



fig.1



Environments' quoted in Rheingold 1992:113)

fig.2

'Your mistake', Ng says, 'is that you think that all mechanically assisted organisms – like me – are pathetic cripples. In fact, we are better than we were before'. (Stephenson 1993:231)

Technology must cease to evolve with the goal of getting humans out of the loop, and aim instead at forming with humans a higher level, synergistic machine. (De Landa 1991:217)

[The next generation of our technology] will enter every home and office and intercede between us and much of the information and experience we receive. The design of such intimate technology is an aesthetic issue as much as an engineering one. We must recognise this if we are to understand and choose what we become as a result of what we have made. (Myron Kruger, 'Responsive

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The second most often asked question of those with pierced bodies (after, 'Didn't that hurt?') is 'Why (on Earth!) did you do that?' There are as many possible answers to this question, however, as there are body-parts to pierce. Yet there seems to be a growing part of 'the scene' that wishes to call itself 'Modern

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<sup>1</sup> I must thank Ruth Adams (University of Lancaster) for a preview copy of her dissertation, 'Conceptual Problems of Body Modification: "Modern Primitives" and New Age religion'; and Tim Sanderson (Central St Martins College of Art and Design) for his, '*Two + Two = Elephants: Evolution and Art*', as both were very helpful in directing the mutation of this piece.

Primitive’, thereby structuring its response to this question of ‘Why . . . ?’ within a (borrowed) system of ritual and belief. (This desire to reinscribe an ancient, spiritual dimension within contemporary life is common in many current lifestyle choices and even political actions. For example, some aspects of rave culture borrow much of their iconography and spirituality from Hinduism; note especially the London clubs, *Escape from Samsara*, *Institute of Goa*, *Return to the Source*, *Megatripolis*. . . . And many roads protest groups – who are strongly allied with free party networks – graft their environmentalism onto Ancient Celtic spiritualism and even modern Astrology.) What does it mean, then, to be a ‘Modern Primitive’?

Fakir Musafar, celebrated Body Modifier, performer, shaman and editor/publisher of ‘Body Play and Modern Primitives Quarterly’, coined the term ‘Modern Primitive’ (also used by Vale and Juno in their collection of the same name) to describe the subjective stance that he (and those on whom he practices) occupies. Increasingly disaffected with the fragmentation and lack of spiritual direction offered by contemporary (Western) culture, the ‘Modern Primitives’ look to the cultures of others (often marginalised by the mainstream and idealised by the underground) to offer their lives structure. In the editorial to ‘Body Play’, entitled ‘Worship Through The Body’, Fakir writes:

I was in Malaysia this August on a specific mission: to investigate the possibility of participating in their Thaipusam in January 1995 . . . I waited 52 years to connect with the ‘source’ of my inspiration for ‘worship through the body’ . . . I had real insight during my August trip – an insight about the value of offering one’s body as a gift to deities, revered ones and ancestors. One has choices in life. You can believe in an invisible world or not. And if you feel there are beings besides the ones you can see and touch, you can either ignore them or reach out and honor them. Your active worship of invisible beings, if they are real to you, will then come back as real gifts and blessings. (Musafar 1994b:3)

This Editorial then documents in words and photographs Musafar’s involvement in

three different piercing rituals: the Tamil Hindu Thaipusam Festival in Malaysia; the ‘Sun Dance’ ritual of North American Sioux culture (extensively detailed in Issue 9); and the Sufi Dervishes of the Rufiah culture. How PoMo can you get? At a time when meaning is constantly undermined by hypertextual anarchy and when spirituality has been usurped by technology, the ‘Modern Primitive’ is in desperate need for a ‘Return to the Source’ of Being.

