape much changed. Online, when conducting a search on ‘cyborg theory’ or ‘cyborg identity’, I uncovered page after page of dead links; cyborg resource pages long dead and gone, Trans-Human and Extropian dot-orgs folded, having fallen out of favour with the digi-telligentsia. The Web had morphed irrevocably, leaving the tiled-backgrounded, bullet-pointed, Times-New-Roman-fonted, plain-text-edited ‘Cyborg Links’ page twitching pointlessly in the digital dirt. My own ‘Cyborg Pages’, once hosted at the address provided for me by my university, poorly constructed using a text-editor and my feeble 640x480 monitor as testing environment, were but a scrap of archival webjunk simmering quietly somewhere in the cramped bowels of the WayBack Machine at Archive.org; images missing, links all broke, tables misaligned. The fantasy of uploading one’s consciousness had been replaced by the far more ‘egalitarian’ lowest-common-denominator fantasy of downloading someone else’s consciousness from Amazon.com, or having your own consciousness pre-determined there in stripped down, agent-led shopping-preference form. The cyborg, that gleaming herald of a posthuman world, had lost the sheen it once had, no longer a worthy vehicle for encapsulating the fears and fantasies of a culture enmeshed in a global technological becoming. Imagine; cyborgism *was* about capital after all! Let us not forget; *Terminator III* was a baaaaaaaaaaaaad movie.

Thinking there may be hope yet, I boldly keyed in the URL for Cyborg.com. Surely by now, in this glorious age of futurological speculation and rampant cyber-squatting, some

canny soul will have identified the powerful connotations of such an address and will be holding it in reserve, keeping its excess in check, awaiting the true coming of the defining hybrid of our time, the hybrid that will lay waste to our feeble hold on ontological and phenomenological distinctions once and for all. Surely the name, the proper name itself and its rightful property, will have been claimed by its rightful owner. Surely the progeny and progenitor of the postmodern, late-capital, bio/techno/logos will have stood up to be (bean-)counted?

As of this writing, Cyborg.com is the URL for a Human Resource management tool called eCyborg, an offshoot of Hewitt Associates, “a global HR and outsourcing consulting firm” (Hewitt Associates). I searched for some time, but could come up with no concrete explanation of what was particularly cyborgian about Hewitt’s eCyborg application – even the page entitled ‘Why eCyborg?’ was strangely silent on the question of ‘why e-Cyborg?’. “Hewitt's eCyborg HRMS combines an unparalleled administrative foundation with the latest collaborative, Web-accessible technology. As a result, we enable our customers to leverage the power of their most important asset—their employees.” Ironically, this is probably the purest and most honest expression of the cyborg I went looking for in 1999; steeped in the platitudes of the private sector, humanistic at the same time as it is completely technical, networked, web-savvy, and thoroughly vapid. The cyborg is now so harmless, so lacking in revolutionary fervour or transgressive power, that ‘global’ HR companies have been able to harness it for its brand-potential. The cyborg is tech-talk, sign value. Let us be brutally honest: the cyborg is bullshit.

Like so many other deaths; like so many of the 'ends' and 'posts' critical theory has proliferated during the past hundred years, do we now have on our hands the death of the cyborg? What has happened to our glorious enquiry? It has gone from speculation to autopsy.

In some way, the cyborg was 'killed' by becoming so cleanly imbricated into the concept of the 'human', just as capitalism swallows all that intends to stand against it, or outside it. Humanity has an incredible ability to incorporate new forms of being into its matrix. So much that has at one time been considered beyond the pale, outside the realm of the human 'true', has now been incorporated into popular knowledge of what 'we' are; it has been brought inside, domesticated, domiciled, nomologized. And yet 'we' remain a 'we', and 'we-ness' remains unthreatened as the structure of consciousness and being, and thus of power. By now, it should almost go without saying that the concept of 'humanity' has been far too frequently co-opted by powers of various sorts with an interest in peddling and producing their own version of 'the human'. Far too many deaths, far too much exclusion and far too much suffering has already been caused in the name of the 'human', which has frequently served to obscure or stand-in for a much more conservative vision of white, male, Western, Christian, heterosexual middle-class being; the 'human' was and continues to be a 'supplement' (a dangerous one at that) of and for a vast number of Western ideals. Perhaps that has always been the point. The human as a semiotic category has always served as a normative device, a rhetorical sorting technology designed to weed out difference, marginality, and monstrosity and either 'brand' it with the stigma of

the non-human or, like *Star Trek's* Borg, incorporate it in order to grow. This act of substitution, whereby the seemingly external, technological object becomes internalized, purified and in so doing 'humanized', marked the death-knell of the cyborg as any kind of politically useful vehicle for examining the power relations of technoscience, biotechnology and global capital. Biotechnology, as the most public face of the becomings-cyborg all around us, is so far into its ascendancy that any serious questioning of the bio/techno relation is uneconomic, retrogressive and, frankly, passé. As Donna Haraway notes, "[t]he capacity for multisided, democratic criticism and vision that fundamentally shapes the way science is done hardly seems to be on the political agenda in the United States, much less in the R&D budget of universities, in-house government labs, or industries" (94). Cloning and stem-cell research may be currently considered contentious *avants-gardes* of technoscientific possibility, but they are contended on the basis of ethical and religious concerns, both of which have to do not with 'what is human' but 'what is *right* for humans'.

The cyborg, as the 'end' of the human and as the possibility of the 'post'-human, was always going to be subject to the same obsolescence as any theory of the end. Endings are notoriously dangerous things to theorize; after a brief turn under the forgetful academic sun, they generally come back to bite the theorist on the hand, admonish them for their naïveté, their bad faith, their failure to believe in the impossibility of endings. There are no ends, no endings. The imagination of the cyborg is part of the imagination of the end that apocalyptic fantasies are the primary example of. Endings are land-grabs, apparatuses of theoretical capture, and they are 'virtual', not 'possible', they find their

truest manifestation in the expectation that fuels investment, not in arrival. Endings are not postulated in order that they will come and someone will have the glory of having predicted them; they are postulated in order that they never come, that they are always yet to come, that they come by not coming, and that someone is there to capitalize on this *revenant*, this apocalyptic *revenue*. Thus it is in this economy that the cyborg and the posthuman, quite simply, lack value, for they have come and gone. To announce the posthuman; to track its progress; to state its arrival, its distribution through the populace; this is at the same time to announce the death of such a concept, for it is to obviate the necessity of any kind of investment which would then allow for a return.

I also suspect, as I mentioned, that the cyborg simply went out of fashion. Certain words, phrases and concepts exhibit immense staying power in culture; often they signify concepts that change, Proteus-like, as they need to. For example, the sign of 'science' has, since its inception, denoted widely differing fields, knowledges and understandings. In the medical field, it has encapsulated the Hippocratic theory of the humors, blood, phlegm, black and yellow bile, speculative substances which governed the ease and disease of the body. It has encapsulated theories of the body as a clockwork mechanism, which in turn have echoed visions of the universe as a vast clockwork, stars attached to rotating spheres just waiting for the unlikely event of a comet to tear through their fragile bonds and expose them to the cruel light of an emerging Copernican logic. Understandings of 'nature', too, have at times encapsulated such mechanistic visions of the world, combining simultaneously the biological and the mechanical. More recently science, within the field of molecular biology, has come to represent the body, and thus

humanity and life itself, as a function of the information-processing and inscriptions of DNA and RNA. Science survives, it lives on, as does capital, as does humanity. The cyborg was never going to be such a stayer, always too speculative, never able to throw off its science-fiction cloak, always returning to paddle in the shallows of Hollywood blockbuster entertainment. In some way the cyborg was always going to be destroyed, re-incorporated into the human, rolled back into some future-retrogressive model. Temporally troubled, the cyborg lived in the past and the future at the same time; nostalgia for the cyborg, would be nostalgia for the future.

Having sketched out the realm of the cyborgian domain as involving such contested 'things' as human, machine, biology, technology, organic, non-organic, living and non-living, it should also be made quite clear that not all of the aforementioned oppositions describe the same 'things', or represent exactly the same enquiry. These pairs cannot always be mapped evenly onto each other, they delineate overlapping but also distinct fields, like so many Venn diagrams escaping each others' borders. All that is technological does not contain all that is non-human, although the technological can also be considered non-human. All that is human does not contain all that is biological, although the practices and processes of technoscience may represent a viewpoint in which the former is to be treated simply *as* the latter, that is, as biological *matter*. This same problematic also haunts any political or economic *use* of these things, whereby attention turns to what is at stake in their relation. The economic concerns of a for-profit biotechnology industry necessitate certain elisions of the physical boundaries understood

to exist between things, as well as a legal apparatus to police what is done both with these things, and in the name of these things.

Furthermore, this confusion makes it difficult to even speak of these things. How can we speak of a cyborg as a hybrid of human and machine when it is not clear that humanity is not already part machine, or in part technical? How can we speak of what is biological when Intellectual Property and patent laws allow for the patenting of living entities or elements as 'inventions', and thus technologies? Our language, in such an enquiry as this, is always delimited by language itself, cannot entirely break free of the way in which language returns us, always, to domains already inscribed in prepared forms and modes of thought. Thinking a radical exteriority to language, an outside of thought or the concept, then, is a thought that has much the same difficulty as thinking a radical destabilization of the human and the machine; there is an aporia of thought here, just as there is an aporia of being, and the cyborg all too easily slips or even dives into this abyss. Indeed, it is perhaps this fundamental unnameability or constant disappearance that has contributed also to the cyborg's demise. The cyborg is, despite its name, the being that has no name, the being that is not a being, that which *is* by being *not*, or *not yet*, or even *never*. So maybe the cyborg was killed before it even began to live; perhaps we are not at the end at all, perhaps we can begin again on this enquiry, indeed perhaps we *must* begin again; perhaps we have never been cyborgs, we have always been human, will always be human.

A Proper Introduction: Bio/Techno/Logo

While I would argue that the cyborg as a *term* has had its day, as a *concept* (an impossible concept perhaps, a concept always in-formation, always requiring of re-formation) or as a signal towards a mode of enquiry, the cyborg remains of vital importance, and has perhaps not even begun. During the time of its ‘reign’, the cyborg sat at the centre of a range of enquiries and discourses, all concerned with the border wars or apparent oppositions between what has variously been described as human and machine, biology and technology, human and non-human, living and non-living, organic and inorganic, animate and non-animate, “who” or “what”. Tied up with these oppositions have been concerns regarding the understanding of *tekhnē*, technics, technique and technology, each term bringing with it a different orientation, a different history, different nuances depending on the language and culture it appears in. Although the cyborg, as the figure once charged with the encapsulation of these enquiries, may no longer hold the caché it once had, the tenor and pseudo-objects of these enquiries have not gone away.

The realm of the cyborg; the realm of questions about the role of technics and technology in human lives and in lived experience, the *technological life(style)*; the realm of the understanding or *doxa* of biology and biological systems and of technology and technological systems; the realm, therefore, of systematicity, calculation, information and in-formation, and programming in general; the realm of the complex apparatuses of power that oversee the use the human race makes of technology, the evolution of technics and co-evolution of the human; all of these realms remain vital centres of enquiry for thought in the twenty-first century. We – humanity, the world, the West, the East, the

minority world, the majority world – continue to think about who we are, and this thinking of who we are continues to stabilize and destabilize against what we (think we) are not, and against what we are (not) becoming. We continue to research, to develop, to progress, to innovate and to capitalize. We go to market, we bring ever more complex ‘things’ to market, and in doing this we bring ourselves to market also, for we act in the name of these things. We multiply forms of property, and these forms of property – these proper forms – are structured in the economic, political, literal and figural fissures between humanity and its others.

Given on one hand the ‘terminological’ death of the cyborg, its passing into the signification of a certain moment in late-twentieth-century science-fiction and critical thinking, and on another hand its conceptual survival and ongoing pertinence, *and on yet another hand* (if we may be permitted, bio/techno/logically, to graft another hand to our logic) the difficulty of thinking, saying and writing about what resides in the interstices of human and technical being; given this hydra-handed monster (which no-doubt has a number of faces as well), what space or place is available to us to think?

The title of this thesis, *Bio/Techno/Logo*, represents an attempt to think this place of no place, this unnameable inbetween, this between two or more unnameables. Bio/Techno/Logo, as an extrapolation from the currently fashionable term ‘biotechnology’, delineates a number of fields. It calls forth or conjures up a number of discourses, disciplines, fields of study, modes of knowledge, and forms of enquiry, all of which appear in some incredible and magical way to be packed into, delineated by,

captivated and reserved by this deceptively simple term, biotechnology. It reminds us, also, to look closely at the function of suffixes and prefixes. Biotechnology is a word constructed out of prefixes and suffixes, each part of this tripartite term lending itself to countless other iterations and variations on its theme. Biocide, biohazard, biopoiesis; technophilia, technophobia, technocracy; by their very 'nature', 'bio' and 'techno' lend themselves freely to all-comers, operating under a connective linguistic synthesis that presupposes an equally connective science and culture. Similarly, 'ology' as a suffix often signifies an easy and slippery way with language. We multiply ologies easily, as we do bios and technos. Every practice, every discipline, every category has its ology, everything that is systematized and everything that is scientified has its ology, and spawning new ologies is a simple matter. But do we regularly question what it might mean to add the syntactical ghost of the *logos* to any formulation? Is it really a simple matter to *neologize* as freely as we do, or to live with a language, science and culture that makes new words and neo logics without a second thought or glance?

We must begin, then, with an exploration of our termin-ology. 'Bio' invokes, first and foremost, biology, the scientific study of living organisms. The 'living' and the 'organic' (as well as the non-living and non-organic) are implied here too, as spheres *proper* to biological enquiry and as forms of biological *matter*. However, as noted, when we use this prefix, we interpellate many fields, disciplines and modes of thought and practice, and we must keep in mind the proliferation of these fields. While biology may spring to mind as the paradigmatic usage for such a prefix, neologisms such as biocapital, biopiracy and bioprospecting, which we will encounter later on, must also be thought

alongside something like biology. Biocapital *et al* inflect biology as a practice in numerous ways, implying a politics of space, property and territory that does not necessarily appear in the original term. These other terms inflect biology, and biological matter therefore, with the question of materialization, a question Judith Butler raises in *Bodies that Matter*. If biology is the study of life and living matter, is this matter simply given, a simple matter, or has it in fact *materialized*? What discourse is implicated in biology's ology?

More specifically bio, through its association with life and the living, is associated also with 'the human' and with 'human being'. Human beings are alive, they are biological matter. Like the living organism, human beings are fit subjects for biological study; biology asks what human beings are made of, what their make-up is. Human beings study themselves of course, without having to study biology. Philosophy, archaeology, anthropology, to name only three; these disciplines also take the human being as their subject of study. Although these disciplines ask many other questions, one of their primary zones of enquiry is human being, what it means to be human, where humans came from, how they work, how they think, and what they think about. Quite apart from its physical, biological make-up, and the matter of the materialization of this make-up, what makes a human human? *And can we even ask this question?*

'Techno' has its root in *tekhne*, but it has many technicalities; technology, technics, technique. *Tekhne* is the Greek term for craft, art or skill. It is a broad term, and 'skill' is even broader. Bernard Stiegler asks, "[w]hat is not skill? Politeness, elegance and

cooking are skills” (*Technics* 93). In Greek mythology, *tekhnē* was given to human beings by Prometheus after his brother, Epimetheus, had created humans but forgotten to give them any specific ‘animal’ characteristics, such as sharp teeth, claws or speed, that would ensure their survival. *Tekhnē* is not merely skill in something, it is the ability to change or form matter. It is a matter of survival and invention, it involves production, but also a looking towards the future in which such production will be useful; both ‘survival’ as a living beyond and ‘invention’ as a move towards the to-come, imply a temporality of present and future. As we will discuss later, *tekhnē* thus implies *anticipation*.

‘Technics’ and ‘technique’ are strongly tied to *tekhnē*, in many ways inheriting its broad base. These terms, like *tekhnē*, imply skill, specialization and anticipation in the fashioning of something. What is fashioned may be material or immaterial, it may be ‘rhetorical’ or ‘technical’, but most importantly, it will be a product. Technics and technique imply not merely production, but use and exchange. As Stiegler notes:

Rhetoric and poetry are also techniques. And there is something of poetry and rhetoric in all language. Is not language itself, *qua* skill, a technique, and a potentially marketable commodity? The speech that presupposes a type of skill is productive even if speech is not the specialty of the person speaking: it produces enunciations. These can be marketed or not, as is the case for all products of a *tekhnē*. (*Technics* 94)

Technique, however, is also used slightly differently. In the work of French writer Jacques Ellul, *la technique* signifies an ideology of absolute efficiency in technical

practice. It is the rule of “the one best way” (79). Ellul also argues that technique is purely rational and amoral, and evolves by itself according to this logic of pure rationality and efficiency. “In this decisive evolution, the human being does not play a part. Technical elements combine among themselves, and they do so more and more spontaneously. In the future, man will apparently be confined to the role of a recording device; he will note the effects of techniques upon one another, and register the results” (93). Ellul has a powerfully humanist approach, and clearly has a strong investment in the demonization of technique as part of his critique. Given this overt bias, his work will not be critical to this thesis and I do not intend to examine his position in detail. However, I note his work here as another perspective on technics and technique, and importantly, one that introduces the notion that technics and technique are often comprehended as something both external to, and autonomous from, the human. Langdon Winner argues that human beings “export their own vital powers – the ability to move, to experience, to work, to think – into the devices of their own making. They then experience this life as something removed and alien, something that comes back at them from another direction” (34). In this sense, Winner suggests that technique is humanity *made invisible*, or in terms we will come to later, made *spectral*; it is humanity made ghostly, made other, made humanity under the projected and encompassing sign of technics.

‘Technology’ is the most widely used (and abused) term of the entire signifying chain, and as a function of this wide use, is the most amorphous or difficult to grasp. Adrian Mackenzie quotes Leo Marx, who rather dispassionately describes technology as “a bloodless abstraction, that represents no particular person or thing, no specific skill,

vocation or other institution” (Mackenzie, *Transductions* xi). It is used to signify all that we have mentioned in terms of *tekhnē*, technics and technique, as well as abstract systems or ‘technologies of power’ à la Foucault; the word ‘apparatus’ is similarly inflected with the multiple senses of specific physical technologies or machines, groups of machines, or abstract systems of power or governance. Technology also stands in for notions of progress and development, and is ideologically marked as a frequent tool of state and multinational corporate power; technology *is* the future, but it is the future made manifest, encapsulated in some product or other, or in some program. Technology is the most powerful technical signifier that is up for grabs in the modern era, and despite its vagueness, can be understood to represent a further development of technics, and most importantly, its modern manifestation. Richard Beardsworth, for example, follows Stiegler in understanding “by ‘technology’ the specific amalgamation of technics and the sciences in the modern period”. Technology is the modern inheritor of many years of technics, and marks its association with science, as well as the discourse of this inheritance. “Technology is therefore the discourse describing and explaining the evolution of specialized procedures and techniques, arts and trades – either the discourse of certain types of procedures and techniques, or that of the totality of techniques inasmuch as they form a system” (Stiegler, *Technics* 94). We could no doubt go on listing the ways in which technology is differently inflected in different discourses and disciplines; suffice it to say that here, for the purposes of this thesis, we will understand ‘technology’ as technics in the modern period and technics manifest in specific modern technologies, and will try to limit its use to discussion of the technics of modernity.

Although their etymological roots are quite different, the ‘tech’ prefix invokes also various machinisms; the machine, mechanism, the mechanical. We have already suggested that speaking about technology is not an easy thing; so too with ‘machine’, or ‘the machine’, terms which hold a certain fashionable aura and, like technology, are in some way overcoded by their common usage. A phrase such as ‘the machine’ in many ways signifies ‘technology’ as a large system of technical domination, a technological juggernaut laying waste to all in its path. Lewis Mumford’s ‘megamachine’ as a figure of authoritarian technophilia and domination expresses this idea quite succinctly. However, the word ‘machine’ can also signal a far less expansive and authoritarian system. Machine comes from the Greek *makhana* – a pulley, and from *makhos* – device, contrivance. ‘Mechanism’ and ‘mechanical’ receive their connotations from this sense of machine. A machine is a technical device, often inflected with a theatrical purpose. The *deus ex machina* is not merely a plot device, but in the Greek theatre, a crane used to lower an actor playing a god onto the stage, there to wrap up proceedings in a timely fashion. Again, the ‘apparatus’ appears as a useful synonym here, being that its Latin root *apparāre* bundles together the sense of making ready (in Heidegger’s terms, making ‘ready-to-hand’), and making visible, that is, *appearing*.

It is the use of a machine to introduce a break into the flow of a narrative, that Deleuze & Guattari inherit when they speak of a machine as “a system of interruptions or breaks (*coupures*)” (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). At the same time, they position each machinic break as a flow that is broken by another machine. “In a word, every machine functions as a break in the flow in relation to the machine to which it is connected, in relation to the machine

connected to it” (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). A machinic system, then, is a system of breaks-flows that dictates the distribution of forces across heterogeneous realms and materials. Deleuze & Guattari see machines everywhere, because nothing exists outside its relations and connections with everything else. Everything is in “a continuous, infinite flux: for example, the anus-machine and the intestine-machine, the intestine-machine and the stomach-machine, the stomach-machine and the mouth-machine, the mouth-machine and the flow of milk of a herd of dairy cattle (“and then...and then...and then...”)” (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). The ‘abstract machine’, a term which will surface in Chapter 3 of this thesis, thus signals this potential linking of multiple machines, the idea that many individual machines, whatever they consist of, often combine to form larger machines.

Being that there is a considerable difference between quotidian uses of ‘machine’ to signal either some large system of technical domination or a simple technical contrivance, and Deleuze & Guattari’s notion of the machine as a break or cut in a flow, we shall try to limit our use of the word ‘machine’ in this thesis, as we will with the word ‘technology’. We will primarily use machine in the context of writing; following Deleuze & Guattari’s proliferation of machines of many sorts, we will speak of ‘the writing machine’, and will use this term to invoke writing as inscription or ‘writing down’, writing ‘in general’ as the trace that conditions the utterance and iteration, and writing as technics, writing as a technical element in the de-cisions of governmental, legal, capital and colonial power.

As signalled by our earlier mention of the easy profusion of ologies, ‘logo’ reminds us that each of the aforementioned spheres is frequently governed or overseen in some way by the *logos*, the founding Word, the legitimating Discourse, the Brand, Speech, Father, Phallus, Sun, Capital, Good. *Logos* is a complex idea, and the power it confers has been widely appropriated during its long and fraught history as an idea. The deconstructive and feminist examination of logocentrism and phallogocentrism has decisively exposed the distribution of its power. Derrida’s ongoing examination of the relation between speech and writing, which maps onto a distinction between *logos* and *tekhnē*, has destabilized the easy assumption of speech onto the throne of the *logos*, and has frequently substituted writing in its place.

‘Logo’ thus reminds us that we are in the area of the brand and of intellectual property, and of what we will call ‘the writing machine’; the logo implies the sign and symbol by which the product and property of capital enterprise is marked, disseminated, bought and sold. We are well accustomed to understanding the products of technological manufacturing processes as bounded and bordered by a system of signs, marks and traces. The manufacturer’s logo that appears on all our machines, our clothes, and on the endless stream of meaningless apparatuses that suffuses the social, is a now almost invisible sign of the powerful reach of the brand, and brand-consciousness is bred into consumers in the West from a young age.

Similarly, the profusion of intellectual property claims and the discourse of the ‘knowledge economy’ has ensured that we are all exposed daily to the idea that intangible

things such as schemas, signs, figures, names, words and even colours can be copyrighted, trademarked, and thus owned. Trademarks, copyright and patents, as forms of intellectual property, all fall within the sphere of the logo, that legitimating discourse, word or document that grants forms, gives power, inscribes and circulates. However, what emerges in the era of Bio/Techno/Logo is a more complex form of ownership whereby it is parts of biological bodies, and human bodies therefore, that are owned, commodified, and in so doing, technicized.

Taking this somewhat sprawling termin-ology into account in our understanding of Bio/Techno/Logo, one of the fundamental tasks of this thesis is thus to think the human differently; to think it other-wise, to think it alongside, in conjunction with, as codetermined with, its others. Such an undertaking inevitably involves thinking technics, and technology differently as well; that is, thinking the human other-wise requires thinking it in relation to its others, and thinking those others other-wise as well.

Madness in my Method-ology

I would like to use this formulation, Bio/Techno/Logo, as an heuristic device or reminder of the complexity of the fields we will be skirting here. Bio/Techno/Logo reminds us to attend to the construction of these fields of knowledge and enquiry, and to the stabilization of the practices that constitute these fields, and the ‘things’ that ‘inhabit’ such fields. It reminds us that ‘biotechnology’ need not refer to the practices it is generally held to refer to – rather, that such a term might in fact hide within it a number

of quite different possibilities for meaning, if we open ourselves up to the terminological potentials of mis-reading. I am not using Bio/Techno/Logo to in any way imply that it is biotechnology *in particular* that we will be discussing, as some kind of paradigmatic example or test-case. Far from it; although we will discuss it, this thesis is not ‘about’ biotechnology. Indeed, it is about nothing *in particular*; if anything it is about particularity and the particle. Particles are hot properties these days, and the *idea* of particularity is a powerful one; the search for and positing of particles of various sorts has been going on for many hundreds and even thousands of years, and will no doubt continue. Monads, atoms, molecules, genes, memes, proteins, seeds; particles are theorized, manifested, witnessed, produced, hybridized and exchanged every day, in laboratories, on the market, and in the atmosphere at large. Donna Haraway treats these particles as the ‘stem-cells’ in the ‘technoscientific’ body, and as the ‘wormholes’ that deliver us into contemporary worlds (43). They are the ‘make-up’ of the modern world, and this ‘make-up’ is surface and depth.

While thinking about nothing in particular, I should note that the question of whether this thesis *has a thesis* is a question that we shall leave here suspended. What would it mean for us to ‘have’ a thesis? Would we then be able to honestly say that we had found the answer, that possession was nine tenths of the law, and that having found the law, stood at its gates and (imagine!) been admitted, we were going to keep to it, stay within it, respect it? There is no specific question to which we could find a specific answer – rather, there is the constant questioning of specifics, and of species. To have a thesis, to be in possession of it, to own it, to have it as my property and my capital, and to rest in

the knowledge that this property is secure, would be to willfully blind myself to the duplicity of property, and this duplicity will be one of the main themes of this thesis.

Property, 'having', and possession, are never simple. In the English language, as well as in French, there are a number of tropes that circulate around these terms, variant meanings that inscribe any use of the terms with the ghost of something other, some other sense, some twist or turn that may not always be *meant*, and that calls into question the status of whatever is ever *meant*. Possession can signify either ownership of something, or possession by something, some obsession, ghost or spectre. Furthermore, these somethings may often be the same thing. To possess something of great value, to jealously guard it, to store it up in the name, perhaps, of one day realizing its value on the market; this is also to be possessed by this thing, in its power, under its spell. 'Having' marks out a similar contra-diction, for one can 'have' something, and be 'had' by something or someone; again, one can be had at the same moment one thinks one has something; cheated, short-changed, swindled. These tropes mark out rhetorical and capital contradictions, they have to do with economies that exist in language, and the 'real' world (let us pretend, for the sake of a moment's distinction, that these are separate or separable domains). Commerce, a term that can involve interpersonal exchange of many sorts, be it monetary, conversational, sexual or any combination of the above, encapsulates this generalized duplicity very well.

Acknowledging this contra-dictory nature of language and of capital; insisting on opening up to this double-talk, may seem like a language-game, a bit of fun, mere

rhetorical machination, mere *sophistry*, not serious, complex and *sophisticated* academic enquiry. As will become clear, however, an enquiry into the zones delimited or promised by Bio/Techno/Logo cannot honestly and responsibly be conducted without recourse to such theatrics, such performativities. I am guided in this mode of enquiry by the deconstructive methodology of Jacques Derrida, whose tireless work on the *abyme* of language revolved always around the question of what one can ever *mean to say*.¹ I am guided, moreover, by two Derridas.

Firstly, I am guided by the Derrida of deconstruction, the Derrida of a vast number of texts that have become central to critical thought. Deconstruction now has a long history in academia. It is not ‘new’, and to some, it has lost its shine. The initial obituary of Derrida’s death in *The New York Times* is testament to the derision with which deconstruction has been received in some quarters (Kandell); either that, or it is testament simply to the fact that, dying when he did, and in the political climate he did, Derrida’s Continental spirit of unquiet seemed too glaringly un-American not to be challenged by the popular press. No freedom-fries at *that* philosopher’s funeral. Thankfully, deconstruction also remains a vital sphere of activity in academia, and thankfully, Jonathan Kandell’s *NY Times* obituary, disingenuously titled “Jacques Derrida, Abstruse Theorist, Dies in Paris at 74”, was roundly condemned. Animated, perhaps, by the more overtly political stance Derrida took in his later years, deconstruction and Derridean

¹ It is worth noting, however, that Derrida’s tendency to italicise, make fun of, and generally point out the contra-diction involved in the phrase ‘I mean to say’, loses some of its weight when in translation. In French, the words ‘I mean to say’ would more accurately be stated ‘*Je veux dire*’; literally, ‘I want to say’. Here, ‘wanting’ would open up a much greater realm of indeterminacy than what in English would be expressed by ‘meaning’; wanting implies desire but in no way does it imply fulfillment, it is open-ended. Meaning, on the other hand, complicates intentions with the spectre of denotative meaning; “I mean to say *this*; *this means this*.” Hence, Derrida’s playing with *je veux dire* makes more sense in French, although the English translation introduces a number of interesting nuances perhaps not initially intended.

thought have maintained currency and relevancy in academia and in the world today, and constitute a vital set of perspectives for the enquiry I wish to conduct. As much as this thesis is a meditation on a number of themes, then, such as the relation between humanity and technicity, biology and technology, as well as the role of writing, memory, property, value, spectrality and virtuality in these relations, it is also a meditation on how these themes, or their synonyms, intersect in and with the work of Derrida, and the thought of deconstruction. Coupled with this is a desire to join the analysis and use of Derrida's earlier, more 'canonical' works, with an analysis informed by his later works; this thesis thus opens with discussion of *Of Grammatology* and *Dissemination*, and closes with *Archive Fever* and *Spectres of Marx*.

Secondly, and as a function of this bracketing of the thesis by deconstructive thought, I am guided by what I would like to call the 'spirit' of Derrida, a spirit especially spectral now that we have Derrida *as* a spirit, an archive and a spectre to float above, to come back, to glide over and guide silently and formlessly. Derrida died about halfway through the writing of this thesis; before I had even finished with the spectre of Marx, the spectre of Derrida showed up as well. This spirit is the one who enjoins us to, simply, always pay the closest attention to what we are 'saying', and to the *technologies* of saying; to pay attention to the way in which words slip out of our grasp, always trying to mean something else when we least expect it; to pay attention to the derivations and etymologies of words, to their own virtual histories packed within them, always clamouring and clambering out, escaping present context, remembering past usage. This spirit presides over the twists and turns of language, from behind its visor or over our

shoulder it watches and grins knowingly as language falls apart, opens up, reveals the seeds of its opposite, *punishes* itself for its duplicity. Judith Butler has expressed the logic of this illogic well:

[S]peaking is always in some ways the speaking of a stranger through and as oneself, the melancholic reiteration of a language that one never chose, that one does not find as an instrument to be used, but that one is, as it were, used by, expropriated in, as the unstable and continuing condition of the “one” and the “we”, the ambivalent condition of the power that binds. (242)

Butler’s ‘speaking of a stranger through and as oneself’ suggests a plurality of voices, a dialogic function of language itself which can never be escaped but which marks the fundamental condition of speaking, writing and thinking. For this reason, but also for reasons of my own, this thesis is a work of montage, or bricolage. In cinematic contexts montage is editing, the cutting apart and joining together of strips of film to form a continuous temporal reel. Montage allows us to span time, to span space, to make leaps, visual and conceptual, to bridge, to connect, to synthesize, to associate. As a practice, montage allows an editor to pull together the strands that make up a story. Montage is, firstly, about narrative, the sequencing of events, whether chronologically linear or non-linear. In this sense, I have approached this thesis as a montage of elements that fit together to form a certain kind of story, the story of the human and the technical and their supplements. But montage is more than just a narrative device, it is a discursive device also, a dialectical method of conceptual juxtaposition that seeks always to hint at what is

not shown *in* the edit but exists *between* the edits, as a function of the edit. In this sense, then, the montage performed in this thesis is a conceptual one, designed to draw out the facets, implications, subterfuges, elisions and illusions of the human and the technical.

Using the technique of the bricoleur, in this thesis I have brought together a host of texts, contexts and disciplines that together constitute my story. Bricolage is a form of montage in the sense of a bringing together, but most importantly, it is a bringing together of whatever is found ready to hand. Montage implies a set of parameters already identified as pertaining to the structuring principle of the montage. Bricolage is more piecemeal, and more aleatoric, it is about forging connections between environmental elements that are found, that sit around. The texts I analyse in this thesis do not sit together in any pre-defined disciplinary category, they are not pre-grouped, they do not 'speak' to each other in any easily-identifiable way (and in that sense, this thesis is also a work of translation, giving space to the conversation of un-like and unlikely things). Moreover, they are essentially arbitrarily chosen, and could no doubt be substituted for any number of other texts. In a way, the texts themselves are not the point, it is the connections and significances that arise from their analysis and juxtaposition that is of interest here.

Broadly speaking, texts from literary, filmic and advertising culture have been collected together, to be filtered through a generally deconstructive laboratory. The texts span centuries, but are in no way ordered chronologically, nor should they be; they do not constitute a *history*, and *historicization* is not the point, although *historicity*, or more accurately *temporality*, is key. The human and the technical are found everywhere, and

their supplemental chains lead off in many directions. While it is an underlying principle of this thesis that the human and the technical have had ‘relations’ for many hundreds and even thousands of years, and that these relations have been inflected by the historical conditions of particular eras, creating any kind of *order* for these relations, as if they had developed according to some phylum which could be mapped, tracked and written up, would be to unduly limit the potentiality implicit in these relations. This thesis is neither about the past, nor modernity, nor the contemporary scene as such, as specific moments in time. Rather, what I am attempting to do here is to place the facets, implications and spin-offs of the human-technical relation alongside each other in order to generate a picture of this relation, a picture that does not imply *a* particular history, *a* particular discourse, *a* particular discipline, but that emerges gradually from its parts.

It is not the case that I am attempting a history or exploration of *something*, hence my Improper Introduction which does away with the cyborg as an ‘object’ of study. Indeed, the thing-ness of such a putative object of study is precisely what is questionable here; remember, we are examining *nothing in particular*. Rather, I am attempting to map out various articulations of a number of relations, coalescing around ideas of humanity, technics, biology, technology and writing. Alongside the techniques of montage and bricolage, this thesis has been composed in an iterative fashion. It’s like a rondo, which is a musical form that consists of a statement of the main theme succeeded by variations on parts of the theme, and a return to the main themes. Rondo form is not strict however, and main themes are never singular. Although rondo form is most easily expressed as ‘ABACA...’, it is often the case that A is composed of à, ã, ā, ã, and ä, that B and C will

explore first \tilde{a} and then \bar{a} and \tilde{a} , and that subsequent repetitions of A will repeat not A but $A\tilde{a}$, $A\bar{a}$, or $A\tilde{a}$. This thesis is thus not through-composed, but consists of themes and refrains. There is no single motif that runs through it, but there are themes, refrains and variations.

The Thesis Proper

This thesis is divided into two parts, each of which follow the paths of a number of themes, using two different but related concepts to focus the discussion. Although the chapters of this thesis are numbered consecutively, the two parts do not so much follow on directly one to the other, but rather, loop back and conduct similar analyses across different domains. In Part One, which is comprised of chapters 1 and 2, discussion will revolve around the concept of ‘the writing machine’. In Part Two, which is comprised of chapters 3 and 4, discussion will revolve around ‘the face’.

The primary theme of this thesis is the question of the relation between humanity and technics. What is the role of technics in human life? This is also to ask about life in general; what is the role of technics in the understanding of life? These are broad questions, and have been the concern of many thinkers for many years. Thus, while questions regarding ‘the cyborg’ or ‘the post-human’ have arisen only during the past 40 years or so, the domain which these questions inherit has been around much longer. As in the second section of chapter 2, “Don’t Be So Down on the Pharm: Plato, Derrida and Writing”, Derrida’s examination of Plato’s *Phaedrus* and other writings demonstrates

that questions regarding what is human and what is technical, and the tension between them, have been asked for thousands of years. Indeed, it is Derrida's contention that these tensions have structured the entirety of Western philosophy since Plato. Similarly, Bernard Stiegler's archaeo-techno-logical analysis of Zinjanthropian and Neanthropian 'man', suggests that this question of the human and technics is a fundamental one. Although the question has not necessarily been *asked* for millions of years, it has been *questionable* all during this time, this time that calls into question time itself. My contention will be that, although 'the human' and 'the technical' have existed as separate linguistic and cultural formations, and will continue to do so as a function of their names, and the power of nomology, they are in fact codetermined. The human condition is always to be conditional upon an-other.

The broad nature of such questions, and the broad nature of such an answer, requests that we ask other questions also. What are the *implications* of this codetermination of the human and the technical? What does it mean, and what is implicated in this codetermination? Alongside our general questions, then, other issues arise. How can we break down the facets of this technicality that is codetermined with the human? It is here that writing appears on the scene, and it is around this concept, the concept of the writing machine, that Part One is structured. Writing is a *tekhnē*, and a mnemotechnic. Or perhaps writing conditions *tekhnē*, *tekhnē* is a writing, and mnemotechnics is another kind of writing, another tracing. Either way, if we are to speak of the relation between the human and technics, we must speak of the role of writing in this relation. The writing that makes possible anticipation by storing up and projecting into the future; the writing that

spans space and time, sur-viving and making possible the process of in-vention; the writing that conditions memory and time as a function of this archiving and virtualizing; the writing that conditions law, value and capital in this process; the writing of our own materializations; each of these aspects of writing will be worked through in this thesis. Memory, its constitution as a function of writing and technics and its role in temporalization and virtualization, will feature strongly throughout chapter 1, where it will appear in discussions of Rousseau and Plato, as well as in the archaeo-techno-logy of Bernard Stiegler and André Leroi-Gourhan. Memory will re-appear in chapter 4, during a discussion of Botox and the archive. In each case memory, that human faculty on which all knowledge hinges, hinges in turn on various forms of technics, and differentiations between internal and external memory, the inside and the outside, which are traditionally mapped onto questions of the living and the technical, are profoundly problematized.

Value, capital and property are also of importance. As we discuss in section 1 of chapter 1, “*Donner le Change: The Dangers of Verbal Masturbation*”, in his *Confessions* Rousseau argues that it is through writing that he can make known his value. Despite a repudiation of the importance of writing and its relegation to a *supplement* of speech, Rousseau finds that it is writing which gives him value, which makes his value known, which allows him to circulate *as a value* in some kind of social market. Exchange, and the circulation of capital and commodities this implies, presupposes writing. In section 1 of chapter 2, “*Signs of Life: Performativity, Propriety and the Particle*”, we again find that it is some aspect of writing which aids in the determination of value in the human and the technical. There, both the bioinformatic ‘writing’ of life as DNA and RNA code,

and the writing machine of intellectual property and patent law, work to assign value and status to the human and the technical, and to the human *as* technical, as informational. This assignation of value through writing implies an economy of exchange and ownership that is subject to the vicissitudes of possession and property. The deep meshing of bioinformatic practices and intellectual property and patent law provides a space in which property can be appropriated and what is proper can be made property.

Writing is often understood as a representation; it is its status as external representation, as supplement to speech and internal memory, which Plato and Rousseau object to, and it is this hierarchization of original over representation which Derrida problematizes with a deconstructive methodology. Representations presuppose mimesis, and are often figured in terms of visuality. Thus representations, the process, time and space of representing, are often inflected with a theatrical sense. Representations imply performances and performativities, like the machine of the *deus ex machina*, they are spectacles, and they require spectators. The relationship between writing, representation, spectacularity and technics, then, is worthy of closer examination. What does it mean that there is a spectacle of the machine? In section 2 chapter 2, “Modest Witnesses: Kafka, Foucault and the Juridical Apparatus”, this question is asked in terms of technologies of witnessing, and thus of a ‘juridical apparatus’ as a whole. Taking our lead from Donna Haraway’s examination of ‘modest witnesses’ to scientific fact, the constitution of witnesses as witnesses to an ‘event’, their interpellation by a juridical apparatus and the truth status of their testimony, as well as the just-ness of the justice meted out by such an apparatus, is called into question through the role of technics in the constitution of truth.

More expansively, the relation between spectacularity, representation, the human and technics forms the basis for the lengthy examination of ‘the face’ undertaken in Part Two of this thesis. The face is often taken as one of the primary facets of human being. It is through the face that we express ourselves, the gestural language of the hand is most concretely manifest in the language of the face. But what does it mean to express, and what are the implications of this pressure involved in moments of expression and impression? What might written expression, and facial expression, have to do with each other? Again writing, the duress or pressure exerted in any moment of marking or tracing, *appears* at the same moment as what is human *seems* to be most clear. Throughout Part Two, the relation between the human and technics, and the role of writing in this relation, is examined through the figure of the face. Passing through Sander Gilman’s history of aesthetic and reconstructive surgery in *Making the Body Beautiful*, and Deleuze & Guattari’s ‘abstract machine of faciality’ in *A Thousand Plateaus*, we arrive at the idea of the face *in* cinema, and the face *as* cinema. What is currently known as cinema is an audiovisual form, relying on technical apparatuses of cameras, projectors and screens. But screens and projectors are not simple things. Screens display some things, but screen other things from view, they hide as they reveal; screens have a ghosting or *spectrality* of the there-not-there that problematizes the usual relation of the screen to the mirror. The spectacularity of the cinema screen is more spectral than specular. Projection, likewise, is double-jointed; while technical projection involves the projection of images onto a screen in space, projection as it is understood outside cinema involves projection forward in time. As in the anticipation of technics and in Heidegger’s *Dasein*, projection is an

envisioning of a future in the name of which the present is experienced. And like the screen, this projection is virtual, for it is simultaneously imagined, counted upon, and yet never arrives, it is there-not-there. In the final sections of chapter 3, “The Cinematic Apparatus of the Face” and “We Had Faces Then: *Sunset Boulevard*”, we examine the face in terms of this understanding of the cinematic apparatus. To what degree does the face also function on apparatuses of screening and projection, and thus of virtuality and spectrality? In *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), the face of the Hollywood star is a central concern: Gloria Swanson plays an aging silent-film star obsessed with the idea of appearing “up there” on the silver screen again. She lives surrounded by images of her own face, she undergoes obsessive makeover treatments to ready her face for the cameras, living always under the spell of this image of herself, this property of herself of which she is the property, possessed by her image which is truly spectral.

When images are projected onto screens, they can be said to ‘appear’ on screen, they appear before the spectators. If the images on the screen depicted, for example, an aging silent-film star putting on her make-up, she could be said to be concerned with her appearance. Likewise, if the star suddenly stepped off, out of or through the screen and strode towards the front of the stage, this too could be described as an appearing; the actor would have suddenly appeared, in real life, in front of the spectators. Appearing, and appearances, are complex things, and are intricately involved with faces; the cosmetic industries have built vast multinational empires on ‘improving’ peoples’ appearances, and on fostering an obsession with appearances in one and the same movement, and these industries primarily revolve around the maintenance and

appearance of the face. Thus while appearing *seems* to be something we all do, something we all must do in order to be seen, to be heard, to exist and be publicly recognized as such, it is also subject to market forces, to systems of exchange, to commodification, and to the various technologies of appearance, those *makhana* of theatricality that reveal the acting behind human action. In chapter 4 we examine the technologies of appearance and the theatricality this implies. Beginning with an examination of the duplicity of ‘seeming’ in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, we move through the uncanny science of facial expression on the 17th century stage, to the apotheosis of this scientified, technicized appearance of actors on screen; the widespread use of Botox in the entertainment industry. Derrida’s *Archive Fever* forms the basis for this examination of Botox and the appearance of acting. Botox is a cosmetic and medical treatment derived from botulinum toxin A, a toxin that paralyses muscles by blocking messages sent from nerve centres to the brain. When used cosmetically, it eases the appearance of facial wrinkles by paralysing the smile or frown muscles that cause wrinkles. Botox works on the archive of the face; it erases the ‘inscription’ of time on the face, and projects its function into the future by preventing muscles from forming wrinkles for a limited time period, and it does this in the name of an ideal, idealized virtual face that is out of time, out of space, hovering behind or above the human face like a ghost or spectre.

The final section of chapter 4, “Face Value: Spectrality and the Messianic”, ties together many of the themes woven through the thesis by discussing the value of the face; the spectrality of face value. With so much capital investment, and so much expectation of a *return* on this investment, there can be no question that faces ‘have’ value. We even have

a term for this; face value, the value of something on the surface, at first sight. Given the duplicity of appearances, however, and the analysis Derrida conducts in *Spectres of Marx*, this first sight gives us cause to look again, to try out our second sight, to see what is there by not being there. What appears there before us when we look again, or rather what appears by not appearing, is technics as the spectre of the human, and the human as the spectre of technics.

What spectrality means for the relation between the human and the technical is not 'clear'. Spectrality, as Derrida develops it in *Spectres of Marx*, is based on an aporia or (im)possibility of appearing/non-appearing, of being there by not being there. As much as spectrality 'has' the figure of the ghost upon which to build a case, such a foundation is less than solid, and that is precisely the point. For Derrida, there is no point at which thinking stops, at which it reaches its moment and is whole, complete, done with itself. In regards to spectrality, there is no moment of revelation, no moment at which the spectre reveals itself to be this or that, and there can be no *believing* in ghosts that does not always question this belief, this belief in *something*. Justice, and the messianic, are the same; justice in any real sense can never be done by the inculcation of a programme or calculation, and messianisms that count upon the coming of some pre-determined messiah can only ever foreclose on the promise of the messianic. For Derrida, this experience of the aporia, this living with the (im)possible which in *Spectres of Marx* is termed a living *with* ghosts, is the very condition of justice and the messianic; that it is never done, that it never comes, that it can never be said to have come, be done, finished, the end. In some way, the human and the technical inherit this impossibility. To believe

wholeheartedly in the human would be foolhardy; as we have mentioned, far too much bloodshed and misery has already been spent in the name of the human, and notions of racial or special purity are equally damned. At the same time, to wholeheartedly relinquish any notion of the human, to postulate a post-humanity, would be equally pointless. As much as many may want to, there can be no doing away with the human; as much as many may argue that the human never was human *as such*, this does not imply that it will never be, that it need not be, and that there need be no hope for the future of the human. The human will always find itself in technics; this is its condition, and its condition of virtuality. Being *with* technics, being *with* the technical ghost of the human, foreclosing neither on one nor the other, neither subsuming the other, is the promise of the spectre. “Between the two beliefs, as always, the way remains narrow” (Derrida, *Spectres* 175).

Part One

Chapter 1: The Writing Machine

The book writes itself, and if by chance the person opposite should ask you what you are writing, you have nothing to say since you don't know. Yet the book is written only if it has an engine. A book that writes itself and carries you on board must have an engine even if you don't know how it works, otherwise it will break down.

Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*

What is this thing, 'the writing machine', this thing of which I have said I will speak? And is it a 'thing' anyway?

It is perhaps misleading to start out as if this thing, which I have provisionally brought into being by naming it, by writing it here, were indeed a thing, finalized, bounded, *un machin*. The writing machine is, first of all, not a thing but a rhetorical formation, a conflation of two rather over-used terms, a juxtaposition of two hot-topics. As a

rhetorical formation the writing machine is thus first of all a parasite and a born capitalist, a *différance*-engine, feeding and trading on the things it brings together, multiplying referents and connotations, sucking up meaning, dressing itself in all the finery of an emperor's new set of clothes.

So let us firstly state that we have begun with a lie; the writing machine is not a thing at all, it is words, mere words, metaphor, simple mathematics. By calling the writing machine a thing I have lied, fabricated, brought into the fore the artifice, the sophistry of my writing, and perhaps of writing in general. If the writing machine *is*, it *is* only as a function of being written. Nevertheless, this false start, this literal/literary birthing, this misconception, is indicative of a certain performativity or *machinalité* of writing and is therefore the only way I could begin, for all along we will be talking about performances and performativity, 'as' and 'as if'. By its very status as a rhetorical formation, the writing machine calls into question the relation between words and things, and between saying and doing.

When I say or write 'the writing machine' I make it a thing with my use of the 'the'. The definite article makes it a noun, it names it, individuates it, singularizes while generalizing, gives it the appearance of edges. It *is*, and it is *one*. We are not speaking about writing machines, not solely at least. While typewriters, pens, pencils, computer keyboards and word processing applications in and of themselves all qualify as 'writing machines', even and especially in French when we speak of a typewriter as a *machine à écrire*, literally a 'machine to write', they do not qualify as indicative of something we

are calling ‘the writing machine’ as a whole. They are instances, moments, partial objects in a large-scale ‘ensemble’ that encompasses particular machines as well as their users and their uses, and it is this ensemble that I am trying to get at.

But do I really mean to treat the writing machine as an ‘ensemble’? The word implies a grouping together, a simultaneity or ‘all at once’, and a heterogeneity that nevertheless forms some kind of whole. In these senses I am happy for the writing machine I am sketching here to be understood as an ensemble; a grouping of many parts. Questions of ‘wholeness’, however, are more doubtful. In *Transductions*, Adrian Mackenzie inflects the term slightly differently; taking his lead from the terminology of Gilbert Simondon, he uses ‘ensemble’ to describe large groupings of technical, informational or communicational infrastructure. He speaks of “large-scale technical ensembles [that are] difficult to represent as such because of their sprawling, distributed and quasi-invisible existence” (11). These technical ensembles are ‘quasi-invisible’; they can involve not merely technical ‘objects’ and the technical ‘elements’ that go together to make up these ‘objects’, but concepts and ideas, schemas and diagrams, as well as air and radio waves. Mackenzie’s use of the term ensemble, however, is always overcoded by technics; it is as if everything that is done under the idea of ensemble-ness is simultaneously imbricated in a technical grouping-together, overcoded by a techno-logical politics. Ensembles are not just about ‘getting things done’ in a *strictly* performative manner; they are also about performances. Ensembles form in a number of contexts that are far from purely technical; we can speak of a group of chamber musicians as an ensemble, just as we can speak of the cast of a play as an ensemble, and these performers, and the idea of performance, are

just as vital to my idea of the writing machine, as are individual machines and technical objects and elements.

We can also note that Simondon/Mackenzie's idea of the ensemble bears a striking resemblance to what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'machinic assemblage'. Perhaps we should think of the writing machine as a 'machinic assemblage'? Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari were consummate theorists of machinism, and most of the terms they implement to manifest their theories have to do with connectivity, inter-connectivity, collectivity, aggregation. The term 'machinic assemblage' is used to describe the interconnection and inter-*reaction* of elements biological, technological, material and semiotic, an "intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 90). The elements in a machinic assemblage are in no way all like types, yet they function or vibrate together, in relation to each other. Deleuze and Guattari never look to see individual elements, on their own, defined and *sui generis*; rather, they look always to find the aggregate or aggregates that any particle may in fact be a part of, and they look at how aggregates distribute power and signification through their parts, hence Deleuze and Guattari's interest in breaks, cuts and flows, speed and slownesses, the dynamics of molecules distributed throughout a system. The machinic assemblage, then, may be one way of situating what I am calling the writing machine, for it would describe a complex and ongoing interrelation between writers and writing instruments, tools and their users, signs and their systems or regimes.

The performative aspect of ensemble, however, is lost when we speak of assemblages; assemblage seems a particularly non-reflexive term to use when we are trying to invoke a certain *play* amongst and between our terms, and the danger of losing an attention to the duplicitous nature of language itself is one we must be well aware of. Perhaps, then, we could refer to the writing machine as a ‘scene’. Jacques Derrida, in “Freud and the Scene of Writing”, uses the word ‘scene’ to refer to the psychological and technical structures that Freud places memory and perception, and thus writing, within. Derrida places Freud in the position of a kind of *metteur en scène*, and in so doing introduces the multiple senses *scène* has in French, where it signifies not merely a scene as in a room, picture or tableau, but also a stage, a theatrical space in and on which a performance takes place. The ‘scene’ of writing is simultaneously an aggregation or assemblage of its parts, a dissection of its make-up, and the spectacle or performance of its role. Most importantly, the scene of writing indicates a complex interplay and co-determination of the psychic, as representation of the human, the living, the internal, and the mechanical, represented by the Mystic Writing Pad, the external prosthesis. The writing machine, then, as the *scène* of writing, the space and stage of iteration and iterability, performance and performativity, humanity and technicity, author-ity and *machinalité*.

I would like to foreground this discussion with reference to a ‘text’ and a ‘scene’ that, for me at least, opens up the possibility of formulating something to be called the writing machine in a particularly playful yet pertinent manner. Some time ago, for reasons I no longer recall (obsessions I no longer obsess about? Or perhaps I was just de-pressed...), I

decided to run a search on the word 'death' in all the documents on my computer's hard-drive. Apart from bringing up most of the articles I had written in the past few years (this obsession/depression was clearly a major one), one file in particular caught my eye; upon opening it, I discovered that it contained, in alphabetical order, all the words I had added to the dictionary on my word processor. Here they were, arranged in neat, mechanical order, all my pathologies, my obsessions, the words I had made my own. "Autoerotic, autophilia, autopoiesis, autopoietic ... technologization, technologized, technomorphic, technosphere". Needless to say, I was enchanted. Of the greatest significance though, was the fact that the last word on this list, was *écriture*. While searching for death, my machine had given me writing. How Platonic. Moreover, it had given me not only my own writing, the distillation of my writing that fell outside of my computer's 'knowledge' of what could be written, but writing per se, and further, not merely writing as it signifies in the English language, but writing as part of the French post-structuralist celebration of textuality and the possibility of an *écriture-feminine*, a writing elsewhere, a writing other.

I wanted to feel that this was significant, that there was a logic behind all this, a meaning, a secret. The appearance of *écriture* as the computer's 'last word' on the subject of both my writing, and death, was just too enticing, too exciting an event to pass up - as if, knowing that there can be no 'last words', my computer had circumvented the paradox and ended by beginning again with the endless deterritorialization that is writing. Of course, we can explain all of this away by noting that *écriture* was the only word in my list that began with an accent. Had I elsewhere used, for instance, *être*, then that would be the last word and my reading of this text as emblematising some relation between

machines and writing would change (or perhaps I would fashion a hypothesis about ‘the being machine’, and this thesis would be somewhat different!). Regardless of logical explanations, the fact that there was some powerful sense of significance here, some aura or effect of intentionality, of ordering, of organization, testifies to the degree to which we can see this file as a text, as something that can be read; in other words, as writing. Moreover, it is important to note that this file had been saved as a simple Microsoft® Word .doc file, like any other written document. It was not a .dll, or an .exe file, which would designate it primarily for ‘machine reading’; rather, it was a word processing document, a set of words in process, a dynamic, mutable, ‘live’ document. Further, we cannot ignore the relation of this ‘live’ document to the (proper) name of the software it is designed for: Microsoft *Word*; *logos*, the living word, the *logos-zoon*, reason, rationality, order, divine intention (Derrida, *Dissemination* 79).

If you set out on a hunt for a text, chances are you will find one; what next remains to do is to examine the milieu it springs from. For although what I found is a writing entirely made up of my own words, it is my words arranged according to an order in which I never put them, with a logic that I had nothing to do with, a logic of sequential/alphabetical ordering, of calculation, of programming. In one sense, this text is a product of the writing machine that is my computer, and more specifically, my word-processing software, Microsoft Word, and it records my own divergence from and excess in relation to Word’s in-built ‘knowledge’ of the limits of the writable, which is also to say of the *iterable*. In a wider sense, however, this text is a product of the writing machine that governs not merely the specifications of software and hardware, but the

ordering of information, the informationalization of writing. This machine has taken my words and ordered them according to whatever logic it requires, a logic proven through countless prior iterations in other texts and technical systems. In a still more figural sense, this text is a product of the writing machine of international intellectual property law; note the presence of the Registered Trademark symbol ® after Microsoft, and note the telling *absence* of any trademark after the Word (Microsoft “Microsoft Trademarks”).²

If this text is a ‘product’ of the writing machine, can we therefore speak of it as having been ‘authored’ by this same machine? And, what might my own role be in relation to this text? Have I in fact ‘collaborated’ unknowingly with the writing machine in the production of this text, being that I contributed the words and the machine contributed the order, or more pertinently, the grammar? What is the role of this grammar according to which my words have been ordered, and how might this grammar relate to the rules of grammar that structures everything I have and will write? Being that this grammar is a function of prior decisions from the realm of programming, decisions regarding what grammar would best suit a text of this kind, might we wish to adjust our image of a machine-*author* into that of a machine-*auctor*, a channeler or funneler of predetermined instructions, adhering “to the authority of cultural antecedent”? (Pease 105).

² Given that Microsoft has trademarked ‘Outlook’, ‘PowerPoint’ and ‘FrontPage’, all also software applications in the Microsoft Office suite, it is interesting to note the absences of Word, Excel and Access from this list (Microsoft “Microsoft Trademarks”). No doubt a case could not be made that these terms were sufficiently unique in their spheres of application. However, there can be no doubt that a case would most certainly have been attempted, despite the inherent irony of an attempt to trademark the use of the Word.

In some sense these questions are rhetorical, given the relatively banal nature of the text we are assaying here. As much as one may like to hope, there is a low degree of likelihood that the Microserf responsible for the structuring of additions to Word's dictionary thought long and hard and perhaps even had a little private chuckle about the literary implications of putting these additions in an alphabetically-ordered .doc file. Nevertheless, our questions allow us to delineate a certain field of enquiry which will guide us in this examination of the writing machine. Firstly, this text introduces to us the possibility of a relation between individual writing machines – typewriters, word processors etc. – and an overall concept of the writing machine. This particular writing machine carries within it, or performs, certain logics which can be said to be characteristic of other writing machines, and thus the writing machine in general. The grammar under which it operates, the logic, ordering and programming of my words indicates a repeatability or iterability characteristic of writing itself, and shortly we will delve deeper into this repetition that is writing. This repeatability is also a certain form of memory. Obviously, computers in general function as a form of memory; they store documents, written and otherwise, on some optical substrate which can be accessed at random. They store them, moreover, in the name of future usages of these memories; memories are doubly temporalized, reaching into the past in the name of the future. This document, this custom dictionary, is both an archive and record for the past, and a programme or projection for the future, it is a *calculation*, and an *anticipation*.

Secondly, this text opens up questions on the nature of author-ity, property and propriety. Authors are generally understood to be human, in that they are understood to be the

generators of a discourse. Authors speak with their own authority, they bring themselves into being through the very act of authoring, and what they bring into being is an idea *of* a being, a creative being, a being upon whom have been conferred the arts or *tekhnai* of literary creation. Such an author would be a 'proper' author, an author who could thus sign the text as their property. *This* text, however, has been produced at the confluence of human and machine, it is a little bit me, a little bit my computer. If there is an author of this text it is neither solely 'human' nor 'machine', it is a both/and, an inbetween, a hybrid or even cyborgian formation. If this author could be said to 'exist', it would exhibit simultaneously an autonomy and an automaticity; the living autonomy of my free will as a human being who acts with all the notions or illusions of free and personal author-ity, and the automaticity of the predetermined and programmed need to alphabeticize. This author would be (im)proper, and it would be difficult for any external body to *authorize* what it had to say. Of course, at the hands of Barthes and Foucault, authors have been dying for years now, rarefied out into the distributed functioning of some dominant discourse or other. While we may therefore have trouble with the idea of an 'actual' author of this text, there is nevertheless some author-effect or authorial residue or trace that can be read here, and which conditions and watches over our reading like a ghost, some shadowy figure hiding behind its words, constituted by and in the same moment hidden by these words, screened as it is screened. This author calls into question the relation between the human and the technical, and asks us to attend to the role of writing in the mediation of this relation.

