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Poetic cartographies and ecosophic thought

Poetic cartographies and ecosophic thought

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Abstract

This thesis is about the relationship between poetics, sense, and the *geos*. Taking up Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophical problem of how to think with the earth, the thesis elaborates an understanding of sense as an intensive milieu of variation, excessive of both states of affairs and what can be said of them. It is because sense constitutes the emergent conditions for thought, language, and subjectivity, that one's capacities for grasping its operation correspond to a capacity to take hold of the world. Understanding this problem as 'ethico-aesthetic', this thesis turns to poetry to develop novel techniques for sense-making. Taking inspiration from the ecosophic thought of Félix Guattari, as well as Gilles Deleuze, Henri Bergson, and others, the thesis develops a conceptual grammar for a non-representational poetics, emphasising poetry's affective, a-signifying capacity to destabilise the ordering tendencies of language and produce novel virtual conjunctions for sense-making. Through encounters with several contemporary poets (including Jen Hadfield, Roseanne Watt, Sophie Herxheimer, and Chris McCabe) the thesis enacts a series of cartographic experiments in poetic sense. Together, they gesture to how encounters with poetry might be taken up as an aesthetic practice productive of new refrains – new rhythms of inhabitation across social, subjective and environmental ecologies. A geopoetics of sense emerges in which both ethics and politics become problems concerning the cultivation of an immanent aesthetics; a participation in the ongoing, differential movement of the earth's forces.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: Oliver Dawson   **DATE: 7 April 2022**

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Poetry, deterritorialised

This thesis develops an understanding of contemporary poetry as a site of singular importance for thinking through and with novel processes of subjectivation in our contemporary posthuman milieu. In this endeavour it draws impetus from two key vectors: contemporary poetry, and the ecosophic thought of Felix Guattari (1995, 2008). It begins with the proposition that poetry offers a route into an ecosophic mode of thought, not because of its symbolic or representational aspects that often characterise approaches to 'ecopoetry' (see Astley, 2007), but because of the intensive non-representational qualities that poetry as an aesthetic practice both produces and enjoins. Poetry may well depict or imagine worlds of experience, but, more fundamentally, its success in such depictions are due to it being, first and foremost, a real, operational part of *this* world. Accepting the proposition that poetry is an embedded and embodied practice inseparable from the world entails acknowledging that it has the capacity to interact with other bodies and their relations to induce, inflect, disrupt or alter those relations.

Poetry is tangled up with the very problem of why representations succeed and consequently also close to what escapes or exceeds representation. In short, this thesis argues that poetry can and does function in numerous different ways, above, below and adjacent to representation. Consequently, poetry reveals how language participates in processes nonassignable to fixed meaning, normative codes or transcendent orders that,

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when taken together, constitute language's deterritorialising force. By tracing this deterritorialising movement in language through poetry, the thesis grasps the ethical problem of the production of subjectivity as primarily a question of aesthetic composition, with language conceived as part of larger collective assemblages that emphasise its imbrication in wider social and environmental processes. In order to pursue this question, the starting point shifts from one of poetry as a representational, signifying object, to an encounter with a process that draws together forces, durational qualities, affects and their embodied sensations. This immediately troubles the binary analytic of an inside/outside of text – an accord corresponding to the subject/object dichotomy that continues to permeate research in the humanities and social sciences. Beginning from an understanding of poetry as both encounter and process, questions of what poetry can *do* – what processes or activities poetry can bring about, engender or participate in – take on an ontological importance. To grasp poetry as a site of novelty in excess of predetermined aesthetic categories is to affirm poetry as gathering and interacting with the materiality and virtuality of the earth. This further implies a poetics whose concern lies with the capacity to sense and think with the earth in its irreducible plurality. Aligned with recent geographical work that foregrounds the aesthetic as a heterogeneous field of sensing (Engelmann and McCormack, 2018, Hawkins, 2013, Yusoff, 2014), the task of examining how poetry and poetics constitutes this sensory field in singular ways becomes bound up with the broader critical question of one's capacity to grasp what is at stake in a given situation.

This brings me to the first half of the thesis's title: poetic cartographies. The task it implies is to determine and perform how the poetic – as a collection of vital forces – might be 'mapped'. This mapping is not to be understood as the cartographic tracing of an already assumed territory. Any given poetic territory can be considered real according to its effects, but this does not make it representative of the complexity of poetry's relations, forces or durations. Rather, the thesis will advance an understanding of poetic cartographies in speculative and experimental terms – indeed, as the basis upon which representation and meaning might be founded, or undone. It aims for a generative, generous, and gentle elaboration of poetry's possibilities within cultural geography and the social sciences more widely – and to produce a contingent (as opposed to historically determined) actualisation of those possibilities in and of itself.

The trajectory I have sketched out above emerges from a particular tensing of interests and circumstances. Firstly, a close involvement in UK poetry from 2009-2015

through work at one of its leading national organisations, the Poetry School, provided for a broad exposure to contemporary poetry and its ecologies of practice. Founded in London in 1997 by three poets Mimi Khalvati, Pascale Petit and Jane Duran, the Poetry School was conceived as place where one could gain an apprenticeship in the art of writing poetry, in much the same way that a fine art college functions. Existing outside of formal academic education and initially operating as a peripatetic school in which different poets would teach at various locations in London, the Poetry School gained in followers, expanding its locations beyond the capital and attracting funding from Arts Council England. With public money came the requirement for a more professional structure, and the first Director was appointed in 2007, moving the organisation into its own premises with classrooms in central London, near Waterloo. I joined the organisation as its second Director in post in 2009. During my six year tenure I expanded the organisation's online provision, added an accredited Masters degree to its offer and sought to broaden access beyond its middle-class and middle-aged core student base through grants, diversifying its teaching pool of poets and the content and format of courses available, as well as the development of a projects strand aimed at nurturing new writers through publishing and mentoring opportunities. Today, the organisation continues to thrive under its current director, Sally Caruthers.

What this partial narrative fails to capture is what Thrift (2008: 5), following Ralph Pred (who in turn follows Alfred North Whitehead), calls the 'onflow' of life; the complex inter-relation of materials, memories, embodied sensations, practices, styles, that together constitute a pre-cognitive and pre-individual *umwelt* from which, for example, my own cognition might emerge prepared to act in accordance with the relative solidity and stability it perceives itself to be in and of. It is nevertheless useful to persist with this auto-biographical register for a little longer, however, if only because it provides the corollary for its pre-individual field (Thrift, 2008: 7) that this thesis will seek to unfold.

Leading a London-based poetry organisation whose remit centred on the artistic development of poets meant that I was situated within a distinctive and diverse 'minor' ecology of practice. This ecology consisted of poets ranging from beginner level to prize-winning, professional poets, and a variety of institutions including publishers, literary organisations, funding bodies, venues, as well as looser networks of collaboration . It included people of all ages, ethnicities and social classes, though the distribution across those categories was skewed towards members of groups commonly

defined as middle-aged, middle class, 'white' and female. Demographic preoccupations aside, it appeared to me at the time to be possible to segment members of this ecology into two main groups. These segmentations are, of course, entirely arbitrary, and fail to capture the full range of sub-cultures, collective identities or emergent activity within London's poetry ecology.[1] First there was the 'London Scene Poets'. This group consisted of poets in their 40s and upwards, who had been part of the late Michael Donaghy's (1954-2004) poetry workshop, many of whom had one or two collections published and were teaching workshops at the Poetry School or other adult education centres in London. Also in the 'London Scene' were a mainly younger or 'emerging' cohort of poets in the orbit of Roddy Lumsden's (1966-2020) private workshop. An influential poet and mentor, Lumsden taught for the Poetry School but it was in his private group (which also took place at the Poetry School's premises) where many up and coming London-based poets developed their poetry, with Lumsden often editing their debut pamphlets or first collections. Aside from invite-only poetry workshops, the 'London Scene Poets' would meet for readings or book launches in various pub function rooms, most frequently at the Betsy Trottwood pub in Farringdon. These were often centred on a theme with participants contributing new poems. There were rarely open mic slots at these events - one was invited to read. The style of poetry was certainly influenced by contemporary American poetry and tended towards an eclectic lyricism and cultural irreverence that was, perhaps, somewhat homogeneous in style.

The second group were the 'Workshop Poets'. This group comprised predominantly of middle-class and middle-aged or retired individuals. This group were the core attendees of poetry workshops at the Poetry School and other adult education poetry writing courses. They tended to be diligent, dedicated and eager to learn, usually arriving with high levels of education, life experience, and a literary disposition. They tended to frequent established reading events with open mic slots at places like the Troubadour Cafe and Poetry Society Cafe. If these 'Workshop Poets' continued, they often improved into competent poets, publishing in magazines and with small presses, and winning some of the numerous mid-profile poetry prizes. A handful would discover a real talent for writing poetry and would end up joining private groups and publishing collections. I am sure many others were content just to share their work with their

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[1] Important omissions include the performance poetry scene, poetry within therapeutic settings, and the more self-consciously 'avant garde' or experimental poetry scene.

regular workshop group. What tended to define the 'Workshop Poets' as a group was a shared ambition to develop their writing and a desire to participate in the poetry world.

There was quite a bit of porosity between these arbitrary categories. A case in point is Sophie Herxheimer (see Chapter Five), who came to the Poetry School once her parental caring duties began to lessen. Herxheimer quite quickly established herself as an artist/poet with a unique style and a collaborative approach, and after a few years began teaching as part of the ad-hoc faculty of tutors at the Poetry School, as well as working with a number of poets and literary organisations. Indeed, the Poetry School is an important institution for developing the poetic talents of older people. Those tutors who taught in university settings as well would often remark to me that the discussion in Poetry School workshops was of a markedly different quality to their undergraduate and postgraduate seminars, because the multi-generational nature of the participants brought with it a diverse range of experiences and perspectives. Through creating a space for group-based poetic practice, the Poetry School offered diverse possibilities for the recomposition of subjectivities at both the individual and collective level in ways that often ran counter to more traditional pedagogical hierarchies of teacher-student. Over several years of observing the development of writers and their frequent expressions of delight at having found a community of poets, I became increasingly interested in how one might account for what took place at a collective level within a workshop, as well as the institution and the wider ecology it operated in. Not simply to see the workshop setting in instrumental terms – as the sharing, critique and production of a bunch of poems – but as an event catalysing certain affects and intensities whose traces might become sensitised and embodied by individuals to in some way inflect or alter their capacities in unforeseen ways.

It was not until my subsequent return to academic research in the social sciences that this interest in what happened in group-based poetic practice found a conceptual vocabulary that might lend it further support. My encounter with the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as well as other thinkers such as Spinoza, Bergson and Nietzsche, had the effect of loosening my attachment to the notion of literature reliant on a text object through which meaning might be derived or deferred. I began instead to think in terms of literature's relationship to life, in which literary encounters became bound up with impersonal processes of becoming. With this, the experience of writing and reading poetry began to take on a decidedly ontological character, as an event in which affects and percepts combine and become materialised in language and syntax, to

gesture towards a capacity for bringing new components of desire and subjectivation into existence. The question that began to emerge was one of how to account for these desiring and subjectivating processes operating immanently within the poetic milieu.

Returning to the two groupings of poets sketched above, then, these groups might be said to imperfectly represent the split between a professional poetic trajectory and an amateur one. But this cleavage is unsatisfactory because poetry is not a profession that one strictly chooses; it is more like a vocation and as such is the subject of an impersonal encounter - commonly referred to as a 'calling'. Poetry – as the etymological connection to *poiesis* might suggest – is a doing; an attempt at making or creating. Yet Seamus Heaney identifies a prior determining stage, where the thought connects with materiality - what Robert Frost called "the lump in the throat" (Heaney, 1980: 73). Heaney distinguishes 'technique' from 'craft'. Craft is a poet's acquired or mimicked skill with words, rhyme, metre and so on – what many people think (in the case of some high-profile poetry editors, disparagingly) happens in poetry workshops. Technique, on the other hand, for Heaney, defines their "stance towards life":

> The crucial action is pre-verbal, to be able to allow the first alertness or come-hither, sensed in a blurred or incomplete way, to dilate and approach as a thought or a theme or a phrase. Robert Frost put it this way: 'a poem begins as a lump in the throat, a homesickness, a lovesickness. It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.' As far as I am concerned, technique is more vitally and sensitively connected with that first activity where the 'lump in the throat' finds 'the thought' than with 'the thought' finding 'the words'. That first emergence involves the divining, vatic, oracular function; the second, the making function.

> (Heaney, 1980: 73)

For a humanist writer like Heaney, this is a remarkably impersonal conceptualisation of the poetic. The crucial action of a poem is pre-verbal; it is sensed as coming from elsewhere; it is not thought but must instead *find* thought; it must undergo a dilation, as if unfolding an entirely different ontological reality that will be necessary to create its future.

My contention is that what Heaney talks about happening in the instance of a proto-poem arriving in the poet's body is paralleled in the act of reading or listening to a poem – *if*, that is, one knows how to read/listen. Therefore, if one thinks about

contemporary poetry as an ecology of practice, it can be seen as existing not only to allow for the development of individual and collective poetic craft but, more crucially, to produce a space for the development of singular 'stances' towards life. This is important precisely because such stances are only produced out of a collective process of subjectivation: where collective refers to the impersonal, affective and nonhuman, as much before as after the subject and in communication with multiple ontological registers. In short, the production of poetry - and its encounter - becomes a site where it is possible to grasp emergent subjectivities in their nascent form, before their association with an individual and before homogenisation by capitalistic and normative forms of subjectivation. Furthermore, *mapping* poetic sense, becomes not a tracing or mimesis, but a production of that territory. To speak of a poetic cartography, then, is to envisage an indexing of territories far from conventional, not only as a speculative abstraction but as an onto-genetic production.

From phenomenological environments to ecosophic practice: The impracticality of Guattari's ecosophy

The push towards ecosophic thought puts this thesis into the orbit of the environmental humanities, ecopoetics and ecocriticism. In this section, I explore how the thesis differentiates itself from and responds to these fields of study. After all, the thesis does not focus on the genre of ecopoetry. Nor does it tie itself to pre-eminent theoretical frameworks of ecocriticism, ecopoetics and the "superfield" (Bergthaller et al., 2014: 264) of the environmental humanities. This decision is for important onto-historical reasons, that I will expand upon below, in order to contrast this with prevailing approaches in ecocriticism/ecopoetics and the wider environmental humanities.

Chapter Two will examine Guattari's thought, and in particular his complex earlier work on schizoanalytic cartographies, in more detail. For the purposes of this discussion, however, what Guattari's diagramming practice reveals is his preoccupation with the question of subjectivity. His later departure from an analytic setting to an ecosophic register served to emphasise subjectivity's radically non-representational distribution from the molecular level to the cosmos, thereby amplifying the importance in 'ethico-aesthetic' terms of its production, as the speculative practice of the creation of lines of flight out of suffocating normative models. Ecology in the work of Felix Guattari is consequently transformed from a question of the management of an

environment or *oikos* by the organisms within it, into an open mode of relational thought in which the social, environmental, and mental spheres are brought together. This new ecological image of thought, which Guattari called "ecosophy", speaks to recent anthropological accounts of perspectivism in Amerindian tribes (Viveiros de Castro, 2014), as much as it draws on the work of process philosophers such as Simondon, Whitehead and Bergson.

Within Western thought, the broad turn to ecology has been described as the shattering of modernity and the relativisation of the nature/culture divide in the West within a larger cosmology of thought (Latour, 2017). This has led Erich Hörl to claim that a process of ecologisation is now underway and intensifying towards a generalised ecology (Hörl and Burton, 2017). Ecology is breaking free of its connection to the logocentric and *oikos* and its association with authenticity or the natural as one side of the nature / technics divide. Denaturalised, deterritorialised, and technologised, ecology is now driving a "radically relational onto-epistemological renewal" (Hörl and Burton, 2017: 3-5). In particular, entry into the technological condition has prompted a "shift in the culture of sense" (Hörl and Burton, 2017: 4), understood as an event or becoming emerging out of the neocybernetic power structures (ibid) which had determined discourses of control (see Deleuze, 1992). It is precisely this relation between technics and sense which ecological thought now traverses. This shift in sense – to which a deep ambivalence may be appropriate to maintain – expresses a crisis of representation through a turn to relation and process. *Ecosophic* thought, as figured through Guattari and contemporary thinkers (Hörl and Burton, 2017), is a critical response to this shift that actively militates against reducing the ecological to a synonym of environmental management (the *oikos*), through a radical extension out into social, mental and technological domains. Crucially, however, ecosophic thought also offers a critique of the dominant techno-scientific paradigm that has been transformed by the process of general ecologisation underway into an article of faith for some post-environmentalists and ecological constructivists. Neyrat's (2017) critique of ecological theory and particularly post-environmentalist thinking highlights the latter's reliance on a relationism that increasingly struggles to make distinctions. An endless confirmation of the relations between everything (against the perceived humanist position of their denial through separation from the nonhuman), inevitably extends itself from a consideration of 'natural' environments into anthropogenic ones, leading to the proposition of the Anthropocene and the declaration of the human as a major geological force. For Neyrat

this is not the overcoming of human exceptionalism but a narcissistic continuation of a techno-humanistic colonisation of nature and the nonhuman that harbours a fantasy of fusion.

One does not have to accept Neyrat's critique in its entirety to agree with its point that relationality cannot do away with distinction and difference. My argument is that Guattari's ecosophy offers more nuanced conceptual terrain for thinking relation and process across multiple ecologies. As I will show, ecosophy does not aim to smooth out differences between ecologies or domains of being, but rather seeks to inculcate a disposition of speculative pragmatism in which difference becomes a creative force articulating the production of new subjectivities across molecular, social and environmental levels. I am not alone in making this argument. The call to think in cosmological and nonhuman registers, and from the perspective of heterogeneities rather than individual subjects is gaining traction within the environmental humanities (Cooke, 2019, Erev, 2018, Walford and Kirk, 2017). This commitment to grasping the complexities of relation through difference is important if the environmental humanities is to avoid sliding towards a managerial, consensus-driven approach, one that determines the problem in advance and is as a consequence too readily assimilable to the rapacious expansion of advanced capitalism (see Castree, 2021).

Somewhat at odds with this emergent cosmological vision of ecological subjectivities, the environmental humanities are a field defined by Heise (2017: 2) as envisioning ecological crises "fundamentally as questions of socioeconomic inequality, cultural difference and divergent histories, values and ethical frameworks". Yet as a result the field often seems caught in a tension between a disavowal of the scientific in favour of the humanistic, and a desire for a seat at the same table, even if it means playing a subservient role. This tension becomes embodied in the idea of the Anthropocene.

If one accepts the basic premise that entry into the contemporary technological condition inaugurates a major shift in sense, certain disciplinary predecessors of the environmental humanities – ecocriticism, ecopoetics, and the literary genre of ecopoetry – would appear to offer little in the way of conceptual support for thinking the human subject and its agency under this new paradigm. This is in large part due to their attachment to the philosophy of Heidegger, his notions of being and dwelling, and the special role of poetry for 'enframing' our being-in-the-world. As ecocritic Garrard's subsequent disavowal of Heidegger puts it:

Heidegger's alleged importance for ecocriticism lies in the combination of this critique of instrumental reason and technological modernity with a distinctive valorization of poetry. Not only can listening to language, especially the ancient meanings of words, enable us to hear the call of Being–indeed Heidegger often uses etymological derivations as part of his arguments–but if language is the revelation of Being, poetry is potentially the revelation of that revelation, a disclosure that lets presencing itself presence.

(Garrard, 2010: 4)

In fact, Garrard (2010: 9) argues, Heidegger is only able to comprehend poetry in light of its role in his "own metaphysical drama", a role scripted in advance with a reliance on "dodgy etymological derivations posing as the recovery of language's deepest resources in place of rational argument". He is, for example, unable to comprehend Adorno's (1981: 34) problematisation of the possibility of poetry after Auschwitz, an event that Garrard's (2010: 12) analysis shows Heidegger equated with the mechanisation of agriculture.

With a similar indebtedness to the phenomenological tradition of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, as well as romanticism, ecopoetry as a genre is in danger of becoming a byword for a rather rehearsed and predictable style of worthy poetry with a cause. It's theoretical cousin – ecopoetics – displays a fondness for metaphors that reintroduces transcendence in the form of a symbolic realm of language. The *oikos* of eco merges with both an embodied human experience and dwelling, whilst *poiesis* becomes the means to effect a return to that place of dwelling - as Bate (2000: 76) put it, "an answering to nature's own rhythms, an echoing of the song of the earth itself". Drawing on Bate and other influential ecocritics (Rigby, 2004), Wattchow (2012: 18-19) views poetic writing as an way of "representing the emotional and sensual depth of human experience" and similarly calls for a return to embracing "once again the more ancient forms of language – poetry, prayer and intergenerational story telling – which have outlasted our postmodern severing of text from experience" so we might reclaim an appropriate, though delicate, relationship with the places that sustain us". Yet Rigby, for one, is sceptical of poetry's ability to do just this. With a distinctly Derridean flavour, Rigby (2004: 437) argues "the literary text saves the earth by disclosing the nonequation of word and thing, poem and place". She continues

Only by insisting on the limits of the text, its inevitable falling-short as a mode of response no less than as an attempted mediation, can we affirm that there is, in the end, no substitute for our own embodied involvement with the more-than-human natural world in those places where we ourselves stray, tarry, and, if we are lucky, dwell.

(Rigby, 2004: 440)

For Rigby, *ecopoiesis* would necessarily involve the acknowledging of an outside of the text requiring, in part, greater knowledge of the technologies that will allow it to flourish, and the establishment of a more socially just and ecologically sustainable economic system.

Given the extent to which the human is now technologically mediated it might be expected that the metadiscipline of the environmental humanities would shift more into the orbit of Science and Technology Studies. Yet the humanistic tendencies towards hermeneutic methods of reflection and interpretation persist to sit, somewhat uncomfortably, with a recognition that the ecological crisis is "a crisis of the social and cultural environment – of systems of representation" (Bergthaller et al., 2014: 262-265). This serves to highlight the persistence of binaries around the human/non-human, the thinking subject/object of thought mediated through text, and of course nature/culture, as the *condition* upon which the environmental humanities then emerges. While it is the case that one cannot simply wish away these structurations within western ontological frameworks, the question remains: has the problem been adequately posed? A similar conceptual hemming-in of possibilities and potentials is discernible in Ronda's (2018: 1) study of post-war American poetry when it asks "how can a poem speak for, to, with ecological phenomena?"; conceiving of the poem as voice or archive that might be capable of adjudicating "responsibility for ecological calamity...at the level of the individual subject and collective", whilst acknowledging that these are "complex representational questions". Given recent conceptualisations of Gaia as intrusion, with Latour (Danowski and Castro, 2017: vii) arguing that "nothing had been prepared, thought, planned, predicted, instituted for life under its [Gaia's] sign", questions of judgement and responsibility begin to look parochial. The ability of poetry to "dwell in unresolvable affects and bewildering sensations" (Ronda, 2018: 6) does not, somehow, seem sufficient. At the very least, Gaia's intrusion would appear to demand new modes

of thinking, feeling and perceiving, rather than a retreat into the individual and a human-centred perception of the world.

The tension often present in the environmental humanities – but particularly ecopoetics and ecocriticism – is between, on the one hand, a particular conception of ecology that is suggestive of process and relation, and on the other, a conception of literature that is representational and symbolic. The project to develop a cultural ecology as a part of an expansive ecological field leads to the claim that literature is an ecological force "transforming logocentric structures into energetic processes", yet at the same time a reticence to consider the implications of this, and a corresponding retreat into a conception of literature as representing those processes and relations (Zapf, 2008: 852). My argument is that this tension retains a problematic universalising impulse in the environmental humanities and ecocriticism, not least in light of recent work on cosmopolitics and the call to recognise the incommensurability of not just different *oikos* but of different ontologies that exist on the Earth. Because being-in-the-world stands as the *a priori* condition of thought, ecopoetics fails to think that coming-into-being as an instantiation of difference that Deleuze saw as vital part of the philosophical account of *a* life, with 'Life' conceived as a singular and singularising power, always exceeding organic forms. For this reason I am uncertain that phenomenological ecopoetics can properly engage with a pluriversal "world of many worlds", in which a mountain doesn't need to be spoken *for* but acts in a multiplicity of ways depending on its status in different ontologies (Cadena and Blaser, 2018, See also: Savransky, 2021).

Similarly, the recent technocratic approach for the environmental humanities advocated by Castree (2021) can only define cosmopolitics in terms of representation within a 'big tent' framework of (human) progress, sustainability, and future obligations. It too remains wedded to both a humanistic outlook and an established institutional order, only craving a bigger slice of the pie. Whatever the relative merits of increased involvement of humanities scholars in such techno-scientific assessments, as an approach it nonetheless fails to grasp the implications of the kind of ecologisation that Guattari and Latour have, in their different ways, articulated. To pose the problem in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 351-423), beyond the *oikos* lives the nomad just as beyond the earth there is the cosmos, and exceeding the individual in every direction there are molecular universes. This is important in that it gestures towards the efficacy of a poetics that does not start and end with the human subject, nor indeed any

life form, but rather a geopoetics that is shaped and reshaped by the deterritorialising movements of the earth itself.

Poetry and ecosophy: An untimely alliance

In this thesis, the turn to poetry will attempt to avoid simply representing our crises of self, society and environment back to us because this designation predetermines the problem from the outset, trapping thought in a solipsistic melancholia from which it is difficult to escape. Instead I invoke poetry and the poetic in support of probing the "molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire" (2008: 28) that Guattari increasingly saw as crucial to addressing the multiple crises of climate. The relationship between poetry and ecosophy consequently intersect on this question of the production of subjectivity as diagrammed by Guattari. Poetic forces are taken up here as the capacity to disrupt and overcode linguistic machines; to cut into flows; to abstract from territories into incorporeal universes; and to put into circulation new affects, thereby providing the means by which subjectivity might break-away from pre-existing conventions and habits. The ecosophic work lies in attempting to lend these affective capacities greater material consistency through various 'transversal' strategies.