This all seems rather obsessional to me. Remember how Kant articulated the rigid construction of the subject in his first *Critique* and the way that his aesthetic theory at first dissolved this rigidity and then reconstrained it, in his third *Critique*?<sup>2</sup> Much the same is happening with certain Body Modifiers wishing to reinscribe their practices within ancient cultural formations. What is this Primitive apart from an idealised reconstruction of something that was absorbed, surpassed, chewed-up and spat-out by the Capitalist Machine long ago? Just as the obsessive reinscribes its body (and all the possibilities for its body) within an ideal rigid structure of ritualised cleansing, organisation, movement, chanting or whatever, so too does the ‘Modern Primitive’ ritualise its body-changes within a similar Ideal organisation. *But it doesn’t have to be this way.* There is a way to disrupt this obsessive organisation of the ‘Modern Primitive’ and for this we need to take the line of flight of the Cyborg. Maybe one day – the same day that De Landa’s robot historian comes to write the history of its race (along the lines of *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* [1991]) – a Cyborg historian will think with affection of its own idealised primitives, the Body Modifiers of today.

The project of this piece, then, is to articulate ‘Becoming-Cyborg’ in such a way that those Body Modifiers among us can steer away from the theological restrictions of the ‘Modern Primitive’. Let us first, then, introduce some ideas

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<sup>2</sup> See Kant 1933:B133 and B277; Kant 1952:175–7; see also, Brassett 1991 and Brassett in Earnshaw 1994, for a more detailed discussion of Kant’s methods of subjectification.

about 'Becoming'.

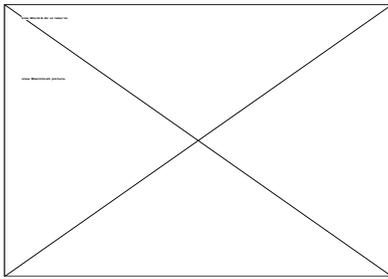


fig. 3

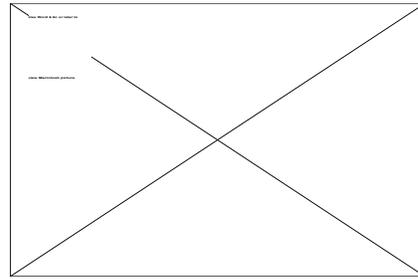


fig. 4

### **Becoming and bits of bodies**

Apparently, PoMo really knows where it is when it comes to Becoming and its traditional adversary, Being. In his detailed and well-traced outline of the ways of Modernism and PoMo (*The Condition of Postmodernity* [1990]), David Harvey clearly identifies (and rigidifies) the location of this age-old distinction. His guide leads us as follows: Being = stasis, the aesthetics of place and the politics of the fascist, and can be thought of as PoMo; Becoming = ethics of time and space, and the politics of change, and can be broadly painted as Modernist. With this simple formulation we can easily orientate ourselves in this book. Which is made even easier as Harvey places a big arrow with the legend 'I am here' at the point where Modernist = Becoming: 'There are some who would have us return to classicism and others who seek to tread the path of the moderns. From the standpoint of the latter, every age is judged to attain "the fullness of time, not by being but by becoming". I could not agree more' (Harvey 1990:359).

On the face of it, Harvey's account of (and preference for) Becoming over Being seems laudable to me; but I can't help being put off by his desire to bind it

in the shackles of a nostalgia for Modernism. The Modernism = Becoming beloved by Harvey, is that which provides a unified response to a world experienced as fragmentary and disintegrating;<sup>3</sup> and as Harvey makes clear throughout his book, the Modernist response to fragmentation (whether articulated through philosophy, literature or architecture) is to impose upon it an ever more sturdy rational system.<sup>4</sup> The critic and theorist Fredric Jameson unwittingly provides a perfect commentary upon the relationship between Harvey's longing for a lost Modernism and the 'Modern Primitive's' desire for a return to spiritual perfection, in his *Fables of Aggression. Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist* (1979). He writes (in one of his characteristically huge sentences, which I have truncated):

The modernist gesture is thus ideological and Utopian all at once: perpetuating the increasing subjectivisation of individual experience . . . , it also embodies a will to overcome the commodification of late nineteenth-century capitalism, and to substitute for the mouldering and overstuffed bazaar of late Victorian life the mystique and promise of some intense and heightened, more authentic experience. (Jameson 1979:39)

We can see that Harvey's Modernist = Becoming and Fakir Musafar's Body Modifiers = Modern Primitives operate along the same organisational lines. Both demand allegiance to an authenticity that once was but is now no more. A definition of Becoming which nostalgically looks backward and hopes for the

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<sup>3</sup> In the Preface to the 1909 edition of his novel *What Maisie Knew* [1897], Henry James wrote: 'The one presented register of the whole complexity would be the play of the child's confused and obscure notion of it, and yet the whole, as I say, should be unmistakably, should be honourably there, seen through the faint intelligence, or at least attested by the imponderable presence, and still advertising its sense' (James 1966:9). While this provides a perfect description of the literary modernist's writing practice, it also shows the way in which Modernism as a whole embraced the notion of structure at a time when the certainties of Victorian life were believed to be crumbling.