Thirdly, this text forces us to ask if it is significant that it is a piece of writing that spawns this questioning of the dual implication of human and machine in relation to author-ity. Of significance are two points: Firstly, we have before us a piece of writing that consists of excerpts from *my* writings; my words, in the ‘hands’ of an unliving ‘thing’, performing differently, dis- and re-possessed. Secondly, it is a piece of writing whose ‘last word’ on the question of death is writing itself, *écriture*. Much has been written on the idea of ‘writing as death’. In the work of Maurice Blanchot, writing is imbued with loss and negativity - the loss of the ‘I’ of the writing subject (analogous to the ‘death of the author’) in favour of the *il* of the impersonal second voice, and the loss of the word as the property of the subject and as delineating or emerging from a subject; “A word is neither totally absent, nor present, it lives on as a kind of life-in-death” (Clark 74). Writing always to some degree exceeds the realm of subjectivity, describes a beyond or outside which can never be fully known, grasped or lived. It is this idea that writing describes an ‘outside’ or ‘death’ (the outside of life) of some sort that resounds throughout Derrida’s many discussions of writing. As Derrida enumerates at great length in *Dissemination*, since Plato, writing as *tekhnē* has been decried when forced to ‘face off’ against the living presence of speech; writing is the ‘dangerous supplement’ or *hypomnesis* that threatens the supposed presence of ‘live’ memory, *mneme* and *anamnesis*. It brings with it the spectre of lifeless repetition, words endlessly repeating, divorced from their human progenitors, and as such ensures that the human will always be brought into conflict with the mechanical or technical.

Finally, all of this, this entire scene, operates under the watchful eye/I of the *logos*, Microsoft Word, and according to the legal grammar of the writing machine of intellectual property (IP), which is in turn part of the machinery of multinational capitalism. Intellectual property encompasses trademarks, copyright and patents, all of which are intended to protect the product of ‘human’ labour by granting the producer sole right to the use and distribution of that product. Significantly, all of these forms of IP rely on a system of graphic marks and documents that simultaneously represent, grant and make possible the producer’s possession of this ‘product’ and the exertion of various rights of ownership. As Donna Haraway notes, “the copyright, patent and trademark are specific, asymmetrical, congealed processes – which must be constantly revived in law and commerce as well as in science – that give some agencies and actors statuses in sociotechnical production not allowed to other agencies and actors” (7). ‘Law, commerce and science’ act as watchdogs for the *logos* of IP, continually re-animating the bounds of what it is possible to name and thus own with the application of these marks, and it is in this sense that we are again reminded of the role of writing in this schema: “Only some of the necessary ‘writers’ have the semiotic status of ‘authors’ for any ‘text’” (Haraway 7). The status of this text or that product – its perceived ontological and phenomenological definition, its available uses, its properties, its role as property, the degree of its exploitation, its origin stories and the discourse that surrounds it – is delineated and prescribed by these marks.

As ‘thing’, then, the writing machine is highly variegated, representing different strokes (the stroke of a pen or brush, a de-cision, a cut, blow or *coup*) for different folks. It cuts

across strata, contaminating, purifying, controlling. In one sense I am using the term ‘writing machine’ simply to refer to certain properties of writing; its ability to repeat at a distance, both spatial and temporal; its function as an external form of memory; its role as *tekhnē* (art, skill, systematized knowledge) and its relation to *logos* (spoken word, divine Word, living word, reason, rationality) and *ēpistēmē* (knowledge, understanding). Indeed, much of what is said in terms of the writing machine is true of something we could call ‘writing in general’, the broad sense of writing Derrida always insists on (Lucy, *Debating* 31). However, there is always a difficulty in talking about writing in general, which is that it is always possible to read ‘writing’ as signifying writing in particular, writing on a page or a surface, writing as writing-down. The Derrida/Searle dialogues are haunted by the spectre of this (mis)reading, wherein Derrida and Searle find themselves at cross-purposes partly because of Searle’s failure to read Derrida’s ‘writing’ as writing in general (Lucy, *Debating* 35). Therefore, we should note that my own use of the term writing machine, and its substitution for writing in general, is both a reference to the way it is used in deconstruction, and an attempt to forestall confusion regarding which ‘writing’ we are discussing. In another sense, I am using the term to refer to the conception, understanding and role of writing in various fields, such as science and biotechnology, as well as its implication in the global movements of capital and the vicissitudes of ownership in a ‘knowledge’ economy. In each of these senses, through my use of the term ‘writing machine’ I am trying to focus on the way in which writing both problematizes and mediates the ever shifting boundaries between the human and the technical.

Donner le change: The Dangers of Verbal Masturbation

I use the term ‘writing machine’ to recall the relation of writing to *tekhnē*; it is my own mnemonic device, a reminder of what is at stake. This same mnemonic recalls writing’s relation to *logos*; writing implicated in the power of *logos*; writing as a delivery mechanism of *logos*, sometimes a lowly messenger whom many would prefer to shoot, sometimes an envoy or substitute/supplement gifted with all the capital powers of the king. In this chapter I intend to use, primarily, the writings of Jacques Derrida to tease out some of these relations. I will also discuss the work of Adrian Mackenzie, whose book *Transductions* is founded on the deconstructive logic of the supplement, as well as the work of Bernard Stiegler, whose multi-volume work *Technics and Time* constitutes one of the most concerned contemporary philosophical examinations of the relation between the human and technics.

Derrida’s name would not normally come to mind when thinking about theorists of technics or technology, nor of the relations between human and machine. His recent works, such as *Archive Fever*, *Spectres of Marx* and *Echographies of Television* (with Bernard Stiegler), have exhibited a willingness to discuss, and even urgency in discussing contemporary (tele)technologies and their political and economic milieux, and these texts will be examined more closely in the second half of this thesis. The literary and philosophical concerns of his earlier works, however, have traditionally kept the reception of these works away from the ‘science and technology studies’ end of the disciplinary spectrum. In thinking about thinkers of technics and technology, as well as

cyborgs, hybrids and the posthuman, one would more readily call to mind writers such as Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Bruno Latour, Bernard Stiegler, and going further back, Heidegger, Gilbert Simondon, Marx, Weber, Lewis Mumford and Jacques Ellul, to name just a few; many of these writers have appeared or will appear in this thesis in good time. Nevertheless, Derrida's work has always come up against technics in one form or another, and it is in discussions of writing and speech that this concern is most evident, in *Of Grammatology* and, most importantly for this chapter, in the essay "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination*. More recently, alongside an interest in the status and role of (tele)technologies and the archive (which can equally be discussed under the banner of mnemotechnics), Derrida has written on the relation between what he calls the 'event' and the 'machine', which recalls for us the concerns elsewhere encapsulated in terms of human and machine, biology and technology, cyborgs and the posthuman. The essay "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2)", published in the English-only collection *Without Alibi*, begins by asking the question of whether it is possible to think the 'event' in its *organicity* ("what is happening"), and the 'machine' in its *inorganicity* ("the calculable programming of an automatic repetition"), at one and the same time, "as two compatible or even indissociable concepts" (*Without Alibi* 72). The possibility of thinking such a thing, the traps laid for us when we speak of such a thing, and the pitfalls of writing it down, will sound throughout this thesis.

Both the interest in the event and the machine, and the examination of writing and speech, occur within a deconstructive methodology and under the sign of the

‘supplement’, a term Derrida introduces in *Of Grammatology* when discussing the *Confessions* of Rousseau. Despite writing with a certain slipperiness, or rather despite an awareness of the slipperiness of writing, Derrida always writes using various terminologies or minor languages, just as much as he writes inside languages that emerge from the texts he reads. While it is not my intention to engage in an indepth analysis of *Of Grammatology* overall, I would like to begin with a brief exploration of Derrida’s discussion of the supplement, and an exposition of various themes this discussion invokes; this exploration will provide an introduction, firstly, to the play of the *pharmakon* in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and “Plato’s Pharmacy”, and secondly, to the role of a ‘supplemental’ logic in Adrian Mackenzie’s *Transductions* and in Bernard Stiegler’s *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*. Throughout, my discussion of these texts will aim towards developing a ‘profile’ (we will go for the full-frontal later on) of the writing machine, a map of the imbrications between the human and technics, and the role of writing as a mediator or ground for these imbrications.

In the “Exergue” to *Of Grammatology*, Derrida sets out his project in terms of writing, the *logos*, and the logic of science. If there is a science of writing – that is, a grammatology; if there *has been* such a thing as a science of writing; if there is to be *in the future* such a thing as a science of writing, what has it consisted of and what must it become? Most importantly, is it possible to have a science of something when it may well be that this science is conditioned by the very thing it is, here, supposedly the study of? For, if that is the case, “such a science of writing runs the risk of never being established as such and with that name. Of never being able to define the unity of its project or its

object” (4). Further, if that is the case, might there be a way of thinking science and writing that allows for such a thing as a science of writing to be thought otherwise? Derrida positions the entire book towards this goal, which is the thinking of a certain kind of future, an other future, a future of and for the other, a future “which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity” (5). This concern for the future envelops, not merely the entirety of this particular text, but indeed a great deal of Derrida’s recent thought, and we will have reason to return to this looking towards the future time and time again in this thesis. For, what can a questioning of the relations between human and machine, biology and technology, really be about but a relation to the future, an imperative towards a responsibility for who, and what, is yet to come, is yet to appear, and is to inherit all that is done today *in its name*?

Thinking science and writing other-wise revolves also around the problem of what is to be thought under the sign of ‘language’. ‘Language’, like many of the other terms that constitute our enquiry, such as ‘human’ or ‘technology’, is a vague and multifarious term, betraying “a loose vocabulary, the temptation of a cheap seduction, the passive yielding to fashion ... This inflation of the sign “language” is the inflation of the sign itself, absolute inflation, inflation itself. Yet, by one of its aspects or shadows, it is itself still a sign” (*Of Grammatology* 6). Two points are of note here. Firstly, we must note that Derrida calls this vagueness an ‘inflation’, mobilizing both the idea that language has become ‘puffed up’ in its ability to encapsulate all that would normally be called speech, writing, trace, alphabet, communication etc., and the idea that this growth of language

‘raises the stakes’ of language use; such an inflation of language does not occur solely within the abstracted rhetorical world of language *alone*, but rather, it occurs in the real world and has economic effects; language is tied up with value, and value presupposes some system, which would be called language, in which to be expressed. Secondly, language will always be subject to the very thing it makes possible, for language “is itself still a sign”, and will thus be tied always to the shifting logics of signification, and of *différance*. In the same way that a science of writing would be informed by writing itself, so too is the concept of language “menaced in its very life, helpless, adrift in the threat of limitlessness, brought back to its own finitude at the very moment when its limits seem to disappear, when it ceases to be self-assured, contained, and *guaranteed* by the infinite signified which seemed to exceed it” (6).

Both the constitution of science by writing, and the delimiting of language by language itself, operate under the logic of the supplement, which oversees “all those situations in which what was thought to be merely added on to something more primary turns out to be irreversibly and inextricably presupposed in the constitution of what it is said to be added to” (Mackenzie, *Transductions* 7). In the chapter entitled “...That Dangerous Supplement...” in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida hears Rousseau’s *Confessions* regarding his attitudes to, and practices of, writing and masturbation, both of which are termed supplements in some way. Let us firstly state that we are already in a religio-judicial scene, a nomological scene, and that this will not be the last time that writing is invoked in the same breath as that of some confessional or juridical apparatus; our discussion of “Plato’s Pharmacy” will also revolve around a certain ‘trial of writing’. Before we even

begin we are reminded that all that is said here regarding writing is said in the spirit of confession, before some priest or judge or otherwise figure of the confessor. It is Rousseau's relationship to both writing and masturbation which he feels he must confess, and which he renounces, here, with the supplement as distancing prosthesis; and it is the reader - you, me, Derrida, any reader - of Rousseau's writings about his writings/emissions, who is put into the position of judging the *value* of these writings.

Let us begin with Rousseau's shyness. Derrida quotes Starobinski, who in turn quotes Rousseau's explanation for his use of the technique of writing.

I would love society like others, if I were not sure of showing myself not only at a disadvantage, but as completely different from what I am. The part that I have taken of *writing and hiding myself* is precisely the one that suits me. If I were present, one would never know what I was worth. (Rousseau, in Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 142).

This statement is very complex. Because of his shyness; because he *would* love society were it not that he feels sure he would show himself at a disadvantage; because he dare not open his mouth; because to *appear* in public would be to appear as completely different than he in fact *is*; because if he were present in this appearing no one would know his worth or value; for all these reasons, Rousseau writes and hides himself, remains absent, and substitutes writing for speech; but paradoxically, he does this in the name of showing himself, apparently, as who he is, and as a value; he shows what he is worth.

Derrida reads here an economy of the relation between a ‘who’ and a ‘what’, that is, being an *I* and being a *value*, and this relation between the who and the what will resurface throughout our discussion. “[T]he operation that substitutes writing for speech also replaces presence by value: to the *I am* or to the *I am present* thus sacrificed, a *what I am* or a *what I am worth is preferred*” (142). Rousseau gives up appearing as a ‘who’, a living, present being, instead, preferring to appear by not appearing, that is, by appearing as a ‘what’, a value, and by implication, a commodity, a thing. Were he to appear in person, Rousseau’s value would not be known, nor would his ‘true’ self, *who he is*, be seen. Instead, Rousseau appears through the technique of writing, and in doing so makes himself known *as* a value, in terms of an economy in which the ‘commodity’ is created by being written. It is writing that turns Rousseau into a commodity, he writes himself to market. All of this, however, this sacrifice and disappearance, has the aim of achieving some kind of ‘real’ or true presence: “The act of writing would be essentially – and here in an exemplary fashion – the greatest sacrifice aiming at the greatest symbolic reappropriation of presence” (*Of Grammatology* 143).

Presence, which is the ‘property’ of speech, is appropriated by writing, in order that Rousseau can reappropriate this very presence *from himself*. It is a kind of ‘grand theft auto’, a theft from oneself, this sacrifice by which presence is given up in order that it can be reappropriated by writing in the name of speech. “Is it anything but a symbolic reappropriation? Does it not renounce the *present* and the *proper* in order to master them better in their meaning, in the ideal form of truth, of the presence of the present and of the

proximity or property of the proper?" (*Of Grammatology* 143). This logic also operates in relation to masturbation, which involves the same relation of self to self through the mediating power of the supplement. Here again, the terminology used by Rousseau invokes the movement of value and of property, for the phrase he uses to describe onanism is '*donner le change*'. Literally meaning 'to give change', the phrase also means to cheat, to sidetrack, to swindle (*Of Grammatology* 154). Masturbation, elsewhere described as 'cheating Nature', actually involves cheating oneself, giving oneself change for some transaction, exchanging pleasures with oneself, cheating oneself of pleasure *at the same time* as one gives oneself pleasure, distributing pleasure within oneself, compensating oneself for a natural weakness. Reappropriation is really just reassignment, cooking the books, shifting the sign of pleasure within a system that in fact needs no 'other' to function:

What is touching is touched, auto-affection gives itself as pure autarchy. If the presence that it then gives itself is the substitutive symbol of another presence, it has never been possible to desire that presence "in person" before this play of substitution and this symbolic experience of auto-affection. The thing itself does not appear outside of the symbolic system that does not exist without the possibility of auto-affection. (*Of Grammatology* 154)

We can also note that writing provides some kind of protection, for it allows Rousseau to *hide*. Writing protects Rousseau from making a fool of himself, which would be to appear and be exposed as something other than what he (thinks he) is. In terms which we will

take up later in this thesis regarding the cinematic apparatus of the face, writing here is a kind of 'screen', in both senses of the word; it is simultaneously something 'onto' which or with the aid of which Rousseau can *project* his (vision of his) true self, and something that hides or *protects* him *from* himself, it is a kind of technology or apparatus of the self. There is an interesting confluence of the processes of projection and protection here. Writing functions as a screen which protects; writing allows Rousseau to not-think what he might in fact *be* if he always misrepresents himself when he appears in public and speaks. This not-thinking, then, is also a projection in the psychological sense; writing allows Rousseau to project a vision of himself which is other than how he appears when in public, yet is paradoxically closer to the vision he has of himself, a supposedly *inner* vision, the *eidos*, a *true* self. This vision is simultaneously a projection and a protection, and it comes about through and as writing, is enabled by writing and is always-already written, represented to himself by himself. Writing is, as Derrida would say, a 'prosthesis of the inside', it is at the same time life and death, presence and absence, *tekhnē* and *logos*, and here, it is what makes the thought of an origin, a true self, possible.

There is, obviously, something thoroughly contradictory in all of this; Rousseau's hiding by writing - his disappearance, his absence - is performed in the name of an appearing or presence which is more 'true' to himself than his physical presence and speech would ever be. Presence is thus a divided figure, encompassing at the same time physical presence and speech, and a true or transcendent presence which nevertheless relies upon an absence, and a technique; writing. Derrida accounts for this contradictory logic in terms of *différance*, the term used to invoke the difference and deferral that the Western

metaphysic of self-sameness or presence is founded upon. “Without the possibility of differance, the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing-space. That means by the same token that this desire carries in itself the destiny of its non-satisfaction. Differance produces what it forbids, makes possible the very thing it makes impossible” (143). Under the logic of *differance*, presence is always-already absence, is founded upon absence, yet denies absence at the same time.

It is this logic, also, that structures the use of the term ‘supplement’ in Rousseau’s confessions. Throughout the *Confessions*, writing is spoken of as a supplement to the fullness of speech.

Languages are made to be spoken, writing serves only as a supplement to speech...Speech represents thought by conventional signs and writing represents the same with regard to speech. Thus the art of writing is nothing but a mediated representation of thought. (Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology* 144)

The same dubious status is conferred upon the act of masturbation, variously described as a vice, a dangerous habit, a fatal advantage, and a cheat for Nature.

[M]y restless temperament had at last made itself felt, and its first outbreak, quite involuntary, had caused me alarm about my health in a manner which shows better than anything else the innocence in which I had lived up to that time. Soon reassured, I learned that dangerous means of assisting it [*ce dangereux supplément*], which cheats

Nature and saves up for young men of my temperament many forms of excess at the expense of their health, strength, and, sometimes, their life. (Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology* 150)

In each of these cases, writing and masturbation supplement speech and sex as external, additional aids, as prostheses; as *dangerous* prostheses, certainly, as prostheses that threaten the unity of what is human and present by their very ease and the seduction of convenience, but as prostheses nevertheless. In both French and English, however, supplement has a double meaning, signifying both ‘addition’ and ‘substitution’; the supplement is added to something, and/or it replaces something and stands in for it, acts in its place. The fact that this word can have two meanings would not normally designate it as particularly troubling, or troubled; many words in both English and French have multiple meanings, and often contradictory ones. And, this duplicity of the supplement is not mobilized through any specifically ‘conscious’ intention of Rousseau. As Barbara Johnson notes, “Rousseau’s explicit intentions are to keep the two senses rigorously distinct – to know when he means ‘substitute’ and when he means ‘addition’” (xiii). Nevertheless, the concept of the supplement, when coupled with what it is used in Rousseau’s text to denote, ensures that any singular use of the word is always exceeded by other significations. While for Rousseau it may be a simple matter of using the same word to mean, sequentially or differentially, either one or the other of these meanings, Derrida reads a different logic at work, that of a both/and. Barbara Johnson interprets addition/substitution in terms of superfluity/necessity, that is, need. “[W]riting and masturbation may *add to* something that is already present, in which case they are

superfluous, AND/OR they may replace something that is *not* present, in which case they are *necessary*” (xiii). This necessity, however, modifies the status of whatever was considered at first to be present; if the supplement, in one moment, adds itself to what is already whole and complete, in another moment it reveals what was whole to be partial, incomplete, deficient. “The supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void” (*Of Grammatology* 145).

Writing and masturbation as supplements invoke a signifying chain that brings together art, *tekhnē*, image and representation as external and artificial additions to Nature.

When Nature, as self-proximity, comes to be forbidden or interrupted, when speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary...This recourse is not only “bizarre”, but dangerous. It is the addition of a sort of artificial and artful ruse to make speech present when it is actually absent...It is thus that art, *technè*, image, representation, convention, etc., come as supplements to nature and are rich with this entire cumulating function. (*Of Grammatology* 144-145)

Derrida reminds us, again, that writing functions protectively; writing, as image and representation, becomes necessary when speech no longer presents but mis-presents, mis-re-presents. Writing protects by representing, again and again, always in and *as* repetition, what cannot be presented *except* by misrepresentation. In relation to masturbation and ‘natural’ sex, the same protective function of the supplement is

mobilized. As we have mentioned, Rousseau sees an explicit danger in the act of masturbation, which “cheats Nature and saves up for young men of [his] temperament many forms of excess at the expense of their health, strength, and, sometimes, their life”. This cheating is enacted as a seduction or sidetracking, a lapse, a diversion: “This vice, which shame and timidity find so convenient, possesses, besides a great attraction for lively imaginations” (Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology* 151). Nevertheless, masturbation protects him from the fullness of sex and the full experience of ‘intercourse’ with women: “Enjoyment! Is such a thing made for man? Ah! If I had ever in my life tasted the delights of love even once in their plenitude, I do not imagine that my frail existence would have been sufficient for them, I would have been dead in the act” (Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology* 155). Despite its external status as additional supplement, masturbation is necessary because it substitutes for, and in doing so protects Rousseau from, the “delights of love” which, “in their plenitude” would no doubt strike him dead. Either struck dumb in speech, or struck dead in sex, Rousseau must therefore ‘armour’ himself with whatever technique is at his disposal. “A terrifying menace, the supplement is also the first and surest protection; against that very menace. That is why it cannot be given up” (*Of Grammatology* 154).

Derrida also reminds us consistently to think writing, and the supplement, in relation to technics; it is writing as art and *tekhnē* that supplements nature, presence and speech. Rousseau, also, relates his understanding of supplementarity to technics as instrumentality:

While the Author of nature has given children the active principle, He takes care that it shall do little harm by giving them small power to use it. But as soon as they can think of people as tools that they are responsible for activating, they use them to carry out their wishes and to supplement their own weakness. This is how they become tiresome, imperious, naughty, and unmanageable; a development which does not spring from a natural love of power, but one which gives it to them, for it does not need much experience to realize how pleasant it is to act through the hands of others and to move the world by simply moving the tongue (Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology* 147).

Whereas elsewhere speech is the origin to which writing is added as the supplement, here, speech is the very technical supplement to Nature that enables the child to think of people – human beings – as tools. Speech renders Nature deficient by making up for natural “weakness”, and it does so by prostheticizing other human beings, compensating for an internal lack by technologizing external beings. To “move the world by simply moving the tongue” is to make of speech a performative technology, a dictation, a repeatable, iterable performance, an ‘acting’ through the *hands* of others, which is also a kind of writing. The movement of the tongue that would command others to act is a movement that has already been rehearsed and is here repeated, reiterated. There is no movement of the tongue without the already circum-scribed possibility that moving the tongue can get something done, can perform some action which is already delimited, having already been proven to *work*. The movement of the tongue and the acting through the hands of others are one and the same movement; to leap ahead of ourselves briefly, it

will be this instrumental, performative and *gestural* understanding of language that Bernard Stiegler uses to relate language itself to technics. Language, writing, gesture and speech all rely on the ability of a signal or trace to last, like a tool, to make itself available for future uses, to be “preserved to be used on later occasions” (Stiegler, *Technics* 166). Thus this thinking of people as tools, and the moving of the world by the tongue, signals already a technical relation to the world and to other people.

Supplementarity, then, works as a kind of conceptual onomatopoeia, enacting and reinstating the very thing the word is used to disperse, to keep at bay. The supplement supplements, it performs itself, *puts itself on*, it operates as a kind of recursive echo, “[i]t tells us in a text what a text is, it tells us in writing what writing is...the concept of the supplement and the theory of writing designate textuality itself in Rousseau’s text in an infinitely multiplied structure – *en abyme* [in an abyss] – to employ the current phrase” (*Of Grammatology* 163). While Rousseau uses the supplement to keep speech and writing separate, and in a relation of interior and exterior, present and absent, necessary and superfluous, Derrida’s deconstruction of these oppositions and his insistence on considering writing in relation to *tekhnē*, hints also at a deconstruction of the relation between ‘human’ presence and technical absence, suggesting, as we shall now discuss, a codetermination of the human by technics.

Don't Be So Down on the Pharm: Plato, Derrida and Writing

We have so far introduced a number of avenues into an understanding of the supplement, and in doing so have introduced a number of supplements of the writing machine. Writing is tied up with value; it is through writing that Rousseau finds his value, expresses his value, puts himself on the market that is society, offers himself up to the scrutiny of the public and the market, goes IPO. While it is living presence and speech that is *meant* to have value, or rather ex-press value, it is writing that comes to its aid and which constitutes the medium in which value is now to be expressed. This writing that finds a value represents a profound cross-pollination of the 'who' and the 'what'; writing allows a who, a living, present human being, to ex-press himself in terms of a what, a commodity, a thing. Similarly writing, like capital, is also tied up in property. Writing appropriates the property that is presence from speech, as a transaction and as compensation for, paradoxically, speech's lack of presence. All of this is to suggest, then, that there is an 'economy' of writing in a broad sense, and that more specifically, it is tied in with the movements of various kinds of capital, be it monetary, intellectual, personal, or biological. Finally, writing protects speech from this lack of presence in an act of compensation. Writing, as an external aide that bolsters presence, that facilitates appearance, is a 'prosthesis of the inside', and thus in a sense *makes possible* the relation of inside to outside that prostheticity requires.

As we continue, I would like the writing machine to stand for the scene of all these things together, to stand for writing's *instrumentality* in the expression of value, capital and the proper(ty), for writing as the screen on which absence appears as presence, and for

writing as the mediation between and codetermination of the human and the technical. Bernard Stiegler reminds us that, in this recognition of the instrumentality of writing and of language, what is important is “knowing how an instrument should be understood, that is, as a being ready to hand, as the what. It is a question not of struggling against the instrumentalization of language but of resisting the very reduction of an instrument to the rank of means” (*Technics* 205-206). Quite apart from any consideration of the role of writing *instruments*, of writing machines *in particular*, we must here emphasize the importance of writing as an instrument itself, writing as a certain instrument of presence and appearing, and writing as instrumental in ‘dictating’ the actions of others. Writing – the writing machine, *tekhnē*, technology – is not merely a means employed by a who; it is constitutively involved in the very conditions of who-ness.

The essay entitled “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Dissemination*, is concerned principally with an analysis of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, although many other Platonic texts are implicated in the analysis, as is “Platonism” itself. Derrida’s purpose here is a continuation of the project begun in *Of Grammatology*, that of a deconstruction of the historical distinction between speech and writing and the valuation of speech over writing, as well as a teasing out of the role of the supplement in this distinction. Where in Rousseau it was the supplement that provided Derrida with access to the *abyme* at the heart of the text(s), in Plato, it is the multiple meanings of the word ‘*pharmakon*’ that opens the text(s) up to a deconstructive logic, and the deconstruction *of* logic. Derrida has other projects, of course, and a great deal to say about a number of issues, just as the *Phaedrus* sows its discourse in many fields; we shall not go into them all here, although some will seep through in places.

Again, our interest is in following some of the twists and turns of Derrida's discussion as he builds up a profile of the role of writing in Plato's thought. Many of the issues we have already highlighted regarding presence, absence, value, property and protection surface again in this discussion, allowing us to continue our gradual exposition of the writing machine. Most significantly, supplementarity and the idea of the *pharmakon* introduce possibilities for thinking the relation between the human and the technical that we wish to draw out.

Structurally the essay is very similar to much of *Of Grammatology*, as it again revolves around the usage, interpretations and translations of a word with multiple meanings. The term *pharmakon*, which appears numerous times in the *Phaedrus* and in other Platonic texts besides, can mean medicine, remedy, drug, charm, philtre, recipe, colour, pigment and, most importantly, both poison *and* cure. *Pharmakon* can signify *either* a thing *or* its opposite, or, *both* a thing *and* its opposite. Just as supplementarity invites or reinstates the very thing it is used to expel, the *pharmakon* introduces the possibility of, from one perspective, a 'meeting' of opposites, and from another, of opposition itself. To put a somewhat platitudinal spin on the term, we could characterize the *pharmakon* as something like a 'necessary evil'. The terms 'drug' and 'medicine' encapsulate this ambiguity well, and when thought of in a contemporary context simultaneously foreground the etymological wormhole through which the pharmaceutical industry appears to us, today, imbued with an almost limitless power to save and to cure, and

especially as regards to anti-depressants and Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) to edit, to block, to inhibit and in doing so release.³

As a brief aside, it is worth noting the powerful confluences between the connotations and perceived ‘mission’ of the *pharmaceutical* industry and medical science; while these industries seem to delimit quite different practical fields, they function under the same set of cultural connotations (relations to progress, development, the problematics of dis-ease and death), and a strikingly similar investment in the *promise* and in imagined futures or the virtual. Donna Haraway unites these industries under the name ‘technoscience’, reminding us to see the technical practices at the core of so much that happens today in the name of ‘science’, ‘medicine’, ‘health’, ‘progress’ etc. “Technoscience extravagantly exceeds the distinction between science and technology as well as those between nature and society, subjects and objects, and the natural and artifactual that structured the imaginary time called modernity” (Haraway, *Modest_Witness* 3). Haraway’s technoscience is an important touchstone here, as she explicitly positions it as an ongoing material-semiotic or science-fictional strategy of combination and category (con)fusion, a strategy of supplementarity, of the *pharmakon*. “In the imploded time-space anomalies of late-twentieth-century transnational capitalism and technoscience, subjects and objects, as well as the natural and the artificial, are transported through science-fictional wormholes

³ The variances in cultural uses of the term ‘drug’ were brought home to me when I first visited the United States and Canada. I grew up in New Zealand, where a ‘drug’ was generally either something illicit taken recreationally, or something only to be gotten from a doctor under a prescription; drugs were powerfully bounded by various scriptive or nomological powers. In North America, however, it is commonplace to emblazon the word ‘DRUGS’, in large block capitals, across the street-frontages of large pharmacy chains, called, of course, drugstores. While I had always been aware of the use of the term ‘drugstore’ to indicate a chemist or pharmacy, I was somewhat taken aback by this approach. What kind of drugs are these, so freely available, so consumable, so branded, so commodified? I was caught in some kind of category confusion; luckily, I soon found a drug for that...

to emerge as something quite other” (*Modest_Witness* 4). Like Derrida, Haraway reminds us to think *tekhnē* alongside tropes of opposition and the (con)fusion of supposed opposites.

Indeed, reflecting on the *pharmakon* in terms of contemporary society and its fascination with medical science and a pharmaceuticalized lifestyle, proves to be an enriching, if a little spooky, experience. While I do not have the space here to enter deeply into discussions regarding the pharmaceutical industry, it is worth noting that questions regarding ‘what is a disease?’ and ‘what is a cure?’ are increasingly complex and even absurd given the tight integration of, for instance, pharmaceutical companies and their branding/marketing firms, not to mention the demands to maximize profit placed on public companies by shareholders (questions of profit/loss, and cost/benefit, are equally rendered absurd in this scenario). The documentary *Selling Sickness* (2004) details the way in which pharmaceutical companies such as GlaxoSmithKline are increasingly designing not only drugs to aid in the treatment of ‘disorders’, but disorders themselves.

One of the world’s leading anti-depressants, Paxil, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), greatly expanded its markets by promoting the drug for a range of new psychiatric conditions. Shyness is thus transformed into “Social Anxiety Disorder” (SAD), constant worry has become “Generalized Anxiety Disorder” (GAD) and premenstrual tension is now “Pre-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder” (PMDD). (SBS Television “Cutting Edge: Selling Sickness”)

This medicalization of fringe aspects of ‘normal’ life, coupled with the pharmaceuticalization of ever-larger numbers of the populace (the film notes that up to 25% of the US population could be considered candidates for Social Anxiety Disorder according to GSK’s definition of the condition), points to a powerful codetermination of disorder and cure, drug as remedy and drug as poison at the same time, in one and the same drug; moreover, the identification of the ‘patient’ – that is, *the being who is poisoned* - is enacted in the same moment, in one and the same movement, in which a *market* is identified and constructed.

The *pharmakon* makes an early appearance in the *Phaedrus*, and is immediately associated with the seductive powers of writing, although other seductions are hinted at as well. The scenario goes something like this: Socrates is strolling near the city walls when he meets Phaedrus, fresh from the company of Lysias, who gave a speech regarding the suitable choice of lover for a handsome boy; a boy should look not for a lover he loves, but rather, for one he does not love, one who does not have his heart. Socrates, a “lover of discourses”, is immediately enchanted, and enjoins Phaedrus to enlighten him further on the subject (*Phaedrus*, I 228c). Phaedrus at first demurs, claiming his (by) heart isn’t in it, but soon warms to the topic. Socrates also is excited, for he notices what Phaedrus is holding with his left hand, under his cloak; it is the actual discourse, given by Lysias to Phaedrus. Socrates asks Phaedrus to show him the discourse, for he would prefer the discourse, which he refers to as “Lysias himself”, to an oral presentation (I 228e). Phaedrus agrees to show him the discourse, and suggests they find a spot under some trees to lie down. After finding a comfortable position, Phaedrus observes that it is

unlike Socrates to leave the city walls. Socrates explains that, as a “lover of learning”, he tends to learn more from the “men in the town” than from trees and open country (I 230d); yet, this discourse that Phaedrus carries has sufficiently interested him to draw him out of his usual habitat; he tells Phaedrus that “you seem to have discovered a recipe (*pharmakon*) for getting me out” (I 230d). Phaedrus unfurls the discourse, and they begin.

Derrida immediately latches on to this seductive power of the *pharmakon*, and of writing. “Operating through seduction, the *pharmakon* makes one stray from one’s general, natural, habitual paths and laws. Here, it takes Socrates out of his proper place and off his customary track...Already: writing, the *pharmakon*, the going or leading astray” (*Dissemination* 70-71). Writing, and the *pharmakon*, chart a crossing of boundaries, an outering of the inside, or, to put it another way, a revelation of the outside-ness of the inside; it is a leading outside in the name of the inside. Socrates, he who resides customarily on the inside, is here coaxed outside by the promise of writing, yet what writing delivers will be the satisfaction normally achieved inside the city walls, with the men of the town. While Socrates will shortly attack writing for its ability to only repeat, blindly, what is already known, his entire mission in this is predicated on his seduction by precisely this function of writing. For it is not direct speech that seduces Socrates to venture out of himself, it is the hidden-ness of the *pharmakon* that calls to Socrates; speech deferred, hidden letters, private, secret words, discourses hidden beneath cloaks; metaphor, double-talk, palimpsest. When explaining to Phaedrus his love of discourse, Socrates announces: “if you proffer me volumes of speeches I don’t doubt you can carry me all round Attica” (I 230d). Despite an abiding investment in the valuation of speech

over writing, here, it is speeches bound in books that draw Socrates so violently off the path. Socrates will have discourse any way he can get it.

Only the *logoi en bibliois*, only words that are deferred, reserved, enveloped, rolled up, words that force one to wait for them in the form and under cover of a solid object, letting themselves be desired for the space of a walk, only hidden letters can thus get Socrates moving. If a speech could be purely present, unveiled, naked, offered up in person in its truth, without the detours of a signifier foreign to it, if at the limit an undeferred *logos* were possible, it would not seduce anyone. It would not draw Socrates, as if under the effects of a *pharmakon*, out of his way. (*Dissemination* 71)

Of note also, is the question of writing's relation to memory; writing as mnemotechnics, a technique for the maintenance of memory. Phaedrus demurs when asked to repeat Lysias' speech; Lysias' discourse is lengthy, and Phaedrus has not had the chance to commit it to memory and thus learn it 'by heart'; he had secured the script from Lysias, and had been preparing to learn it by heart when Socrates came along. Socrates, also, is reluctant to let Phaedrus practise his poorly developed oratory on him, especially when the written discourse is close at hand, the written discourse which substitutes for Lysias and which Socrates generously terms "Lysias himself". The written discourse, here, is also a substitute for memory at the moment when memory proves itself not up to the job, just as in Rousseau writing substitutes for presence when presence belies itself.

The *pharmakon* makes its other appearance towards the end of the *Phaedrus*, again associated with writing. As Socrates and Phaedrus draw their discourse to a close, Plato recounts a ‘myth’ regarding the origins of writing. The myth, supposedly an Egyptian myth but in fact a Platonic invention, written *as if* to come out of the mouth of a likewise invented Socrates, tells of the invention of writing by the Egyptian god Theuth, and the ‘gift’ of writing to the King of Egypt, Thamus. Writing as the mouthpiece of Socrates, who in turn speaks as the representative of Thamus, King of Egypt and arbiter of all value, Plato again refers to writing as a *pharmakon*. Theuth presents Thamus with a number of arts, saying of writing: “Here, O king, is a branch of learning that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their memories: my discovery provides a recipe (*pharmakon*) for memory and wisdom” (Plato *Phaedrus* XXV 274E). Thamus responds by arguing that this recipe, writing, would in fact have the opposite effect to the one Theuth proposes:

O man full of arts (*O tekhnikōtate*), to one it is given to create the things of art, and to another to judge what measure of harm and of profit they have for those that shall employ them. And so it is that you, by reason of your tender regard for the writing that is your offspring, have declared the very opposite of its true effect. If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls: they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks; what you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. (XXV 275)

Again, we are reminded that writing is a matter of memory. Theuth, god and ‘father’ of writing as well as of a number of the arts including calculation and mathematics, presents writing as a recipe for improving memory and making people wiser. Thamus, who situates himself as judge and arbiter of the value of Thamus’ *tekhnai*, and who thus *puts writing on trial*, responds by calling it not a recipe for memory, but for reminder; writing does not animate or even re-animate the living presence that would be memory, but rather, serves merely to remind one of what is already known. What is more, writing will in fact harm rather than aid memory, for people will come to rely on this external *tekhnē* rather than on their internal memories which are, apparently, not technical. Thus writing, and by extension *tekhnē*, is an issue of the inside and the outside; writing, the external, technical aide, contaminating and ruining the functioning of internal memory, implanting forgetfulness in the soul. Memory, truth (*alētheia*) and forgetfulness (*lēthē*) are inextricably linked, not least as a function of the forgetfulness already planted within the name of truth.

The danger of writing, then, is the danger of a confusion of the outside for the inside, the external mark for the internal spark, the prosthetic for the body *proper*. This confusion, which has been foreshadowed in our discussion of the supplement, will continue to be one of our main themes. This confusion also introduces one of Derrida’s main interests in “Plato’s Pharmacy”, which is to track the appearance or non-appearance of a number of terms in the “pharmaceutical” chain (*Dissemination* 129). These terms point to an ‘unspoken’ discourse in Plato, which is nevertheless ‘inscribed’ at the core of his language, and of ‘Platonism’. Derrida’s argument is that while Plato does not implicitly

call attention to it, there is a signifying chain that links the occurrences of the words *pharmakon* and *pharmakeus*, and this chain involves also a third term, *pharmakos*, which does not appear in Plato's text but is nevertheless 'present' through a kind of familial implication. Together, these words constitute a 'logic' that underpins and undercuts Plato's arguments, folding back logic itself at every turn. Contradictions and double-talk abound.

The *pharmakon* we have already examined; writing is the *pharmakon* in the Phaedrus, although painting is similarly implicated in the condemnation of the representative arts. Here, writing as the *pharmakon* is named a recipe for either memory or reminder, and while Theuth and Thamus quibble over interpretations, it is left to Thamus to give the 'last word', because he is the judge, and arbiter of all value. It is Thamus, father of *logos* and of all things, who puts writing on trial, subjecting writing to the logic of his law, which is absolute. Nevertheless, as Derrida points out in his later discussion of the *Laws*, any juridical system can only maintain itself with the aid of writing. Derrida quotes Clinias, in the *Laws*:

Legal prescriptions, once put into writing, remain always on record, as though to challenge the question of all time to come. Hence we need feel no dismay if they should be difficult on a first hearing, since even the dull student may return to them for reiterated scrutiny. Nor does their length, provided they are beneficial, make it less irrational than it is impious, in my opinion at least, for any man to refuse such discourse his heartiest support. (*Dissemination* 113)

Judges are thus readers, and anyone who either produces or upholds the law is a writer. In order to be a judge, one must be already familiar with the laws, which can only be present by having already been prepared and here presented, repeated, reiterated. The nomological system, simultaneously a system of naming and setting down for the future, is what the juridical system relies on, and the ability to exercise a judicial or juridical power relies on the functioning of writing, not to mention the temporality and storage capacity of the archive, as a system of recording and repeating a number of laws which must always remain the same. Any trial of writing, then, cannot be conducted without writing itself, and is founded on both writing and the archive as technical substrates that grant and guarantee the repetition of the same. Thamus, he who denigrates writing because it will fix and thus wither and destroy memory, must already rely on some form of fixed or archivic memory in order to make such a judgement.

A similar contra-diction revolves around the second term in the chain. A *pharmakeus* is a wizard, magician or sorcerer, someone of ambiguous powers over others, a caster of spells, a 'logomancer'. The sophist, that rhetorician and master of the arts of persuasion, whose dubious relation to truth and the *eidos* makes him a marked man in Socrates' eyes, is a fine example of a *pharmakeus*. Ironically, however, Socrates himself is frequently cast as a *pharmakeus*; Derrida cites numerous texts, in particular the *Symposium*, in which Socrates is accused of putting spells on people, of blinding people, of striking them dumb or numb, or of leading them astray, like a satyr or piper (*Dissemination* 17-19). He does this with his words, his *logoi*, and while his *logoi* are no doubt well-born and

grounded in the truth of the *eidōs*, such magical powers of persuasion qualify him for consideration as a sophist, and a *pharmakeus*.

The third term, *pharmakos*, does not appear in Plato's text. Derrida's argument, whether specious, stretchy or not, is that its absence is negated by the presence of its synonyms. "But what does *absent* or *present* mean here? Like any text, the text of "Plato" couldn't not be involved, at least in a virtual, dynamic, lateral manner, with all the words that composed the system of the Greek language" (*Dissemination* 129). Questions of the boundaries of 'the text' aside, mention of the *pharmakos* is relevant because of its meaning; not merely a synonym for *pharmakeus*, a *pharmakos* is also a scapegoat, that particular brand of evil maintained on the inside in order that it can be expelled when the time comes for purification. Derrida cites various authors' descriptions of the Athenian purificatory rites conducted during the Thargelia, or during times of pestilence or famine, in which the most "unsightly" of the city's inhabitants were led out of the city, fed, beaten, and finally burnt, their ashes scattered to the winds (133). René Girard, in *Violence and the Sacred*, follows similar practices in a number of other cultures, and groups them under the name of the 'sacrificial'. Most importantly, he points out that sacrificial victims, of whatever sort, must be understood as representatives of a culture's *own*, internal violence, rather than being violent or disruptive *themselves*:

The victim is not a substitute for some particularly endangered individual, nor is it offered up to some individual of particularly bloodthirsty temperament. Rather, it is a substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members

themselves. The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from *its own* violence (Girard 8).

In each case, we again witness the maintenance of a certain kind of ‘necessary evil’, and it has always to do with the inside and outside of some topological but living *body*.

The city’s *body proper* thus reconstitutes its unity, closes around the security of its inner courts, gives back to itself the word that links it with itself within the confines of the agora, by violently excluding from its territory the representative of an external threat or aggression... Yet the representative of the outside is nonetheless constituted, regularly granted its place by the community, chosen, kept, fed, etc., in the very heart of the inside. These parasites were as a matter of course domesticated by the living organism that houses them at its expense. (*Dissemination* 133)

Scapegoating and sacrifice are practices common to many cultures. They are ceremonies, spectacles, rites; they are a certain kind of game that is played for real. This game or play, however, concerns the borders of the city’s ‘body’, its unity, its status as a ‘living organism’; rites of the *pharmakos* are a performance of the city becoming one with itself, time after time, again and again, and the city does this by expelling from its inside what is no longer to be considered proper to itself; no longer considered the city’s property, the *pharmakoi* are led out, expelled, given away. Like the *pharmakon* but in a way more explicit, the *pharmakos* is both poison and cure *at once*, the impurity that purifies by this very impurity. *Pharmakoi* have value inasmuch as they can one day be pronounced to

lack value, to be worthless, surplus to requirements, and moreover to be dangerous. Which is also to say that *pharmakoi* condition value itself, marking out the poles of a ‘value chain’ that encompasses both value and worthlessness, what is proper(ity), and what is improper, what is no longer the city’s property. And Socrates – he who patrols the city’s walls, he who acts the stinging fly to stimulate, rouse and maintain the life of the city (*Dissemination* 147); he who follows writing outside the city walls for the pleasure to be found in books, yet he who derides writing because it is improper, because it cannot act in a seemly manner in good company, because it is unproductive; Socrates, he too is a *pharmakos*, sacrificed by the city because of his spells of words and his rampant discoursing with Athenian youth.

Pharmakoi are thus maintained as a certain excess that can be expelled at an arranged time, again and again, and repeatability is their fundamental property; but this excess, while momentarily emptied out, remains or is retained inasmuch as it will always come time again to empty it out. This is why we can call the rite of the *pharmakos* a ‘game’ that is ‘played for real’; it is a performance in which the difference between the real and the play, the thing and its representation, is repeatedly elided. What things like the *pharmakos* signal is a social mechanism for ‘having things both ways’, just as supplementarity signals the ‘conceptual onomatopoeia’ of enacting and reinstating the very thing that is supposedly dispersed through supplementarity.

This ‘having both ways’, which contaminates logic and is indeed the contamination of logic, happens a number of times and takes many forms. Of particular note in Derrida’s

cross-examination of the transcripts of the trial of writing is an observation regarding the status of this story as ‘myth’. Plato delegates the critique of writing to a myth; myths function on oral traditions that involve the repetition of the same story, without necessarily knowing the ‘truth’ or ‘origin’ of the story; writing, also, is charged with this same function of ‘repeating without knowing’: “One should note most especially that what writing will later be accused of – repeating without knowing – here defines the very approach that leads to the statement and determination of its status. One thus begins by repeating without knowing – through a myth – the definition of writing, which is to repeat without knowing” (*Dissemination* 74-75). Plato relies on myth to discredit writing, but this reliance is founded on the very reasoning following which he tries to discredit writing.

Early on in the discourse Socrates states that the truths of myth would be very hard to verify absolutely, so it is more sensible to simply accept them and concern oneself with more personal matters.

I myself have no time for the business [of interpreting myths]: and I’ll tell you why, my friend: I can’t as yet ‘know myself’, as the inscription at Delphi enjoins; and so long as that ignorance remains it seems to me ridiculous to inquire into extraneous matters. Consequently I don’t bother about such things, but accept the current beliefs about them, and direct my enquiries, as I have just said, rather to myself... (I 230a)

This comment sets up an opposition between *mythos* and *logos* that reverberates throughout the discourse, and which maps onto a similar opposition between sophistics and dialectics; *mythos*, that which is transmitted and repeated blindly, publicly, is really of no value, because there is no way of verifying its truth; writing and sophistics, technical means of repeating without knowing, are similarly indicted. On the other hand, concentration on *logos*, the truth of which can only spring from within oneself and from enquiry of the dialectical type, is a far better way to spend one's time. Despite this depreciation of myth, however, Socrates seems happy to accept myths at 'face value' and follow common interpretations of them, which is also to accept that they contain a certain *kind* of truth; the truth is what can be repeated, *re-cited*. Thus it is that, following the recitation of the myth of Theuth and Thamus, he draws the conclusion, which Phaedrus calls "very true", that "anyone who leaves behind him a written manual, and likewise anyone who takes it over from him, on the supposition that such writing will provide something reliable and permanent, must be exceedingly simple-minded" (XXV 275c). Where at first no truth can be drawn from myth, here, where it is convenient to do so, a 'truth' can be drawn which will underpin the entire philosophical structure of Plato's argument in the *Phaedrus*. Obviously, it is no longer a very controversial thing to suggest that truth is 'up for grabs' and will be found where it will be found, or put where it is put. Nevertheless it is important to note that, even in the discourse of Socrates/Plato, who invests so heavily in maintaining an *idea* of truth, this idea of truth can be rehearsed elsewhere, in myth, in a structure of repetition that would also be recitation, writing, and can be slotted into or aligned with the *logos* as seen fit, according to custom. Furthermore, Socrates' dialectical method of reasoning, here put to work in the service of

denigrating writing and myth as sophistic techniques, is grounded in a particularly sophistic technique or argument. As Derrida goes to great lengths to point out, Socrates the philosopher and dialectician can equally be cast as a sophist, he who discourses any which way to fulfill his own needs, without regard for 'truth' *as such*.

If myth does, after all, hold some value when engaging in intellectual pursuits, what further value can we glean from the myth of the invention of writing? The myth is concerned with paternity, and betrays an ideological investment in the maintenance of the paternal as the holder and granter of power and meaning, that is, of *logos*; Derrida asks us to pay attention "to the permanence of a Platonic schema that assigns the origin and power of speech, precisely of *logos*, to the paternal position" (*Dissemination* 76). Such a location of power, the power of speech and of *logos*, in the paternal position has of course become a central focus of analysis in much scholarship, feminist and otherwise; the move from logocentrism to phallogocentrism was swift and expected. We can take it as given that there is a politics of gender operating within this myth, and also within Platonism itself, and that this politics has been extensively analysed and problematized; generation, naming and inheritance, here, all operate according to a patrilineal line, and the cosmos in which this happens operates also on this model; gods and sons, suns and gods.

In the myth, and in the mythos that surrounds it, there is a preponderance of fathers and sons and a powerful invocation of the *idea* of biological regeneration (save for the conspicuous absence of the mother, who has been already emptied of any formative function in Plato's *Timaeus*, allied there with the *chora*, the receptacle of all prior

Forms⁴); Theuth is the ‘father’ of the arts, who are thus called his offspring. Socrates denigrates writing for not being able to act independently of its ‘parent’ and author, and for not knowing how to *act* in good company: “It doesn’t know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill-treated and unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its help, being unable to defend or help itself” (XXV 275e). Writing is the bad seed, the discourse spilt on barren soil; *logos* is the good son, the fertile trace, the viable *revenue* or *return on investment* (*Dissemination* 82). Thamus, in that it is given to him to judge the value of what Theuth presents to him, also acts like a father (*Dissemination* 76). Thamus is also thus the father of *logos*, with the *logos* as the word of god and the child of a parent. The *logos* is a living thing, a *logos-zoon*. Socrates states that every discourse “ought to be constructed like a living creature, with its own body, as it were; it must not lack either head or feet” (XX 264c). Lacking these things, the written *logos* can only be a *tekhnē*, a techno-logy, unable to stand on its own two feet, the non-living, un-engendering, non-organic. We have, then, a powerful distinction between the *logos* and *tekhnē*, which is also a distinction between the living and the non-living. Both are engendered in some way, and gendered in the same moment, but while one is stillborn, the other is born with head and feet, it stands on its own, and knows how to act in good company.

Is this distinction water-tight, however, or is it merely apparent? Derrida notes that the *logos*, as a living thing, must have a father (*Dissemination* 80); this relation of father to son is in part what gives to *logos* its status as living, and which also gives to paternity the

⁴ Plato’s association of the feminine or the mother with the *chora*, has been extensively discussed. See for example Chapter 1 in Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*. See also Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, and Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

privileged position in the distribution of *logos*. Yet this relationship is not simple; how can we speak of a ‘father’ of *logos* that is in any way separate from *logos* itself? Are we not stuck again in the double-bind of language itself, trying to imagine a beyond of language while always stuck firmly within its bounds? Does the son not produce the possibility of the father? It is in this sense, then, that “it is precisely *logos* that enables us to perceive and investigate something like paternity” (*Dissemination* 80). Which is also to suggest that the parent can never be present, can only ever be represented by *logos*, and that *logos* will always be a representation of that which is always hidden, unable to be perceived except through *logos*.

The *logos* is thus always-already a kind of representation, writing or *tekhnē*. And, as in our discussion of writing and Rousseau, this *tekhnē-logos* also works to screen the father from view, and to protect. Derrida notes that the father of *logos*, who in the myth is Thamus or Ammon-Ra, the King of the gods and sun-god, is also considered to be ‘the good’. “*Logos represents* what it is indebted to; the father who is also chief, capital, and good(s). Or rather *the* chief, *the* capital, *the* good(s). *Patēr* in Greek means all that at once” (81). Like the sun, this father of all things, this chief/capital/good, cannot be stared at or apprehended, requiring the *logos* as a substitute or supplement. Foreshadowing our later discussions of the face, Derrida is explicit in his positioning of the *face* of god as that which cannot be apprehended, “from fear of being blinded by any direct intuition of the face of the father, of good, of capital, of the origin of being in itself” (83). The face, signal of presence and that which presents to the world, cannot be apprehended, and requires a substitute, a system of signs and codes, an appearance that is taken on, in order

to be visible; “[T]he disappearance of the good-father-capital-sun is thus the precondition of discourse, taken this time as a moment and not as a principle of *generalized* writing” (*Dissemination* 168). As we shall see later on, the face, that bastion of ‘the human’, can only ever be perceived through complex apparatuses of ‘appearance’, it is kept at bay in order that it can, and *must*, be eternally re-presented, reconfigured, marked and re-marked upon. *Tekhnē* and *logos* are equally determined through their status as representations, and any comparative distinction between the ‘living’ *logos* and the ‘non-living’ *tekhnē* is equally untenable; again, oppositions which are in one moment set up and polarized, are in the next moment broken down, had both ways, and this shuttling between opposition and its opposite is characteristic of the underlying (il)logic of ‘Platonism’ that Derrida is at pains to reveal here.

The role of memory, also, as a vital carrier of the *logos-zoon* and the idea, is implicated in this dual supposition of inside and outside, presence and absence, living being and technical prosthesis. As we have discussed, writing is held to be a danger to memory; where Theuth argues that writing is a remedy for memory, Thamus sees it as a poison for memory, a hypnotizing contaminant. Derrida notes the contra-diction in this structure; if memory were truly ‘internal’, truly ‘living’, then it should have nothing to fear from that which is purely external, purely prosthetic (*Dissemination* 110). Writing as an external form of memory should *simply* supplement, simply add itself on to what is already whole. However, that is not the case; writing is held to damage in its supplementarity, its effects carry over and introduce forgetfulness into the soul. Writing is again the ‘dangerous supplement’ it was in Rousseau, the external addition with internal effects. Furthermore,

like the mystical and magical face of god that cannot do without its representation, that is indeed pre-occupied with and by representation in a primal kind of narcissism, memory cannot do without signs with which it recalls what is no longer present. Here, signs repeat, signs have their prime function in repetition, which opens up also a kind of calculability or programmability; memory is nothing without the *damage* of this dangerous supplement.

Plato dreams of a “memory with no sign” (*Dissemination* 109). He does this according to the concept of *anamnesis*, the originary knowledge postulated in the *Meno* that is acquired by the soul before its fall into body; *anamnesis* is a kind of ‘soul memory’ or transcendental knowledge, postulated in order to solve the aporia of knowledge and memory. This aporia asks how knowledge is possible; what is the first moment of beginning to know, which is also to ask, what are the conditions of the possibility of consciousness and of being? According to Plato/Socrates, a man “would not seek what he knows, for since he knows it there is no need of the enquiry, nor what he does not know, for in that case he does not even know what he is to look for” (Plato, in Stiegler, *Technics* 98). Socrates reasons, then, that there must be some knowledge that conditions all seeking for knowledge from within the life of the ‘human’ or the body; since the soul is immortal and has been born many times, it “has seen all things both here and in the other world, [and] has learned everything that is” (Plato, in Stiegler, *Technics* 98). And as Stiegler notes, it is this foreknowledge that a great deal of modern philosophy, “be it that of Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Nietzsche, or Heidegger”, is based on (98). Nevertheless, while Plato may *dream* of a memory with no sign, memory, that which

gives access to the anamnestic truth of the *eidōs*, is already tied up in the process of representation and of repetition; “the evil slips in within the relation of memory to itself, in the general organization of the mnesic activity” (*Dissemination* 109). Memory is thus represented by two figures, *anamnesis* and *hypomnesis*, both of which rely on some form of repetition, whether based on the fantasy of the originary or not. Memory is already writing, for memory already represents itself to itself. The aporia of memory, answered in the *Meno* in terms of a denial or what Bernard Stiegler calls a *forgetting* of finitude through the postulation of a transcendental *anamnesis*, in fact opens memory, and thus being, up to *tekhnē*. As Richard Beardsworth puts it:

The aporia which provokes the metaphysical disavowal of finitude (as in *Meno*) should be developed as an aporetic, inextricable relation between thought and technics. Since access to time marks the specificity of human culture, to forget finitude is thus to deny the constitutive role of *techne* in the process of hominization.

If writing, and thus *tekhnē*, are implicated in the play of oppositions that is the *pharmakon*, and if we are to step now into the contemporary context, can we suggest that ‘technology’ or ‘technoscience’ or the various technicities that modern ‘humanity’ finds itself engaged with, might in fact be a *pharmakon*, both a poison and a cure, internal and external? We have already suggested this with our use of Haraway’s ‘technoscience’, always a double formation, and with our brief mention of the practices of the pharmaceutical industry, fomenting poisons and cures in one and the same drug. The deconstruction of the opposition between *tekhnē* and *logos* suggests this also, reminding

us that the term *technology* already brings together elements of the ‘living’ and the technical. Simultaneously, since writing is involved here too; if writing is a *pharmakon*, might it not be writing that makes possible the relation of humanity to ‘technology’, and which mediates the bio/techno divide? Might it not be a certain kind of repetition, iteration or citation that makes possible such things as humans and technologies; that is, might humans and technologies be always-already caught up in the play of inscriptions, repetitions, iterations and citations characteristic of writing, or what we are calling the writing machine?

So many figures of the codetermination of opposites, and technology is part and parcel of this process, just as writing is; if both writing and technology are *pharmakons*, we can firstly understand that they are, in some way, both ‘poisons’ and ‘cures’. To be extremely reductive for a moment, they are good and bad, they bring benefits and drawbacks. They have good effects and bad effects for *us*, they act in our name, and they act in various ways; sometimes they play their part, sometimes they improvise, making a hash of their lines. Played well or played for real, this scene remains a *scène*, the theatrical working out of a number of roles.

If we are to think technology as a *pharmakon*, what does this also give us to think in terms of the very structuration of the opposites supposedly combined within the *pharmakon*’s inclusive embrace? If technology is a *pharmakon* in relation to humanity, isn’t this relation also structured by the logic of supplementarity? If technology is ‘our’ *pharmakon*, doesn’t this imply that technology must already be inside us, in order that it

can appear in this polar position, as poison AND cure, saviour and threat at the same time, the very condition of threat-ness and saviour-ness? Could humanity imagine itself 'better' or 'worse' without technology, or some such figure, from which to pull a relation to the past and onto which to project two or more possible states or *futures*? Is technology, perhaps, the *virtual of the human*, or, in terms of the final chapter of this thesis, is technology perhaps the *spectre* of humanity, that shadowy image of ourselves that is there by not being there, that grants us our status as living and that beckons, always, from out of the shadows of *who* and *what* has been and is yet to come? Might humanity and technology, the *who* and the *what*, not in fact be involved in some kind of 'interactive stabilization' or 'transduction' as Adrian Mackenzie and Bernard Stiegler would argue, each jostling up against the other as commerce is conducted, as properties are exchanged? As soon as there is an imagination of difference there is technology; as soon as there is more than one, as soon as there is two, as soon as there is one added to another, addition, repetition, citation, iteration; as soon as there is memory, past and future, *return* and *revenue* and *revenant* therefore, we have begun to write, and technologize, ourselves.

Moreover, as soon as there is value and property – the imagination of the *proper* - we have entered a juridical or nomological scene in which judgements as to what is right, good and proper - that is, what *is* and what *is not*, what being is to *be*, what *has* value and what *has not* - are made on the basis of the writing that pre-exists all de-cisions. This writing is the 'arche-writing' Derrida uncovers at the core of Rousseau's confessions, and Plato/Socrates' trial of writing, and it is this writing that I am calling 'the writing

machine'. This writing is writing before the letter and the law, and I call it the writing machine as a mnemonic and reminder of the role of technics in what we call language and writing, and also, of the role of writing in what we call technics, technology, and machine. I want always, also, to re-inject *tekhnē* into *logos*, into all that *logos* comes to stand for in terms of living reason, speech, Word and granting power, chief, capital, good(s). I use this term, the writing machine, so that we can never imagine ourselves free of the machinations of what we do when we name, when we say, when we sign on the dotted line. It is not a simple matter to speak of human and machine; it is not a simple matter to *write* that I *speak* of human and machine. There is a tension here that I do not wish to do away with, for it is the tension not merely of any relation between human and machine, biology and technology, living and non-living, but further, of speaking and writing about these things as if they *were* or *are* things; this is the tension of the production of things in particular, the production of particles, of particularity.