Instead of asking 'what does poetry say?', the approach here is one which starts with 'what can poetry do?'; how does poetry's unique sense-making capacity – that is, a sense-making resistant to, or without, meaning – pose new problems for real processes of subjectivation? It is certainly the case that poetry can run "counter to the 'normal' order of things, a counter-repetition" (Guattari, 2008: 45). What Guattari's thought enables one to draw out is how poetry's "intensive given...invokes other intensities to form new existential configurations" (ibid). This is not, I think it should be stressed, to grant poetry a special status in any objective sense. It is rather to affirm poetic sense as one aspect of a range of aesthetic practices capable of interpolating itself into new bodies and assemblages. That is to say, poetry makes a difference; introduces a new quality; guarantees indeterminacy where previously one assumed causality. Poetic sense adds an indefinite difference to life precisely because the poem as a formal object is "always in excess of itself – ecstatic, journeying outside itself and absorbing its surroundings into itself as it goes" (Bruns, 2007: 104). Unlike myth, whose function is the unifying of people as community, poetry enacts a "nomadic series of associations whose sociality [...] is performative in the sense that it comes together and disperses,

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increases or depletes itself, and never settles into place" (Bruns, 2007: 105). This combination of formal openness and performativity makes poetry highly relevant to the ecosophic problem of subjectivity, conceived as how one goes about lending consistency to molecular populations of one kind or another, and the perpetual flight from systems of closure.

In the context of this thesis, then, the turn to poetic practice might be provocatively conceived of as giving a shot of (nomadic) sociality into the arm of social scientific research. To ask how social scientific research can contribute to the renewal of social practices is to critique a certain institutionalist logic of knowledge accumulation that assumes that knowledge will be benevolent, relevant, applicable, transferable, usable – in short, *assimilable* to the current order of things. For Guattari this closes down possibilities, limiting thought to knowledge of that which is already given:

> Thus the schizoanalytic undertaking will never limit itself to an interpretation of 'givens'; it will take a much more fundamental interest in the 'Giving', in the Assemblages that promote the concatenation of affects of sense and pragmatic effects.

(Guattari, 2013: 19, see also: 58-60)

The idea of knowledge as an accumulation of actualised material and spatial-temporal references is born out of an overriding desire for generalised structures to the detriment of complexity and singularity – that which Guattari referred to as 'scientism'. Rather than advocating a move towards a properly scientific method (as sought by Freud), Guattari proposes a shift in focus from the epistemological to the ontological, thereby allowing for the proper integration of virtual registers: those non-discursive, affective and incorporeal elements that engender new singularities and new existential territories, in order to renew the production of institutional subjectivities and its epistemological horizons. Given this, it would be a mistake to read Guattari's (2008: 28) to "take into account" molecular domains as an accommodation or after-thought. The molecular domains of the virtual, affective and non-discursive go to the political heart of Guattari's ecosophic thought: there is simply no transformation given at the molar level without there being a molecular giving of the transformative brought into existence.

Taking seriously the primary ethico-political importance of the molecular, the question becomes that of how one might join up with and modify its intensive movement across the more meta-stable categories (machinic phyla) of critical analysis

familiar to the social sciences. The strategy I have adopted is one that takes up a particularly evasive element to hand within my own milieu – that of poetry – as both constitutive of my own existential territory yet enabling the mobilisation of diverse possibles – incorporeal universes – through experimental means. Put in simple terms, poetry has proved an invaluable lure for my thinking through of what exactly might be forcing thought in a given encounter and, corresponding to this, has helped me in the difficult task of differentiating the conditions upon which thought might effectuate an intervention – a cartographic operation on the production of subjectivity. As will be outlined in further detail in the next chapter, this taking up of poetry and the poetic is quite distinct from traditional approaches in literary studies. It rests, restlessly, on a speculative gesture of 'thinking with', of relaying poetry's *improvidential* capacity to produce thought *otherwise*. This improvident quality of poetry operates in a minor register to unsettle the sense of providence by which major formations - operating across political, institutional, social and mental domains – build myths of control and progress, and stake their claim to one (and only one) impoverished reality. The legitimacy of the major is closely aligned to its claims to foresight, preparation and sound judgement in ensuring 'our' future prosperity, invariably figured as inevitable, regardless of the miserable conditions it may usher in for many human and non-human entities. In so doing, the major also devalues and often seeks to destroy the many other ways of knowing, of taking care, of believing in and of accounting for this world. Since Plato, the improvidential capacities of the poetic have been frequently figured as inconvenient, irrelevant, untrue, inconsequential, providing no advantage or use beyond a properly sanctioned therapeutic or celebratory value. Yet it is this improvident quality that grants poetry its force and potency. For to be improvident is to be untimely; not to think according to one's own perceived advantage, nor to limit what is possible to that which emerges from the already given. The poet "eschews the coherence and unity that is the lot of ordinary mortals: he is the various, the undulating, the elusive transformist" (Marx and Elliott, 2018: 34). This quality that Plato saw as the disquieting pathology of the poet gestures to the capacity of the poetic to think with and through the event, and to actualise the virtual differentials implied within that event-time through a minor gesture (Manning, 2016). As I will argue throughout this thesis, such poetic capacities are immanent to its function and therefore do not require the writing of another kind of poetry that would be somehow more suited to contemporary agendas. Instead, it is a question of how to grasp the poetic function differently, as a generative force for sense

and subjectivity that does not emanate from an intentional subject but presupposes an energetic micropolitical field, in which the human is but one component among many.

Notes towards a geopoetics

Despite the danger that Plato attributed to poetry, it is perhaps most commonly taken up in geographical thought as a *mediation* between self and world; an interface through which some sort of meaning might be extracted. Poetry's connection to geography is, unsurprisingly, long and varied given the shared interest in landscape (Wylie, 2007), place (Cocola, 2016) and belonging or, more fundamentally, 'earth writing' (Springer, 2017). The cultural geographer and poet Tim Cresswell (2014), highlights Simon Armitage, Elizabeth Bishop and Charles Olson as poets who have either studied geography, or engaged with geographers or geography as a concept in their work. Going back further one can point to landscape poetry as a genre that charts the shifting relations between the human and 'nature', from the romanticism of Wordsworth through to the modernist landscape poetry of Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts*, and onwards to the experimental language-based radical landscape poetry of Francis Presley, Wendy Mulford, and Peter Reily (Tarlo, 2011), to name but a few. A more dominant lyric-based tradition with an ecological and broadly phenomenological humanist philosophy is also evident in the British Isles, tracing a line from Ted Hughes through to Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, and today's oft-cited 'ecopoets' including Alice Oswald, John Burnside and John Kinsella as, for example, in Bristow's *Anthropocene Lyric* (2015, See also Farrier, 2014).

It is the latter philosophical framework that dominates geography's encounters with poetry. Adopting a phenomenological approach, Cresswell (2017) argues for a 'topopoetics' in which poems are viewed as place-making, with place conceived as that which brings space into being. Linking such place-making both to rhetorical and poetic form, Cresswell's argument is essentially hylomorphic, in which the form of a place constitutes space. This leads to the requirement – whether in the writing of a poem or in the *poiesis* of place and space – that there is a selection of the 'correct' form in advance, which in turn presupposes a designer in a position of transcendence. On both counts this is somewhat problematic. It underplays the poem having its own emergent agency (not to mention form) independent of the poet. Although space is acknowledged by Cresswell (with a cursory nod to Deleuze) as already replete with more or less virtual

and actual elements, that space is still only ever "a space to fill" and the poem "an act of dwelling that brings space and place into being" (Cresswell, 2017: 326). Movements of deterritorialisation are forever fixed between being and beings. The problem of selection is imprisoned within being and from this flows a world 'for us'. Both place and space become grounded by being with space always relegated to that which is only ever constituted in the act of (human) place-making.

As a consequence, Cresswell's Heideggerian gesture with 'topopoetics' can never become a *geo*poetics because it brings earth and territory together, thereby neglecting the earth's own deterritorialising movements that do not resemble the relative deterritorialisation / reterritorialisation of assemblages, but draw a line of flight from them. There can be no *geo*graphy of the poem that takes the poem as its origin – only ever a topography and historiography. The poem and the relation between place and space become consigned to an expression of an internal historical destiny: to dwell, *to be*. The contemporary expression of this confusion being found in the concept of the Anthropocene. Against this, the key lesson of Deleuze and Guattari's (1994: 96) geophilosophy – a lesson which this thesis takes seriously – is that geography is not simply the making of places as a container for historical form. Rather it must affirm the irreducibility of contingency as the power which arises from the milieu; the relationship between territory and earth as the unforeseeable that forces us to think. Poetry's relationship to thought, I therefore argue, rests on this relationship between territory and earth and the constant movements of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation it carries out. Poetry's efficacy, furthermore, lies less in its self-possessed *poietic* capacities in so far as they rely on being for their ground, than in its immanent and impersonal potential for animating *autopoietic* processes of becoming that exceed the predetermined.

Recent debates on climate geopoetics (Acker, 2021, Cresswell, 2021, Engelmann, 2021, Magrane, 2021b, Magrane, 2021a, Nassar, 2021) bring this issue into sharp focus. Although positions and responses vary considerably, there is a consensus that emerges across these papers of the "extraordinary times" that the climate emergency have produced, and of the need to 'respond'. Poetry becomes a geopoetics when it is capable of addressing the "crisis of the imagination" wrought by climate change (Magrane, 2021a: 9). It is poetry's singular approach to image association and juxtaposition that offers a means to disrupt familiar patterns of thought and reorganise the world (ibid). There is much to admire in Magrane's (2021a: 17) rendering of geopoetics as a "compressed energy construct" that gathers earthly materials to

effectuate an embodied response in the reader/audience that cannot be predetermined. Similarly, who would disagree with the potential of geopoetics to challenge and enliven human geography's traditional disciplinary modes of conceptualising and presenting its 'earth-writing' (Magrane, 2021a: 18)? However, a tension emerges here because the agreed 'extraordinary times' fix the object of geopoetic practice in advance. The danger is that this amounts to domestication and historicisation of the potential of geopoetics in which its possibilities are circumscribed by an insufficient analysis of the 'real situation' that calls it to work. There is, I suggest, an altogether more untimely quality of geopoetic force that demands to be accounted for. A quality that might just be capable of thinking the singular stupidity these 'extraordinary times' produce – in other words, the unthinkable. It is one reason why this thesis does not focus on poems *about* climate change. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 108) put it "We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation". Creation is therefore what resists the present determination of the problem to call forth new forms and a new people.

Cresswell's scepticism at the mobilisation of poetry by the geopoetic project as a valorised form is therefore well-founded, particularly as it contains at its heart the poet as the archetypal (male) liberal humanist. It is also undoubtedly the case that poetry struggles neither less nor more than other forms of expression or representation with the abstract quality of 'objects' (hyper or otherwise) such as climate change. Yet the appeal Cresswell makes to hybrid forms – neither wholly academic nor poetic – as a promiscuous version of geopoetics that avoids the veneration of 'the poem' remains circumscribed by the very forms it hybridises. Conceptually speaking, hybridity effectuates a diversity of homogeneity, rather than what is required: thinking multiplicity and heterogeneity. Geopoetics can and must do better.

Acker's (2021: 25) response to Magrane makes a number of important interventions in the debate, not least an encouragement for Magrane's geopoetics to be bolder and "acknowledge the wildness that is poetry", an implied critique of his "well crafted" poetry that Acker underscores with a wonderfully rich poem of her own. Acker's own sustained engagement with the lyric philosophy of Jan Zwicky also marks a contrast with Magrane's generalised rendering of a familiar theoretical milieu. Lyric philosophy, Acker (2021: 24) argues, promises a "moment of lyric apprehension [in which] one is, briefly unentwined with a self". This temporary attunement to a resonant meaning within a whole is another way of making a universe of common experience

grounded in Being, for which metaphor is lyric philosophy's vehicle. As Zwicky (2014: 21) writes, the "is" – explicit or implicit – of a metaphor is its lyric aspect", with the degree of resonance in the statement "A is B" (where A is not B) equating to the degree of lyric truth. In this way, Being assumes a role of "interconnectedness, the resonant ecology, of things" (Zwicky, 2014: 22).

The problem with lyric philosophy lies with this search for a ground and a generalised veneration of meaning. That ground is figured as a whole – greater than the sum of its parts – that can only be apprehended in the lyric moment. Although promising a phenomenologically selfless experience, lyric philosophy's implied trust in "intense emotion" (rather than the affects of which emotion is a by-product) reinserts a human-centred perspective at every point, whilst also gesturing to a quasi-mystic wholeness of a *gestalt* with which Being may commune. This is contrasted with a rather unappealing gloss of technocratic meaning-making that consists in breaking the multiple down into its constituent parts. This last point may be a reasonably fair characterisation of the scientific method (though it is an unconvincing understanding of technics for scholars of Simondon or, indeed, Guattari), but it does not follow from this that one must therefore subordinate the relations of the multiple to the One, nor envelop it in Being. Deleuze's injunction is unequivocal on this matter:

> One must go further: one must make the encounter with relations penetrate and corrupt everything, undermine being, make it topple over. Substitute the AND for IS. A and B. The AND is not even a specific relation or conjunction, it is that which subtends all relations, the path of all relations, which makes relations shoot outside their terms and outside the set of their terms, and outside everything which could be determined as Being, One, or Whole. The AND as extra-being, inter-being. Relations might still establish themselves between their terms, or between two sets, from one to the other, but the AND gives relations another direction, and puts to flight terms and sets, the former and the latter on the line of flight which it actively creates.

(Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 57)

Lyric philosophy appears to want to appeal to open structure and the One. I'm not convinced it can do both. For Zwicky it is metaphor that brings about apprehension of the connectedness of all things, their resemblance through being, whereas for Deleuze (2007: 117) "there are no metaphors, only combinations" of regimes of signs and fluxes

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that produce an immanent variation of meaning. Therefore, whilst one might initially feel an affinity towards Zwicky's lyric philosophy, it effectuates a trap for thought imprisoning it within an image grounded in Being and recognition. Deleuze is able to spring this trap through a philosophy of difference, which in turn grants thought not a *gestalt* within which one might admire one's own reflection, but instead confronts what Colebrook (2010: 7) describes as "a malevolence, stupidity, self-mutilation and opacity that thought can never incorporate or master". Lyric philosophy, in gesturing towards the dissolution of the self as "the complete fulfilment of the eros for coherence" (Zwicky, 2014: 24) , is engaged in a tracing back of truth to the conditions of its emergence, namely the common ground of being.

Against this active vitalism of coherence, Deleuze posits an incoherence that must "think difference, even if difference is that which cannot be thought" (Colebrook, 2010: 7). What Colebrook (2010: 7) terms Deleuze's passive vitalism therefore simultaneously seeks to intuit "the emergence of the milieu in which thought takes place while also confronting the thousand other plateaus that parse life through a different logic". This is another way of saying that something outside of thought forces it to think and whilst that something – a problem – is the condition for that thought's actualisation, it also gestures to those unactualised paths that were not taken, were never thought, but which are nevertheless retained within the actualised thought to comprise its conditions of emergence. It is this difference that cannot be thought that Deleuze's philosophy insists *must* be thought. In this way philosophical thinking, and the inorganic power of life become situated on the same virtual plane of creativity. To accept this entails a transformation of the aims of geopoetics from question of representing, framing and engaging with climate change (Magrane, 2021a) to the problem of how to think with the disorganising, irruptive power of life (or the *geos*) to create difference. In so doing, one might become free of the nostalgia for coherence in the lyric that stops thought in its tracks, in order to put thought into flight; to explore life's productive capacity for ramified creative divergence in excess of its organic organisation.

Engelmann's (2021:33) response to Magrane is in resonance with this idea of geopoetics as geophilosophy when it affirms the former as a practice that goes beyond the important process of gathering and reorganising a multiplicity of materials, to engage "the incalculable and the unknowable [...] to reach into new spaces of feeling and knowing while impressing on us a sense of humility towards what we don't know". Pushing beyond humility in the face of the widely accepted urgency of 'our times',

however, I suggest that the untimely promise of geopoetics is that it might bring about a repopulation of the *geos* with problems that might yet shock us into thought. A humility then, in acknowledging the conditions upon which thought arises, but one that is doubled with a refusal accept those conditions as a ground for thought. Perhaps, then, it is only a geopoetics of disobedience that might be worthy of passing through the coded figurations of the earth's 'great betrayal' that are expressed in the notion of the Anthropocene.

What might a geopoetics of disobedience consist of? One might argue, with Cresswell, that a call for hybrid texts aims for something like a diffuse or atmospheric geopoetics, where the question of whether it is 'poetry' is no longer an interesting one. Is this not an example of deviance? Yes, but only of a kind – it is an acceptable corruption only by keeping the two terms 'academic geography' and 'poetry' as ideal forms through which one might triangulate a hybrid 'geopoetics'. A far more interesting question arises when a poem starts misbehaving; when it stops behaving like a poem should, as in 'The Large Thing' by Russell Edson (1935-2014):

> A large thing comes in.
> Go out, Large Thing, says someone.
> The Large Thing goes out, and comes in again.
> Go out, Large Thing, and stay out, says someone.
> The Large Thing goes out, and stays out.
> Then that same someone who has been ordering the Large Thing out
> begins to be lonely, and says, come in, Large Thing.
> But when the Large Thing is in, that same someone decides it would be
> better if the Large Thing would go out.
> Go out, Large Thing, says this same someone.
> The Large Thing goes out.
> Oh, why did I say that? says the someone, who begins to be lonely again.
> But meanwhile the Large Thing has come back in anyway.
> Good, I was just about to call you back, says the same someone to the
> Large Thing.

(Edson, 1994: 184)

Here is a poem that would fail most recognised tests of what a poem is. Certainly, at first glance, it looks like a poem on the page, but there the similarity seemingly ends.

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The language is lumpen and prosaic. The figures of the 'someone' and the 'Large Thing' are indistinct, there is nothing particular about them; no names, no descriptions (except for the thing's size), no metaphor. Of course, our lyric sensibilities are working overtime to make a metaphor out of the Large Thing, but the poem refuses this. We know someone doesn't want the Large Thing, orders it to leave twice, but then gets lonely when it doesn't come back so recalls it. This happens again before eventually the Large Thing starts pre-empting the calling back by the someone and returns by itself, which pleases the someone. It is as if the poem is ridiculing itself, the reader, and all poems simultaneously. Or, that it is masquerading as a poem when it is in fact...what, exactly is it? One becomes grateful that *all poems* are not like this. Or then again, perhaps all poems are just this, when stripped of their specificity; a pull-push of object and subject inflated with its own particular importance.

'The Large Thing' also problematises an understanding of space as a repository for human place-making. We might say that the poem happens in a space that is not yet a place. The reader knows that there is a space with a 'someone' in 'it', and that there is an outside and an inside to that space. The Large Thing enters and exits the space initially under the order of the 'someone' but it eventually moves from the outside to the inside by itself, although the 'someone' claims to have wanted the Large Thing to come back. Through these movements, the poem draws attention to the pre-individual movements of space as an ongoing process. For example, why does the 'someone' become lonely? What is it that causes them to vacillate about the presence of Large Thing? In this space relations have formed and unformed without anything attributed in a tangible or distinct way to the things they put into relation. In this manner, 'The Large Thing' gestures to an understanding of the event of place as "the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing" (Massey, 2005: 141). It is a poem that in a very literal way is *taking place*, but has not yet *taken* it. As such the trajectories and the meanings that might be generated from its movements gesture to a potential, nascent within formulations of the *geo*, that is irreducible to a conceptualisation of place as something gathered or formed by human agents and therefore authentically meaningful in contrast to undifferentiated space. Rather, the ambivalent thrown togetherness of the poetic space functions to destabilise any straightforward distinction or hierarchy between space and place that might locate its ground in being.

Through its peculiarly uncomfortable presence, 'The Large Thing' is an example of how geopoetics can bring about a "splintering and rearranging [of] the materiality of the world, word or this white page" (Nassar, 2021: 29), as a political act of destabilising a phenomenology of the 'I'. Edson's a-poetic gesture, both sober and unyielding, paradoxically opens thought to what Glissant, (1997: 21) rather deliciously, terms the "succulencies of Relation". For Glissant (1997) a poetics of relation is a circular nomadic wandering; an 'errantry' that conceives of totality only through relays, detours and inferences that operate to challenge the imposition of universal or generalising totalities, with their attendant coloniser's logic of centre and periphery. Totality through relation, is an (im)possibility accomplished through the rhizomatic journey from periphery to periphery that in its movement "abolishes the very notion of centre and periphery" and enacts "the power to experience the shock of elsewhere" (Glissant, 1997: 29-30). It is this crucial political commitment to a plurality of worlds as a decolonisation of thought and relations, that points to why all poetics (not just those narrowly defined as 'climate' or 'eco' poetics) must ultimately be considered as geopoetics.

To have done with openings

The opening line of a poem has a huge responsibility upon its shoulders in terms of setting the content, tone, rhythm, and syntax to follow. In my own poetry-writing experience, the opener is rarely the first line I write down but often a line somewhere in the middle of the first draft, once all the throat-clearing is done with. Alas, however, this is not a poem and so the best that can be done is to prise open that middling space the rest of the thesis will work out of. I opened, therefore, with an initial proposition of poetry and the poetic that emphasised its non-representational (i.e. intensive, affective, processual) qualities to both embed and embody it as an operational part of the world rather than a commentary on or representation of that world. Drawing upon how my own interest in poetry and the poetic has developed (and with a helping hand from Seamus Heaney) I sketched out an impersonal and collective understanding of the poetic in ontological terms. Poetry is grasped as a plurality of pre-cognitive and prelinguistic sensing techniques that operate together to enact 'singular stances towards life', or emergent forms of subjectivity within a milieu. In this way, one might, I suggest, constitute poetic cartographies as an onto-genetic activity, both disruptive of

existing homogeneous formations of subjectivity and productive of new subjectivities and their territories.

In contrast to phenomenological approaches in ecocriticism and the wider environmental humanities, Guattari's *ecosophy* both recognises and critically intervenes in a broader shift towards a denaturalised, technologised ecologisation of thought that constitutes new conditions for sense-making. Ecosophy's ethico-aesthetic paradigm highlights the creative activity involved in thinking with difference across multiple domains. The aim being to produce nascent forms of subjectivity that might evade capture by representational models, thereby acting as an ethico-political resistance against homogeneity and the principle of general equivalence. Poetry's capacity to disrupt linguistic formations and function as an agent of deterritorialisation within assemblages aligns it with the ecosophic problem of producing new ethico-aesthetic forms of subjectivity that think with the milieu as an event rich in virtual potential. Turning to recent debates in geography on geopoetics, I highlighted how a problematic philosophical lineage (again, largely phenomenological) leads to a geopoetics that struggles to think difference and consequently becomes beholden to form (as with Cresswell's *topopoetics* and hybrid geopoetics) or to the One as a *gestalt* (as with Zwicky's lyric philosophy). This failure to think difference as that which continually disrupts any kind of formal or transcendent prior condition is what, I argue, also leads to geopoetics being reduced to a 'climate geopoetics', in which poetry becomes a way to 'get the message out' about climate change. Consequently poetry becomes concerned with responding to problems determined in advance rather then realising its own problematising potential. Spotlighting a particularly frustrating (though humorous) poem by Russell Edson, and with reference to both Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy and the work of Edouard Glissant, I argued that all poetics can be considered geopoetics to the extent that it thinks with the deterritorialising movements of the earth to enact "the shock of elsewhere" (Glissant, 1997: 30). I return to consider the implications of such a geopoetics for sense in the concluding chapter.

Chapter outlines

Following Chapter Two's considerations of method, there are four further chapters:

Memorable speech

In 'Memorable speech' I look to further establish the ontological milieu of the thesis and in particular the idea that poetry has an essential relationship to time. Taking its title from WH Auden's definition of poetry, the problem the chapter pursues, is whether poetry grasped durationally as process, might allow for the kind of ontological mutations that Guattari saw as necessary for transversal – that is, ecosophic – productions across mental, social and environmental ecologies. Turning to the philosophical method of Henri Bergson, the chapter explores how reintroducing duration into our thinking inserts a creative indeterminacy into matter. Bergson's contention is that such indeterminacy requires a wholesale leap into another ontological realm, that of the past. Unlike the present, the past eternally is, but cannot act. It is therefore virtual. Moving into Deleuze's reading of Bergson in earnest, the chapter unpacks how duration's qualitative differences in kind virtually coexist with matter's quantitative differences of degree. Bergson's *élan vital* names the movement from the virtual to the actual as a process of creative differentiation driving evolution in a similar way to that of memory recollection. In light of this, poetry, I argue, can be figured as producing memories of the future – an anticipation of a qualitative difference that becomes materialised as sensation. Through this untimely quality, apparently lacking any utility, a Bergsonian poetics speaks to a creative revelation of difference as virtual co-existence existing immanent to matter, with the potential to disclose new modes of existence.