<sup>4</sup> Once again this movement is reminiscent of Kant's restratification of the anarchic aesthetic experience under the diktat of Reason, in his *Critique of Judgement*. See also

recovery of a paradise now lost.

My own cartography of Becoming, however, follows the vectors announced by Deleuze and Guattari in their ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ volumes: *Anti-Oedipus* (1984) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). In the second of these books, they explain:

Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation, or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equalling’, or ‘producing’. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:239)

For Deleuze and Guattari Becoming renounces all attempts at organisation and actively seeks to destroy not only the structures of rational authority, but also the moral high-ground that Harvey wants occupied by no-one but the *avant-garde*. For Harvey, Becoming is synonymous with Progress; the Progress revered by Hegel and his followers as Dialectic. But, as the quotation from *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) above shows, progress (and, ‘Modern Primitives’ should note, regress) has nothing to do with their sense of Becoming.<sup>5</sup> In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), they write: ‘A line of becoming is not defined by the points that it connects, or by the points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localisable relation to distant or contiguous points’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:293). Unlike the conception favoured by Harvey, this

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fn.2.

<sup>5</sup> In the works produced by Deleuze and Guattari – not only their ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ volumes, but their *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991) too – Becoming is wrapped up with many of their favourite terms: deterritorialisation, rhizomes, smooth space and nomads, to name only a few.

Becoming is not so easy to pin down. Becoming as Progress (or even a *Return to Progress*) has very definite points of origin and aim, and although it may designate movement over stagnation, it is a movement which is allowed only a very limited range of options. Here, however, Deleuze and Guattari describe a Becoming that doesn't work on this 'join-the-dots' principle. This Becoming is not goal-orientated, it is not a teleology; rather, it dissipates a stratified system of goals – arranged like points in Cartesian geometry – by ensuring that any point is passed through. We are left with Becoming that is not a hierarchy of goals, but is 'a verb with a consistency all its own'. For Deleuze and Guattari, Becoming is what swarms do, it is how Nomads relate to smooth space<sup>6</sup> and how rhizomes erupt . . . and it has an intense relationship with the Body without Organs. Before the concept of Becoming is fleshed out, I will mention Bodies without Organs, as they will also be useful in understanding Cyborgs.

As they first disrupt the organised body/mind, subject/object dualities, Deleuze and Guattari focus upon Artaud's creation of the Body without Organs (BwO). The BwO produces nothing; it is nothing more than a collection of machinic interfaces upon a general plane of desirous fluctuations. It has no organisation and no purpose. The BwO is recognised only as a machinic amalgam; not an organism; not the organised, systematised body with all its parts allocated a specific role; but an agglomeration defined by the desires it couples. In 'plateau' 6 of their *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), designated as 'November 8, 1947: How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?'<sup>7</sup> Deleuze and Guattari write:

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<sup>6</sup> This is further allied to the notion of 'Cartography' not only in the joint works of Deleuze and Guattari already mentioned, but also in Guattari's *Cartographies Schizoanalytiques* (1989); for a discussion of this see Brassett 1994; see also fn.11.

<sup>7</sup> The first English translation of this appeared as 'How to Make Yourself a Body Without Organs' in Peraldi 1981:265-270.