Who, What, Where, When: Originary Technicity and Transduction

We have so far established a logic – a deconstructive logic of the supplement and the *pharmakon* which is, of course, also the deconstruction of logic – through which to approach a codetermination of the human and the technical. We have done more than simply bring a deconstructive logic to this enquiry, however. Throughout the previous sections we have worked to open up the relation of human and technics to a wider sphere of inferences. We have discussed the role of writing in the arbitration and attribution of value, and the identification of certain kinds of market. We have brought writing, and

technics, to bear on memory, suggesting that memory is always-already ‘contaminated’ or rather constituted by the ‘external’ trace that is writing and technics; internal and external, living and non-living, have a complex resemblance. In doing so, we have identified a logic by which *tekhnē* and *logos* can be equally understood as two sides of the same thing, which is also to suggest that *language*, as speech, writing and even thought, can be understood as a technics, as a putting in reserve and a storage in an external place. This also implicates the figures of repetition, recitation and iteration as characteristic of writing and technics as well, being that storage and putting in reserve imply the possibility of future use, and an opening onto the future that we can call, with Bernard Stiegler, *anticipation*.

There is a technicity to language, just as there can be a technicity to thought; this technicity we are figuring, with Derrida, as writing or as writing machine. We have broken technics and writing into a number of qualities and characteristics – repetition, iteration, memory, value – in order to assay how technics *appears* as technology and how this relates to the human and the appearance of the human. This is another way of saying we are investigating what Donna Haraway implies when she talks about what *counts* as technology or what is *at stake* in technology. What ‘counts’ means what is understood, what is considered, what is treated as technology in order that decisions can be made; later in this thesis we will look at this ‘counting’ of technology in more detail. For now, let us reiterate that we are multiplying technicities with the aim of building up a profile of the writing machine, a profile of the various ways in which writing mediates what is human and technical, and what counts as human and technical, and the very process or

possibility of this counting. In this section of this chapter, repetition and iteration, memory and storage, exteriorization, anticipation and an opening onto the future will all play important roles in our explication of the codetermination of the human and the technical, the mutual invention of the who and the what.

In the Introduction to *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed*, Adrian Mackenzie suggests that “it may not be possible to think of a body *as such* because bodies are already technical and therefore in some sense not self-identical or self-contained” (6). He suggests there is a similar difficulty in thinking of technology *as such* as well; technology, always tied up or over-coded by countless layers of rhetorical baggage, the site of power struggles and much capital speculation, has a complex ‘thinkability’: “The volatile essence, the mutable, divergent and eventful character of technologies within our collectives eludes classification as merely ‘technical’ or ‘social’” (2-3). Language, with which we will try to *think* technology, is also tied up in the conditions of technics, and therefore conditions (its) thinkability; language gives us the thought of an ‘as such’, but takes it away at the same time, language makes the ‘as such’ (im)possible, as Derrida would say.

Speaking about bodies and technologies as ‘things as such’, naming them through speaking about them, and producing them in this act; the complexity of this operation is the double-bind the writing machine presents us with. This double bind is also the *abyme* Derrida recognizes when thinking about a ‘science’ of writing which could not be external to its object but would be conditioned by writing itself, or about the constitution

of language by language itself. It is this double bind, the double bind that overshadows all enquiry conducted in the name of the human/machine relation, the cyborg, the posthuman and the hybrid, that Mackenzie seeks to unpack with the notions of, firstly, 'originary technicity' and the supplement, and secondly, 'transduction'. *Transductions* is primarily an exploration of Gilbert Simondon's notion of transduction, and we will return to this notion shortly; however, as the first quote above indicates, the book is premised on the logic of the supplement, and is fundamentally concerned with the codetermination of human 'bodies' and technics under the sign of originary technicity, a logic Mackenzie borrows from Derrida, and more recently, from Bernard Stiegler.

Mackenzie suggests that we may have such trouble situating ourselves in relation to technology because, following the logic of the supplement, we may already be technical; we would thus be speaking about what we are *as if* we were speaking about what we are not. "[W]hen we try to decide whether humans and technologies are entwined corporeally and temporally, we cannot ground our judgements in a radically non-technical domain" (*Transductions* 10). If technology is considered a prosthesis – an external aid, an artificial substitute, a technical replacement for something that has either gone missing or has perhaps always *been* missing - then, following the logic we have already elaborated in our discussion of *Of Grammatology* and "Plato's Pharmacy", this technical prosthesis may already be a prosthesis of the inside, a 'constitutive' prosthesis, an originary technicity, and is therefore invisible and unacknowledged because it is already here, *inside*. "The adjective 'originary' ... is one way to describe something more unnerving and unlocatable than merely strapping on, implanting or even injecting gadgets into living

bodies” (Mackenzie, *Transductions* 7). Originary does not, of course, signify an attempt to get at the ‘origin’ of either technics or humanity; rather, it introduces a logic whereby questions concerning the codetermination or, more pertinently, co-evolution of the human and technics can be asked. We could map ‘originary’ onto the use, in deconstructive and poststructuralist circles, of the word ‘already’; originary here, in fact, works against the traditional thought of the origin.

Mackenzie’s understanding of originary technicity is founded on the writings of Derrida and Bernard Stiegler. We have already cleared the ground for an understanding of how Derrida might approach such a concept as originary technicity; our discussions of the supplement and the *pharmakon* have concentrated on how what is held to be external, additional, secondary, can be understood to condition the possibility of secondariness or supplementarity. The prosthetic is already there, its place is ‘marked out’ by and as the trace or arche-writing that conditions prostheticity and internality. Bernard Stiegler, in *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, follows a similar logic across a wide number of different domains, including analyses of Rousseau, Leroi-Gourhan, Gille, Simondon and Heidegger; we shall not go into them all here, but shall focus on what is most relevant to the terms of our enquiry.

In terms we have already encountered elsewhere, and judiciously avoiding the complications of heavily-invested terms such as biology, technology, living, non-living etc, Stiegler situates his enquiry in terms of, firstly, the ‘invention of the human’, and secondly, the ‘who’ (the human) and the ‘what’ (the technical). Given the possibility of

the invention *of* the human, he asks: “‘Who’ or ‘what’ does the inventing? ‘Who’ or ‘what’ is invented?” (134). His ultimate aim is to demonstrate that the who and the what, the human and the technical, invent each other, invent each other *in* the other, through a kind of reflective, co-evolutive process or ‘instrumental maieutics’ which, to bring us back to Mackenzie, can also be understood as a ‘transduction’.

Through invention, the in-vitation and in-vocation of the to-come, *le venir*, Stiegler’s approach implies a process or passage; the passage to the human. If the human has been invented (or is rather still in the process of being invented), there must be some passage of invention, some temporality that is specific to this passage, and this temporality will of necessity be a temporality of evolution. We have not spoken, as yet, of evolution or time, but we have spoken about memory and the role of *tekhnē* in understandings of memory. Derrida’s analysis of Plato’s suspicions towards writing revolves around a rejection of the transcendent anamnestic knowledge postulated to exist before the fall into the body, and therefore before, and outside of, technics. Through the postulation of this transcendent knowledge, Plato institutes the system of oppositions that structure Western philosophy and metaphysics; soul/body, *logos/tekhnē*, speech/writing, presence/absence, infinite/finite. Derrida’s analysis suggests that it is in fact writing, or arche-writing, that conditions the possibility of such oppositions, and of transcendentalism. Rather than an external threat, a secondary, supplemental *tekhnē*, writing is in fact internal to, and constitutive of, memory.

For human beings, there is no temporality without memory, and, Stiegler argues, there is neither temporality nor memory without technics; whether specifically designed to store memories and time, as in photography, cinema or computers, or whether this storage comes about after the fact and in a different context, as in the artefacts uncovered through archaeology, “technics is always a memory aid” because it functions as a material trace and a record of what is past (Stiegler “Our Ailing Educational Institutions”). Memory is always a relation between past and present, as well as a projection onto or into the future, and it is through the interplay of these moments that time is experienced (this point will be made again, later, in terms of Freud’s discussion of the Mystic Writing Pad, where it is the periodicity of ‘cathectic innervations’ in the ‘mnemic apparatus’ that gives the individual an experience of time; Derrida’s response, in “Freud and the Scene of Writing”, will echo what we are about to discuss, namely, that memory and the experience of time rely on the spacing and tracing of writing). Stiegler’s interest, and indeed this has been our interest all along, is to push this understanding of writing, memory and time in the direction of the constitution of the human by technics. Knowledge hinges on memory, for to know something is to have learnt it, and thus remembered it. The survival of the human, its continuance through time and its continual in-vention as an invitation towards what is to come, depends on knowledge and memory, which are no longer to be understood as purely internal to the human or transcendent of technics. Rather, humanity experiences time through writing and technics, for it is technical artefacts or ‘substrates’ that receive the ‘inscription’ of memory.

If the invention of the human depends on memory and knowledge, which must be understood in terms of writing and technics, how does this form a theory of temporalization or evolution? Stiegler distinguishes between three types of memory through which the human develops; genetic memory, epigenetic memory, and epiphylogenetic memory; his concern is primarily to propose that it is the second and third types of memory that inform the first in the invention of the human. That is to say, in a profound break with or minimally *challenge to* evolutionary biology, that the human is not reducible to a genetic program, but rather, that the genetic is in-formed by what is epigenetic, extra-genetic. As Richard Beardsworth puts it, “[h]umanity ‘transcends’ its genetic program in pursuing its life through means other than life (matter)”. Human evolution is not a simple matter of separate phyla stretching through time, it is rather a matter of the differentiation and organization of matter. The prefix ‘epi’ signifies an upon, over, above or in addition to. Stiegler’s formulation of epigenetic memory refers to the cultural memories, inscriptions, programs and codes that we are not born *with* but that we are born *into*, that pre-exist us and that we acquire above or on top of our genetic make-up, and yet that we live *with* and according *to*. “To acquire something outside our genetic programming, then, this thing must exceed the biological. The epigenetic structure must pre-exist us; it must exist beyond our short lives to be subject to inheritance and transmission” (Barnet). Epigenetic memories exist externally to the human, but, through enculturation, through our entry into language and culture and all that this entails, become internal. The epigenetic is an ‘already’, it is, in Heidegger’s terms, the ‘already-there’ of Dasein, whereby Dasein, ‘the being that I am’, is constituted as an inheritance of a past that both is and is not ‘mine’:

The already-there is the pre-given horizon of time, as the past that is mine but that I have nevertheless not lived, to which my sole access is through the traces left of that past. This means that there is no already-there, and therefore no relation to time, without artificial memory supports. (Stiegler, *Technics* 159)

The epigenetic is culture, or from a different perspective ‘the symbolic order’, which is received through and in-formed by language – it becomes the knowledge and memory of the central cortex, and for each of us as ‘individuals’, it dies when we die. However, epigenetic knowledge also exceeds us, in that language itself – both speech *and* writing as *tekhne* - does not die when each of us dies; language remains as a storage system for the repetition and reanimation of material and semiotic artefacts. Language, and writing, function by *putting in reserve*. Similarly, other technical artefacts remain also, spanning the deaths of individuals, and from them, through these artefacts and memory supports, individual epigeneses are formed and re-formed. This function of technics, as the ongoing support of consciousness, is what Stiegler calls epiphylogenetic, and this is also his image of human ‘evolution’, the human maintaining itself through the technical memory support.

Stiegler’s language is both archaeological and geological; he refers to technical elements as ‘artefacts’ which, through their continued existence in time, through their repeated covering and uncovering, constitute ongoing memory supports for the human on a much larger temporal scale than individual human lives or epigeneses. He refers to this process

as a ‘sedimentation’; epiphylogenesis is the “conservation, accumulation, and sedimentation of successive epigeneses, mutually articulated” (*Technics* 140). Stiegler’s language is archaeological for a number of reasons. Firstly, as we shall shortly discuss, Stiegler situates his theory of the codetermination of the who and the what in relation to the theories of French archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan, who examines the development of technicity and language in Zinjanthropian and Neanthropian ‘man’. Secondly, Stiegler relies on ideas of archaeology as an uncovering of traces of the past. Archaeology is a kind of bringing-to-light of the already-there, an image of Dasein in action, and it gives us concrete examples of technics operating as a memory aid, whether intended as such or not. Thirdly, the sedimentation of artefacts, their geological layering and their gradual uncovering through excavation, gives us an image of time, and technics, as palimpsestical inscriptions on and in the human. In each of these cases, the trace – the possibility of the mark that will endure outside human presence and beyond death, that can be used like a tool, relied on to do a certain job – is central to our understanding of technics as constitutive of the human:

Now if it is true that only epigenetic sedimentation can be the already-there, this is only possible when the transmission allowing for the sediments is of an absolutely technical, nonliving essence: made possible by the organized albeit inorganic matter that the trace always is – be it a matter of tool or of writing – let us say one of an *organon* in general. (Stiegler, *Technics* 141)

Stiegler illustrates his theory (which, it must be noted, remains a theory or hypothesis “awaiting an acceptable biological explanation of such a phenomenon” (*Technics* 177)), through an analysis of the theories of Leroi-Gourhan. Leroi-Gourhan understands the evolution of man as a gradual ‘liberation’ or ‘freeing’ of memory, whereby the development, over thousands of years, of an upright posture and the use of the feet as the prime motors of mobility frees the hand from involvement in mobility and the face or mouth from a grasping function; thus, Leroi-Gourhan suggests that mobility is one of the most significant features of human evolution (Stiegler, *Technics* 146). Mobility has extra-human consequences however; it is memory that is freed, here, in that what eventuates through an upright posture is the relation to time enabled by exterior technical objects; that is, that exterior objects are the repositories of the already-there. Leroi-Gourhan’s argument, and Stiegler’s also, is that the *exteriorization* of tools – that is, the transformation of nails and teeth into exterior objects, in particular the chipped flint – is more than just ‘tool use’, more than McLuhan’s ‘extensions of man’; and further, that technics is more or other than simply a ‘means’ for the human to achieve an ‘end’. Rather, as a ‘supplementary’ logic would suggest, technics is constitutive in its exteriority, it “silently propels our evolution as a species”, and is thus exterior and interior at the same time (Barnet). For Stiegler, then, human being can be characterized as a putting-outside-oneself; the hand is no longer just a hand, attached to a body, but is now an exterior hand, a throwable hand, a cutting hand with a growing list of qualities and properties. “Prostheticity, here a consequence of the freedom of the hand, is a putting-outside-the-self that is also a putting-out-of-range-of-oneself” (*Technics* 146). To be human, is to be outside of yourself and inside at the same time.

Stiegler makes the same argument later when discussing the Greek myth of the origin of the human; it is from this discussion that the subtitle of his book, “The Fault of Epimetheus”, arises. In the myth, it was given to Epimetheus to create all the creatures of the earth and to give them the qualities, attributes and endowments with which they would be able to survive. Before he knew it, however, he had used up all the powers he had available, and was left with a naked humanity, lacking weapons, lacking protection from the elements. This is the ‘fault of Epimetheus’; to have forgotten humanity (from this we get the Greek term *ēpimētheia*; forgetting, idiocy, but also, interestingly, wisdom gained from experience). Prometheus, on discovering man’s plight, hastily stole fire and skill in the arts from Hephaestus and Athena to *compensate* man for his shortcomings. Thus in the myth, to be human is to ‘have’ prostheses, with all the complications that this ‘having’ implies:

Man invents, discovers, finds, imagines, and realizes what he imagines: prostheses, expedients. A pros-thesis is what is placed in front, that is, what is outside, outside what it is placed in front of. However, if what is outside constitutes the very being of what it lies outside of, then this being is *outside itself*. The being of humankind is to be outside itself. In order to make up for the fault of Epimetheus, Prometheus gives humans the present of putting themselves outside themselves. (Stiegler, *Technics* 193)

We can see, here, a fundamental codetermination of *logos* and *technē*, both of which arise from this ability to be outside oneself, to put in reserve, and to put outside of oneself.

Exteriorization is not simply an issue of tools; the development of technics is not merely the development of physical tools, but is also the development of a capacity for language; gesture and speech are united in their ability to put into reserve, to store up for later use, to make repeatable, and to *anticipate* future use, which is also to envisage the future through technics.

The whole of our evolution has been oriented toward placing outside ourselves what in the rest of the animal world is achieved inside by species adaptation. The most striking material fact is certainly the “freeing” of tools, but the fundamental fact is really the freeing of the word and our unique ability to transfer our memory to a social organism outside ourselves (Leroi-Gourhan 236).

Thus for Leroi-Gourhan, ‘hominization’ in its early stages is rooted not in the development of the cortex that characterizes the Neanthropian (and that is also popularly understood to characterize ‘modern’ humanity, for the brain does not evolve subsequent to the Neanthropian (Stiegler, *Technics* 142)), but rather in the earlier period between the Zinjanthropian and Neanthropian in which, as a function of the upright posture, the cortex develops at the same time as the tool, which is simultaneously the tool as external technical object, and the word as tool. The human begins not with the brain but with the feet, and it is the skeleton as ‘equipment’ that advances beyond the nervous system and begins to incorporate, rely on, the organization of inorganic matter:

Erect posture determines a new system of relations between these two poles of the “anterior field”: the “freeing” of the hand during locomotion is also that of the face from its grasping functions. The hand will necessarily call for tools, movable organs; the tools of the hand will necessarily call for the language of the face. The brain obviously plays a role, but it is no longer directive: it is but a partial element of a total apparatus, even if the evolution of the apparatus tends towards the deployment of the cerebral cortex. (Stiegler, *Technics* 145)

Stiegler begins to depart from Leroi-Gourhan at this point. Leroi-Gourhan argues that the liberation and exteriorization characteristic of these early stages of humanity constitute ‘quasi-zoological’, or ‘species-specific’ behaviour; it is behaviour enacted in the name of simple survival, the fulfillment of the instinct of preservation. The *fact* of exteriorization for Leroi-Gourhan is not, ultimately, constitutive of the human. The tool develops extremely slowly during the period we are discussing – it develops alongside the cortex and can thus be understood as, “to a large extent, a direct emanation of species behaviour” (Leroi-Gourhan, in Stiegler, *Technics* 154). Stiegler and Leroi-Gourhan agree that this quasi-zoological behaviour can be understood as a kind of technical (un)consciousness; that is, that the zoological would use the technical as a matter of survival, in a concrete manner, given the exteriorization that has taken place. Where they differ, however, is in the interpretation of the anticipation characteristic of this exteriorization. Leroi-Gourhan’s “to a large extent” signifies, for Stiegler, “not at all”.

Leroi-Gourhan sees exteriorization and early tool use as indicative of a technical consciousness devoid of the reflective, spiritual consciousness attributed to the Neanthropian. That is, technics comes out of zoological behaviour, and is ultimately transcended by spiritual intelligence, a higher level of humanity, which is complex, reflective and capable of abstraction. Leroi-Gourhan thus posits, according to Stiegler, a ‘second origin’ for the human, which is not seen before the Neanthropian and consists in the beginnings of reflective, spiritual intelligence; he sees the ability to *manipulate* symbols, characteristic of language in its advanced, ‘modern’ state, as having its roots in the cortical capacity of the Neanthropian, rather than in an earlier, merely gestural language ability. According to Leroi-Gourhan, “[t]he exteriorization of nonconcrete symbols took place with the Neanderthals, and technical concepts were thenceforth overtaken by concepts of which we have only manual operating evidence – burial, dyes, curious objects. This evidence, however, is sufficient to establish with certainty that thought was being applied to areas beyond that of purely vital technical motor function” (Leroi-Gourhan 114-115). Thus Leroi-Gourhan, paradoxically, having argued firstly that hominization began with the liberation of the hand and face through exteriorization, reinstates the opposition between technics and ‘intellect’ that Western metaphysics has always functioned upon, and which we have spent a large part of this chapter deconstructing. Stiegler argues, however, that technical consciousness is more or other than simply consciousness directed towards concrete, technical ends. Rather, the facility of anticipation required for this consciousness is *already* the opening towards the future, toward the possible, as well as towards and beyond death, that the spiritual consciousness or intelligence that Leroi-Gourhan wants to believe in, consists of. This is also to suggest

that any distinction between concrete and ‘nonconcrete’ symbols is disingenuous; a symbol is a symbol is a symbol.

Rather than getting too caught up in this quibbling over different kinds of intelligence, and different stages in human history or pre-history, I want to concentrate on the model Stiegler develops for understanding the codetermination of the human and the technical, for it is this model that leads us back to transduction and Mackenzie, where we began. Rather than identifying a break or rupture between the gestural language and tool use of the Zinjanthropian, and the abstract manipulation of symbols and spiritual consciousness of the Neanthropian, Stiegler sees the latter as emerging logically out of the former as one and the same movement. Both stages have in common a facility of anticipation, a looking beyond the present, which is also a reflection on the past. Interestingly, Stiegler uses the metaphor of the mirror to explain this process:

Flint is the first memory, the first mirror. At the dawn of hominization, that is, of corticalization, the epiphylogenetic vector becomes flint as that which conserves the epigenesis; the process of corticalization operates as a reflection of this conservation, which is already, in itself, a reflection. (*Technics* 142)

Reflecting on a certain Lacanian moment, Stiegler thus understands this dual reflection/anticipation, where the human is reflected in the tool and the tool is reflected in the human, as a “proto-mirror-stage” (*Technics* 135). The use of the mirror, here, is clearly a metaphor, a metaphor for some moment of identification and representation that

many theorists since Lacan, and no doubt before, have relied on. Mirrors are great theoretical apparatuses; they are convenient, concrete, and infinitely theorizable, they are a kind of *abyme* for infinite speculation on the process of virtually any kind of ‘subject’ formation one might wish to theorize. Mirrors are wishing wells, as Narcissus already discovered. Exactly why Stiegler should choose to use the figure of the mirror, here, is difficult to say; Christopher Fynsk, in “Lascaux and the Question of Origins”, wonders the same thing (not to mention finding Stiegler’s attacks on Leroi-Gourhan to a large extent overwrought). Mirrors do offer us a certain image of representation and artificiality, in that a mirror is, first and foremost, an artifice, an apparatus; however, in their basic form they have a static quality that can only be transcended through an imaginative or fantastic approach. Mirrors show what is in front of them, in that moment, in that present; to ask “mirror mirror on the wall...” is to make of the mirror a magic mirror, in essence not a mirror at all, but rather an apparatus through which to project another image of oneself.

Later in this thesis we will come at the mirror again and, through Derrida and *Spectres of Marx*, will suggest that the figure of the spectre is a far more apt figure through which to ‘reflect’ on the human and the technical, being that the spectre has a much more complex temporality. For now, I would simply like to point out that the mirror seems an odd figure to choose given that temporality, an opening onto the future, and we could even say an opening onto the *virtual*, is what is characteristic of the relation Stiegler is depicting. The mirror of Stiegler’s ‘proto-mirror-stage’ is not temporally static, it does not reflect back the present state of what is reflected therein; the mirror that each thing is to the other is a

mirror that opens on to the future and the past, it is “the mirror of anticipation, the place of its recording and of its inscription, as well as the surface of its reflection, of the reflection that time is, as if the human were reading and linking his future in the technical” (*Technics* 153). This mirror is generative, and evolutive, it implicates object and reflection, reflection and object, in an ongoing process of mutually articulated change. Given this is the case, a more spectral version of the specular relation may be appropriate.

Rather than relying entirely on the somewhat static and loaded metaphor of the mirror, however, Stiegler gives us other ways to think about this codetermination; he calls it an ‘instrumental maieutics’, and a ‘transductive’ relation. Maieutics is the term used to describe the Socratic method of eliciting the ‘truth’ of a proposition through a guided process of questions and answers; in our discussion of “Plato’s Pharmacy”, this method was called ‘dialectics’. Maieutics comes from midwifery, as an image of assisted birthing, bringing into life, bringing into the light; thus, Socratic maieutics is a bringing to light of the ‘truth’ (although we have already questioned the bases on which Socratic truth is judged, as well as the sophistic-ation of the dialectical method). Being that Stiegler sides with Derrida regarding the questionability of the terms of reference in Socratic questioning, we can discount the possibility that Stiegler is making any use of the Socratic root of the term. Rather, Stiegler suggests technics and the human come into being through a kind of ongoing, reflective question-and-answer session, “in the course of which the differentiation of the cortex is determined by the tool just as much as that of the tool by the cortex” (*Technics* 158). *Neither the cortex nor the tool would develop as*

they have without the other, the who and the what are mutually inclusive, they are two sides of the same thing, and it is anticipation and exteriorization that facilitate epiphylogenesis, which ‘powers’ this process:

The epiphylogenetic structure makes the already-there and its appropriation possible, as reappropriated expropriation, a maieutics of “exappropriation”: flint, the object of work and of the project of anticipation, is also what will keep the memory of this experience, of this epigenesis. (*Technics* 159)

Although he does not elaborate greatly on this possibility, seemingly citing it as a point of reference, Stiegler suggests we can also understand the human/technical relation, wherein the interiorization of the who is nothing outside its exteriorization in the what, as a ‘transductive’ relation *à la* Simondon (*Technics* 152). The concept of transduction, which Stiegler and Mackenzie take from French philosopher Gilbert Simondon, adds another approach to our understanding of the codetermination of the human and technics; it also introduces another way of investigating how the relation between the human and technics is informed by aspects of the writing machine, for it is iterability, citationality and performativity that characterize, for Mackenzie, the transductive relation.

Transduction, as Mackenzie explains it, describes “the intersection and knotting together of diverse realities” (*Transductions* 13). The various oppositions that have surfaced throughout this thesis so far, such as human/machine, living/non-living, biology/technology, who/what, can be understood as such ‘diverse realities’; they are

zones or ‘things’, often held in philosophical and scientific thought to be different, separate and separable, but which are, in a deconstructive light, found to be mutually entwined. And, as we have discussed, language and the sedentarizing or delimiting function of the name have also often functioned to keep these things separate. Transduction is one way to describe the way in which these things *come to be*; Mackenzie points out that the concern with transduction is to think ontogenesis (how something comes to be) rather than ontology (what something is), a concern “focused on a unity of becoming rather than a unity of substance” (*Transductions* 17). Simondon calls this an ‘individuation in progress’:

This term [transduction] denotes a process – be it physical, biological, mental or social – in which an activity gradually sets itself in motion, propagating within a given domain, by basing this propagation on a structuration carried out in different zones of the domain: *each region of the constituted structure serves as a constituting principle for the following one*, so much so that a modification progressively extends itself at the same time as this structuring operation...The transductive operation is an individuation in progress; it can physically occur most simply in the form of progressive iteration. (Simondon, in Mackenzie “Invention, Innovation”; my italics)

The who and the what serve as ‘constituting principles’ for each other in their ongoing evolutive or epiphylogenetic relation. Iteration, repetition and difference characterize the transductive process. It is not a matter of matter being ‘given’ form, of a kind of stamp of pre-given form being applied to matter. Introducing the Greek notion of matter, *hyle*,

Mackenzie opposes transduction to the form-matter, or *hylomorphic* model, noting that transduction is a departure from social theories that conceive “the interface between the human and the technical in hylomorphic terms [whereby] the human (collectively or individually) *shapes* or is *shaped* by technology (*Transductions* 45). It would be such theories that would understand humans as tool *users*, and would lead to the false dichotomy or double bind signalled earlier when Mackenzie talked about the polarities in attitudes to technology as making the future ‘better’ or ‘worse’, which we read also as the poison/cure dichotomy. Rather than an imposition of form, which might tempt us to speak simply of the ‘inscription’ of form, transduction suggests an emergence of form through an ‘interactive stabilization’ or process of iteration, a repetition with difference that builds on each different repetition.

Mackenzie gives the example of the growth of a crystal suspended in a liquid. The crystal grows by replicating its structure, using its contact with the liquid (a different domain) as a kind of generative other against which to stabilize, or rather metastabilize, which is essentially a transductive operation. “The planes on which the crystal grows are always those surfaces of the crystal in contact with a liquid” (*Transductions* 17). Triggers for crystal growth, such as changes in the temperature of the liquid or the introduction of impurities to the liquid, do not impose any particular form on the crystal; rather, they adjust conditions in a ripple effect that changes the relation of the crystal to the liquid, and in doing so changes the form of both crystal and liquid (Mackenzie “Invention, Innovation”).

Likewise, Mackenzie also indicates how we could consider the living as operating transductively.

The living encounters information, understood strictly as the unpredictability of forms or signals, as a problem. It resolves the problem through constant temporal and spatial restructuring of itself and its milieu. It develops and adapts, it remembers and anticipates. Unlike a crystal, life can individuate (that is, develop in its specificity out of a domain of unresolved tensions and potentials) to a greater or lesser extent by becoming information for itself. It possesses interior milieu. (*Transductions* 17)

We are reminded, therefore, to see transduction alongside the logic of Derrida's 'prosthesis of the inside' and of Stiegler's instrumental maieutics, where the human develops against, and in relation *with*, the technical, and indeed finds itself invented in its other(s), in and *as* its other, for its other is already within. And, as in our discussions of memory in "Plato's Pharmacy", and of Stiegler's epiphylogenesis as a constitution of the human through the survival of language and various memory supports, transduction occurs equally in physical and psychical domains. While we can understand transduction as a way to view the ongoing interaction and interreaction of humanity and technics *qua* such things as tools, we must also understand it occurring in and as thought: "Thinking can be understood as an individuation of a thinking subject, not just something that someone who thinks does. To think transductively is to mediate different orders, to place heterogeneous realities in contact, and to become something different" (Mackenzie, *Transductions* 18).

While a thing may appear to emerge out of a transductive relation at any one moment in time, this does not in any way imply that all transductive relations will cease at the moment that 'thingness' emerges. Thingness may emerge arbitrarily, or according to a certain point of view or even ideology; this is how things come to 'count'. Mackenzie and Simondon understand this transductive individuation as a process of 'information'; they play with a reformulation of information as in-formation. That is, information is always in-formation, in a process of formation which is also a temporality of formation, an ongoing formation which we could understand as an evolution. In terms of Mackenzie's transductive understanding of the living, it should be clear that while life goes on and thus may appear to constitute a certain linearity or 'unity of substance', what is nevertheless occurring is a constant resituation of the living against the non-living, which is the process of in-formation.

In other words, information is a transductive process which provisionally resolves some incompatibilities within an ensemble. It may do so irreversibly...but it may also do so by suspending or delaying formation, by maintaining or continuing the processes of formation, so that the ensemble remains information, as in the case of life.

(Mackenzie, *Transductions* 50)

Again, we can see that the temporality of the transductive process echoes the temporality invoked by Stiegler's notion of epiphylogenesis, where human evolution occurs *in* time but *between* the human and the technical, with the technical as memory support also

giving the experience of time. Stiegler's notion of technics as a proto-mirror-stage which is always an opening onto the future, and onto a future state, recalls this temporality also. It is through the exteriorization and anticipation characteristic of technics that the human ontogenesis occurs, and this process is always *in process*, in-formation, never a *fait accompli*.

Whether we choose to follow Stiegler dutifully back through his (and Leroi-Gourhan's) zoo-techno-logical pre-history of the human is neither here nor there; proving or disproving the veracity of his assertions regarding this pre-history would be an exercise in futility, although no doubt many will try. Moreover, it would do nothing but prove our larger point regarding the role of writing and technics in constituting memory and time, for any attempt to bring a scientific viewpoint to bear on Stiegler's assertions would rely on technical substrates as the bearers of this history. We would again use writing to give a history, in writing, of the human, which would deliver us back to the role of technics in such an endeavour. Stiegler's model of epiphylogenesis as the codetermination of the human and the technical is a paradigm shift in the manner of Simondon and Mackenzie's opposition to the hylomorphic model; an attitudinal shift, a re-dressing of the balance. Transduction, instrumental maieutics, epiphylogenesis *et al* all give us an image of the human and technics being codetermined in and as time, and it is what Stiegler calls the trace – the mark, arche-writing, writing before the letter – that makes the time in which this temporality is experienced possible.

Chapter 2: Nothing in Particular

Modern corn infrastructure enables scalable, high volume production, unlike other plant platforms.

Prodigene

The play on ‘information’ that Mackenzie and Simondon perform reminds us, again, of the heterogeneity of language, the duplicity and complicity of language as a (mis)communicational *tekhne*. What does it mean to say that the human uses information to keep it in-formation? How can we possibly read this? How can we read this as ‘modern’ human beings, surrounded by informatic technologies, embedded in informatic milieux? This sentence appears before you, now, as a function of a series of informatic apparatuses, it has passed in and out of a number of informatic environments – word processors, computers, the internet - in order to emerge, here and now, on a page, somewhere. How can or should we read this sentence given such a context, a context also of numerous writing machines? How has the informatic context of these words influenced their appearance, with all that the ambiguity of a term such as ‘appearance’ should connote?

Similarly, we could ask this question in terms of the informatic understanding *and constitution* of the human in biotechnological practices; the metaphor of the human *as* code, as program and as information. Donna Haraway argues that this is more than mere metaphor:

Nineteenth-century scientists materially constituted the organism as a laboring system, structured by a hierarchical division of labor, and an energetic system fueled by sugars and obeying the laws of thermodynamics. For us, the living world has become a command, control, communications, intelligence system (C³I in military terms)...These issues are about metaphor and representation, but they are about much more than that. Not only does metaphor become a research program, but also, more fundamentally, the organism for us is an information system and an economic system of a particular kind. (97)

How do we understand ourselves as information, and in what way might this informational understanding of ourselves *act* as information that contributes to our information?

We could pose this question differently: how is information *performative* in the constitution of what is understood to be 'human' today? How might the understanding of life – biological life, human, animal and plant life – as information and as iteration influence life as it is lived, and life as it *will be*, in that imagined future or virtual that

everything that is done today is done in the name of? And again, what might the writing machine, as mechanism of judgement, as epigenetic memory support and iterative, citational archive, as arbitration and possibility of value, have to do with this?

The previous chapter examined the codetermination of the human and the technical and the role of writing in mediating this relation. We have advanced various models or logics – the supplement, the *pharmakon*, epiphylogenesis, transduction - by which we can understand the codetermination of the human and the technical, and have looked at how writing, or what we are calling the writing machine, implicates memory, time, property and value in this codetermination. These models, we have argued, stand in a complex ‘opposition’ to the Western metaphysical tradition which seeks to keep humans and technics, *logos* and *tekhnē*, speech and writing, separate. These models undermine the separateness and separability of ‘things’ such as human, technics, living, non-living etc, implying that the human has always been technical. To be human is to be outside oneself, always exteriorized in and as technics. The human was invented, and continues to be so, it is always in-formation, in an ongoing process of materialization and corporealization.

Turning our attention now to the contemporary situation, Mackenzie suggests that recently, in biotechnological discourses and practices, in the material-semiotic practices of technoscience,

‘life’, from the supermarket tomato, through genetically altered rabbit viruses, to cloned sheep and attempts at human somatic gene therapy, has undergone a fairly

literal technological rendering...life has become intensely technological, or at least newly susceptible to an association with the potent but almost empty abstraction, 'technology'. (*Transductions* 171)

As we have indicated, Haraway situates this understanding in terms of information; in technoscience, the organism is an information system, a system of codes and programmes; the organism is coded, calculated, calculable, legible. The organism is scripted and life is inscribed, Mackenzie's 'literal' bringing with it the spectre of the literary. Information and technology here have a kind of kinship, they are both understood in terms of an array of elements or particles from which life is formed, piecemeal, in particular, in its particles, structured, we could almost say, *like a grammar*. The human continues to be invented, but interestingly, it is *as information* that the human is invented. Is it not the case that many industries, most especially the biotechnology industry, have a large investment in a technological or informatic rendering of life? The epigraph for this chapter is powerfully emblematic of the technological/informatic approach to life; 'modern corn *infrastructure* enables *scalable* high volume *production*, unlike other plant *platforms*'; each italicized term places corn within an informatic milieu that is also determined by the market, by laws of production, as if modern corn (clearly a significantly different thing from pre-modern corn, whatever that might be, let alone the complexities of post-modern corn...) is tantamount to a data network, or a factory production line. Corn infrastructure is subject to the exigencies of a market that demands scalable, high-volume or mass production, and the modernity of corn infrastructure, that which marks it off from the feeble production capabilities of other plant platforms,

presumably also pre-modern, is precisely this boosted, *boosterized* and up-sized facility for industrial-scale production. The plant *platform*, meanwhile, suggests an ability to build upon a foundation that has been strengthened and prepared for successive iterations, like a writing surface.

For hundreds of years technics or mechanicals of many sorts have been used as models for understanding the human. The mechanistic worldview of de la Mettrie and Descartes led to explanations of the functioning of the body along mechanical lines – the body as a clockwork organism reflecting the workings of a clockwork universe (Gonzalez 268-269). The profusion of lifelike automata in the 18th century reflected this interest in expressing both physical and cultural aspects of human life in programmed form. Stepping forward two hundred years, the ‘building blocks of life’ theory on which genetic and molecular biology was founded reflected chemistry and physics’ search for atomic and sub-atomic particles. Ruth Hubbard quotes American geneticist Thomas Hunt Morgan in 1926: “In the same sense in which the chemist posits invisible atoms and the physicist electrons, the student of heredity appeals to invisible elements called genes” (Hubbard 39). These invisible elements, these particles, represent a drive to identify the smallest level on which life’s mysteries can be unravelled and revealed to be a matter of calculation, programming, and information. Particles, their possibility, discovery and/or invention have driven understandings of the human throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and continue to do so. Ruth Hubbard, in “Genes as Causes”, and Evelyn Fox Keller, in “Fractured Images of Science Language and Power”, emphasize the seductive power with which the early molecular geneticists - Muller, Schrodinger, Watson and Crick - imbued

their quest for “the secret of life” (Keller 61), their heroic search for “what it means to be human” (Hubbard 49), and their claims to have ‘discovered’ the building blocks of life. Both writers attest to, simultaneously, the reductionist nature of these claims, yet also the speed and ease with which such claims were taken up within the scientific community. The claim to have found the building blocks of life fits into a trajectory of scientific ‘discovery’ representing the uncovering of secrets, a revealing, a bringing forth, *poiesis*, *aletheion*. It is a claim imbued with the status of a mythic ‘quest’ narrative and magic, like the alchemical quest for turning lead into gold, conquering the secret of matter. Technoscience, and most especially biotechnology, with its ‘star’ status as key scientific discourse of the day, and with the genome representing the latest scientific frontier of knowledge, discovery and potential for colonization and capitalization, inherits this mythic narrative status of the quest.

In a sense, then, it is no surprise that life is now to be understood technologically, and informatically; the seeds have been in place for hundreds of years, slowly gestating in their cultural and narrative ground. At the same time, there remain large sectors of society who would question such an understanding of life, and would seek to reinstate the separability and specificity of the human and the technical, biology and technology. Mackenzie identifies various polarities in attitudes towards technology; technology will either save us or destroy us, our bodies are under attack or are about to be infinitely extended. These polarities retain their currency, despite a certain naïve simplification of the issues. I would argue, however, that what has not changed, between the period(s) in which the dominant ideology supported a separation of the human and technics, and the

contemporary ideology of bio-techno-logical life, is that in each case some role is given to the writing machine to mediate the boundaries, separation *or* merging of the human and technics, biology and technology. Concentrating on biotechnological practices and discourses, and a number of fictional and theoretical writings by Franz Kafka, Michel Foucault and Margaret Atwood, this chapter will continue to examine the role of writing in mediating what is understood by the human and the technical, biological and technological; what is understood by and what *counts as* these things. Although the dominant ideology of biotechnology, or the contemporary scene that Jeremy Rifkin calls ‘the Biotech Century’ and Donna Haraway calls the ‘New World Order Inc’, may be quite different from that of Plato or Rousseau’s time, in many ways the *terms* remain the same.

Signs of Life: Performativity, Propriety and the Particle

In *Transductions*, it is by way of iterability, citationality and performativity that bodies and technics are transduced or in-formed. Each of these terms indicates some aspect of a writing process and has played a significant part in our discussion so far. Mackenzie uses these terms in a discussion of Judith Butler’s account of materialization in *Bodies that Matter*; Butler uses the terms in a discussion of the materialization of sex, taking her lead from Derrida’s use of the terms in “Signature Event Context”. Given this rich context, this rich play of citations and the very play of citationality, I again want to use Mackenzie’s text and his terms as a jumping-off point for further discussion.

Mackenzie explains the iterative, in-formative stabilization of bodies and technics with reference to Judith Butler's work on materiality, and Donna Haraway's understanding of corporealization. Butler's attendance to the *processes* by which matter, sex and gender come to be considered as necessary and universal (i.e, 'natural' in the sense of 'given as is'), opens up a way of understanding matter, sex and gender as 'singular and contingent', that is, as things that have gone through a process of materialization or corporealization. Bodies do not simply appear, whole, in the world, but are materialized or in-formed over and in time (*Transductions* 29). Thinking the appearance of matter transductively suggests that "[c]orporeal materiality thus appears not as a substance, but as a pre-eminently *transductive* field in which psychological, physical, technical and affective realities precipitate" (Mackenzie, *Transductions* 35). To be visible, to be seen and known, a body must be legible, and its legibility will be determined through this precipitation of heterogeneous domains.

Working around or beyond the social constructivist paradigm, Butler sees matter not merely as "surface and/or site on which social processes inscribe themselves", but as something which "stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter" (*Transductions* 36-37; Butler 9). Matter - that is, the stuff that things are made of, and in Butler's text, the gendered, sexed body - is not so much 'stuff' but the *appearance* of stuff or *stuffness*, it is an *effect*, "the sedimenting effect of a regulated iterability", an effect of repetitions and iterations bounded or corralled by power, discourse, culture and other forms of matter (Butler 252n12); bounded also, in Stiegler's terms, by the epigenetic. We can see here the interactive and iterative

stabilization attributed to transductive processes. As Mackenzie explains, “Butler argues that matter, as an ensemble of effects such as fixity, boundary and surface, is inextricably bound up with the determination of the limits and boundaries between the social or ‘human’, the natural or ‘non-human’, the constructed and ‘unconstructed’ and the living and non-living” (*Transductions* 37).

With a model that bears strong similarities to the ‘abstract machine of faciality’ that we will discuss later in this thesis, Mackenzie argues that matter is normalized or in-formed “through corporeal repetitions and citations that repeatedly and performatively exclude anything that does not comply with the norm in question” (*Transductions* 39). It is in this sense that iterability is ‘regulated’, that is, the heterogeneous realities against which matter or bodies are measured do not come arbitrarily but are chosen, over time, by various powers and cultural institutions. Norms are institutions, and institutions require and produce norms.

Mackenzie introduces two forms of writing in his delineation of matter. He states that matter is not about social processes inscribing themselves *on* bodies, as the social constructivist idea of ‘writing on the body’ might suggest, but rather, as Butler says, it is the effect of ‘regulated iterability’ or citationality which governs what matter comes to be. While we can understand this inscription on bodies as indicative of what Niall Lucy calls the ‘written-down’, or ‘writing in particular’, being that Butler’s terminology and logic is profoundly deconstructive we must understand iterability in Derridean terms, that is, as ‘writing in general’ or ‘arche-writing’, which is the very condition of the mark or

trace (Lucy, *Debating* 25-31). Iterability is the requirement of any sign, mark or trace that it can be repeated and recontextualized, thus repeated and differentiated at the same time, *already* different from itself *within* itself. As Derrida puts it in “Signature Event Context”:

Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring. This citationality, duplication, or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is not an accident or anomaly, but is that (normal – abnormal) without which a mark could no longer even have a so-called normal functioning. What would a mark be that one could not cite? (97)

All marks, signs or traces can be cited, recited, and as such are *already* cited, because they are determined by citationality. There is no sign that is not already a citation, no fundamental element of meaning or particle which is not already enmeshed in the systematic play of the writing machine. While the body may not necessarily be ‘inscribed upon’, it is formed through a process that is the condition of all inscription.

What might this iterative understanding of the mark or trace, have to do with the positing of particles of information in the discourse of molecular biology, biotechnology or

technoscience? If matter is to be understood as iterative materialization, and if life is to be understood informatically, as the interplay of elements or particles that are simultaneously imaginary and real, constructed and discovered, material and semiotic, does this not also imply that life, and certainly what counts as human, can be understood as a kind of writing? And if this is the case, what are the implications of understanding life as writing?

Mackenzie gives numerous examples of authors who rely on informatic, technological and literary understandings of life. He quotes Evelyn Fox Keller, who notes that, since Watson and Crick's postulation of 'genetical information', "some notion of information (however metaphorical) assumed a centrality to molecular biology" (Fox Keller, in *Transductions* 178). The 'Central Dogma' formulated by molecular biologists in the 1950s held that the base sequence of genes, or DNA, directly and completely specified the sequence of amino-acids in a protein. It further "assumed that the amino-acid sequence of a protein determines its three-dimensional structure and, by implication, its function. Hence, it seemed logical that the shape of hemoglobin, its colour, and the way it transports oxygen in the blood are all determined by 'the hemoglobin gene'" (Hubbard 44). From this Central Dogma stemmed the various popular genetic-determinist beliefs in genes as 'programmes' for life, which have gradually filtered their way into culture to the degree that claims of 'genetic discrimination' against insurance companies became commonplace in the 1990s. Genetic determinism appealed not merely to the science world but to the business world, with its emphasis on calculability and reliability. Genetic determinism, the informatic understanding of life, was bankable in a fundamental way,

because it could be counted upon, and could thus facilitate the flow of capital in a particularly concrete manner. Andrew Niccol's 1997 film *Gattaca* presents a chilling account of a possible future driven by such genetic discrimination. Despite the elastic science on which the film is based, its prognostications of a society driven by on-the-spot genetic identification, designer babies and the emergence of what Jeremy Rifkin calls the 'genetocracy', represented a profound meditation on the possible implications of the informatic understanding of life (Rifkin 168).

The tenets of the Central Dogma have since proven to be woefully simplistic, and the idea of genes as programmes has been discredited. The emergence of traits is much more heterogeneous and interactive, indeed transductive, than originally supposed. As Ruth Hubbard writes, "the base sequence of a gene (DNA) is not translated literally into the amino-acid sequence of the protein in whose synthesis it participates...the message encoded by DNA can be changed while it is translated into RNA and proteins (hence further genes) are involved in all these processes" (44-45). Nevertheless, Mackenzie notes that despite this repudiation of the flow of 'information' from DNA to proteins, "there is no question of contemporary biology...dispensing with informatic metaphors" (*Transductions* 179). He quotes various writers on molecular biology whose explanations of the functioning of the genome rely on understanding DNA in terms of 'parallel computer processing' (*Transductions* 179). While the simplistic Central Dogma of Watson and Crick's time has been surpassed, and the sender-receiver / DNA-protein / direct-transfer-of-information model has been ridiculed, informatics as a *scène* continues to exert a powerful pull on those working in the field.

This pull is evident in the discourse and practice of biotechnology. The Prodigene quote placed as the epigraph to this chapter exemplifies the informatic, and even architectural approach to life: modern corn *infrastructure*, plant *platforms*. The biological, here, constitutes a space in which technoscience can do its work at the particle level, and a surface on which it can build. Like any suburb, fiefdom or colony, the body is a *built environment*, and is simultaneously biological and technological. As Mackenzie notes, “biotechnology is distinctive in the way that it configures living bodies as reservoirs of technical elements” (*Transductions* 193). Numerous other examples abound. Dr Ron James, former managing director of Pharmaceutical Proteins Ltd, the Scottish company who produced Dolly the cloned sheep, is on record as stating that “the mammary gland is a very good factory” (Shiva 2). This is a very complex statement, recalling our earlier mention of ‘pharming’. Factories are where commodities are produced, places of industry and of capital; taken at face value, James’ comment is easily understood. Yet factories are also complex cultural sites. The history of the factory is the history of the modern West, in terms of industrialization and narratives of technological progress, pollution and the emergence of ecological movements, and the exploitation of workers and the emergence of labour movements. Factories continue to concretize key issues related to the spread of globalization, with the sweat-shops and *maquilladoras* that dot Asia, south-East Asia and South America replicating and building upon the forces of production that characterized the Western factory. Capital moves through factories in many ways, and factories sit at the centre of complex ethical webs, double-binding workers and communities to cycles of financial gain *and* impoverishment.

In this context, James' comment takes on greater significance. The factories of the biotech century exist not in industrial parks surrounding the world's major cities, but in the mammary glands and bloodstreams of transgenic pharm animals. Human and animal bodies can now be 'seeded', often on the genetic level, in order to be later 'harvested' for their 'crop'. The factory is no longer an industrial space peopled by machines, workers and management teams, but a biological space populated by transgenic and hybrid forms. Further, it runs on automatic, requiring nothing other than the normal conditions of life, no coal, no steam, no electricity. This is not an insignificant moment in the history of the organism, when its biological systems of maintenance can be harnessed for the production of raw materials for commodities. It is also a significant moment in the diversification of capital, when elements of 'value' can be grown in bloodstreams and mammary glands. The informatic approach to life signals a new moment in the history of both the organism and the factory, and to many it is clearly very promising; however, it cannot be considered apart from the constraints and inequalities which have always accompanied capital growth and industrial expansion. Within technoscience and biotechnology, the who and the what have a complex co-implication, but this co-implication is mediated by the economic forces that structure what these sciences deem knowable, and worth knowing.

Haraway's eponymous(e) creature is implicated in similar fields. OncoMouse™ is a transgenic animal, developed in 1988 by researchers at Harvard Medical School but licensed to Du Pont, designed to aid cancer researchers in toxicology testing and in

developing cancer therapies (Haraway 286n35).⁵ It reliably develops cancer within the first few months of its life, and was the world's first patented transgenic animal (Haraway 79). Bounded by the writing machine of patent law, defined thus as an invention and a technology, and bought and sold as a scientific instrument for use in the laboratory, OncoMouse has generated not merely a very odd market and a host of transgenic look-alikes in universities and research labs, but a discourse surrounding the production and use of transgenic animals. Haraway quotes Howard Rosen, former corporate development director at GenPharm International Inc.: "We do 'custom-tailor' mice. We view them as the canvas upon which we do these genetic transplantations" (Haraway 98). She also quotes business writer Michael Shrage, who argues that "[t]his transition will have as big an impact on the future of biology as the shift from printing presses to video technology has had on pop culture. A mouse-based world looks and feels different from one viewed through microorganisms" (Haraway 98). Again, the biological is the ground or surface upon which bio-techno-logical life can be built. The biological is a canvas, a base, a blank surface, a clean, prepared slate; it is prepared for certain purposes and its value consists in its receptivity to the writing of technoscientific knowledge. Indeed, the biological disappears here, just as it does in the chamber of Robert Boyle's air-pump, which we will shortly discuss; the biological is pure potentiality.

Obviously, these phrases attributed to the various stakeholders in the biotechnology industry are just that, statements, made to the press, in written texts, in interviews or wherever. They are metaphors, rhetoric, explanations for the layperson, they do not

⁵ One cannot help noting a fascinating irony; the first company to market a transgenic animal, an animal that is a hybrid of organic matter and technoscientific practice, an animal that spans the biological and technological worlds, was called Du Pont: the *bridge*.

constitute science in and of themselves but rather they refer obliquely to practices which are merely explained and described with such language. However, they beg the question of what the relation is between technoscientific practice and the rhetoric that is used to describe this practice, and thus to represent this practice. Given our deconstructive analysis of the founding import of representation, the implication of representation in what is represented, the questions with which we opened this chapter remain of vital importance. To what degree have these metaphors of life as information, of DNA as parallel processing or computing, of biological organisms as platforms, canvasses, and infrastructure, been instrumental, or performative, in the constitution of life today and in the future? What are the effects of this constitution of life? And, as Haraway asks, *cui bono* (113)? Who profits from such a situation?

In the opening of this chapter we indicated that for Haraway, the metaphor that understands life as information was more than metaphor, it was a metaphor that enabled certain contexts to come into play surrounding this understanding of life. Haraway states, “[n]ot only does metaphor become a research program, but also, more fundamentally, the organism for us is an information system and an economic system of a particular kind” (97). As information, the organism enters research programs and economic systems in ways that, as purely biological entity, the organism could and would not. Mackenzie concurs, noting that, for Haraway, “the very tissue of the biotechnological hybrid is informatic. Information is not just a metaphor that reduces the complexity of life as an object of biological knowledge, it is also a set of technical-economic practices which trace certain paths and not others” (*Transductions* 181). This tracing of certain paths and

not others recalls our earlier discussion of Judith Butler's account of materialization, where materialization occurs as a 'regulated iterability' and a 'normalization'. The materialization of the body, and the informaticization of life, occurs in the context of decisions regarding what is scientifically and medically doable and/or useful, what is prescribable in terms of the strictures of intellectual property and patent law, and what is commodifiable. There is a profoundly economic imperative governing, abstractly or concretely (depending on one's level of paranoia), the materialization of life. As Mackenzie states, "[l]ife as a diverse and intricately overlapping milieu has become an open and diverse engineering site, the subject of mapping programs, financial speculation, voracious property claims, and massive state and corporate funding" (*Transductions* 171).⁶

⁶ It is notable that public and private sectors both have a large investment in the constitution of life today, and that this joint investment of public and private in the same object marks out a complex site of negotiation and translation, in terms of the often conflicting goals of the two sectors. For Mackenzie, both states and corporates have an investment in life today; often, this investment is a joint investment. The OncoMouse is a case in point, developed and patented by Harvard Medical School, but licensed for commercial development to Du Pont. GenPharm is another company that has purchased the rights to market transgenic animals from the university laboratories that developed them. Haraway quotes Christopher Anderson in *Science*, who states that universities tended to license product development and marketing to private companies because they did not wish to enter into the business of manufacturing (Haraway 98). Manufacturing and product development is not (usually) a university's core business; education and research are. Universities still need to use the products of their now doubly-alienated labour, and must now purchase them from the private companies licensed to market them. Whereas "traditionally, biologists have enjoyed a kind of commons in research materials that they exchanged with each other", when research materials have been licensed to for-profit companies, and these for-profit companies have strictly limited the ways in which these materials can be used, the situation is somewhat different, foregrounding the negotiation required in private-public dealings (Haraway 98-99). This kind of negotiation is not a 'new' development, and obviously public and private sectors have dealings all the time. However, it is worth noting that all is not always business as usual. For instance, the development of private arms by many universities, the explosion of Western universities into the foreign student market and the profusion of offshore campuses has brought with it profound implications for what education is at the start of the 21st century. The commodification of education, which Stiegler deals with in "Our Ailing Educational Institutions", introduces us to the powerful duress which the private sector (or, from a slightly different tack, what Stiegler calls the 'transnational programming industries' ("Our Ailing Educational Institutions")) can bring to bear on the public sector.

Mackenzie's discussion of bioinformatics exemplifies the role of information in the understanding of life. He examines the role of the protein and genome databases such as those used in the Human Genome Project, GeneBank, the European Molecular Biology Laboratory and the DNA Database of Japan (*Transductions* 194). These databases contain DNA sequence data fragments – the 6 billion base pairs of human DNA, in the case of GeneBank - that only become meaningful when they are compared to other fragments, using the differences between sequences to elucidate similarities and, ultimately, to draw a 'map' of the genome, which is the totality of genetic "information" in a cell (Haraway 245). The sequence data of different organisms is compared, and databases are cross-referenced, comparing sequence data "to the other large-scale databases containing the details of when and where various genes are active, of protein structure and folding, and protein-protein interactions" (*Transductions* 184).

Bioinformatic databases provide a robust technical structure and architecture with which to deal with the "problems of sorting and comparing billions of sequences of DNA base pairs" (*Transductions* 182). The databases, with their complex searching algorithms, allow for the performance of calculations and comparisons that could not take place without such a technical structure. This is to say more than that scientists rely on their tools to do their work. It is to say that the genomic databases provide an understanding of 'life' and the human genome that is inevitably inflected by the very structure of the technical substrate; we will make this point again, later, in our discussion of Derrida, Botox and the archive. The 'representation' of the 'human' in genomic databases does

something constitutive to how the human is, and will be, understood; and further, it provides virtualities for the human that are inevitably technically mediated.

The human to be represented, then, has a particular kind of totality, or species being, as well as a specific kind of individuality. At whatever level of individuality or collectivity, from a single gene region extracted from one sample through the whole species genome, this human is itself an information structure whose program might be written in nucleic acids or in the artificial intelligence programming language called Lisp®. (Haraway 247).

The human is and will be not merely technically mediated, however. This mediation will take place within certain fields and contexts and not others, and according to certain economic and cultural imperatives and not others.

Reinforcing the relation between informatics and writing, Mackenzie describes this representation of the human formed through the sorting and comparing of sequence data as the *reading* and *writing* of genomic *maps*: “Constant rereading and rewriting of archived linear sequences also focuses on mapping the relation between DNA sequence and the topological structure of proteins” (*Transductions* 182). Haraway, also, examines the now popular trope of the ‘genetic map’, drawing attention to the geopolitical and biopolitical complexity of using a cartographic metaphor to describe and guide knowledge of the human genome (162-163). Maps are, obviously, a certain kind of representation, a kind of writing that is frequently used in place of its referent. Maps are

tropes, an *as* or *as if* that is used to assay and extend knowledge of what supposedly *is*. This map-writing and representation, however, has a politics. Just as Ron James' relation of the body to a factory cannot be divorced from the context of industrial progress and labour movements, the mapping of the human genome cannot be understood outside the context of exploration, trade, ethnography or anthropology, botany, and territorial capture which surrounds the historical *scène* of cartography. The spatialization of the biological, hinted at earlier in our discussion of plant-platforms and a mouse-based world, is here placed within the context of expanding the knowledge of a territory, and molecular biology, in taking upon itself the task of mapping the human genome, speaks volumes about the potential enclosure of biopolitical territory.

The genome is a frontier, and the *thought* of frontiers brings with it a complex set of desires. To think of a frontier, with its open spaces, its limitless horizons, its seemingly unending source of the unknown but knowable, is at the same time to project the closing of this frontier, the re-formulation or reformation of what was 'already there', the occupation of 'space' held to be there for the taking, and the utilization of what has been 'found' as a resource. The history of the American West gives us a perfect image of this tendency, with its early settlers and their farms scratched out in the wilderness, the slaughter of the native people and the claiming of their land as if it had not been inhabited, and the gradual encroachment of 'civilization' through the railroad, mail, electricity etc. Similarly, the doctrine of *terra nullius* under which Australia was colonized, held that the land was empty before colonization because there were no white inhabitants, and the land was not used in any systematic way, as in agriculture, but was

used by hunter-gatherers (who were themselves invisible) (Hawthorne 176). Australia was a frontier in and of itself, but it was only able to be so through the notion of *terra nullius*, one of the powerful rhetorical technologies of colonialism. While frontiers are generally understood to involve the progress of ‘civilization’, open space that is soon to be filled, and the promise of knowledge, they require certain kinds of blindness or not-seeing, and whatever violence or repression this blindness requires for its maintenance.

The notion of biopolitical territory thus raises the question of biological property. How is property configured when it comes to the question of elements of the body as a body’s, or a person’s, property? Mackenzie situates his enquiry on the back of contemporary examinations of bodies and technologies in technoscience and biotechnology, and he does this because of “the increasingly direct biotechnological manipulation of what was held to be in some sense immutable – the limits of life and death – and inalienable – the propriety or ‘mineness’ of living bodies” (20). He later argues that genetic information, which many would consider “the most fundamental property of the body”, can only be considered thus through the technical mediation of biotechnology and bioinformatics. That is, “DNA’s status as *information*, and its status as a ‘fundamental property of the body’, comes to light only through the reading, copying, comparing and sorting of genetic sequences carried out by a host of technical mediations currently circulating through computer databases” (*Transductions* 187). Property is caught in a double bind; DNA information, as *a* property of the body in the way that strength is a property of steel, is surely inalienable. This is the body’s make-up. Yet it comes to be so only through a system of knowledge and a technical apparatus, which in turn opens up this property of

the body to become property, in the sense of something owned, something to be traded, capitalized upon, commodified. We can understand this process as a materialization, or corporealization; biotechnology and genomic databases provide a structure through which certain versions of the human can be constituted.

Of note, then, is the question of ‘propriety’; what is proper to the body, what is the body’s property, and what is the body proper? How can it be that what was *thought to be* inalienable, a property of the body, has become, ironically, alienated and has thus become property in the sense of the alienated commodity? In our discussions of Plato and Rousseau, we have already signalled a certain complication regarding the status of property, the ease with which what is proper to a body or a *who* becomes property, an alienable commodity, a *what*. In Rousseau in particular, it was through writing that this translation of the *who* into the *what* occurred. Although Mackenzie does not elaborate on this question of the propriety of the body in biotechnological practices, nor does he call attention to the equivocality of propriety and property in this scenario, it is clearly at the core of any enquiry into the imbrication of bodies and machines (perhaps the bodies were moving too fast for him?). Biotechnology is a realm in which divisions between biological or bodily property, and intellectual or informational property, are frequently eroded, and this erosion is granted by the increasingly complex system of intellectual property rights, trademarks and patents; elements of the writing machine, bearer of a performative power. Donna Haraway calls the results of this erosion “the property form of existence”, noting that for her two chimerical champions of the New World Order, OncoMouse™ and FemaleMan©, “to be commodity is to be” (120).