Structure and mutation: Towards a machinic poetics

This chapter explores the potential of Guattari's machinic philosophy for understanding poetry as an ecosophic activity of micropolitical importance, harnessing language's alterity to produce new subjectivities. It spotlights an encounter with the poet Chris McCabe to trace several strands of thought that emerged from both our conversation and my engagement with McCabe's poetry in his collection *The Triumph of Cancer*. I also explore a reference McCabe made to the claim by the poet Don Paterson that a

poem is "a little machine for remembering itself", as a means of contrasting the machinic with the mechanical. Whereas mechanics indicates a closed system of connections between dependent terms, machinic, as taken up by Guattari and Deleuze, is a proximity grouping between independent and heterogenous terms that together draw an abstract line. Emphasising that there are social, aesthetic and biological machines, the chapter argues for the machinic as a concept that allows one to think the outside of structure and grasp semiotic forces towards novel productions of subjectivity. Through the empirical encounter with McCabe and Paterson, the chapter also traces in a zig-zag line the evolution of the machinic in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, with reference to Deleuze's earlier structuralist work on language and the event of sense in *Logic of Sense* (2004b), the Body without Organs (first appearing in *Logic of Sense* and subsequently developed with Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*) and the refrain (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Acknowledging that caution is paramount when it comes to desires breaking free of the organisational clutches of the body, the chapter makes the case for how a machinic poetics might enact an ethico-aesthetic gesture capable of avoiding such pathological dangers, shifting from phenomenological and psychoanalytic models of the individual towards an ecosophic cartography of subjectivation that demands to be remade in each creative instance.

The ecosophic act of feeling: Poetry, animism, and speculative thought

This chapter draws on an encounter with the artist and poet Sophie Herxheimer to think about Guattari's call for a new aesthetic paradigm, capable of escaping dominant capitalist modes of subjectivation. Inextricably linked to Guattari's wider ecosophic project, the chapter argues for the importance of aesthetic practices as speculative gestures towards an intensification of experience. In this Guattari shares an affinity with the thought of Alfred North Whitehead, yet importantly the metaphysical abstraction of speculative thought is transformed under Guattari into a multiplicity of (im)practical techniques. Aesthetic practices are therefore conceived as offering a range of experimental techniques through which one might grasp processes of subjectivation in ways adequate to the multiple enfolding crises of mental, social and environmental domains.

Building on the machinic aspects of Guattari's thought explored in the previous chapter, I examine how aesthetic practices can be understood machinically as

transversal processes of subjectivation - a folding of the virtual and actual across multiple domains to allow for new cartographies of becoming. To explore this further I turn to the theorisation of Amerindian subjectivity by Eduardo Viveiros de Viveiros de Castro (2014) . In *Chaosmosis* (1995) Guattari establishes a link between aesthetic practices and animist assemblages, presenting a challenge to the subject/object fixity of much of western epistemology. Viveiros de Viveiros de Castro's analysis of Amerindian multi-naturalism – where objects and animals can be granted personhood – emphasises an ontological ambiguity that understands nature as variation. Where relations with others, and one's own existence are produced through an ongoing negotiation with difference.

In my analysis of Herxheimer's work and practice, I look at how her foregrounding of encounters and transformations is suggestive of a certain animist perspectivism. I trace how this enables her often personal work to take on a collective definition – what Braidotti (2011) has called feminist transposition; a nomadic process of transformation of the self through the affirmation of negative passions.

Returning to Guattari's aesthetic paradigm, I consider how its animistic qualities force one to think about how space and time is something that must be accomplished, if one is to combat transcendent ideals installed by capitalist processes of subjectivation to foreclose the future. Ethico-aesthetics therefore transforms the speculative gesture into an immanent practice of experimental composition that refuses principle in favour of function: how to grasp the necessary transversal support so that one might become other.

Sensation and bodily fluxes in the Atlantic North

The final chapter of the thesis unfurls a five day visit to the Shetland Isles. Initially the visit was conceived for the purpose of meeting the poet Jen Hadfield, an incomer to the islands, now resident there long-term. Given the prominence of place in Hadfield's poetry, I attached an importance to experiencing the landscape for myself. The chapter is therefore in part somewhat of an auto-ethnographic account of my experience in Shetland and the events that happened along the way. Like the other chapters, however, it takes those empirical encounters as spurs to further theoretical thought, drawing on recent work by Jane Bennett and Bruno Latour, as well as Franco Berardi, Mikhail Bakhtin and Deleuze and Guattari, to illuminate the singular material and energetic

components of the encounter towards the production of a poetic cartography that elaborates a heterogeneous thinking-space-time.

The conceptual thrust of the chapter is the figure of the *I* and its milieu – in this case for me, one that is not habitual or familiar. It draws energy from the Shaetlan words *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*, meaning within or outwith the walls of an enclosure, but which also possess a metaphorical resonance that speaks to the relative integrity of a material (human) body and mind in its environment. The chapter adopts different apertures of focus to approach the problem, bringing into play my own experiences of being in and on Shetland, interviews with the poets Jen Hadfield and Roseanne Watt, as well as thinking with their poetry. Recent work by Bennett (2020) on subjectivity provides a key touchstone for the chapter's aim of elaborating a more porous 'I', susceptible to both impression and expression. I explore how an ethical generosity to the potential within a milieu translates into a poetics of subjectivity in which poetry might animate incipient virtual qualities towards a more ecosophic understanding of the human in its environment. Alert to the dangers of certain elements that might be *ootadaeks*, the chapter explores how fear, horror, the grotesque and the desire for imperceptibility are mobilised and transformed through art and poetry allowing for an experience of inhuman and unliveable percepts and affects. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, alongside Berardi, I affirm these percepts and affects as a dissensual force in contemplation with chaos and the cosmos; an enabling ethos of recomposition, of both ourselves and of our milieu.

TWO

(Dis)orientations: a machinic approach

In this chapter I examine how the conceptualisation of (geo)poetics as deterritorialisation operates in practice. What I mean by 'practice' is both the question of how crucial concepts running through the thesis are mobilised and relate to each other, *and* the implications of this mobilisation for the research design. This entails the invention of a novel methodological approach; an approach that, in the first instance, affirms that there can be no neat cleaving of the theoretical from the empirical. The 'machinic' approach I develop here therefore emphasises the irreducible imbrication of theory and empirics as essential when adopting an experimental ethos towards the doing of research. The anthropologist Anand Pandian echoes this when he asks:

> To grasp the empirical as already conceptual, a fact as already an idea, if only virtually so: what would it take to attune oneself to this possibility, to learn to engage the actual matter of the world in this manner?

(Pandian, 2019: 21)

Pandian's (2019: 16-17) provocation to consider the texture of empiricism emphasises how thinking always takes place in and with the world, and the givenness of an empirical world is an "actuality always open to critical shades of virtual presence and

possibility". This is, above all else, a call to think with the milieu, the ethical force of which pervades Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus.* Massumi (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: xvii) clarifies in the translator's notes that a milieu is to be understood as a technical term that combines three meanings: 'surroundings', 'medium' (as in chemistry) and 'middle'. It is therefore more than an environment, distinct from a ground, and pertains to processes of composition.

Milieus (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 313-314) are the process by which elements of chaos are differentiated through an ongoing rhythmical vibration that determines their specific composition as a block of space-time. Milieus are not isolated units but relate to and combine with other milieus, always remaining open to forces of chaos that might ingress or destroy them. Living things, groups, even whole species, are constituted through several milieus at once that may be exterior, interior or intermediary. The rhythm which distinguishes a particular milieu from chaos is also the means by which it produces difference through contact with the frontier of another milieu. Milieus exist prior to territorial assemblages, the latter appropriating and indexing sections of multiple milieus for the purposes of expression:

> There is a territory precisely when milieu components cease to be directional, becoming dimensional instead, when they cease to be functional to become expressive. There is a territory when the rhythm has expressiveness. What defines the territory is the emergence of matters of expression (qualities).

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 315)

Milieus slide across several territories and consequently are less stratified and sedimented, therefore offering a generative medium for thought that might avoid subsumption into the habituated logic of one assemblage or another. Furthermore, milieus encourage thought along ecological lines, to emphasise a complexity of permeable, overlapping material processes through which all living things, including humans, are constituted as emergent capacities for thought, action and feeling in ways that are always provisional and underway.

Humans are sustained through both shaping and being shaped by the molecular nonhuman processes of their milieus, which is always already a political proposition because these processes co-constitute the capacities for thought seizing upon and responding to the problems that different milieus give (Dewsbury, 2012). Thinking with

the milieu is an acknowledgement that changing the way we think is an alteration of our milieu that in turn affects our capacities for action. It is a rejection of first principles as a ground, instead proceeding immanently, from the middle of multiple processes coming into relation. Accepting this as an inherently unstable, open and risk-laden affair affirms milieus as a *medium* for creation through their proximity to chaotic forces and their genetic connection to rhythm.

It follows from this that a subject becomes understood as a term that refers to a host of processes - material, chemical, thinking, desiring, affecting, that are already underway within, without, across and through that particular body and its milieus. Wherever possible I prefer, therefore, to speak in terms of processes of subjectivation to refer to this distributed sense of emergent quality. What I hope is apparent in this approach is that the act of decentring the human is by no means tantamount to its removal from the field. The multiple challenges to the post-enlightenment category of the human as a unified, rational, exceptional, masculine, European subject, lead Braidotti (2013: 51-52) to call for a new posthumanist theory of subjectivity that is "both materialist and relational, natural-cultural and self-organising, [and which] is crucial in order to elaborate critical tools suited to the complexity and contradictions of our times". Those complexities include an unprecedented level of technological mediation and the increasing incursion and commodification of the human body materials through bio-technologies. The body is therefore a site contested and speculated upon in novel, disruptive, and unpredictable ways. The emergent field of epi-genetics, for example, simultaneously offers both a dynamic, non-deterministic understanding of the relationships between environments, genes, bodies, and health, and the promise of harnessing the body's plasticity to combat undesirable factors. At the same time it is also a vast expansion and molecularisation of what counts as 'abnormal' variation, producing an *"intensified* racialisation because it redefines difference as epigenetic *damage*" across generations, and in which optimisation emerges as a "new, more plastic form of eugenics" (Mansfield and Guthman, 2015: 12, 16).

Given the contemporary techno-scientific stratifications of human and non-human milieus, the danger is that only thinking *with* milieus, becomes too passive an activity; it fails to think in ways that can grasp their increasingly active technical composition. It is for this reason that thinking with milieus is coupled in the thesis with an 'interventionist' staging of techniques that can be termed 'machinic'. The appeal to the 'machinic' is one that rests on relation, independent of distance or contiguity,

between heterogeneous terms. The purpose of machinic relations (which must be made) is to make something work for itself. In the case of the production of subjectivity, which Guattari (1996: 134) saw as the central defining question of politics, ethics and aesthetics, it offers a situated cartographic practice in which "the analytic map can no longer be distinguished from the existential territory that it engenders". Because of this processual, onto-genetic quality, Guattari went to lengths to emphasise that the extensive 'scaffolding' he created pertaining to schizoanalysis should not be taken up as a single method or model but instead a provocation to 'meta-modalize'; grafting different models on to one another according to the concrete situation:

> Its end? One can say that there isn't one, because it is no longer the end that matters but the 'milieu', the process becoming processual. [...]One no longer wants to make a definite object. One does not want to enter into a pre-established program. One tries to live the field of the possible that is carried along by the assemblages of enunciation. You begin a novel, but you do not know how it is going to finish; perhaps it will not even be called a novel. But precisely that would be an analytic process; you throw yourself into an analysis without knowing what you are going to find. It is precisely that notion of process that to me is fundamental.

> (Guattari, 1996: 136)

It is this commitment to an open-ended, immanent sociality of thought that I take up as a machinic approach to thinking with the milieu of this thesis, which situates itself as working across several institutions, ecologies of practice, and disciplinary concerns.

Viewed from a certain perspective, a doctoral thesis is an inherently arborescent model. It is tied to transcendent notions of the idea, the individual author-subject as the producer of those ideas, and the "specialised collective equipment" (Guattari, 2015: 132) that comprises the institution of the university as legislator and guarantor of both author and ideas. However, this structuration and *stratification (*to borrow a term from *A Thousand Plateaus*) of thought, knowledge, and ultimately matter itself, is never the final word. It is only ever a tracing of the map of thought, with the map itself continuing to be made through aberrant, or 'machinic' movements. Lending consistency to these movements requires an approach that grasps transdisciplinarity as a creative endeavour:

> It is a matter here of initiative, the taste for risk, for exiting pre-established schemas, the maturing of the personality (which can concern very young people). Once again, much

more will be gained in this register by referring to processes of aesthetic creation than to the standardised, planned, bureaucratised visions that reign too frequently in centres of scientific research, laboratories and universities.

(Guattari, 2015: 136)

With this in mind, the rest of this chapter is split into two main sections. The next section deals with the question of poetic language, and language more generally, as it relates to processes of subjectivation. This involves a fairly substantial examination of Guattari's schizoanalytic cartographies of the unconscious – the 'scaffold' that is not, for all that, a model. I then go on to explore how language's pragmatic function operates through collective assemblages. These initial theories together offer a way of finding one's coordinates in a given situation. To grasp how the given is given, three further concepts from the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari are examined: affect, refrains, and rhizome. Together these three concepts are constitutive of the machinic approach to poetry and subjectivity that this thesis enacts. The final section then seeks to account for the heterogeneous ways that this machinic approach becomes manifest in the chapters that follow as a 'methodology'. In the sense that each of the chapters enacts a singular cartography, this final section might be thought of as a compendium of legends that allow for each map to be used both alone and together in overlay, as a single object of thought with transversal relays, conjunctions, disjunctions, and resonances.

Language and its outside

 To better situate how this thesis unfolds and refolds poetry with the problem of subjectivity, poetry's improvidence – its disobedience – requires further conceptualisation in its own right. Having previously said that poetry should not be considered objectively 'special', it does possess intensive deterritorialising capacities with regards to language. However, this requires some clarification on where the question of language and writing sits within this thesis. The initial problem, therefore, concerns the relationship between language and states of affairs: How does the regime of signs, language and signification join up with the bodily regime of affective intensity? This initial problem I pursue through examining Guattari's schizoanalytic cartographies of the unconscious – and their subsequent transposition into an ecosophic register – which seek to move away from structuralist models of the unconscious to one

that is radically redistributed from the molecular to the cosmos. I then return to language through an analysis of the 'Postulates of Linguistics' plateau in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to demonstrate the immanently variable pragmatics of language once it is situated with collective assemblages of enunciation and understood as assigning incorporeal attributes to bodies within a social field. Through this operation "Subjects are invoked and actualized in the course of discourse, not according to predetermined grammatical constants but rather according to the pragmatics of linguistic variables, a vast and metamorphosizing assemblage" (Flaxman, 2012: 201). My argument in this thesis is that poetry's ability to produce new means of expression from within language that break with pre-existing semiotic coordinates of subjection discloses writing's potential to induce an amnesia of prior orders and, by implication, a dissolution (albeit fleetingly perhaps) of the regulated self and an opening onto impersonal multiplicities. To better grasp how this micropolitics of the poetic operates, this section concludes with an analysis of three key Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts: affect, the refrain, and rhizome, that I argue are essential to the production of poetic cartographies.

It is because of this variability of expression that language achieves through immanent, molecular means, that literature can be defined as a site with a high coefficient of variability. This is not to say that literary forms and texts do not also possess the means to embed state forms of subjection and oppression. Indeed, the development of the novel can be posited as an important legitimation of the nation state and its forms of power and control. The only question is "which other machine will the literary machine be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 4) – an ethico-aesthetic question concerning the production of different incorporeal attributes, and therefore novel, disobedient tendencies.

Cartographies of subjectivity

Guattari's distancing from a Lacanian imaginary/symbolic realm of language is what allows the former to argue for an unconscious both trans-individual and collective, possessing political force through its presence in and across objects, social relations, communities and institutions (SeeWatson, 2009: 56). An unconscious not "structured like a language" as Lacan would have it, but instead "something we drag around with ourselves...populated not only with images and words but with all kinds of machinisms

that lead it to produce and reproduce these images and words" (Guattari, 2011: 9-10). Denied a juridical role in Guattari's unconscious, language is nonetheless still an important semiotic component, operating through collective assemblages that include molecular affective a-signifying elements as 'components of passage' for flows of intensity (Guattari, 2011: 49). Criticising the reductive linguistic formalisation of Lacan, Guattari – both separately and with Deleuze – pursues an "immanent, material, political real" outside of linguistic signification, resulting in what can be described as an ethology of the unconscious (Watson, 2009: 62). Bodies and their capacities are subsequently defined in relation to other bodies within their milieu, yet also in their relation to the cosmos through molecular processes and machinic abstractions that exceed the molar level of structures in every direction.

It is this distancing from Lacanian structure that leads to Guattari's call, first for molecular revolutions (that might be capable of instituting political change across multiple and diverse molar structures), and, later, his development of the notion of ecosophy:

> The only true response to the ecological crisis is on a global scale, provided that it brings about an authentic political, social and cultural revolution, reshaping the objectives of the production of both material and immaterial assets. Therefore this revolution must not be exclusively concerned with visible relations of force on a grand scale, but will also take into account molecular domains of sensibility, intelligence and desire.

(Guattari, 2008: 28)

Having outlined in Chapter One some of the problems I see with an ecology of relations and an environment that too often gets translated into a self-centred *umwelt*, I will try to set out here why I see ecosophic thought as offering far greater promise for grasping the complexity of the contemporary moment. In Guattari's ecosophy, subjectivity is always an emergent quality produced through the conjugation of the mental, social and environmental spheres. It is, therefore, relational and processual, but crucially it is a relation that must be invented. Ecosophy therefore distinguishes itself from both a managerial ecology of sustainability and a techno-scientific ecological constructivism – both of which in their own ways can be seen to represent doomed attempts to save the current capitalist system – to call for the development of mutant forms of subjectivity.

Ecosophy emphasises that the production of subjectivity is a creative endeavour that is 'ethico-aesthetic'. That is to say, subjectivity must be made and therefore it is question of ethics and aesthetics: what kind of world do we want?

Ecosophic practice is pragmatic, opportunistic and risky work requiring a delicate precision to successfully achieve its outcome of grasping new productions of subjectivity. For Guattari, the question of subjectivity, such as it is radically distributed from the molecular through to the cosmological, is never simply a given, it must correspond to a giving. This leads to his diagramming of four ontological dimensions that constitute the production of subjectivity, and indeed, existence (Watson, 2009: 99-100):

		Discursivity	
		• plural • continuous • fusional	• unary • discontinuous • of mixtures
Deterritorialization	• Infinite • Irreversible • Far from equilibrium	Φ. Processual machinic *phyla* (Rhizomes)	U. Incorporeal *universes* (Constellations)
	• Finite • Reversible • Close to equilibrium	F. Energetico-signaletic *flows* (Complexions)	T. Existential *territories* (Cutouts)

TABLE 2.2 Values and characteristics of the four domains F, Φ, T, U

Figure 1. Guattari's diagram of the four ontological dimensions of subjectivity.

(Guattari, 2013: 61)

Guattari's diagramming in *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* becomes increasingly elaborate, complex and technical, but with the aid of Watson (2009), and Querrien and Goffey (2017) the four dimensions can be summarised as follows:

i. **Fluxes/Flows (F),** 'real' spatio-temporal material and semiotic energy flows such as desire, capital, labour, signifiers etc. The emphasis is on the movement of matter at every possible scale, with the capacity to constitute environments

through the unforeseeable interaction of flows, independent of any intentional shaping by an entity, human or otherwise.

ii. **Existential Territories (T),** operating between the virtual and the real to actualise the milieus of humans and nonhumans. Existential territories allow for the transformation of a living being's environment through its actions, usually to the detriment of other species. Forming through non-discursive and affective means, existential territories shape subjective identity and a sense of self.

iii. **Incorporeal universes (U)** are constellations of virtual possibility; that which escapes capture by the energetic, evolutionary, regulatory and existential coordinates of the other dimensions. They consist of qualities that have become abstracted from territories via deterritorialising flows of matter in the form of surplus value of code that is non-discursive and affective. These qualitative coordinates are not universal because they relate to a particular point of origin. Rather they are singularizing – abstracted references of territorial productions that can appear or disappear depending on the constitution of a particular assemblage or territory.

iv. **Machinic Phylum (Φ)** – different 'species' of machine (technical, social, aesthetic, living, abstract) that have evolved in relation to space and time but in which the separate phyla are arranged rhizomatically. As an integral, the phyla guarantees the singular difference of a given sign from the domain of possibilities it has irreversibly differentiated itself from, yet its rhizomatic arrangement in the phylum maintains its relation with the other phyla in an ever-changing outside. For Deleuze and Guattari, any cutting into a material or semiotic flow forms a machine, and with this expanded definition the machinic phylum becomes "both historical, for everyone, and specific, depending on how the flows in question are cut (into) in each case" (Querrien and Goffey, 2017: 103-104).

Scientific paradigms concern themselves with the first two functors in the left column, Phyla (Φ) and Fluxes/Flows (F) – the material and discursive givens. This is the actual or ontic domain. What these functors fail to take into account is the process of the giving – how something comes into being and the effort of persisting in that being. These are the second two functors in the right-hand column in Guattari's matrix – Universes (U) and Territories (T). For Querrien and Goffey (2017: 104) , it is important

to know the flows one is animated by as this makes it possible to deduce what existential territory (T) one belongs to and how to make an intervention or modification to it. Similarly, what will be the abstractions, theories and ideologies that one will draw upon to achieve this (U) ? And what machines, existent or new, might be called upon to effect such modifications (Φ)? The cartographic practice that Guattari diagrams in schizoanalysis is always an invention - a production - of the ontological support, suited to the dynamism of the conditions. For this reason cartographic practice operates under an ethico-aesthetic paradigm because it requires attending to the processes that are non-discursive and affective

Within this ethico-aesthetic paradigm, then, schizoanalytic cartography, ecosophic cartography and metamodeling are put forward by Guattari as a set of strategies for analysing, and producing subjectivity (Watson, 2009: 97) through collective assemblages of enunciation. Although not synonymous, the terms speak to the same object of thought on different registers and in different contexts. Any strategy, any cartography, needs to be capable of capturing the complex singularities that can draw new existential territories. But the cartographic strategy required in a given situation cannot be pre-determined. The aim is always to find the strategy appropriate to the contingencies in a given situation. A tension in Guattari's diagrammatic thought therefore emerges: why such complex mappings of the production of subjectivity if, when one comes to the event, one must be prepared to discard them? The key argument here is for an openness to multiplicity; it is because an event is always an unframing of homogeneity and the principle of general equivalence that one must at once begin to make a new map 'on the fly', as it were. In this sense, ecosophic cartography shouldn't simply describe the territory as it sees it but should remain open to the virtual and be prepared, as Stengers (in Watson, 2009: 109) has said, to grant any concrete encounter a "few additional degrees of freedom". The practice of cartography should therefore multiply the existential territories such that subjectivity has an escape route out of any model that might be applied to it to shut it down. With ecosophic cartography, the point is to map the territory in order to create lines of flight out of the multiple enfolding crises which threaten to foreclose the future.

From linguistics to collective assemblages

The possibilities of ecosophic cartography for the resingularisation of subjectivities were something that Guattari saw as an essential companion to both the renewal of social practices and the capacity to avert environmental collapse (Guattari, 1995, Guattari, 2008) . As a collection of techniques and practices they signal a commitment towards that which is not yet actualised, but might yet open up. In language it is with literature that one most readily works with what literary critic Castiglia (2017) calls unreality. Corresponding to the virtual affective and non-discursive realms that Guattari speaks of, literature's unreality, Castiglia argues, demands that our critical encounters with literature become the site that transforms idealism into social practice. Literature "guarantees the perpetual unreality of ideals, refusing the imperative 'reality' that limits the possible to what is or has been, to precedent and presence" (Castiglia, 2017: 3). Perhaps more than any other form of literature, poetry moves beyond the precedent and presence that a semiological understanding of language continually colonises, to draw a whole new map of virtual potential in relation to socio-political change. This resonates with the Australian poet John Kinsella who writes

> "Words are never the same after the poem, though. Poetry is not about sameness, even though the same refrain might come again and again, echo through the literature."

> (Kinsella, 2007: 47)

Kinsella's invocation of the refrain spotlights one of Guattari's key concepts for an ethico-aesthetic practice and one which I introduce below, as well as draw on extensively in Chapter Four. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, in the plateau 'Of the Refrain', Deleuze and Guattari claim that it is the poet who "lets loose molecular populations in hopes that this will sow the seeds of, or even engender, the people to come" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 345). Hope is figured here as a refusal of codified molar structures and a precondition for molecular revolutions. It also gestures to the speculative effort of Guattari's (2013: 36) schizoanalytic cartographies to "conquer new degrees of freedom in relation to existing economic and social constraints", whose increasing rigidity he argued had resulted in a collective collapse of confidence in the idea of emancipatory social practice.

The stakes, therefore, exceed both psychoanalysis and art, and the task becomes:

"to try to register, through a concrete cartography of the assemblages of enunciation, how the phenomena of the planes of consistency are jumped, what are the semiotic systems that allow passage from the world of recognised significations to the world of a-signifying ritornellos constitutive of new existential territories?