The BwO is opposed to . . . the organism, the organic organisation of the organs. The *judgement of God*, the system of the judgement of God, the theological system, is precisely the operation of He who makes an organism, an organisation of the organs called the organism, because He cannot bear the BwO, because He pursues it and rips it apart so He can be first, and have the organism be first. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:158-9)

The BwO is not averse to organs, as such, but to their hierarchisation into the organism. ‘Modern Primitives’ should be afraid of the BwO. To the ‘Modern Primitive’ the BwO acts as a wind blowing away the spirits congregating on the organised body leaving it without a system of meaning with which to Be. Each metallic insertion, each wounding inscription, each painful overcoding of a ruptured Body as the ‘Being-Organised’ of the ‘Modern Primitive’ (Fakir Musafar’s ‘Worship Through The Body’<sup>8</sup>), talismanically wards off the BwO.

As the Body Modifier disturbs the surface structure of its body with marks or objects, *it can’t help but become a BwO*, disorganising that which the dominant culture demands should be whole or perfect. The tongue, for example, once pierced, ceases to be merely an organ with which one speaks, eats, licks. . . . The pierced-tongue begins to work according to its own desires, flicking, poking, tapping, twisting and pulsating – the ordinary organisations in which the tongue works have become disrupted with a needle and 3cm long barbell. ‘Rite of Passage’? ‘Expression of Self’? Don’t make me laugh – a pierced body-part has disengaged from the accepted codings of (whatever) culture it worked itself into. To overlay ‘ritual’ or ‘individuation’ upon an act of piercing is a gross act of bodily oppression, or self-delusion. That the BwO, in certain hands, then

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<sup>8</sup> ‘But what is the value of a gift to a deity? Certainly love, intent and adoration count a lot. But is there more that one can offer? In cultures that worship through the body, the extra something is often the body itself’ (Musafar 1994b:4).

reterritorialises<sup>9</sup> upon the idea of the Primitive, is an unfortunate outcome. In discussing Artaud (who else?) once more, in their *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991), Deleuze and Guattari write:

Artaud said: write *for* illiterates – speak for aphasics, think for acephalics. But what does this ‘for’ mean? It isn’t ‘with the intention of . . .’, or even ‘in the place of . . .’, it is ‘before’ [*devant*]. It is a question of becoming [*devenir*]. The thinker isn’t acephalic, aphasic or illiterate, but becomes it. He becomes Indian not to finish becoming, rather ‘in order that’ the Indian (who is Indian) becomes something else and tears himself away from his agony. (Deleuze and Guattari 1991:105)

Becoming, they write here, is always a double action: a becoming something, and an allowing of that *thing* to become something *else*. Thus they get away from the Idealisation of the thing towards which Becoming moves, according to which the progressive Modernist Becoming – so missed by Harvey – is defined. And the ‘Modern Primitive’s’ regressive approach to Becoming is circumvented too; for what else does their ‘becoming-Indian’ (for example) denote other than a situating of the place of that Indian (Idealisation)? Thus Becoming should not be regarded as a teleology but a *process*: a process which operates on multiple vectors in the promotion of a smooth space.<sup>10</sup> The implication of all this is that – in the terms

<sup>9</sup> This is an important term in the works of Deleuze and Guattari. In their ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ volumes they identify three processes for the organisation (or otherwise) of flows. These are: territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. The production of a Territory – a territorialisation – comes about when flows on the Plane of Consistency are organised into a whole hierarchical system. Deterritorialisation, quite simply, describes the dissolution of these territorial growths, reinvigorating the plane of consistency. Similarly, reterritorialisation describes the turning back of a deterritorialised flow to the uniformity of a territory. These terms are used and explained in great detail in the fourth chapter of Deleuze and Guattari 1991, entitled ‘*Géophilosophie*’, pp.83-108.

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze and Guattari detail three distinctions between smooth and striated space, the third of which runs as follows: ‘Finally, there is a third difference, concerning the surface or space. In striated space, one closes off a surface and “allocates” it according to determinate intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one “distributes” oneself in an open

favoured by Deleuze and Guattari – the practice of Body Modification is one of deterritorialisation.

In order to examine this claim further, we need to take the line of flight of the Cyborg: for once we have seen the Cyborg disorganise the hierarchical territory of the body (and its organs), we shall be able to see the relationship it has with Body Modification and deterritorialisation.