Let us recite a well-known example that encapsulates many of these issues: In their account of the growing global trade in human body tissue, *Body Bazaar*, Lori Andrews and Dorothy Nelkin cite the case of John Moore, a Seattle businessman who, while undergoing treatment for hairy-cell leukaemia, had his spleen cell-line patented by doctors at the UCLA School of Medicine. Moore was not informed of this process until he discovered he was the ‘referent’ of patent number 4,438,032, upon which he had this to say: “My doctors are claiming that my humanity, my genetic essence, is their invention and their property. They view me as a mine from which to extract biological material. I was harvested” (Moore, in Andrews and Nelkin 1).

Moore’s case is interesting for a number of reasons, not least because of its Kafkaesque overtones. Firstly, we have one of the more contentious cases in which an element of the human body has been patented and thus considered ‘an invention’, a technological ‘element’ capable of entering into economic and legal exchange. Patents are used to protect ‘inventions’; in order to patent something, it must be proven that this thing has come about through some technological *process* that the applicant of the patent has put in place. Donna Haraway quotes the 1952 U.S. Patent Act as allowing “any new or useful art, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement [thereof]” to be patented (87). Thus patent 4,438,032, as a powerful instantiation of the writing machine of intellectual property, grants that the element of John Moore’s body that has been isolated by his UCLA doctors can be considered an invention, and thus a technological element that can be owned and traded. What was proper to John Moore, his

spleen cell-line, has, through a biotechnological process that *cannot be divorced* from the system of patent law that grants a certain status to the product of this process, been turned into property, and this property is not John Moore's; John Moore has been exappropriated.

Patents provide an important touchstone for the trope of the map. The modern use of the word 'patent' comes from the Latin *litterae patentes*, which refers to 'letters patent' or 'open letters', "official documents by which certain privileges, rights, ranks or titles were conferred by sovereign rulers" (Shiva 12). Vandana Shiva writes that *litterae patentes* were used in Europe from the sixth century, as the 'charters' given by European monarchs so that explorers could simultaneously discover *and* conquer the lands they found on behalf of the Crown (12). Letters patent, like the doctrine of *terra nullius*, were a vital part of the colonial machinery, for their purpose was to facilitate the conquest, and ownership, of territory. Like the Word of God which brings what it speaks of into being, letters patent provide a method of owning all that can be seen by the simple writing of words. By the written word, by the presence of a certain set of words together in a document, and by the signature of the monarch as binding authority, letters patent determined what was proper and what was property, and their open status allowed this determination an open jurisdiction.

Interestingly, we could also consider the patent as a *pharmakon*, both as a form of writing and as a poison/cure. On one hand, the patent as a written document grants that what was considered biological can also be considered technological; it is a written method of

‘having both ways’ whereby writing mediates the boundaries between biological and technological. On an other hand, the patent system itself is also a kind of ‘necessary evil’, being that it grants a monopoly on a product or process to the producer in the short term, in the name of encouraging a more widespread innovation in the long term.

Secondly, we must also understand patent 4,438,032, which grants technological status to what was hitherto considered biological, as an instance of the performative power of the writing machine. Performativity, according to J.L. Austin’s formulation, refers to utterances that put something into effect or perform a function in the very act of being uttered, thereby conferring on the speaker an absolute authority to *make it so* merely with their voice, like any god or arbiter of value. The marriage celebrant’s “I hereby pronounce you...” or the judge’s “I hereby sentence you...” are taken as prime examples of such utterances or ‘speech-acts’. As Judith Butler notes, “[i]mplicated in a network of authorization and punishment, performatives tend to include legal sentences, baptisms, inaugurations, declarations of ownership, statements which not only perform an action, but confer a binding power on the action performed” (225). Although it seems absurd, considering our earlier deconstruction of distinctions between speech and writing, to refer to the patent as an Austinian ‘speech-act’, we must nevertheless consider patent 4,438,032, and therefore the system of patents and intellectual property in general, as an ‘utterance’ that grants a certain kind of thing to *perform as* another kind of thing, to enter the market and be exchanged according to its granted status. This is another way of saying patents allow for something to *count* as something else.

This act of granting, of course, is less a singular ‘act’ or ‘utterance’ than a moment of quotation or citation. “Hence, the judge who authorizes and installs the situation he names invariably *cites* the law that he applies, and it is the power of this citation that gives the performative its binding or conferring power” (Butler 225). Performative speech acts, then, are more properly considered examples of the performative power of writing or the writing machine, being that they function according to the legacy inscribed in a system of citation and repetition. Performatives exhibit a complex mix of author-ity and *machinalité*; they ‘make it so’ according to the supposed will and intention of a single speaker/author, yet this will is also a function of the iterability and citationality - the already - inherent to all utterances and which grants the very possibility of the utterance. Like writing, performatives also continue to function after the utterance, externally and on their own, “in spite of their authors, and sometimes against their authors’ most precious intentions” (Butler 241).

Thirdly, the patenting of John Moore’s spleen-cell line indicates that we have a human body being treated as a ‘resource’, or in Heideggerian terms, as ‘standing reserve’. Moore states that he was treated as a ‘mine’, a naturally-occurring geological store-house from which, given the required governmental permissions, the raw materials for commodities can be extracted. He also says he was ‘harvested’, suggesting a more agricultural use of his body as field or ground for the preparation and harvesting of, again, raw materials for the production of commodities. This second statement recalls my earlier mention of the practice of ‘pharming’, utilizing the biological (most frequently animal, not necessarily human) body as a laboratory or factory in which to grow pharmaceutical or medical

materials. As Heidegger points out in “The Question Concerning Technology”, this process whereby human beings identify elements of the natural or biological world as standing reserve is part of the overall process of the coming into being of technology. Here, we witness a process whereby human beings, the UCLA doctors, identify elements of the *human* body as standing reserve, which instantiates the coming into being of a *biotechnological* entity. It is no longer the case that the human is considered standing reserve as a function of its potential labour-power; rather, the human body is considered standing reserve in its biological particularity, and the only labour involved is that automatic and autonomic labour of the heart, which is not necessarily a labour of love.

Finally, Moore’s case is interesting because it reminds us to take note of recent developments in the trade in the human body and in biological tissue, as the title of Andrews and Nelkin’s book, *Body Bazaar*, suggests. Playing on Fredric Jameson’s formulation of ‘late modern capitalism’, Nancy Scheper-Hughes has coined an interesting term for recent developments in this trade: “late modern cannibalism” (1). Scheper-Hughes’ term nicely encapsulates the logic of this trade, indicating a circularity whereby human beings commodify aspects of humanity in order to transplant those aspects into other human beings; the who is reconstituted through the what as *biocapital*. Obviously, in its raw form this trade is an ancient one; ‘body-snatching’ has been going on for centuries, and the ‘world’s oldest profession’ also has a fundamental investment in certain properties of the human body. Nevertheless, what we witness today is an increasingly articulated approach to the commodification of the body, and we are reminded that this goes on in a number of markets and under a number of legal or illegal

rubrics. In the same breath that we talk of the patenting and commodification of John Moore's spleen-cell line, we can also talk of the international trade in bodily organs – livers, kidneys, eyes, whether given willingly by donors living or deceased, reluctantly by the poor or in-debt, or unwillingly and unwittingly by those whose organs are harvested during surgery or taken by force. Technoscience and medical science play a powerful mediating role in these negotiations of bodily propriety and property, granting ever greater possibilities for the commodification of particulate biological matter. In this context, we could also talk of the theft of human identity. In a society in which the identity of a human being can be held to reside on one hand in genetic information, and on an other hand in the information in computerized databases in banks, the tax office, government departments, corporate customer records and email mailing lists, and (again) on yet another hand, in the hand itself, in fingerprints, retina-scans, facial features etc, the particulate approach to bioterritory cum biocapital is translated into identity theft. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the US, and the fastest growing category of Federal Trade Commission complaints (Federal Trade Commission). It is a testament not merely to the expansive, innovative and schizophrenic logic of capital, but also to the far-reaching implications of an informatic cultural and technical infrastructure, where we are far more often constituted as street addresses, birthdates, bank account details, drivers licences and tax file numbers than as physical bodies.

Similarly, 'biopiracy', the term given to "the use of intellectual property systems to legitimize the exclusive ownership and control over biological resources and biological products and processes that have been used over centuries in non-industrialized

countries”, is another important touchstone here, reimplicating the writing machine of patent and intellectual property law in the trade, lawful or unlawful, ethical or unethical, in biological tissue (Shiva 49). Biopiracy is allied with what is known as ‘bioprospecting’, the practice of biotechnology companies trawling the world’s biosphere for useful biological elements which can be isolated, experimented upon and evaluated for their potential value in scientific, medical or cosmetic fields. Obviously, this can also be classed as research, just as ‘biopiracy’ refers, albeit pejoratively, to an increasingly legitimate *because legitimized* business practice. In essence, bioprospecting is a necessary part of the research process for organizations in public and private sectors, and much public good comes from such research. It is also a practice that has gone on for hundreds of years, so is not in any way ‘new’ or solely a function of a new technology. Cary Fowler’s brief history of the British network of botanical gardens in *Unnatural Selection* demonstrates how systematic plant collection, classification and breeding grew alongside medical schools in the 16th century, and was ‘powered’ by European exploration missions (6). Botanists accompanied explorers and cartographers in their ‘mapping’ of previously unknown regions, contributing to the science of the day, as much as the map-makers contributed to geographical knowledge. However, as we have discussed, the cartographic exercise was geopolitical, frequently aligned with the Colonial expansion of territory and Empire, and botanical science was an absolutely key element in the expansion of Colonial power because it provided the schematics and reasoning for trade. Despite a pejorative slant, the terms *biopiracy* and *bioprospecting* both indicate an economic and territorial bias in the scientific and business practices lumped under such nomenclatures.

Evaluation of potential uses and ideal cultivation conditions for new plants led to the forging of trade routes and the exploitation of the native inhabitants of lands where either a valuable plant grew, or could be introduced and cultivated. *Biopolitics is geopolitics by other means*. The role of the Kew Gardens network in ending the Andean republics' monopoly on cinchona export is a case in point. Cinchona bark is used to produce quinine, one of the earliest known treatments for malaria; in the early 1800s it grew only in the Andes, in South America, and export of the tree or its seeds was illegal (Fowler 11). The British Empire, of course, maintained colonies in many areas affected by malaria, so had a large investment in potential cures for malaria, and in securing cheaper access to such cures. "Using a number of questionable and even illegal tactics, British collectors succeeded in returning to England with seeds and Wardian cases full of cinchona in 1860. The Treasury financed a special glasshouse for the raising of cinchona and within five years a million trees had been distributed" (Fowler 12). Seed and tree stock was distributed through the Kew network, hybridized and cultivated, and plantations were established in a number of colonies, most notably India and Ceylon. Within 30 years, Ceylon was producing 13 million pounds of cinchona bark a year and Andean exports had fallen seventy-five percent (Fowler 12). Scientific and medical uses for cinchona were strongly inflected by issues of Empire-maintenance and territorial expansion, as well as possible avenues for trade. While it seems slightly incongruous to term this biopiracy and bioprospecting, being that it was part of the normal operations of what was understood to be Empire in the 19th century, and being that it was organic plant matter rather than biological elements that were stolen, cultivated and traded, the maintenance of these terms is important because of the way they inflect what goes on in

the name of biotechnology, innovation and research, with the question, and questionability, of property.

In summation, Moore's case is interesting because it gives us insight into a framework in which the body is treated as, firstly, undifferentiated matter or information in an iterative, negotiated process of stabilization, and secondly, commodifiable because it is information; through biotechnology and intellectual property law, propriety is up for grabs in the fecund *scène* of late modern cannibalism. What *counts* as human, and what *counts* as technological, what is proper to these things and what is their property, materializes in a space that is both public and private, open and regulated, personal and inter-personal. The process of coming to count is an iterative one, cyclical and repetitious, and it is powered by things like IP and patent laws, bioinformatic genomic databases, and rhetorical tropes. To answer the questions we began this section with; although there are many other examples we could have chosen, Moore's case serves as a textbook illustration of the way in which these various aspects of the writing machine – bioinformatics, patent law, the rhetoric and tropes of the biotechnology industry - are *performative* in the constitution of what the human is in particular, and what life is in general.

Modest Witnesses: Kafka, Foucault and the Juridical Apparatus

The instrumentality or performativity of the writing machine is, I think, what Haraway implies when she talks of the 'material-semiotic' dimension of technoscience. Haraway

asks us to understand technoscience as designating “dense nodes of human and nonhuman actors that are brought into alliance by the material, social, and semiotic technologies through which what will count as nature and as matters of fact get constituted for – and by – millions of people” (50). As in Butler’s understanding of matter as the ongoing process of materialization, technoscience, and its understanding of life, has a semiotic or discursive dimension that cannot be divorced from its material dimension, just as the human cannot be divorced from the nonhuman. Technoscience is a way of writing just as it is a way of analysing, and producing. Interestingly, according to Haraway, this material-semiotic dimension of technoscience through which the modern understanding of life is constituted, has its roots in a complex system of ‘witnessing’ and ‘laboratory inscription practices’ (Haraway 120). The title of Haraway’s book, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan©_ Meets_ OncoMouse™*, is due testament to the importance of the witness to Haraway’s thought. Witnessing, part of the ‘inscription practices’ of the laboratory, and a “powerful writing technology”, testifies to the semiotic dimension of technoscience (Haraway 26).

Given that in the previous chapter we spoke of a certain juridical apparatus that both puts writing on trial and yet is already enveloped by the scene of writing, what does it mean to say that technoscience is rooted in a system of witnessing, of testifying to the truth of some evidence, as if in some court of law or trial? It is to imply that technoscience is constituted through some kind of visual means; technoscience and the ‘truth’ it produces is made up of certain kinds of ‘events’ that must be witnessed to be true. Technoscience is a spectacle. The technoscientific event is granted its status through the context in which

it is witnessed; ‘spectators’ of certain kinds must be present, and must be schooled in the *tekhnē* of witnessing, like any well-educated cinéphile. If these spectators are already schooled in the arts of witnessing correctly, however, the conditions for the technoscientific spectacle must always precede the spectacle itself. ‘Natural’ facts and ‘natural’ science may well be what is witnessed, but they will be witnessed according to a calculation or programme which has been pre-defined, suggesting that witnessing involves a combination of the *who* and the *what*. Witnessing will always come before itself, and the modesty of the witness may well, as we will discover, be false.

While there are no doubt many precedents for such a claim, Haraway locates one root of this witnessing of the inscription of laboratory science in the practices of the Royal Society and Robert Boyle in 17th century London. She takes the term ‘modest witness’ from Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, who in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, talk about the practices and politics of providing modest witness to Boyle’s experiments with the air-pump. Shapin and Schaffer understand Boyle’s air pump to operate on three levels, the material, the literary (or semiotic), and the social. The air-pump was “a *material technology* embedded in the construction and operation of the air-pump; a *literary technology* by means of which the phenomena produced by the pump were made known to those who were not direct witnesses; and a *social technology* that incorporated the conventions experimental philosophers should use in dealing with each other and considering knowledge-claims” (Shapin and Schaffer 25). As Haraway puts it, “[t]he three technologies, metonymically integrated into the air-pump itself, the neutral instrument, factored out human agency from the product” (25).

The scientific truth produced by the air-pump was a product not merely of the physical apparatus of the pump, but of the technologies of providing a ‘modest’ witness of the truth of the performance, and of the written report which served to disseminate this truth. Modesty, as Haraway explains, was the requirement of the witness that he (and Haraway emphasizes this ‘he’, analysing later the exclusion of women from the category of potential modest witnesses) was able to give a pure, unbiased, impersonal and ‘objective’ account of what he had witnessed. “And so he is endowed with remarkable power to establish the facts. He bears witness: he is objective; he guarantees the clarity and purity of objects” (Haraway 24). Selection into the ranks of the modest, however, was a less than objective process, excluding women, the artisans and engineers who constructed and tended the pump, and minorities. Despite claims not merely to objectivity but to a certain openness or public-ness of the laboratory, the laboratory, and therefore the space of witnessing, was a highly regulated sphere. “Boyle’s “open laboratory” and its offspring evolved as a most peculiar “public space”, with elaborate constraints on who legitimately occupied it” (Haraway 25). Simultaneously public and private, open and closed, Boyle’s laboratory was a complex site of the constitution of objectivity through its very opposite. Moreover, it was the constitution of ‘natural’ fact through a complex mix of invisible human agency and technical apparatus.

Haraway’s interest turns most sharply towards the conditions by which ‘modesty’ was constituted. It is modesty which piques most keenly her interest, being that it was constituted through a system of exclusions. The exclusions and blindnesses which modern technoscience functions upon are placed on the back of this rhetorical institution

of modesty. I want to concentrate more closely, however, on the other term in our key phrase. What does it mean to speak of *witnesses* to science's exposition of natural fact? For Haraway, witnesses provide a medium for objectivity. Legitimated by their modesty, witnesses constitute a mechanism through which objectivity can be assured in the constitution of scientific fact; they are an interesting mixture of human agency – the who – and technical necessity and automaticity – the what, at the same time that this human agency is subsumed by or made invisible by this aura of technical necessity. Moreover, the truth that is witnessed is disseminated in written form, in the form of the report. Like a witness statement, the written report is the primary mechanism through which the truth of what is witnessed is disseminated. Thus witnessing combines aspects of both who and what, human and technics, and is a function of what we have been calling the writing machine. In this section of the chapter, I want to spend some time fleshing out what that might mean for understandings of juridical 'truth'.

Witnessing is a rich cultural site. To begin with, it is grounded in a moment of sight, and thus spectacularity and spectatorship, as well as presence. From here on in, the implications of witnessing in terms of Derrida's interest in justice, presence, the event and the signature will only continue to mount up. We will try to do justice to these implications. On the face of it, to witness an event is to be there, at that time and place. It is to be present. But witnessing has a complex temporality. For example, witnessing the signing of a document is an attestation, through another signature, to the moment in which a signature is affixed to a document. It is to say, "I am here, I see you do it." But by the signature on the document, which calls into play the role of writing as a

mnemotechnic, it is also to say “I *was* here, I *saw* you do it”, and also, “I will have been here”; in the future, in future readings of this document, in future uses of this document in whatever context it comes into, it will be understood that I was here, even though I am no longer here, no longer present, and this document is all we have to go on. Witnessing, and the signature, thus function as a conjunction of virtual and actual realms; witnessing is a projection into some future time, and it undertakes this projection through writing.

The signature that is witnessed legitimates the document in terms of the authority of the signatory; as in the writing machine of patent law, the signature is a legitimation device. Yet to witness the signing of a document one must in turn sign the document. The signatures back each other up, referring to and legitimating each other *en abyme*. “You say I was here, I say you were here, if we can just get our stories straight we’ll be ok...” Witnessing is a kind of cross-referencing, it requires or at the very least presupposes some degree of corroboration. This corroboration that the signatures perform is only authenticated through the iterability of the signature, the ability of the signature to be recognized as such. The presence that the signatures attest to is a function of the absence implied by the iterability of the signature, the fact that signature-ness is always constituted elsewhere, previously, *already*. This argument has appeared a number of times in our discussions of Plato and Rousseau, and has resonance with Stiegler’s understanding of the already-there as epigenetic and epiphylogenetic.

Witnessing also has to do with something we could call ‘the event’. In terms of the document, it is the event of signing that the witness attests to. But all sorts of events can

be witnessed, and it is primarily in a court of law that the question of the witnessing of events becomes central. Indeed, we could even say that it is *only* in court, or within the bounds or strictures of some juridical environment, some environment which takes as its primary objective the upholding of the law and thus of justice, that one really *becomes* a witness, when one is retrospectively granted such a status, called to the dock to give testimony. Where the witnessing of a signature throws itself into the future, here, witnessing in fact always comes after itself, when one is constituted as a witness.

Witness is the term used in court to describe the person who saw something happen. “You *saw* something that night didn’t you; in your own words, please tell the court what you saw.” Witnesses and witnessing are constructions of what we might wish to call the juridical apparatus, they are determined in terms of the machinery of the law and of justice, they are interpellated by the questioning of the law; “what did you witness?” The witness has witnessed something, they have seen something happen, they saw something out of the corner of their eye or they watched as events unfolded, rapt or disinterested depending on the immediate significance or ‘event-ness’ of the events. They did not necessarily know, at the moment they became a witness *in potentia*, that that is what they had just become. Depending on the apparent significance of what happened, they may have had a *sense* that they had just ‘witnessed’ something. Alternatively, they may have simply continued with their normal train of perception. If, while walking home, I saw a man shoot another man, and an hour later I saw a kangaroo cross the road, when relating the day’s events I would be unlikely to say that I ‘witnessed’ a kangaroo crossing the road, and that I ‘saw’ a murder taking place; if *pressed*, I would be more likely to attest

that I witnessed a murder, and that I saw a kangaroo cross the road. In either case, both of these events would be simply things that happen, inconsequential until contextualized in terms of some forensic narrative, some explication of forensic *impressions*.

So, what is an event? Witnessing is the act of recalling things that happened; a signature, a murder, a kangaroo on the road. An event is 'what happened', singular, unique, spontaneous, gone in a moment. In *Without Alibi*, Derrida argues that this concept of the event can be called 'organic'. Events happen to someone, they involve, and indeed define and presuppose, the who.

[W]hat happens ought to keep, so we think, some nonprogrammable and therefore incalculable singularity... To respond to its name, the event ought above all to *happen* to someone, to some living being who is thus *affected* by it, consciously or unconsciously. No event without experience, without experience, conscious or unconscious, human or not, of what happens to the living... There is no thinking of the event, it seems, without some sensitivity, without an *aesthetic* affect and some presumption of living organicity. (72)

Without the who, the status of an event is uncertain. The prosaic paradox of the tree falling in the forest is testament to this questionability. Witnessing, however, gives significance to events, and it gives greater significance to certain events, and less to others. We could say that witnessing is reserved for events that have already happened, or have already been prescribed, which is how witnessing can be understood to always come

after itself. In order to say that the event I witnessed was a murder, I would have to know what a murder looks like, that it is a certain special kind or category of event. Ironically, in ascribing such significance to the event, I would testify to the ‘artificiality’ of the event, and in a way would negate the event-ness of the event at the same time that I testified to it. Niall Lucy writes:

Defined from within the metaphysics of presence ... events always appear as things in themselves, and not as things that have been made or produced. According to the metaphysical concept of event, every event happens outside of the text, outside of representation. In practice, though, certain normalizing procedures – of language, politics, the media, etc. – produce certain occurrences as events, and overlook the event-ness of others. (*A Derrida Dictionary* 33)

Lucy goes on to inflect this production of event-ness with juridical connotations: “To claim what happened there and then as an event, let alone to claim that it is happening still, would be precisely to be seen as *claiming* something, to be *making* a case, to be *producing* what happened” (33). Thus, it is only when pressed, within an environment in which as a witness I must be pressed in order for someone to make a case, and where my status as witness relies on my giving in to this pressure, that the event-ness of the events I witnessed can emerge. This would at the same time deny that these events were in fact events, as singular, unique happenings, because they would be inflected with the production of a case within a certain context, in relation to prior iterations of such events, and because, as Derrida indicates, “what happens ought to keep ... some

nonprogrammable and therefore incalculable singularity”. Rather, these events would be inflected with what Derrida calls, in *Without Alibi*, the machine; that which is destined “to reproduce impassively, imperceptibly, without organ or organicity, received commands”; that which “would obey or command a calculable program without affect or auto-affection, like an indifferent automaton. Its functioning, if not its production, would not need anyone” (72).

The truth of what the witness says is produced in the same way. Before speaking, witnesses are first asked to swear that they will tell the truth; they swear on the bible or on the constitution, but they swear in terms given by the law, and this swearing is a conjuration (as Derrida would argue, and as we will discover in the final chapter of this thesis), an incantation of the law and of truth, and an evocation or imagining of the spirit of the law or of truth. Unless proven otherwise, it is thus understood that the witness tells the truth, because the mechanism of the court, and of conjuring, states that this is so. While obviously it is still available to the witness to lie and to the judge or jury to disbelieve the witness, and this happens all the time and is therefore a fundamental element of the law and of the production of truth, what is said is said *in the name* of truth, in the name of an accurate recollection and representation of what was witnessed, which is, again, not necessarily the same as *what happened*. Further, while it is clear that witness statements, having been made, are then open to interpretation within the court, the ultimate aim and goal of the juridical process is to reach a verdict and a judgement which will, again, be made in the name of truth. Witnessing and judgement, and therefore justice, go hand in hand in a juridical framework.

As in Robert Boyle's laboratory, where modest witnessing produced a 'technical' objectivity (the appearance of 'natural' fact) through a human means, and it did this in a 'public' sphere that was in fact highly regulated, a private kind of public-ity, juridical witnessing opens up a number of paradoxes or aporias; the aporia of the event, and of justice. At the same time, witnessing provides a mechanism through which to purify these aporias, to deny that there is an aporia at the heart of the event, of justice, and of presence. Witnessing speaks of events that are not necessarily events. They are held to be events because defined in terms of the metaphysics of presence, but this definition inflects them with the repetition and automatic functioning of the machine, which is also a kind of absence. Witnessing is a rhetorical technology for producing the event, which at the same time obscures the (im)possibility of the event. Similarly, the juridical apparatus functions on an idea of justice which is, in some way, the opposite of justice. Niall Lucy highlights this paradox of legal justice: "[W]hile it may be one thing to attribute a kind of pragmatic finality to courtroom decisions, it is quite another to suppose that, in their finality, such decisions must be just" (*A Derrida Dictionary* 63). Justice is clearly the domain of the law and the court, there can be no question that such systems exist for such a purpose, however, there remains the question of whether a system of law, a system based on calculation according to a programme or set of rules that must be implemented, can be termed 'just'. Justice, like the event, is (im)possible, always awaited, and that is its purpose and function, and to that degree justice exceeds the jurisdiction of the law and the juridical apparatus. "Justice always keeps us waiting, in other words; it remains always to come" (Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary* 64). To foreclose therefore on justice, to

foreclose on the (im)possibility, which is more properly the virtuality of justice, to cut its process with a de-cision, is to introduce calculation into the carriage of justice. Similarly, to bear witness, to state that one witnessed an event within an apparatus that defines the terms of witnessing, is to introduce calculation, judgement and the machine into the event itself. In order to think witnessing, we must think the machine and the event together.

Obviously, despite a certain (im)possibility, witnesses still give evidence, and justice is still meted out, every day, around the world. Likewise, as Lucy points out, “there is no sense in which Derrida is calling on us to let the future happen willy-nilly, without any regard for injustices in the here and now” (*A Derrida Dictionary* 65). It is not the case that the (im)possibility of the event and of justice ushers in the kind of absolute relativism (which sounds kind of paradoxical in itself, I must admit) that deconstruction is often accused of. Rather what these aporias require is that all thinking of the event and of justice be thought alongside these aporias, in the name of the aporia rather than in the name of some transcendental or metaphysical truth, law or Word. Derrida states: “I will even venture to say that ethics, politics, and responsibility, *if there are any*, will only ever have begun with the experience and experiment of the aporia” (*The Other Heading* 41). This is, for Derrida, the point of justice, that it never allows for the abrogation of responsibility through the inculcation of a programme or calculation that forecloses on what is always yet to come.

Keeping this complex apparatus of witnessing in mind, this juridical apparatus that grants status to the witness and grants facticity to the artifactual event, there are two texts I wish

to discuss. Both of these texts come from eras different both to Boyle's 'modest witness' and to the bio-techno-logical thought of technoscience, but they are similarly concerned with some relation between technics, writing and the law, as well as with the necessity of witnessing the machinery of the law. There is also a performative dimension to the writing that each text invokes; in each case, writing is manifest in some kind of writing machine or technology of writing, and this writing performs a function in and of itself, simply by being written. The 'utterance' of writing, in each case, is performative in an Austinian sense, however, it is also performative in a theatrical, and technical, sense.

The first text I wish to discuss is Franz Kafka's short story "In the Penal Colony". Kafka was one of modernity's most concerned theorists of jurisprudence. Trained as a lawyer himself, he frequently highlighted the absurdities of the justice system, and the mythical status granted to justice and the law; *The Trial* is obviously his most extravagant meditation on these issues, with its overt concern with a 'guilt' which is all-pervading, undeniable and unassailable. "In the Penal Colony" is similarly concerned with the 'machinations' of the law, however, it takes a much more literal approach to these machinations.

Kafka's story centres on the efforts of a prison officer on a far-flung penal colony, to convince a visiting 'explorer' to aid him in re-popularising a method of punishment that has fallen out of favour with the new prison Commandant. This punishment consists in the use of a machine which kills the condemned by continuously tattooing the law that has been infringed onto the body of the condemned, up to the point of death: "Whatever

commandment the prisoner has disobeyed is written upon his body by the Harrow” (144). Death usually comes at the twelfth hour, with a ‘transfiguration’ at the sixth hour, when the condemned begins to read his sentence through his wounds. The machine consists of the ‘Bed’ onto which the condemned is strapped, the ‘Designer’, which is the mechanism programmed with the sentence to be written on the body, and the ‘Harrow’ which carries out the task of executing the Designer’s programme. When the explorer refuses to aid the officer in convincing the new Commandant of the value of this particular machine of punishment, the officer takes matters into his own hand and, after programming the machine to write the sentence ‘Be Just!’, commits suicide by putting himself under the Harrow.

There are a number of aspects to the justice the story depicts. Firstly, the accused is not informed of the sentence that has been passed upon him; this justice is automatic, presupposed, a foregone conclusion. He is not told what law he has broken, and, remarkably, he is not even told that he has broken any law, nor is he given any defence. On the question of why the accused has not been informed of the nature of his crime, the officer replies, “There would be no point in telling him. He’ll learn it on his body” (145). On the question of the lack of any defence or trial, the officer states: “This is how the matter stands. I have been appointed judge in this penal colony. Despite my youth. For I was the former Commandant’s assistant in all penal matters and know more about the apparatus than anyone. My guiding principle is this: Guilt is never to be doubted” (145). As in *The Trial*, where K’s guilt is as all-encompassing yet ineffable as the air, here, guilt is never to be doubted. This is clearly the opposite of the ‘natural justice’ dictum most

courts and juridical environments operate upon; that the accused will be informed of their crime, that their crime will be fairly investigated and judged, and that the accused will be considered innocent until proven guilty. Kafka's justice is clearly 'un-just', and in the terms outlined above, perhaps even 'un-natural'; despite a masochistic flirtation with the off-white secret of liberation through pain, this justice is cruel and excessive. But we could equally read it as turning an analytical mirror upon the justice system *as system*, that is, as a hyperbolic depiction of a systematized understanding of justice. The nightmare logic that grips Kafka's story is not, for all its chilling, machinic cruelty, illogical; in fact, it is profoundly logical, a manifestation of a pure, uncontaminated logic. A logic moreover, of another kind of justice: let the punishment fit the crime.

In a way, the existence of the machine presupposes guilt; the machine exists as that image of justice that needs no higher authority to announce and carry out its judgement. The officer states, as justification for his guiding principle regarding guilt, that as well as being the assistant of the former Commandant in penal matters, he "knew more about the machine than anyone". This is not merely to combine the roles of judge, jury and executioner in one figure, but it is to superimpose those roles on top of each other. The existence of the machine, its thingness, the authority with which it gives its verdict, and the strange kind of 'gift' that this verdict consists of, overrides any question of due process. Why bother telling the accused what he is accused of? When he reads it on his body he will understand. The punishment delivered by the machine is verdict, sentence, justice, Word of God and Law all at the same time, it is pure *technē-logos*, the pure machinery of the Word that *does* while it *speaks*, yet speaks by *writing*. As such, Kafka's

image of justice recalls our earlier discussion of Derrida's understanding of justice. Justice here is pure calculation, and the 'event' of the crime is entirely obscured by, and indeed encapsulated in, the machine of the punishment.

Justice is not merely a foregone conclusion because guilt is never to be questioned, but also because justice is already inscribed in the machine itself, and in the technical documentation on which it is based. The prison officer carries the former Commandant's original plans around with him at all times, they are the abstract and fetishized form of the machine and are the mandate and instruction for all it does: "I'm sorry, I can't let you handle them – they are my most prized possessions" (148). To the explorer, the documentation is meaningless, "a labyrinth of lines crossing and recrossing each other" (148), but to the prison officer it is the programme for all sentencing. When the explorer refuses to aid the officer, the officer refers again to his documentation, and adjusts the machine according to another prescribed sentence, this time, intended for himself. The sentence he chooses to give himself is "Be Just!" Ironically, however, rather than writing the sentence the machine begins to fall apart once activated, not writing anything, merely jabbing the officer until he dies, and the officer is denied the gift of 'transfiguration' at the sixth hour. The explorer looks in the face of the officer's body: "It was as it had been in life; no sign was visible of the promised redemption; what the others had found in the machine the officer had not found" (166). At this final moment, justice in its calculated form is denied the officer, and simultaneously revealed without its legitimizing cloak of transfiguration, nothing but cruelty, pain and the repetitious movement of a machine.

The 'gift' the verdict normally delivers, however, which makes the sentence incontrovertible, and which in some way *justifies* the whole enterprise, is the transfiguration that occurs at the sixth hour. This transfiguration is a public transfiguration, which brings us to the second important aspect of Kafka's image of justice; the spectacular nature of its machinery. The Harrow is made of glass, so that the progress of the sentence can be *watched*. Emphasis is laid on the fact that in the former Commandant's time, the use of the machine was a matter of great public excitement:

How different an execution was in the old days! A whole day before the ceremony the valley was packed with people; they all came only to look on...The machine was freshly cleaned and glittering, I got new spare parts for almost every execution. Before hundreds of spectators - all of them standing on tiptoe as far as the heights there - the condemned man was laid under the Harrow by the Commandant himself.

(153)

The stage of the execution that is most watched is the transfiguration that occurs at the sixth hour:

Well, and then came the sixth hour! It was impossible to grant all the requests to be allowed to watch it from nearby. The Commandant in his wisdom ordained that the children should have the preference; I, of course, because of my office had the privilege of always being at hand; often enough I would be squatting there with a small child in either arm. How we all absorbed the look of transfiguration on the

face of the sufferer, how we bathed our cheeks in the radiance of that justice, achieved at last and fading so quickly! (154)

It is at the sixth hour that the condemned man begins to 'read' the punishment wrought upon his body:

Enlightenment comes to the most dull witted. It begins around the eyes. From there it radiates. A moment that might tempt one to get under the Harrow oneself. Nothing more happens than that the man begins to understand the inscription, he purses his mouth as if he were listening. You have seen how difficult it is to decipher the script with one's eyes; but our man deciphers it with his wounds (150).

On one hand, we can understand this scene of punishment, machinery and spectacularity in the context of histories of public execution, torture and display. Public hangings, the stocks, the guillotine, the chain gang; all have relied on a structure of visibility, of spectacularity, and on a marking of the body as the literalization or concentration of this spectacularity, for their effect. There is a writing, and reading, at the core of these practices. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* makes this point many times: "torture forms part of a ritual. It is an element in the liturgy of punishment and meets two demands. It must mark the victim...And, from the point of view of the law that imposes it, public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph" (34).

On an other hand, we can understand this scene as a performance, and as performative. The body must be marked, and must be seen to be marked. There is no point in this punishment if it cannot be seen and read by both the accused and the onlookers, all of whom are *witnesses* to the event of this justice, this artifactual *performance machinale*. Kafka is explicit regarding the theatrical nature of the punishment:

When the man lies down on the Bed and it begins to vibrate, the Harrow is lowered onto his body. It regulates itself automatically so that the needles barely touch his skin; once contact is made the steel ribbon stiffens immediately into a rigid band. *And then the performance begins.* (147, my italics)

The spectacle of punishment must be witnessed; its efficacy must be witnessed and can only be testified to by those constituted as witnesses. Moreover, in this entire juridical process it is only during punishment that there *are* such things as witnesses. Because guilt is never to be doubted, there is no reason for witnesses to testify on behalf of the accused, and no event prior to the sentence to be witnessed; rather, witnesses are used to testify to the truth of the crime and the punishment at the same time. Witnessing, as a vital element of justice, as a contributor to the temporal *carriage* of justice, is here constituted as part of judgement, entirely subsumed in the spectacle of justice, in the event-machine of justice, an event of considerable significance. The machine is a literalization of the 'machinery of justice', for it acts as both the symbolic and active representative of the law. As a symbolic representative of the law, the machine hyperbolically reflects the way in which writing has always performed a central and active role in the technologies of

State or monarchical governance, and we have already examined the role of writing in the territorial and capital expansion of Colonial power. Here, the crowd gathers to see what will be written, to see the body-made-text, the *word made flesh*. The machine *performs* the law at the same time as it *cites* the law. In its repetitious inscription of the sentence; in its calculated, programmed nature; and in its spectacularity, the machine literalizes the law as citationality, as iterability, and as performativity.

I would now like to discuss another form of writing machine, very different in manifestation, purpose and derivation to Kafka's, yet bearing similarities to it in that in both cases, the writing machine implies both spectacularity, judgement, confession and redemption.

In the essay "Technologies of the Self", in the book of the same name, Foucault examines, firstly, the role and permutations of the incitement to 'know thyself' in the Greco-Roman society of the second century, and secondly, the monastic principles of the fourth and fifth century Christianity of the Roman empire. The guiding principles of both regimes serve to construct models of the self which are then adhered to as closely as possible. Such model selves abound in his discussion; the incitement to take care of oneself asks that one become "the doctor of oneself" (Foucault, *Technologies* 31). Knowledge of oneself and the examination of conscience requires that one become a judge, or administrator of oneself. Confession and judgement are at the core of the technologies of the self. And in the work of Cassian, Foucault finds three models for selfhood. Firstly, one must be like a miller, sorting bad grain/thoughts from good

grain/thoughts. Secondly, one must be like a military officer, ordering bad soldiers one way, good soldiers another. Thirdly, one must be like a money changer, examining each coin for quality and purity of metal, good or bad condition, fitness for future use, etc. (46-47).

Foucault asks that we consider such structures of person-ality as technologies, or more accurately, as techniques, for what is required is the taking-on or 'modelling' of an ideology which enables the 'proper functioning' of selfhood. Such techniques are *programmes* for the governance of the self; like Kafka's justice, with its documents, technical diagrams, and programmable machine, Foucault's 'technologies of the self' are machinic or technological, they exist as calculations, as schematics. He prefaces his discussion by outlining the four models of technology as he understands them: 1) technologies of production; 2) technologies of sign systems; 3) technologies of power; 4) technologies of the self (18). Obviously, Foucault's discussion concentrates on the fourth option, but it is at the same time inflected by the other three. The technologies of the self are instrumental, they "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies" (18). This instrumentality of operations performed on the body echoes the instrumentality of technologies of production, which "permit us to produce, transform and manipulate things" (18). Technologies *affect* and *effect* both the *who* and the *what*. Similarly, these technologies of the self are based on a logic of reading and writing, of disclosure and marking, which suggests that they are also overseen by some sign system, some system of iteration and calculation which makes such reading and writing possible.

When discussing Christian monasticism and asceticism, Foucault introduces two technologies in particular. He talks first of *exomologesis* or “recognition of fact” as a technique of penitence. *Exomologesis* was the public recognition of a sinner’s status as a penitent. *Exomologesis* instituted a system of bearing witness against oneself, witnessing, or having witnessed, the spectacle of one’s self examination and renunciation. “Each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to try to know what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires, and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community and hence to bear public or private witness against oneself (40). Furthermore, this penitential status was asked for, it was a role which was taken on and which came with various strictures and interdictions: “There was fasting, and there were rules about clothing and prohibitions about sex. The individual was marked so he couldn’t live the same life as others. Even after his reconciliation, he suffered from a number of prohibitions; for example, he could not marry or become a priest” (41). What we must note is that the status of the penitent is not some internal, conscious state; it is not an examination of self of the order of the Greco-Roman incitements to self-knowledge. Rather, penitentiary status is manifest around a logic of *disclosure*, of the externalization and physical manifestation of a conscious state; the individual is ‘marked’, written on, physically changed from the time in which he or she takes on the status of the penitent. The writing machine of *exomologesis* must *show* itself, it must be *read* to fully function. “To *prove* suffering, to *show* shame, to *make visible* humility and *exhibit* modesty - these are the main features of punishment. Penitence in early Christianity is a way of life acted out at

all times by accepting the obligation to *disclose oneself*" (42, my italics). *Exomologesis*, then, is a method of writing or textualizing the self and the body, and, like Kafka's justice, it is explicitly formulated around a logic of spectacularity, of bringing-forth. "It is important to emphasize that this *exomologesis* is not verbal. It is symbolic, ritual, and theatrical" (43). *Exomologesis* is both performance and performative; it is a dramatic spectacle of penance, but this penance is effected through marking the body of the penitent. The *mark* of penance performs the task of *doing* penance.

As Foucault notes, there is a "paradox at the heart of *exomologesis*; it rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner" - it purifies through disclosure, it erases by writing (42). It is precisely the revelation of sin rather than its mere acknowledgment or a pledge to change one's ways, that is taken as the paradigm for this version of penance. Yet it is also a spectacle of renunciation, for it is the public recognition that the penitent is making a break with his or her past life and past self. Various models are given to explain such a revelation/renunciation; we have the medical model, in which one must show one's wounds in order to be cured, and we have a juridical model, in which one must confess one's faults in order to appease the judge; each of these models again foregrounds the importance of witnessing. Most importantly though, for it is the model which most effectively articulates a relation between the purifying and redemptive function of *exomologesis* and the envisioning of death, is the model of the martyr as the ideal against which to measure oneself.

The way the martyr faces death is the model for the penitent. For the relapsed to be reintegrated into the church, he must expose himself voluntarily to ritual martyrdom. Penance is an affect of change, of rupture with self, past, and world. It's a way to show that you are able to renounce life and self, to show that you can face and accept death (43).

Through the model of the martyr, the writing of the self that is *exomologesis* takes death as its symbolic object; the sinner must “kill” himself through ascetic macerations” (48). Yet this death is also a ‘cure’, a purification, and a guide, for it marks the way back into life.

The other Christian technology Foucault discusses is *exagoreusis*; unlike *exomologesis*, which was dramatic and thus required public witnessing, *exagoreusis* is verbal, and implies private confession. Foucault talks about *exagoreusis* in terms of obedience and contemplation. According to Foucault, obedience stems from the relationship of the monk to the master. “The monk must have the permission of his director to do anything, even die. Everything he does without permission is stealing. There is not a single moment when the monk can be autonomous. Even when he becomes a director himself, he must retain the spirit of obedience” (45). Obedience is not simply about doing one’s master’s bidding; it is about relinquishing control over oneself, relinquishing autonomy, in favour of the automaticity of acting according to an external will. Contemplation concerns “the obligation of the monk to turn his thoughts continuously to that point which is God and to make sure that his heart is pure enough to see God” (45). In each case, Foucault identifies

a 'scrutiny of conscience' or 'self-examination' at its core. It is this scrutiny of conscience which results in the three technologies attributed to Cassian, being like a miller in sorting the grain of one's thoughts, being like an officer who orders good thoughts/soldiers one way, bad thoughts/soldiers another, and being like a money changer, examining thoughts, like coins, for their weight, the quality of their metal, their derivation etc.

Foucault argues that, despite their differences, *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis* have one thing in common; both technologies require disclosure through renunciation. Paradoxically, technologies of the self require *renunciation* of the self. Given our overriding interest in witnessing and the juridical apparatus, however, we can understand other ways in which these two technologies are linked. The marking and public disclosure of *exomologesis* must be witnessed, it must constitute an ongoing event, and the event-ness of this event is programmed. Similarly, confession must also be witnessed, albeit privately, either by God ("as God is my witness") or by the master or confessor, and this too is programmed. In each case witnessing is the mechanism which gives the truth of renunciation.

What interests me about both Kafka's story and Foucault's accounting of the technologies of the self, is this interplay between writing, reading, witnessing, confessing, and judgement. Despite an overriding interest in punishment, the law and power, it is not the case that the texts necessarily share particular ideologies or intentions, and there is no explicit temporal or cultural contiguity that links the texts. I cannot superimpose Kafka

onto Foucault and I would not want to; I want to remain with the square peg and the round hole. In each case, however, these processes – reading, writing, witnessing - are mediated by technologies of various sorts, both abstract and mechanical. We can reverse that proposition; in each case, what a technology is, how it operates, is mediated by writing. And in the case of Foucault, as it has been throughout this chapter and the previous, who and what the human being is, the maintenance of the self, is mediated by this technical system of writing, this writing machine.

Ersatz but Edible: Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*.

For the final section of this chapter, and as something of a summation of many of the themes that have populated this chapter so far, I want to turn to the analysis of another text: Margaret Atwood's 2003 novel, *Oryx and Crake*. The analysis of this novel returns us to the informatic, biotechnological scenario with which we began this chapter. *Oryx and Crake* is a dystopic and satirical fable set in the aftermath of a biotechnological apocalypse. A plague of horrific proportions, disseminated as a 'Trojan horse' virus hidden in a panacea sex-pill, has liquefied most of the world's population, leaving the protagonist Snowman as 'the Last Man' wandering a landscape overrun by predatory phactory-pharmed GM hybrids and populated by a tribe of genetically engineered post-human noble savages.

Oryx and Crake turns on a number of myths or archetypes. With the depiction of cloned and genetically engineered life-forms comes the Frankensteinian myth of ex-utero

creation coupled with its Promethean twin of forbidden knowledge and technology 'out of control'. As a post-apocalyptic novel there is also the invocation of the figure of the 'Last Man' as survivor of the destruction and lone surveyor of all that is left, and the figuring of the apocalypse as a cleansing renewal making way for a 'millennial' reign of peace. These myths are, here, placed within two frameworks; the framework of a biotechnological revisiting of post-cold-war eschatology, and the framework of a linguistic and literary 'magic' performed by capitalist producers upon willing consumers, and by biotechnologists upon 'nature'. Within these frameworks, the 'Last Man' is a survivor on two counts; a sole survivor of the destruction, but also a sole representative of the 'human' as a species soon to be supplanted by genetically engineered post-human beings.

It's quite a scenario, and perhaps I have overdone my description, made it appear more fantastic or sensationalist than it is. But then again, *Oryx and Crake* is a text that mobilizes such a vast array of futurological speculations, and mythological and literary archetypes, that no hyperbole is too absurd to describe it. Further, it is a text in which the function and value of language, rhetorical and otherwise, is consistently foregrounded, hence my somewhat breathless précis of the scenario. Language and writing are linked to both the beginnings of life and the end of the human; they constitute the agar of the 'natural' environment (as in Stiegler's examination of hominization) and of the biotechnological laboratory.

Both the eschatological and the biotechnological framework ultimately pose the question of ‘the end of the human’. This question has, from various perspectives or with different nuances, hung over this thesis from the beginning. No enquiry that stems from the postulation of ‘cyborg’ identities or a real or theoretical ‘post-humanity’ can avoid the question of the *end* of the human. And yet at the same time such a phrase is impossible to read – it is an *abyme* for thought, an incoherency, an (im)possibility. How can we speak of the end of the human, when ‘we’ are still here? *Oryx and Crake* is a speculative fiction, a reflection on what it might mean to posit an end to the human within a biotechnological scenario. It places the human, as well as modernity and what is termed, often disingenuously, civilization, in jeopardy, not so much in *crisis* but certainly in *question*. It is an experiment in disappearance.

Before examining the two frameworks I have just mentioned, I would like to briefly map out the plot of the novel, and outline some of the discursive structures that sit behind it. The novel opens upon Snowman, living in a tree to avoid roaming packs of ‘wolvogs’ and other hybridized creatures. Both civilization and the environment have broken down, ‘humanity’ has been reduced to toxic corpses, and Snowman is left a scavenger, living off scrounged foodstuffs from abandoned trailer parks, and avoiding the boiling rays of an ozone-heavy sun. Snowman also appears to act as caretaker to a group of naked innocents called the Children of Crake. It slowly emerges that these ‘children’ are the biotechnological spawn of Crake’s massive R&D budget and the Paradise Project, and that the genetically altered world Snowman lives in also came about as part of that process.

The book then begins to tell the story, in flashback, of how all this came about. It follows Snowman (aka Jimmy) through his life in the ‘Compounds’, corporate hubs for the totalitarian biotech companies who breed, amongst other organic contraptions, ‘pigoons’ with extra kidneys for xeno-transplantation. Early in his life, Jimmy befriends Crake, a brilliant and somewhat diffident character whose intelligence and moral ambiguity propels him quickly towards a career in the Compounds. Crake later becomes the head of the top-secret Paradise Project housed in the RejoovenEsense Compound, and it is this project that leads to the wholesale breakdown of civilization and humanity that we witness at the opening of the book. The book alternates between flashbacks to this past, and the present, where Snowman undertakes a dangerous journey to the ‘scene of the crime’, the Compound where Crake’s experiment began. The novel closes with Snowman returning to his home to discover that he is no longer alone; a few rag-tag human survivors have made camp nearby, and he prepares to either greet them or kill them, his fellow remnants of a defunct race.

With evident rhetorical glee, Atwood populates this biotechnological nightmare with a number of satirical extrapolations from contemporary science and multinational capitalism. Biotechnology and pharmaceutical giants with names like HelthWyzer, OrganInc and RejoovenEsense market a range of designer drugs, happy-pills, and cosmetic-surgery make-over packages; HappiCuppa, AnooYoo, NooSkin, BlyssPluss. Designer babies are ordered from Infantade, Foetility and Perfectababe. Simulated foodstuffs and the product of biotechnologically altered animals abound; “ersatz but

edible” shrimp paste(272), ChickieNobs Nubbins, SoyOBoy burgers and sardines. Laboratory-spliced hyper-animals of all kinds roam freely; the snat, the pigoon, the rakunk, the wolvog. In all, the world depicted is a fully altered world, and a fully alterable world. This is a post-genomic world, a world in which genomic sequencing is something that has already been surpassed, that presents no barriers to science. At the same time, this ‘high science’ is echoed in a ‘low science’ that results in the aforementioned artificial foodstuffs. Hybridization, mutation and simulation are the primary orders of the day, and these logics are threaded through culture and science at all levels.

Atwood creates a world in which the brand is highly performative, and is central to the experience, and constitution, of life. Everything is branded, and everything is owned; the logo is the *logos*, Word of the capitalist God. Haraway’s New World Order Inc, with its postulation of “Man the brand”, “Nature™ and Culture™”, finds its fictional manifestation in the world Atwood creates (Haraway 74 & 112). The advertising slogans for Atwood’s speculative brands are absurd, kitsch, infantilized, surely too cheesy and obvious to work: “NooSkins for Olds” (55), “Blue Genes Day?...Try SnipNFix! Herediseases Removed...Heal Your Helix...Weenie weenie? Longfellow’s the Fellow!” (288). The brandnames are obviously cynical, over-the-top, they exhibit their dreamed-up-ness almost as a badge of authenticity, as if written according to the logic of ‘the bigger the lie, the easier to swallow’. They also echo their actual (or imagined) function in their names; ‘AnooYoo’ promises precisely that, a new you, through their endless range of self-help and self-improvement products; “pills to make you fatter, thinner,

hairier, balder, whiter, browner, blacker, yellower, sexier, and happier” (248). NooSkins makes the same promise – a new skin. Where contemporary pharmaceuticals tend to pack their brandnames with a pseudo-medical aura of scientificity and a hint of joy or freedom (Xanax, Viagra, Prozac, Claritin, Celebrex ⁷), Atwood’s brands strip off the scientific veneer and go straight for the consumer’s primary pulsion, the all-purpose medical lifestyle solution.

In depicting a world so starkly reducible to brands, slogans and technological panaceas, Atwood presents a ‘masquerade’ or ‘carnival’ of a logo-driven society, packaged as a pastiche of Marxist and Frankfurt-school-style critical theory. All that has been said about mass culture’s production of consumption and concurrent manufacture of lack, desire and product/solution; all that has been said about the false consciousness of commodity fetishism and a life lived according to the dictates of advertising media, is encapsulated in a product like NooSkins, which answers the dream of regained youth with the promise of an entirely new epidermis. No mere quick-fix surface-level laser treatment, NooSkins is marketed as the key to crossing a whole new threshold of epidermal regeneration. Atwood’s masquerade is manifest in the hyperbole of the product’s promise. A similar product, the BlyssPluss pill, is touted as an absolute panacea to all of life’s sexual ills. Of course, it is the vast scope of the BlyssPluss pill’s promise which makes it universally popular, and it is its universal popularity which makes it an ideal vehicle for Crake’s apocalyptic vision, as we shall discuss.

⁷ “Consider and compare the brand names of two drugs indicated for rheumatoid arthritis, Arthrotec and Enbrel. As a rheumatoid arthritis patient, which drug would inspire you with confidence, trust and a sense of hope for the future? Answers on a postcard” (Robins).

At the same time, the omnipresence of the logo and the brand places life itself within the purview of the writing machine. Life, as something open to biotechnological tinkering, is always generated within the multinational capitalism of biotech firms, which operates according to the dualist logic of intellectual property and the market economy; the 'production' of life occurs within certain frameworks which are strictly regulated by various aspects of the writing machine. The who and the what, bio and techno, are structured *by* the logo.

Geopolitically, the world of the novel is divided into the producers and the consumers, the 'kings and dukes'(28) who oversee and control the process of production, and the seething masses of the general public. Vaguely reminiscent of a feudal monarchist state (I think of Prince Harry escaping the castle and slumming it with Falstaff and the whores), this world also invokes similar divisions in recent science fiction, such as the division between the 'Multis' and the 'Glops' in Marge Piercy's *He, She and It*. Atwood manifests this divide between rich and poor, haves and have-nots, in the splitting of urban environments into the 'Pleeblands' - places of filth, disease, poverty, bio-terror and chaos; and the 'Compounds' - walled, secure, tightly-controlled and policed districts of biotechnological and capitalist production.

The Pleeblands, once called 'cities', are characterized as places of unruly, of chaos, of a dangerous, cloying multiplicity and plurality: "Asymmetries, deformities: the faces here were a far cry from the regularity of the Compounds. There were even bad teeth" (288). Even images of artistic and self-expression are, here, made to appear as mutations, as if

the desire to express oneself is in some way a maladaptation. Indeed, mutation and pollution are the overriding factors of Pleebland life; manufactured bio-agents that liquefy their victims circulate freely; visitors from the Compounds are encouraged to inoculate themselves before entering, and to wear 'nose cones' to filter out microbes and particulate matter; sexuality in the Pleeblands is open, raw and licentious; prostitution and nudie bars abound.

There is the sense of a post-human bazaar economy, reminiscent of the street scenes in Ridley Scott's *BladeRunner* (1982); cosmopolitan, clamouring spaces rich with variety, fecundity, sexuality, intrigue and the fluid exchange of biocapital. "There was so much to see – so much being hawked, so much being offered" – "People come here from all over the world – they shop around. Gender, sexual orientation, height, colour of skin and eyes – it's all on order, it can all be done or redone" (288, 289). The Pleeblands represent the case of John Moore writ large. The isolation and free exchange of biological elements, their increasing particularization and thus commodification, has reached an apotheosis in this society. The Pleeblands are also both a testing ground or live-in-laboratory for biotechnological and pharmaceutical possibilities, and an index of the changing state, and status, of 'the human', given such great possibilities for modification across all strata of biological being; epidermic, psychic, genetic. In the same way that the factory, under 'pharming', moves inside the body, the laboratory, here, moves into the biosphere. The "experimental way of life" that Haraway situates at the root of the scientific laboratory, is 'liberated' in Atwood's text, and set to run on automatic in the world at large (Haraway

15). “The whole world is now one vast uncontrolled experiment...and the doctrine of unintended consequences is in full spate” (228).

Violence in the Pleeblands festers openly in the form of riots, protests and strikes directed against the Compounds, who control the means of production and the terms of consumption. Although the Pleeblands are key zones of consumption, they are also the open face of resistance to the manipulation of biological and economic life. The ‘gen-mod coffee wars’ involve global protests over the development of the HappiCuppa bean. In her characteristically brusque manner, Atwood condenses the complex and fraught economics of multinational agriculture, biotechnology and intellectual property rights into a few simple lines, while simultaneously presenting an implicit critique of the practices of multinational corporations such as Monsanto and Starbucks: “[T]he Happicuppa coffee bush was designed so that all of its beans would ripen simultaneously, and coffee could be grown on huge plantations and harvested with machines. This threw the small growers out of business and reduced both them and their labourers to starvation-level poverty” (179).

This Pleeblander violence also takes the form of ‘hot bioform’ attacks, in which rogue elements from the Pleeblands make forays into the Compounds to release bio-weapons of a range of gruesome varieties: “[T]here’d been an incident only a few weeks before they’d moved in – some fanatic, a woman, with a hostile bioform concealed in a hairspray bottle. Some vicious Ebola or Marburg splice, one of the fortified haemorrhagics” (53). These incursions by Pleebland bioforms are uniformly destructive,

usually liquidating their victims within hours: “The woman had been spraygunned at once and neutralized in a vat of bleach, and the poor guard had been whisked into HotBioForm and stuck in an isolation room, where he’d dissolved in a puddle of goo” (53).

The Compounds, on the other hand, are safe, controlled, biologically monitored and secure, and what they produce is done under the guise of an altruistic desire to better ‘human’ life. They represent the height of corporatized, technoscientific, biotechnological culture. ‘CorpSeCorps’ security personnel patrol the borders, interrogate visitors and investigate untoward occurrences and suspicious persons. There is a distinctive lack of criticism, or of a plurality of viewpoints; indeed, any dissenting voices that are heard in the novel are usually heard posthumously, as a suicide turns into a murder and rumours spread about what they knew and who knew that they knew. In a speculative fashion, this scenario is a manifestation of the 1990s scene in the United States that Donna Haraway describes in *Modest_Witness*:

[T]he spectrum of science policy discourse in the United States in the 1990s makes even mentioning such things [as democratic participation in technoscience or engaging in debates in education about science and technology] appear to be evidence of hopeless naïveté and nostalgia for a moment of critical, public, democratic science that never existed.(94)

The Compounds encapsulate corporate ‘yes’ culture in a spatial metaphor of bringing together into one place all those who have ‘opted in’, who have internalized the goals, truth and ethics of the company as their own, and excluding or expelling everything that is threatening to this homeostasis.

The distinction between Pleeblands and Compounds turns on the way in which biotechnological or manufactured agents and products are treated and represented. The ‘hostile’ bioforms of the Pleeblands are considered quite distinct from the ‘friendly’ bioforms of the Compounds; the pigeons, calmly and benevolently producing superfluous human kidneys in their bodies; the BlyssPluss pill and the NooSkin makeover, legitimate solutions to ‘medical’ problems. The Pleeblands are not ‘productive’ in the same way as the Compounds; they deal in revolt and disease, their ‘splices’ are for destruction, not saviour.

Interestingly, another distinction on which the difference between the Pleeblands and the Compounds turns, is that between ‘the arts’ and ‘science’, in which the arts are debased through their association with linguistic verbiage and ad copy, and the sciences are associated with the lofty aims of rearranging the ‘building blocks of life’ for capital gain. Jimmy and Crake attend very different universities; Crake’s university is venerably named the Watson Crick Institute after James Watson and Francis Crick, the molecular biologists famous for ‘discovering’ the structure of DNA. Jimmy attends the Martha Graham Academy, “named after some gory old dance goddess of the twentieth century who’d apparently mowed quite a swath in her day” (186). Although both universities are

protected to some degree from the surrounding cities, the ‘walls’ around Martha Graham are considerably more permeable than those of Watson Crick; most of Martha Graham’s students come from the Pleeblands, so don’t really need to be protected anyway. This divide between the arts and sciences is given further weight by the names of the courses studied in the respective universities. Jimmy, a student of ‘Problematics’, takes ‘Applied Rhetoric’, ‘Applied Semantics’, ‘Relativistics and Advanced Mischaracterization’. Watson Crick, on the other hand, specializes in a range of market-oriented courses in genetic engineering: ‘Botanical Transgenics’, ‘NeoGeologicals’, ‘Décor Botanicals’, ‘NeoAgriculturals’.