(Guattari, 1996: 133)

To avoid reducing language to structure and signification and to account for a-signifying refrains entails four key shifts:

i. **The move from language and linguistics to collective assemblages of enunciation.** Why is this necessary? Well firstly because it obviates the distinction between speech and written language. This is also something Kinsella (Kinsella, 2007: 50) argues for poetry when he writes: "My new lyricism is one of linguistic disobedience. These are words that open a pathway to what it is I think I write. Poetry is between speech and writing; it is closer to thought than either.". In the 'Postulates of Linguistics' plateau Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 78) argue that the meaning and syntax of language must always be defined alongside the speech acts it presupposes. Indeed, language itself can only be defined as the order-words, implicit presuppositions and speech acts in any given moment. Speech becomes unmoored from an individual act, to be determined instead by collective assemblages of enunciation - comprising of a multiplicity of machines, semiotic and material flows and incorporeal universes. These collective assemblages are impersonal and pre-individual; they determine the extent to which any statement or enunciation can be said to be individuated. All discourse is thus indirect and determined by the assemblage as to which acts and order words it can presuppose and attribute to bodies in a given social field. This is also why the question of subjectivity is so central to Guattari's concept of revolutionary politics. Subjectivity is produced through the collective assemblages and thus "fundamentally decentred in relation to individuation" (Guattari and Rolnik, 2008: 44). This essentially social character of subjectivity circulates to be taken up by individuals, either in relations of alienation and oppression, or ones of expression and creation. With the former, the individual is

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in a submissive position in relation to subjectivity. In the case of the latter, the individual reappropriates components of subjectivity, eliciting a process of singularisation (Guattari and Rolnik, 2008: 46). In this sense, creative uses of language and the resingularisation of subjectivity speak to the same processes of relation to the collective assemblages.

ii.   **To understand the primacy of collective assemblages of enunciation as what allows for the attributing of molecular, immanent acts to language.** Deleuze and Guattari term these incorporeal transformations, thus distinguishing them from the actions and passions which actually happen to the body through material fluxes or machinic cuts into those fluxes (1987: 80-81). Incorporeal transformations are rather instantaneous attributes: "you are guilty of murder"; "You're a father"; "I love you". These are interventions *in*, rather than representations *of* the bodies in question but they impose an order and redistribute that body's conditions of existence – its existential territory.

iii.   **It is important to stress that, although linguistics might wish it otherwise, we are not dealing with constants here.** "You are guilty of murder" means something different if spoken in a courtroom or whilst playing Cluedo. "I love you means" something different if said to a lover or to a son, daughter or sibling. They produce different incorporeal transformations and therefore have different productions dependent on how the collective assemblage functions to determine it. The variability of expression therefore sets up the relation between language and its outside (the affects and passions of distributed bodies) precisely because this molecular function is immanent to language (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 82).

iv.   **This situation grants pragmatics a special importance in ensuring language does not close in on itself towards some sort of entropic inertia, but instead takes on a political energetic character.** Working with and through collective assemblages of enunciation therefore pragmatically effectuates the conditions of possibility for language (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 85) by introducing new configurations of bodies within a social field.

By taking into account the primacy of collective assemblages and in particular the molecular function it attaches to language it becomes possible to think this molecular language-function as where the singular force of poetry – one might call it the poetic-function - goes to work. It is what allows poetry to rework language from within. The a-signifying semiotic component of the poetic-function is not in opposition to any of its various and complex significations, rather it is the line of variation itself that it diagrams as an abstract machine. It gestures to poetry's pragmatic potential to inflect and orientate the actions and passions of bodies such that it can be considered a disruptive force.

Affect

Affect, notes Guattari, "sticks to subjectivity", in a transitive manner. As Spinoza (1985: 465) had reasoned, a parallelism exists between mind and body such that "so long as the Mind imagines those things that increase or aid our body's power of acting, the Body is affected with modes that increase or aid its power of acting". Equally, if we imagine someone else like us to be affected with a particular affect, we will be affected with a like affect (unless, that is, we hate that someone like us, in which case we will experience a contrary affect) (Spinoza, 1985: 471). The emulation of desire set out by Spinoza, for Guattari (2013: 203), emphasises affect's non-localisable quality and lack of an origin, resulting in "multipolar affective compositions". Affect is therefore rendered as atmospheric – the weather of subjectivity – to be grasped through its passages and the crossing of thresholds in its perpetual search for material consistency. Like Bergson's duration (see Chapter Three), affect requires that one think qualitatively, in terms of the events and haecceities it composes.

Somewhat paradoxically given its non-discursive and non-energetic nature, Guattari argues for affect as the 'hyper-complex' motor of enunciation. Guattari (2013: 206) distinguishes between sensible affects, which are immediately given and experienced, and problematic affects, which involve complex interruptions and dispossessions of existential territories to engage recollections of memory and diverse processes of cognition. Whereas a sensible affect of contentment might be experienced sitting around a fire under a starry sky, an example of problematic affect could involve the feelings of helplessness, anger, resignation, despair and so on, prompted by the ineffectual and duplicitous nature of governments' responses to global warming. With

problematic affects, the individuated self becomes "the fluctuating intersection, the conscious terminal of these diverse components of temporalisation" (Guattari, 2013: 206) . It is because of affect's interminable search for consistency and the resultant fractalisation into multiple modes of temporalisation that it is of huge importance for an understanding of a micropolitics based on molecular becomings.

Affect, then, cannot be understood through a stable register of meaning-making but requires a concept capable of grasping how it captures heterogeneous extra-linguistic components within an assemblage of enunciation to inaugurate complex rhythms of temporalisation. The concept that Guattari invents for the capture and reiteration of sensible and problematic affects is the refrain.

Refrains

The refrain – sometimes translated as *ritornello* – allows one to approach the problem of individuation from the perspective of rhythmic time. It does not deal with time in general, or the subject in general, but with time as it is inhabited. It refers to the process by which beings "territorialise in temporalising"; the process of extracting a territory from the affective sensory signs in what would otherwise be a chaotic milieu (Sauvagnargues, 2016a: 125-126).

Refrains are integral to ecosophic practice, naming the "durational mattering" (McCormack, 2013: 7) at work in life (organic and inorganic), society (through social rituals and routines) and the mind (producing the sense of self). Crucially, refrains do not refer primarily to the adoption of pre-established schemas of being, as in the child's initiation into the Lacanian signifying order. By concerning habit, refrains draw attention to how a habit is always, first and foremost, a differentiation, before it is a repetition (See Dewsbury, 2015). As Sauvagnargues (2016a: 127) puts it, "a habit is not given once and for all; it is given one time, inscribed as a temporal rupture, before becoming consolidated". Building on the passive synthesis of time in Difference and Repetition (1994), the refrain dramatises Deleuze's metaphysics of duration through its transformation into a crisis of consistency that necessitates a response, a new beginning, a departure through the consolidation of a new habit. The sense of being at home, in one's self or in any existential territory, requires first that the territory is created. When it is created, it becomes necessary to leave it in order to grant it consistency and differentiation from the milieu. Hence refrains always constitute a movement from

milieu to territory but also the passage from one milieu to another. It signals the need to continually re-accomplish one's territory, sociality, and subjectivity by means of a rupture and leap into disjunctive ecological complexity: "Consistency is only gained by a perpetual headlong flight of the for-itself, which conquers an existential territory at the very same time it loses it" (Guattari, 2013: 211). The gap produced by this "circuit of displacements" (Sauvagnargues, 2016a: 131) is what allows for new affects to 'stick' and the process of becoming to resume out of the (only ever provisionally) individuated self.

Returning to the collective assemblages of enunciation and their relation to language, the refrain's importance lies with its ability to reappropriate materials and functions that are deterritorialising within the assemblage and transform them into expressive components. As the marker of a territory or assemblage, precisely the style in which it is held together, refrains grant expression a primacy over possession. As Sauvagnargues convincingly argues (2016a: 135-136), this has important consequences for politics. Property cannot be assumed to be pre-existent, but is accomplished through expressive gestures – a particular concatenation of refrains – which together constitute the affective a-signifying registers that mark the possession. This also signals a greatly expanded role for aesthetics, understood as an ethology of affects. Depending on the scale and perspective one adopts, art and poetry become capable of expressing the style of an epoch, a life, a date, a political system. Whether the refrain emerges from within the redundancy of socio-political norms, as, for example in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* (2014) or as a singular cut, such as with Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956), it gestures to an ecology of disjunctive rhythms through which one inhabits, however precariously or temporarily.

In *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (2013), Guattari proposes that it is problematic affects that form the basis of sensible affects, rather than the other way round. This means that the complex cannot be based upon the simple in a hierarchical sense. A scientific paradigm, in which objects are isolated from one another in order to comprehend their properties, therefore struggles to grasp the deterritorialising movement of affect through materialities, territories and bodies. Already thinking subjectivity at the mental and social level, Guattari mobilises refrains as a resistance to capitalistic universes which tended towards entropy and a general equivalence of values. The subsequent movement to an ecosophic register becomes bound up with an ethico-aesthetic practice of pragmatically composing one's refrains at the level of each of the

three ecologies, to achieve more joyful rhythms of being. Always with the attendant affirmation of negative passions from which these new rhythms might emerge and depart.

Rhizome: Thought's ethico-aesthetic manifesto

If collective assemblages of enunciation draws attention to the outside of language, and refrains provide a pragmatic concept for working with that affective molecular domain, rhizomes constitute an ethico-political manifesto or anti-method for a new image of thought. It is the concept in Deleuze and Guattari's writing that connects collective assemblages to their machinic counterparts and out further to the abstract machine enabling "a whole micropolitics of the social field" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 7). As a new image of thought the rhizome's influence on this thesis is implicit throughout. Here I set out explicitly what I see as the key implications of rhizomatic thought for what follows.

With the rhizome, thought is no longer a representation of an objective reality but is transformed into an experimental operation on that reality. This dissolution of the boundary between theory and empirics is constituted in the effort to confront the signs which force one to think in any encounter "because they envelop what we are not yet thinking" (Zourabichvili, 2012: 209). This is not to be taken as a green flag for a form of relation in which anything goes. Rather, it requires the cultivation of certain vigilance and sobriety that will allow thought to go beyond common sense explanations of experience towards the concrete conditions of that experience "in order to find the articulations on which these peculiarities depend [...] a virtual image of the point of departure" that constitutes its sufficient reason (Deleuze, 1988: 28-29). Neither simply a matter of ever-proliferating relation, nor an appeal to a higher dimension, thinking rhizomatically consists of subtracting the unique from the multiple in an active gesture towards the outside that defines that multiplicity. This is done in order to alter the nature of the multiplicity through the production of a line of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 8-9). Working with the rhizome involves an outflanking of the given in order to grasp the giving in its onto-genetic movement.

The rhizome has a direct affiliation with cartography. By concerning itself with what forces thought to think (distinct from *a-priori* common sense) it can be understood as making a map of a new territory. Deleuze and Guattari insist on the need to "make a

map not a tracing" Deleuze, 1987 #391: 13} because any encounter is an experimentation with reality. Map-making therefore becomes figured as a performative act, always open to modification and with multiple entry and exit points. Make a tracing, however, and all that is created is a model of the blockages; an organisation and structuration that traps thought within a representational image. Even within such tracings (psychoanalysis and linguistics being two examples that seek to shut down the rhizome through the production of models), however, there exists the potential to rejoin the rhizome through a pragmatics of composition that mitigates, through its propagation, against the imposition of a centralising, arborescent structure. Hence schizoanalysis seeks to treats the unconscious as a rhizome – an a-centred machinic production through which new maps must be made. So too with language; the rhizome is the means by which new productions of the unconscious find their consistency in new statements and different desires. As Deleuze and Guattari write,

> The problem of writing: in order to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are unavoidable. Not at all because it is a necessary step, or because one can only advance by approximations: anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is underway.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 20)

Does not poetry's 'ambiguity' gesture to this very problem of writing? Poetry is a doing – a happening – precisely because it deals in anexactitudes; poetry essentialises its inexactness so that it might open a passage from one existential territory of signs and affects to another. It lends a certain consistency to change. This is poetry's rhizomatic function; working from within language's tendency towards a signifying arborescent order, it weakens the roots and produces mutational offshoots – new conjunctions that change the nature of language's multiplicity out of its middle. Poetry understood as rhizome becomes defined as "a circulation of states" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 21) - haecceities that intervene transversally in processes of subjectivation across different registers (affective, semiotic) and domains (mental, social, environmental).

A machinic method?

Stating at the outset of the chapter that I would examine how poetry's deterritorialising function operates in practice, this has initially involved the elucidation of several key Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts in order to show how they operate together within the context of language and collective assemblages. However, as soon as one turns to concrete situations there are always practical decisions to be made that effectively diagram the questions and possibilities. It is to these matters of research design, to be understood in an iterative sense, that I now turn.

Following this chapter, the thesis comprises four further chapters. Three of these are substantively based on interviews in the field whilst the other explores poetry's relationship to memory and duration through the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Although pivoting off an insight from W.H. Auden, the chapter is largely an examination of Bergson via Deleuze. The importance of Bergson to Deleuze's philosophy of difference is apparent, but there is also a lesser understood genealogical link to the thought of Guattari. Firstly, Bergson provides an understanding of matter that encompasses perception, thus avoiding a representational model of consciousness and instead locating 'perception' within all things (as contractions of light, matter, time). This has the effect of decentring the perceiving mind and human subject to emphasise its ecosophical relations; "the close solidarity which binds all the objects of the material universe" (Bergson, 1988: 209).

Secondly, Bergson's understanding of duration as a qualitative indetermination, provides an ontological basis for the central question in this thesis of poetic disobedience in language and collective assemblages. Indeed, Deleuze (2007: 15) once said of Bergson that his style of philosophy contains "something which cannot be assimilated", a quality that I also argue for poetry. Furthermore, Bergson's philosophy explicitly links duration as a qualitative difference to the question of affect, for as Guattari notes:

> Assimilable in this regard to the Bergsonian concept of duration, an affect does not arise from existential categories, which are able to be numbered, but from intensive and intentional categories, which correspond to an existential self-positioning. As soon as one decides to quantify an affect, one loses its qualitative dimensions and its power of singularization, of heterogenesis, in other words, its eventful compositions, the "Haecceities" that it promulgates.

Auden's definition of poetry as 'memorable speech', when grasped through Bergsonian duration, becomes understood as a vector of subjectivity, "given immediately in all its complexity", as a 'pathic' or affective knowledge, prior to mediation through signification and subsequent subject-object relations through discourse (Guattari, 1995: 25-26).

Bergsonian duration therefore discloses the ontological importance of the category of the virtual for Guattari – and for my project of poetic cartographies – as an accomplishment of space-time. With Guattari (1995: 26-31), the virtual becomes understood as the Incorporeal Universes of reference that, through the production of a-signifying affects and their machinic consolidation through refrains, constitute subjectivity's "opening onto multiplicity" and its possibilities for creative resingularisation. In this way ethico-aesthetics can be understood as a kind of "transportation of differences across both space and time" (Lampert, 2011: 93). One that that avails itself of "a universal history of machinic abstractions that lets actual events become larger and smaller at the same time" (Lampert, 2011: 112). A geopoetics becomes ecosophic through this affinity with the virtual; by utilising techniques of abstraction and deterritorialisation geopoetics detaches from the 'inevitability' of present determinations to invoke capacities that create different futures. It is therefore precisely the refusal to assimilate – to history, its actualised forms, the environments, or philosophy – that marks out Bergson as of crucial importance to this thesis. With a Bergsonian intuition for creative process duly vitalised, the thesis enters the empirical field alive to its virtual hues.

Two of the chapters based on work in the field centre on single interviews with a poet (Chris McCabe and Sophie Herxheimer respectively), whilst the final chapter features two interviews with different poets, both based in Shetland (Jen Hadfield and Roseanne Watt). These interviews took place during the second year of the doctoral research period. Both McCabe and Herxheimer were interviewed in London, while Hadfield and Watt were interviewed in Shetland. Three further poets, Julia Bird, Eleanor Rees, and Dave Ward were also interviewed in London and Liverpool respectively, though none of these interviews feature in the thesis (a Rees poem makes an appearance in the Bergson chapter, however). Although these interviews yielded rich

material, they were omitted from the final thesis due to constraints of time and due to the decision to predominantly treat each interview in its own chapter.

My process for each interview involved an initial approach to each poet, explaining the contours of my research and asking whether they were interested in participating. An information and consent sheet was provided to each poet detailing how the interviews would be used within the thesis and any subsequent published material. In arranging the location for interviews, my preference was for familiar settings where the participants would be comfortable - ideally their home (Herxheimer, Hadfield), workplace (McCabe), or least preferable due to noise issues, a public place such as a cafe or restaurant (Watt). The choice of location was ultimately dictated by a combination of these factors and my pragmatic approach to securing each participant's involvement in the research. Clearly, however, each location provided for differing affective atmospheres that inevitably impacted upon the length and depth of the interview and the kind of material it yielded.

For each interview I prepared by engaging with the work of that poet and other materials; blogs, reviews, videos of readings etc., that were easily accessible. The canonical preoccupations of academic literary studies means that little critical work yet exists on the poets outside of specialist poetry magazines, which are difficult and expensive to search through and obtain. This I embraced as a positive in that it would not prejudice my thinking towards their work to any large degree and encourage an openness towards the interview encounter. Moreover, the thesis is not engaging a critique of the poet's work in literary terms, but rather focuses on how their practice and poetry might elicit certain philosophical problems and open up novel processes of subjectivation, singular trajectories for thought, and affective dispositions. Questions of aesthetic judgement were of only qualified importance. Through my preliminary reading, certain themes emerged as of interest, but these I used only to loosely structure the interviews. This was a deliberate decision on my part to encourage the thinking-space to emerge out of each encounter, rather than force it down particular pre-determined tracks. In approaching the field in this manner, I hoped to remain alive to the singular affective atmospheres that each encounter generated and their immanent propensity as a pull or charge emerging in a particular space (Bissell, 2010: 273).

Each interview was recorded using my mobile phone's recording application. Photos were sometimes taken as visual memory aids but not in any methodical manner. I would sometimes refer to notes during each interview but I avoided writing at length

during the interviews as a way of taking the body seriously as a conduit for the sensory data of the encounter. Not one, then, but two recording machines, as Dewsbury's injunction states:

> ...the researcher can have the confidence of using her or his body directly in the field as a recording machine itself, knowing that writing these nervous energies, amplitudes and thresholds down, is feasible as such jottings become legitimate data for dissemination and analysis.

(Dewsbury, 2010: 327)

Afterwards I transcribed interviews using specialist software. I created a spreadsheet to log key passages from the interview and note emergent themes. However, this document had only time-limited value as a heuristic for organisation and orientation. Of far more importance was the act of listening back to recordings which had a performative effect (albeit an imperfect one) as a machinic memory technique capable of refraining (retemporalising, reterritorialising) some of the affective charge of certain moments in the conversations. I sought to remain vigilant against the outside imposition of a singular method of data extraction and interpretation, such as that offered by programs such as NVivo. Such software seeks to establish commonality and connection across datum in order to support broad claims about qualitative data. It therefore proceeds via a process of noise elimination. My approach was the opposite: it was the noise, the difference, the digression or divergence in the experience that often interested me most and that I sought to intensify or amplify.

It might reasonably be asked why I chose to treat each interview in their own chapter, rather than taking the interviews together and looking to compare and contrast the thematics of different practices. Whilst this is a valid approach that I think could have yielded some interesting directions, my concern was that it would amount to the imposition of a grid of interpretation that would effectuate a striation of the thinking-space. In the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, striated space creates a delimited whole that is enclosing. Smooth space, in contrast, is an open whole, which "appears only as a uncompleted ongoing process, and always from the vantage of the local" (Bogue, 2007: 133). With smooth space, the centre shifts according to one's locality, allowing for the ongoing formation of rhizomatic connections through immanent acts of inhabitation and creation. I take this as requiring a commitment to take each encounter

on its own terms; to think from the middle of the event, from its locality and with its milieus, and move outwards. As Manning writes:

> Each step will be a renewal of how this event, this time, this problem, proposes this mode of inquiry, in this voice, in these materials, this way. At times, in retrospect, the process developed might seem like a method. But repeating it will never bring the process back. For techniques must be reinvented at every turn and thought must always leap.

(Manning, 2016: 45)

The continual reinvention of techniques is an ethico-aesthetic approach that militates against reducing the empirical encounter to a model - "a range of a-priori points and markers" (Jellis et al., 2019: 5) in favour of "its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity" (Guattari, 1995: 61). Attending to the virtual lines and their bifurcations is to allow those lines to take precedence over the empirical points - be they the researcher, the poet, the poems, the 'data' extracted from an interview. This is also Manning's point; there can be no retracing of the process, only a proliferating cartography that renounces any pretence to universality to affirm a restless creation of mutant coordinates (Guattari, 1995: 106). In cultivating the thinking-space that a particular milieu might generate, it was therefore important to both pay attention to the experience of that encounter as it unfolded 'for me'; remaining vigilant of methods that would capture it within a subject-object ordering and pragmatically alert to opportunities allowing its singularities to proliferate.

My rationale for selecting the particular poets that feature herein similarly relates to the conditions of emergence for the doctoral research itself. As set out in the first chapter, my interest in poetry and poetics comes out of a sustained period of working in and around poetry and poets as Director of the Poetry School. Occupying a key position within this relatively small ecology of practice – one in which I was creating educational opportunities for poets both as educators and learners – I inevitably established networks and relationships with individual poets to a greater or lesser extent. The Poetry School sat within a portfolio of poetry organisations funded by Arts Council England. This included organisations like the National Poetry Library (although this was funded under the umbrella of South Bank Centre), where Chris McCabe worked.

Being a poet who makes a living, or at least part of that living, out of poetry entails overlapping roles. So, to take the example of Chris McCabe again, I became familiar with him and his work through seeing him read at events, activity relating to his professional role at the National Poetry Library at South Bank Centre, and his teaching work for my organisation, the Poetry School. The relationship developed over a number of years and comprised formal and informal elements such that it would be a difficult and largely fruitless endeavour to try to disentangle these, or deny them by constructing a position of detached objectivity towards them. For it is undoubtedly through my contact with figures like McCabe, himself a deep thinker of poetry's relationship to language, that my own passions have been inflected along particular trajectories.

Such relationships proliferate within poetry's ecologies of practice. Another of my interviewees, Sophie Herxheimer (2019b), coming out of what she describes as a "very unpoetic background" credits Chris McCabe with giving her the confidence to call herself a poet:

> I thought I was really pretentious and just fooling myself and being completely... a twat really, so I just...because it is embarrassing poetry, obviously, it's a ghastly saga! So, to have somebody who's clearly not that embarrassed about being a poet saying, "you're a poet and it's not embarrassing" was extremely formative in terms of me becoming confident about saying I was a poet.

(Herxheimer, 2019b)

This is to say that these relationships, gestures and utterances matter. They are productive and performative; they fold and refold the world differently, in unforeseen ways. They can become lodged in the body as new attributes, reordering the senses and altering one's capacities for thinking, feeling and acting in the process. Herxheimer's account of the loss of her inhibitions towards calling herself a poet is all the more intriguing given her pre-existing identity as an artist – perhaps validated by her formal training at Central St Martins. With poetry being less formally institutionalised than visual arts (probably to a large extent due to the relatively small economy that exists around it, compared with the speculative finance of the art market) the relations between poets are certainly important for pragmatic reasons. Poets, whether amateur or professional, tend also to be the core readership for most contemporary poetry, a fact that outside commentators sometimes point to as evidence of its general irrelevance.

This suggests it is good business for poets to form connections with other poets, for these are the people who will attend their events, buy their books and participate in their workshops. However, I argue that the relations also have an importance for their performative valance. I am invoking the performative here not in a citational sense of enacting the already given role of 'a Poet' (Butler, 1993), but as in finding oneself suddenly on "the cusp of an emergent structure" (Dewsbury, 2000: 475), a creative disruption of habits in which what is underway and what gets actualised is always contingent upon the situation.

Parallel to this community of practice is the institution that is Poetry in the UK, characterised by key organisations (e.g. the Poetry Society, Forward Arts, the high-profile presses such as Faber, Picador, Bloodaxe, Carcanet) , prizes (the TS Eliot prize, the Forward Prizes, The Ted Hughes Prize, The Costa Prize), and key 'gatekeeper' editorial roles at certain presses, magazines and journals, as well as the prestigious official positions of Poet Laureate and Oxford Professor of Poetry. The awarding of prizes and these public-facing roles are the main instances when the art form is brought to the attention of those who have at best a passing interest – although most likely none – in poetry. Much is made of who wins these prizes or takes up these positions, with mainstream press often taking it as barometer of wider shifts in social attitudes, or else a corruption of certain preconceptions of what poetry is or should be. The last decade has been characterised by a marked shift in who is winning prizes, with more women writers, writers of colour and gay/non-binary writers being recognised. Whilst this is great news (particularly for the winning poets), and certainly excites journalists of both the left and the right for different reasons, what it never fails to reveal by proxy is the entrenched conservatism of the poetry establishment. This belated recognition of and accommodation for minority groups and their experiences is not a phenomenon peculiar to the institution of Poetry but rather one that is widespread throughout British society. I mention it here, therefore, to both signal its bracketing from consideration in the thesis, and to mark a clear distinction between these incursions of poetry into wider public perception (the Major), and the minor movements of style, collaboration, and relation that characterise poetry's continually shifting ecologies of practice. It is the latter register from which my enquiry emerges and proceeds, because it most closely corresponds to the call from Deleuze and Guattari to 'think with the milieu'.

Returning to consider Herxheimer's development as a poet, it can be seen to be in an enactive relation to the poetry and poetics of Chris McCabe, despite their very

different backgrounds and approaches to their practice. This resonates with some of the theoretical arguments I make in the thesis, drawing on Berardi (2015, 2018), around the distinction between connection (where semiotic elements communicate along a pre-determined design) and conjunction (where elements relate without obeying a law or finality, thereby allowing for an open production of affects, intensities and meaning). Berardi, pointing to the proliferation of digital technologies within and without the body, views connection as essential to contemporary semiocapitalism in that it allows for a paradigm of exchange in which everything is quantifiable, with a resultant desensitisation towards the exchange of signs. Conjunction, on the other hand, paradoxically opens up the possibility of disjunctive synthesis – relation across difference, a-synchrony, and a-signification, in a semiotic recomposition of the world. For their conjunctive relations – to each other and with other figures both human and non-human, living and dead – both encounters with McCabe and Herxheimer offered a rich milieu, or 'thinking-space' (McCormack, 2008) with which to think with and through within the thesis.