### Cyborgs and subjectivities

In the wake of the data-processing and robotics revolutions, the rise of genetic engineering, and the globalisation of markets, neither human work nor the natural habitat can return, even to their state of being a few decades ago. . . . The proper way to deal with what we have to acknowledge as a *de facto* situation is to reorientate it – which implies a redefinition in terms of *contemporary conditions* of the objectives and methods of each and every form of movement of the social. (Guattari 1989b:135)

For Guattari, the programme for this reorientation runs in terms of social, mental and environmental ecologies (what he also terms – as I have, following him – cartographies). What comes out of this process but the Cyborg? The question of subjectivity becomes more forcibly posed, Guattari argues, the further ‘machines of production, signs, images, syntax and artificial intelligence’ are developed (Guattari 1989b:134). In ‘The Three Ecologies’ the method of cartography involves critique and the articulation of new possibilities.<sup>11</sup> It is clear, he argues

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space, according to frequencies and in the course of one’s crossings (*logos* and *nomos*)’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:481). The relationship with the concepts of territorialisation etc. (see fn.10) should be noted.

<sup>11</sup> ‘By their very essence, analytical cartographies reach far beyond the existential territories to which they are assigned. Like artists and writers, the cartographers of subjectivity

(along with many others) that technological innovations have resonances far exceeding the particular domains in which they occur. Such innovations are not intrinsically transgressive, however. The genesis of much new technology is in the laboratories of the Capitalist Machine. If De Landa's book shows us anything, it is the proximity of Cyborg production and the Capitalist War Machine. But the ways of territorialisation, reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation are interwoven with extreme complexity. The Capitalist Machine's ideal techno-subjective innovation would be an Artificial Intelligence (AI): a thinking, individual, slave machine – a reterritorialisation of deterritorialised techno-flows. The Cyborg has a different Becoming altogether. The techno-flows of the Cyborg should be left to deterritorialise . . . but how?

Both De Landa and Kelly (in his *Out of Control* [1994]), view Cyborg production very differently to the making of an AI. One of the most striking claims made by De Landa is that research into AI is somewhat misguided. Why bother trying to *replicate* human intelligence in a machine, the closing sections of his book ask, when the possibilities of *adding to* human intelligence appear to be so much more exciting? One of the prime movers of research into AI, De Landa explains, was the US Defense Department's need to remove humans from the decision-making loop in the 'playing' of war games. (Whatever the scenario, human players just could not instigate all-out nuclear war; so in order for those in charge of Military strategy, tactics and logistics to prepare for its eventuality, humans had to be replaced by intelligent machines, which would have no such compunction for avoiding Armageddon.)

The trouble is, as the need for increased machine intelligence is required – to

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should seek, then, with each concrete performance, to develop and innovate, to create new perspectives . . . ' (Guattari 1989b:133).

remove ‘soft’ humans from each rung of the military decision making process (until the ideal is reached: a mechanised soldier with the ability to identify and destroy enemies on its own) – the most fundamental problems arise. De Landa describes some human functions that neither software nor hardware can (yet) imitate: these are photoanalysis and cryptanalysis – which, for the civilian, means the ability to make sense of three-dimensional space and the ability to translate from one language into another. Any form of working machine vision or translation needs to interface, somewhere along the data-processing loop, with what William Gibson’s console jockeys call ‘meat’.<sup>12</sup> That is, in order to create machines which operate intelligently, the best thing is to create a new construct out of the interface of human and computer. And so we have what Dr Fred Brooks of the University of North Carolina, terms Intelligence Augmentation (IA)<sup>13</sup> . . . the making of the cybernetic organism.

Cyborgs trickled onto the cultural scene via an article written by Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline for *Aeronautics* (September 1960), called ‘Cyborgs and Space’. This article explains that if space travel is to become a future possibility, then the production of Cyborgs will be a necessity. The epigraph states: ‘Altering man’s bodily functions to meet the requirements of extraterrestrial environments would be more logical than providing an earthly environment for him in space . . . Artefact-organism systems which would extend man’s unconscious, self-regulatory controls are one possibility’ (Gray 1995:29). After

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<sup>12</sup> See Gibson 1986.