Of course, there is a satirical dimension to the manner in which the distinctions between Pleebland and Compound are drawn up, that renders them shaky. Despite an implicit valuing of scientific endeavour over marketing manipulation, the degree to which the product of scientific endeavour *relies* on marketing slogans and catchy brandnames to ‘perform’, suggests that the inside/outside dialectic which hovers behind the distinction between the Pleeblands and the Compounds, is already deconstructed. Recalling Haraway’s emphasis on the material-semiotic make-up of technoscience, science in Atwood’s text functions equally as a vehicle of rhetoric and fashion, and as a vehicle of scientific development. The ‘progress’ science represents is in fact an imagined, fantasized progress, a lifestyle option disguised as a step forward. Despite an appearance of scientificity, the research conducted in the Compounds, and the products shipped from them, is fundamentally consumer-oriented. The litany of products produced at AnewYoo – “pills to make you fatter, thinner, hairier, balder, whiter, browner, blacker, yellower,

sexier, and happier” (248) - suggest an inexorable and cyclical logic of product diversification and market differentiation. The Compounds need the Pleeblands, and science needs the market.

Crake, as one of the Compounds’ most prized researchers, encapsulates this dual logic, which is also the logic of the *pharmakon*. The BlyssPluss pill he developed provides the simplest manifestation of this logic. As Crake explains to Jimmy, BlyssPluss is to be marketed on three characteristics; it will “protect the user against all known sexually transmitted diseases”, “provide an unlimited supply of libido and sexual prowess”, and prolong youth (294). It is an all-purpose sexual cure-all. A final characteristic Crake describes, which is not to be made public, is that BlyssPluss would also sterilize the user, “thus automatically lowering the population level” (294). Crake reminds Jimmy of the populational problems the world is now facing: “As a species we’re in deep trouble, worse than anyone’s saying. They’re afraid to release the stats because people might just give up, but take it from me, we’re running out of space-time” (295). This characteristic too appears as a ‘cure’, although for a different ill. This pill, which of course ‘sells itself’, is at the same time designed with a different purpose in mind; the wholesale destruction of the human race. Having been marketed worldwide, when the virus in the pill activates the spectacle of a global pandemic emerges, as in any fantasy of global outbreak, complete with outbreak centres dotting world maps with red flashing lights. “Then the next one hit, and the next, the next, the next, rapid-fire. Taiwan, Bangkok, Saudi Arabia, Bombay, Paris, Berlin. The pleeblands west of Chicago. The maps on the monitor screens lit up, spackled with red as if someone had flicked a loaded paintbrush at them” (324).

Even *this* poison is, for Crake, a kind of cure. The sentences he makes with his fridge magnets, which through the novel provide an index of his current preoccupations, turn distinctly metaphysical and open-ended towards the end of the book: “To stay human is to break a limitation” – “I think, therefore” (301). Crake’s misanthropy – “We’re hormone robots anyway, only we’re faulty ones” (166) and his analysis of human frailty, the pettiness, addictions, emotional entanglements, violence and urges he reduces human beings to, is solved by the two-part move of destroying the current human race and introducing the ‘Children of Crake’ from the Paradise Project as the perfected ‘human’ inheritors of the world.

Crake’s association with the Grandmasters of Extinctathon echoes the dual status of the BlyssPluss pill. Extinctathon is an internet game, initially designed to test the player’s knowledge of extinct species. Later, as Crake continues playing, it becomes a centre for bio-activism. Other players, the Grandmasters, begin to disseminate hostile bioforms. “A tiny parasitic wasp had invaded several ChickieNobs installations, carrying a modified form of chicken pox...A miniature rodent containing elements of both porcupine and beaver had appeared in the northwest, creeping under the hoods of parked vehicles and devastating their fan belts and transmission systems” (216). Like Crake, the Grandmasters are Compound members seeking to adapt or destroy the system from the inside. Crake later recruits the Grandmasters to work on the Paradise Project and BlyssPluss. Their activist status co-opted by the Compounds, they aid in the manufacture of Crake’s apocalypse under the guise of an altruistic answer to global problems of overpopulation, environmental degradation and natural-resource exhaustion.

Crake is a kind of bioterrorist of the inside. He works within the system of the corporates, but maintains an unpredictable streak of calculating anarchy that allows him to be both inside and outside, poison and cure at the same time. Crake, who so perfectly manages to play the corporate game that he is given an almost unlimited R&D budget for his Paradise Project, ultimately wishes to rewrite all the rules of the human condition and begin again with Version Two of the Human. Behind air-locks and locked doors, in the secure heart of the Compound, and under the very noses of the RejoovenEsense top brass, Crake builds the future of the human, and prepares for the extinction of Version One and the end of the society that feeds and maintains both the Compounds and the Pleeblands.

Atwood's speculative fiction speaks directly to contemporary life, presenting a world that may not necessarily have 'happened', but which has certainly already been dreamt of, war-gamed, speculated upon, and which already exists in a less hyperbolic or carnivalesque fashion. The Pleeblands, despite their depiction as dens of absolute iniquity (which owes more to a discursive need to set up an easy polarization of urban spaces than any real sense of abjectivity), are nevertheless composed of most of the aspects of the everyday that constitute life in the West in the early years of the 21st century; cities as localities of great plurality and multiplicity, open (and closed) sexuality, hyper-consumption and capitalism; sex, drugs and personal expression; biotechnology and bioterrorism; protests against the movements of multinational corporations, G8 and WTO summits. The Internet in the novel, awash with pornography and fetishes of every imaginable kind, is not a great deal different from the current state of the Internet as of

this writing; the difference is simply that Atwood chooses to downplay the commercial aspects of the Internet in favour of the sexual and voyeuristic.

Likewise, as we have suggested, the Compounds are an elaboration on, and literalization of, the 'buy in' required of many workers in corporate culture. The Compounds also remind us that, more and more, this buy-in finds a physical manifestation in gated communities and custom-built towns. Disney's planned community "Celebration", Florida, is perhaps the cornerstone of this ethos. Celebration is a town built by Disney in the 1990s. Founded on a dream both mythological and technological, it was designed as "the model American town" and has its core values in a "commitment to community, education, health, technology, and a sense of place" (Disney "Press Room", "Community"). Moreover, it places family living, and indeed 'the family' as an ideological institution, within a corporate structure and ethos. "Corporate citizenship in CELEBRATION means joining one of the most promising new towns in America, designed to integrate the best ideas of the past with the best technology for the future, a place where companies put down roots and employees plant their family trees" (Disney "Welcome to Celebration").

In her naming of companies and brands, Atwood has gone not much further than current trends in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Already, companies with names like Genetic Savings and Clone, Transgenic Pets, and Prodigene populate the technoscape of the US and Europe. And, the fears that are currently expressed over what may happen if GM organisms are let loose into the biosphere, such as those outlined by

Jeremy Rifkin in *The Biotech Century* or Vandana Shiva in *Protect or Plunder*, are realized in Atwood's text in the 'errors' frequently encountered in either the development, or end-result, of various products: "Happicuppa coffee bean crops were menaced by a new bean weevil found to be resistant to all known pesticides...A microbe that ate the tar in asphalt had turned several interstate highways to sand" (216). Atwood's disaster scenarios, darkly comic as they are, have nevertheless already been predicted by many contemporary opponents of the biotechnology industry, and most likely by the industry's pundits as well.

The properties of the pills, medicines and drugs in the book are also not very far removed from contemporary 'medicine'. BlyssPluss appears as a combination of Viagra, Human Growth Hormone (HGH), and standard vaccinations, a catch-all panacea wonder drug, the encapsulation of current fantasies of the transcendence of human frailty. The fact that BlyssPluss is a Trojan horse, designed to deliver a deadly virus under the guise of sexual freedom, recalls the use of the Trojan horse concept in the design and delivery of computer viruses, whether delivered as hidden files in a downloaded software application, or as attachments to random email messages. Indeed, Jimmy's ironic litany of promises espoused by the AnooYoo pills resembles nothing more than a concatenation of the promises found in any survey of contemporary 'spam' marketing emails, and the questionability of the *promise*, here, is of prime importance.

Spam is an important referent, as its tone almost perfectly matches the overblown hyped-up promises of an achievable and perfected post-humanity evinced by the products in

Atwood's text. Spam messages are driven by a hyperbolic logic of breathless case-studies and amazing facts, underpinned by faith in the technoscientific panacea:

“We have been on the spray for just 3 weeks now, and besides the tremendous energy we both feel, my husband's allergies and spells of depression have lifted. I am healing extremely fast after an accident and have lost 7 lbs. without trying!”

“Pheros is a lovely fragrance with a touch of human pheromones, packaged in a exclusive crafted box. Pheros is a foolproof tool of seduction, the scent and the pheromones together make a foolproof combination. No one can resist the wearer of this mysterious fragrance! Pheros combines high tech science with the well-known function of the scent of a luxurious [sic] perfume.”⁸

Spam functions almost solely on the weight and value of the promise, that which is always yet-to-come, for what is bought and sold is never done so in terms of the here and now. Atwood's world is a world according to spam; a world of barrages of media messages raining down on a waiting populace; a world in which diseases, disorders and conditions that, like GlaxoSmithKline's Social Anxiety Disorder and Generalized

⁸ These quotes are taken from spam email marketing messages I received during 2002-2003. Spam is difficult to reference; in fact, the mere act of 'quoting' spam emails brings up a host of fascinating questions. In what sense, if any, can spam be said to have been published? Certainly it is not published by any reputable publisher, nor written by any reputable author; yet it was nevertheless distributed to potentially millions of 'readers', despite the fact that much spam is in fact written and distributed as an illegal, or certainly discouraged, form of communication. Does spam have any copyright? As a form of verbal and written communication, surely it must have some kind of inherent copyright which would reside with the 'author' – if the author had signed their work with an email address that worked, that is. Who would I contact if I wanted to obtain the right to republish the contents of a spam email? What right of control would exist with what author? Is spam, perhaps, another example of a writing machine, a vast decentralized semi-autonomous hybrid of networks, servers, relays, senders and receivers?

Anxiety Disorder, are created in one and the same movement as their ‘cures’ are ‘discovered’; a world in which biotechnology and medical science experiment with ‘the art of the possible’. Biotechnology presents a number of possibilities, a number of avenues down which science may wish to travel, and also a number of avenues down which biology may follow. These possibilities are expressed, in the book, through the simplicity of the act of splicing. But the book also presents biology *in potentia*, as a virtuality, a thing that is always coming-into-being, not-yet-here. It is not the case that the biotechnological promise presents us with *faits accomplis* – it is not that the products of biotechnological experimentation have all already been envisioned, laid out, planned, and just need to be ‘realized’. They are not ‘possible’ in that sense. Rather, biotechnological experimentation presents us with a virtual biology, an unpredictable virtual biology in the process of being actualized. The ‘human’, in this schema, is something that has simultaneously already been surpassed, and has also never been reached. ‘Humanity’ is always virtual, always coming into being, always up for grabs by or *promised to* whatever regime has the rhetorical power to grasp hold of it for however long, and the scientific/economic power to back up its truth claims. The human, in Atwood’s text, is both something on its way out, due to be replaced, an old model that has done its time, as well as a promise, something always yet to appear.

As a speculative fiction, then, Atwood’s text sits in a “not too distant future” that is yet alarmingly familiar; in fact, the only real threshold it sits beyond is the realization of the ‘building blocks of life’ theory popularized by early molecular biologists such as Watson and Crick. This too, is treated in Atwood’s brusque style, as if it is only a moment away,

or has already come and gone, and wasn't such a big deal anyway: "Once the proteonome had been fully analysed and interspecies gene and part-gene splicing were thoroughly underway, the Paradise Project or something like it had been only a matter of time" (303).

The fact that nothing in the book really comes as a surprise does not, however, lessen its impact nor its importance. Atwood's text foregrounds certain aspects of modernity through a strategy of mimesis, parody, and satire, and forces a second look at contemporary life, revealing the power-plays, marketing strategies and processes of mythography that are already at work in its construction and constant re-realization. Most importantly, she turns considerable satirical scrutiny on biotechnology and technoscience. In doing so, she exposes a deeper seam at which the material and the semiotic meet; the biotechnological manipulation of nature, technology and the human. Atwood dramatizes the ease with which such distinctions can be done away with, particularly, through rhetorical strategies that easily elide distinctions between the biological and the technological.

Alphabetic language is inherently recombinative; change a letter here and there, and you change a word, and a meaning. Combine two words, two separate semantic units, and you create a new semantic unit that takes connotations from both words to create a hybrid. Grammar – the technical system of *la langue* – provides us with the rules of this game. Atwood foregrounds this recombinative nature of language, and implicitly relates it to the highly recombinant science of the novel. The brandnames and hybrid animals she has

dreamt up are indicative of the performative function of biotechnological rhetoric, which we highlighted earlier in this chapter. There is a way in which language cleanly encapsulates all that science accomplishes, through the simple joining of words. Indeed, the word used in both Atwood's text and in many other writings on biotechnology to describe these hybridizations – splice – testifies to the apparent simplicity of this operation. Splicing, like the 'cut and paste' of most software applications, provides not merely a non-scientific metaphor for actual practices, but a model or program of possibility. The rakunk, the wolvog, the spoot/gider; they come into being at the moment that two simple nouns are merged, and they do so in the guise of a pseudo-science based, in the public estimation of it anyway, on the free transferability of generic genetic particles or matter, an open recombinative possibility. As a signifier, the spoot/gider's signified is not tardy, as it is the result of a simple rhetorical act of addition. 'Decoding' the spoot/gider is the work of a moment; indeed, a combinatory matrix codes everything that takes place in either language, science or the market, and it renders everything accomplishable *through* language, which is to say through writing, which itself echoes a similarly recombinative nature.

Making her reference explicit by having Crake attend the *Watson Crick* Institute, Atwood aims her critique at the 'building blocks of life' theories of the early molecular biologists, and by implication, at more recent biotechnological experiments. Crake is a biological determinist, believing also in a logical biology, a biologic of sense. Art, for instance, exists for a purely biological function: "The male frog, in mating season, makes as much noise as it can. The females are attracted to the male frog with the biggest, deepest

voice...So that's what art is, for the artist...An empty drainpipe. An amplifier. A stab at getting laid" (168). Everything is there for a reason, and nothing should be there for *no* reason. In his design for the Children of Crake, nothing extraneous is included, and all indeterminacy is removed.

Crake's world-view is thus of an infinitely malleable, editable world made up of discrete entities linked by cause and effect. As a graduate of the Watson Crick Institute he inherits Watson and Crick's reductionist 'Central Dogma'. His answer, for instance, to the problem of death is to re-interpret immortality as the absence of the fear of death; using a particularly literary metaphor, he suggests that you simply "edit out the fear" (303). His design for the Children of Crake is similarly additive or subtractive. The Children of Crake are vegetarian, eating mostly leaves, nuts and twigs. To get the maximum benefit from their diet, Crake designed them, like hares and rabbits, to recycle their own faeces two or three times a week. "[H]e'd stolen the specific idea from the *Leporidae*, the hares and rabbits, which depend on caecotrophs rather than on several stomachs like the ruminants...Caecotrophs were simply a part of alimentation and digestion, a way of making maximum use of the nutrients at hand" (159). Other convenient and biologically-determinist splices involve borrowing mating rituals from the baboons, and "the expandable chromosomes of the octopus" (164). Through Crake's reductionist science, and through the cut and paste naming strategies for the outcomes of biotechnological splicing, the writing machine of rhetoric is explicitly linked to the writing machine of technoscience and bioinformatics.

From a slightly different angle, there is an interesting conflation made between genetic diversity and linguistic diversity, or between race and language (Québecers will no doubt be familiar with such a concept). Part of the eschatology that informs the book is the idea that with the death of the human race comes the death of language. This is an idea that is not uncommon in post-apocalyptic texts, generally figured within a cold-war, nuclear scenario. For instance, Russel Hoban's novel *Ridley Walker* is written in a broken-down, post-apocalyptic pidgin English: "On my naming day when I come 12 I gone fornt spear and kilt a wyld boar he parbly ben the las wyld pig on the Bundel Downs any how there hadnt ben none for a long time befor him nor I aint looking to see none agen" (Hoban 1). After the end of civilization and the decimation of humanity through a nuclear war, survivors must rebuild not merely their technical infrastructure, but their linguistic, cultural and mythic infrastructure as well. Scavengers for food and technology, the survivors must be linguistic scavengers as well, constructing new myths out of the remnants of old ones. The language of the desert-children in *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) evinces the same mixture of pidgin-English and reworked cultural myth. Without going to the extremes of *Ridley Walker* or *Mad Max*, Atwood suffuses her book with the sense of a lament for language, for words, and for the creative endeavours conducted with words. At the opening of the book, Snowman sits in his tree, trying to remember the sources and meanings of phrases that pop into his head unbidden. "In view of the mitigating,' he says. He finds himself standing with his mouth open, trying to remember the rest of the sentence" (5). Throughout the book, there is a constant sense that language is slowly slipping away from him. He recites litanies of archaisms to himself, reminding himself that he is the final archive and repository of language and all

that this entails. “‘Hang on to the words,’ he tells himself. The odd words, the old words, the rare ones. *Valance. Norn. Serendipity. Pibroch. Lubricious.* When they’re gone out of his head, these words, they’ll be gone, everywhere, forever. As if they had never been” (68).

Similarly, born in a vacuum and bereft of the inheritance of human culture, the Children of Crake speak a simplified, stripped-down language. They constantly ask questions of Snowman because his language refers to things that are now long gone.

Toast is when you take a piece of bread – What is bread? Bread is when you take some flour – What is flour? We’ll skip that part, it’s too complicated. Bread is something you can eat, made from a ground-up plant and shaped like a stone. You cook it...Please, why do you cook it? Why don’t you just eat the plant? Never mind that part – Pay attention. You cook it, and then you cut it into slices, and you put a slice into a toaster, which is a metal box that heats up with electricity – What is electricity? Don’t worry about that. While the slice is in the toaster, you get out the butter – butter is a yellow grease, made from the mammary glands of – skip the butter. So, the toaster turns the slice of bread black on both sides with smoke coming out, and then this “toaster” shoots the slice up into the air, and it falls onto the floor... (98)

Snowman’s language, with which he explains his world and must explain the world also to the Children of Crake, is a storehouse, a mnemotechnic and archive, but what it preserves no longer exists. We are reminded again of Stiegler’s postulation of the

different kinds of memory. Language and technics, here, are both part of the human. The epigenetic function of language, and the epiphylogenetic function of technical elements, are both foregrounded through their destruction. In Stiegler's terms, without the epigenetic and epiphylogenetic function of language and technics, Atwood suggests that there is no human, only meaningless questions and meaningless answers. The human is always in flux, always becoming, always materializing, transducing, taking itself apart, putting itself back together, dis- and re- membering. Without memory, however, and without memory supports, there can be no re-membering.

This final point about the death of language turns us to the other framework this book situates itself within; biotechnological eschatology and the Last Man. The apocalypse has been a hot topic for a long time now; at least for the last two thousand years, and most likely much longer. Perhaps it was always a hot topic? Regardless of how hot and how long, it began to get hotter towards the end of the twentieth century. In the late 1990s, *fin de millennium* fever spread like a virus through cultural production, evidenced by movies such as *Volcano* (1997), *Armageddon* (1998), and *Strange Days* (1995). As the Y2K bug incorporated the technosphere into the preparations for the end, and more recently, as global terrorism has become a frightening reality, a palpable tenor of the apocalypse has settled on the world. Often tied to apocalyptic scenarios, the Last Man is a complex historical, literary and philosophical figure, an archetype interpreted quite differently through the ages; Mary Shelley, Byron, and Nietzsche have all meditated on the Last Man, each with quite different approaches.

Atwood's novel inherits the discourses of the apocalypse and of the Last Man, and places them in the what-if scenario of the moment. Hers is an apocalypse *of* the human as much as it is of the world, civilization etc. Not merely the end of the human as a population or race, but as a concept, and a set of biological and technical structures. It is the end of the human as constituted by a certain arrangement of DNA, and by the epigenetic and epiphylogenetic memory supports. Snowman/Jimmy is not merely the last man left standing, the sole survivor of the cleansing apocalypse – he is also the last Man, the last of the humans. We are presented throughout the novel with the possibility of the end of the human, and we have this ending systematically worked out through the disappearance or diminution of language, the destruction of the technological system, as well as the liquidation of most of the world's inhabitants. Through the entire book we live with this palpable sense of the end. Jimmy ekes out an existence scavenging amongst the remnants, trying vainly to remember the words that structure what for him constitutes human life, culture and creativity. Whenever he speaks with the Children of Crake, those meek, laboratory-born inheritors of the earth, he is reminded of all that is gone; his words make no sense, they break down in his mouth.

Of course, there are others; the novel ends in hope, garbled voices on the radio, a plume of smoke, another rag-tag band of travellers; the Last Man is not *the* last, but one of a band. We can re-build. Although the ending smacks somewhat of a banal dénouement included for the purpose of tying up the narrative on a slightly hopeful, if ambiguous note, we are reminded that the end may not necessarily be the end. The end of one

understanding of the human is the beginning of another; what counts as human will shift. Given time, even the Children of Crake may come to count as human.

Atwood's novel is not *science* fiction but *speculative* fiction; it is a reflection on the various states or statuses of human being, doing and ending. In her novel the human appears in many guises, and technology and writing play different roles in this performance. The human is something organic that has been destroyed by something pharmaceutical, it is physical, something susceptible to disease. The human is also an organization of biological particles that has had its day, supplanted by the biotechnological spawn of the laboratory. The human is a function of memory supports and the trace, of language and technical infrastructure; with the disappearance of these supports, the status of the human is threatened. On all these levels, Atwood's text charts an end to the human. Yet the human is also a promise, a virtual biology that exists as a function of scientific writing and capitalistic speculation. The human is something that has both come and gone and is always yet to arrive, its temporalization is heterogeneous.

As we stated earlier, the question of the 'end of the human' has hung over most of this thesis so far. We have suggested a number of things about the human. On one hand we have said that the human has never been purely 'human' because the human has always been technical as well. The human is biological but is not solely biological. On an other hand, we have suggested that the continuation of the human as a cultural category and as a linguistic formation has ensured that the 'human' is still alive and well, and will always be so. *Something* will always be *coded* human, will *count* as human. Various powers,

abstract, concrete, conscious, unconscious, individual, societal, material, and semiotic, oversee the human and its becomings. The human counts, and is counted. On yet another hand, on this hand that keeps appearing whenever we speak of the human, grafted onto our discourse by the very power of writing and technics, this hand that refuses binarity; on this third hand, we have suggested that the human has been refigured informatically, biotechnologically, as both information and a kind of writing, a technics. The human is not human because it is informatic, technical. This too is a counting; the human is *represented* informatically, it appears in databases, it is cut up, rearranged, bought and sold. The human exists to whatever degree the market requires it to, and it is given value accordingly. This is the Human™, the human inflected by the writing machine of intellectual property, Haraway's New World Order as Bio/Techno/Logo, the New *Word* Order. The human ends as it begins.

Part Two

Chapter 3: The Face

The FACE, but not the countenance, is a landscape, several landscapes. A photograph of Beckett at eighty. An entire land parched with drought, the flesh defied. And in the wrinkles, in the creases where the pupils flash with anger, a cheerful incredulity. So the mummy is still alive. Just. The network of cracks and furrows represents so many weak points; misery has entered them, infiltrated them and has been welcomed. Waiting for rain.

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*

We may have reached the *end* of the human, but we have not *finished* with the human, nor with technics, nor with writing. There must be a different way to do this; can we begin again? We have spoken of particles, cells and information, the beginnings of life as understood by the laboratory. And we have spoken of Bernard Stiegler's understanding of bio-technical 'hominization', the beginnings of the human. Both of these

understandings of the human have to do with depth or structure, they are delvings beneath the veneer of life into the guts, struts and workings of the organism. But we have also spoken of presence and appearing, of witnessing and the spectacle, visual aspects that have more to do with the play of surfaces than with depth. Let us begin again, then, with that aspect of the human that speaks to us most strongly, that stares back at us most keenly when in the midst of the play of surfaces we reflect on who and what we are: the face.

The face is one of the primary scenes in which the relation between the human and the technical is played out. All that happens in the world of biotechnology and nanotechnology, all the minutiae of recombinant DNA and genetic manipulation, is without doubt a highly prescient and contemporary arena in which to examine this relation, and we have dwelt, albeit briefly, in the laboratory of this possibility. For now, however, let us remain awhile at the level of pores and discuss what is on the surface, what is visible, what appears before us. The face is a vital element in the grand narratives of 'being' for contemporary Western culture, a culture obsessed by shiny clean surfaces, a culture enamoured of images of itself, a culture preoccupied with technological prostheses of many kinds.

Why talk specifically of the face, as an issue separate from the body? The various cosmetic surgery procedures undertaken on the body, from eyebrow lifts and lip enhancements to breast reductions, collagen breast implants, calf implants and liposuction, do indeed represent a powerful relation between the biological and the

technological. The same can be said of the many implant procedures and prostheses that dot the medical and reconstructive surgery landscape. All of these procedures could be used to invoke a certain ‘technicization’ of the body. As we will see, however, the face stands as a whole other semiotic category to the body, and its perceived relation to identity – personal identity, and human identity also - marks it out for special treatment. Faces are individual; each of our faces is different and it is generally by the face that we recognise each other, and tell each other apart. While ‘body doubles’ in the film industry introduce us to the notion of a certain interchangeability of the body, ‘facial doubles’ are far more rare, an area more associated with the now-you-see-me-now-you-don’t games of deposed Middle-Eastern dictators.

It is the face that *appears* first when the human is examined; it is the face that we peer into, that we search for and project signs on, that we treat as the document of any person who stands before us. We greet each other, as human beings, and we look into each other’s face. We read what is written there, and perhaps even what has been erased. Generally the other will have a face; sometimes it will be familiar, sometimes it will be unfamiliar, sometimes it will be difficult to look at, sometimes it will be obscured, sometimes our old codes won’t work and we’ll have to develop new ones. But we will try to see it, we will try to find in it the human being we greet. In the West at least, it will be, apart from the hands, often the only part of the body that is uncovered (Gilman xviii); the face will appear before the body, as a representative, an ambassador. It will be *on* the face that we will look for *signs* of the person standing before us. We may touch lips, cheeks,

foreheads or noses, our hands also may clasp, but all going well it will be our eyes that lock. Here we are, human to human, *tête-à-tête*, face to face.

Yet, simultaneously, the face is also a kind of P.R. exercise for clandestine technological becomings, for it is through an ever-complexifying system of technological and pharmacological ‘cures’ that the perfected, cosmetic, clear image of the human face is approached, reproached, re-approached. The face is everywhere in the media, on stage, on screen; it sits at the centre of a vast apparatus encompassing lights, cameras, action, mirrors, make-up artists and white-coated lab-technicians furtively grinding foetuses into expensive white paste. The face is the ‘display home’ for the future or *l’avenir* of the human, the imaging and imagination of which relies on many a technical apparatus. The face is the ‘appearance’ of the human, the visage, the seen, the screen; the face is where appearance starts, or takes hold. And as we all know, appearances can be deceiving.

There is an idea of the face which has been circulating in the English language for a long time, and many other languages no doubt; so many epithets and common phrases that have to do with some quality of the face, or some act that is face-like. The face just keeps on appearing, you can’t keep it down. About-face, run away, and you fly in the face of it. Approach it, and you face it. Try to go under it, and you fall flat on your face. Insult it, and you crack it. Lie to it, and you’re two-faced. The face is everywhere, and everything has a face; rock face, cliff face, clock face, face of the earth, changing face. In this chapter we will face up to the face. Although it will frequently flee from us, or we from it, we must try not to lose sight of it, or lose it altogether. Rather, we must approach it

head on, we must try to face facts. We must take it at face value, but must find out its market value all the same; we just never know when we will want to hand it in and choose another.

The face has also been a key concept in non-Western cultures for thousands of years. The Chinese concept of ‘losing face’, *diu lian*, embarrassment or shame, is built into Chinese culture and continues to play a pivotal role in how daily life is conducted (Lin 228). Here, the face is the figure of truth, of honesty and personhood. In standing tall without shame, you ‘face’ the world, turn your full face outwards. In becoming shamed, the ability to face the world directly is gone, and face is lost. The same concept was later exported to Japanese culture, and is now familiar in English also.

The face is something that we all have, yet this ‘having’ is far from simple. It is not simply a matter of having faces as we have, say, feet; most of us are born with feet and within a period of months we start to use them to walk. In this sense, yes, most of us are born with faces also; we have a thing that exists at the front of our heads, that is the home for a number of useful orifices. This face is attached to us physically, it is real and we use it daily. It is indeed very useful; depending on our given abilities, we breathe, we hear, we smell, we talk, we see. Yet we also ‘have’ faces in a number of other senses. We have faces as we have a car, or clothes; we ‘own’ or ‘possess’ our faces to some extent, they are possessions, they are our property, they are ours to play with and do what we will with, they are a certain kind of asset and have a certain kind of value. This face that we own is attached to us by the same kind of abstract permeable membrane with which we

are attached to our objects; if we are good individualized Westerners then we are attached to our objects through a subject/object self/other identification wherein we take these things with which we surround or clothe ourselves to be *ex*-pressions of some part of us, and we can often use them to *im*-press others. We are partial to partial-objects, and these objects 'say' something about us, they in turn have faces which have mouths, and they speak on our behalf, amongst themselves, again, as ambassadors, as representatives of our selves. They are not entirely 'us', but they *act as if* they were. Our faces, then, belong to us inasmuch as they represent us, inasmuch as they are *representations* of us.

This face that is had as cars or clothes is also an investment, it is something we invest in, it is purchased incrementally, over time, over our entire lives in fact. Perhaps it was an overstatement to say that we 'own' our faces; when do you actually own something if you are always paying it off? We should more accurately say that we have our faces on loan; they are *licensed* to us, and we treat them as an operating expense. Time, money, energy and a number of other exchangeable tangible intangibles can be spent on the face, and the face can accrue value and lose value according to these investitures. This value can be felt or experienced by us and the others around us. We find this value useful ourselves, in that we feel it inside ourselves, it can make us feel happy or sad or any number of sensations. However, it is often the case that we find this value useful ourselves only in terms dictated by the degree to which we relate our value to others. We find that it is often pleasing or profitable to parade the face in public, to check its equivalency, its relational value, and in so doing find its value to ourselves. In this sense,

then, this face that earlier we said was our 'possession', in fact 'possesses' us, and this owning is also a haunting, a frequentation, a visitation.

If we can own, or rather if we can be always approaching ownership of the face, we can thus also disown, or lose ownership of, the face. We have moments where we sense that our faces no longer belong to us, that they have been invested in by some other power, some hostile takeover has taken place and we no longer sit on the board of our face, it is chaired by some representative of the former competition who has brought with them their entire management hierarchy. Often, ownership of the face will in fact be the same thing as disownership. In investing in the face, it is possible to lose control of the face; investment is divestment; when the face 'goes public', new stakeholders and shareholders enter the scene, and we find that the terms of our license agreement have changed. The face is now possessed by an external power or force.

These stakeholders may come from all walks of life and non-life. They populate the spheres of media, stage and screen that I mentioned earlier, and they constitute the audience for each of these spheres. They span many industries and sectors; the cosmetics industry, the aesthetic surgery industry, the beauty industry, all of which could in fact be said to be sectors of a far-reaching and always mutating 'appearance industry'. The appearance industry has a strong investment in the face; in individual faces, and in the large-scale, cultural, floating ideal of the face, which is also a certain vision of 'humanity' that is forged through relations with technicity. Through this industry individual faces are injected, de-aged, lasered, purified, wiped-clean, remade, written,

erased and re-written; and through these processes, which are the processes of the writing machine, the cultural, ideal face of the 'human' is formed again and again. This idea of the human 'haunts' the face as it is lived, it is a ghost or spectre that returns time and again, *le revenant*, representing always that which has been before and the promise of that which will come again, *le revenu*, the return on investment.

Similarly, the stage and screen, which of course metonymically represent all that happens on, in front of, behind, and around these centres of specular/spectral power, have a powerful investment in the face, to the degree that we could even say that the face is 'conceived' within theatrical and cinematic structures. Or we could just as easily say that the theatre and the cinema are conceived within a facial structure. It's the chicken and the egg all over again, crossing the road to get to the other side, turning around, discovering another side to get to, and crossing again and again. The face and the screen have a kind of dual presupposition; the face is nothing without a surface to appear on, the screen is nothing without something to appear on it. The face and the screen are two of the greatest lovers of our time, entwined, co-dependent, floating freely above us, swooping down occasionally to ignite the passions of the multitudes, to consecrate the faces of dedicated followers. We *could* say that the face is like Christ, the Holy Ghost, that Christ is the first face, the *prima facie*, and that all individual faces are modelled according to the dictates set out by the Christ-face, by the messianic ideal as it is manifest in Christianity. Or we could state that the Christ-face is more properly an instance of something less specific and more speculative, some messianicity that co-opts Christianity yet seeds or supersedes it. Either way, it is fair to say that the face sits at the centre of some mechanism that

metes out codes for individual faces based on the model of an idealized meta-face. Further, a 'screen' and a 'stage' of various sorts are required for this process of 'projection' and *mise-en-scene* to be apprehended.

In this chapter and the next I intend to look at all of these facets of the face that I have so far so obliquely drifted past. We will lose the face, it will be fragmented, and we will find it again, we will piece it back together. I intend to run these chapters in a series of iterative loops; I shall digress, and I shall return. I will drift, I must admit, rather freely; I shall myself 'come again', *revenir*, like the Ghost of which we have spoken and will speak. I shall discuss a wide range of texts from advertising brochures to Shakespeare, all of which mobilize similar concerns. Ours is an interdisciplinary, *undisciplined* quest; there is method in our madness and madness in our method. This quest will pass through the staging of the face and its screening; we will stand by as the face is projected, put on, taken in; as it appears, and appears by not appearing. We will circle the face and examine its circulation, its commodification, its use and its exchange; the *ballet mécanique* of 'face value'.

Not to be Passed Up: Sander Gilman and the Body Beautiful

Sander Gilman's book, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*, provides a fascinating account of the history of the various medical and otherwise techniques employed in the name of reconstructing, repairing, rejuvenating, and beautifying the human face and body. His examination of the contexts such work is

conducted in, its public reception, and the discourses surrounding it, provides an excellent introduction to a discussion of the function of the face in culture, and its relation to various other formations such as technics and the human.

Gilman begins his account by setting up the ground for subsequent discussions; this 'ground', which will nevertheless soon fall away beneath us, happens to be the face.

Aesthetic surgery deals with the face first because (along with the hands) it is the part of the body that is "uncovered" in the West. We see the face, and the act of seeing the face is immediately loaded with multiple layers of meaning. The face is read "scientifically," Charles Darwin noted, as marking the boundary between civilization and barbarism: "As the face with us is chiefly admired for its beauty, so with savages it is the chief seat of mutilation." Darwin gave the face meaning within his system of representations. Such meanings shape the visualized body, and it is this spectral body that is central to the pursuit of aesthetic surgery. (Gilman xviii)

The face is the first thing that is 'seen' when we meet, and it is onto the face *as it is seen* that meanings are loaded. Although the racial and political orientation of Darwin's 'science' is clearly questionable, we nevertheless can see that the face is easily imbricated into multiple discourses, including that of science, and that this science is concerned with using the face to demarcate racial boundaries. This scientifically *seen* face, this face that appears on some map of what is scientifically knowable/visible, sits atop and is the representative of a 'spectral' body, a ghostly yet apparent, socially constructed body, and

it is this body which is the subject of aesthetic surgery. Gilman uses the word 'spectral' unproblematically; the context suggests that he uses it to refer to something that exists as an image, a visualized thing that exists within representations. However, let us note that spectrality is much more complex than Gilman would have us believe; Derrida's examination of the spectral in *Spectres of Marx* leaves us in no doubt of the complexity of this term. Gilman's spectre is visible; despite being made of ideas, it is seen 'at first-sight', and we will later have cause to examine this production of the 'at first-sight'. Look again; what of the spectre that is not visible? The spectre that is there *by not being there*? Spectrality, ghosts, spectres, and revenants; these shadowy forms will haunt the following chapters as they haunt Gilman's language, and as they haunt so many other texts which we will examine here. We will further our examination of the spectral, and thus of *Spectres of Marx*, in the next chapter; for now, let us note that the problematic of the face is fundamentally a spectral problematic, a problem of the vagaries of appearance, the technologies of appearance, and the promises of such technologies.

Although requiring of second-sight, Gilman's terminology is telling, and we shall return to many of his terms throughout this chapter and the next. Gilman opens Chapter One with a statement that undercuts all notions of solidity in terms of the ground of the face: "In a world in which we are judged by how we appear, the belief that we can change our appearance is liberating. We are what we seem to be and we seem to be what we are!" (3). We are *judged*; we are subject to some juridical apparatus of approval or disapproval, we are passed or failed, looked up, looked down. We are judged by how we *appear*, by our appearances, by some aspect of ourselves which is visible to or in the eyes of the

judge. The judge's eye in which we appear may as well be the 'scientific' gaze, or any one of a number of other gazes - the cinematic gaze, the gaze of the camera, and of the spectator - that bring with them a certain way of seeing, a certain way of seeing what is to be seen, and therefore of not seeing what is not to be seen, which is to say not seeing what has been somehow defined, intuited or cordoned off as *not to be seen*. It is not that that which is not seen is not there; it is simply that it is differently visible, it is not *apparent*. This too, this 'not seen', is also the spectral, it is the spectral face that the seen face has as its ghostly double, it is the spectre of Gilman's spectral.

Nevertheless, standing there, in the eyes of the judge, our spectres waiting in the wings, we have yet the power to change our appearance; perhaps we will need to leave the room to do it, go into a back room maybe, where a disgraced surgeon awaits, sharpening the knife of opportunity, like Humphrey Bogart in Delmer Daves' film *Dark Passage* (1947), hustled into the surgery at three in the morning to be given a new face, a non-criminal face, a face that is *seemly* in the eyes of the law, a face that will allow him to *pass* unnoticed into the crowd. Or perhaps it will only take ten minutes, a single injection, some society chatter and a glass of champagne. Either way, we will be liberated, the eye will no longer look so harshly upon us, the judging will be over. Finally, at last, we will be what we *seem*. The exact nature of this seeming, which is also to say the exact technology of this seeming, remains to be determined, and we shall return to this question in good time.

Another of Gilman's primary concerns is to examine the relation between 'aesthetic' surgery, and 'reconstructive' surgery. Gilman traces this dichotomy between aesthetic surgery – surgery performed for personal reasons, for 'inner' reasons, for the purposes of beautifying or improving one's appearance – and reconstructive surgery – surgery performed for reasons considered properly 'medical', to improve disfigurements, to cure ills – from its introduction in the Renaissance to contemporary times. Here, his concern is to emphasize the arbitrary nature of this dichotomy. The line between aesthetic and reconstructive is a blurry one, never fixed, always wandering according to the discourse of the day. It carries with it, and plants on both sides of this dichotomy, a mutable notion of 'happiness'. It is happiness that 'patients' of both reconstructive and aesthetic surgery are looking for; happiness with one's looks, with one's appearance; happiness that one can walk down a street and not be stared at; happiness that one's facial muscles work properly, that one can eat, smell, see. Happiness is further premised on the notion that "the external body (with whatever qualities are ascribed to it) reflects the values of the soul" (Gilman 23). That is, that one's external appearance is a reflection of one's 'internal' mental or spiritual state, or more accurately, that one's external appearance is both the appearance of the external body and the appearance of the 'internal' body; that 'appearance' is some representation of body and soul. Happiness, here, is an issue of happiness that one's appearance matches what one feels inside oneself, what one feels is one's true self. Ironically, of course, this 'soul', internal body or, dare we say it, 'true self', is immaterial. In true Cartesian style, it is a ghost in a machine, and like a ghost, it *is* by being *not*, by *not being*.

Gilman locates happiness historically within the Enlightenment notion that each individual could and should make or re-make themselves in the pursuit of happiness; this was what it meant to be an autonomous 'individual', and the notion of the 'citizen' was similarly based on such autonomy (18). Gilman also places an understanding of the 'human' within this definition (18); human beings change not only their environment but themselves, they adapt, adjust, imagine and become. They pursue notions of themselves that are placed in front of them, they project themselves forward then run to catch up. The Heideggerian *Dasein* is based on this principle also. Gilman qualifies this will to re-make, this makeover-fever, however, by noting that it was in public that this re-making took place. Making and re-making were 'spectacular' activities, they required an audience or spectator to be valid, and happiness was thus, to some degree at least, socially bound. Gilman quotes Richard Sennett, who gives a fascinating account of the duplicity of this Enlightenment notion of the self and its role in society.

At home, one's clothes suited one's body and its needs; on the street, one stepped into clothes whose purpose was to make it possible for other people to act as if they knew who you were. One became a figure in a contrived landscape; the purpose of the clothes was not to be sure of whom you were dealing with, but to be able to behave as if you were sure. (18)

The theatricality of this complex illusion of self-expression is clear. At home, in private, clothes have a use-value that is self-evident; in public, this use-value is superseded by an exchange-value which is premised on the clothes' ability to enable a performance. One

performance enables another; an appearance is put on in order to enable an 'as if' that in turn defines what 'is', yet what 'is' remains always in abeyance. Note how quickly the autonomy of self-expression reveals its flipside, which is the automaticity of the contrivance, the artificial, agreed-upon reality of a mechanized performance; we shall return to this autonomy/automaticity in our later discussion of the face as commodity. In terms of aesthetic surgery, Gilman articulates a similar contradiction between the autonomy to change oneself, and the reliance on a surgeon to effect this change. "[I]f claiming the right to change one's body is a claim of autonomy, relying on a surgeon to execute the change is a surrender of autonomy" (26). The 'human' ability to change oneself is premised on a number of 'technological' processes that rely on the surgeon as a gatekeeper of sorts; the surgeon, as wielder of the instruments of appearance, has within his/her power the distribution of human characteristics, and the acceptance or non-acceptance of the individual by society. 'Human' being, now, looks more like a program than a self-expression.

At the root of this programmed self-expression, this autonomy/automaticity, is the idea that one's appearance must be socially accepted in order for happiness and autonomy to be attained. Gilman gives this idea the name of "passing". Passing is a question of inclusion and exclusion, a binary operation by which individuals are deemed to either pass or not pass in terms of some ideal, socially constructed category of human being and appearing. Starting with the nose, Gilman discusses the aesthetic surgery techniques by which first sufferers of syphilis, and later German Jews, were enabled to pass (or given the illusion that they could pass) within the social category of their choice. "The patient

believes that there is a desirable category of being from which he or she is excluded because of reasons that are defined as physical. The results of this exclusion are symptoms of psychological ‘unhappiness’...The surgeon believes that with ever more innovative medical interventions, the patient can be enabled to ‘pass’” (22). Because social status or value is accorded to the members of certain categories, or to the privileged half of each binary opposition, passing is simultaneously an arbiter of social power. Given that it is the face that is seen first when people are apprehended, passing takes the face as its primary instance, with the nose, in Gilman’s theory anyway, leading the charge. The face is a crucial part of passing’s mechanism for social differentiation. Simultaneously natural and constructed, and often re-constructed, it is the slippery surface to which peoples’ appearances are attached. And yet, the face is also taken as the representative of a human *being*; Gilman states that the category into which a patient may wish to pass is a category of ‘being’, which is a function of the relation of the category to the physical. Being, here, is a function of both physicality and mutability; to be, to be human, is to ‘have’ one’s form, and change one’s form, at the same time.

Passing, then, is a social mechanism designed to sort people into categories, and these categories are taken as ‘natural’ in that they are related to being; “hairy/bald, fat/thin, large-breasted/small-breasted, large nose/small nose, male/female” (Gilman 23). It is in the terms of these categories that the appearances of people are judged, and it is through this process that one can ‘pass’ into the public sphere. Indeed, passing *enables* appearance, it is the mechanism of passing and its correlative construction of categories to pass in or out of that gives a face an appearance, that makes it seen, that makes it see-

able. Faces are not seen, and do not ‘function’, entirely on their own; they require social mechanisms, and frequently technological and/or medical alteration, in order to be seen, in order to appear *as if* they had been ‘human’ all along.

The Abstract Machine of Faciality

Gilman’s formulation of the social mechanism of ‘passing’ bears a strong resemblance to the theory of faciality advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in Chapter 7 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, “Year Zero: Faciality”. There, Deleuze & Guattari identify ‘passing’ as one of the component parts of the ‘abstract machine of faciality’, an examination of which will reveal new perspectives on our slowly-forming understanding of the face.

Deleuze & Guattari talk of the face, or rather the ‘abstract machine of faciality’, which is to say the system by which faces are *produced*, as a coalescence of the semiotic systems of signifiacance and subjectification. From the very beginning, the face is produced, it is engineered, it arises as a function of a number of semiotic and technical streams or powers; it is, in terms we have already discussed, materialized, or in-formed. It does not come into existence with the birth of a thing that becomes a human being, and yet it is already there to watch over the thing becoming human becoming an individual, a person. One is not born with a face; one becomes attached to one. The face guides or orients the development of the human like a satellite, like a moon.

Signifiante and subjectification form part of an ‘arborescent’ system wherein such things as identities, meanings and relationships of many sorts are mapped-out in a tree-like manner. Arborescence establishes a hierarchy in which a central trunk dictates the distribution of branchings/*branchements*;⁹ branches are above ground, roots are below, everything is in its place, everything happens in a series. “Arborescent systems are hierarchical systems with centers of signifiante and subjectification, central automata like organized memories. In the corresponding models, an element only receives information from a higher unit, and only receives a subjective affection along preestablished paths” (Deleuze & Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 16). The image, here, is an image of bureaucratic centralization, the “command tree” (16), State Power; ‘information’ flows up and down the tree along preestablished paths, and individuals exist within the structure as generators and relayers of information along these paths. Further, individuals perform tasks according to a pre-defined role-plan. Deleuze & Guattari quote Pierre Rosenstiehl and Jean Petitot: “The channels of transmission are preestablished; the arborescent system preexists the individual, who is integrated into it at an allotted place” (16).

Deleuze & Guattari place arborescence at the centre of structures of power and dominance; they see it as the dominant form of cultural and epistemological organization, both the organization of meaning, signifiante, and of individuals, subjectification. Arborescence is, from another perspective, State power, that power concerned with building and defending closed systems, with organizing and ‘striating’ open space, with capture and control. We could define signifiante as the process, act or moment of

⁹ Here we mean to speak simultaneously of branching-out, and plugging-in, from the French verb *brancher*, to plug in; whether we speak of branching out or plugging in, we are still operating within the *controlled* connectivity of the arborescent.

‘meaning’; it is the process whereby a sign comes to mean, and as such forms a communicable unit. Subjectification is the process whereby a subject, an individual, is constituted. The subject is thus a function of both language and culture in general, and indeed of any system of organising living beings. Subjects also function as the centres around which, or in terms of which, signification functions. Things ‘mean’ in relation to subjects who need meaning to remain intact, who in turn give things meaning. Further, both the meanings of things and the existences of subjects are oriented towards and by the arborescent, that is, the dominant, structuring power.

Signification relies on the face to channel or anchor meaning in communication; the face not only ‘inflects’ meaning, but gives it discourses or languages within which to signify. “The form of the signifier in language, even its units, would remain indeterminate if the potential listener did not use the face of the speaker to guide his or her choices...A child, woman, mother, man, father, boss, teacher, police officer, does not speak a general language but one whose signifying traits are indexed to specific faciality traits” (Deleuze & Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 168). The face organizes and distributes specific *faciality traits*, signification aspects that are proper to faces, and that are proper to *proper* faces. Subjectification also relies on the face to give form to different subjects, and different forms of subjectivity. Indeed, the face is a ‘sorting device’ for subjects, a focal point for the distribution of *type*. “[T]he form of subjectivity, whether consciousness or passion, would remain absolutely empty if faces did not form loci of resonance that select the sensed or mental reality and make it conform in advance to a dominant reality” (168). The face, then, sits at the centre of a number of large social and cultural systems of

organization; we can see it as a conduit for the processes through which 'people' come to be 'people', through which people come to be different from other people, through which people recognize people as (other) people, and through which people communicate, signify, and mean. Further, the face as conduit for social production *preexists* individual faces; it exists as a 'dominant reality' to which individual faces are made to conform, or differentiated from. As such a model, the face is both virtual and actual; it exists always as something that has not yet arrived, that is eternally 'to come', yet is also constantly arriving, manifesting, appearing.

Deleuze & Guattari further illustrate this scene by invoking the 'white wall/black hole' system. They use the figures of the white wall and black hole as metaphors for the space and surface in and upon which the processes of signification and signification are enacted. The white wall functions as a surface upon which signs can be written, and upon which signification can take place; the white wall receives, distributes and displays meaning. The black hole localizes consciousness and subjectivity, it provides identifiable centres in which subjectivities can coalesce. Deleuze & Guattari are quite explicit in the degree to which they describe signification as an inscription, a simple form of writing; the white wall appears as the surface upon which signification writes its signs, it is a surface waiting for meaning, a tabula rasa waiting for writing, waiting to be filled up with meaning. The black hole appears as the dark, open potential space of consciousness, it is the home or seat of the soul. There is also a dramatic or theatrical aspect, and further, a cinematic aspect, to this process that we must emphasize, and to which we will return; the 'narrative' aspect (signification) and the 'character' aspect (subjectification) appear upon

the face as upon a stage. Black holes dance across white walls, circus-entertainers and holy fools float before us: “A broad face with white cheeks, a chalk face with eyes cut in for a black hole. Clown head, white clown, moon-white mime, angel of death, Holy Shroud” (Deleuze & Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 167). The face appears within spectacular settings, it is made-up, inked-in, blanked out, Marcel-Marceau’d. It “vaguely begins to take shape *on* the white wall. It vaguely appears *in* the black hole” (*Thousand Plateaus* 168). The face is a screen, and appears on the screen, it is a *dual formation*, it projects and is projected, it is composed of white light and shadow. Without wishing to invoke too stringent a relation to Baudry as of yet, we could say that the face is a form of ‘proto-cinema’, a mode of being-image which presupposes a screen, a projecting apparatus and a spectator.

It is not the case, however, that the white wall/black hole system *is* a face, which is also to reiterate that the face does not come “ready-made”. Rather, the white wall/black hole system is an ‘abstract machine’ – the abstract machine of faciality – that *produces* faces and faciality traits, that *codes* faces, or rather, that overcodes faces, that produces faces as things that overcode, that signify absolutely. The white wall/black hole system organizes the face in such a way that the face organizes all that falls beneath it, within its gaze, it codes the body and distributes faciality traits as needs be, wherever and upon whatever. Deleuze & Guattari write about the facialization of a landscape, the way in which a landscape, be it in a painting, a photograph or film, or perhaps even a ‘real’ landscape, is understood according to a system of meaning that is facial. “All faces envelop an unknown, unexplored landscape; all landscapes are populated by a loved or dreamed-of

face, develop a face to come or already past” (*Thousand Plateaus* 173). The face and the landscape are countries to be explored, passages/*paysages* to walk through. Similarly, there is a facialization of use-objects, exemplified by the cinematic close-up. Deleuze & Guattari write of Griffith and Eisenstein, and their use of the close-up both of faces and of objects to direct action, signify relationships, foreground character traits. Béla Balázs makes a similar observation regarding the close-up, in *Theory of the Film*. “[The close-up] shows the speechless face and fate of the dumb objects that live with you in your room and whose fate is bound up with your own.” (261). Landscapes, clocks, kettles, all become drawn into this drama of faciality wherein the thing is said to be “watching me”, and in so doing constituting itself as a face that watches, and “me” as a face that is watched.

Most importantly, this abstract machine of faciality is constituted by a bipartite operation, two movements of binarization that, in Deleuze & Guattari’s schema, are intrinsically computational. The first relies on the construction of a series of oppositions that position the face within a system of “either/or”. This face (this collection of faciality traits) *or* that face, man *or* woman, on and on, a series of switches that map faces out in a branching arborescent structure.

The movement of the black hole across the screen, the trajectory of the third eye over the surface of reference, constitutes so many dichotomies or arborescences, like four-eye machines made of elementary faces linked two by two. The face of a teacher and student, father and son, worker and boss, cop and citizen, accused and

judge...concrete individualized faces are produced and transformed on the basis of these units – like the face of a rich child in which a military calling is already discernible, that West Point chin. You don't so much have a face as slide into one. (*Thousand Plateaus* 177)

The second movement of binarization is a 'checking' or 'sorting' based on the result of the either/or. This movement is of the 'yes/no' type, and revolves around a decision as to whether the face 'passes' or not, whether it *functions*, "whether it goes or not, on the basis of the elementary facial units" (177). The question is of whether a certain face can pass as a certain type; whether its organization of traits is *proper*, or in accord with, the recognized organization of traits proper to that type. The face is a program, a system of ordering, of sequencing, of sorting.

We must note that Deleuze & Guattari's notion of passing is simultaneously a question of the performative, and of the technical. It is never a question of whether a face *is* a certain thing; it is a question of whether a face can be *seen* to be a certain thing, whether its appearance fits within a preestablished, already-circulating understanding of what it should be. Remember, we are talking of what is proper, and what is proper always betrays its process of appropriation, and the politics of propriety. Facial types, collections of facial traits, coalescences of expectations of faces based on race, class and religion, revolve not around the question of normality, but around the question of the *appearance* of normality, the degree to which one can appear normal, the relative normality of one's appearance. The same can be said of Sander Gilman's notion of passing, where passing is

not a matter of becoming invisible, of passing beneath some social radar, but of becoming differently visible, of appearing on the radar and being mapped accordingly (Gilman xx). Therefore, it is a question of whether the face ‘goes’ or not, whether it works, whether the abstract machine - which already exhibits a kind of technical essence in that its purpose is to cut, sort, choose, categorize, distinguish, put in place – can organize “elementary facial units” in such a way as to make the face function *as* a face, and in so doing, *appear*. The face requires an ingenious *engine*, which must perform the function of a *projector*.

Both Sander Gilman and Deleuze & Guattari, then, see the face as part of a sorting mechanism for societal characteristics, and thus power. The face is implicated in the distribution of power in society through its role as a sorting mechanism to decide who has the ‘right’ characteristics and who doesn’t, who fits within the preferential categories and who doesn’t. Deleuze & Guattari go further, however, in that they place passing within a much larger system of the distribution of signification and subjectification, and they place the face at the centre of this process; the white-wall/black-hole system is the model for an over-arching, archontic even, system of *writing* and *projection* by which meaning and character are distributed upon a face. The abstract machine of faciality *produces* faces. Faces are produced as *surfaces* on which “facial traits, lines, wrinkles” are *inscribed* and *projected* (*Thousand Plateaus* 170). “The face is a map”, a system of marks and traces that represent some other body, a body of earth, a body of water, a human body, some body that is always elsewhere, that can only be known and traversed through its representations (170).

In our discussion of Deleuze & Guattari's theory of faciality, we have spoken so far about the spatial dimensions or the spatial constitution of the face; we have outlined the ways in which faciality traits collect or coalesce on and around an individual, and also how these traits are often applied to landscapes or objects. The white wall and black hole are primarily spatial expressions of the mapping of signification and subjectification onto and into surfaces and holes. But is there a temporal dimension of the face? How is the face temporalized? Where is the face facing?

Various temporalities have so far been spoken of. Firstly, we began by invoking the arborescent structure of power which preexisted specific moments of signification and subjectification; signification and subjectification occurred along 'preestablished paths', according to a plan which had already been set into place. Everything was already laid out, like a stage set, waiting for its players. Secondly, we outlined the abstract machine of faciality which produced individual faces in the image of, and according to the dictates of, a "dominant reality" which preexisted the individual.

This is one 'past'. Put simply, the arborescent structure of power, the organizing, striating, programming, face-making structure of power, pre-exists individuals; it gives them spaces to slot into, surfaces to slide around upon, holes to find themselves within. This 'past' can be understood in terms of culture, language or the symbolic order existing prior to any individual's entry into them; as in the epigenetic and epiphylogenetic memory introduced by Bernard Stiegler, we are born into the world but we acquire language, systematic thought, and thus all the traits of personhood, through the many

processes of enculturation. As Deleuze & Guattari say of the white wall and black hole, “we are born into them, and it is there we must stand battle” (*Thousand Plateaus* 189). But how do Deleuze and Guattari *structure* this past? They ask themselves the same question: “When does the abstract machine of faciality enter into play? When is it triggered?” (175).

For reasons which are only vaguely explained, Deleuze and Guattari place the face of Christ as an ‘origin’ of the abstract machine of faciality, hence the title of this chapter, “*Year Zero: Faciality*”. They distinguish ‘primitive’ cultures (to which we will, inevitably, return in a moment), which apparently operate according to a body-head relation wherein it is the body and its becomings-animal that orients the culture, from the faciality instituted by the Christ-face, which comes to represent the ‘White Man’ himself (*Thousand Plateaus* 178). Here, the face of Christ overcodes all other significations, it shines down upon all the actions of White Men and Women, sanctifying, justifying, judging, and in the hands of White Men and Women it is further shone upon all those who deviate from whatever norm is fashionable at any time. The Christ-face, as the face that defines all others in relation to it, becomes a model for acts of division in which a certain face – be it a representative of ‘the White Man’, ‘the European’, the ‘Human’, ‘the Good Citizen’ – codes all others not as ‘others’ but as steps in a series of continuums of deviance. “If the face is in fact Christ, in other words, your average ordinary White Man, then the first deviances, the first divergence-types, are racial: yellow man, black man, men in the second or third category...They must be Christianized, in other words,

facialized” (178). In an arborescent schema, the face of Christ becomes a ‘trunk’ from which branches of various degrees of deviance branch out in a binary fashion.

Deleuze and Guattari go on to allow that signification and subjectification do and have existed outside the Christian schema; “there are Indian, African and Asian despotic formations of signification; the authoritarian process of subjectification appears most purely in the destiny of the Jewish people” (*Thousand Plateaus* 182). These various despotic and authoritarian regimes exhibit different combinations and forms of signification and subjectification, each with their own form of power and organization. Deleuze & Guattari state, however, that they have chosen the Year Zero of Christ because it was within or around the figure of Christ that these various mixtures of signification and subjectification achieved “a total interpenetration” (182), which we can assume is to say that the Christ-face mobilized and joined signification and subjectification within a single, Christian enterprise.

But why Christ? Christianity as a system of moral, cultural and political ordering has had and continues to have a huge impact on Western culture, and this impact has been well documented. Christianity suffuses Western culture like a virus, as do the variants of Christianity, to the degree that it is often difficult to tell what is religiosity and what is ethnicity, what is personal and what is political. Christ as a personification of the idea of the One also provides a powerful vehicle through which to inculcate a system wherein individuals model themselves on some all-powerful yet nonetheless essentially fantasized and abstract ideal. The messianic is a powerful orientation, one to which we shall return

in our later discussion of the commodity; as a specific, localized messianism, Christ encapsulates within specific spatio-temporal parameters a desire to express something which remains essentially inexpressible, a desire to bring the transcendent into everyday, lived experience. If, indeed, Deleuze & Guattari's theory of faciality is intended to be specific, intended to explain a phenomenon primarily in the context of Western culture, then we would agree that it is extremely useful in analysing the distribution of power in society as it relates to individuals and their appearances, and we would agree that the figure of Christ is as reasonable a model as any to focus this analysis around. Whether it is a matter of Christ or not, allying the face with the 'despotic signification' characteristic of regimes that control by fixing codes of individuality, image and appearance, is an extremely powerful insight.

Yet Christ is merely one of the stories told over the past so-many years regarding the origin and destiny of the human, and Christianity is merely one of the politico-religious power structures that has arisen to control the lives and minds of people over the past so-many years. Hierarchical, arborescent power structures no doubt both pre-exist Christianity, and exist in areas of the world untouched by Christianity. Similarly, there can be no doubt that the face is 'significant' to many non-Western, non-Christian cultures, and that similar ideas of the face will exist across both Christian and non-Christian cultures. Faciality as Deleuze & Guattari advance it is not, therefore, a theory of the face in general; it is the theory of the face put to the use of a certain power, in a certain time. Faciality extends our understanding of the binary operation of the face as an element of culture, in that it relates the face to the roles of signification and

subjectification. But it does not expose all the facets of the face, and indeed, may hide or sideline some as it reveals others. The temporalization of the face in Deleuze & Guattari occludes a more global and multicultural spatialization.