Jen Hadfield offered a different relation. Although I had worked on one occasion with Hadfield at the Poetry School, this was done remotely, with her delivering teaching in an online setting. We had met once at a poetry prize ceremony, but that was the extent of our previous in person encounters. My interest in Hadfield stemmed instead from her poetry, which I intuited might be trying to grasp at some of the same things I wanted to say about the operation of poetry in the world. More precisely, I recalled an encounter several years ago where I had seen Hadfield read her poem 'The Ambition' (2014). What I remembered about that poem - unpublished as it was at the time - was what it *did* to me. An unsettling though not unpleasant feeling in which the words of the poem took on a different life, becoming lodged in my body, which in turn began to feel disorganised; not of its usual composition. That molecular experience, certainly notable for its rarity within thresholds of perception at least, stayed with me. It may be impossible to say definitively *what* 'The Ambition' did that evening, but much of this thesis is an examination of *how* it was able to do it – which is an answer of sorts. McCormack (2007: 365) argues for the molecular as "the materiality and movement of thinking which apprehends how thinking emerges from a sensible field in which the molecular is a constituent force" irreducible to biological or physiological accounts. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, McCormack (2007: 368) argues for how the molecular encompasses more than the biochemical to designate "a zone of composition,

decomposition and recomposition working below the perceptual and affective thresholds of organised forms and subjective territories". Far from designating the small of scale, the molecular is rendered in ethological terms, diagramming cartographies of affect in which a (perhaps human) body is always co-constituted in its capacities with and through the non-human.

My experience of Hadfield's poetry, then, exceeds what can be explained through a representational methodology. As shall be seen in Chapter Six, 'The Ambition' is an expression of bodily recomposition through entering icy waters, yet whilst I, listening to the poem in the plush comfort of London's Royal Festival Hall, experienced something strangely analogous (and all the more disconcerting for that), it would be naive to claim that the poem affects *all* bodies the way it did mine on that evening. For one thing, it has never happened to me again upon subsequent readings, so the idea that this force is somehow locked inside the poem's language and formal structure is a non-starter. Rather, the experience highlights the methodological importance of taking the body seriously as a locus of conjunction. Not, then, a grounding for thought in being or the self, but something altogether more volatile; the sensing body as a barometer of intensity within shifting ecologies of space-time. An immediacy of experience that registers in the materiality of the flesh. The evident tensions in any research that claims an empiricism towards the fleeting appearance and disappearance of micro-percepts and affects are not to be smoothed out but rather "staged aggressively and with confidence", because its very presentness is evidenced through the acts of appearing and disappearing (Dewsbury, 2010: 327-328). The physical theatre educator Jacques Lecoq (2019) argues for something similar when he expresses a desire that his students learn how to perform something other than themselves whilst nevertheless investing themselves deeply in a performance, such that:

> They have learned not to play themselves but to play using themselves. In this lies all the ambiguity of the actor's work.

> (Lecoq, 2019: 63)

Lecoq's injunction, then, is not to fall back on personality, but to play with the ambiguity that the sensing body embodies. Furthermore, the French title of Lecoq's text, *Les Corps Poétique*, attests to the ambiguous connection between body,

movement, and poetics. For social scientific research, this ambiguity might be thought of as adopting a problematising approach to the empirical event. For my research, it requires an affirmation of the empiricism of the poetic encounter as something that exceeds representation and therefore insists on its theorisation through a different register. Not a faithful reflection of that event, but its experimental continuation by other means, as a way of promulgating the sensible field from which these affects and percepts emerged.

There is a violent coda to the story of when I first heard Hadfield's 'The Ambition'. As I got on the night bus at Tottenham for the final leg of my return journey from the South Bank Centre to Stoke Newington, I was attacked by three men. Punched and pushed down the stairs of the bus as I went to take my seat, I ended up back on the ground floor receiving kicks to the stomach and head for what seemed like an eternity but was probably no longer than 30 seconds. The attackers left the bus and the driver then ordered everyone off except for me and a couple of people who were helping me back up. The police were called. When they arrived an ambulance was radioed for. When the ambulance did not show the police drove me to hospital where I spent several hours under observation before being discharged at around 4am, luckily with only minor injuries.

These two bodily events - listening to a poem and being physically assaulted - are, on the surface completely distinct in quality. Yet they have become indissociable for *this* body. I cannot recollect one without recollecting the other. It is as if each event divided itself into the other. 'The Ambition's darkly humorous metamorphosis of the body was a surrogate of the event, the dark precursor of what would only a few hours later transpire on the floor of the bus. The not altogether unpleasant sense of disorganisation that had come over me whilst listening to the poem, was suddenly reactualised in a second event as I experienced my bodily organisation under relentless attack. The problem of consistency that the poem had expressed literally *re-presented* itself in that second experience to make the poem felt in the moment, perhaps (though it is impossible to say for certain) as the relaxation of my body that seems to have allowed me to emerge relatively unscathed. It is the establishment of relation through non-relation – without a dialectical resolution into a higher term nor a principle of equivalence – *and* its performative molecular activation within the body that for me characterises the movement of the poetic as something that is operating prior to signification and hovering below the threshold of perception, to implicate terms and

bodies in one another. Deleuze's concept of disjunctive synthesis contends that the relation is first and it is only differential, such that "the test of sense lies in the double trajectory of the distance that relates them" (Zourabichvili, 2012: 168). My dramatisation of this concept here speaks to the value of inventing an immanent evaluation and methodology for the apprehension of poetic sense. More practically, it affirms my particular selections with regard to research design as something akin to Nietzsche's Eternal Return; an empirical relation of difference that might return again and again under different conditions and be experienced as an involuntary encounter, forcing thought to think along novel trajectories, with speed and intensity. To put this more plainly, I sought to follow the excessiveness of the event of my encounter with Hadfield's poetry – and the difficult event of the same night that it communicated with – to Shetland, as act of counter-actualisation that might yet open up further novel possibilities for thought.

Poetry's sense is a heterogenesis, a non-pulsed, floating present of the event that can never be fully actualised. Seeking a methodology equal to poetic sense therefore entails that one affirm the imbrication of the theoretical with the empirical. Following Zourabichvili's (2012:171-174) excellent analysis of Deleuze's event, the poetic event might be thought of as an expression of disjunctive synthesis in language, which is not to be confused with its actual effectuation in states of affairs. Indeed, for Deleuze (2004b) in *Logic of Sense*, only language can accomplish the disjunctive synthesis of the event to create sense. Yet whilst the event's expression resides in language, its expression is simultaneously an attribute of the world and its states of affairs. Where poetry becomes interesting from an ethical perspective is in those instances where a disordering is underway, where the ineffectuable nature of the expression – "the event is not what occurs (an accident), it is rather inside what occurs" (Deleuze, 2004b: 170) – allows the world to become enveloped in language, and in the sense of the expressed as a becoming-imperceptible, or counter-actualisation. This highlights the importance of the poetic as a virtual repository for counter-actualisation, for thinking difference.

Poetic events intensify the virtual of the event's expressible – even if they possess only one set of states of affairs which correspond to their actualisation in a present and likewise, to a past and a future of that actualisation. The poetic sense, the expressible of the event, is not reducible to the event that happened to us, the reader or listener of the poem in the act of reading or listening. Neither is it reducible to a lived experience of the poet or the historical act of writing the poem. Rather, through its

disjunctive synthesis and the deterritorialisation of syntax and meaning, poetic sense exhibits a mobility that can be evaluated according to its communication with other events and bodies – its capacity for counter-actualisation. Similarly, Deleuze's (2004b: 170) ethical call "to become worthy of what happens to us" is not simply about avoiding feelings of bitterness, regret or unjustness towards what happens, nor only about accepting one's misfortunes. Rather it is to become worthy of the event in its excessiveness of sense, which is irreducible to its actualisation in a particular state of affairs. Indeed, through the creative act of counter-actualisation it is the intensive, impersonal, and pre-individual contours of the event that are released in the present, such that a counter-actualisation is something quite different from the actualisation of the event in things. It is the "most contracted, the most instantaneous, and the most punctual" (Deleuze, 2004b: 170-171) present conjured by "the actor", all the more pure for its singular superficiality. Being more like actors - using ourselves to open up the ambiguity of the impersonal event – is to make *that* present actualisation mobile and thus to counter-actualise the past and future of that present with different determinations. Counter-actualisation is therefore what allows us to affirm our wounds, shortcomings and misfortunes; by experimenting with the intensity of the disjunctions on the virtual (expressible in language) side of the event, which exists in parallel to its actual determination in our lives. Counter-actualisation is not about granting an individual free will, in which anything may be actualised, but rather gestures to how, through cultivating a responsibility to the event, "freedom comes with the generation of sense within determined actual and virtual circuits" (Williams, 2008: 157).

If Hadfield's inclusion in the thesis gestures to the Deleuzean event, and the ethico-aesthetic act of counter-actualisation (or resingularisation, to put it in Guattari's terms), the final poet interviewed in the thesis, can be seen as one of the novel productions emerging from this. I had never heard of, let alone read, Roseanne Watts' poetry before I was on the train, to Edinburgh and an eventual flight to Hadfield's home on Shetland. A chance encounter with a mutual acquaintance – the American poet and Edinburgh resident, Ryan Van Winkle – on that train led to an evening at the artist hub The Forest Cafe, where Van Winkle talked about the work of Watt and suggested I tried to seek her out. Upon arriving on Shetland I discovered that Watt had a exhibition of poem films on the island and, through my visit, was able to set up a meeting. Out of this interview and through reading Watt's poetry, the final fieldwork chapter was undoubtedly enriched, transformed into exploration of the 'ultraminor' in Shaetlan

dialect; the inside and outside of the 'I'; horror and the nonhuman; sensation and contemplation; and the implications of these aspects in processes of subjectivation. The encounter with Watt also relayed into my encounter several days later with Hadfield, inflecting the conversation down trajectories it may not have otherwise ventured.

Given all this, it is perhaps unsurprising that the final fieldwork chapter reads as the most narrative-driven of the three. Indeed, I have gone to further lengths here to provide autobiographical detail pertaining to my selection of Watt, Hadfield and Shetland. Does this not constitute an autoethnographic approach to the field, in which the self is consciously deployed within an "epistemological orientation to the relationships among experience, knowledge, and representation" (Butz, 2010: 139)? Moreover, does this self-conscious positionality not reinscribe experience as emanating from a phenomenologically intentional subject? My response to this is both to acknowledge the tension – perhaps at its most contracted in Chapter Six, but present across the thesis – and to affirm it as a generative constraint. For at every turn, wherever the 'I' is invoked in the thesis, it is accompanied by a multiplicity of singularities, molecular populations, forces and becomings. The insistence then, is always on an 'I' that is multiple and therefore must be made. The self/subject is only ever provisional; running through it are processes of subjectivation that open it to the social field, the environment, to the cosmos, and the virtual. The appeal to ethico-aesthetics is therefore to adopt an artfulness towards life – which, yes, includes social scientific research – as Manning would have it:

> Here, in the midst of life-living, artfulness reminds us that the "I" is not where life begins, and the "you" is not what makes it art. Made up as it is of a thousand contemplations, the art of time reminds us that "we [must] speak of the self only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says 'me' " (Deleuze 1978: 75). This is why artfulness is rarer than art. For artfulness depends on so many tendings, so many implicit collaborations between intuition and sympathy. And more than all else, it depends on the human getting out of the way.

> (Manning, 2016: 63)

Poetic writing, draws attention to this third party which says 'me', those "singularities [that] preside over the genesis of individuals and persons" as a "nomadic distribution"

(Deleuze, 2004b: 118). If, as Flaxman (2012: 233) notes "the subject is merely the product of the habit of enunciation, the articulation and repetition of 'order-words' according to which it acquires the semblance of identity", then it becomes of paramount importance to proliferate the collective assemblage, through its immanent line of variation and the provision of machinic connections that allow for detours and relays. Poetry offers tools for the resingularisation of subjectivity, because it trades in those strange intensities and rhythms that disrupt our habits of self and of thought. In this endeavour, there is nothing to be gained in positioning oneself finally and authentically, and everything from an experimentation with the milieus a self might slip into, pass over, or brush up against. It is in this spirit that I relate my own life; only so I might have done with what happened and begin to go to work on what is taking place. In the same way, the selection of these particular poets is not because they are exemplars of this or that poetic quality or subject matter. Taste in poetry is personal because it abounds with impersonal singularities. The more important ethico-aesthetic task lies in cultivating a taste for the latter through illuminating the singularities that arise from contact with the distinct practice of each poet's efforts of singularisation.

The machinic methodology of this thesis attempts an eventful composition within each chapter, that affirms poetry's pragmatic disobedience - its impracticality. Put another way, each chapter can be taken as a continuation by other means of the performative capacity of poetry to attribute incorporeal transformations within a collective assemblage that in some way worry or disturb the meta-stability of that assemblage. This is about, first of all, taking the assemblage as the 'basic' unit of reality, thinking with the milieus that slide across and through that assemblage, and attempting an intervention in its movements of relative deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. This intervention may be to draw attention to the impractical interval that poetry inserts between excitation and action; a way that poetry discloses duration to thought as the creative movement of a vital inorganic force (Chapter Three). In another register of style (Chapters Four, Five and Six), the assemblage emerges out of a conversation with a poet; the flows that animate that poet's creative practice begin to come into focus along with the machinic phyla (literary, aesthetic, technical and social) they draw upon in order to constitute their existential territories. Turning to a particular poet's poetry both illuminates and proliferates the flows, phyla and incorporeal references present. Thinking from within this assemblage entails remaining vigilant to the imposition of prior conditions for thought and the elaboration of abstractions that do

not proceed from that assemblage. Each chapter therefore becomes an attempt to animate the assemblages virtual universes of reference towards a new effort of singularisation.

As seen earlier, the qualities of incorporeal universes have an origin and hence are not universal, but rather become resingularised through the deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation of new assemblages. The poet in question creates their territory by calling upon particular abstracted qualities; a Gerard Manley Hopkins universe, in the case of McCabe (Chapter Four); for Herxheimer (Chapter Five), it is Emily Dickinson, William Blake, or Elisabeth Bishop, among others. Research that proceeds along rhizomatic and machinic lines consists in an effort to prolong, stretch out and relay the lines of flight (Querrien and Goffey, 2017: 93). Rather than tracing an idea back towards origins (why Hopkins? Why Blake?) it embraces the creative diagramming of thought in-action (*how* Hopkins? *how* Blake?) as an machinic operation that is all the more rigorous for its determination to think from the milieu. In this way a Hopkins universe allows thought to grasp the mutational experience of cancer from within a pint glass (Chapter Four).

In each of the chapters that follow the commitment is towards thinking with the milieu as both that which is given *and* the process of giving. In each encounter I have sought to ask what is at stake and to follow that line as a generative production of what Heaney called a singular stance towards life, but that might otherwise be termed novel productions of subjectivity. This is a creative approach to geographical research that relies in part on a process of relaying thought through a number of thinkers, artists, and writers in order to establish lines of relation between disciplines, ontologies, systems of knowledge, historical periods, entities and events. In short, a new assemblage. This approach of thinking with or alongside another is one way that I avoid poetry becoming a mere object of geographical inquiry, to instead deploy it as an onto-genetic conductor for thought and research. This ethico-aesthetic practice takes research as a creative immanent activity that must 'heterogenise' in order to capture all the points of singularity in a given situation. It is a technique that chimes with Deleuze's idea of mediators for thought:

> Mediators are fundamental. Creation's all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people – for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists – but things too, even plants or animals, as in Castaneda.

Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost.

(Deleuze, 1995: 125)

As Deleuze notes, mediators may take many forms, sometimes people but also sometimes objects. The important thing is that they make something happen; they set something into creative motion that then works to produce a series that is immanent to the encounter. Mediators help one to invent an immanent system of orientation – a map, not a tracing – for sense. Despite the apparent abstract nature of this approach, the precautionary principle is that abstractions are only sought out and fabricated along a speculative line in accordance with the conditions from which that thought (as opposed to thought in general) has emerged.

A machinic methodology is necessarily abstracting in aid of making something work for itself. It is a method that affirms space and time as something that must be accomplished through interventions that form novel conjunctions in the making of a new assemblage. Each chapter therefore creates a series, but the thesis as a whole looks to establish a resonance between series. This is what Guattari's ecosophic thought consists of: a desire to form transversal ecologies as a way of putting movement back into thought so that it might avoid the traps of history, of reflection and of representation.

THREE

Memorable speech

Of the many definitions of poetry, the simplest is still the best: 'memorable speech'. That is to say, it must move our emotions, or excite our intellect, for only that which is moving or exciting is memorable, and the stimulus is the audible spoken word and cadence, to which in all its power of suggestion and incantation we must surrender, as we do when talking to an intimate friend.

(Auden, 1989: 327)

What might it mean to understand poetry as process, as a movement of durational quality, rather than as a predetermined object? Resist the urge to read W H Auden's definition of poetry as a metaphor: memorable speech is memorable because it *moves*. Poetry, one might infer from Auden's definition, possesses a certain material efficacy, to the extent that it becomes imbricated in the excitation of the intellect or the movement of emotion. This happens though the "stimulus" of the spoken word. Furthermore, for this stimulus to move us it must be memorable, which implies a novel relation with time. When gathered together, this process of sympathetic excitation, memory and affect asks to be understood as an event of duration. Auden goes on to suggest that this durational event called poetry possesses certain qualities – of intimacy and friendship on the one hand, and suggestion, incantation and surrender on the other.

Everything turns on giving and taking: One takes what the voice has to give, even or especially if its content is improbable. With poetry, Auden implies, one enters into a event of sense, comprising of affective and perceptive forces to which one submits oneself – perhaps in spite of one's prior assumptions. Furthermore, Auden asserts that it is the cadence of expression – that is to say, what comes prior to any signification or argumentation – that stimulates the creative movement of emotion or intellect.

Auden's 'simple' definition alights on the ontological ground this chapter will seek to establish towards an ecosophic poetics; a poetics that thinks with the milieu to deterritorialise language's signifying order. If there is a habitual utility implied in such ordering, then a poetics of memorable speech gestures towards an act of disordering; by virtue of its memorability this poetics succeeds by marking itself out as difference. Through this minor utilisation of language, an (onto) genetic and vital poetics emerges in opposition to a representational or symbolic order. Consequently, one is dealing with a recomposition or reorientation of time (intensity) and space (extensity). A return to the poem-object as a kind of perfect whole – without considering its conditions of emergence, reception, or renewal – cannot alone account for the new relations that this poetics activates in the present. Similarly, appealing to authorial intent or historical context is inadequate. Rather, the problem is best posed as how to come to terms with the act of poetry as an act of sense.

Depending on whether one begins from the spatial or the temporal, however, one of two very different sets of ontological problems emerges. Beginning with matter and space, and relegating time to a pulsed (chronological) environmental effect, time becomes represented within a spatial reality as a fourth dimension. In this reality, matter can be configured and reconfigured but it always remains quantifiable, which in turn allows for its localisation and isolation as discontinuous parts. Yet if this spatialisation of time, habitual though it is for human perception, really *was* reality – if time really was a mere backdrop to material manifestations in space – it would be possible to know what a poem could do before it was read because any selected cut of matter would be a part of the whole and that whole could be thought in principle. This would result in a poetics without movement, or at least one in which the movement of poetic matter across bodies – the excitation of emotion and intellect, to use Auden's terminology – was quantifiable, and already known in principle in advance. For example, one would presumably be able to say with certainty in poem *A* that a feeling of melancholy will be registered upon reading the second line of the third stanza. In such a metrical existence

one becomes trapped in a deterministic dualism of the one and the multiple in which there are infinite possibilities pre-existent in matter that simply await realisation given the right configuration. Clearly, however, a poetic act – as with the act of smelling a flower – does not produce a discrete and determinable outcome for sense. Whereas when I smell a particular flower I may be transported back to the garden of my childhood, for another person smelling the same flower the experience will be qualitatively different (Ansell-Pearson, 2018: 65). This difference cannot simply be accounted for by the association of one individual's particular emotions and intellect with an objectively discrete flower or poem. One must rather account for the qualitative difference in kind that is produced in each experience.

Auden's definition of poetry as *memorable* speech implies there is a relationship between matter (things, language, speech, thought) and time (memory) that is grasped in poetry durationally*,* as a capacity for continuous indeterminate creation. Beginning from time, therefore, involves a shift from a quantifiable possibility of an interaction between a discreet subject and object, onto a durational movement of qualitative potential that one experiences as indeterminate capacity for sense-making. This is a potential of sense, conceived as a virtual insistence of the past on the present that, in turn, allows for an idea of sense that is not grounded in the sensing organism, and the affirmation of a radically open future.

To both account for the idea of creative indetermination and unpack how poetic sense harnesses this durational force, this chapter turns to the philosophy of Henri Bergson. In what follows, I explore how Bergson's philosophy of duration reveals an indetermination in matter understood as a pre-existent ontological condition of sense, which Bergson defines as an image. Bodily perception participates in this inorganic condition of sense to the extent that the former's potential for indetermination (beyond a determined orientation to utility) increases. In other words, the more indetermination present in an experience, the greater the potential for creatively differentiating the future from the present. This process of participation in duration is explored initially through the act of recollection which, for Bergson, entails a wholesale leap into a different ontological realm.

As an aesthetic practice, poetry holds particular promise for accessing this sense of indetermination that duration inserts into matter. This all the more important for that fact that poetry plies its trade from within language, the very domain of order that

separates matter into discrete quantifiable units, thereby reinforcing our familiar habits of sense. For as Auden notes, unlike other uses of language, with poetry,

> We must, in fact, make exactly the opposite kind of mental effort to that we make in grasping other verbal uses, for in the case of the latter the aura of suggestion round every word which, like the atom radiating lines of force through the whole of space and time, it becomes ultimately a sign for the sum of all possible meanings, must be rigorously suppressed and its meaning confined to a single dictionary one.

> (Auden, 1989: 327)

Poetry, then, reveals what one might call the insistence of the virtual. It acts forcefully on signs to liberate them from the yoke of signification and emplacement, and it does this by raiding memory, to produce "ontological mutations" (Guattari, 1995: 82); introducing a *qualitative* difference that operates transversally to time.[2] From within poetry, understood as process, one might reach an experience of duration that can be thought as a qualitative intensity – a singular movement of multiplicity that cannot be broken up into its constituent parts. I spotlight this singular qualitative multiplicity in Eleanor Rees' (2019) poem 'In Midsummer'.

From here the analysis is widened out to consider what Bergson named the *élan vital*; the participation in life's creative movement from virtual to actual. However, it is because of Bergson's insistence that this process of actualisation emerges out of an *internal differentiation* that aesthetic practices such as poetry take on a much greater importance. Bergson saw fabulation – the creation of stories as a ballast against the perception of an indifferent world – as both defining and limiting humanity. However, in reading Bergson through Deleuze and Guattari, I look to elaborate how a Bergsonian poetics emerges that might renew attachment to a notion of life that is excessive of form and being; a poetics of creative differentiation that participates in a geomorphic field of sense through the actualisation (and counter-actualisation) of the virtual.

Poetry as memorable speech is therefore mobilised in support of an idea of duration that is onto-genetic, which is to say that it must be activated. To reorientate the

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[2] The Guattarian concept of transversality itself mutated across his output. Although I address the concept in subsequent chapters as used here it refers to the coefficient of virtual multiplicity, or something that would amount to the non-linear complexification of chronological time. (See Genosko, 'The life and Work of Felix Guattari' in Guattari, 2008: 115)

ontological conditions of sense is, I argue, to engage ethico-aesthetic techniques towards ecosophic aims. It is, therefore, a question of participation; for example, Frank O'Hara's (2005) desire for poetry to "race counter-clockwise" as a zebra does, and stab as intimately and as casually as a praying mantis, speaks to this desire for poetry to know and inhabit time in order for it to work. He continues:

> All this I desire. To
> deepen you by my quickness
> and delight as if you
> were logical and proven,
> but still be quiet as if
> I were used to you; as if
> you would never leave me
> and were the inexorable
> product of my own time.

(O'Hara: 18)

In this poem, titled 'Poetry', ambiguity exists around whether the 'you' refers to poetry itself or to a reader of a poem. It is thus simultaneously a poem that addresses the writing of poetry as a practice, and its affective, durational force in the world. Again, poetry's speed of movement is the key which unlocks durational force. Three modes of inhabiting time are drawn upon from the natural world (praying mantis, cricket, zebra) with the ambition that poetry would subsume all modes of duration. This leads to the establishment of an intimacy that endures through an "inexorable" production that, because it is the speaker's "own time", can be understood as an auto-poetic function. The capacity of poetry to both lay claim to and make time – an audacious act of poesis – is an idea that this chapter attempts to develop through Bergson.