<sup>13</sup> ‘In the AI community, the objective is to replace the human mind by the machine and its database. In the IA community, the objective is to build systems that amplify the human mind by providing it with computer-based auxiliaries that do the things that the mind has trouble doing’ (Rheingold 1992:37).

much technical discussion (of items such as the Rose osmotic pump,<sup>14</sup> and its insertion into laboratory mice) the authors conclude: ‘Solving the many technological problems involved in manned space flight by adapting man to his environment, rather than vice versa, will not only mark a significant step forward in man’s scientific progress, but may well provide a new and larger dimension for man’s spirit as well’ (Gray 1995:33). Even at their conception, the wider psychological, social and cultural significance of Cyborg production was recognised. The question remains, in whose hands would such productions be trusted? Writers like Joseba Gabilondo – in his ‘Postcolonial Cyborgs. Subjectivity in the Age of Cybernetic Reproduction’ – regard Cyborgs as, at best, figures of a dreamed Utopia, or, at worst, ‘the hegemonic subject position that [capitalism’s] ideology privileges’ (Gray 1995:424). This response is understandable, insofar as it goes: once the Cyborg has been found a convenient place in which to be pigeonholed, the writer leaves, clapping the dust from his hands after a fit-up job well done. *Of course* the Cyborg is borne from the myriad flows of capital through various military and industrial complexes, but like many other technological innovations funded by – what Guattari in ‘The Three Ecologies’ calls – ‘Integrated World Capitalism’ (Guattari 1989b: *passim*), once generated the ‘product’ seems to have a life of its own, like a socio-cultural virus.<sup>15</sup> This discussion, however, anticipates one which follows concerning the relationship between the production of schizos and BwOs.

Much work has been done over the past decade on the production and

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<sup>14</sup> ‘[F]or continuous slow injections of biochemically active substances at a biological rate’ (Gray 1995:31).

<sup>15</sup> Such a cultural virulence can be seen happening with the genesis of personal computers via the Hacker parasites in the 70s, or the dissemination of LSD from the CIA via the psychedelic underground in the 60s.

cultural significance of Cyborgs, by Donna Haraway,<sup>16</sup> A. R. Stone<sup>17</sup> and other writers in the Feminist tradition. For Haraway, the production of Cyborgs necessarily dissolves the subjective and bodily boundaries cherished by the History of Occidental Philosophy and Science. Haraway's aim is to provide for a writing of the body which disorganises the structure placed upon it by traditional scientific and philosophical discourses. She dismisses the traditional limits between Human and Animal, Human and Machine, and the Physical and the Non-Physical, in order to create an entity that is essentially transgressive. Haraway writes:

The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, Pre-Oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense; a 'final' irony since the cyborg is also the awful apocalyptic *telos* of the 'West's' escalating dominations of abstract individuation, an ultimate self untied at last from all dependency, a man in space. . . . The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. (Haraway 1985:67)

On the whole this seems quite appealing. Haraway muddies the boundaries between bodies (and everything else) and describes the resulting existential soup in terms of 'biotic' information processing systems. We see the tantalising presence of 'perversity', 'irony' and a certain amount of desire. But this seems to be counterbalanced by such gestures towards the tradition of organisation as '*telos*', 'individuation' and 'self'. With Cyborgs like this, is it any wonder that Gabilondo cannot see anything other than the influence of capitalist hegemony?

Which brings us up to schizos and back to BwOs. For many commentators – Gabilondo and Harvey alike – the schizo is one of the most pernicious creations of

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<sup>16</sup> Particularly since Haraway 1985.

<sup>17</sup> See Stone 1991 and 'Split Subjects...' in Gray 1995.

PoMo thought. Harvey writes:

Deleuze and Guattari . . . , in their supposedly playful exposition *Anti-Oedipus*, hypothesise a relationship between schizophrenia and capitalism that prevails ‘at the deepest level of one and the same economy, one and the same production process’, concluding that ‘our society produces schizos the same way that it produces Prell shampoo or Ford cars, the only difference being that schizos are not saleable.’ [*Anti-Oedipus*, p.245] (Harvey 1990:53)

and Gabilondo: ‘Claims for the Schizophrenic logic of the postmodern ‘Subject’ try to incorporate the modern Subject into postmodernism through the logic of nostalgia, which tries to reincorporate cultural logics and elements from the past into the present – history as nostalgic device’ (Gray 1995:429). The most in-depth account of the productive relationship between capitalism and schizophrenia is given in Chapter 3 of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* (1984) (particularly sections 9 and 10). This is a notoriously difficult and long chapter and a brief map should be made here of this relationship.