Deleuze & Guattari's theory of Christ-faciality is further problematized by being premised on an opposition to the 'primitive' head/body system, wherein faces are coded by heads and bodies, which are themselves governed by various becomings-animal and becomings-spiritual. In what they later call a "nostalgia for a return or regression" (*Thousand Plateaus* 190), Deleuze & Guattari examine 'primitive' societies as examples of assemblages of power that do not operate through the face; these societies are considered 'presignifying' and 'presubjective', they come *before* the arborescent, they are its 'past', they exist in some temporality of always-before, an imagined past before meaning began, a gestatory, pre-symbolic imaginary. Strangely, having already generated an origin in the form of Christ, Deleuze & Guattari precede this origin with another origin; the primitive.

Deleuze & Guattari outline various functions, elements and practices of various unnamed (and perhaps unnameable) 'primitive' societies that operate in a non-facial manner. Without regard for cultural specificity, without differentiating between cultures, without naming names and locating peoples, without reference to their own positioning in relation to these peoples, certainly without disclosing, critiquing or positioning their sources, and *most* certainly without posing the fundamental question of 'primitive in relation to what?', they speak of paintings, tattoos and marks on the skin; they speak of a lack of

incest prohibition; they speak of masks, shamen and possession, warriors and hunters, jaguar-spirits, bird-spirits, ocelot-spirits. All of these cultural traits appear to centre around a coding wherein the head belongs to the body not to the face, wherein it is the body as receiver and channeler of souls and spirits that sits at the centre of 'primitive' culture. What emerges here is an ethnically-non-specific mélange of fantasized culture-traits submerged in a pseudo-ethnological discourse of interpretation, faintly coloured by the embarrassing respect of the White liberal intelligentsia for the Orientalized Other. It's like Maya-Deren-by-numbers, as if we have been magically transported into the body of the European filmmaker amongst the natives, transfixed, crouching by the fire as a gyrating non-specific 'Black Man' roars like a tiger. In lumping together non-Western, non-arborescent cultures into this pastiche of primitivity, Deleuze and Guattari enact precisely the kind of binarization they accuse arborescent power structures of. They deal with type, with the 'appearance' of primitivity, the surface of primitivity, with stereotypes and character traits which are as arbitrary and as constructed as the traits that operate within the abstract machine of faciality. Although they are at pains to place this primitive pastiche outside the abstract machine of faciality, and to resurrect it on the body, Deleuze & Guattari nevertheless facialize the primitive. By placing their observations on the surface, by making surface-level observations regarding the *performance* of primitivity, the *rituals* of primitivity, and by constituting above all an unspoken 'us' and 'them' dichotomy, Deleuze & Guattari give back to the primitive a face, because 'we' have deemed it so. Painted, masked, possessed, whatever; primitivity, like the face, is a performance, a spectacle, it is put-on, it is an appearing.

The 'future' of the face is similarly problematic and sketchy. Deleuze & Guattari imagine a "great future" for the face, "but only if it is destroyed, dismantled" (*Thousand Plateaus* 171). This dismantled face, this *visage de l'avenir*, however, is premised on a negation of the primitive past, which is concurrently a validation of this past, a reconstruction of its reconstruction.

First, it is never a question of a return to ... It is not a question of "returning" to the presignifying and presubjective semiotics of primitive peoples. We will always be failures at playing African or Indian, even Chinese, and no voyage to the South Seas, however arduous, will allow us to cross the wall, get out of the hole, or lose our face. We will never succeed in making ourselves a new primitive head and body, human, spiritual, and faceless. It would only be taking more photos and bouncing off the wall again. (*Thousand Plateaus* 188)

Deleuze & Guattari state that it is 'never a question of a return' to the primitive, yet they in no way question their positing of primitive peoples as presubjective or presignifying, nor do they question the construction of Africans, Indians or Chinese as a past to which there can be no return. *We* may fail in our attempts to return to these states, we may botch the fantasy and end up, again, as snap-happy tourists, but the thing which we were apparently trying to get back to remains in some way distinct. Its status as a fantasy is never questioned, rather, what is questioned is the fantasy of a return, the idea that it could be reconstituted, that 'we' could be like 'them' again, that we could lose ourselves. Even that fantasy of the return is doubly represented, can be had both ways. Although 'it

is never a question of a return' because this return is a fantasy of a return, and we will always be failures at it, somewhere in behind this humble recognition of our failures as individualized Westerners, there is a return that nevertheless conditions this failure, a return that *does* succeed. The 'new primitive head' that we are unable to make is conditioned by an *old* primitive head that is the model for our strivings. To fail at something is to have a picture of success and to fail to attain it, to fail to actualize it. The success remains still waiting in the wings, like a ghost whose time has not yet come again, and Deleuze & Guattari's faciality remains premised upon this return, this virtual primitivity, which, no longer a valid or available past, is in fact a kind of future.

Despite, or in spite of, their scholarly natures, Deleuze & Guattari avoid having to further question this fantasy, this phantasm, of the primitive, on which they nevertheless base their arguments, by 'recanting' in the final few lines of the chapter. Having premised the present of the face upon a past which can not be returned to, they disavow this past in the postulation of a bizarre and, we have to be honest, somewhat utopic future. "Earlier, when we contrasted the primitive, spiritual, human head with the inhuman face, we were falling victim to a nostalgia for a return or regression. In truth, there are only inhumanities...Beyond the face lies an altogether different inhumanity: no longer that of the primitive head, but of 'probe-heads'" (*Thousand Plateaus* 190). What would prompt such a turnaround, such an about-face? It is as if, in dismantling the face and orienting it towards the future, Deleuze & Guattari found that they had 'lost face' entirely, and committed an embarrassing theoretical *faux pas*. They then hastily patch the silence with a theory of 'probe-heads' to replace the dismantled, lost face, which was lost in the

process of its dismantling, like an eyeball that fell out and rolled under the couch. Probe-heads (*têtes chercheuses*; searching heads, guidance devices, and in Internet parlance, search-engines) are introduced to depict the face involved in multiplicitous becomings, in searchings for forms that dismantle strata, that cross or even destroy borders defined by the abstract machine of faciality. The face, in this glorious future, somehow no longer defined with the limits of signification and subjectification, is finally free: “no more concentrically organized strata, no more black holes around which lines coil to form borders, no more walls to which dichotomies, binarities, and bipolar values cling” (190).

There should be nothing wrong with looking forward to a brighter future, especially if this future appears no longer to be in the sway of powers that currently govern the present. A little iconoclasm goes a long way. As intellectual heirs of the various counter-cultures that circled the globe during the latter half of the twentieth century, Deleuze & Guattari are entitled to their share of optimism, and to their desire to see the end of systems of domination. The abstract machine of faciality is clearly one such system, based as it is upon an arborescent, hierarchical power structure and the categorising processes of signification and signification. *A Thousand Plateaus* frequently reads as a guide-book to the destratified, asignifying, nomadic life, multiplying excited exhortations to the reader to always go further, to keep moving, to never arrive: “Write to the n th power, the $n - 1$ power, write with slogans: Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don’t sow, grow offshoots! Don’t be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point. Speed turns the point into a line! Be quick, even when standing still!” (*Thousand Plateaus* 24). As such, it is not without context that Deleuze & Guattari imagine a time in

which the face is dismantled and something beyond the white wall and black hole is proposed; it fits within their overall *project* to imagine such an end, an end without end: “Become clandestine, make rhizome everywhere, for the wonder of a nonhuman life to be created. *Face, my love*, you have finally become a probe-head” (*Thousand Plateaus* 191).

However, quite apart from the strangely phallic and reproductive overtones (Is making rhizome the same as making love? Are nonhumans given birth to in the same way as humans?), I cannot help but wonder about these probe-heads, these nouveau-primitive post-facial substitutes for a face that was lost when dismantled. I wonder about their convenience, the ease with which they appear here, post-face, the inhuman children of a rhizomatic union. Perhaps Deleuze & Guattari should have got down on their hands and knees and looked under the couch in the first place, instead of nervously theorising that the face was replaced by a probe-head? There is a sleight-of-hand operating here, a too-quick wrapping up of proceedings (within this chapter in any case) that indicates a desire on the part of Deleuze & Guattari to have done with the face, at any cost. Is the probe-head a ‘projection’, perhaps, of this desire, a phantom constructed to emblemize Deleuze & Guattari’s own searching for some ‘solution’ to the problem of the face, some future resolution or dissolution? Probe-heads are searchers, *têtes chercheuses*, their very action seems to be to project themselves further on, into the future, in the pursuit of something else, some always-other vision of themselves. That is what searching is; the pursuit of something that has not yet been attained. Ironically, the probe-head comes to

stand not as the figure of a defacialized system, or a de-systematized face, but of the *search* for such a (de-)system and of the *desire* for such a system to come into existence.

Although I find their analysis of faciality and the distribution of power according to the valuation of facial characteristics extremely cogent, and particularly relevant to a study of the face in a culture obsessed with the face and its appearance, I cannot say that I am entirely convinced by Deleuze & Guattari's (hi)story of the face, and its 'primitive' antecedents. Their temporalization of the face too readily posits 'origins' of questionable value and rhetorical function. Nor am I convinced of the glorious, dismantled, probe-headed 'future' of the face as any realistic or particularly useful destiny for such a system; it may indeed be a virtual face, a face that has not yet come, yet it is no less a fantasy, a phantasm and a projection of a desire for the destruction of the facial machine. While this is no doubt a worthy cause, I wonder whether this phantastic future obscures different virtual faces, some other faces-to-come. The face has many futures, dismantled, lost or found. Indeed, perhaps it is premised upon the future; perhaps the Face itself is always a thing of the future, always something that has not yet arrived, that perhaps never will arrive but will be searched for anyway. Perhaps the face, like the probe-head, is a 'projection'?

The Cinematic Apparatus of the Face

Rather than speaking of the face in temporo-cultural terms of primitive presignifying/presubjective and asignifying/asubjective, can we find other ways to shed

more light on the face? I wonder if a closer examination of the face's relation to ideas of the 'screen' and 'projection' (in a number of senses) might be a better way of situating the face within a less specific milieu. I have already mentioned that there is a cinematic structuring of the face, and have invoked the idea of the face as proto-cinema. The face is always-already a screen, it presupposes a screen upon which it appears, and a screen that it appears *as*, that it functions *as*. This double function of the face is made explicit in the identification of the white-wall/black-hole system, which is a two-part system, a machine with two moments. The face is projected upon individuals, mapped onto them from the outside, and it is also the surface that receives the projection. Indeed, Deleuze & Guattari refer to the face, and also to the white wall of signifiante, as a screen, many times during their faciality chapter. The white wall is described as a "semiological screen", the black hole as a "central eye", a camera (*Thousand Plateaus* 179).

The face constructs the wall that the signifier needs to bounce off of; it constitutes the wall of the signifier, the frame or screen. The face digs the hole that subjectification needs in order to break through; it constitutes the black hole of subjectivity as consciousness or passion, the camera, the third eye. (*Thousand Plateaus* 168)

Judging by their sentence structure, or at least by the translator's version of their sentence structure, Deleuze & Guattari use the words 'screen' and 'camera' in a rhetorical sense, as examples that give the sentences in which the words appear greater sense. Yet they are no less explicit in their use of cinema as one of the primary instances or loci for the facial machine, frequently concentrating on the close-up as the paradigm of the face's

cinematization. The face is “by nature a close-up, with its inanimate white surfaces, its shining black holes, its emptiness and boredom” (*Thousand Plateaus* 171). As mentioned by both Deleuze & Guattari and Balázs, it is the close-up which facializes objects, which lends to objects their subjects and signs. The close-up gives faces to things, and gives thing-ness to faces. Although Deleuze & Guattari ultimately steer their reading of the face away from such cinematic and spectacular settings, and place it in a Christian milieu, it is clear that cinema lends to their theory of faciality a terminology, as well as a certain legitimacy in terms of a distinct, recognizable cultural manifestation. They discuss how the abstract machine of faciality has appeared in painting and literature, but frequently bring it back to a cinematic metaphor: “Is it not fair to say, then, that there are close-ups in novels, as when Dickens writes the opening line of *The Cricket on the Hearth*: “The kettle began it...”, and in painting, when a utensil becomes a face-landscape from within, or when a cup on a tablecloth or a teapot is facialized” (*Thousand Plateaus* 175). Cinema and the semiotics of the shot are focal points for their theory; we could even say that the white-wall/black hole system is itself based on a technical apparatus of projection. The white wall must function as a screen in order for something to appear upon it. The black holes must be projected onto the white wall in order to appear. Both white wall and black hole rely on some imagined ‘light source’ that illuminates their processes, and a ‘camera’ to form the images/signs.

Similarly, in *Cinema I*, Deleuze defines a face - any face, clock face, animal face - as a set of micromovements on a reflecting surface; he gives the example of a clock face, which consists of the hands and their movements, on the flat plane of the clock's surface.

“Each time we discover these two poles in something - reflecting surface and intensive micro movements - we can say that this thing has been treated as a face” (*Cinema I* 88). He argues that the close-up also functions in this way, it sets up two poles of the image. The differentiation Deleuze makes between the “intensive series” of micromovements that work to break free of an overriding outline, and the “reflected and reflecting unity” of the surface as a whole, which works to contain unruly significations, can be related to the way in which the face has come to function in popular culture, because it is precisely the tension between the containment and escape of unexpected or unacceptable faciality traits, that drives the many industries that have invested in the maintenance of the face, and that fosters a desire or need for a transcendent face; thus passing, signification and subjectification are again key to the understanding of the face. Intensive micromovements (deviant facial traits, facial tics etc.) “form an autonomous series which tends towards a limit or crosses a threshold” (*Cinema I* 89); they push the boundaries of passability, and they work to break free of the outline, whose function it is to make sure that facial “features remain grouped under the domination of a thought which is fixed and terrible, but immutable and without becoming, in a way eternal” (*Cinema I* 89).

Can we perhaps hijack the abstract machine of faciality, and reorient it away from these poles of the primitive, ethnic and religious, and towards the cinematic? What does it mean to speak of the face as a proto-cinema? The term ‘proto-cinema’ is generally used in a historical sense, to link together in a historical chain firstly the camera obscura, then the magic lantern, and later the primarily nineteenth-century devices such as the praxinoscope, mechanoscope, zoopraxiscope, and phenakistoscope, all of which in some

way prefigure cinema in its contemporary understanding. Crucially, all of these strange creatures involve some variation on the theme of, firstly, displaying a sequence of images that appear to move upon a surface, secondly, employing some light source to project the images upon this surface, and thirdly, assuming that there will be a witness to this spectacle. That is to say, there is a 'cinematic apparatus' that runs through each of these manifestations as a current, and it is this imagined apparatus that links each of these concrete but proto-cinematic manifestations. Note also, that we have again described the white-wall/black hole system, which is the process of signifiante, and of the appearance and function of the face.

To talk of the face as a proto-cinema in a broad sense, then, is to invoke an apparatus that involves camera, screen, projector and spectator, as well as the ideas of all of these things, ideas of these things before they existed, or when they existed in other or non-material forms; proto-cameras, magic-lanterns, shadow-plays and cave walls, not to mention the complexities of apparatus theory and psychoanalytic theories of projection. Obviously, we don't want to speak at length about all of these things. My objective here is not to advance, point by point, the argument that the face *is* a form of proto-cinema, and that its existence relies on physical machines such as cameras and movie projectors; while these machines no doubt are at times involved in the manifestation of the face, I am also interested in these machines as virtual, and as invoking a virtual face. I do not intend to argue that some historical, cultural understanding of the face and its appearance played a part in the development of what is currently known as cinema. Nor do I wish to advance a 'new' theory of cinema or the 'cinematic apparatus' *as such*. I am more interested in

what it might mean to speak of a ‘cinematic apparatus of the face’, and what light this casts on the face that we are slowly moulding, and on the materials with which we are working. Let us think of the face as cinema-in-the-abstract, as cinema-by-another-name, and of the face *in* cinema.

If we are to speak of a ‘cinematic apparatus of the face’, such a phrase will inevitably recall the use of the term ‘cinematic apparatus’ or ‘cinematographic apparatus’ in the writings of Jean-Louis Baudry. Baudry’s now (in)famous articles, “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus” and “The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema”, form the basis of what has become known as ‘apparatus theory’. Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey, Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath amongst others, have built on these foundations and have expanded upon the psychoanalytical aspects of Baudry’s ideas. The tenets of apparatus theory as they emerged in the 1970s, however, have since been profoundly questioned by many subsequent writers, perhaps most acidly by Noël Carroll in *Mystifying Movies*. While I do wish to detour briefly through some of this debate, I should point out that I do this not to imply some reliance on the psychoanalytical tenets of apparatus theory, but rather, to bring the *terms* of this debate into relief. Questions regarding projection, perception, impression, spectatorship, spectacularity and spectrality – terms which have surfaced a number of times throughout this thesis and will continue to do so - run through both Baudry’s articles and Carroll’s responses. The relation of the mirror, which is one of the primary figures through which Lacanian psychoanalysis enters into apparatus theory, to the spectre, will be key to my reading of their debate.

Baudry's initial article, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", is concerned with how cinema establishes an identification between the spectator and the character(s) on screen, as well as between the spectator and the 'eye' of the camera. Baudry relies on a reading of Lacan's 'mirror stage' to explain that the spectator merges with characters and the camera through the 'mirror' of the screen, which 'regresses' the spectator to a pre-symbolic stage of self-other indistinction (Baudry, "Ideological" 310-312). According to Baudry, it is this merging of spectator and technical apparatus that constitutes the ideological effect of the cinematic apparatus as a whole. The spectator is no longer in a position to critique the film, its characters, and its politics, as the spectator is no longer able to take up a position 'outside' the film, but has been absorbed by it, has seen itself in the screen/mirror and sits narcissistically at one with itself (and, for whatever reason, the whole possibility of auto-analysis does not have any place here; narcissists apparently don't auto-critique, they just auto-adore). In the course of this regression, the 'spectator', one who actively looks, becomes a 'subject', one who is subjected *to* the ideology of the apparatus, and subject *of* the "illusory delimitation of a central location", master/mistress of the discourse (311).

Interestingly, it is in language that is simultaneously 'specular' and 'spectral' that this identification and transfiguration is described. Firstly, the camera permits the spectator, now 'subject', to "constitute and seize itself in a particular mode of *specular* reflection" (my italics); secondly, cinema creates a "*phantasmaticization* of the subject", and it is this phantasmatic subject that is seen and identified with by the apparently 'real' subject

(311). The subject sees themselves in a mirror, but sees themselves as a phantasm, a spectre. Through a fascinating etymological wormhole, Baudry elides the difference between the images that appear on screen as on a mirror, and this *apparition* itself. Baudry's subject, itself a spectre not merely because it is the subject of a discourse, and is thus a rhetorical figure, but also because it is an unacknowledged construct of Baudry's fantasy of the unknowingly confused and cross-eyed spectator (therefore we could also call it a 'projection'), has spectres of its own. Spectres imagine spectres, and his entire cinematic apparatus is haunted by this production of ghosts, which is the process of specularization/spectralization.

In his second article, "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema", Baudry constructs a sequence of analogies between Plato's allegory of the cave, Freud's understanding of dreams as regression, Lewin's theories of a 'dream screen' that appears in dreams and that recalls an infantile identification between the baby and the mother's breast, and the situation of the spectator of cinema. In bringing together this sequence of analogies, which in their description of situations involve similarities such as the immobility of the subject, the darkness of the surroundings, the appearance of imagery on a (dream-)screen, the projection of imagery *taken for* the real, and the centrality of the subject to the narrative played out by the images, Baudry proposes a number of hypotheses: Firstly, that Plato's allegory of the cave represents the stirrings of a 'will to cinema', "a signifier of desire which *haunts* the invention of cinema and the history of its invention" (Baudry, "Apparatus" 697: my italics). Baudry asks whether we can speak of the cinematic apparatus as the technical

manifestation of a desire that is “inherent in our physical structure”, a desire “to which the impression of reality would seem to be the key” (697-698). This ‘impression of reality’ is the key to a desire that exists as a *ghost*, as a ghostly double, within the history of cinema and within us, within our physical structure. It is this hypothesis that Noël Carroll calls ‘proto-cinematic’ (Carroll 715). Secondly, that “the cinematographic apparatus brings about a state of artificial regression”, a regression to “a mode of relating to reality which could be defined as enveloping and in which the separation between one’s own body and the exterior world is not well defined” (Baudry, “Apparatus” 703-704). A related aspect of this hypothesis, which also hinges on the series of analogies that structure the article, is that the “cinematographic apparatus reproduces the psychical apparatus during sleep: separation from the outside world, inhibition of motoricity” (706). Thirdly, that the unconscious incites the subject to produce machines that represent the inner workings of the subject to itself, and that cinema is one such representation; cinema, here, is a mirror not merely of the surfaces of characters, but of the inner workings as well, a specular, spectral manifestation of the workings of the psychic apparatus.

Baudry’s arguments are both fascinating and tenuous, stacked one on top of the other like a house of cards, the ground for which is the understanding and acceptance of psychoanalytic accounts of subject formation. As Noël Carroll notes in *Mystifying Movies*, Baudry’s arguments are either “loose and superficial” or “graceful, imaginative, and ingenious” depending on how you look at them (Carroll 723). Opting for ‘loose and superficial’, Carroll exploits this tenuousness in his analysis of Baudry’s arguments.

Carroll argues that because Baudry gives the *appearance* of an argument founded on logical analogy, it is therefore appropriate to submit his arguments to a rigorous logical examination, whereupon Carroll commences to pick apart Baudry's logic with evident glee. Most importantly for our discussion, his critique of Baudry's analogy between Plato's cave and the cinematic experience, and therefore of the argument that Plato's allegory of the cave is proto-cinematic, hinges on incredulity towards the idea that such an analogy can fit within a history of cinema, which is also to say that Carroll interprets Baudry's claim within a strictly historical framework. Indeed, it is Carroll, not Baudry, who introduces the term 'proto-cinema', and it is Carroll's understanding of proto-cinema as a historically-bound term, that conditions his understanding and refutation of Baudry's analogy. Despite stating that "[m]any, more historically minded, film theorists might wish to question the existence of transhistorical, transcultural desires of the sort Baudry postulates", thus implying that Carroll himself is not one of these *more* historically minded film theorists, Carroll continues to operate within a historical and logical understanding of cinema: "[T]here is no historical argument in sight to show that Plato's myth of the cave literally played a role in the invention of cinema" (722-723). Perhaps Carroll is, after all, at least *somewhat* historically minded.

I wonder, however, whether cinema really has been 'invented' yet. Invention is always inflected with the promise of something that is yet to come; to *in-vent* is to cause something to come, to in-troduce and in-voke *le venir*. Can the invention of cinema be 'finished' in such a way that one can historicize it in terms of a lineage that has come to fruition? What is the relation of these 'historically minded film theorists' to the *future* of

film, and thus of film studies? The emergence of disciplines such as ‘New Media Studies’, ‘Multimedia Studies’ and ‘Screen Studies’ has brought with it an understanding of cinema as an antecedent for various media forms. Lev Manovich, in *The Language of New Media*, positions cinema as the antecedent form of what he calls ‘cultural interfaces’, digital and computer-based Graphical User Interfaces that utilize cultural and cinematic metaphors to structure their visual and experiential aspects (Manovich 69). While new media or multimedia are understood by Manovich as being cinematic (in terms of a relationship to the cinematic apparatus), the increasingly complex cross-promotional relationship between merchandising, 3D multi-player gaming and film suggests that there is also a sense in which cinema as it is *becoming*, is multi-mediamatic. From this perspective, it becomes clear that cinema, or rather what is currently called cinema and may well be something else very soon, is still being invented, that changing conditions of technology and capitalism ensure that media forms are never really static.

Carroll finds Baudry’s arguments ludicrous in part because Carroll sees cinema as something that has been developed, something that can be quantified in a number of succinct social, cultural and technological forms, something that requires no relation to large-scale transhistorical and transcultural desires in order to *be*, and something that has a distinct lineage and is thus able to be historicized, and historicized correctly. Baudry’s loose-and-superficial / imaginative-and-ingenious version of cinema is ill-suited to the task of providing such a lineage, and must therefore be discredited. In so doing, Carroll ‘exorcizes’ Baudry’s argument, and the cinematic apparatus, of its ghosts, those shifting forms that represent what cinema may have been, could have been, could be, could

become. Of course, writing in 1988 Carroll can be forgiven for assuming that cinema had been invented; the incredible rise of digital entertainment and Internet-based, networked data structures had hardly even begun. Nor had the 3D interactive gaming phenomenon reached the stage it has today, where films are marketed as value-added merchandise to support the latest Xbox or PlayStation game. Moreover, it is not the case that Baudry does anything to dispel this idea that cinema has been developed; he talks of cinema as an “outcome” of technical considerations and societal developments which were “necessary to its realization and completion” (“Apparatus” 698). Nevertheless, Baudry at least leaves his pseudo-historicization of cinema open to interpretation, by introducing the idea that the cinematic apparatus, as something that can be seen spanning many centuries and is manifest in some way in the allegory of the cave, as well as in modern cinemas, revolves around the “impression of reality” (698). Clearly, such a phrase is requiring of closer examination, and this question of the impression of reality will re-surface throughout this chapter and the next. For now, let us note that the thing that Baudry chooses to place at the centre of the cinematic apparatus is not a specific technological form that has reached its purest manifestation in the late 20th century, but a process that involves machinery of *projection, perception* and *inscription*. Impressions are simultaneously things that are perceived *by*, and made *upon* or *in*. We all have impressions of things when we perceive them, but these impressions are simultaneously understood as inscriptions in whatever sort of psychic apparatus we care to picture. Christian Metz describes cinema spectatorship in terms which could also be understood to describe an ‘impression of reality’. In *The Imaginary Signifier*, he notes that the spectator ‘duplicates’ both the

camera/projector, as originator of the image, and the screen, as a surface that receives some kind of cinematic inscription.

During the performance the spectator is the search-light I have described, duplicating the projector, which itself duplicates the camera, and he (sic) is also the sensitive surface duplicating the screen, which itself duplicates the film-strip. There are two cones in the auditorium: one ending on the screen and starting both in the projection box and in the spectator's vision insofar as it is projective, and one starting from the screen and "deposited" in the spectator's perception insofar as it is introjective (on the retina, a second screen). (Metz 736)

Thus, cinema encompasses impression in both senses; as something that is perceived by a subject, and as something that is inscribed on a subject, or in a subject. And again, we can note the similarity between the cinematic apparatus and the apparatus of the face as we have described it, as something that is put on, and as the surface that receives this putting on.

My point in this brief examination of Baudry's theory of the apparatus is, firstly, to question the application of a strictly historical understanding to the 'invention' of a medium, and in this case, of cinema. To talk of a proto-cinema in historical terms artificially halts, names and attempts to encapsulate something that will always be meta-historical because it will *become*. Rather, let us talk of proto-cinemas as iterations or representations of a thing that is always in abeyance, and is thus virtual. It is in this sense

that the face is proto-cinematic; the face is an abstract form of something that has not reached fruition and that may never reach fruition, something to which fruition is anathema, yet something that involves a combination of the various elements that we have united under the appellation ‘cinematic apparatus of the face’, that is, the processes of projection, perception and inscription. The screen onto which the face is projected is always receding; the projection of the face is projection in space *and* in time, or rather *out of time*, beyond time, into a time that time will not touch. This face, this projected, screened, always-receding face, is an absolute, the belief in which is the purest form of the spectatorial practice of *suspension of disbelief*. In this sense, the cinematic apparatus of the face thus relies on an embracing of the there-not-there; the spectre. Let us not forget Baudry’s terminological slide, wherein images that appear on the screen and in the mirror are considered ‘specular’, and these same images invoke a phantasmaticization of the subject and are thus ‘spectral’.

We Had Faces Then: *Sunset Boulevard*

Roland Barthes’ short meditation, “The Face of Garbo”, introduces us to the *idea* of the face in cinema, and the face *as idea*. Greta Garbo, in Barthes’ cosmogony, represented “a kind of absolute state of the flesh, which could be neither reached nor renounced” (Barthes 57). As such an unattainable ideal, she was the purest expression of what we generally understand as the meaning of the ‘star’, because stars, as Stanley Cavell points out, “are only to gaze at, after the fact” (Cavell 294). Already past, already shone, the light of the star is ageless, always arriving after it has begun, shining down from some

temporality which cannot be conceived in human terms. Barthes is explicit in his description of Garbo as pure Idea, pure Essence, and contrasts her sharply with an individualized, earthly, manifest face such as that of Audrey Hepburn. Crucially, Barthes emphasizes the degree to which Garbo maintained this Essence, even when she was no longer in the spotlight. “[T]he essence was not to be degraded, her face was not to have any reality except that of its perfection, which was intellectual even more than formal. The Essence became gradually obscured, progressively veiled with dark glasses, broad hats and exiles: but it never deteriorated” (Barthes 57).

The face of Garbo, existing always elsewhere, out of the cycle of time and life, shrouded in mists and veils, made-up, make-believe; a spectral form, and the product of the cinematic apparatus of the face. In our continuing investigation of the face, rather than discuss the films of Greta Garbo, however, I would like to discuss a film that features Garbo only as a ghostly referent, a has-been that might-have-been but wasn't. This film also invokes such an apparatus or artifice of the face, yet it brings together these themes in a particularly ironic or self-reflexive manner; Billy Wilder's noir classic, *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Garbo is only mentioned once in this film, and it is a matter of idle speculation as to whether the writers had her in mind when writing and casting the film (Staggs 7). Nevertheless, her light shines on this film as stars do, subtly directing it, conditioning it, and yet transcending it.

Sunset Boulevard, a product of the Billy Wilder / Charles Brackett writing team that also produced *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *The Lost Weekend* (1945), is one of the enduring

classics of mid-20th century Hollywood cinema. It is a film about film, a Hollywood film about Hollywood, packed with an ironic self-referentiality that never falls into postmodern ennui, but remains firmly within a dry yet theatrical noir tradition. Most importantly, it is a film about the female 'star' and the most valuable 'asset' of the female star; her face. In its depiction of a silent-movie star enmeshed in the memory of her beauty and fame, *Sunset Boulevard* explicitly invokes a cinematic apparatus of the face, an apparatus that dictates the form and terms in which the face will appear. And yet, this apparatus is not confined purely to the world of the screen; it is brought down to earth through the use of a real-life silent film star in the starring role: Gloria Swanson.

The story concerns Joe Gillis (William Holden), a down-on-his-luck Hollywood scriptwriter whose car is going to be re-possessed unless he can raise \$200 immediately for the insurance. While on the run from the insurance agents, he ducks into the garage of an overgrown Sunset Boulevard mansion. Weeds in the yard, rats in the swimming pool, and an antique car on blocks in the garage, the house is a metaphor for past glories gone bad or been forgotten. As Joe's voiceover says, "a neglected house gets an unhappy look; this one had it in spades." In the house, Joe meets Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson), an aging movie star from the silent era, and Max (Erich von Stroheim), her butler and erstwhile husband and director. Although initially preoccupied with the death of her monkey, who somehow seems less like a dead monkey and more like a dead husband, Norma soon asks Joe to edit her script for a movie adaptation of *Salome*, written as a come-back to be directed by her former friend and director Cecil B. deMille (playing himself). Reluctantly Joe takes the position, and is hastily moved in to the bedroom above

the garage. Time passes, and soon Joe is Norma's 'kept man', with a rack full of dinner suits, expensive ties and expensive tastes, and only a modicum of embarrassment regarding his circumstances. Joe continues to edit Norma's script, which is eventually shown to deMille who, finding himself unable to add one more rejection after "thirty millions fans have given her the brush", remains silent on the unlikely prospect of its production, leading Norma to assume that it will go ahead. Norma begins a brutal regime of facial rejuvenation, preparing herself for her big appearance, while meanwhile Joe begins work on a new script with a friend's fiancé, Betty Schaefer (Nancy Olson). These clandestine writing sessions are conducted under cover of darkness, and soon the inevitable happens; Betty falls in love with Joe and Norma finds out about Betty and the other script. Madness, which had already begun to rear its head while Norma prepared her face, arrives fully on the scene, and Norma kills Joe in a fit of jealousy before descending the stairs into the waiting arms of the police and media. "Alright Mr deMille, I'm ready for my close-up."

Sunset Boulevard "examines the aftermath of the transition to sound, in which the power of the writer (and the spoken word) displaces the acting skills of the silent stars" (Ames 196). It is both futurological and archaeological, heralding the ascendancy of the writer and the screenplay, and picking through the pieces of the silent era. Two worlds immediately become apparent; the 'new Hollywood' of Betty Schaefer and her fiancé Artie Green (Jack Webb), and the old Hollywood of the silent stars, the 'waxworks' (Ames 204). Emblematic of, yet stuck inbetween these worlds, are Joe and Norma; Joe, a writer who isn't quite making it in this grand new era of writers; and Norma, down but

refusing to be out. The two worlds of old and new Hollywood outline the two levels on which the film operates. On a narrative level, the film is a noir thriller about the death of a Hollywood writer, driven to his death, murdered in some way by the machinations of the system he works in. The film is narrated in flashback, having begun with a body floating in a pool; the camera, submerged in the pool, focuses upwards at the body as the flash-bulbs pop and the media crowd around. Secondly, and more importantly for this analysis, on a discursive level the film is a meditation on the star system, and the face of the silent film star as this system's most emblematic manifestation. Of prime importance to the star system is the spectral nature of this face, and the way in which the star system hinges on the production of ghosts.

Ghosts and spectrality give this film its poignancy and bitter ironies, as well as its touches of dark humour. Most obviously, the film is narrated by a ghost. Joe Gillis, whose death brackets the film in a strange but not unheard-of narrative convention, speaks to us from beyond the grave. The stories of ghosts are always cautionary, and the ghost of Joe Gillis returns to us, to the film, to tell his woeful tale. We first see Joe floating dead in the water. The camera is submerged, and we are down there, in the waters of death, we are *with* Joe on the 'other side'. And then, like all ghosts, we rise out of the waters, we look *back*, and the ghost story begins. Joe meets Norma, and becomes her ghost-writer, her literary prosthesis, the servo-mechanism of her desire to return. Indeed, Norma surrounds herself with ghosts, the 'waxworks', her bridge partners, all older actors who, like her, have experienced better days. To emphasize the disparity between the new and old Hollywood, Wilder even cast genuine silent stars in these roles, played by Anna Q.

Nilsson, H.B. Warner, and Buster Keaton. Discussing the filming of *Sunset Boulevard*, Swanson described the waxworks and their milieu of bridge parties, caviar and cigarette smoke as a ghostly world, kept separate from the world of the living: “Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett had cleverly kept [the] ghostly world of oldies separate from the young Hollywood...therefore, I had no scenes with Nancy Olson or Jack Webb” (Ames, 205).

Norma’s house is the archetypal haunted house. The opening shots are gothic; a swimming pool empty save for rats fighting over a rotting orange, the “ghost of a tennis court”. Overgrown, rambling and in disrepair, Joe assumes the house is uninhabited, and he is only half wrong, for it is less inhabited than possessed. When Joe first enters the house and is mistaken for the undertaker, Max ominously tells him “if you need any help with the coffin, call me”. The house is dark and eerie, candelabras gather dust in the hallway, their flames guttering slowly in the gloom. Joe encounters Norma, dressed all in black, wearing dark glasses even though it is daylight outside; she leads him to the massage table, upon which lies a curiously small corpse. Throughout the film, the house maintains a distinctly vampiric air. The curtains are almost always drawn, not simply to keep out the light but to maintain a strict separation between the incarnate world of ‘50s Los Angeles, and the strangely ‘disincarnate’ world of Norma, Max and their collective memories, their photographs, paintings and memorabilia, relics of the *ancien régime* of ‘20s silent film. There is the sense that everything would crumble were too much natural light to enter the scene. Indeed, the fragile barrier between inside/outside, past/present, disincarnate/incarnate and thus fantasy/reality, functions not merely in the sense of a vampiric ‘ban’ on sunlight, but in a more psychological sense of a tremulous boundary

between sanity and insanity. Norma's final breakdown is triggered by the irruption of Joe's outside life into her fantasy; Norma discovers that Joe is writing a script with Betty Schafer, and that Joe and Betty are in love. With so much reality, so much to *realize*, Norma embraces fully the ghost she has kept hanging round all these years, and ascends to unite with her star persona. She kills Joe because "[n]o one ever leaves a star", and begins to ready her face for the cameras.

The vampiric air of the house is celebrated most succinctly in the scene in which Joe rushes into the house to ask why his belongings have mysteriously arrived in his bedroom overnight. Accompanied by the evocative strains of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, from an exterior long-shot we cut to an interior close-up in deep focus, with Max's white-gloved hands in extreme foreground hovering above the keys. Apart from the high-kitsch overtones, the use of the Toccata and Fugue completes the referential chain. Like Nösferatu's coachman, Max announces that he brought Joe's belongings, and our questions regarding how Max did such a thing overnight, without knowing where Joe lived, without a key, and with the car on blocks in the garage, are resolved without being resolved; the house operates on a logic all its own, and its inhabitants are subject to a law that is thoroughly other than that which governs Joe and the outside world.

Norma herself is the arch-ghost of the film, possessing her house as she is possessed by, and preoccupied with, her face and image. Lucy Fischer, in "*Sunset Boulevard: Fading Stars*", reads Norma as a vampire, one of the cinematic 'undead', and finds in her depiction the conflation of fears of aging with fears of bodily decay; the figure of the

vampire encapsulates these fears and packages them into a form for which it is acceptable to feel revulsion. Fischer notes how Joe Gillis' attitude towards Norma's aging, and most specifically her aging body and face, is expressed in his description of her house, "which is alternately described as 'rundown' or 'neglected'".

Gillis points out its "ghost of a tennis court with faded markings and a sagging net." It is clear from these descriptions that a horror of bodily decay lies at the root of Joe Gillis' attitude toward the mansion - a fact that emerges when he refers to the place as "crumbling apart in slow motion." Thus the aging process is viewed as somehow repulsive, to be shunted away. (Fischer 102)

Gillis' revulsion at the aging body, of the house and of the woman, is legitimated in the film, Fischer argues, by the depiction of Norma Desmond as a vampire, one of the undead, neither alive nor dead, feeding on death and maintaining only an illusion of life (103). Within the narrative, we can easily see how Norma appears to 'feed' off Joe's youth, and how this nourishment improves her appearance. At one stage, she says "I've never looked better in my life...because I've never been as happy." Like all vampires, this feeding on the life-blood of the young brings Norma back, from old-age, from extinction, from invisibility. It returns her to an earlier state, reanimates her, prepares her for her come-back. Likewise, we see Joe feeding off Norma's wealth; indeed, popular conceptions of the 'kept-man' scenario have these readings built-in, and *Sunset Boulevard* constantly plays with these conceptions, neither entirely critiquing nor

justifying them, doing little to endear either Joe or Norma to the spectator looking for some kind of positive identification.

However, there is another kind of feeding in *Sunset Boulevard*, which has more to do with the relation of the star to her image. Here, we see Norma feeding on herself. Fischer notes that as Norma watches her younger self in silent films, “she seems almost to “feed” on her youthful persona”, as if nourished by this image of her own youth in the circular logic of auto-consumption (103). Norma produces herself at the same time as she consumes herself; constantly trying to put herself back together, she re-members herself in order that she can devour herself again and again. Indeed, we could say that Norma’s ultimate goal in the film, a goal she pursues with all her power, a goal Max serves to facilitate and foster, is to re-member herself, to reconstitute that which she was, and to become that re-membered self. In so doing Norma essentially haunts herself, for it is her image she wishes to become, her image which is always becoming and always receding. Yet this image exists solely as a function of the cinematic apparatus of the face, it is the specular, spectral other, the other that is unutterably other, the other which exists never as that which was and *will be*, but that which *promises* to be again. “At bottom, the spectre is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back” (Derrida, *Spectres* 39). This image is there by not being there, its presence, and its present, is the function of a promise from out of the to-come.

As a product of the silent screen, Norma Desmond is pure spectrality, and pure face. Norma, decrying the rise of the writer, tells Joe “We didn’t need dialogue, we had faces

then.” And as Christopher Ames notes, “silent film acting, with its reliance on gestures and close-ups, puts more emphasis on acting with the face than do stage acting or talking motion pictures. *Sunset Boulevard* reminds us frequently that the face of Desmond/Swanson is *cinematic property*” (Ames 199; my italics). The duplicity of property is again made clear. Norma lives inside and is defined by the remains of the cinema’s image of herself; she lives in an archive, and is indeed her own archive, although not her own *arkhon*, for she lives not by her own law but the law of the cinematic apparatus of the face. She is surrounded by photographs of herself in her heyday, and entranced by private screenings of her movies in which she appears always young and beautiful. While Norma lives surrounded by images of herself, however, it is not the case that she therefore possesses her image; rather she is possessed *by* her image. Her image, some always-elsewhere function of the individual images she is surrounded by, was produced by and remains the property of the Hollywood star system, and of the cinematic apparatus; in other words, the market. As Walter Benjamin notes, commenting on the rise of the star system and Hollywood cinema, “This market, where [she] offers not only [her] labour but also [her] whole self, heart and soul, is beyond [her] reach” (*Illuminations* 224). Norma’s physical body may remain her own, but her face, and thus her image or appearance, is mouldering on Paramount’s asset register, and has been considerably depreciated. Norma’s sense of self, which we could call use-value, the use to which she wishes to put herself, has been entirely supplanted or defined by an exchange-value wherein her self/image is subject to the whims of the market. Even this exchange-value is primarily imagined; in the new Hollywood of talking pictures, her image has value only as nostalgia. Like a diva-style Phantom of the Opera, Norma is the

ghost of Hollywood, and her face is the purest expression of the commodity fetish, a thing which has had any sense of use-value entirely subsumed by the mysterious movements within the cinematic apparatus of the face, and the social relations it feeds and feeds upon (Marx, *Capital* 77). Walter Benjamin concurs: “The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the ‘spell of the personality’, the phony spell of a commodity” (*Illuminations* 244).

If Norma is pure face, however, she is also pure apparatus. There are four key sequences in *Sunset Boulevard* that depict the functioning of the cinematic apparatus of the face. Each sequence implicates the next in an expanding matrix of technologies, until the tragic cinematic finale is played out. The first of these sequences is the scene in which she and Joe watch one of her early films. It ends with Norma exclaiming “I’ll show them, I’ll be up there again, so help me!”.¹⁰ The ‘up there’ Norma speaks of is the space and time of the screen. To *be* up there is to *be* in a way that her current form of being cannot compare with; her being is always oriented towards this being *up* there, elsewhere, floating through the air like a ghost and projected onto the screen. In this scene, after the camera focuses for some time on the film on the screen, in which a young Norma/Swanson lights a candle and prays for her wickedness to be cast out, it switches to Norma and Joe. Standing up, lit by the flickering beam of the projector, Norma’s profile is harshly backlit, and the contrast between the youthful figure ‘up there’ on the screen, and her current state *down here*, is brought sharply into focus (Ames 200). Throughout the film, Swanson

¹⁰ Incidentally, the film they watch is the never-released von Stroheim film *Queen Kelly*, which starred a young Gloria Swanson; one of the many insider-references Wilder and Brackett packed into the film.

plays Norma as an over-the-top diva; her hands are talons, her eyebrows drawn-on, her mouth a painted slash, distorted always in a painful parody of a smile which doubles as a grimace. Norma is always 'made-up', and this scene is no exception: "Clearly, the overacting Swanson still has star power, but like Bette Davis of *The Star* and *All About Eve*, her physiognomy seems garish, even (intentionally) grotesque" (Ames 200). This overacting on Swanson's part cannot be ignored; it highlights the artifice of the face by playing it too well, taking it too far. If Swanson *acts* the part of Norma, she also *appears to act* Norma, she shows *herself* acting, and even shows *Norma* acting, and in so doing invokes an apparatus of the face that permanently marks the face of the star with the traces of its making. In terms which we will use in the next chapter, Swanson 'puts on' Norma's face, just as Norma puts on her own face using make-up, and during the 'makeover frenzy' sequence that succeeds Norma's visit to Paramount studios.

The second key sequence occurs during Norma's visit to Cecil B. deMille on set. Norma arrives at the Paramount studio gates, and after finally being recognized by an older security guard, she is ushered onto the set by deMille and seated in the director's chair while deMille makes a phone call. A microphone brushes Norma's hat and she angrily pushes it away, whereupon a lighting technician recognizes Norma and turns a spotlight on her. "Let's get a good look at you" he says, and the apparatus springs into action. It is suddenly as if, there in the middle of the soundstage, the screening of an unexpected film begins. Where before, unlit, Norma entered the set unnoticed, now, in the spotlight, her 'presence' re-asserts itself. Cast-members become spectators and flock around, fascinated with this apparent resurrection, drawn to the light of this spectacle unfolding in their

midst: “There’s Norma Desmond”, they exclaim; “Why, I thought she was dead!” Norma basks in the light that is shone upon her, which is concurrently the light of a technical projecting apparatus, and the light of public adoration, the light of the spectatorial gaze. For a moment the ghost is real; Norma becomes a spectator of her own spectrality, back from the dead, lifted from down here, the resurrected Norma is momentarily *up there* again, in the light, the light of the projector and the light that glints in the eyes of the audience. Of course, the light is extinguished as quickly as it began; deMille arrives and orders the technician to “turn that light back where it belongs”, the light turns away and the crowd disperses. The spectacle is over, Norma is left to compose herself after her brief foray up there. “Did you see them? Did you see how they came?” As Christopher Ames notes, we are left with a powerful sense of the “transforming power of movie technology, its power to turn a person into an icon and, conversely, to extinguish that transfiguring light” (206).

The third sequence is the ‘makeover frenzy’ montage sequence that follows Norma’s visit to the set. Convinced that the filming of *Salome* will go ahead, Norma begins what Joe’s voiceover calls “a merciless series of treatments”, a gruelling regimen of therapies designed to ready her “for those cameras that would never turn”. Her skin is subjected to electric shocks, heat treatments, steam, massage, mudpacks and lotions. Through a magnifying glass every pore and wrinkle is examined and every impurity excised. The sequence ends with Norma examining her face in a make-up mirror, her features rigidly locked in place by a series of straps. She has been immobilized, conditioned, examined minutely by an abstract cinematic eye as much as by the eye of the beauty technician. As

Ames notes, “[l]ight, mirror, magnifying glass, and giant eye symbolize the remorselessness of the close-up and its demands” (201). If, as Deleuze & Guattari suggest, the face is by nature a close-up, the face is also necessarily a function of the apparatus that gives us such a thing as a close-up, and the industries that condition the form and appearance of the face in close-up (Deleuze & Guattari 171). The technologies of both the beauty industry and the cinematic apparatus are invoked in a joint capture and conditioning of the face. The face is technologically produced in two senses. Firstly, its faciality is conditioned by cosmetic technologies, it is scraped clean, sucked dry, plucked and re-surfaced. Secondly, it must pass through the yes/no gate Gilman and Deleuze & Guattari place at the core of ‘passing’, which is intrinsically computational. The face that appears upon the screen, the face that is projected and which ‘passes’ before the eye of the spectator, must first ‘pass’ under the discriminating eye of the camera.

Finally, the fourth key sequence ends with the final scene, in which Norma prepares herself for the cameras as police and media fill the downstairs foyer, and she descends the stairs to utter her famous last words, “Alright Mr deMille, I’m ready for my close-up.” Both before killing Joe and after, Norma stares upwards and off-screen-right, her eyes wide as if stretching to encompass a huge picture of herself, yet also as if in terror, as if some horrible/beautiful thing is unfolding *up there*, where the stars are. It is her own ghost she stares at, the ghost of her that the cinematic apparatus still projects above her, beyond her, and back upon her, and which she is possessed by. Later, as the policemen interrogate Norma in her bedroom, she sits silently at her dressing table, entranced by her image in the mirror. We can interpret this scene in a number of ways. With Lucy Fischer,

we could see in this image a depiction of the narcissism frequently projected onto women in painting and cinema, just as we could read in it a ‘regression’ of the Lacanian type to the possession of and with the self characteristic of the mirror stage. “Clearly she is “subordinated” to her screen persona, and, like the Lacanian infant, stands “jubilant” in the “assumption” of her specular image. While the infant has only commenced to be distanced from its true identity, Norma has had a lifetime to experience the radical loss of self visited upon women in our culture” (Fischer 108-109). Indeed, no doubt Baudry would approve of such a reading. However, let us remember the slippage between specular and spectral, between what appears on the screen as in a mirror, and what appears by not appearing, by haunting the screen and possessing the spectator. With the mention of the cameras that the “news-reel men” have arrived with, Norma’s attention returns to the present. Max assures her that “the cameras have arrived” and she prepares herself for her scene. We cannot be blind to the presence of the apparatus here, and its promise of a ghostly becoming. Regardless of where – mirror or screen - her image appears, it is the cinematic apparatus, with its promise of appearing *up there*, that constitutes Norma’s preferred mode of ‘being’.

Max, playing the part of deMille, directs the scene. Through a frozen tableau of police, newspaper reporters and photographers, Norma descends the stairs as the Princess Salome. The cameras and lights of the media follow her down; ironically, it is the Paramount *news* team. At the bottom of the stairs she breaks character briefly to express her happiness at having been allowed to return to pictures. She admits that this thing she has returned to, this cinematic apparatus that has apparently re-admitted her, is her whole

life. “There’s nothing else. Just us, and the cameras, and those wonderful people out there in the dark.” And then she is ready for her close-up; she advances menacingly on the camera and on ‘those wonderful people out there’, twirling her hands like Nösferatu, her face blurring to fade-out.

Norma’s final admonition is telling, for a number of reasons. Firstly, she succinctly describes the cinematic apparatus in its entirety as the only thing that exists. Actors, cameras and spectators are joined together in a single enterprise which is all-encompassing, and within which she finds herself and defines herself. Screens, projectors and eyes that shine; white-wall/black-hole. Secondly, it is an acknowledgement that the ghost of her that the apparatus presents her with is ‘real’, and that there is nothing else. She *is* her ghost and has no existence outside of that spectral state. To be, finally, ready for her close-up, is to be ready once again *to be pure face*. She is not *with* her ghost, she *is* her ghost. When she is *up there*, or at least preparing to be up there, she exists; when she is down here, she does not exist. As we mentioned earlier, Norma’s possession by the cinematic apparatus of the face is such that the only form of being she values is the being that is *not*, the being that is immaterial, that is pure light, that is absolute. Pure star, pure face, nada. Norma’s ‘face value’ is not her use-value, it is her value as something that does not exist, that will never exist, that flits about at the periphery of her gaze, off-screen-right, where she stares enraptured at the sight.

To conclude this chapter, let us briefly re-cap our discussion so far. We began with an examination of Sander Gilman’s history of aesthetic surgery. Gilman sees the face as one

of the primary indices of 'human being', and demonstrates the way in which facial characteristics have been used to determine social acceptability. He uses the word 'passing' to describe the binary process by which an individual is assessed and is deemed to either pass or not pass in terms of some socially constructed "desirable category of being" (22). Gilman's terminology hovers between the natural and the constructed, and the real and the imagined. The categories into or out of which one passes are socially constructed, they are only *perceived* to be real. Yet they are perceived categories of *being*, that is, they are perceived as natural, physical, and having something to do with a fundamentally human state. There is an 'impression of reality' at the core of passing, wherein what is 'real' is both perceived *as* an impression, and impressed *upon* the perceiver as an inscription. The real is a matter of impressions; of perceptions, representations and writing. Further, it is a visualized or 'spectral' body "that is central to the pursuit of aesthetic surgery" (Gilman xviii), yet aesthetic and reconstructive surgeons still must operate on some body that is 'real' in that it is physical, and biological *to some degree*. It is the questionability of this 'degree' that is interesting. Having either been born into a desirable category of being, or having arrived there through some medical and thus technical intervention, a 'human' being enters a complex system of the projection and exchange of appearances, all of which enables a certain social machinery to function. The human face, then, is a thoroughly confused thing; or rather, it is semi-autonomous, and semi-automatic, a hybrid of biological function and technical in-vention.

Deleuze & Guattari take a similar stance to Gilman in situating the face at the core of some social mechanism that metes out acceptability or unacceptability according to one's

collection of facial traits, which are distributed and coded by this same mechanism. The abstract machine of faciality produces faces, codes faces, gives them significance in culture and attaches predetermined subject-formations to them. This process is built into culture as a functioning of what we might wish to call the 'symbolic order', although Deleuze & Guattari do not use this term and, being that it is Lacanian in origin, may wish to avoid its usage; they do, however, use the phrase "dominant reality", which is inflected with the same sense of an overall set of structuring principles (168). Crucially, Deleuze & Guattari develop a cinematic metaphor to describe how this process of signification and subjectification works; the white-wall/black-hole system. The white-wall, the surface onto which signs are projected, functions as a 'screen' for meaning to appear on, and the face bears strong resemblance to this screen. It is onto the face that significance is loaded; the face is written, and it is projected, and the close-up is its finest moment.

This projection functions in two ways – it is both a projection onto a surface, and a projection forward in search of some ideal that is always receding, some ideal that is virtual, always to-come. The cinematic apparatus of the face functions on both such forms of projection. A film like *Sunset Boulevard* provides us with a diagram of this apparatus. Firstly, the face of Norma Desmond, the star, has as its primary referent its appearance when projected on screen. The media with which she surrounds herself – the paintings, the photographs, the mirror images – are all secondary forms of the star, they take their reference from the screen. Norma's only desire in life is to be back again, up there, on the screen where she belongs, and she freely admits that there is nothing else for her. Secondly, this image of the face of the star, up there on screen, is always receding. It

has form, but only by having no form; it is spectral, always beckoning, always appearing to come but not. Indeed, it is a kind of *promise*.

Chapter 4: Appearing to Act

‘Smart-sensing’ technology re-programmes the skin and trains it to moisturise itself.”

“Summer Beauty” Avon Brochure

Having danced around it for some time, we must now examine more closely the function of ‘appearance’, that aspect or property of the face that has to do with being seen, and that temporal process of ‘appearing’. To see always involves a face. There is always a face when there is seeing, and when there is appearing, which is a function or facet of ‘being-seen’. Etymologically, vision and the face are strongly linked: ‘visage’ comes from the Latin *vīsus*, appearance, from *vidēre*, to see, and from *vis*, face. Eyes may see, but they will require a face to sit in.

From our discussion so far, it should be clear that the face has something to do with appearance. In the same way that we ‘have’ faces and faces ‘have’ us, the face ‘has’ an appearance, and the appearance is something that both is and is not the face ‘itself’. In Gilman’s schema, the appearance is the thing that is changed in aesthetic or reconstructive surgery, that ‘spectral body’ that is operated upon at the same time as changes are made to a physical body. For, we are ‘judged’ by our appearances, and we

are therefore able to change our appearance. This is, Gilman implies, what makes us 'human'.

What does it mean to 'appear'? What is one's 'appearance'? Does technology, or some technological apparatus, mediate the process of appearance? Is there an 'outside' to appearance, a before, an after, a moment of un-appearance, the un-appeared, the not-yet-appeared; or perhaps the appearing that appears by not appearing, the there/not there; the apparition, the *spectral*. Is it possible to appear, or have an appearance, if there is nobody there to appear before? Does one 'own' one's appearance, or as we have already suggested, is it always oriented towards, and defined in terms of, an other, to whom one appears, and from whom one's appearance is in fact on loan? Perhaps we are all engaged in continually manifesting the appearance of others, each of us carrying around the unimaginable burden of other peoples' appearances.

My interest in appearance stems from the notion that 'appearance' sits at the core of a great deal of the cosmetics, beauty and aesthetic surgery industry's developments, and many other cultural spheres besides; these industries are engaged in a constant reworking of what it means to 'appear', and can thus constitute an over-arching 'appearance industry'. "Reduces the appearance of fine-lines and wrinkles"; witness any TV advertisement for any of the various anti-aging products on the market, or read any newspaper or magazine ad, and this phrase, or a variant thereof, will no doubt play a part. Appearance is the domain of the cosmetics industry; fine lines and wrinkles the world over are daily ploughed by loving cosmetic micro-machines, cleansers and toners, re-

programmers and fillers, communicators, informationalizers, erasers. Yet (if you will allow me to continue with this agricultural metaphor), it is not the face that is the ‘ground’ on and in which this ploughing takes place; it is the appearance of the face which is the ground, and which is worked upon by these cosmetic machines.

“Reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles”. The authors of such a phrase are in no doubt regarding what they are saying, and the relation of their words to the actual ‘performance’ (or perhaps we should refer to this as performativity, being that we are in the realm of the ‘as if’, the realm of techno-graphy) of the product. At no stage in the process is anything but the ‘appearance’ of fine lines and wrinkles discussed; it is ‘as if’ fine lines and wrinkles appeared through some devious biological malfunction. Fine lines and wrinkles, as actual things, as actual things that happen in real time (as if time was real, inexorable, a thing that could not be stopped, arrested, gone back on, like a promise) do not enter into the equation; it is their appearance that is at stake here, and the changeability or editability of this appearance. It is appearance that is editable, therefore it is appearance that matters, that is treated as matter, that *materializes*, as Judith Butler would say.

One analysis of this concentration on the surface, on this constant qualifying of the effects of a particular anti-aging product in terms of its effects on the ‘appearance’ of fine lines and wrinkles not on fine lines and wrinkles themselves, would be to state that it is appearance that is spoken of, that is concentrated on, because advertisers have to work in accordance within certain legal parameters regarding the ‘truth’ of their claims.

Evidently, since there is no guarantee that fine lines and wrinkles as actual things will be physically diminished by this particular product, an advertisement cannot claim that a product can do so; rather, it is fine lines and wrinkles as spectral or virtual things, as marks on a virtual face, that are diminished. Let us remember that cosmetic products are produced simultaneously within the domains of capitalist production and of science; they are produced in laboratories, by the ‘white-coated lab technicians’ I invoked in the introduction to the previous chapter. ‘Appearance’ is the terminology of a science that is rhetorically bound, for there is a legal framework that will hold science *to its word*. This rhetoric is a function of a regulated and litigative environment in which scientific pursuits (and indeed any pursuit that is advertised in the public domain) must live up to their words, and will be judged according to the letter of the law.

All of this said, there is also the implication that at no time was anything but a change in one’s appearance expected – all we can hope is that the product will change the ‘appearance’, and that is all we *need* to hope for. Indeed, in some way there is only ever appearance; certainly, it is only ever appearance that matters, just as it is matter that appears, that has an appearance. We have reached some advanced stage of the simulacrum here, at which there can be no question that appearance is not at the root of it all; there *is* only appearance, only seeming, and perhaps that was always the case; the *mise en abyme* of the visual. And yet, to simply invoke the simulacrum in its all-encompassing smugness, as some kind of key to this appearance frenzy, this fever, would be to unduly limit the significance of this appearance. There is more than just an endless multiplication of the image, of the process of imaging, as this simulacrum does nothing to

elucidate the field within which it appears, the forces at play within and around it. Appearance is a certain technology not merely of the visual and the cinematic, but of the biological and the technological as well, and as we will shortly discuss, of the theatrical.

Although this may seem deceptively simple, or even a little below-the-belt, a cheap trick, I would like to preface this discussion of appearance with a quote from an Avon catalogue. While it often seems as if the rhetoric of the cosmetic industry comes pre-analysed, pre-digested, pre-determined to explain its intentions fully upon the slightest hint of critical analysis, I would nevertheless like to use this quote as something of a sounding board, a refrain; the quote has an economy, simplicity and bold absurdity that I find charming. Further, it encapsulates so much that we could say about the relation between the human and the technical, between biology and technology, and their public, dramatic ‘appearance’.

In Avon’s “Summer Beauty” catalogue for 2004, the following sentence is used to describe Anew Pure 02 Oxygenating Cream: “Rejuvi-Cell Complex makes surface skin cells appear to act younger” (“Summer Beauty” 42). What can this possibly *mean*? What is this ‘appearance of acting’ on the part of skin cells, given the magical presence of Rejuvi-Cell Complex? What kind of derma-techno-logy is this that can so easily, and with such directorial powers of ordering, put on the appearance of acting younger?

Perhaps it means nothing anyway, a throwaway phrase, mere words. It is, after all, advertising copy in an Avon catalogue, destined for a quick read in the bathrooms of

suburban Australia before being tossed out with the recycling. Such a simple phrase, so clear, so innocent, so nicely packed with the power-words of the genre. No doubt it is another white cream in an endless run of white creams that either do or do not have some kind of effect on one's face, or on one's perceptions of one's face, or on the perceptions of others of one's face, and either way its actual effect is functionally irrelevant.

I can't help wanting to take it literally though. What if someone buys the stuff, someone in need of rejuvenating, an actor perhaps? What happens when their surface skin cells start appearing to act younger? What does that *feel* like? For precisely this reason I can't help having some questions; what if it were *true*? What if it actually worked, what if it lived up to its letter, the letter of its law, what if it *performed* precisely as it said it would? What would this performance entail, and how would it be perceived?