Recent uptake of Bergson in non-representational geography has focused on his concepts of intuition and the interval as a means of embracing a creative methodology emphasising open experimentation (Williams, 2016). In this effort, the focus has been to draw attention towards material agency and process, and away from the kind of knowledge assumptions that follow in the wake of methods that construct an intentional subject (Hawkins, 2015). In this important intervention, Bergson's central philosophical project of how to think durationally remains nonetheless somewhat downplayed. This

chapter therefore seeks to build on existing approaches to creativity arguing that the value of thinking poetics with Bergson lies in the "indissoluble relationship" (Lapoujade, 2018: 15) it weaves between time and affect. As noted in the previous chapter, Guattari (1996) saw Bergson's concept of duration as assimilating a concept of affect centred on the eventful composition of haecceities – a certain sense or 'thisness' independent of an individual person or body. Taking up this production of sense (or subjectivity, as Guattari would have it) as an ethico-aesthetic activity, the development of a non-representational understanding of poetics through Bergsonian duration gestures to how poetic creation harnesses the poetry's onto-genetic quality to go beyond the 'natural' and the human. This requires not simply that one affirms a more vital conception of matter's agency (Bennett, 2010), but that agency implies a virtual, incorporeal conception of sense as a temporalising force, immanent to the material world and, indeed, perpetually seeking to exceed its organisation through creative differentiation.

Before engaging with Bergson's complex, challenging thought in earnest, however, I first outline his influence on the modernist literary movement in pre-war Britain, as it sought to break with the dominant rationalist empiricism of the philosophical establishment. In this I aim to point not only to the historical fact of Bergson's impact on the course of British poetry, but also to gesture to its ongoing irruptive potential for a non-representational poetics in our contemporary milieu.

Bergson and British modernism

The influence of Henri Bergson on British culture and in particular British modernist aesthetics was significant, with Gillies (1996: 37-38) describing him as "a major presence in many different areas of English culture" during the pre-war era. Although beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this relationship in depth, a brief historical sketch of the philosophical and literary milieu in Edwardian Britain helps to establish why Bergson's ideas found traction among several modernist poets as a part of a wider cultural turn to Europe at the time.[3]

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[3] Deleuze and Guattari often reach for British and American modernist literary figures in order to talk about the creative power of literature. However, I have reservations regarding so-called 'Deleuzean' approaches that default to a comfortable field of modernist 'innovative' or avant-garde poetry that can be readily parsed through a Deleuzean lexicon and analytic framework. Clay's (2010) obvious preference for this type of poetry in his book on contemporary poetry and Deleuze maintains an unhelpful (and non-

As Bergson's major works became available in English around 1910-11, there was an explosion of interest in his thought that resulted in over two hundred articles published in English journals, newspapers and books (Gillies, 1996: 28). Bergson also gave several public lectures at British universities which further cemented his ubiquity in intellectual debate. As Gillies (1996) asserts, however, it was most likely Bergson's willingness to and manner with which he engaged with the dominant scientific and philosophical issues that was the catalyst for his surge in popularity. In science, Bergson's opposition to the determinism of Darwin and Spencer, and the pluralism of Einstein's theory of relativity was nonetheless the product of extensive engagement with their scientific works. By engaging such theories head on, Bergson invited attacks from many quarters, though also a begrudging admission that many of his intuitive insights on biological evolution and physics presented science with alternative theories to pursue and new problems to resolve (Gillies, 1996: 32).

The response to Bergson's thought in the rationalist and empiricist circles of British Philosophy was equally divided. Bergson's philosophy of duration and his method of intuition was seen as a direct attack on cherished enlightenment notions of rationalism and the supremacy of the intellect. Bertrand Russell spoke for the majority of the philosophical establishment when he wrote:

> Of course a large part of Bergson's philosophy, probably the part to which most of its popularity is due, does not depend upon argument, and cannot be upset by argument. His imaginative picture of the world, regarded as a poetic effort, is in the main not capable of either proof or disproof.

> (Russell, Bertrand. 1912. "The Philosophy of Bergson." Monist 23, no. 3 Quly): 346, in, Gillies, 1996: 34)

Consequently, Bergson did not establish himself in British philosophy in the same way that his thought was engaged with by American and European philosophers after the First World War. Before the war, however, his ideas were unavoidable, even if

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Bergsonist) dualism between 'contemporary innovative poetry' and a normative, lyrical 'establishment' poetry. Without detracting from the excellence of the analysis in that book, it nevertheless results in a situation where a 'legitimate' or 'conservative' poetry tends to be constructed in order to advance a programmatic form of avant-garde poetry, and politics. This then stymies the possibilities for ethical and political thought within an institutional, or 'molar' framework, disallowing for minor movements within and through these groupings of poetry, which I argue is the disjunctive potential they bring to thought.

repugnant to many. Outside of established institutions of learning, however, Gilles (1996: 36) notes the widespread appeal of Bergson's thought among society figures with intellectual tendencies, as it engaged with the major social issues of the day. Admitting his ideas became a kind of "intellectual calling card" that conferred a mark of superiority upon those individuals (an phenomenon that undoubtedly persists to this day), often it was the style of Bergson's language rather the ideas themselves which percolated into debates on the social issues of Edwardian Britain (Gillies, 1996: 38). Bergson's concepts of elan vital, duration and intuition provided fresh vectors of expression beyond empiricist explanation to those agitating for reform in newly inaugurated disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology, such that:

> Bergson became a rallying point for those who saw themselves as in the vanguard of social change. And for those who fought for the status quo, he became a compelling example of all that was wrong with the direction the country was taking.

(Gillies, 1996: 37)

In modernist literature, Bergson's influence was significant among two key groups: the Men of 1914 and the Bloomsbury group. Gillies credits the little-published poet T.E Hulme with indirectly introducing many other poets to the ideas of Bergson. Subsequently Ezra Pound's Imagist movement and Wyndham Lewis's Vorticism were resonant with Bergsonian ideas of the time-image and notions of movement and flux. As Gilles writes,

> The picture of Vorticism - a maelstrom around a point of stillness – is applicable to Bergsonian durée because the moment we presently occupy is also surrounded by the flux of past and future moments.

(Gillies, 1996: 51)

It is with TS Eliot, however, that one comes across a figure who both engaged deeply with Bergson's philosophy, and whose own work is influenced and motivated by similar problems. According to Gillies' (1996: 66-77) analysis, drawing upon the earlier work of Paul Douglass (1986), Eliot remained unconvinced by Bergson's account of perception. What Eliot saw as a contradictory position adopted by Bergson – that perception was both internal to human beings and external in things – Gillies takes as

evidence of the former's leanings towards just such a state of affairs even though he remained unable to undo the dualism himself. Similarly, Eliot's questioning of the success of Bergson's middle ground between materialism and idealism Gillies' sees as revealing, in that it would allow Eliot to be both a creator and subject to a creative force. Again, however, Eliot looks for answers to his creative dilemmas with Bergson, only to emerge disappointed. Nevertheless, Gillies argues convincingly for the debt which Eliot owes, alongside other modernists, to Bergson's philosophy.

Yet it is another modernist writer who perhaps best spotlights the enduring appeal of Bergson's philosophy for elaborating a non-representational poetics. In her essay 'Modern Fiction', writing against the "materialist" constrictions of the Edwardian novel, Virginia Woolf (1925: 61) asks "Is life like this? Must novels be like this?". Woolf goes on to describe life as "an incessant shower of innumerable atoms", and from this delivers her own manifesto on what it means to write a novel that attends to life's chaos:

> Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small.

(Woolf, 1925: 61-62)

Woolf here is calling for a form of writing that can attend to an inhuman order of perception, prior to the selection of consciousness towards action and prior to the division of subject-object. In other words, a moment of pure duration, in which writing takes on the quality of an experimentation in the capture of molecular affects and percepts. It is with this Woolfian sense of life as chaotic flux that I now turn from Bergson the historical figure, towards an examination of his thought in detail.

Matter, image and perception

What both Frank O'Hara and WH Auden agree on is that one cannot gain an adequate understanding of poetry's efficacy by treating it solely as an object, extracted from time. So for the philosopher Henri Bergson, who observed:

Nevertheless, I said to myself, time is something. Therefore it acts. What can it be doing? Plain common sense answered: time is what hinders everything from being given at once. It retards, or rather it is retardation. It must, therefore, be elaboration. Would it not then be a vehicle of creation and of choice? Would not the existence of time prove that there is indetermination in things? Would not time be that indetermination itself?

(Bergson, 2002: 224)

To account for the existence of time and the indeterminate difference that it inserts into matter, and consequently the perception of it, Bergson begins with an arresting definition of matter as an "aggregate of images"(1988: 9). Although this definition might seem counter-intuitive in the common sense of the word, it allows Bergson to escape both the traps of philosophical idealism (whereby matter is reduced to a representation of an ideal that exists only in the mind) and materialism (whereby matter becomes a mere thing entirely different to that which is perceiving it). By defining matter as an aggregate of images, Bergson is able to claim that the object exists both in and of itself, regardless of any perception of it, and that it is pictorial as we perceive it: "a self-existing image"(1988: 10). In this way both material realist and idealist elements are retained without privilege being granted to one over the other.

It is from this initially peculiar definition of matter that Bergson is able to show how the perception of matter cannot be of a different nature to matter itself. Turning to the human body, Bergson notes that the aggregate of matter-images that constitute the universe as we perceive it appear to happen only through the medium of particular images that are given by the body. However, those privileged images – the sensory nerves, certain organs and the brain - cannot be the source of matter for then it becomes inexplicable as to how perception emerges from matter. The sensory nervous system and the brain must also be images, not the condition for the image of the universe; "The brain is part of the material world; the material world is not part of the brain" (Bergson, 1988: 19). Perception cannot be a representation, an image of an image, rather it is embedded within the flow of images that constitute the multiplicity of matter. Perception, therefore, is not different in kind from the rest of matter, it can only be a difference of degree.

What distinguishes perception of matter from the rest of the aggregate of matter-images is its orientation towards action. Living bodies are centres of action; objects "destined to move other objects" (Bergson, 1988: 20). Perception is what links bodies to an immediate future and is thus a nascent potential for that body to act. Even though perception harnesses the same images as those which constitute the universe, the extent to which it does harness particular images is a reflection of the utility of those images for the body. In the case of simple life forms, utilisation of images is relatively straightforward, but as the complexity of living forms increases a larger interval of indetermination is inserted between stimulus and reaction:

> The degree of independence of which a living being is master, or, as we shall say, the zone of indetermination which surrounds its activity, allows, then, of an a priori estimate of the number and the distance of the things with which it is in relation. Whatever this relation may be, whatever be the inner nature of perception, we can affirm that its amplitude gives the exact measure of the indetermination of the act which is to follow. So that we can formulate this law: perception is master of space in the exact measure in which action is master of time.

> (Bergson, 1988: 32)

Being action-orientated, perception can master space to the extent that the potential for indeterminate action increases. This indetermination is the insertion of time into matter. For Bergson the very definition of life is this ability to dislocate perception from immediate action through constituting a zone of indetermination into which memories - of bodily habit and pure recollection - are inserted to lure actions towards an immediate future.

For Bergson, however, perception's action-orientated image is not confined to organic matter. It is an ontological condition. Bergson constructs the material world as an aggregate of images acting and reacting with one another in a continuous flow. Pure-perception (which can only ever be an abstraction from bodies) means placing oneself "in the very heart of things" (Bergson, 2002: 118), at the very convergence of action and reaction. This is an inhuman, inorganic image, one that cannot be perceived by the eye and which 'fatigues' our imagination. In the Bergsonian universe "There is nothing save for flows of images that encounter one another, collide, reflect, compose and decompose one another" in infinite variation (Lazzarato, 2007: 97). Strictly speaking,

because perception is not in us but in things, the Bergsonian image is the material world perceiving itself in its perpetual flow. There is no need for a perceiving subject for things to appear; it is the elements of the images themselves that continually transmit movement and light. Image is thus transformed under Bergson such that it is equivalent to movement, light, matter and time as the "true genetic element of the world" (Lazzarato, 2007: 98).

> ...the separation between a thing and its environment cannot be absolutely definite and clear-cut; there is a passage by insensible gradations from the one to the other: the close solidarity which binds all the objects of the material universe, the perpetuality of their reciprocal actions and reactions, is sufficient to prove that they have not the precise limits which we attribute to them.

(Bergson, 1988: 209)

The primary operation of the perceiving mind, continues Bergson, is to mark out divisions. To do this we must first be convinced that reality is divisible at will and so superimpose a mesh over extensity to create an infinitely divisible and homogenous space. Consciousness, however, is always a composite experience consisting of extensity and duration, into which life manifests as indetermination, however infinitesimal. This is what allows for a body's perception of independent objects and the necessary continuation of the rhythm of duration to which that body is accustomed. It is a material or habitual memory which therefore solidifies into sensible qualities the continuous flow of things, thereby prolonging the past into the present (Bergson, 1988: 210).

Bergson's strange formulation of the material world as an aggregate of images that perceive each other autonomously allows one to reconceive of the poetic image not simply as the incessant play of representation, but, more profoundly, as an ontogenetic act. Any poetic image thus becomes an instance of indetermination that alters the flow of images to lure thought in hitherto unaccustomed directions. This is perhaps why poetry is often viewed as difficult or irrelevant, because through the poetic image it intensifies the convergence of action and reaction in such a way that is fatiguing for habitual human duration. In light of Bergson, William Carlos Williams infamous phrase "no ideas but in things" (Williams, 1976: 231) becomes less of an injunction to the poet to avoid abstraction than a statement of ontological fact, with poetry's own matter-

image fully implicated in the ongoing autonomous composition and decomposition of the material world.

Recollection and the leap into ontology

The proposition that follows from an understanding of time as indetermination, is that the poetic image, with its self-possessed materiality as one perceiving image in the flow of images, intensifies that indeterminate quality by virtue of its novelty. However, this intensification of the matter-image is still under the attribute of habitual or material memory that comprises extension. Additionally, however, a perceiving mind in apprehending a poetic image also draws upon recollection memory (duration). Therefore to grasp poetry as memorable speech, one must understand how this other attribute of memory contributes the composite experience of the image. One must straight away discount the idea that memories reside in the brain. Just as matter-image is self-existing and not produced from within the human body, memory is not simply the accumulation of past matter-images that are stored in the brain like a hard drive. Against the still commonly held view of memory as being contained in something, whether that be a brain or a computer, memory, Bergson asserts, is not material but is our means of access to the past (duration). Although accorded privileged status by consciousness, the brain is a material thing like any other thing and therefore memory cannot reside in it but must reside in time. However, time is not a thing, it is duration and so nothing can be 'in' anything (Ansell-Pearson, 2018: 75-77). Were it possible to disentangle pure memory-image from pure perception-image in consciousness we would comprehend memory as "a power absolutely independent of matter" in so far as it allows consciousness to engage experimentally with duration and the virtual (Bergson, 2002: 121).

The pursuing of poetry as memorable speech therefore intersects with the Bergsonian task of reintroducing duration into our thinking so that we may go beyond the composite state of human experience towards the conditions of real experience. Bergson's assertion is that the past and the present belong to distinct domains, the latter being actual and the former virtual. Deleuze's (1988) reading of Bergson helps us to appreciate the implications of this difference in kind between present and past, and therefore between matter and memory. The present, writes Deleuze, is defined by action, not being. Rather, the present is "pure becoming, always outside itself. It *is not*,

but it acts" (Deleuze, 1988: 55). The past, on the other hand, is that which no longer acts, but *is*: "It is identical with being in itself" and should not be thought of as what 'was' (ibid). In this way, the present is unable to pass unless the past is understood as the precondition for the present's passing. The past must virtually co-exist with each passing present, not just as a double of the present moment, but all the past in general. This produces the paradoxical position of only ever being able to say of the present that it 'was', and of the past that it eternally 'is'. Because the past is "pure ontology", pure recollection therefore has only ontological significance (Deleuze, 1988: 56).

The ontological significance of recollection becomes clearer through examining the process of memory recollection. As already outlined, Bergson distinguishes between two forms of memory: habitual or material, and recollection. The process for both of these is one of *synthesis*; a relaxation of inhibition, an expansion of images and finally a contraction of the past into a single moment of intuition, in the present and future-oriented. However, with habitual synthesis, the memory function is materially located, that is to say, it is conserved within the sensory-motor mechanisms of the body (or matter-image) which passively or automatically contract instants or elements from its milieu. For Lazzarato (2007) this means that only recollection (or spiritual, as Lazzarato refers to it) synthesis can truly be called memory in so far as it intervenes actively. The act of remembering involves a *dilation* of the past. It is worth quoting Bergson at length on this operation

> Whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act sui generis by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first, in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera. But our recollection still remains virtual; we simply prepare ourselves to receive it by adopting the appropriate attitude. Little by little it comes into view like a condensing cloud; from the virtual state it passes into the actual; and as its outlines become more distinct and its surface takes on colour, it tends to imitate perception. But it remains attached to the past by its deepest roots, and if, when once realized, it did not retain something of its original virtuality, if, being a present state, it were not also something which stands out distinct from the present, we should never know it for a memory.

(Bergson, 1988: 133-134)

The act of recollection is unique: it requires intellectual effort, precision, and the adoption of a certain "attitude" on the part of the creature remembering (for recollection is not an exclusive trait of the human species). First, one places oneself in the past in general: there is a leap into this distinctive ontological realm of being in itself. Only then can the recollection take on a psychological character through adjustment and fine tuning, in order to pass back from the virtual into the actual - imitating perception, yet retaining its virtual character by distinguishing itself as memory.

Bergson's account of recollection amounts to a critique of the commonly held belief that the present passes into the past by means of succession. The tendency is to believe that the past is only constituted after having been present, but also that it is then reconstituted in a new present according to the needs of perception. As Deleuze (1988: 58) points out, this double illusion sits at the heart of physiological and psychological theories of memory founded on the assumption that there is only a difference of degree between recollection and perception. Bergson's insistence that the past and present are differences in kind is what grants an escape from the inadequately analysed composite that is psychological experience. It provides for an explanation of how the present passes by showing how it is the *whole* past that coexists with each passing present as its condition for passing. The present and its past and are constituted simultaneously, like an image and its reflection. Bergson's spatialised metaphor of the cone, with its tip at the instant of recollection and expanding behind, illustrates how each "region of the past" is not the repository of a particular memory but rather the whole of the past repeated at a more or less contracted state. Within this indivisible whole there are remarkable points, dominant recollections, but these may fail to support our perceived embodied needs. This failure means we must begin again; take another leap into the virtual, adjust and refine the level of contraction. Again, Deleuze (1988: 62-63) emphasises, this is not the psychological operation we might think it is. Psychological consciousness "has not yet been born" and will only be born through our "affinity with being", through the capacity to contract the necessary ontological conditions that will engender its birth. Recollection *for us* only ever happens through actualisation of that recollection in the recollection-image. What pre-exists that image, as its onto-genetic condition are the virtual variations of the recollection, existing in itself (Deleuze, 1988: 67).

Duration as one single qualitative multiplicity

Recollections continually intervene in perception according to utility, that is, the needs of the body. However, there are some recollections that return us to the object to restore in it a complexity of detail that had been lost in the rush of sensory-motor perception to action. It may not now be possible to recognise this object because there is a sense in which it is no longer *for us*. Poetry as memorable speech, it is argued, fulfils this function. The operation of recollection embedded in poetry is bound up with a certain lack of utility that reveals, ironically, the nature of Bergsonian duration: it is both one and several at the same time, and it is differentiated within itself by its movement through matter.

What happens when one starts to think about poetry as a composition of duration? The poem, 'In Midsummer', by Eleanor Rees (2019: 66-67), depicts an encounter that the speaker has with a woman running, apparently from something pursuing her, through the shrubbery in a glade. Only the woman is not actually there. In the poem, Rees layers different temporalities and spatialities together. For the speaker it is a hot day in June, for the woman, it is night and has been raining. The woman "runs as if the foliage isn't there", suggesting a different season. The poem also draws attention to other durations and the material traces and trajectories they produce. We learn of "a desire path between conifers" that the woman runs along; the "just-gone-over rhododendrons"; and the "saplings / slimed with snail-drawn rivers". By the end of the poem the speaker realises they are trapped in the loop of woman's running:

> [....] I turn
> to see her curve into the shadow
> where leaf is bold and covers all
> definition. And as my spine
> twists on its pelvis, there she is again,
> – who will break this? My
> observation of her gesture keeps her looped
> in the woodland glade forever. Where do I go?
> How do I leave? A rustle in the trees,
> blackbird hunting for grubs.

(Rees, 2019: 66-67)

In her afterword to Rees' collection, Braidotti (Rees, 2019 81-82) notes how in the former's poetry "time and space do not separate and divide, but rather swell in and through a continuum of endings and beginnings" in which matter continually unfolds and rebounds such that entities lose their fixings and boundaries to emphasise the transcorporeal and ecosophical force of life. Through the poem's many durational trajectories, loops and swellings - the compositional nature of duration is made concrete as both singular and many. Poetry becomes a way of sensing duration's multiplicity, beyond the human, yet insisting from within 'our' duration. As Deleuze puts it, "my duration has the power to disclose other durations, to encompass the others and to encompass itself ad infinitum" (Deleuze, 1988: 80).

In addressing this conceptualisation of duration as a single qualitative multiplicity, Bergson initially sets out a position of dualism, with differences of degree in space and differences of kind in duration also subsuming oppositions between matter and memory, present and past, perception and recollection, and so on. However, for Bergson, this dualism necessarily gives way to an ontological monism of duration with a plurality of durations. All the material world is a relation of expansion and contraction and through this it participates in duration and is a part of it. Space is, for Bergson, nothing other than an abstract symbol or schema of matter. It is "materiality minus matter" (Roffe, 2020: 95); a representation of the limit of extension that can never be attained in reality.

Although Bergson's philosophical method of intuition allows for the decomposition of matter and duration into its two kinds, reality is, in fact, always composite, with matter and duration co-implicated in each other. Nowhere is this more apparent than in intelligence, which expands into matter to find its form but only finds its sense according to the degree to which it masters matter through contraction in duration. From the perspective of being a complex action of sense-making by intelligence, Rees' poem is therefore a particularly masterful contraction of duration's multiplicity in speech/language-matter. An external object of a glade in midsummer becomes saturated in its virtual subject to express a kind of implied or tonal intention, such that one becomes capable of knowing other realities through a precarious synchronization of heterogeneous rhythms of duration (Lapoujade, 2018: 55-56). What allows for this experience of knowing is that that the durations are precisely not multiple but one. As Deleuze (1988: 85) puts it "Being or Time is a multiplicity. But it is

precisely not 'multiple'; it is One, in conformity with *its* type of multiplicity." From this perspective one might argue that the very efficacy of poetry relies on the fact that there can be no extrinsic reference to some other time, unliveable in itself, for this would be to spatialise and quantise time. The virtual rhythms of duration are always immanent to any actualised duration, ensuring that human perception remains inseparable from the durational movement of its ecologies.

The élan vital: Bergson's philosophy of life as one gigantic memory

The name that Bergson's philosophy gives to this participation in duration is the élan vital. English translations for élan encompass a complexity of meanings including impetus, momentum, force, and energetic style. For Bergson, élan vital names the very essence of life; a dynamism that is both multiple and differential (Roffe, 2020: 95). The élan vital is the final – and most poetic – moment in the Bergsonian method of intuition, allowing for the reconciliation of dualism and monism in a nature that is time itself. The differences of degree in matter (which are for us) and the differences in kind of duration (which is in itself and for itself) combine in virtual (and only virtual) coexistence in nature. The process of the élan vital always names this movement from virtual coexistence into the actual. A process "proceeding 'by dissociation and division', by 'dichotomy', is the essence of life" (Deleuze, 1988: 94).

The actualisation of the virtual must be precisely distinguished from the movement from the possible to the real, in which realisation must resemble the possible from which it is realised and is therefore a process of limitation of what is already given. In the latter movement the possible is, in fact, nothing more than a backwards projection, abstracted after the fact and to make the real fit. The concept of the possible, therefore, cannot explain the process of evolution understood as differentiation and creation and falls back into preformism. The actual, in contradistinction, in no way resembles the virtual, despite embodying its totality. The virtual "cannot proceed by elimination or limitation, but must *create* its own lines of actualisation in positive acts" (Deleuze, 1988: 97). The essential point to grasp in this vital process of differentiation is that each line of dissociation or diversion carries with it the virtual whole. The virtuality persists in each actualising instance; each dissociation from unity is an articulation or contraction of the virtual whole, which must then have access to the virtual in order to

differentiate once more. In this sense both actual and virtual are real, but in qualitatively distinct ways.

It is therefore differentiation, rather than association, that is the driving force behind evolution, producing the actual from the virtual as a response to a problem and in a thoroughly creative and novel act. In contrast, materialist accounts of evolution tend to view the process as one rooted entirely in the actual, with elements that are external and indifferent to each other accidentally combining through association with each other in enough quantity to effect a qualitative transformation. Invoking environmental conditions is similarly to posit an external causality for differences. In both these accounts the objection is that the external indifference of elements does not provide for a sufficient reason or means for forming associations, nor for those elements to start to function as a bloc. With no explanation provided for coordination as a group, Bergson (2002: 195) concludes that "Circumstances are not a mould into which life is inserted and whose form life adopts: this is indeed to be fooled by a metaphor". Instead, there must be something beyond the combining of material elements that brings them into concert with one another as a living being exhibiting particular behaviours.

In contrast to a purely actual materialist account of evolution, a Bergsonian philosophy of life (1988: 99-100), requires instead that we view difference as internal, so that change is no longer accidental but locates its cause from within the tendency towards dissociation. This tendency is what provides the means to actualisation, which takes place along heterogeneous non-linear series. What is actualised in each line of differentiation cannot be totalled up to be all that is. Coexistence is virtual and only ever virtual. It is, in fact, precisely another level of virtual memory, just as with the more limited example of recollection. Each actualisation retains the whole and is its expression from a certain perspective, inventing the necessary characteristics - be they physical, vital, or psychical - that correlate to the ontological level they actualise.