Capitalism refers to a particular way of corresponding to the general flow of capital. On the whole, Capitalism tries to slow down this flow, these flows, in order to agglomerate, congeal, organise capital in the hope of maximising, or realising, its own ends. The Capitalist Machine converges with the Schizophrenic insofar as it deterritorialises the hierarchisations performed by other machines (what they call the Primitive Territorial Machine and the Barbarian Despotic Machine), decoding their formations and smoothing out their stratifications. This, however, is only part of the story. If it wasn’t, then Harvey, for example, would be correct in saying that Schizophrenia and Capitalism were commensurate with each other. The Capitalist Machine may have deterritorialised the flows of Capital across the entire face of the planet, it may have co-opted the speedy, Nomadic War Machine, but each of these processes has been subject to an even greater

organisation by the Capitalist Machine: what Deleuze and Guattari call an axiomatisation and reterritorialisation. They write:

The flows are decoded *and* axiomatised by capitalism at the same time. Hence schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death. . . . Hence one can say that schizophrenia is the *exterior* limit of capitalism itself or the conclusion of its deepest tendency, but that capitalism only functions on condition that it inhibit this tendency, or that it push back or displace this limit, by substituting for it its own *immanent* relative limits, which continually reproduces on a wider scale. It axiomatises with one hand what it decodes with the other. (Deleuze and Guattari 1984:246)

The schizophrenic processes, used so successfully by Capitalism to deterritorialise, thus lurk at its perimeters like wild animals outside an encampment. The schizo, then, is no mere playful image tweaked by Deleuze and Guattari into an intricate system of metaphors: it is the dangerous limit, ‘tendency’ and product of the Capitalist Machine.<sup>18</sup> Thus Schizoanalysis (the critique of the limits of the movement of the Capitalist Machine) and cartography coincide. Both are interested in deterritorialisation, both emphasise Becoming over Being, both map the process by which contemporary subjectification operates.<sup>19</sup> The Cyborg was, for Haraway, the West’s ‘awful apocalyptic *telos*’; following the processes of Schizo formations under Capitalism described above, I would rather characterise it as both its ‘dangerous limit’ and ‘tendency’. Therefore, the Schizo and the Cyborg – which are both subjective constructs of the Capitalist Machine (De Landa shows that Cyborgs are the material products at the cutting edge of military technology) –

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<sup>18</sup> We should note – as, indeed, Harvey does (Harvey 1990:53), although he later forgets this in order to deride the work of Deleuze and Guattari (Harvey 1990:352) – that the schizo is not the clinical schizophrenic, subjectified by psychiatry.

<sup>19</sup> See Guattari 1989a.

should be of interest to anyone involved in critique. This is compounded by the fact that they both describe subjective processes which are necessarily transgressive of the boundaries laid down by Capitalism (hence its desire to tightly constrain them as Institutional Beings or Artificial Intelligences).

I doubt if Fakir Musafar would be pleased with my identification of his 'Modern Primitive' practice with the stratifications of contemporary Capitalism. But, after everything that has gone before, can his practice be seen as anything other than overcoding, axiomatisation or reterritorialisation? Once again, this presupposes that the act of Body Modification is irrevocably bound up with processes that deterritorialise.

## **Final Remarks**

Harvey has nothing but contempt for Deleuze and Guattari's works. For him they epitomise the PoMo approach to, and analysis of, subjectivity under contemporary capitalism. All those schizos and nomads! But on even the most superficial of glances, we can see that Deleuze and Guattari don't easily fit onto Harvey's map of contemporary philosophy and politics. Deleuze and Guattari advocate Schizoanalysis and smooth space, Becoming and the BwO, cartography and critique. Becoming has nothing to do with points, points of view or supposedly PoMo Being; and nothing to do with progress, the primacy of the *avant-garde* that Harvey pinpoints as Modernist Becoming. In true nomad style, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy swarms across the boundaries of Harvey's outline of Modernism and PoMo. Where does this leave us with respect to Cyborgs and Body Modification?