Obviously there are a great many questions we could ask in the elucidation of this sentence, and obviously the sentence is a great deal more complex than it may appear at first sight. The combined effect of the words 'surface', 'appear' and 'act' is to lend a profound sense of duplicity, or even multiplicity, to the product. We are left with the sense that everything is not as it seems, and we will therefore begin our gradual unravelling of the appearance of acting by relating appearance to a literary and theatrical examination of the 'seeming'.

Seems Madam?: Hamlet's Inky Cloak

Although seeming is more often applied to an overall *impression* of a person rather than just the appearance of their face, it is nevertheless premised on the same surface/depth model as appearance. A closer examination of seeming will give us more materials to work with in our examination of the face. That which 'seems' is that which 'appears', that which, to all accounts, looks like it *is*. It is quite normal to take a seeming for the truth, to allow it to stand in for the truth, *as if* it were true, and to act accordingly. If a friend seems depressed (perhaps, god forbid, their father has been killed and their mother has married their uncle), it would be sensible, seemly even, to try to cheer them up. In doing so there is a good chance that we would find out the nature of this seeming; we would discover whether or not they were in fact depressed, and if so, the depth of this depression. Our *acting* upon the *as if* of their seeming, would result in an *actual* conclusion to the matter. However, there is always a question at the core of appearance, and of seeming; *is* that truly the case? "Yes, they 'seem' to be such-and-such, but are they *really*?" Hence this taking for the truth, this taking the *as if* seriously, taking the *seems* as an *is*, always involves a kind of play wherein a question is suspended in order to answer the question at a later date; the fundament of the theatre, suspension of disbelief. Whether or not something is what it seems to be, will be discovered at a later date, sometime after we take the seeming for what *is*. Revelation always comes later. We have to take the seeming for an *is* in order to find out what it *was*. Of course by then, well, it may be too late anyway, the poison may be coursing through our veins and we may have to forget about the whole thing.

Shakespearean studies have frequently concentrated on the 'seeming', most especially in readings of *Hamlet*. Although the word 'seems' appears only occasionally, it is nevertheless one of the central tropes of the play, introduced as early as Scene II, Act I. In *Hamlet*, seeming is related to appearance in two senses; first, in the sense of Hamlet 'seeming' to be perturbed, and later mad; and secondly, in the sense of Hamlet searching for a 'seemly' way to act upon his grief. A number of other themes echo this concern. The face, as something seen to represent a person's truth, or honour, is also implicated in this investigation into the relation between what is and what seems to be. Indeed, the entire play revolves around a succession of ruses, by which an appearance is put on in order that some 'truth' will out, or by which a surveillance is conducted in order for the 'true' nature of someone's *act* to be observed. In each case, truth 'has' an appearance, it has apparatuses that represent it, that stand in for it, that supplement it, that haunt it. The nature of acting or playing is constantly put into question, probed from all directions as one by one the characters are themselves revealed to be 'acting' in some way, above and beyond their role in the play, which is of course an act. It calls to mind Diane Arbus' description of photography: "A photograph is a secret about a secret." (Bosworth). Like *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's final and most complete examination of his 'art', *Hamlet* is a profound meditation on the actor's craft and its relation to notions of the face and body and how, and to what purpose, these are (re)presented to the world.

Like the Ghost of the Father (and perhaps of the Son), the question of whether Hamlet is mad, or whether he is pretending to be mad, returns constantly, haunting the text as a discursive refrain. It begins in Act I, Scene II; King Claudius and Queen Gertrude

question Hamlet regarding his continued depression over his father's death. I shall quote a lengthy passage.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet. Not so my lord. I am too much in the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
 And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
 Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
 Thou know'st 'tis common – all that lives must die,
 Passing through nature to eternity

Hamlet. Ay Madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,
 Why seems it so particular with thee?

Hamlet. Seems, madam! Nay, it is; I know not seems.
 Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,
 Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
 That can denote me truly. These, indeed, seem;
 For they are actions that a man might play;

But I have that within which passes show –
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

(I,i,66-86)

The crux of the matter is laid out before us. Claudius thinks Hamlet is depressed, under dark clouds. Already a ghost himself, Hamlet is a shadow of his former self. Hamlet shrugs this comment off with a joke by saying that, on the contrary, he is too long in the sun, i.e, he is mad. Neither Gertrude nor Claudius are put off by this joke, not realizing that they are being put on. Gertrude thinks Hamlet ‘seems’ particularly perturbed at his father’s death. Hamlet’s grief appears to be *too* great, his seeming is overwrought, it is unseemly; what could possibly be the matter? Hamlet reinterprets Gertrude’s statement, and throws back at her the double sense of seems. He distinguishes between the ‘dejected haviour of the visage’, the wearing of black, the crying, and something that is inside him which cannot be shown, which surpasses the trappings of mere action. He implies a ‘real’ grief, a ‘true’ grief, which cannot be represented by ‘playing’ grief, which is also to say that no matter how much he may play at grieving, no matter how well he may act the grieving son, there will yet be some grief that remains unexpressed. No matter how deep and how dark the seemings of grief, they will never approach the grief that lies always within. And yet that grief, also, is a kind of appearance, for it is a grief that never fully arrives; it is the *ghost* of a grief, a grief spurred on by the Ghost yet always tardy, always returning but never arriving; *le revenant*. The truth will never out.

This truth that will never out leads us to the other seeming in the play, that is, seemliness. Hamlet is concerned with how he should *act*, as a son grieving over first the death, and what is later revealed as the murder of his father and the usurpation of his father's throne and his mother's bed, by his uncle, Claudius. It is a matter of how Hamlet chooses to act upon the truth he feels inside himself; how to act the good son, how to take revenge and when, what actions to take, and what act to put on. Indeed, Hamlet has a great deal of trouble distinguishing between action and acting, when everyone around him appears to be acting. Claudius, acting the Good King, implies that Hamlet's display of grief is unseemly; he is unimpressed with Hamlet's depression.

Claudius. ...to persever

In obstinate condolment is a course

Of impious stubbornness; tis unmanly grief;

It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,

A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,

An understanding simple and unschool'd;

(I,i,92-97)

Later, once Hamlet's grief has turned to an 'antic disposition', it is a matter of grief appearing to have unhinged him. He visits Ophelia, exhibiting all the signs of madness, trembling and pale, *as if* he had seen a ghost:

Ophelia. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,

Lord Hamlet, with his doublet unbrac'd,
 No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
 Ungart' red and down-gyred to his ankle;
 Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
 And with a look so piteous in purport
 As if he had been loosed out of hell
 To speak of horrors – he comes before me.
 (II,i,77-84)

This, too, is unseemly behaviour, and is simultaneously a seeming; his doublet unbrac'd, his stockings around his ankles, his knees knocking, Hamlet has broken all the codes by which sanity is known, and has re-coded himself as characteristically, seemingly, mad.

Around these seemings the drama revolves. Ruses multiply, play upon play. Act II scene 1 finds Polonius enjoining Reynaldo to travel to Paris to seek out Polonius' son Laertes' friends. There, he is to brag about Laertes' carousing ways, and to incite Laertes' friends into discussing his activities, in an attempt to ascertain whether Laertes really *does* have carousing ways. Reynaldo must put on a seeming, in order to find out if what Polonius suspects is true. Polonius then, for most of the rest of the play (and of his life, ironically), spends his time hidden behind one arras or another, faceless, *screened* from view, all ears, straining to decipher the truth of Hamlet's madness. Polonius himself *plays* the ghost, the hidden, the unseen, the being that watches from the shadows, and in so doing actually *becomes* a ghost, murdered in the trappings of his contrivance. Along with the

King and Queen, who join him in this endeavour to out the truth through contrivance and surveillance, he makes actors of the characters whose rooms he hides within; Ophelia, aware that her dealings with Hamlet are overheard, contrives to draw Hamlet into discussion of his love for her. Hamlet, who also seems to be aware that they may be overheard, or at the very least treats every conversation *as if* it may be overheard, and thus *acts himself acting mad*, accuses Ophelia of being two-faced, of making herself another face on top of the one God gave her. Her ‘paintings’ are implicated in this accusation of the duplicity of the face; in applying make-up she puts her ‘self’ on as she puts others on. This duplicity is earlier hinted at by Claudius, himself a two-faced murderer playing the good King, who from the corner of his mouth, the other side of his face, mutters in an aside that “the harlot’s cheek, beautied with plast’ring art, is not more ugly to the thing that helps it than is my deed to my most painted word” (III,i,51-53). Even earlier, a similar duplicity on the part of Gertrude is hinted at by the Ghost, who describes her as “my most seeming virtuous queen” (I,iv,46). Save for Horatio, and perhaps for the incidental characters in the play, the ‘mechanicals’ who are already mechanical, there is no face that is not already double, no character who is not already two-faced. All faces are double, each face is implicated in some ruse, some contrivance, some artifice, and it is this doubling that is at the root of appearance, and of seeming. Appearance is always-already artificial.¹¹

¹¹ As a brief aside, Béla Balázs, speaking of the face and the close-up in *Theory of the Film*, recounts a wonderful example of this same logic by which the face adds faces on top of itself in a play of simulation and dissimulation, and within a setting that is spectacular, that involves a hidden spectator. The scenario is so close to the scenario and tenor of *Hamlet*, and exemplifies the situation so clearly, that I shall quote at length:

Asta Nielsen once played a woman hired to seduce a rich young man. The man who hired her is watching the results from behind a curtain. Knowing that she is under observation, Asta Nielsen feigns love. She does it convincingly: the whole gamut of appropriate emotion is displayed in her face.

Hamlet's relationship to the Players, the theatre company that arrives at the castle, is similarly complex. It begins with Hamlet asking the Players to perform a speech that depicts the slaughter of Priam during the siege of Troy, and Hecuba's grief at the death of her husband. This speech is a model for the correct way to act upon the death of one's husband, the requisite explosion of grief. By extension, it is also a model for Hamlet's own grief, one which he fails to emulate, and which makes him feel all too keenly his failure. Indeed, the Player performs grief so well that Hamlet finds he must stop the play, overwrought by the apparent contradiction between the Player's feigned but volubly-expressed grief, and his own 'true' but tangled and inexpressible grief.

Hamlet. O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
 Is it not monstrous that this player here,
 But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
 Could force his soul so to his own conceit
 That from her working all his visage wann'd;
 Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
 A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

Nevertheless we are aware that it is only play-acting, that it is a sham, a mask. But in the course of the scene Asta Nielsen really falls in love with the young man. Her facial expression shows little change; she had been "registering" love all the time and done it well. How else could she now show that this time she was really in love? Her expression changes only by a scarcely perceptible and yet immediately obvious nuance – and what a few minutes before was a sham is now the sincere expression of a deep emotion. Then Asta Nielsen suddenly remembers that she is under observation. The man behind the curtain must not be allowed to read her face and learn that she is now no longer feigning, but really feeling love. So Asta now pretends to be pretending. Her face shows a new, by this time threefold, change. First she feigns love, then she genuinely shows love, and as she is not permitted to be in love in good earnest, her face again registers a sham, a pretence of love. But now it is this pretence that is a lie. Now she is lying that she is lying. And we can see all this clearly in her face, over which she has drawn two different masks. At such times an invisible face appears in front of the real one... (Báñez 265).

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do,

Had he the motive and cue for passion

That I have?

(II,ii,543-555)

Of particular note is the mechanistic model under which the actor is said to perform, a model we will return to shortly. The actor 'forces' his soul to his own conceit, he labours over it, and in so doing puts his soul to 'work' in re-making his face; the actor sets a number of changes in motion, changes that follow mechanically one after the other, as if he were following the installation instructions for a prosthetic limb.

The play that Hamlet asks the players to perform, "The Murder of Gonzago", also functions as a model of action, although not this time a model for how to act, but a model of actions past; the play depicts the murder of Hamlet's father as described by the Ghost. Hamlet asks Horatio to observe Claudius closely during the performance of the murder, after which "we will both our judgements join in censure of his seeming" (III,ii,84-85). Hamlet's play, as a seeming that is a representation of the 'truth', is designed to out the truth from behind Claudius' seeming; the truth, if and when it appears, will be a function of a fabrication.

Within the pages of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare unfolds a drama of seemings and appearances that grows exponentially as the play progresses; plays within plays within plays, actors acting actors acting. Appearances are not merely deceiving; appearances can hide appearances which hide appearances; the deception, if you can still call it that, happens again and again and again. And yet, seeming continues to be a vital part of this process of assaying the truth of someone's appearance. Seeming is also something all the characters do as a matter of course; it is their *modus operandi*, and the ability to navigate the intricacies of appearance and seeming is a vital skill in the Shakespearean world, as it was in the world described by Richard Sennett at the start of the previous chapter. Seeming is fundamental; while seeming is about the play of surfaces, it is experienced on a much 'deeper' level within one's self, it exists up against that which 'passes show'. Further, seeming is locked within a kind of 'face-off' with the concept of truth, it is the necessary corollary of truth, the flipside, the hidden face of truth.

Seeming is an act; as such, it involves and invokes a certain staging, and a complex *mise-en-scene*. When seeming is staged, it also involves a screen, in two senses; there is a screen on which the seeming must appear, and a screen which hides the truth of the seeming, which may in turn turn out to be a seeming of another sort. There are screens for display, for projection, and screens for secrets, for protection, and this double function of the screen is built into the process of seeming and appearance. The face, therefore, as always a doubly-iterated thing, a palimpsest, a Janus-head, it hides *as* it reveals, it is hidden and revealed at the same time. The role of the ghost in *Hamlet* typifies this hiding revelation, this appearance that makes secret. After the ghost's penultimate visitation,

when Hamlet has spoken with it, Hamlet demands of Horatio and Marcellus that they do not speak of what they have seen: “Never make known what you have seen tonight” (I,iv,143). The ghost is immediately put into reserve, suspended, it cannot be spoken of. Later, when it appears to Hamlet in his mother’s chamber, it appears only to Hamlet; it maintains its silence and its secrecy at the same time as it appears, it is both hidden and revealed. Thus in all aspects of the play, the problematic of seeming and appearing is a matter of the interplay between secrecy and revelation.

Giorgio Agamben, in *Means Without Ends*, precisely captures this secret revelation of the face’s appearance, using language that seems even to be intended for a discussion of seeming in *Hamlet*:

We may call tragicomedy of appearance the fact that the face uncovers only and precisely inasmuch as it hides, and hides to the extent to which it uncovers. In this way, the appearance that ought to have manifested human beings becomes for them instead a resemblance that betrays them and in which they can no longer recognize themselves. (94)

In Agamben’s analysis of the face, it is precisely *because* its function is communication, openness, and revelation, that the face also keeps in reserve, hides, makes secret. Agamben’s logic is profoundly deconstructive; the *truth* of the face is the *necessity* of seeming and appearance:

Precisely because the face is solely the location of truth, it is also and immediately the location of simulation and of an irreducible impropriety... Because human beings neither are nor have to be any essence, any nature, or any specific destiny, their condition is the most empty and the most insubstantial of all: it is the truth. (Agamben 94-5)

Actors: The Opposite of People

Having delved once into the facile and flighty world of appearances, let us now return to our Avon quote. “Rejuvi-Cell Complex makes surface skin cells appear to act younger.” I find this extremely exciting. There is a new kind of skin cream that can make skin cells ‘appear to act younger’. On the surface, *sur la face*, such a claim *seems* to make perfect sense; any consumer of popular culture will be equipped with the ‘tools’ to process such a statement. Or rather, such a claim makes perfect sense when articulated in terms of a public desire for youth and a repudiation of the appearance of aging that itself makes perfect sense *on the surface*, on and in relation to the surface. It also makes sense in terms of a certain fantasy of the technological cure, the patented, trade-marked machine-panacea, legitimated through its assumption of a progressive, beneficent science and a legal system of performative writing, *litterae patents*.

There is a *mise en scene* to this scenario that is intriguing. It is surface skin cells that are acting; the skin cells are acting on the surface, on the face as on a stage. Perhaps they were put there to act, put on the stage, the scene, to act; perhaps that is their role, perhaps

they are *actors*. The *mise en scene* is concurrently a *mise en visage*, a putting on of the face as of a play. The face is always-already a performance, it is put-on; perhaps it is even a comedy, a put-on, *une face*. Think of the common phrase, to ‘put on one’s face’; to pull the face from a jar, from cold-storage, to apply make-up to the surface of the face, to make-up the face, to create the face, to make it ready for public display, to make one ready to appear. The face is simultaneously a thing that is put on – a play, a fancy - and a thing on which something else acts, a thing which something else entirely is ‘put on’ – a stage.

The face of the actor has always been a contentious thing, a thing over which much ontological debate has been spent. In his book *The Player’s Passion*, Joseph Roach gives a history of the ‘theatricalization of the human body’, beginning in the seventeenth century and ending in the early twentieth. He also concentrates in large part on the actor’s main stock-in-trade; the expression of emotion, the ability to move an audience by appearing moved him/herself, which perforce implicates the face (and subsequently the hands) as the generator and ‘home’ of this emotion. Already, emotion is something that is both natural and put-on, artificial. Of great interest is the discussion of the paranoia that the actor garnered among seventeenth century audiences, who were superstitious of the actor’s ability to mechanically (or magically) ‘control’ the audience’s passions, and to express emotions dictated by an external force and not necessarily an inner volition. It was as if some ghost, some God, some machine, or some strange mixture of all three, were hovering above the stage, overseeing the entire drama, pulling the strings not merely of the actor, but of the audience themselves. The actor him or herself, caught in

the middle of this drama of deistic machines, became the focal point for a profound sense of ontological confusion. We can recall the words of the leader of the acting troupe in Tom Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*: "We're actors; we're the opposite of people".

Various historical paradigms that have been used to explain the derivation and expression of the passions are explored throughout the book, but what is most important is that they all in some way fall within the category of science; indeed, the subtitle of Roach's book is "Studies in the Science of Acting". Searching for suitable bodies of knowledge to explain how an actor's passions can be both called forth and expressed effectively, seventeenth and eighteenth century theories of acting inevitably took recourse to the science of the time, which unlike today, was a combination of physiology, medicine and philosophy, and further, was intrinsically mechanical.

Roach notes that in the universe described by Galileo and Newton, the words *mechanical* and *natural* became synonymous (60).¹² As in the informatic worldview of bioinformatics and biotechnology, the supposedly 'natural' world was one enormous machine populated by many kinds of lesser machines, human and animal, all of which were constructed of the same substance and which operated according to generalizable physical laws. The clockwork universe presupposed by such a theory found its echo in

¹² It is this conflation between the mechanical and the natural that allows us to make sense of one of the most quixotic statements in *Hamlet*. Hamlet signs his letter to Ophelia with the following lines: "Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET" (II,ii,122-123). Within a modern discourse this statement would appear exceedingly strange – what is this 'machine' Hamlet is operating? Within a Renaissance discourse, however, it begins to make sense; simply, the machine is Hamlet's body, his physical form, this 'thing', as in the French use of *machin* to denote a 'thing'.

the many automatons that populated the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which Descartes used as metaphors for his version of the human body.

Here water acts the part of a spring in a double sense: as a reservoir and as a medium of propulsion. It symbolizes the hidden mechanical cause of the visible effect, the means whereby “this statue” or “terrestrial machine” - for that is how Descartes conventionally referred to the body - moves and emotes. When the spring is pushed, the machine stirs. (Roach 63)

Although on one hand the Cartesian cogito has come to be seen as the paradigm of the Enlightenment subject, which specifically sets up the human subject as a ‘self’, Descartes’ mechanistic model of the body has ironically come to delineate a very different model of subjectivity, one which unites mind and body, human and machine into a scientific and *knowably* scientific mode of being. His model of a machine body animated by a ‘divine spark’, a ‘fire without light’, and controlled from a distance by the free-floating, self-present mind (what has come to be called the ‘ghost in the machine’ theory, or *interactive dualism*), came to act as a primary model for explaining the human passions, for it postulated a mechanical causal link between the Idea of the passions and their outward manifestation in the body. Roach recounts a bizarre literalization of this mechanical causality; significantly, it is within sight of a ghost, in the terrible presence of a ghost, the ghost of the Father no less, that this takes place:

The name of one Perkins, hair-dresser and wig-maker, enters into a history of the eighteenth century stage on the strength of a technical contribution to David Garrick's *Hamlet*. The actor employed his services to enliven the Prince's first encounter with his father's ghost, a scene in which Garrick's start made Lichtenberg's flesh creep, set poor Partridge's knees to knocking, and moved Dr. Johnson to express concern over the effect of the shock on the ghost. When other spectators marvelled that Hamlet's hair actually seemed to stand on end as the ghost appeared, they testified to a fact. The ingenious Perkins had engineered a mechanical wig to simulate the precise physiognomy of mortal dread. On the line "Look, my lord, it comes," the hairs of this remarkable appliance rose up obligingly at the actor's command. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, flipped his wig. This sudden perturbation astonished Garrick's audiences and has embarrassed his biographers, who have found in Perkins' fright wig a cause for baffled amusement, and apologetic muddle - just the sort of claptrap that the actor was, alas, "not above." (58)

Although Garrick's mechanical rendering of 'mortal dread' was more likely to have produced a somewhat comic effect than any real terror, the fact that a mechanical wig was not 'out of the question' testifies to the strong influence Cartesian mind-body causality had on eighteenth century theatre, and theatrical theory.

Descartes' identification of the six primary passions - wonder, love, hatred, joy, desire and sadness - and their strict manifestation in a set of mechanical bodily actions or expressions, found a literal representation in the many treatises on acting published in the

eighteenth century which treated expression as a science. For instance, like many other works of the time, Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* (1749) included illustrations of the universal passions, which left no doubt as to the 'natural' physical expression of each and every passion (Roach 140), and how to reproduce them. Similarly, Aaron Hill developed a science of expression in which a passion, conceived in the Imagination, finds manifestation first in the face, and then spreads by an inexorable logic to the rest of the body and the voice:

Previous to art's first act - (till then *all vain*)

Print the *ideal pathos* on the *brain*:

Feel the thought's image on the *eyeball* roll;

Behind that *window* sits th' attentive *SOUL*

Wing'd, at *her* beck, th' obedient *MUSCLES* fly,

Bent, or *relaxing*, to the varied *eye*:

Press'd, moderate, lenient, *VOICE*'s organ' sound,

To each felt impulse, tones the tuneful round:

Form'd to the *nerves*, concurring *MEIN* partakes,

So, the *mov'd* actor *Moves* - and passion shakes.

(Roach 81)

Beginning with an 'imprinting' on the brain, a moment of originary inscription, of programming, the actor unfolds a sequence of finely tuned mechanical relays; the actor is

put into series, put into order; further, it is from the face of the actor that this whole procession of mechanistic movements and effects spreads.¹³

This is not to imply that it was *only* actors who were held to exhibit such an affinity; Descartes' mind-body-machine and Julien Offray de la Mettrie's later articulation of *l'homme machine* were models to be applied to the whole of humanity, they were part of the grand Enlightenment quest-narrative for the knowledge of Man, no longer tied strictly to a religious or Deistic cosmogony. However, it is significant that the automata of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were conceived frequently within a theatrical or performative context. Vaucanson's automata were all performers - a flautist, a tambourine player, a mandolin player - they were all built to appear, to perform, to appear in the performance. Similarly, the Salle des Machines of 1660s Paris was a machine-theatre based on the apparent theatrical value of "tangible objects propelled into motion by unseen physical forces" (Roach 62). As we noted earlier in our discussion of the writing machine, the mechanical has a performative, specular or spectacular dimension, it is always a theatre, it catches the eye, it draws one in; it is visible, it appears, it has an appearance.

While on one hand audiences of the day received such an equation with no qualms about 'dehumanization', on the other hand there was still held to be something disturbing about the actor. This was a function of the fact that the actor, in miming certain affects for the edification of an audience, not only affected the audience in the same way that a book or

¹³ We could also note that the long history and international variations of Punch and Judy puppet shows, shadow plays and marionette theatre further emphasizes the connection between automata and the actor.

a film will affect a reader/spectator, but called into question the expression of the passions in everyday life. What is 'real' when the actor can produce 'reality' on call? Can a distinction between feigned emotion and genuine feeling any longer be made when there are actors who can simulate genuine feeling so well that they find themselves unable to return to 'normal' after the performance? (Roach 49). The eternal conundrum of Hamlet: "*He acts crazy so well, he must be mad.*" In other words, when does the performance end?

The actor, then, and most importantly the face of the actor, invokes suspicion over the process by which it appears, and by which it performs. The face of the actor has a spectral dimension that is intrinsically mechanical, invoking a range of uncanny doublings and repetitions. The *mise en visage* of the actor's face is concurrently a putting-on of the face, a making-up, and a kind of theatre of machines, a *ballet mécanique*. It is not so much the action of the actor that is the problem; this can be taken as entertainment, passed off, passed over, as the example of Garrick's mechanical wig demonstrates; rather, it is the appearance of this acting that is problematic, that calls forth a question, and that requires the mobilization of a precession of spectres.

Let us look again at the claims of Anew Pure O2 Oxygenating Cream: "Rejuvi-Cell Complex makes surface skin cells appear to act younger". We can see that there is now a conundrum consisting of a kind of doubling or repetition of appearances. How do skin cells 'appear' to act? What is this 'appearance' of acting? Assuming that skin cells are normally already acting, are already actors, and that this is normal, how do they then

‘appear’ to act? Appearing to act suggests that it is possible to both act, and appear to act, to mime or mimic the process of acting. All the world’s a stage; actors play actors playing actors. As ‘human’ beings, we are all already actors, our faces, our surface skin-cells, demanding that the play must go on.

Perhaps appearing and acting cancel each other out, two falses making a true; perhaps the appearance of acting is in fact ‘the real thing’. Does a double simulation re-constitute the real? Or perhaps the skin cells were appearing and acting all the time already, and this was their natural state; they were always involved in some kind of simulation, or dissimulation, and the only real difference between the skin cells prior to the application of Rejuvi-Cell Complex, and after, is that before they appeared to be acting older, and now, they appear to be acting younger. At any rate, the appearance of acting has remained the same. So perhaps ‘being’ was always just a ‘seeming’. It makes it a great deal easier to change what something *is*, when it has been established that what it *is* is nothing fixed, nothing truly formed, merely a seeming, an appearance, a surface waiting for re-surfacing.

However, what if ‘appearing to act’ were in fact a matter of acting poorly? Surely ‘good’ acting is seamless, invisible, a seeming that is not a seeming, but is truly a being; good acting transcends appearance, it requires only a ‘first sight’. It is always a jarring experience when watching television or film, and it suddenly occurs to you that you are watching a group of actors; their bodies continue outside the frame, their lives run parallel or perpendicular (or downright contrary) to the lives they are depicting. The crew

is bored, the set is fake, the snow is melting under the lights. Perhaps it was nothing more than a poorly expressed statement; a smile that didn't quite sit right, eyes that failed to reflect what the mouth was saying, an eyebrow that failed to raise. A bad script, a daytime soap, a ludicrous turn of events. Either way, the spell has been broken and now you are witnessing the appearance of acting; the façade, the performance. In some decisive way the made-up is shown to be made-up, and the multitudinous machines of making are suddenly exposed.

We can think this appearance of acting as a form of 'disingenuousness'. To be disingenuous is to be insincere, to lack candour, to be not ingenuous. To be ingenuous is, apparently, to be innocent, naïve, artless, without artifice. Ingenuousness requires only the 'first sight'; you do not need to look any deeper than what is on the surface. Ingenuousness is the truth of the phenomenon *as* phenomenon.

And yet, I have always suspected the ingénue of disingenuousness. I have never been able to truly separate the idea of ingenuousness from the idea of ingenuity, which ironically inflects the idea of inventiveness and a display of genius, with the figure of artifice once again. Etymologically, both ingenuity and ingenuousness share a derivation from the Latin root *ingenium*, which like the Enlightenment science we have just discussed bundles together the seemingly opposed concepts of 'nature' and 'contrivance'; 'engine', a mechanical contrivance, shares the same root. Ingenuousness, then, as a kind of innocence that is haunted by its other; an innocent artifice, a playful machine. *Disingenuousness* as all of this *plus* the failure or breakdown of this machinery of

innocence; the artifice is seen through, exposed as an artifice; the act appears *as* an act, the phenomenon belies its phenomenality, appearing as, precisely, an appearance. First sight gives way to, demands the invocation of, second sight, the second look, looking again, seeing beyond the surface. The appearance of acting is an act that requires closer examination, an act that fails to convince, a poor show.

Working With Wax: Botox and the Archive

The appearance of acting, the exposure of the apparatus, the disingenuousness of ingenuity; all of this makes us think about one of the cosmetic industry's latest triumphs, and a treatment that has taken the acting community by storm: Botox. We could no doubt make many of these comments about any of the other facial rejuvenation techniques on the market today, and indeed we have already spoken of both reconstructive surgery and anti-aging cremes, albeit briefly. However, Botox brings to the fore our concerns in a particularly ironic manner; the use of one of the world's most toxic substances as a 'cure' for aging, and thus for life itself, is too fascinating an anomaly to pass up.

At the 2003 Oscar Awards, a little-known production team from Melbourne Australia won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film, for a film entitled *Harvie Krumpet* (2003). Afterwards, the producer, Melanie Coombs, noted that attending the Oscars was "like being at Madame Tussaud's except they were live people" (Loane 25). Coombs' comment appears in a short opinion article by Sally Loane in *The Sun Herald*, entitled "Come on Mum, it's Botox Time". Loane contextualizes Coombs' statement in terms of

the effects of Botox, and its recent dramatic appearance in circles such as entertainment, fashion, beauty and Hollywood cinema. From Coombs' comments, an image emerges of a group of actors who, as a result of their use of Botox (or whatever other cosmetic treatments are or were in vogue), no longer look like 'live' people. Coombs knows they are 'live' people, but they *appear as if* they are not. No names are named, and no fingers directly pointed; they are a 'they', the cumulative effect of the (hyper)reality of a grouping of stars in the same space, a constellation. Together, they are subjects of the cinematic apparatus of the face, and whoever 'they' are, to the eye of an independent Australian film producer, they appear as if they are characters from Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, caricatures of themselves, testaments to their own memories *while they are still alive*. Interestingly, these actors *appear to be actors*.

It is a throwaway comment, a metaphor, an observation, nothing more. It is also worth noting that *Harvie Krumpet*, the film Coombs produced, was a claymation film. Already accustomed to seeing malleable material in motion, perhaps Coombs finds all actors a little wax-like, a little statuesque. Nevertheless, some significance adheres to her comment, for we have already encountered one group of beings of wax in this thesis, the 'waxworks' of *Sunset Boulevard*. The 'waxworks', silent-film-stars whose images have long since ceased to circulate, are now their own museums, living testament to their own past. Wax, as a malleable substance that is easily moulded into a given form, and the material of choice for the imitable Madame Tussaud, has a string of cultural connotations that have to do with the simulation of the human form and the archivization of the appearances of luminaries. Further, the drawcard of Madame Tussaud's is that the

characters are extremely life-like, that some reality-effect floats about them. Wax is used to preserve the brightness of stars after the light has gone out, to enshrine their memory in a substance perfectly suited to the 'impression of reality' that constitutes such a use. Yet, this life-like-ness is simultaneously a death-in-life-ness. The character is frozen, cut-down in the midst of life. If we look closely, we can begin to see the marks of the sculptor's chisel; the flesh has the waxen air of a fresh corpse. Wax records what is past and gone; it was the material of choice when instruments for recording sound, such as the wax cylinder, were first invented. Wax has also many times been used as a metaphor in descriptions of memory. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates gives the example of memory as a wax tablet in our minds, which receives impressions as we perceive the world (X 191c-196c). Similarly, the underlying material of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad, the apparatus with which Freud compares the human mind and memory, is wax (Freud *vol 19* 227).

With this string of waxworks' in mind, Coombs' comments begin to take on a larger resonance. Botox and the face of the actor; actors and wax; wax and the impression of reality; all these things and memory, and thus the archive. What does Botox have to do with the archive, and with the idea that the archive is a form of writing, and of memory? And, given the terminology that we have now gathered together here – writing, memory, archive - what might a reading of Derrida's discussions of the archive in *Archive Fever* do for our understanding of the face?

Botox is the brandname of a cosmetic treatment, 'botulinum toxin type A', produced by multinational pharmaceutical company Allergan. Botox is injected into muscles around

areas of the face that form wrinkles or lines – corners of the eyes, between the eyebrows, around the mouth, the neck – and for a period of up to 6 months it ‘freezes’ the muscles so that the face is no longer able to perform the movements that produce wrinkles. Since its introduction into cosmetic use in 1987, Botox has become the most popular cosmetic treatment (surgical or nonsurgical) in the US. In 2003 in the US alone, 2,272,080 Botox injections were performed (*Biotech Business Week* March 15 2004). At an average cost of more than \$500US, Botox is well over a billion-dollar industry.

Botox is a highly diluted form of botulinum toxin, one of the deadliest and most powerful neurotoxins known. Botulism, a disease contracted from canned foods that have been poorly preserved, is caused by botulinum toxin; often fatal, it causes muscular paralysis by blocking “the release of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular junction” (Misra). Botulinum toxin has also been used as a potential agent in chemical and biological warfare. The Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, perpetrators of the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack, manufactured botulinum toxin as part of their biological weapons arsenal (Lifton 186). They even went as far as dispersing the toxin in public areas of Tokyo three times between 1990 and 1995, although failing in each case to inflict the damage they were intending (Lifton 187-188). Despite Aum’s failure, Botulinum toxin has powerful cultural connotations, as well as proven function, as a dangerous, paralysing poison. However, it should also be noted that, within the apocalyptic system of Aum Shinrikyo, botulinum toxin was also a kind of cure, as it was part of Aum’s arsenal of biological and chemical weapons. Aum’s overall goal, or more specifically, the goal of Aum’s guru Shoko Asahara, was to bring about an Armageddon or apocalypse as a purification of the

world. Robert Jay Lifton's fascinating analysis of Aum Shinrikyo and Shoko Asahara, *Destroying the World to Save It*, builds this simple logic directly into its title. Although the implementation of botulinum toxin never succeeded in its aims, the role it was intended to play was always a double role of creator/destroyer, and poison/cure (Lifton 59). As such, botulinum toxin qualifies as the perfect expression of the logic of the *pharmakon*, the poison that is also a cure; for Aum Shinrikyo, botulinum toxin cures *at the same time* as it poisons, these movements are one and the same.

Already a poison and cure within Aum's apocalyptic framework, botulinum toxin has also been uncovered as a 'miracle cure' by the scientific and medical community. In the late 1980s, a diluted form of the toxin was found to be useful in treating patients with muscle-spasm conditions, such as cerebral palsy (Brandt 59). Since that time, many other medical uses for Botox have been discovered; it is licensed for use to treat facial spasms, cervical dystonia, spasticity, and excessive sweating, amongst other conditions (Brandt 59; Misra). In 1987, two Vancouver doctors, Jean and Alistair Carruthers, discovered that Botox could also be used to 'clear' wrinkles by blocking the muscles that cause them. Botox "blocks the nerve impulses that control muscle movement by restricting the patient's abilities to contract the facial muscles. No contraction of the muscle equals no movement of the skin lying over it and no movement equals no wrinkles" (Brandt 58-59). As we shall discuss however, Botox is more than just a chemical poison that cures various ills. The cost of each treatment, the brevity of its effects and the repetition of treatment this brevity requires, allows us to understand Botox again as a *pharmakon*, as a

substance that poisons while it cures, that negates its function as it functions and, as Socrates might expect, that writes at the same time as it erases.

‘No movement equals no wrinkles’; Botox sells itself, hardly needing the no-doubt considerable resources of Allergan’s marketing department when its premise is so self-evident, so clear and unequivocal, and when its performance so succinctly meets the needs of the appearance industry. No movement: no wrinkles. No wrinkles: no worries. “I haven’t frowned since 1987. I have a picture of it” states Jean Carruthers in a 2002 interview in *The Vancouver Magazine* (Smith). “The goal is that she won’t be able to raise her eyebrows” explains Dr Patricia Wexler to *Time* journalist Bruce Handy (Handy 72). Wrinkles are one of the ‘signs’ of aging, a process expressly forbidden, demonized even, by the appearance industry. They are signs that appear on the face over time, traced there by the expressions that mark one’s passage through time and through life; one’s facial expressions. Botox renders one’s face unable to form certain expressions, which therefore reduces the likelihood that wrinkles will appear. For most people, the inability to form certain facial expressions is apparently not a problem; indeed it is a boon. Maggie, Dr Wexler’s patient, is not concerned about her frozen forehead. “People aren’t that observant...They don’t say, ‘Hey - you can’t raise your eyebrows’” (Handy 72). Dr Wexler concurs: “The upper one-third of the face doesn’t have to be mobile for normal facial expression” (Handy 72). There is a flipside, however, to this inability to form certain facial expressions; and that is, simply, the inability to form certain facial expressions. There is (at least) one group of people whose livelihoods rely on the ability to form facial expressions: actors.

As we have already discussed, the face of the actor is a complex thing, invoking a mechanical doubling or technological training of the face in the science of expression. It is from the face that expression, and thus character, and thus the scene of acting, springs, and there is always an apparatus surrounding the production of the actor's face. The face of the actor must *work*; it must be put to work in the service of the play or film, and it must function according to principles of expression. It must work in the eyes of the audience or spectator, which is to say, it must produce the truth of the act, and in Baudry's words, give the audience the 'impression of reality'. Ironically, it appears that the use of Botox in the entertainment industry has put the lie to this impression of reality. Actors can now be caught in the act of acting; like Coombs' wax figures, they can be seen to be acting themselves. Recent accounts of Botox use in the film industry have focused on the problems casting agents and film directors face when auditioning actors, who can no longer emote as required. Of Botoxed actors, Paul de Freitas of the British Casting Directors' Guild notes: "We waste a great deal of time weeding them out at the audition stage. We watch them on film and when you get the close-up, there's simply no subtlety of emotion at all." (*MX Magazine*, Feb 10, 2003). London casting agent Jeremy Zimmermann had this problem with Mickey Rourke: "I had to veto Mickey for the leading role in a British film I'm working on. I had to explain to his agent that we wouldn't be using him because his face looks so frozen after his recent operations...He looks so strange now" (*NW Magazine*, April 21, 2003). Martin Scorsese and Baz Luhrmann are two film directors who have publicly voiced their opposition to the use of Botox in the film industry, frustrated by difficulties in finding actors able to express non-

verbal emotion, especially anger. As Luhrmann notes, “their faces can’t really move properly” (*MX Magazine*, Feb 10, 2003).

Their faces frozen in a caricature of untroubled, unwrinkled youth, like surface skin-cells after Rejuvi-Cell Complex these actors now *appear to act younger*; the apparatus of appearance is laid bare, and it is worn upon, and takes the place of, the face. Moreover, these actors now appear to act ‘like’ themselves. Denise Chamian, casting director for Tim Burton’s 2003 film *Big Fish*, notes: “You look through magazines and watch television and you see that a lot of these women don’t even look like themselves anymore” (Weiner 34). While the idea of looking or not looking like oneself is a common epithet used to describe someone, a prince perhaps, who seems out of sorts, we cannot ignore the aporetic nature of this notion. How is it possible to not look like oneself, unless one is not oneself? And, how could one not be oneself? Such aporetic questions aside, if we take it as given that it is possible to not look like some publicly circulated image of oneself, this also implies that in the normal course of things one in fact looks *like* this image of oneself, and that it is an image which will always precede one’s self, representing oneself from the beginning, an apparatus of appearing *like* oneself that conditions any notion of ‘being’ oneself.

The apparatus of appearance, here, consists of a treatment in which the wrinkles and lines of the face are temporarily erased, and the ability to form them is temporarily blocked. As we have already mentioned, wrinkles are one of the signs of aging; wrinkles are traces left by time and experience on the face. Signs, traces, and the impressionable face;

wrinkles are thus a kind of writing and of memory, which Botox purports to erase. Advertisements for Botox and other facial treatments are explicit in their description of the evidence of life and time on a face as writing, as a system of marks, and moreover, as a writing that is out of control, an *undue pressure* which must be put in check. “Your toughest wrinkle between your brows took 10 years, 2 mortgages, 153 car repairs to get, and ten minutes to do something about it” (Botoxcosmetic.net). “[E]very single one of the 15,000 facial expressions that you make each day is damaging your skin” (Skindoctors). These texts specifically place the face at the centre of some automatic recording device, ceaselessly recording little sadnesses, little joys, *petits morts*, *grands mals*. The everyday event, the quotidian fact of existence in time and space, is positioned as something that must be *survived*, an aberrant *condition*, something which marks and mars the face, always distancing it from the reified, pure, uncluttered, unmarked surface of the *ideal* or imagined face, the face that is out of time, before and after time, always to-come; the face of the future.

What is this interest in reducing the face’s ability to emote, and thus *preventing the event*? What is so wrong with frowning? With raising one’s eyebrows? With smiling? All of which is to say; what is so wrong with *ex-expression*, and how is it that the act of *expressing* - a sending out, an outering – has come to be read and simultaneously vilified as an *im*-pressing – imprinting, marking, writing? These essentially ‘normal’ acts become deviant when they are seen as forms of writing that do damage; the face is always able to have damage done to it, it is always in a state of being damaged, by the sun, by frowning, by smiling, by its *self*. By its very passage through time the face is in great danger, so

fragile, so easily cracked, so easily broken. This face, this blank mask of death-in-life, dies as it is written. We can thus treat the face as a 'text' of some sort, a biological surface or substrate upon which time, experience, life, and events, inscribe marks of one sort or another. Somewhere, sometime, there is a 'hand' that marks, an invisible hand, a hand with intention, an authorial hand, or perhaps a non-authorial hand, an *auctorial* hand, a non-directed, non-authoring hand; a channel hand, a hand channelling time indiscriminately. And this writing – in the contemporary understanding of it at least - destroys as it creates, impresses as it expresses.

We have already discussed various ways in which the face is written, or inscribed. The abstract machine of faciality inscribes the face with type and character in order that it can pass, that it can be processed; furthermore, this inscription is iterative, part of the ongoing process of materialization and appearance. Faciality traits are coded, distributed upon the white wall of the face, and interpreted through this process. The face is made-up, put-on, screened, projected. This, indeed, is the process of impression. Here, the face is subject to another kind of writing, a writing that is simultaneously internal to the functioning of the face, and external to it, both of which are nevertheless part of the fundamental state of being in the world. This writing is an act performed by the face itself; it smiles, it frowns. It is also the act performed upon the face by the world and by life itself, the aforementioned mortgages and car repairs, sun damage, wind damage and so on. In each case the result is a writing that, literally, marks time, which is also to suggest that this writing on the face has something to do with an 'archive', which firstly we read as a 'text'.

Common understandings of the archive revolve around the collecting of records. The *Collins English Dictionary* defines 'archive' as "1) a collection of records of or about an institution, family, etc. 2) a place where such records are kept. 3) to store (documents, data, etc.) in an archive or other repository". Archives typify the recording or epiphylogenetic function of writing, they exploit writing as a mechanism for the storage of ideas and time, and thus of memory. The face is an archive inasmuch as it stores and displays the marks of time and experience for each individual. It is a visible, 'live' memory, borne out of the stuff of life and lived everyday; it is personal, yet it is public, it is there for all to see. It is also in some way a representation of an interior archive, for the face displays on the outside what has gone on, and is going on, on the inside; the eyes as 'windows to the soul'. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida positions his discussion of the 'psychoanalytic archive' squarely inbetween the archive of psychoanalytic works that Freud has left as his own 'impression' on culture, scholarship and medicine, and the archive of the psychic apparatus that Freud theorized, which functions on the tracing of psychic impressions. The archive is thus to be understood as a physical collection of records *and* a psychic apparatus, and the analysis of the latter has conditioned a great deal of the content of the former. Derrida's text contains analysis of a number of Freud's writings, but most importantly, it recalls for us the notion of the psychic apparatus outlined by Freud in his "Note Upon the Mystic Writing-Pad". It also recalls Derrida's own earlier analysis of the "Note" in "Freud and the Scene of Writing".

In the “Note”, Freud describes the functioning of the psychic apparatus by way of a comparison to the functioning of a childrens’ toy, the Mystic Writing Pad or *Wunderblock*. The Mystic Writing Pad is a wax slab covered by a sheet of wax paper with a sheet of transparent celluloid on top. A ‘pointed stylus’ is used to make impressions on the celluloid; where the wax paper is forced into contact with the wax slab, dark marks appear. When one lifts the wax paper and celluloid from the wax slab, the marks disappear, leaving a clean writing surface once again. However, traces of what has been written can still be seen if one examines the surface of the wax slab. This double function of a surface with unlimited receptive capacity, and a substrate for the permanent storage of traces, is compared to the psychic apparatus, which is also defined (by Freud) by this double function; the psychic apparatus is said to consist of the perceptual system (*Pcpt.-Cs*), which receives perceptions but retains no permanent trace of them, and ‘mnemic systems’ (both ‘memory’ and ‘the unconscious’ are implicated in these systems), which lie ‘behind’ the perceptual system and from it receive and preserve traces of excitations (Freud, *vol.19* 228). Thus Freud explains the psychic apparatus by way of an analogy with a technical apparatus, and both apparatuses present us with an image of the archive. The psychic archive preserves traces of excitations – memories – as the wax slab preserves traces of earlier writings.

Freud takes his analogy further, arguing that the periodicity of writing and subsequent erasure that constitutes the functioning of the *Wunderblock*, is like the ‘current’ of ‘cathectic innervations’ sent from the mnemic system to the perceptual system. Freud asks us to picture two hands engaged with the Mystic Writing Pad. One hand writes on

the surface, thus bringing the two levels of the apparatus into contact, while another periodically lifts the wax paper from the substrate; at this moment, what has been written on the surface is erased and what has been preserved in the substrate is revealed (Freud, *vol.19* 232). Freud uses this picture of a periodic and temporal spacing to describe the movements of consciousness:

It is as though the unconscious stretches out feelers, through the medium of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.*, towards the external world and hastily withdraws them as soon as they have sampled the excitations coming from it...I further [have] a suspicion that this discontinuous method of functioning of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* lies at the bottom of the origin of the concept of time (*vol.19* 231).

Two aspects of this scenario must be emphasized. Firstly, Freud argues that consciousness consists in this ‘flickering-up and passing-away’ of perception, and that in the periods when there is no contact between the layers of the psychic apparatus, “consciousness is extinguished” (*vol.19* 231). Secondly, as Freud also mentions in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, there is a suspicion that time is experienced as a function of this periodic ‘sampling’ of the world by the feelers of the unconscious (Freud, *Beyond* 54).¹⁴ Significantly, this experience of time, which is also consciousness, is a function of writing, for it is a function of the moments when the wax paper is impressed upon the

¹⁴ Although such a connection is perhaps a function of the vagaries of translation, it is worth noting the close relation of ‘sampling’ as employed by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, to the ‘sampling’ employed by digital technologies. Digital audio recording technologies, for example, also ‘sample’ the world by approximating minute chunks of it and reconstituting them numerically. The greater the speed at which this sampling takes place (i.e., *Hertz*), the more ‘real’ the recording sounds. Variability in the speed of sampling will result in variability in the quality (or ‘reality’) of the sound, just as, logically, variability in the sampling of the world by the feelers of consciousness will result in variability of the experience of time, and of the world.

wax slab, which is to say when the perceptual and mnemonic systems meet and when memory *traces* are preserved. As can be expected, Derrida finds in Freud's insistence on the psychic trace, a moment in which writing as technical supplement is found to condition the very functioning of the biological system it supposedly supplements:

Temporality as spacing will be not only the horizontal discontinuity in a chain of signs, but writing as the interruption and restoration of contact between the various depths of psychical levels...We find neither the continuity of a line nor the homogeneity of a volume; only the differentiated duration and depth of a stage [*scène*], and its spacing (Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing" 111).

On this stage, in this *scène*, this theatre of re-presentation, writing conditions time and consciousness as the space between tracings, and the archive records time as the spacing between recordings, between inscriptions. Archives need time; they exist in it and of it; there is a temporality of the archive and it functions on the periodicity of inscriptions, of impressions and expressions.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida enumerates various etymologies and connotations for the word 'archive', which further inflect the archive with a number of interesting contexts. Derrida begins with the beginning, with the *arkhē*, government, which coordinates the double senses of commencement, and commandment, to *begin*, and to *rule*, both of which are found in the word *arkhein* (1). The *arkhē* thus governs by both topological and nomological principles, principles of space and of law. A later term, *arkheion*, refers to

the repository of official records, which is also the home or domicile of the *arkhon*, the ruling magistrate (2). Thus again, the nomological principle acquires topological control; the letters of the law are stored in the house of the ruler. Derrida further inflects this domiciliation of the archive, with the sense of a gathering together of signs, a cohering or ordering of signs which has to do with ensuring that there is nothing which is out of place, nothing which is not under control, nothing secret or hidden that could break the absolute power of the *arkhon*:

The archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we will call the power of *consignation*. By consignation, we do not only mean, in the ordinary sense of the word, the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit), in a place and on a substrate, but here the act of *consigning* through *gathering together signs*...Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or *secret* which could separate, or partition, in an absolute manner. (*Archive Fever* 3)

The archive, then, has not merely to do with writing and recording and individual memory. It has to do with the writing of law and the grouping or gathering of social memory, the control of these writings and these recordings, and their interpretation, their dissemination; in the sense in which we discussed it in Chapter 2, the archive is a matter of *justice*. As Derrida states in a footnote, “[t]here is no political power without control of

the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation” (*Archive Fever* 4). If the archive typifies the writing of the law, it is access to the archive (which in governmental terms we would call Freedom of Information (FOI)) and the degree of hermeneutic freedom conditioning this access, that determines the nature and public experience of the law. We can thus revise our earlier comment regarding the relation of secrets to the archive. It is not necessarily the case that the archive can admit of no secrets. A secret leads a double life; it is secret *to* those who know of its existence, and it is secret *from* those who do not know of its existence. In the tension between this secret from and secret to, and under the necessary threat or promise of accidental or intentional revelation, the secret of the secret lies. The central issue of the secret, then, is the question of from whom a secret may be kept, and for how long. If there is a secret part of the archive; if there is some part of the archive that is differently coded; or even if the archive itself is secret, is it secret from or present to the public, and what is the relationship of the *arkhon* to this secret? ¹⁵ The most important issue in

¹⁵ Although Derrida’s comments, and their implications as regards to the secret, have a relevance to global politics in general, they seem particularly prescient at this moment, mid-2004, as the eyes of the world flick between occurrences in Iraq and the machinations of the United States and the Bush regime (furthermore, by the time this thesis is examined, these ‘current’ events will by then be well past, archived and largely forgotten, which will further prove the point I wish to make here). The US’ declaration of ‘war’ against Saddam Hussein rested solely on a certain interpretation of a certain archive, that was nevertheless secret, hidden, barred from public access and highly open to interpretation. All that continues to happen in the Middle East happens as an after-shock to this hermeneutic moment, which *stood* as the expression of a globalizing liberal democracy and yet which *stands*, now, as the *spectre* of democracy, the shadow of something that will always be there by not being there at all. Similarly – and here we must unfortunately tumble down the slope between the US and Australian political landscapes – since the Tampa and Children Overboard affairs in 2001, the Howard government has survived a number of scandals through successfully claiming ignorance of ‘what happened’, despite the fact that information always emerges – later on, of course, after the denial and once the public has had time to largely *forget* – suggesting that *some* strata of the Government did indeed know what happened. The latest of these, in June 2004, is the question of what and when the Howard Government knew of the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse allegations as well as allegations of the abuse of Australian prisoners David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib in Guantanamo Bay. The ability to claim ignorance has become one of the most powerful weapons in the Australian political landscape, and it rests on complex artifices of secrecy, whereby the fundamental rule is, “don’t tell the

regards to the archive, then, is the question of control; who or what is in charge of this archive, and what uses is it put to; what goes in to the archive, and what is kept out; towards what is the memory inscribed in the archive oriented?

Botox, as the current spearhead or avant-garde of the appearance industry, is a play or game played with the archive. It is the institutionalization of a new kind of law; a takeover of the facial archive, and a physical capture of the face. Commencement; the face begins anew, a blank slate. Commandment; muscles freeze, cease and desist; time stops, or is made secret. Consignation: representation of the ideal. Botox, with its freezing of the facial muscles and elimination of smile lines, frown lines and crows feet, all the little signs that appear on the face over time to mark the passing of time and living of life, is a refusal to allow the face to record time, to record the face's passage through time, to signify and thus recall all that the face, and the 'owner' of the face therefore, has experienced; its joys, its loves, its sadnesses, its pain. Simultaneously, Botox is a re-writing of memory and the archive, a reconstitution of a history, a creation of a *virtual*

Prime Minister". Interestingly, at the core of this apparatus is the very question, or questionability, of the existence of an archive, that is, a record of 'what happened', including a date and time. Is there an archive or is there not, and if so, how secret is it, and how is this secrecy built into its strategic function? Which is to say, does the archive in fact function by remaining invisible, always in abeyance?

Last week, a Senate inquiry discovered that Hicks had told ASIO a year ago that he had suffered beatings at the hands of the Americans. Will Howard resign? No. He hadn't been told. Would the head of ASIO resign for not advising Howard he was wrong? No. On what basis did Howard make his false claim? He probably didn't ask for a brief, but assumed what suited him because he hadn't been told otherwise. Why not? Because the public service knew Howard wanted to create no waves with the Americans so they didn't tell. Easy, isn't it? (Kingston)

Alongside this Governmental secrecy, we can also see in this the overall archontic function of a media that functions, day to day, on the large-scale public act of *forgetting*. While the media exist, on the face of it, to inform the public and to constitute an archive and public memory, it is worth asking whether the constant proliferation of media records, the ongoing attribution of event status to global happenings, and the speed at which events subsume events, in fact ensures that the media dictate not what is remembered, but what is forgotten.

history of the face, a virtual history bereft of the pain, love, joy, sorrow and experience that leave their marks on the face; an unmarked, un-re-markable history. Unremarkable because, of course, Botox also dictates the form for future archives, or defines the future state of the archive; how can time write on the face now that it no longer emotes? No movement: no wrinkles. The face is now a slippery surface, off which time will slide, a ~~sur~~-face, a face-not-on, a face-off. Botox *effaces* the face, it produces it by taking it away. If the face is written, Botox is a system of writing not as the leaving of marks, but in the sense of *erasure*. Botox is a *pharmakon*, and its writing is equally ambiguous, poisoning as it cures, destroying as it creates. Botox is secret writing, the writing of secrets, it is writing as re-writing, anti-writing, as always-already a palimpsestical operation. Botox is like that moment of pseudo-erasure when the inscribing surface of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad is lifted from the wax substrate, halting consciousness, halting time, leaving nothing to see, but everything yet to be seen.

An untrustworthy surface, the skin, a paper annoyingly palimpsestical, it insists on maintaining the records of its encounters with life, just like the mystic writing pad, and the 'mnemonic systems' of which Freud is so fond. And indeed we may well ask, to what degree does the skin function, here, as an analogue of the 'unconscious', or as a representative of the psychic archive, and what does Botox have to do with this? In some way, the inside/outside dichotomy under which the skin frequently operates, maps onto the past/present dichotomy under which the facial rejuvenation industry operates; denial of the inside, denial of the past; empty out, wipe clean. In "Freud and the Scene of Writing", Derrida notes that "writing is unthinkable without repression" (113). He refers

to the opening-up of writing, the path-breaking (*Bahmung; frayage*; breaching) of writing, the fact that to write anything at all one must also always not write something else, everything else. The violence of writing is the invocation of what is not written, and the pressure of the ever-present limits of what is written. Writing has an unconscious, it recalls and requires the unconscious, and writing on the skin is subject to the same law.

Botox, as a writing that is an erasure, is pure repression, the re-repression of ex-pressions and their reinterpretation as im-pressions; what is repressed is now 'behind' or 'beneath' what was impressed. Ironically, there is no repression without the failure of repression, which is to say, without return. Freud reminds us that "[r]epressions that have failed will of course have more claim on our interest than those that may have been successful; for the latter will for the most part escape our examination" (Freud, *vol.14* 153). Successful repressions, like well-kept secrets, are of no real interest. An interesting side-effect of the erasure of wrinkles by the freezing of muscles, is what is known as 'muscle recruitment'. Particularly around the 'scowl line' or area between the eyebrows, muscles nearby the frozen muscles compensate for the inaction of their neighbours by attempting to recreate the effect of frowning. Dr David Becker, assistant professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, notes: "After receiving Botox, a patient may unconsciously attempt to re-create the facial expressions in the area where treatment has paralysed facial muscles. What can happen is that other, nearby muscles compensate – this can have the effect of actually creating new wrinkles" (*MX Magazine*, Feb 18th, 2003). Just when we least expected it; just when we thought we had done away with all that was past, with all that was present and with all that was going to have been; just

when we thought we had commenced afresh and anew and commanded the face to freeze, what do we witness but the return of the repressed. The patient ‘unconsciously’ begins to emote again; the mask cracks and writing begins again.

The Botox face institutes the archive as a system of secrets, and necessarily ‘dirty’ secrets that some will wish never to let out. Like the unconscious, with its intricate system of repressions and depressions, the face holds secrets, cordons off some areas of its archive so that only invited guests may enter. Facial tics and other involuntary spasms stand as emergencies or rupturings of the pure surface, and they mark the crossing over of the ‘unconscious’ to the surface, the moments when secrets begin to seep out. Likewise, ‘muscle recruitment’ and the appearance of *secondary* fine lines and wrinkles represent a return of the archive to the surface, the moment when writing, and thus time, begins again, struggles to make its way back to the surface. What to do with this return of the repressed? How to cope with this unconscious *compensation* now that writing and time have recommenced? Dr Patrick Bowler, chairman of the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors, advises the following: “I have seen this (muscle recruitment) happen, particularly when people have Botox between the eyebrows. It is usually easily corrected by injecting a little more Botox into the affected area on follow-up visits” (*MX Magazine*, Feb 18th, 2003). It is thus time for the next injection, which brings with it the promise of another, and another, and another; and in this potentially endless cycle of technological fixes; in the middle of this beginning again, as we recommence and *revenir*, we find ourselves *en mal d’archive*, in archive fever, sick of archives, in need of archives, in need of the destruction of the archive, burning for the spectre of the archive, destroying the

archive to build it again, chasing it away to call it back, to bring it back home, where it belongs; repetition compulsion, destruction drive, Botox as the *anarchivic* archive (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 91 & 10-12). This same compulsion is found in the definition of spectrality in *Spectres of Marx*, where a problematic of hunting, conjuration and exorcism echoes this reversibility of the 'need' for and of fever: "Specular circle: one chases after in order to chase away, one pursues, sets off in pursuit of someone to make him flee, but one makes him flee, distances him, expulses him so as to go after him again and remain in pursuit" (Derrida, *Spectres* 140).

The 'trace' of time upon the body and the face is a writing that comes from without, and is brought *in*, performed *upon*. It is a function of diurnal and nocturnal rhythms, 'natural' rhythms even, and will always persist, indeed cannot be stopped except by death. And yet, it is precisely this trace, this mark of time, which is at the heart of a massive industry of facial rejuvenation, of regeneration. A technology like Botox is simultaneously a time-binding form of writing, in that it attempts to make its mark subsist across time, for as long as possible, and it is also a time-denying form of writing, a writing that reverses while it writes, writes backwards. Botox acknowledges the 'work' of time, the writing of time, at the same time that it re-writes it, denies it, represses it, and commences to write in its own rhythm, which is a rhythm of technological repetition, or of a certain compulsion to repeat.

In his theory of the repetition compulsion, Freud gives us the image of instincts which strive constantly to "restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been

obliged to abandon under the *pressure* of external disturbing forces” (Freud, *Beyond* 67; my italics). Freud notes that this earlier state of things, abandoned under pressure from external forces, made history by the tracing of impressions upon the living entity in its passage through the world, cannot be a state that has not been experienced. “On the contrary, it must be an *old* 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” (*Beyond* 70). This state, Freud argues, is death, the non-being inscribed at the origin of all that *is*.