Evolution, under Bergson, is thus conceived as a process by which the *élan vital* overcomes matter, through an *alienation* from form. Hence the evolution of the eye becomes a solution to the problem of light. Such solutions are only relatively successful. Viewed from another angle all such achievements – even species, are an arrest of life's impetus; a setback. With a certain violence against the movement that produced it, "the living being turns on itself and *closes itself*" (Deleuze, 1988: 104). This is, however, far from a call to despair. The lines of actualisation must be distinguished from the actual material thing that is closed in on itself. The lines remain open to the whole of virtual

memory, possessing the freedom to utilise this ontological plane in a unique creative act. As Roffe (2020: 98) points out, it is precisely because virtual memory is a virtual multiplicity of differences in kind that we are able to explain qualitative changes in living beings. In this sense, although happening at a different ontological level, evolution is the equivalent of memory recollection. Just as with the metaphor of the cone where all the past is located at each point in a different level of contraction and relaxation, each evolutionary act, however small, is an actualisation of the virtual whole in a particular state of contraction and relaxation, thereby ensuring a radically open development into the future.

Having named duration as the driving force of life, the *élan vital* unfolding, Bergson endows humans with the ability, unique among living things, to think this unfolding and to deploy it with a degree of control. Bergson relates this ability to the complexity of the human brain and the interval that it produces between stimulus and movement (Deleuze, 1988: 107). This is a somewhat contentious moment in Bergson, given that he has gone to great lengths to show that the brain does not differ in kind from any other material thing. Bracketing the question of whether intelligence actualises for other species, human intelligence for Bergson is the evolutionary divergence from instinct which allows for the creation of an interval into which the *élan vital* freely pours itself. However, it is not intelligence *per se* that provides for such a capacity. Intelligence is what constitutes the human as a species, but it is also what limits it. Intelligence allows for memory and matter to combine with the aim of utilisation and domination, but in this process it also detaches humans from life, slowing down the movement of the *élan vital*. The problem for Bergson, and a problem that still seems so apposite today is how to compensate for the disequilibrium that intelligence invokes and renew the attachment to life. The problem actualises in the social world where obligations are created through the story-telling function in order to produce fictitious representations as a ballast against intelligence. However, the problem of attachment is not purely social and must be posed at an ontological level. Just as with memory recollection where the interval between excitation and action allows one to leap into the virtual past, in the interval between intelligence and society it is emotion that is introduced as a difference in kind, a virtual multiplicity that enables the human to go beyond itself in a creative act.

Emotion is Bergson's moment of non-philosophy. It is where philosophical contemplation must be left behind to allow the élan vital to gain self-consciousness. For

emotion does not have need of an object. It is *impractical* and therefore *essential*. Creative emotion is a great "cosmic memory, that actualises all the levels at the same time, that liberates man from the plane (*plan*) that is proper to him, in order to make him a creator, adequate to the whole movement of creation."(Deleuze, 1988: 111). Hence the importance of art goes far beyond that of producing societal obligations through story-telling and myth-making.

Bergson viewed societal obligations and religious belief as the ways in which nature corrects the disequilibrium induced in humans by the intellect, the latter producing representations of the real that detach humans from instinctual life into contemplation and reflection – a disruption to the flow of the *élan vital*. Counteracting this tendency of the intellect, societal obligations ensure one's attachment to life is viewed as attachment to the group – the family, tribe or nation. Similarly, the storytelling function is engendered through religion in a process of fabulation in which the human comes to occupy an exceptional place in nature, second only to invisible omnipotent powers. Although this produces religious dogma, for Bergson religion and the storytelling function also meets an originary vital need for the human species to believe: "We are naturally religious, although none of our religions are natural." (Lapoujade, 2018: 66).

It is through fabulation that humans create imaginary representations capable of existing alongside the sensorimotor, future-oriented representations of the real produced by perception and recollection. Through the storytelling function humans weave fables into reality to engender belief and attachment. It is a process of anthropomorphism in which an impersonal and unforgiving natural world is tempered by the presence of transcendent beings or powers aligned to humanity. The more reactive societal instinct to obey is thus augmented by religious fabulation to include the more confidence-inducing instinct to believe and, consequently, an indifferent world is thereby transformed into an *Umwelt*.

Taken together, these three faculties – intelligence, obligation, and belief – circumscribe the limits of the human species at the same time as they determine its humanity (Lapoujade, 2018: 69). What keeps us humans attached to life, however, is also our sickness; it amounts to a system of checks against imbalances that maintain life support, but at the expense of a kind of narcissistic neuroses as we move ceaselessly in the circles which envelop us. It is this closure of the species – our natural normality – from which Bergson sees it as necessary to escape. It is precisely an *abnormal*

attachment to life which is required. An attachment which does not rely on arrested representations of form and being, and for Bergson this attachment is found in movement.

As already seen, matter interrupts the *élan vital* whilst being tends to close in on itself. It is only by paying attention to the movement *through* beings and material forms that a deeper attachment to the *élan vital* is grasped. This is what Bergson calls creative emotion, "the integral of all the affections of sensibility that precede the intelligence and that the intelligence can only repress as it is attached not to the affective states of subjects but to the objects around which these states materialise" (Lapoujade, 2018: 76). Far from being a secondary effect of objects being represented by the intellect, creative emotion engenders its objects. "It is pregnant with representations, not one of which is actually formed, but which it draws or might draw from its own substance by an organic development" (Bergson, 2002: 316). Creative emotion is therefore supra-intellectual:

> It is the emotion above all which vivifies, or rather vitalizes, the intellectual elements with which it is destined to unite, constantly collecting everything that can be worked in with them and finally compelling the enunciation of the problem to expand into its solution. And what about literature and art? A work of genius is in most cases the outcome of an emotion, unique of its kind, which seemed to baffle expression, and yet which had to express itself.... it would seem that the solid materials supplied by intelligence first melt and mix, then solidify again into fresh ideas now shaped by the creative mind itself.

> (Bergson, 2002: 317-318)

The creative act emerges from this antagonism between matter and the élan vital, both the imperative to express and an inadequacy of expression. In this way, every creation, once realised in a living form, just as in a work of art, is always to an extent a failure, a falling back into matter in an inhibition of the élan vital. Of course, to attach oneself to movement is precisely to dematerialise, to leap into duration and the virtual, a risky business that Bergson identified primarily with mysticism. However, the failure of the created takes nothing away from the act of creating which, unlike dialectical processes, does not involve negation but instead retains the virtual whole with each differentiation.

Our attachment to life, brought to its deepest resonance in the movement of creative emotion is, in the final analysis, found in duration. Moreover, it is not an

attachment to anything, but rather a sympathy with duration's movement itself. In this decisive turn towards movement through intuition, humanity becomes capable of leaving the circles nature has circumscribed for it. The question for Bergson, writing after the first world war and arguably in anticipation of the atom bomb, was whether humanity was not only capable of its own destruction, but may actually desire its annihilation (Ansell-Pearson, 2018: 130-132). In this era of ecological devastation, the idea salvation might rest with a reversion to 'natural ways' fails to understand the devastation to ecosystems as an expression of natural human faculties. Only by going beyond the human organism in an abnormal creative gesture, can the human species continue to survive.

A Bergsonian poetics: Creative fabulation, attachment and art's intuitive futurity

I wish to finish where this chapter began, by revisiting Auden's definition of poetry as memorable speech. In light of Bergson's philosophical method of intuition and his philosophy of life as duration, image, movement and creation, the key question is: what kind of poetics emerges from an encounter with his thought? This section shall therefore set out some claims, to which subsequent chapters will return.

If the poem, whether spoken or written, is the material thing, its *poetry* nonetheless exists in a real sense quasi-independently of this materiality. The poem is always a composite. On the one hand it is actualised in a form comprising differences of degree achieved through words, syntax and their emplacement in lines or speech-phrases. On the other hand, this is not, in and of itself, the poetry of the poem, which is the difference in kind that it seeks to impart. The poetry is the quality expressed through the poem's materiality, and that might induce sensation through means of percepts and affects. As Auden remarked, poetry is an excitation that moves us, and this requires that one thinks of poetry, in and of itself, as forceful movement. This entails shifting focus from the poem as written or spoken object towards poetic process, understood as the essential movement between the virtual and the actual. In short, I would suggest that the poem object is not what is most interesting about poetry. Poems need to be considered as remarkable points in much greater processes that belong primarily to duration rather than matter. Poetry both expands into the past and extends into the future. The poem is

therefore better thought of as an *event*: it is an opening onto duration and the movement of poetry understood as inorganic, vital, and processual.

Auden's definition of poetry as "memorable speech" has conceptual purchase, therefore, if one is careful not to limit it to the act of recollection. When we recall, past memories combine with the present in an action-orientated fashion according to their utility *for us*. It is on these very practical terms that we leap into the ontological past. But although the event of a poem may provoke us to search for a particular contraction of the past, it is also a feeling towards an experience of futurity that is not for us but could be were we to become other. Indeed, is it not precisely a future memory that Auden refers to when he speaks of poetry as memorable speech? In the midst of a poem's experience, is there not already the anticipation of memorability, of a qualitative difference in the process of genesis? Poetry as the memory of the future.

When Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 171) say "Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory", they are warning against the memorialisation of art and literature - its arrest and ossification in lived experience as much as in material forms and symbolic representations. With Bergson, fabulation is about creating attachment to life through belief. Humans create representations of supra-natural beings that exist *for us* as a ballast against an indifferent nature made all too apparent by the intelligence. But in this necessary endeavour, so Bergson claims, a tragic separation from nature occurs. This problem, taken up and transformed by Deleuze and Guattari, becomes a geopoetics of how to reattach ourselves to the world; how to believe in *this* world: "not even in the existence of the world but in its possibilities of movements and intensities, so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence, closer to animals and rocks" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 74-75). In light of this "most difficult task" (Ibid), Deleuze and Guattari's appeal to creative fabulation is both a departure from Bergson's largely derisory view of fabulation as a corrective for the destabilising effects of intelligence, and also a filiation to the creative impetus of *élan vital*.

Poetry, understood as Deleuzo-Guattarian creative fabulation, speaks to Manning's (2016: 47) definition of art as "the intuitive potential to activate the future in the specious present, to make the middling of experience felt where futurity and presentness coincide, to invoke the memory not of what was but of what will be". Manning's Jamesian invocation of the word "specious" is notable. If following Bergson the present habitually misleads consciousness into thinking that any future experience will in some way resemble it (thereby constraining thought to a binary of

possibility/impossibility), the event of poetry expresses the intolerability of such continuity through acts of qualitative differentiation. These disjunctions disclose a community of duration that, as with James' pluriverse, is "indefinitely open to construction and prolongation" (Lapoujade and LaMarre, 2020: 42). Manning's notion of Art as *way* is therefore indebted to Bergson's method of intuition, which broadly consists of dividing inadequately analysed composites of reality into their different natures (in order to avoid the posing of false problems), before temporalizing thought into order to pose true problems in terms of duration. Manning (2016: 56) views intuition as the work by which the art object is exceeded in form and content such that what was unthinkable becomes felt durationally in the event of art. One leaves behind materiality and the conditions of existence of the art object to participate in a "worlding" of more-than human ecologies "that potentially redefines the limits of existence" (ibid).

Drawing upon this Bergsonian method, and its transfiguration by Manning as well as Deleuze and Guattari, poetry can be intuited as a response to the problem posed by language. Recalling that Auden (1989: 327) spoke of everyday uses of language in terms of suppression, what might be gained by encountering poems as if they are bodies "radiating lines of force through the whole of space and time"? This is poetry's minor harnessing of duration's multiplicity to produce a disjunctive subversion of the ordering tendencies of language examined in Chapter Two. Poetry's minorisation of language is what marks it out as a becoming, a process of actualisation of the virtual in material configurations.

When poetry's minoritarian use of language is combined within a creative fabulation, what Bergson termed the indetermination in things becomes *essentialised*, rendered in the materiality of the poem-event as sensation. This block or being of sensation consists of percepts and affects that exist independent of reference to an object or the passage from one state to another. When talking about art in this way, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 168) are thoroughly Bergsonist, insisting "Even if the material lasts for only a few seconds it will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself *in the eternity that coexists with this short duration*". Far from granting exceptionalism to the human (as with religious fabulation), art becomes the event of percepts and affects becoming paradoxically immaterialised in material and simultaneously passing into the virtual.

A simple example will suffice: I may hear or read a poem that I then 'forget', only for its feeling to suddenly materialise in another event. It may have been that my original encounter with the poem hardly registered at the time but here, now, its sensation blooms like algae to disrupt and reorientate perception and action. This moment of concrescence is only possible through accepting the category of the virtual as the coexistence of the past with the present and, equally, that the affects and percepts within the poem-object exist in and of themselves. This phenomena opens up the possibility of thinking time and history not just in non-linear, coexistent terms, but also as serial. Two series of events are put into communication by the virtual poem-object. The before and after are only chronologised retrospectively (Lampert, 2011).

The philosophy of Bergson draws one towards an understanding of poetry as both an extensive and intensive process infinitely greater than the poem-object. A process that the poem, in fact, only catches or slips into. This makes matters of both practice and participation of interest. Poems become mediators – aberrant ones perhaps – that continually lure us away from utility, that introduce indetermination into perception for mastery of...nothing. Poetic time, then, is not something endured, rather it is duration that is "activated, orientated, the object of qualitative change." (Guattari, 1995: 18). As Rees's poem 'In Midsummer' demonstrates, to practice poetic time is to enter into new rhythms of existence and to participate in an "implied tense" (Sauvagnargues, 2016a: 128).

Is it not, then, the poet that reveals and renews our immanent attachment to life? The poet's revelatory function lies not in intelligent reflection nor fabulatory belief, though it engages both operations for its purposes. One must instead talk of an affinity with life and freedom, beyond the paradigm of the perceiving subject and perceived object; beyond the human and the forms it fixes and delimits. As Bergson writes,

> What is the aim of art if not to show us, in nature and in the mind, outside of us and within us, things which did not explicitly strike our senses and our consciousness? The poet and the novelist who express a mood certainly do not create it out of nothing; they would not be understood by us if we did not observe within ourselves, up to a certain point, what they say about others. As they speak, shades of emotion and thought appear to us which might long since have been brought out in us but which remained invisible; just like the photographic image which has not yet been plunged into the bath where it will be revealed. The poet is this revealing agent.

It is this revelatory agency that gives poetry its untimely – that is to say, virtual – quality. Poetry reveals that language cannot be a mere formalisation of a bounded organism's needs but is instead something that emerges from a virtual problematic field through the production of a creative difference that is incorporeal and inorganic. As Colebrook (2010) has argued, bodies become bodies through their organs entering into relations between themselves and their environment that together constitute a response to problems within a field of sense. It is this sense that also enables language. If one wishes to understand the relation between life and meaning, one cannot start from the bounded body because this fails to explain the emergence of that body. A pre-individual field of sense is what produces the potential for organisation and orientation. Similarly, language is neither a seamless emergence according to the need of humans nor a totalising system of order that constitutes meaning, difference, and the possibility of the subject in one go. With reference to Deleuze, Colebrook writes:

> Language is possible because matters already have the virtual power of releasing pure expressive elements, sonorous qualities or predicates...Language is not the imposition of difference on an otherwise undifferentiated world, but the interaction of formed matters with each matter having its own tendencies for differentiation.

(Colebrook, 2010: 95)

Both the body and language form because there is a potentiality of sense that "lies between the nature of bodies and their relations, and the languages that express those relations" (Ibid). Bergson (1988: 121) expresses a similar thought regarding the action of listening to someone speak: we adopt a "certain disposition" of variability "as though we were choosing the key in which our own intellect is called upon to play?". If indeed signification has resulted in our relations to the world becoming flattened onto the voice, it is surely in poetry that speech and language detaches itself from the body. Poetry mediates this leap into this onto-genetic realm of movement and image, from which the "polyvocal regime of exchanged sounds, marks, rhythms, gestures and forces" first emerged as the human organism's response to problems in the field of sense (Colebrook, 2010: 96). This is not to suggest a return to such systems, which always represent a closure back on the body. Instead, with poetry we see that in

language the potential for asignification is always immanent to the image of language. It is only intuited by leaping into the *whole* of language, just as it is only by leaping into the whole of the past, that we become capable of detaching ourselves from our possible futures, which are inevitably defined by the conditions of the present (Grosz, 2000).

In an era where mental ecologies are increasingly characterised by an enclosure of the given present, Bergson's thought shows the importance of modes of practice and participation such as poetry in which one might experience difference as life's creative force. Immanent to language's yoke of signification, poetry's interval may seem impractical, but its intuitive ability to actualise the virtual in such aberrant ways may be precisely the kind of operation required to free the future from the clutches of the present.

FOUR

Structure and mutation: Towards a machinic poetics

A poem is just a little machine for remembering itself; a poem makes a fetish of its memorability. It does this because the one unique thing about our art is that it can be carried in your head in its original state, intact and perfect.

(Paterson, 2004)

The machine always depends on exterior elements in order to be able to exist as such. It implies a complementarity, not just with the man [sic] who fabricates it, makes it function or destroys it, but it is itself in a relation of alterity with other virtual or actual machines - a "non-human" enunciation, a proto-subjective diagram.

(Guattari, 1995: 37)

In his TS Eliot lecture of 2004, the prominent poet and editor, Don Paterson, took up the idea of poetry as a relation of or in memory, but added in a key ingredient: a poem was a machine. It was a machine, moreover, whose function was to objectify memory,

turning it into a fetish whose properties included portability, containment and an unchanging, perfect nature. This idea of a poem - solid, self-referential, impermeable - has an appealing neatness about it. Not only does it secure the poem as an object, it does so through mobilising certain commonly held assumptions about the machine and, implicitly, the operation of memory as like that of a machine. Rhetorically this has a certain effectiveness, but if taken literally the neatness begins to look troubled. The qualities of containment Paterson's appeal to the machine highlight contrast sharply with Guattari's conception of the machine as dependent on exterior elements and machinic relations for its existence. Consequently, while the machine holds importance for both Guattari and Paterson, it can equally be assumed that from these very different definitions of the machine two quite distinct poetics would emerge.

In this chapter, I work through the middle of this difference in order to explore the potential of the machinic in relation to poetics and ethico-aesthetic practice. This I elaborate through the staging of an encounter with the poet Chis McCabe, developing his description of the micro-flick with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the refrain. The provocation is towards how a machinic poetics might allow thought to grasp the outside of structure, whether this is the structure of language or of the body. In thinking that 'outside' as immanent *to* structure, I indicate how through a machinic poetics it becomes possible to grasp mutations of desire and subjectivity that draw their consistency from outside of signifying discursive formations. Through an analysis of McCabe's poetry, I highlight that what is at stake in a machinic poetics is the homogenising organisation of subjectivity and the body through language. Grasping the machinic dimension immanent to language therefore puts this organisation at risk, giving way to a micropolitics of sense-making that might, with due caution, be taken up and reorientated towards ethico-aesthetic ends. The promise of poetic cartographies and ecosophic thought alike, I argue, lies in the emphasis placed on the ongoing composition of heterogeneous subjectivities across molecular, social and environmental domains. A process that actively militates against bodily organisations that have as their aim a kind of managerial consensus or balance between those bodies. Searching out vectors for molecular mutation, rupture and suture, therefore entails an embracing of experimentation through machinic techniques capable of operating transversally across multiple ecologies.

The rhythm of ideas: The poetic practice of Chris McCabe

The problem of structure and mutation that the concept of the machine pushes to the fore, became apparent to me through an encounter with the poet, author and National Poetry librarian, Chris McCabe. When we met in the summer of 2019, I had known McCabe for almost ten years. Through his teaching for the Poetry School (where I worked as its Director from 2009-2015), his role as a librarian at the National Poetry Library in London, and his presence on the London poetry scene, our paths crossed frequently during that time. I'd come to know McCabe as someone whose creative practice was always on the move, restlessly experimental, cerebral, rhythmical, lyrical, and often darkly comic. I often found McCabe's poetry challenging. It is packed with historical and cultural references that are difficult to grasp. It speaks in multiple voices and adopts different personas and temporalities often within the same poem. That the poems often did not yield readily to comprehension upon first reading seemed only to further insist on the importance of what they might be doing. Indeed, it was often only upon hearing them read by McCabe in his distinctive rhythmical Scouse that the sense of the poem would make its impact felt.

Knowing McCabe to be someone interested in experimental poetics and language itself, as much as the lyric voice, set him apart for me as something of an eclectic 'poets' poet'. He was someone who crossed over between the more avant-garde or 'innovative' poetries and the majority of 'mainstream' contemporary poetry, as well as being involved through the National Poetry Library with the spoken word, performance poetry scene. McCabe's positioning both institutionally and artistically within this milieu would seem to afford him a multiplicity of different perspectives and it was with this in mind that I approached him, keen to hear more about his own practice, as well his views on current developments in contemporary poetry, both stylistically and ecologically.

It was in the course of a long and free-ranging conversation that the question of poetry's relation to what I shall call, after Guattari, *the machinic* began to insist itself. Quoting Don Paterson's assertion that the poem was "a little machine for remembering itself", McCabe (2019b) expressed some scepticism towards the idea of the poem as a "mechanically engineered construct", instead sketching out a poetics "that seems to generate in the moment...the meaning of the poem is what is happening in poetic language in the way it generates from one meaning to another, how vowels can connect

across lines, sibilance, assonance, all these techniques that are there.". Referring to his own practice, McCabe spoke of the moment when "the idea for a poem starts to wrap itself in language". He continued,

> For me it's the language that comes first. A lot of poets have an idea and they have a kind of "aha I've got an idea I know what I'm going to do". For me...it goes back to William Carlos Williams, "no ideas but in things", so it's the idea in the language. There will be an idea for where a poem might go, but it has to come with poetic language, with a kind of merging of a couple of words, or an image. And it's almost two things which move the poem forward, so I'm interested in how thought plays itself out through language often, rather than a poem that resolves itself neatly at the end and that's the end of it, kind of like a 'Snow Globe' type poem, you know?

> [...] it's the idea. It's the idea of where it might go and the language and they're both kind of inseparable...again, like, 'no ideas but in things'. It's not ideas about things, it's ideas in the thing, which is language.

<div align="right">(McCabe, 2019b)</div>

Although McCabe states that language comes first, this is not, I believe, a privileging of language *over* ideas. McCabe contrasts his approach to those poets that bend language to the idea, producing a bounded, hermetic 'snow-globe' poem. This seems to speak to the containment of an idea by means of words, *as content,* suggesting a domination of language over thought. McCabe's approach indeed designates a primacy to language, but this is not to deliver a fixing of language to idea, but to enact a perpetual and playful merging of the two. One should not fixate, therefore, on which component – the idea or language – is doing the wrapping. It is the wrapping that is the creative event; the concrescence of idea and language that marks out the poetic process. The poem understood as process is, for McCabe, the playing out of thought through a *singular* language, with language in general being understood as the set of enabling conditions or milieu in which such playful movement can be generated. The moment in which the idea wraps itself in language therefore suggests a way of looking at the poem's emergence that privileges neither the idea nor language but their quasi-autonomous coming together in the creative event.

Words merging, images taking flight; language is the primary enabler for the mobility of the idea but only through the idea finding and becoming inseparable from a singular, equally mobile language. One might say that the poetic idea (whether it is cognitively or affectively registered) only finds its sense immanent to *a* language. The condition for making this contact between thought and language being, therefore, some mutual presupposition of sense. What McCabe's comments about generative play throw into relief, however, is that this agreed upon 'sense' that language wraps around is a shifting and contested field, one which poetry productively exploits. With such qualities, it seems at this juncture as insufficient to equate poems with little machines as it does with snow globes.

Alongside the imbrication of idea and language McCabe also highlighted the importance of rhythm to the creative instance:

> The third element is rhythm, but that isn't always something that would be in every poem to the same extent. The way I write it's very rhythm-led, often. And you know, so I'm taking - what's the Paul Klee line? - taking a line for a walk? So, playing out an idea through rhythmical language. And I often don't know where that'll end. I don't know if it's going to be a really short poem or a long poem, but I often do have a clear visuality of it as well. You know, a clear sense of what it's going to look like on the page. So, you know, I'll know if it's going to be really long lines or shorter lines – kind of a thin column on the page. I don't know where that comes from, that intuition that a poem's going to be visual in a certain way, but...it's coming from the subconscious, isn't it? A lot of it is pre-conscious.

McCabe, 2019 #758}

The introduction of rhythm into McCabe poetics seems to go hand in hand with a concretisation of the poem. A poem's visuality emerges through a kind of synaesthesia of sense that is a process of temporalisation as much, if not more than, extension. Rhythm, for McCabe (2019b), doesn't simply happen on the line but is also embodied in a process he calls a "a micro-flick backwards and forwards" between conscious and pre-conscious states.

> In the process of writing a poem, you know, I'm kind of so absorbed in concentration that I'm almost not there, you know? It's like concentrating on any activity that you find fully absorbing, you're not really there, you're in thought. But I sense, I guess, there's a

kind of micro-flick happening between, you know, the conscious state as a writer that I've, you know, kind of matured, if you like, and this access to a subconscious where images are going to come from and very strange connections between things are going to come from, and the conscious is kind of like correcting it as it goes.

(McCabe, 2019b)

The importance placed on accessing a pre-existent, pre-conscious domain implicates the poet with more-than-human rhythms in the creative instance (See McCormack, 2002: 474). The writer's consciousness is here certainly singled out as the aspect that can be matured and developed, but this development is in order that one might more readily *depart from it* and enter into a pre-conscious realm. This recalls the virtual of Deleuze's Bergsonism (1988) encountered in Chapter Three – whereby recollection involves an ontological leap into the past – but with some important differences. Where Bergson might describe the recollection of memory-image as like the adjusting of aperture on a camera lens, here McCabe refers to an embodied rhythmical micro-flick between different domains. There is no leap, no wholesale ontological transportation into the virtual through dilation followed by contraction and actualisation.