The cyber-artist and performer Stelarc has moved in his 'shows' from

piercing the body to extending it. After ‘the three films of the inside of the stomach, lungs and colon/the 25 body suspensions [by large meathooks high above city streets]’ (Stelarc 1995:93) he now amplifies diverse aspects of his bodily functions with a variety of sensors and transducers. Stelarc’s desire is the emptying of the body of organs, replacing their functions with much more durable techno versions on the surface of the skin, in the hope (similarly expressed by Clynes and Kline in their ‘Cyborgs and Space’ article) that new environments (extraterrestrial or informational) can be more accessible. Stelarc’s body modifications are diametrically opposite to those of Fakir Musafar – even if, physically, they seem quite similar. If Body Modifiers were not easily seen as ‘primitive’ Cyborgs, then Stelarc’s example proves it.

We should remember, however, that Body Modification is not just about piercing. Body Modifiers have tattoos, scars, prostheses, spectacles and contact lenses, cars and bicycles, and a different outfit for every occasion. In all of these cases we can see the flowering of the cyborg, the making of the BwO, with all manner of what Lotringer calls ‘technophilic intensity’ (Lotringer 1981:274). That these intensities can be turned back onto the stratifications of Capitalism (even when they are done in the name of alterity – witness the ‘Modern Primitive’) is important insofar as such reterritorialisations can be avoided.

In the closing article of the SEMIOTEXT(E) collection *Polysexuality*, Sylvère Lotringer writes: ‘Technophilic intensity (speed and fusion) automatically *liberates all the other potentialities of becoming* (Becoming-animal, or plant, or thing) that are closely closeted in what the culture keeps calling – God knows why – the free individual’ (Lotringer 1981:274). This is the project of Stelarc’s performances and the result of Deleuze and Guattari’s Schizoanalyses. This is also what articulates Tetsuo – the Iron Man. Tetsuo is shown in some of the film’s early scenes inserting pieces of grimy metal into his body. After an accident – in which

a speeding car smashes into his newly cyborged leg – his body develops strange powers, growing metallic prostheses and amalgamating bits of junk until, by the film’s conclusion, he has Become Cyborg. Tetsuo is the archetypal Body Modifier: he *needs* the metal he crams into it. His organised body just isn’t good enough. And, once he has coalesced with the salaryman responsible for his accident, they head off to cyborgise the world.

For De Landa, to Become Cyborg involves ‘establishing a “partnership” with computers and on allowing the evolutionary paths of both humans and machines to enter into a symbiotic relationship’ (De Landa 1991:10). As I intimated above, this doesn’t just involve computers: the driver of a car has extended the limits, form and function of her body in new and different ways; similarly with the player of electronic games. The Doctor who confronts the anxious salaryman, in *Tetsuo. The Iron Man*, remarks, ‘There’s a piece of metal stuck in your brain! I can’t believe you’re still alive! . . . You’ll die if it’s removed. Think of it as a piece of jewelry.’ So, until nanobots, hardware/software/wetware interfaces, or intelligent prostheses become readily available, I’ll have to make do with these bits of surgical steel jewellery.

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fig. 5

fig.6

### **Illustrations**

All original work is reprinted with the kind permission of the individuals and organisations concerned.

figs. 1 & 6 Images created and mutated by Kurt (artist, game designer and computer animator) of AURA VISUAL (London 1996).

fig. 2 Author has his tongue pierced. (Still from the television documentary, 'Pins and Needles' [Harris 1995 (original in colour)].)

fig. 3 Photograph of Ron Athey (by Jeremy Cadaver), *Torture Garden* flyer, Saturday 5th October, 1996; also in Wood 1996:63.

fig. 4 Stelarc with Third Arm (by K. Oki [original in colour]) in Stelarc 1995:92.

fig. 5 The salaryman expresses his feelings after having mutated and coalesced with the Tetsuo cyborg. (Still from *Tetsuo. The Iron Man* [Tsukamoto 1993].)

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