Whether we understand the repetition compulsion in a psychoanalytic or cultural context is neither here nor there. For instance, we have already mentioned the way in which the cult Aum Shinrikyo approached botulinum toxin, and sarin gas, as purifying agents, designed to bring about the destruction and thus purification of the world. Eschatological thought is fundamentally concerned with reconstituting some imagined past state from which the world is understood to have fallen; the impossibility of a ‘true’ return, and of a return that will remain ‘back there’, conditions eschatology such that this performance of the return is enacted again and again. Aum Shinrikyo’s recurrent use of botulinum toxin and failure in each case to reach their goal, testifies to this fundamental condition in a particularly ironic manner. The apocalypse is programmed, like a machine, and its function is always to *fail* to appear, and to return at the same time, like the ghost, the spectre, or any old messiah.

Repetition compulsion, eternal return, *apocalypse machine*; whether we understand these structures on the level of the organism, the psyche, the crowd, or the cult, we can chart in

each case the fantasy of the return that never fully succeeds, and so finds its purest expression in the *repetition* of this return. Botox, then, as eternal return, eternally returning the patient to an earlier state, turning back the pages of time, riffling through them and turning them back again. Botox plants the death drive right in the heart of the archive, it ensures that the archive of the face will be destroyed as it is created, and it places this logic, which is simultaneously the logic of *technology*, and of *capital*, at the centre of its function. “In other words, the radical destruction can be *reinvested* in another logic, in the inexhaustible *economistic* resource of an archive which capitalizes everything, even that which ruins it or radically contests its power” (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 13). If Botox is a *pharmakon*; if Botox is both a poison and a cure, we can also say that the poison *is* the cure and the cure *is* the poison, and that this is Botox’s selling-point, its apparatus of capture. It is not the case that there are two separate functions, the curative and the poisonous – rather, what cures poisons and what poisons cures. The destruction of the archive is the promise of the archive, the promise of destruction is the re-creation of the archive. It is thus that we find ourselves *en mal d’archive*, in archive fever. Botox exists, on the surface, at first sight, to destroy the archive of the face; to delete it, to wipe it clean, to go back. Simultaneously, its purpose is to empty out the future, to stop the recording, to project the blank face into the future. And yet, beneath the surface, on second sight, unconscious forces have been put to work; the face fights back, re-surfaces, forces its writing to begin again. The face is thus delivered again to the anarchivic archive, and the Botox-upgrade-cycle continues.

Being that *Archive Fever* is drawn from a speech to commemorate the opening of the Freud Museum in London, a museum in the 'house' of Sigmund Freud, Derrida asks a question concerning the technologies of archivization. Had Freud known of, and utilized, the modern technologies of communication and information storage such as email and the computer, would the archive of psychoanalysis be qualitatively different? And further, would Freud's theories of the unconscious and its own archivic technologies of storage and of memory be different had he the model of the computer to work with, rather than the Mystic Writing Pad? The question is one of the determination of the archive by its technology; not merely the storage mechanisms of the archive, but its structure, and very make-up, which is also thus a determination of the future of the archive, and what is archivable. Derrida fashions a 'retrospective science fiction' in which Freud and his contemporaries developed their theories in a technoscape of computers, printers, faxes, teleconferences and email, and describes the resultant shock-waves that would echo across the psychoanalytic archive:

[T]his archival earthquake would not have limited its effects to the *secondary recording*, to the printing and to the conservation of the history of psychoanalysis. It would have transformed this history from top to bottom and in the most initial inside of its production, in its very *events*. This is another way of saying that the archive, as printing, writing, prosthesis, or hypomnesic technique in general is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content of the past which would exist in any case, such as, without the archive, one still believes it was or will have been. No, the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the

archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. (*Archive Fever* 17)

The question of the future of the archive is crucial here. Firstly, the archive is oriented towards the future inasmuch as it exists in order that some future use is made of it. The archive will not be made use of in the past, it is only in some future time that it will be useful, that it will be understood why it recorded what it has. Use may have been made of the archive in the past, but this use will no doubt have entered into the archive itself, it will have been archived in its turn and again the archive will be oriented towards the future. Secondly, that which the archive will record, that which the archive will become, that which will be available for interpretation, that which will be there for all or some or none to see, is determined by the technical form of the substrate. Not merely must there be an *arkhon* to preside over the interpretation and dissemination of the archive, but there is a technological or abstract *arkhon* which is the very form of the archive, which conditions what is acceptable for entry into the archive, and what is not, what *passes*, and what does not.

The future of the face under Botox relies on just such a question of technological determination. What the face will become, what it will re-present, will be determined by the presence of the toxin, its strength, its degree, its decree. The future form of the facial archive will be determined by one's Botox regime(n); Botox will take-over the writing of the face, the governance of the face, and will act as the word of the law, will write with the authority of the proper name of the Face.

Much of the popular writing on Botox refers to its use as a pre-emptive strike against aging (Devine 15). Botox use is not solely about appearing in the present in the same form as you appeared in the past; it is about ensuring that your future appearance will recall the present that was lived under Botox. Botox use is thus a projection, a virtualization, throwing forward in time one's appearance and ensuring that the biological writing of time does not appear on the surface in the *meantime*. Time is more than mean, however; it is cruel. Despite all this projection, these pre-emptive strikes against the return of the present, the becoming-real of the possible, you still have to 'top up' the toxin; each application wears off eventually, as the muscles break free of the toxin and come back to life. Writing, and time, for six months kept at bay, assert themselves again. Writing rights itself, and you begin again. In order to maintain this new, technically placated surface, you must engage with the 'upgrade cycle' of all technical systems, and get an update, another shot. This new face, this blank face, this technically re-surfaced, stripped bare face, is again only on loan, and the economic structure proper to it is that of the *license*. Recapitalize, refinance, re-produce the Return On Investment. The relation to software is hard to ignore; the new, blank, technologically perfected face has an extremely limited lifespan, a built-in obsolescence that the old face never had. Botox essentially turns what was inevitable – aging - into a measurable, calculable, and thus profitable (for the wielders of the syringe anyway), sequence; quarterly injections to top up the toxin, to push back the years, to empty the archive and thus the future out all over again. This commodification of the face, here, is in fact the commodification of time as it is worn on the face, the commodification of the fact of the writing of time, and thus the

commodification of the archive and the desire for its destruction – which is at the same time its resurrection.

There is a sense that the ‘human’ that is always floating above and beyond and behind the machinations of the appearance industries, and Botox in particular, is in fact not *purely* ‘human’ at all; witness the stripped-bare, smoothed-away, technologically perfected, ageless, out-of-time, post-biological ‘human’; facial-cleansing is really the cleansing of the human, washing the human away in the act of re-constituting it. The ‘human’ face thus mobilizes a vast cultural desire for technological transcendence, or rather, for the illusion or ‘appearance’ of technological transcendence. Think of the temporality of this vision – it is firstly, removed from time, from the ravages of time, it has stepped-out of this cycle of wear and care that the weather and all ‘adverse’ influences inflict. Secondly, it is also in some way an ‘original’ human for which there is a kind of nostalgia, there is a sense that the passing of time has made us leave something behind, something has been lost, the purity, the perfection, the innocence of a biology not marked by time, a transcendent ‘pure’ biology, reified, abstract, unadulterated, unfallen, pre-lapsarian. Thirdly, there is a nostalgia for the future, for the ‘to-come’ of the human. Eternally deferred, ever appearing and disappearing, this face, this face of the future-human, the human-to-come, haunts the human like a ghost, and finds its reason for (non)being in this spectral function.

It is not the question of a concept dealing with the past that might *already* be at our disposal or not at our disposal, *an archivable concept of the archive*. It is a question of

the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come. Perhaps. Not tomorrow but in times to come, later on or perhaps never. A spectral messianicity is at work in the concept of the archive and ties it, like religion, like history, like science itself, to a very singular experience of the promise (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 36).

Here, Derrida argues that the understanding of the archive as something that deals primarily with the past – what has been recorded, what has come and gone – neglects the orientation of the archive towards the future. While the archive may indeed consist of traces of what has come and gone, its overall orientation is towards the future, that which will have one day come, or may have come. This future has about it the air of a ‘promise’ and a ‘spectral messianicity’, the discussion of which will lead us on to our final area of concentration: ‘face value’.

Face Value: Spectrality and the Messianic

We have already encountered the idea that the cinematic image, the image of the star that is projected ‘up there’ for all to see, and most particularly the image of the face of the star, exists as a kind of promise; a thing that is always to come, a thing that is sought after, worth striving for, yet questionable as regards to its attainability. Promises have to do with the future; they invoke the spectre of that which ought to come about, and this thing that ought to come about is generally some kind of fulfillment, some future gift,

exchange, satisfaction of expectation, fullness or closure. Promises are also usually inflected with positive overtones; a promise of violence or destruction or loss is more usually considered a curse or a threat. Thus what is expected from the promise is in some way a 'blessed event'. Whether this blessed event occurs or not; whether the promise is kept or not, is entirely another matter. We could be so bold as to say that promises that are kept are not promises, or rather, that promise-ness is primarily manifest in the experience of the wait.¹⁶ Certainly promises cease to be promises as soon as they are fulfilled, and retroactively negate the promise-ness of the promise. A promise is pure virtuality, its entire *raison d'être* lies in the to-come; in fact, it has not so much a *raison d'être* as a *raison de venir*. Botox makes the youthful appearance of the face – which is the concurrent destruction and reconstruction of the archive of the face - into a promise. And Botox is merely one of the many chemical and technological cures that makes such a promise, and that has such a relation of virtuality to the face, that invokes the virtual of the face, and the face *as* virtual.

¹⁶ We could thus, if we wished, relate the promise, and all the various other figures we have discussed here which invoke this question of what is to come, to the 'wait' of masochism as it is defined by Gilles Deleuze in *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*. Here, Deleuze analyses the etiology of sadism and masochism, arguing that masochism's formal structure is that of the wait; waiting for something – pleasure - which is always late, always tardy, and expecting an experience - pain - which hastens, and meanwhile heightens the experience of, the coming of what is awaited (Deleuze, *Masochism* 71). I do not wish to pursue in detail the relation of masochism to the various figures of the to-come that have been enumerated here. Up until this point nothing has overtly suggested the relevance of the masochistic scenario. However, promises can no doubt be used within a masochistic framework, being that masochism functions upon a contract (Deleuze, *Masochism* 75). It may also be interesting to explore the relation of masochism to what we might wish to call 'makeover frenzy', the obsessive repetition of cosmetic surgery, procedure after procedure, on and on. Certainly, the medical establishment has recognized the contribution of conditions such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) to the explosion of cosmetic treatments worldwide: 7-15% of patients seeking cosmetic surgery are understood to have BDD (Southgate 27). BDD is based around an obsession with an imagined defect in one's appearance; because it is imagined, it can never really be 'fixed', making it perfect fodder for the logic of a cosmetic industry which functions on changing 'appearances', which again are imagined and are always oriented towards that which is yet to come.

Spectres and messiahs have come and gone in this thesis many times. We first encountered spectrality in the terminology of Sander Gilman. There, the face and body that were operated on in aesthetic surgery were considered 'spectral'. They were spectral because they were representations, illusory nevertheless, but seen at first-sight. They were what 'appears'. Our discussion of the technologies of appearance, however, has taught us that appearance can never be taken at first-sight, but rather, that appearance is always tied up with a process of virtualization, with becoming that which is projected forward and which thus appears to come back. Appearance always requires a second-sight, which is an attempt to see what is not to be seen, what is there by not being there; thus, appearance and spectrality remind us to think not merely the apparent, but the inapparent; that which is yet to come.

Our discussion of Jean-Louis Baudry introduced the idea of a slide between the specular and the spectral. Baudry argues that the screen functions like a mirror, as a reflection of a 'self' which is not a self. Baudry's mirror works in the manner of Lacan's mirror, as a locus for the identification/mis-identification that is said to occur during the 'mirror stage' of subject-formation and which makes possible the 'I' which is also a 'not-I'. However, in becoming subject to these mirror-effects, Baudry's subject is constituted by a 'phantasmatization' of itself in the mirror; that is to say, the subject becomes a ghost, sees itself as a ghost. The degree of intentionality versus rhetoricality in Baudry's invocation of the phantom is difficult to determine. Spectrality is invoked almost as if it does not mean anything, *as if* it is a rhetorical device – linguistic spectre of a spectre – which pads or rounds out the image of something which appears most properly in a

mirror, as a 'mirror image'. However, if there is one thing that both *Hamlet* and *Spectres of Marx* teach us, it is to be vigilant regarding the appearances of ghosts, rhetorical or not. Why is it that attempts to describe the quality of the mirror image, use spectres as their *supplement*? What is it about ghosting that seems to provide such a ready source of rhetorical power, and yet why is it that the mirror wins out in the final attempt to theorize the filmic image, and the spectator's relationship to this image?

Christian Metz makes a similar terminological elision when discussing the 'false' object of cinematic perception: "[T]he perceived is not really the object, it is its shade, its phantom, its double, its *replica* in a new kind of mirror" (Metz 732). Between false perception – 'the perceived is not really the object' - and mirror image – 'replica in a new kind of mirror' - Metz passes through spectrality; shade and phantom. While searching for an understanding of cinema, and while trying to find suitable language to express this, Christian Metz finds ghosts. Significantly, he passes as well as through the 'double', and thus the uncanny, the *unheimliche*. Freud's essay "The Uncanny" concentrates strongly on doubling and automatons as harbingers of the uncanny; he reads them as, firstly, reminiscent of primary narcissism, and secondly, as instances of the 'repetition of the same' which in turn recall the 'compulsion to repeat'. Yet, as Derrida notes in *Spectres of Marx*, Freud also acknowledges that he might have begun his investigation with what is "perhaps the most striking of all" examples of the uncanny, that is, with ghosts (Freud, *Art* 364). For Freud, as well as for Descartes, there is a ghost in the machine. Let us remember that the German word for uncanny, *unheimliche*, recalls the figure of something that is long familiar but has been forgotten, something from out of the distant

past that has come back, that returns; *le revenant*. Thus a short detour through the double and the uncanny returns us, and Metz, again to the realm of the spectral.

Mirrors are particularly dumb objects; they reflect what is in front of them, and they are tied to a particular experience of the present. They do not store images from the past, they do not provide any kind of record or archive, except inasmuch as their images may reveal the archive of the face. Nor do their images speak of the future; unless we use our mirror image as a base on which to project our future appearance, it is only in fairy tales that mirrors show us what may come. What mirrors do show is the present moment of a sighted viewer, and a certain relation of the viewer to his or her visualized 'self'. It is this property of the mirror Lacan plays on in his formulation of the mirror stage. Let us note, however, that Lacan's theory uses the mirror as a metaphor; the mirror stands *as* a certain apparatus that, like the Mystic Writing Pad perhaps, *seems* to emblemize the process of subject formation in an exemplary manner:

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the infant stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, *would seem* to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the "I" is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. (Lacan 2; my emphasis)

Despite this metaphoricity, with a seeming at its heart, Baudry and Metz find in the figure of the mirror an appropriate mechanism onto which to project their vision of the cinematic apparatus. Their speculation leads to specularization, yet what it produces are spectres. Specularity requires spectrality, and mirror images find themselves *in* this supplemental spectrality, *with* these extra spectres. To see a ghost is a very different thing than to look in the mirror. To look in the mirror is to see the moment; it is there, right now, in front of you, and you are looking at it, which is to say, you see/don't see yourself. To see a ghost is to do all this; time stands still, clocks stop, an uncanny feeling creeps through the house. Yet it is also to look into the past and the future, and to be looked at; it is to see the revenant, the (im)materialization of what was past and has come again, and it is to be looked *at* by this spectre; the visor effect. Always-already there, visible by being invisible, the spectre precedes your seeing and your appearing and *looks back*: "ghost or *revenant*, sensuous-non-sensuous, visible-invisible, the spectre first of all sees *us*. From the other side of the eye, *visor effect*, it looks at us even before we see it or even before we see period" (Derrida, *Spectres* 101). Spectres lend resonance to the mirror image, and thus to the cinematic apparatus. They name the mirror image – 'phantasmaticization of the subject' - and they give it a frequency, a vibration, a temporal and phenomenological equivocation. It is through spectrality that a certain appearance/in-appearance is given to the filmic image, and it is through spectrality that the status of the filmic image is forever called into question, and is *able* to be called into question. While mirrors have undoubtedly been an extremely important touchstone for the theorization of cinema for many years, and while they do, in turn, recall various narcissistic arrangements of

reflective surfaces, they remain inert when questioned as to the relation of the image to the past and the future, and to the virtual.

It is therefore through spectrality, rather than the figure of the mirror, that we wish to understand a film like *Sunset Boulevard*, and consequently the cinematic apparatus of the face. While mirrors do make an appearance in *Sunset Boulevard*, they are merely one screen among many in which the face could appear; the *prima facie* is the cinema screen and the camera, which function through ghosting not reflection. Norma Desmond surrounds herself with ghosts; Joe Gillis, a ghost-writer; the ‘waxworks’, silent ghosts of Old Hollywood. Her house is the archetypal haunted house, and Norma herself is depicted as some kind of vampire, explicitly feeding off Joe’s youth, implicitly feeding off the *image* of her youth, which is also her ghost. This image, this ghost surrounds her, she wallows in it, it is apparent in paintings, photographs, old films, letters and the adoration of Max, who perhaps more than any other character in the film represents a sanctioning and legitimating force behind Norma’s possession of and by her image. Indeed, Max ‘conjures’ Norma’s ghost, in the various senses Derrida inflects ‘conjunction’ with in *Spectres of Marx*.

Firstly, conjunction involves a ‘swearing together’, the taking of an oath, which is an oath to keep something secret. If conjunction involves revealing, bringing-forth, as we will come to shortly, before this revelation comes secrecy, secrecy regarding what is conjured. Conjunction keeps revelation in reserve. Derrida gives us an example from *Hamlet*; having seen and spoken with the ghost, Hamlet enjoins Horatio and Marcellus to swear

together to keep silent regarding what they have seen, just as the ghost, from beneath the stage, enjoins the group to swear to secrecy also. “It is the apparition that enjoins them to conspire to silence the apparition, and to promise secrecy on the subject of the one who demands such an oath from them” (Derrida, *Spectres* 41). With this sense of conjuration in mind, we can see that Max maintains Norma’s ghost by keeping silent about it. Max protects Norma from the knowledge that she has, essentially, ceased to exist; the fans no longer write, Paramount doesn’t want her, she no longer matters, she is immaterial. Max maintains Norma’s desire to become her image, to become her ghost, by hiding from her the fact that she has already become a ghost, that is, she is immaterial, and by keeping ‘alive’ the fiction of her ghost as something *other* than what she currently *is*.

Thus, secrecy leads us to the second meaning for conjuration, whereby conjuration signifies the incantation or spell necessary to *bring forth* some spirit or spectre. Max hides Norma’s awareness of herself *as* a ghost by bringing forth the fiction *of* her ghost as something that had been attained once and will yet be (re)attained. Through his insistence that “Madam is the greatest star who ever lived”, through his constant refusal to let Norma lose her grip on the Old Hollywood in which she reigned, Max conjures Norma’s ghost again and again, projecting it above and around Norma so that she sees it, and wishes to join it and merge with it, *up there*. Let us not forget that Max is not merely Norma’s ex-husband, but that more importantly, he is Norma’s director, the architect and choreographer of her spectrality; while Cecil B. deMille is given a privileged status as her director *par excellence*, it is Max who was with her at the beginning and who is with her

at the end. As Norma descends the stairs in the final scene, it is Max *playing* deMille who directs the scene, and who presides over her final transfiguration.

As well as a function of Max's machinations, Norma's ghost is a function of the cinematic apparatus of the face. The cinematic apparatus has given her an image of herself which haunts her, which possesses her, and it is the quality or nature of this 'possession' that plants the trouble at the core of her troubled being. In the introduction to the previous chapter we spoke of the problematic of 'having' faces. As well as signifying ownership, having was also always a 'being had', a being owned, and a being taken in. To have a face is to be had by the face, to be taken in, to be taken over. The possession of Norma's image is caught in a similar rhetorical bind. Norma is possessed by her image, controlled or dominated by a spectral force, it haunts her, returns to her again and again, calling to her, beckoning her on. From the screen and in the mirror the ghosts call to her, exhorting her to become one of them, to ascend to their realm. It is thus as if 'she' is the property of her image, rather than the other way round. While it is normal to possess one's image, in that it is one's property, and has one's properties, here, Norma's image possesses her, she is a property of her ghost, she is 'pre-occupied' with and by her image. This image in turn is possessed by the vast system of studios, executives and spectators which functions on the circulation of images, on commerce with ghosts. Cinema trades on ghosts, it is trade with ghosts, between ghosts, and, most significantly, the ghosts trade amongst themselves. Cinema – and the appearance industries in general – both produces and commodifies the spectral dimension of the face.

If we were to characterize the tenor of the contemporary use and understanding of the face, and if we were to situate it in terms of the ‘human’ and the ‘technological’, we would have to speak of something like a ‘pre-occupation with ghosts’, wherein pre-occupation would mean both an obsession, and an always-already being occupied by, haunted by, inhabited by, ‘had’ by the very thing we thought we ‘had’, a property or function of what we thought was our property. The pre-occupation has also to do with a haunting of the human by the technical, wherein the technical is a ghost or prosthesis of the human. This same reversal of fortunes governs the relation of the face to Botox, and in the final analysis, to time. Botox represents a technological ‘cure’ for time – for the writing of time, for life, for the coming of age. Of course, Botox produces time, or rather re-produces time, in the very same movement that it vanquishes it. This is archive fever, the need for archives, the need for the destruction of the archive which conditions the need for its restitution, and so on and so on. Lock-in, upgrade-cycle, license. Although Derrida only occasionally uses this term, it is this ‘pre-occupation’ with ghosts, in both senses of the word, which is one of the core ideas in *Spectres of Marx*.¹⁷ In *Spectres of Marx*, which is an adaptation of a lecture given in 1993 at a conference entitled “Whither Marxism?”, Derrida undertakes an explication of Marx’s spectres; the ghost of Marx – what remains of his thought and its relevance to the contemporary situation – and the ghosts of Marx – the spectres he created and grappled with in his work. Derrida has numerous projects with the book, as can be expected; the subtitle is “The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International”, and this subtitle signifies the book’s relation to the contemporary political situation of a certain ‘end of history’ and a

¹⁷ “This limit-concept of use-value is in advance contaminated, that is, pre-occupied, inhabited, haunted by its other, namely, what will be born from the wooden head of the table, the commodity-form, and its ghost-dance” (Derrida, *Spectres* 160).

'last man' projected by Francis Fukuyama among others.¹⁸ On a more philosophical level, the book has to do with 'living with ghosts'; it begins and ends with an exhortation to live with ghosts – images, representations, prostheses, those past and those yet to come – and how “to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself” (176).

Derrida begins the book, in the Exordium, with a quixotic phrase that, as can be expected, haunts the text as it plays out. “Someone, you or me, comes forward and says: *I would like to learn to live finally*” (xvii). What this phrase means - whether it means anything, whether it can mean anything, what it should mean – is in some way the subtext of the entire book, for it speaks not merely of what it is to live, to be alive, to go through life, but also of life's relation to death. What does it mean, *to learn to live*? Does one teach oneself how to live or must one rely on some other, or Other, from which to learn? Characteristically, Derrida places learning to live in the realm of a both/and, an inbetween life and death, a learning from oneself and a learning from the Other, a learning that happens *with* the Other.

¹⁸ These things have to do with the rise and reign of Western liberal democracy, and while they are not our primary focus here, Derrida's comments are more relevant now than ever. Of course, since 9/11, and the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism and the US 'war on terror', Fukuyama's argument that the world has reached the 'end of history' in terms of the near universal acceptance of liberal democracy as the endpoint of civilized development, has largely been discredited. Obviously, liberal democracy, especially democracy US-style, has been rejected by large parts of the world's population, moreover, it has contributed in large part to the tenor of this rejection. This discreditation has not kept Fukuyama down, however; he is now signatory to the founding documents of the Project for the New American Century (www.newamericancentury.org). The liberal democracy Fukuyama triumphed in 1992 has mutated into the New World Order of the New American Century, the Bush regime and its 'war on terror'; again, the spectre of democracy, the appearance of democracy and all that is done in the name of this spectre, continues to haunt the world and its tele-techno-media.

If it – learning to live – remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*. What happens between two, and between all the “two’s” one likes, such as between life and death, can only *maintain* itself with some ghost, can only *talk with or about* some ghost...The time of the “learning to live”, a time without tutelary present, would amount to this, to which the exordium is leading us: to learn to live *with* ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts. To live otherwise, and better. No, not better, but more justly. But *with them* (*Spectres* xvii).

Learning to live is a matter of being in life in relation to death, living *other-wise*, *with* the Other, and most importantly, with others that have been and are yet to come, with ghosts. “No justice...seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some *responsibility*, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead” (Derrida, *Spectres* xix). To learn to live, to be *with*, is to *accept* pre-occupation by the other as a necessary part of being with oneself, and *Spectres of Marx* ends with a reiteration of the necessity of this *with*, and its relation to another vital formation of with-ness, the *unheimliche*, the stranger that is already found to be with-in.

It is this *with*, then, that Derrida spends most of the book working out, specifically, Marx’s own troubles with ghosts, his desires to be rid of them at the same time as he brings them back, chasing after them to chase them away. Derrida goes through many ghosts, and we will not list them here; it is not our intention to give a *précis* of the entire

text. The arch-ghost, however, the *hauptgespenst* that Marx would wish to do away with finally, but ultimately cannot do away with so easily, is the ghost of capital. Capital, of course, is the thing in which all other things find themselves – it is the ultimate translator, the thief of value. Thus to Marx, capital, and its corollaries ‘value’ and the ‘commodity’, are the final ghosts to be rid of, the ghosts that must finally be exorcized in order to deliver us back to ourselves, labour back to the worker, and our things back to being useful things.

The final analysis Derrida conducts, is of Marx’s description of the capital-ghost and his desire to be rid of it, his inability to be *with* it; it is an analysis of the relation between use-value and exchange-value as outlined in Chapter 1, Section 4 of *Capital*, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof”. Thus we arrive at the relation between the commodity and the spectre, namely, the question of value, and, in terms of the subject of our chapter here, the value of the face. All that we said earlier regarding the mechanism of passing and the processes of signification and subjectification, has to do with a certain social and cultural and thus economic value accorded to the face depending on its attribution of character traits. The face has a value; for those in the public eye (and that is all of us at some stage or another, at varying frequencies and durations), the face is an element wrapped up in a large system of symbolic and capital exchange. Botox, and all the other cosmetic and aesthetic techniques, are modes of investment in the value of the face, and are invariably founded on the idea of some return on this investment, that is, the revenue which is always *le revenant*.

We can no doubt talk of something like facial capital, or 'face value'; we have discussed the commodification of the face in a number of ways. And if we can do that, it is always worth asking – although we do not have the space to pursue these questions beyond posing them - what other kinds of bodily capital are there? Certainly, 'identity capital' is something around which a huge industry has already been founded, and has brought with it its correlative form of crime; identity theft. Similarly, as we have already briefly mentioned, the history of the trade in human tissue is an extremely complex and convoluted one, spanning the moral gamut from legitimate organ donation to illicit organ-snatching, and it has its apotheosis in the biotechnology industry's patenting of DNA and cell-lines; the strange case of John Moore's spleen. All of which is to say that capitalism has always had a strong interest in the 'human' and its ability to be broken into ever smaller parts and particles, as well as its ability to be constituted and re-constituted by various industries, as the market requires; this is the in-formation and materialization we discussed in Chapter Two. The elements or particulate materiality of humanity have always held a fascination for the marketplace, always ready to capitalize on the shifting demands of a race whose biological basis makes it susceptible to illnesses and accidents of many kinds. The face is, from one perspective, merely one of the many body parts involved in this large-scale and age-old biological capitalization. However, the face is also the locus for so much of what is considered to be 'human'. The face is the representative of the human, its representation, its ambassador. As such, it exerts a particular pull on market forces, it is a powerful zone of intensity. The face is also one of the elements of 'humanity' that is commodified while it is still attached to a body. The face is there for all to see, it is displayed, marketed, spectralized at the same time as it is

used, day-to-day, by whomever it ‘belongs’ to, whomever belongs to it. This gives the face a particularly split-identity, as well as a certain conflict of interest, and in some way it is this conflict which this thesis has been written to work out.

Let us speak now of the question of the value of the face; *face value*. What do we apprehend when we take the face at ‘face value’, when we take it ‘at first sight’? To what degree does belief in such a thing as ‘face value’ hide or obscure values which are less apparent – or, which is to ask the same thing in a different way, what is the value of the spectral? How do we situate the various stakeholders – the stage, the screen, the appearance industries, and most especially, the human and the technical - of the face in this procession of spectres, this ‘value chain’? We will examine these questions in relation to Derrida’s elucidation of the spectral value of capital in chapter 1, section 4 of Marx’s *Capital*; the appearance of the mystical character of the commodity, and the example of the simple wooden table. *NOTE: We will do this by substituting the ‘face’ for the ‘thing’ which becomes a commodity.*

Marx begins with the thing, the face itself, with its use-value, which is, apparently, easily understood. “A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood...So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it” (Marx 76). Derrida asks us to believe, as Marx does, in the apparent innocence of this face: “Let us take the chance, then, after so many glosses, of an ingenuous reading” (*Spectres* 149). To go back, briefly, to our discussion of appearance, an ingenuous reading, then, would take the prognostications of Rejuvi-Cell Complex at its word: “Rejuvi-Cell Complex

makes surface skin cells appear to act younger.” We would thus agree that our surface skin cells were always acting, and that this was normal, and human, and that Rejuvi-Cell Complex would simply make them act younger. Suspension of disbelief, standing ovation.

And yet right away we cannot continue in this way, caught by the duplicity of Marx’s opening remark, snagged on the ingenious apparatus of ingenuousness: “But is this not right away impossible? Marx warns us with the first words. The point is right away to go beyond, in one fell swoop, the first glance and thus to see there where this glance is blind” (Derrida, *Spectres* 149). Derrida goes on to take phenomenology to task for this same ingenuousness, for a reliance on and belief in the ‘at first sight’, which we could also consider as an equation between being and appearing, the phenomenological fold. This same phenomenological mistake is outlined by Sander Gilman in the opening pages of his book, when he states, ingenuously, “We are what we seem to be and we seem to be what we are!” (3). Derrida wonders whether phenomenology relies on the appearance of use-value “so as not to think the market or in view of making oneself blind to exchange-value” (*Spectres* 150). He goes on to describe use-value as “very human” (150). In use-value, the properties of a face “always relate to what is proper to man, to the properties of man: either they respond to men’s needs, and that is precisely their use-value, or else they are the product of a human activity that seems to intend them for those needs” (150). Use-value is a concatenation of human needs applied to a face; it is a kind of humanization of the face, a bringing into the fold of the face, a ‘taking in’ of the face. Use-value is the face in its ingenuous, or apparent form. It is the face as it is apprehended,

as its sensuous form is 'taken in'. And this is one kind of 'face value'; the human face, the face as it appears, as something we all 'have', and which makes us human. Yet, let us remember that we have already brought out the problematic of possession within this 'having', just as we found the ingenuity within ingenuousness. This use-value, this 'human' property, must therefore be already owned or preoccupied by some *other*, and – and here we are approaching one of the fundamental tenets of this chapter – it is considered 'human' in order *not* to have to think that it may also be something other.

It is therefore a question of the spectral nature of the face and its commodity form. “[I]t is a question, precisely, of forming the concept of what the stage, any stage, withdraws from our blind eyes at the moment we open them” (Derrida, *Spectres* 148). Taking the theatrical metaphor from Marx, as much as from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Derrida asks what, when we open our eyes to see what is on the stage, is in fact hidden from us but is nevertheless there; what renders us blind, what makes us fail to see, what is the apparatus of this staging. In *Hamlet*, it is the ghost of the Father that we are trying to see, that we are failing to see, that appears, or appears to appear, and in doing so, does not appear. The stage is the place on which it is decided what there is to be seen, or not seen, or both at the same time; as we have already discussed, it is the place of seeing, seeming and appearing. In *Capital*, the stage is the arena into which the face ‘comes out’ in commodity form. Derrida is very careful to note how Marx describes the appearance of the commodity as an ‘*auftritt*’, an actor’s entrance onto stage. The stage is, essentially, the market; it is the locus of a necessary ‘outing’ in which the relational value of the face comes into play.

Derrida's examination of the spectral revolves strongly around this theatrical metaphor; ironically the theatrical context lends the discussion of spectres a surprising solidity, being that it is the theatre of *Hamlet* and the Shakespearean canon that is so frequently invoked. The theatrical metaphor is also key to the *mise en visage* of which we have already spoken, the putting on of the face, the staging of the face, the appearance of the face, and the "appearing to act" of the surface of the face. The *mise en visage* is a drama of vital importance, always requiring of closer examination, for, as Derrida notes of the process of seeing the commodity, of examining the face, there is never any guarantee that what is seen 'at first sight' is what is actually there. Thus it is that all along, we have questioned the spectral dimension of the face, and have examined the artifices and apparatuses behind the construction of this spectral dimension.

Exchange value, then, represents the moment when "the curtain goes up on the market and the table plays actor and character at the same time, when the commodity-table, says Marx, comes on stage, begins to walk around and to put itself forward as a market value" (Derrida, *Spectres* 150). Thus in terms of our substitution of the face for the thing, it is now that the face is 'put on'; the face is staged, and is constituted as a stage, something which plays are put on. It is also at this point that the face takes on a 'life of its own', becomes simultaneously animate, autonomous and transcendent: "But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table-turning"

ever was” (Marx 76). Derrida calls another halt to proceedings here, as what was before a simple face is transfigured into something that has a head, stands on its head, and produces grotesque ideas from its head.

[T]he [face] has feet, the [face] has a head, its body comes alive, it erects its whole self like an institution, it stands up and addresses itself to others, first of all to other commodities, its fellow beings in phantomality, it faces them or opposes them... Facing up to the others, before the others, its fellows, here then is the apparition of a strange creature: at the same time Life, Thing, Beast, Object, Commodity, Automaton – in a word, spectre. (*Spectres* 151-152)

The commodity as commodity has a face, it faces the other commodities, it is enabled by a certain *faciality*, which is manifest in exchangeability, commerce, conversation, autonomy. Commodities develop faces when they talk amongst themselves, when they find value in their relations with each other, and the market is a ‘front’, simultaneously the place of facing-up, of autonomous confrontation, and the automatized staging of the performance of commodities, their discourse as numbers (*Spectres* 155).

At this point an interesting contradiction begins to emerge, and it has to do with the ‘mechanical freedom’ of capital (*Spectres* 153). Taking the theatrical metaphor from Marx’s *auftritt*, Derrida notes that the thing is now both actor and character, performing on the market/stage. As actor, the thing is a free-agent, free to take on forms, an animated, autonomous thing, free to converse and have commerce with other things. “It

goes into trances, it levitates, it appears relieved of its body, like all ghosts, a little mad and unsettled as well, upset, “out of joint,” delirious, capricious, and unpredictable” (153). As character, however, the thing must yet retain its *original* character, that of the inert thickness of wood, it is bound by the thingness of its matter. “[T]he spirit, soul, or life that animates it remains caught in the opaque and heavy thingness of the *hulē*, in the inert thickness of its ligneous body, and autonomy is no more than the mask of automatism” (*Spectres* 153). At the beginning of the previous chapter, we encountered just such an autonomous automaticity, in relation to the process of appearing in public. There, the autonomy of self-expression found its doppelganger in the contrivance that governs and delimits this expression. Here, like Rousseau, the face ‘goes public’, puts itself on stage, takes on the appearance of acting freely, but remains nevertheless bound by its form, dragged down by its weight, brought back to earth, reigned in by its shareholders. The ‘mad dance’ of the market will always be constrained by the rules of the game, by the limits of its possibility, and, being based fundamentally on number, it will always work like a sort of clockwork. Again, it is this undecidability which is spectral, and which is also uncanny, for it exhibits the undecidability of autonomy and automaticity, life and technics.

Autonomous and automatic, there is still the mystical character of the commodity to be accounted for, for this commerce between facialized commodities reflects poorly on the labour that produced them. Marx is searching for the *secret* of the fetishism of commodities; what is the nature of this commerce that the commodities have begun, and how is this nature experienced by the producers of the commodities? “How do those

whom one calls “men”, living men, temporal and finite existences, become subjected, in their social relations, to these spectres that are relations, equally social relations among commodities?” (*Spectres* 153).

Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, so soon as it assumes the form of commodities? Clearly from this form itself. The equality of all sorts of human labour is expressed objectively by their products all being equally values; the measure of the expenditure of labour-power by the duration of that expenditure, takes the form of the quantity of value of the products of labour; and finally the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, take the form of a social relation between the products (Marx 76-77).

Derrida says this secret has to do with a ‘quid pro quo’, a phrase Marx uses which is generally rendered by his English translators as ‘substitution’. Quid pro quo here, however, refers more properly to a theatrical ruse of misunderstanding or mistaken identity (*Spectres* 193n23). The commodity no longer plays the role intended for it, it is no longer identified as the product of labour, but rather, as a social relation between things, between faces. Moreover, in this moment, the producers of faces become spectres of these faces, defined in their terms, conferred with their value. Derrida places a mirror at the centre of this misapprehension, but it is a mirror which produces spectres not reflections. “There is a mirror, and the commodity form is also this mirror, but since all of a sudden it no longer plays its role, since it does not reflect back the expected image,

those who are looking for themselves can no longer find themselves in it...It is as if they were becoming ghosts in their turn” (*Spectres* 155). Commodities thus transform human beings, and human producers, into ghosts, because they can no longer recognize their own labour, which is also to say themselves, in the commodity. The mysteriousness of the commodity form stems from the crossover whereby the commodity form takes the products of human labour and makes them equivalent in relation to other commodity forms, not to that labour. Thus the value of human labour is defined in terms of the value of the commodity (of course, these days, now that the only commodities are brands and signs; now that the entirety of the economic system is based on and privileges numbers and thin-air, human labour is now valued in inverse proportions to the value of the commodity; larger the brand, lower the bottom wages, greater the general desertification).

Ironically, this being-haunted by the commodity has a flipside, which ensures that it lasts but a moment; since commodities do not take themselves to market of their own free will, “their guardians must place themselves in relation to one another, as persons whose will resides in those objects” (Marx 88). That is, people must pre-occupy their faces, must possess them, must haunt them, *in order that* those faces can have commerce amongst themselves and thus haunt these people in return. “Persons (guardians or possessors of the [face]) are haunted in return, and constitutively, by the haunting they produce in the [face] by lodging there their speech and their will like inhabitants” (Derrida, *Spectres* 158). This misrecognition, then, is really only momentary, or perhaps it does not even happen at all, for disbelief has already been suspended in the act of inhabiting the face in order to take it to market, where it will engage in commerce with other faces,

automatically and autonomously. Thus the commodity as an element in a *ballet mécanique* is haunted by the people who produced it. People haunt themselves through the projection of a technical spectre.

There is another pre-occupation, however, another haunting, one more fundamental and constitutive of this entire drama. Derrida asks whether use-value can really be said to precede exchange-value. Marx, who has a certain investment in being able to finally be rid of the *hauptgespenst* of capital, states that use-value is simple, “there is nothing mysterious about it”, it is the use a face will be put to and can be observed and understood “at first sight”. There is no ghost here, he says – the ghost arrives when the commodity comes on stage. Thus, there is a before and an after of the ghost, a concrete origin which it is possible to resurrect, a to-come which is finite and accessible. We have encountered these fantasies before in this chapter; both the Botox face and the cinematic face are premised on this idea, the ingenuousness of the past and the attainment of the ideal. However, in order for use to be useful, it must have been already determined to be useful, and it can only be determined to be so through some kind of pre-occupying iterability, an availability to repetition. “The said use-value of the said ordinary sensuous thing...must indeed have at least promised it to iterability, to substitution, to exchange, to value; it must have made a start, however minimal it may have been, on an idealization that permits one to identify it as the same throughout possible repetitions” (Derrida, *Spectres* 160). We must recall that availability to repetition is one of the fundamental traits of writing, and the technical; this was one of the points made in Chapter One. Open to repetition, sequencing, programming, ordering, signification, subjectification, the face

is already technical, already pre-occupied by the technical, and the 'human' is a 'spectral-effect' of this technicity, just as technicity is a spectral-effect of the human. "The 'mystical character' of the commodity is inscribed before being inscribed, traced before being written out letter for letter on the forehead or screen of the commodity" (*Spectres* 161).

Marx places the secret of this fetishism in religion. "There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world" (Marx 77). In religion, ideas, the products of the human brain become manifest, take on form and life, and enter "into relation both with one another and the human race" (Marx 77). Religiosity gives Marx the model by which the relations among producers are transformed into fantastic, phantomatic relations between commodities; this is his ideological moment where things become commodities, and his first moment of spectrality, the production of the first ghost. However, with Derrida, we have already asked whether, in fact, this production is preceded and conditioned by the ghost within use-value, the ghost of repeatability, sequencing and ordering that makes use possible. Regardless of when and in what order, it is a certain religiosity, an ability to believe in the external existence and circulation of ideas, which conditions both use and exchange value. Religiosity "gives to the production of the ghost or of the ideological phantasm its originary form or its paradigm of reference, its first 'analogy'" (Derrida, *Spectres* 166).

Continuing our substitution of the face for the thing, we could thus say that it is ‘religion’ that allows human beings to be defined in terms of their commodified, technified, spectralized faces, because it gives us the possibility of believing in these things as autonomous entities. To say this would be to echo in large part the argument advanced by Deleuze & Guattari earlier regarding the Christian origin of faciality, wherein religiosity as the Christ-face – a manifestation of an idea – is treated as the *prima facie* against which faces are defined. However, we also questioned whether such an orientation for the face was to tell the whole story – whether explaining the abstract machine of faciality in terms of a Western Christian tradition of messianism was to obscure some other system that could more properly be called messianic.

Derrida, in numerous texts, makes a distinction between the messianic, as “urgency, imminence but, irreducible paradox, a waiting without horizon of expectation”, and specific messianisms, as religious manifestations and temporal encapsulations of a more general messianic will (*Spectres* 168; de Caeter). This distinction recalls our earlier discussion of the difficulties of justice in a system of laws as calculations. Where messianicity is a continual opening up to a future which is unknown but must nevertheless be just, messianism is a calculation of the future and a pre-occupation of the seat of justice. Derrida asks whether the messianic might in fact precede and condition specific messianisms, and that they may differ on the question of the to-come. Messianism functions on the calculating, programmatic expectation of the coming or return of some messiah. “[I]f one could *count* on what is coming, hope would be but the calculation of a program” (*Spectres* 169). Whereas the event or to-come of messianism is

the coming of some messiah or saviour, which is more properly a social control, the event of the messianic is a figure of “absolute hospitality, the “yes” to the arrivant(e), the “come” to the future that cannot be anticipated...Open, waiting for the event as justice, this hospitality is absolute only if it keeps watch over its universality” (*Spectres* 168). This messianicity is an opening to the future, a ‘yes’ to what is yet to arrive, a being in time that does not attempt to foreclose, delimit, parcel-up or commodify what is to come.

Alongside this question of the messianic, Derrida argues, we must also consider the deployment of *tekhnē* and its relation to the virtualization of space and time. *Tekhnē* has always been a certain opening to the future, it is always interested in and invests in the future. Our discussion of Bernard Stiegler and his identification of anticipation as one of the fundamental temporalities of technics, gave us a primary example of this. At a rather different end of the spectrum, Botox, as a *tekhnē* that, firstly, writes by writing out, and secondly, opens to the future by capturing and de-lineating specific futures, is the perfect expression of the current state of what Derrida calls the ‘tele-techno-sciences’, wherein space and time – “real life” – are virtualized at the same time that the promise of the to-come and its insistent failure are equally commodified. Derrida asks if the hesitation engendered between the living and the non-living, between “real time” and “deferred time”, by the tele-techno-sciences, can be maintained in its messianicity rather than foreclosed by a despairing messianism. “[H]ow to give rise and to give place, still, to render it, this place, to render it habitable, but without killing the future in the name of old frontiers?” (*Spectres* 169). How to stay in this hesitation without foreclosing on what

is to come by trying to reinstate what is past, by trying to structure the future in terms of frontiers geographical, ideological and phenomenological?

In some way this problem is the same problem faced by Walter Benjamin in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History". Although Benjamin is concerned with a particular moment and movement of modernity, and his intention is to free historical materialism from the strictures of the historiography of the ruling classes, his imagery speaks not merely of history and the past, but of time and technology as well. The angel of history, as the most well known image from Benjamin's text, has its eyes turned resolute and horrified towards the past. But this past is not history as such, it is the stuff out of which history is untimely ripped and laid down in causative fashion. "Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet" (Benjamin *Illuminations* 249). The angel cannot tarry, however; "a storm is blowing from Paradise...This storm irresistably propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress" (*Illuminations* 249). Let us, firstly, suppose that 'progress' is a cipher for technology, and that Paradise is a cipher for a messiah. Let us secondly suppose that the angel knows that the storm comes from Paradise but cannot turn to look at it, that Paradise is something always promised and indeed presupposed by the very movement of the storm, which is technology; the angel is therefore propelled backwards into something which is imagined but cannot be foreseen, is promised but will never come and will never be experienced. Paradise, like God, is transcendent and can never be faced, but it will be necessary to invent it, and to give it a

face, in order that it can be faced *as* a face, *as if* it were a face, in order to live in its image. This is the passage of messianicity to messianism. Benjamin's angel would like to both rescue the past from the calculation of history, and look to the future openly and with hope, but it cannot, it is stuck in that storm of progress that Derrida characterizes as a despairing messianism.

Derrida leaves us, and *Spectres of Marx*, inbetween the who and the what, and argues that this inbetween is also the *living with ghosts* that Marx is unable to allow for, but that this *with* is necessary for there to be any sense of a justice to come, a democracy to come, a responsibility towards those who *are not yet*.

However alive, healthy, critical, and still necessary his burst of laughter may remain, and first of all in the face of the capital or paternal ghost, the *Hauptgespenst* that is the general essence of Man, Marx, *das Unheimliche*, perhaps should not have chased away so many ghosts too quickly. Not all of them at once or not so simply on the pretext that they did not exist (of course they do not exist, so what?)...What costs humanity very dearly is doubtless to believe that one can have done in history with a general essence of Man, on the pretext that it represents only a *Hauptgespenst*, arch-ghost, but also, what comes down to the same thing – *at bottom* – to still believe, no doubt, in this capital ghost. To believe in it as do the credulous or the dogmatic. Between the two beliefs, as always, the way remains narrow. (174-175)

It is time, therefore, to bring things to a close. We are left with a distinction between messianism and messianicity, and the question of how the face fits into this schema. A great deal of this and the previous chapter has been spent discussing the various ways in which the face is oriented towards the future – towards the to-come, the *avenir*. In some way the problematic of the face hesitates between these two, between a messianism that *technologizes* by closing down the future, and a messianicity that *technicizes* by opening up to, and virtualizing, the future. Is not the problem of the face a problem of counting on what is coming, of calculating on the basis of it, of technologizing its coming, of breaking its coming up into measured sequences - Botox; of having expectations as to what is to come and trying to pre-empt or pre-occupy the space of the to-come - *Sunset Boulevard*, and in so doing, reconstitute a past that never was? Which is also to say, is this not a problem of failing to be *with* ghosts, of trying to be rid of them by either destroying them, like Marx, or merging with them, like Norma Desmond?

We have also spoken of the relation between the human and the technical, and we have reached a place where it is no longer a question of one or the other, the *who* or the *what*, but rather an issue of a *differential* ghosting, one within the other, codefining, codetermining. The face always has something to do with the human; it is through faces that the human is frequently defined and refined. As this study has shown us, however, faces themselves are frequently found to be technical in a number of senses; they rely on complex apparatuses of appearance, on rhetorics of seeming and appearing that constitute and concentrate on the surface of the face in order that the technologies of the face remain spectral. Yet, and to further complicate matters, to further complexify and

problematize 'matter', these technologies are, finally, revealed also to be haunted by the very humanity they supposedly haunt, *inhabited by the human in order to inhabit the human*.

Conclusion

Mensch, es spukt in deinem Kopfe.

Max Stirner

There can be no ‘conclusive’ end to our enquiry. A conclusion to the question of the human and the technical, their intricate intertwining, their codetermination, would not really conclude anything, for there are no ends, no endings, no end *to* the human, no end *of* the human, no posthuman, and no post-technics either. The human haunts the technical which haunts the human; like Ourobouros, we chase our mechanical tail as we go. The human and the technical can never be done away with. As much as their opposition will, and must, be continually problematized, and as much as the maps of their imbrication will, and must, be continually redrawn, the human and the technical will remain because they will always *return*. They are ghosts for each other, each one the other’s revenue, and revenant.

The epigraph for this Conclusion is taken from Max Stirner, and quoted by Marx in *The German Ideology*. Most commonly translated “Man, there are spectres in your head”, the

phrase is often taken to imply that Man, humanity, the human being, concerns itself with spectres, with insubstantial imaginings, with formulas and formulations that do not stand up to enquiry, that disappear once one looks them in the eye, once one faces up to them. Derrida notes, however, that the phrase is more complex than that: “[I]t does not say that there is some apparition, *der Spuk*, nor even that it appears, but that ‘it ghosts,’ ‘it apparitions’” (*Spectres* 172). According to such a reading, the phrase does not say that there are spectres *in* the head of Man, but rather, “Man, it ghosts in your head”; there is a ghosting in the head of Man, and moreover, it is Man that ghosts in the head of Man, it is the human that *appears* as the human, *as if* it is human. Thinking and representing ourselves will always involve some spectre or other, and it is through technics that this spectre is represented and thought.

There is no getting away from technics, no retreat for the human that is not a return to the ghost of technics that dogs its heels. In Part One of this thesis, by the deconstructive logic of the supplement and the *pharmakon*, the outside, that which was held to be external, is understood to *condition* the opposition between internal and external. Deconstruction, and the early texts in which Derrida outlines his theory and practice of deconstruction, gives us not merely a way of thinking about the human and technics, but a set of texts and presuppositions that immediately foreground the fundamental nature of the questions that have sounded throughout this thesis. Derrida’s analysis of Plato and Rousseau and the logocentric tradition revolves around the relation between speech and writing, and we have mapped this opposition onto that between the human and the technical arguing that, if speech is conditioned by writing, by an arche-writing or writing before the letter, then

the human is conditioned by the technical under the sign of 'the writing machine'. If speech signifies the present, human subject, and writing is a *tekhnē* and mnemotechnic, then the human is technical the moment *before* it opens its mouth to speak. Writing, and technics, are the conditions of communicability. Further, for Stiegler, writing as the trace is the condition of the experience of time and temporality; future and past, anticipation and memory function on the memory support that is writing, technics, epigenesis and epiphylogenesis. Not merely has writing become one of the defining marks of the 'civilized' technological West, but we as human beings are written in so many ways as well. Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and Adrian MacKenzie have all discussed this to varying degrees. We write, we are written in, and upon. This is how the world works.

In contrast to the philosophy of Plato and Rousseau, contemporary biotechnological discourses and practices tend to almost unproblematically elide the differences between human and technics, biology and technology, and yet it is still the writing machine that governs or oversees this elision. Here, 'life' is understood informatically; it is composed of genetic 'information' and it is always in-formation according to the discourses and practices that govern its materialization. Life is mapped, pre-scribed and in-scribed, stretched out flat in the operating theatre of the laboratory, and its dissection and reconstitution is witnessed by a select group of 'modest witnesses' who together ensure that the event of technoscientific knowledge is known before it is known, written before it is written. In this mapping life is topologized, frontiers are foreseen, captured, commodified and sold. And all of this is overseen by the writing machine of Intellectual

Property and patent law, which grants status to the objects of the laboratory, defines property lines, and surveys new territory for potential expansion.

Our analysis of the face represents a limit-point and test case for the theories advanced in Part One of this thesis. If 'we' are already technical, if memory is already contaminated by mnemotechnics, if value is a function of iteration, how does the face, that bastion of humanity, function in this scenario? How do 'we' then appear, how do we represent ourselves to ourselves? Throughout Part Two I have noted that it is through and on the face that the human appears, and I have further argued that this 'appearance' of the human hides a more spectral apparition that is other-than-human, that is technical or mechanical. Precession not of simulacra, but of spectres. The face is how the human represents itself to itself, but it does this through the spectre of technics and in doing so, misrepresents itself, or rather, reveals itself as also inhuman, reveals its make-up. At the same time, the collective weight of our technology bears down on us like a glowering sky, we are suffused, infused with its bits and bytes, its genes and memes. We turn to face it, but discover that we face ourselves. But only for an instant; our reflection slips away, more spectral than specular, always, still, yet to return.

As much as we have spoken at length of the face, we could also have spoken of the hands, the hands that grasp, the hands that rear, the hands that break, the hands that glow. The hands driven by unseen forces, ahead of the beat, behind the beat, on top of the beat, changing the beat, flipping over in that changing of the beat, and never falling still. Leroi-Gourhan talks of the concurrent emergence of the face, with its home for language, and

the hands, with their will to grasp. The hands are conductors of myriad flows, be they *tekhnē*, love or the market. These spectral forms we could call rhythm; the swirling, swaying, buckling stream of life.

Technology has its own spectres of course, its visions of purer times. The technological imagination is always throwing itself a lifeline, pulling itself back to the human, losing it again, and regaining it. Technology is like a three-legged dog, buckling at each step, one moment heraldic, the other grotesque. It is the grasping hands that pull technology along, that race after its image, which is their own. But of course, the hands grasp at everything; gods, fire, skin. A cup one moment, a fist the next, the hands adapt, and are adapted. In some way it is the hands and face that drive capitalism, together. They form a kind of ludicrous unity, a vomiting synthesis. Nevertheless, the hands tend the face; it is not the face that cares for the hands. The face looks out, upon the world, upon the other faces. The face appears. The hands do not need to appear; the hands work invisibly; perhaps they are the spectral form of the face, and therein, again, we find a technics.

The logic of the *pharmakon* oversees the relations between human and technics, and it is writing which stands as the paradigmatic instantiation of this logic. Writing is indeed a *pharmakon*; it frees, it captures, it poisons, it cures, it does these things at one and the same time, and it is co-opted by individuals and powers of many kinds for many purposes. Writing is and has always been wielded like an instrument by industries, governments, empires and corporations, as well as individuals. The pen may indeed be mightier than the sword but it is equally double-edged. Although we have not discussed

this text in this thesis up until this point, George Orwell's *1984* gives us one of the best exemplars of this function, linking writing, technics, the archive and power indubitably to the question of the face. *1984* is, now, a canonical text in the literature of the 20th century, a dystopia of grand apocalyptic proportions, a profound critique of the abuses of centralized, panoptic power. Language is crucial in *1984*; it is the Party's control of language, their indomitable chipping away at its edges and their sinister neologizing that determines the structuring of all truth, of all that is sayable, doable and thinkable. Language is a technics, and here, it is under the exclusive control of the State. Through language, and the techniques of its editing, rearrangement and dissemination, the past and the present and thus time itself are controlled.

There seems to be no escape from this logic, just as there is no escape from the panoptic gaze of Big Brother. Winston Smith, the unfortunate hero of the novel, takes part in this logic. A technician of Newspeak, he is one of those responsible for normalizing the diminution and redefinition of language. He is also a pawn of the archontic power of the Party, employed to continually revise the archive, and thus the past, in the name of an arbitrarily changing present, which changes continually to both promise *and forestall* any coming of the future. Let us recall our earlier statements regarding the control of the archive. As Derrida noted, "[t]here is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory" (*Archive Fever* 4). Winston is a pawn of the Party's control of both memory and the past. At the same time however, Winston is also a force of resistance, and his resistance takes the form of the very thing that the Party seeks to destroy, namely, the ex-expression of a personal memory. At the start of the novel, off-screen and thus

faceless, outside the panoptic gaze of the Party, in an (im)possible space, Winston sits writing in his diary, in his book of memory. “To mark the paper was the decisive act” (Orwell 9). Quite apart from his subsequent transgressions, his delvings into the proscribed texts of Goldstein and the Brotherhood, his most significant act of resistance is to sit in the unseen corner of his room and write down his thoughts and his memories, and in so doing to declare himself, his mind, his thoughts and his memories off-limits from the Party, if only for a moment. It is not the technicization of language and memory as such that marks out the dystopian tenor of the novel and that constitutes the basis of Orwell’s critique; as we have discussed, language and memory are already technical, regardless of what is done with them. Language, writing and memory are the tools we have at our disposal, they are our make-up. What matters, what comes to matter and what pre-scribes the counting of matter are the structures of power, exchange and property that oversee this disposal.

The totalitarian power of 1984 functions on a tripartite logic, linking language, technics and the face into a single formulation. The face of Big Brother is everywhere, it is the simultaneously concrete and transcendent ex-pression of the power of the Party, it is a writing that codes the lives and minds of all its subjects. This is also Deleuze and Guattari’s abstract machine of faciality writ large, the control of signifiante and subjectification through the face, the construction of a transcendent ideal through which everything must pass, in the name of which all striving is conducted. This ideal, this face, is technical, technological and cinematic. This face is a tool of the Party, part of the mechanisms of power. It is also, in a sense, a ‘technology of the self’ because, although

imposed by the State rather than the individual, and although part of a political and not religious or ethnic regime, once internalized its rule functions on automatic. The Big Brother facial apparatus also constitutes a cinematic apparatus of screens and cameras, of screens that are cameras and cameras that are screens; the face watches and is watched. All subjects are spectators, but spectators also upon each other, and upon themselves. The face, here, puts all subjects on screen, and makes spectators of them all.

It has been said many times that we now live in a 'post-panoptic' society. That is, that the system of screens and media with which the West is now suffused implies no longer the centralized all-seeing-eye of the panopticon as its model of power, but rather a distributed kind of 'looking' in which all nodes in the network moderate each other. With the face of Big Brother and the entire apparatus of power it signifies on one hand, and all the mechanisms of appearance and seeming, all the processes of spectatorship, specularly and spectrality we have discussed on the other, and on, yes, yet another hand the post-panoptic model of a decentralized mode of watching, we can state that it is through the face that we are all watched all the time, and thus we watch ourselves, we imagine ourselves on-screen, or on whatever white wall or in whatever black hole is most appropriate. We see ourselves being watched and conceive of ourselves as spectators and spectated at the same time, in one and the same movement. The face is the most profound mechanism of a distributed social power because it is through the face that we can imagine ourselves; the face receives our fantasies and our projections like the most benevolent and malicious of overseers.

The face is what we watch but it is also a mode of watching. We *are* our faces but we are also always *becoming* our faces, playing catch-up to something that we can never reach because it is put *in front of us*, which is also the fantasy and function of technology. The face unfolds always as a tableau, but the tableau is a *trompe l'oeil*. This is why I have insisted all along that the face is both a play and a stage – something put on, and something on which a play is put. The face is infrastructure, and today it is one of the most critical infrastructures in the make-up of what it is to be a human being. Most importantly, however, and what takes the face beyond a simple instantiation of some theory of the cinematization of everyday life, is that the face has a temporality to it which goes beyond the limited temporality of the present. We have mentioned many times that the face has a virtual aspect, that it is something projected. This projection is not merely projection in space, as in a theatre or cinema; it is also projection in time. The face remains always to come, and if it is our representative, and if we have loaded onto it the dubious gift of expressing our humanity, it is our humanity which is also, always, yet to come.

It is for this reason, also, that the face is fundamentally technical; the projection of the face, its virtuality, is at the same time its technicity, and its spectrality. As Bernard Stiegler argues, technics always has to do with time and temporality. Questions of past, present and future are always presented to technics as riddles to be solved, as problems to be anticipated and overcome. Temporality, the problem of the past and its mounting up, its reflection and effects on the present and the promise, terrible and beautiful, of the future; these are questions for technics. The technologies of the face and body, the

endless succession of cosmetic treatments and procedures of which Botox is one of the most fascinating, are technologies of appearance, and we have discussed the vicissitudes of appearance at length. But appearance is also always oriented beyond the present, as our discussion of Botox demonstrated. The appearance of the face is a matter of the archive, its erasure, and its projection into the future. The past mounts up; it is archived in us, in our faces, by us, in our storehouses and hard-drives, and around us, in the epigenetic and epiphylogenetic memory supports. To some it is given the task to tamper with the archive, or to oversee its use and dissemination, which amounts to much the same thing. To some it is given to delve into the archive, to question its existence, to stamp it out, to contest its interpretation, to try to bring it to light. But all use of the archive, all editing, tampering or erasure of the archive is done in the name of the future, of what may come, of what has not yet seen the light. Hence the messianic aspect of spectrality and the face, and the danger of specific messianisms that attempt to foreclose, through the implementation of specific technologies, on the eternal unfolding of the spectral.

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