In this sense, might McCabe's micro-flick might more readily be aligned with Bergson's passive synthesis of bodies – an automatic contraction of a milieu's elements via a sensory-motor mechanism? Yes, except for the fact that the micro-flick is in excess of habit or custom. The micro-flick is, I would argue, more readily viewed as a pragmatic and aesthetic technique that is introduced *in defiance* of existing habit. It does not only desire acclimation to diverse rhythmical flows and the movements of images within it but, in harnessing the sufficiently developed capacity of the writer's consciousness to quasi-automatically select and reject images as they arise, it extracts a fragment of this heterogenous materiality. It then re-orientates this fragment, putting it to work in another sphere.

if I can be accessing this unconscious state for imagery, in particular, and move with it, in it, in a rhythm which feels natural to me, then...I kind of am in control of it, I'm just not aware of it, you know. [...]

I've probably written maybe a thousand poems or something - it just happens, so making decisions, it's like anybody who practices something long enough you don't have to think about it, you get quite dexterous and quite accomplished at going: "no, not that". I can reject something quite quickly and take the one that I want and move with it. I mean, what's driving what is the question, isn't it?

[...] there's a really delicate interplay between the two, but it's that state I crave access to, you know, it's always there. It's where the rich kind of material resides. I've just got to make something interesting in language out of it.

(McCabe, 2019b)

The ambivalence around intentionality in McCabe's comments is important to note. It is never fully clear what or who is doing the selection yet there is a delicate skill in even being in the zone where one might be able to select and reject. Control, here, is achieved through both a passive contraction of natural rhythms and their active decoding and reorganisation through language. This amounts to a modalisation of rhythmical temporality, in which semiotic components are redistributed to alter their behaviour. By invoking modalisation, I am drawing attention to the ethico-aesthetic process by which habituation may take hold. To modalise is therefore to affirm the possibility of composing different qualities, affections and habits out of the substance of one's milieu.

In utilising this modalising technique, McCabe's practice gestures towards the Guattarian concept of the refrain. Refrains function through the novel reappropriation and redistribution of semiotic materials, and it is because of this that they can be seen as a crucial creative component in a machinic poetics. Thinking with McCabe's poetics as one engaged in the composition of refrains underlines the latter's importance for an ethico-aesthetics, understood as aiming to bring about more joyful rhythms of habituation and becoming. Indeed, insisting on an affirmative immanent ethics of composition through the refrain takes on a complex tension once put to work in the context of McCabe's recent subject matter: cancer. A cautionary hesitation "after affirmation" (Harrison, 2015) seems apposite here; what McCabe's refrains affirm is a Life that is both immortal and destructive; a survival achieved in part through death.

The refrain is defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 323) as "any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into territorial motifs and

landscapes (there are optical, gestural, motor, etc., refrains)". It is therefore a concept that seeks to account for how territories and assemblages are created out of their milieus, which have in turn distinguished themselves from chaos. It would be wrong, however, to characterise the refrain as imposing structure or organisation. The refrain, whilst producing a certain consistency within and among assemblages is primarily on a journey, a passage or departure from one state of affairs to another, and is therefore more readily aligned with creation and destruction. This is one of the reasons for Deleuze and Guattari speaking of the refrain in terms of rhythm, expression, and sound. The refrain is what allows for the bypassing of pre-given formal structure in favour of the direct elaboration of "an increasingly rich and consistent material, the better to tap increasingly intense forces" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 329).

Within non-representational geographies, refrains are taken up by McCormack (2013: 7-8) to account for the composition of "affective spacetimes...from the chaos of the world, generating a certain expressive consistency through the repetition of practices, techniques, and habits". The refrain is mobilised by McCormack as an impersonal, transversal technique for grasping the affective spacetimes that travel across and between moving bodies, to be sensed as intensities of feeling. McCormack (2013: 135) provides the example of radio commentary for Gaelic football, arguing for it as more than simply a representational capture of a modulating affective field of relation (the game), and rather as part of an ongoing modulation, moving corporeally and incorporeally, between bodies across multiple affective fields (the stadium, the pitch, the home etc). Radio commentating becomes part of the expressive quality of this distributed field, participating in its generation. McCormack (2013: 140) draws parallels between the refraining technique of commentating and the poetry of Louis MacNeice, locating in the latter an affirmation of "the possibility of moving in fields of expression that are always beyond the individual", and further suggesting that social scientific research might benefit from adopting a similar ethos.[4] Wylie (2016: 224) agrees; the

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[4] I enjoy the analogy; poetry can similarly allow for passage between affective fields (the reader, the poet, the visual page, its verbalised sounds, its content, etc.), thereby composing through temporalisation a refrain of affective spacetime. Put the reader or listener of a poem in the place of the commentator of a football game, however, and it becomes clear the reader has a good deal more agency. A reader can modulate the pace, loop back and forth (on the page at least), head out on a wandering line of speculation, indulge in a worlding spun out of just one word, pick up a pen themselves, even grab a pair of scissors and rearrange the words of the poem — the equivalent action in commentary would be something like the commentator streaking across the pitch. In short, the respective affective fields of a poetic encounter are more porous, multifarious and irruptive than that of the pitch, the commentary box, and the living room;

mediated distance of commentary offers a "lived abstraction" that might be seen as a virtue when conducting social scientific research. Perhaps, however, the notion of mediated distance becomes more problematic if applied to poetry which, to at least some extent, plies its trade in the "unmapped marrow of the lived" (Ibid).

Also drawing parallels with poetry, Deleuze and Guattari analyse the stanzas of birdsong as complex articulations of motif and counterpoint that constitute and express territorial assemblages, understood as the constitution of a sense of belonging or 'home', through a capture of forces in a milieu. Through the refrain we become able to understand why a colour can "answer" to a sound; and even further, to how different species, orders and heterogeneous qualities become ecologically imbricated (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 330). As Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) chapter on the refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus* argues, what is true for natural ecosystems also holds for human society and the production of subjectivity. In the context of McCabe's statements on poetic practice and language, the refrain might be thought of as the becoming-expressive of language matter that highlights an immanent architecture, existing in variance according to complex relations of force. Following this line of thought, the micro-flick that McCabe speaks of provides a way of intervening in this variable expressivity of matter; micro-flicking installs a new rhythm in the intervals of the prevailing (or ordering) rhythms of language's milieu. This is the synesthetic power of the refrain, which as shall be shown later, McCabe puts to extensive use in his collection *The Triumph of Cancer* to create a-signifying relations of disjunction between the poems (McCabe, 2018). In this powerful synthesising capacity of refrains to set up expressive correspondences between heterogeneous materialities, one can see the beginnings of a machinic poetics start to emerge.

Like McCabe (2019b), I am sceptical of the idea that a poem is a "mechanically engineered construct", or, as Paterson (2004) puts it "a little machine for remembering itself". My contention is that this misrepresents machines as self-contained mechanisms or tools, whilst also imposing limitations on the value of the poetic, confining it to the poem as an object "intact and perfect" (ibid). Under a mechanistic schema complexity is

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its modalities of participation are more imbricated and, one hopes, less scripted. For all that sports commentary thrives on the incipient cusp of the moment, it all too often relies on parsing each moment through a faithful rehearsal of mythical tropes. A grasping for poetry at certain euphoric sporting moments might be seen less generously as occupying the same territory as poetry at weddings and funerals; a mythic use of poetry that aims to demarcate a sedimented organisation of bodies.

a formal imposition, before the fact and from an external transcendent source. By way of contrast, the refrain, operating in the micro-flick in-between of assemblages, functions with an immanence to assemblages that is machinic, without being structural *per se*. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "a machine is like a set of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialisation, and draw variations and mutations of it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 333). The machine is therefore distinct from the assemblage itself. Deleuze articulates the distinction between machine and mechanism clearly in *Dialogues*:

> Machine, machinism, 'machinic': this does not mean either mechanical or organic. Mechanics is a system of closer and closer connections between dependent terms. The machine by contrast is a 'proximity' grouping between independent and heterogeneous terms (topological proximity is itself independent of distance or contiguity). What defines a machine assemblage is the shift of a centre of gravity along an abstract line.

> (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 104)

There are technical machines, but there are also biological machines, aesthetic machines, social machines, and so on. In each case the machine is defined in terms of its immanence to a range of terms that would otherwise be independent. The machine is thus what produces the diagram of those terms and constitutes the relations. The machine is not metaphorical, metonymical, or symbolic but always concerns the real concrete productions of effects. The abstract shift in the centre of gravity at the level of the machine being what brings about actual movements in bodies and the state of things.

Accepting this expansive definition, it follows that it would be incorrect to view the poem as the machine and the poet as its operator. Rather, both poem and poet belong to the poetic machine; they are both present within its centre of gravity and function along the abstract line that makes their movements together possible. This conceptualisation also underscores the machine's sociality. A machine cannot function in isolation but, as this chapter's opening quotation from Guattari notes, depends on both internal relations between (independent, heterogeneous) components and exterior relations with other machines. Try to isolate the machine – as with Paterson's appeal to the poem machine as little and carried intact within one's head – and one soon falls under the yolk of structural signification. A machinic approach, however, necessarily takes account of multiple components that are material, semiotic, representational,

informational, desiring, individual, collective, affective and so on. What this means here, at a very basic level, is that the linguistic aspects of poetry, as with all language, cannot be separated out from the other categories of components in the poetic machine. It follows from this, however, that poetry not only offers novel ways of conceiving of or representing individual and collective experience, but that it is a site bound up with the production of highly novel forms of subjectivity through its contact with other bodies and other machines.

A machinic poetics, then, given the vast and ultimately cosmic relations of alterity that it implies, might consist in an attempt to forge new transversal connections across organic and non-organic components, or between signifying and a-signifying regimes. The reason for doing so is not to avoid reinforcing normative discursive structures for the sake of a higher artistic ideal, but to actively and pragmatically establish new "zones of proto-subjectivation...territories of chaosmic grasping" that can be productive of new values (Guattari, 1995: 55). Values, argued Guattari (1995), need to be rethought as immanent to the machines that modify them. By thinking values and machines together, the prospect of an autopoietic production of new values becomes possible. Values, furthermore, that can avoid the signifying feedback loops that tend to subsume all value production under a totalising and representational image of thought. Massumi's (2018) recent theses on the revaluation of values for a postcapitalist future is one example of a machinic approach that seeks to account for the immanent outside of the economic system – the intensive modulation of that system by wider affective processes – and to conceive of techniques that might harness this immanent outside towards postcapitalist ends. Guattari's conceptualisation of autopoietic production is therefore one that goes beyond any unitary sense (as with Francisco Varela) of an individual machine, system or body, to operate at a diagrammatic or cartographic level. For Guattari (1995: 44), "the machine's proto-subjectivity installs itself in Universes of virtuality which extend far beyond its existential territory". It is therefore always a matter of "ontologically heterogeneous modes of subjectivity" through which the machine traverses and by means of which it extracts its consistency (Guattari, 1995: 45).

From the standpoint of contemporary capitalism's ever-accelerating drive towards automation, the notion of machinic autopoiesis might initially appear unappealing. However, what I think Guattari's machinic philosophy asks us to consider is how a singular (rather than generally equivalent) production of sense and value – non-

human and for-itself as well as for others – emerges. Additionally, it asks what such singular productions of subjectivity and values might do for human societies and the machinic ecologies in which they exist. Understanding our own function within such ecologies in machinic terms, therefore, demands an ethico-aesthetic attention to our active role in the renewal of its components - not as saviours or guardians but as participants always among others. To set out on a journey towards a machinic poetics, is therefore to grasp semiotic forces that can draw together a disparate field of components and give them an agency of sense production. In short, to resingularise thought and the production of subjectivity.

The event of poetic language

The semiotic complexity of machinic concepts such as the refrain can result in a premature uncoupling of poetry from language, the latter becoming diminished in importance. This can lead to the situation in which everything becomes 'poetic'. Football commentators may speak of 'poetry in motion' when a great goal is scored; politicians 'campaign in poetry' (to 'govern in prose'); and natural phenomena such as migration or symbiosis take on poetic resonance. Such everyday appeals to the poetic, though invariably remaining at the general level, seem to be anecdotal evidence that what can be recognised as poetic does not necessarily require language for its expression. However, this somewhat hasty proclamation leaves one with the problem of why, at least in the human realm, poets tend to turn to language for the production of poetry. In this journey towards a machinic poetics, how might language's apparent primacy be accounted for, without falling back into structuralist modes of thought? Chris McCabe's comments on the wrapping of a poem in language and the micro-flick of semiotic rhythm speak to a creative instance; an event that traces the relation between language's structure and the machine through a production of sense. It is within this event of sense, I argue, that language becomes not only possible but structured through the diagrammatic machine. Rather than being simply a secondary production of a linguistic system, sense can be seen as the constitutive outside of that system – that is, an intensive impersonal field of potential. As a marker of this transition from structure to the machine, it is therefore worthwhile returning to the event as the concept that preoccupies Deleuze in The Logic of Sense (2004b).

In simple terms, the Deleuzean event marks a potentialisation; a singularity in which each potential change retains all other potential changes inhering at varying degrees of intensity. The event is a-temporal; it is something that happens prior to the actualisation of a particular designated state of affairs in space and time. The Deleuzean event is therefore productive of effects of variable intensity. Language, insofar as it empirically distinguishes itself from states of affairs, expresses events through propositions. These, in turn, contain three dimensions or relations: denotation (relation of the proposition to states of affairs); manifestations (relation of the proposition to the 'I' that speaks it – an expression of desires and beliefs); and signification (relation of the proposition to general concepts). To these Deleuze adds a fourth, that of sense. Sense is "the expressed of the proposition...an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition" (Deleuze, 2004b: 23).

Sense for Deleuze is what resists modes of analysis based in meaning and facts. Bowden (2011: 33) describes sense as "something like a significant emotion, or a reserve of emotional energy". What is particularly intriguing about this understanding of sense is the productive relation it sets up between language and actual states of affairs. As Deleuze explains:

> Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs. It turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition which expresses it any more that with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things.

(Deleuze, 2004b: 25)

The event, therefore, *is* sense, which turns both towards things and propositions. Sense is not located within things but is what is attributed to them through the proposition. The essential relation is therefore between sense and language rather than sense and a particular state of affairs. Verbs in their infinitive form are what express this sense-event. This is not to say that only the verbs contained within the proposition are of importance. The proposition *I ride my bike down the hill* provides a facts-based understanding of an actual event. The riding of the bike is the actual event in the way in which it ties a subject to an action and a place. The sense of the event is contained

within the verb 'to ride', which, when untethered from its moorings in actual states of affairs, connects to other verbs: to pedal; to freewheel; to accelerate; to scream in delight; to catch flies in one's mouth; to slope; to wobble; to brake; to crash; to fall; to arrive; to leave, and so on. Sense becomes the virtual communication of infinitives. But how does this virtual sense have any relation to actual events?

Let's say in the actual event of my riding of the bike it is raining. I fear I might fall off the bike and keep applying the brakes to moderate my speed as I go down the hill. The rain has soaked through my non-waterproof jacket and impairs my vision. The event 'to ride' gains its sense through communication with verbs such as 'to blind'; 'to soak'; 'to fear'; 'to slow'; to risk, and so on. Now, in another actual event I am riding my bike, again down a hill. This time I am with another cyclist and the sun is shining. The other cyclist speeds off down the hill whooping with joy. I, however, in recollection of the sense made of the last event 'to ride down a hill', take things more slowly. I cautiously apply the brakes on the corners and remaining finely tuned to the slightest bump in the road. When I arrive at the bottom of the hill my companion is sat waiting and greets me with a "what took you so long, slow-coach?". Through a communication of these two actual events there has been a counter-actualisation. The sense of the event 'to ride' (a bike) has been altered and the question I might suddenly feel confronted with is *do I really know what it means 'to ride' this bike - to experience the full intensity of the event 'to ride'?* Pushing this further, I might even ask myself if this speaks to something more fundamental about my character: *Am I too conservative, too risk-averse, too fearful of living my life?* In both events there is a greater significance than only the facts or their linguistic expression. Once in communication the event-effects enter into new relations that vary the intensity of the emotional reserve, that is, sense, to produce new actual states of affairs.

What can be taken from the example above is that language, due to the nature of its construction is able *in principle* to express the causal relation between sense and factual events. Language is not necessary for events to happen. Rather, agreeing with Bowden (2011), language *as process* provides a set of conditions for the expression of sense. This expression inheres in the surface of things as event-effects, thereby providing a counter-actualisation. The other important point here is that it is only through sense that we avoid the endless circle in language whereby denotation, manifestation, and signification act variously as the ground for one another. It is only by

asking questions concerning quality, potential, value or affective intensity, that one can break free of these paradoxes of the proposition.

What's true with this simple scenario of events is true of the more complex communication of events in poetic language.[5] The reason for Deleuze's focus on paradoxes in *Logic of Sense* is in order to make an argument for language's extension into sense. Sense not only maps flows of intensity in relations (thereby diagramming an a-temporal ecology of affects), it also functions as a strategic force through its interaction in events, replaying events as event-effects and thereby effecting a counter-actualisation. Because the sense of a proposition exists separately from its truth or falsity, its subject, and its meaning, poetry offers an important empirical site for the operation of sense. The event of poetry offers an empirical basis for how meaning comes to mean or, conversely to stop meaning. Indeed, once one is thinking in terms of the event, to ask what a poem *means* needs to take account of the intensive movement and strategic intervention of sense upon which meaning depends. By beginning with sense and understanding meaning as its contingent effect, a more speculative and radical register of analysis opens up.

The nomadic and shifting quality of sense outside of the circle of denotation, manifestation and signification goes a long way towards explaining the serial structure of *Logic of Sense*. It also offers support for the approach I wish to take here. By situating this exploration of sense and the machinic within my encounter with Chris McCabe, his work, and the various elements of thought that it contains, I am gesturing towards the idea of the sense-event that is generated in any empirical encounter. To be worthy of such encounters, it is less about a question of fidelity or re-presenting past events, but instead forging connections and relations through disjunction, divergence, and mutation towards a counter-actualisation in the present.

Clatterbridging

I began this chapter with two distinct notions of the machine: Paterson's idea of the poem as a little machine could be described as 'mechanical', while Guattari's might be called 'diagrammatic'. Against this backdrop I presented the poet Chris McCabe's

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[5] As Bowden acknowledges, Deleuze's argument regarding the paradoxes of the proposition in language do not amount to a philosophy of language and are not of the detail of analyses that have been made on denotation in the analytic tradition (Frege, for example).

account of his process of poetic composition, in which he spoke of a generative and playful imbrication of idea and language, often alongside a rhythmical "micro-flick" between conscious and pre-conscious states linked to a corporealisation of the poem. Noting McCabe's scepticism of mechanistic explanations for poetry, I sought to develop his idea of the rhythmical micro-flick with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the refrain. The refrain, understood as an aggregate of expressive matter that breaks away from its systems of organisation to draw its own territory or assemblage, allowed for an initial reconceptualisation of the machine, away from mechanistic or technical structures of dependent terms, towards a more immanent relational understanding that cuts across multiple ontological modes and implies a primarily social proto-subjectivity that is diagrammatic, in so far as it extracts its consistency from heterogeneous components.

With some emergent contours of a machinic poetics traced, I then turned to language itself and, with reference to Deleuze's analysis of the event in *The Logic of Sense*, explored how language provides a set of conditions for the expression of sense - a dimension which neither merges with propositions that express it, nor the actual state of affairs it designates. Sense's own mapping of relations independent of truth or falsity, I argue, opens up a more speculative register of analysis that necessitates attention to a much broader semiotic register than signification, denotation (or connotation) and manifestation - an outside of language (language's outside). In this way, sense can be seen as proto-diagrammatic and, through the ability to counter-effectuate events, it displays an autopoietic quality that will be developed further through contact with Guattari's machinic thought. Finally, sense serves to draw analysis always back to the empirical encounter, the event of sense, as a point of departure that is generative, speculative and mutational.

And so onwards with *this* departure – a new micro-flick, or refrain – beginning in the middle of McCabe's recent poetry collection *The Triumph of Cancer*:

> Cancer changed him more than my arsenic asides or the
> matinées he drove me to on Saturday afternoons. It took
> his speech, for one thing. But then, when did I ever let
> him speak?

(McCabe, 2018: 28)

The prose poem 'Cinema' initiates readers or listeners into the scene of a father-and-son outing to the cinema with three sentences that trace a shifting pattern of sense.[6] In the first sentence two relative constants emerge: the speaker's asides and the Saturday matinees. These are only constant, however, relative to the change wrought by cancer on the father. Then the second sentence undoes the logic of the first. How? Because an 'arsenic aside' implies an ongoing conversation between two speakers and not a monologue. One might well also pause on the word 'arsenic' to ponder the possibility that we are witness to a poisoning of some sort. Finally, the third sentence seems to open up the possibility of the speaker's own reflection on the relationship, indicating to the reader that this is an elegy and that cancer has, from the position in time of the speaker, taken much more than the father's speech.

What is at stake in 'Cinema' is on one level a question of memory and of ritual. We learn of the times the son and their father have spent together "Driving the concretised beachways of the north's A-roads" (McCabe, 2018) (a cinematic image, if ever there was one). How the son would not stop talking but would occasionally

> [...]   throw things in to make sure he was
> still listening. Light of my life, from the fire of his loins
> I arrived to ask.

(McCabe, 2018: 28)

Incidentally, this is not the first time in the collection we encounter jokes made about loins between the father and the son in a car. In 'Clatterbridge' – three poems prior to 'Cinema' – we get a dialogue about an acquaintance of the father's, who lost his penis to cancer:

> I didn't know you could get it there, I said.
> My dad said : you can get it anywhere.
> Clatterbridge : even the hospital sounded
> like lives falling apart.
> Minutes passed & Peugeot's eternity arrived at school gates.
> I said, listen : you don't need it after a certain age anyway.

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[6] The poem does not explicitly state the speaker is male. Specific autobiographical details are present but would not be known to the uninitiated reader. Nevertheless, the sense of perspective emerges through the overall tone of the poem that this is a father and his son.

He said : need what?

I said : your penis

He said : I'd like it just in case.

<div align="right">(McCabe, 2018: 25)</div>

Even in this fast-paced, punchline-driven piece, a caesura happens with the introduction of 'Clatterbridge' who interjects in the joke like a quasi-character through the placing of a colon. The hospital that sounds "like lives falling apart" becomes the pivoting sense of this poem. *To clatterbridge* – the event 'to fall apart' – takes on emotional, collective and literally physiological resonances. The onomatopoeic sound of 'Clatterbridge' adds the sense of a brittle precarity in the connection between father and adolescent son. The event of *clatterbridging* festers through the line "Minutes passed & Peugeot's eternity arrived at school gates.", with the silence taking on a terminal sense (intensified through the proximity of 'eternity' and 'gates') before the release back into humour.

Readers might be forgiven, therefore, for bringing certain expectations to the driving scene in 'Cinema' – and the use of humour is still evident here too – but the sense of when and where the cancer is has shifted. The repetition is in actuality a divergence. No longer a story about someone else, cancer is in the car, at the cinema, in the queue for popcorn, poisoning everything. The son is now perhaps somewhat older, more adult (but how much time has elapsed?). We have progressed from penis jokes to watching *A Clockwork Orange* and references to modernist literature. Cancer, too, has progressed; "Saturdays were chores & compensatory rest" and the son is surprised that the father agrees to take him to see the Kubrick film. The use of reported speech really hits home the larger milieu in which the outing takes place:

> *What exactly is the treatment here going to be then? Quite*
> *simple really : we're just going to show you some film.* Violence
> set to Beethoven meant nothing to us.

<div align="right">(McCabe, 2018: 28)</div>

Given that the earlier speech about loins was not in italics there remains some ambiguity as to who is speaking to who. If anything, however, this increases the intensity of the relations of sense. Similarly, to accord the violent scenes from *A Clockwork Orange* with such banality has the effect of intensifying the sense of destruction wrought by cancer. When the speaker wonders aloud: "Did I want him to watch the / film or just for him to watch me watch it?", it is as if perhaps a communion in violence might stand in for the affirmation of cancer's event. The final lines, listing various modernist referents, reads like a last attempt to be out in front of cancer's event of violence; for the son in some way to out-do cancer's experimentalism and reach his father in his now radically dumbed silence.

> ....Lo-lee-ta. Anecdotes on Joyce
> & Sterne. Stein at breakfast. Unasked for Hopkins. Cancer,
> in the end, was more avant-garde.

(McCabe, 2018: 28)

Cancer and the mutation of sense

Thinking about the poem 'Cinema' as an event of shifting sense is illustrative of McCabe's larger project in *The Triumph of Cancer* of using language to challenge the taboos that surround cancer. When I spoke with him, McCabe talked about wanting to get away from the framing of cancer as a fight with something 'other' that resulted in 'victims' and 'survivors'. Cancer was, he said, "the highest most intelligent form of growth we have in our body" (McCabe, 2019b). His fascination with the process of cancerous growth through division, in which cells no longer understand their prior function and undergo mutation, became for McCabe an interest in what this mutational force might look and sound like in poetic language. In an article on his publisher's website, McCabe admits that the 'sprung' rhythmic poetics of Hopkins was highly influential, drawing our attention to how the latter's poems "often hold together multiple stress patterns at the same time, changing and morphing from line-to-line" (McCabe, 2019a). The "unasked for Hopkins" in 'Cinema' (that wasn't *quite* as avant-garde as cancer) is nonetheless thrust upon the reader in the next poem 'Pinthover' – a homage to Hopkin's 'The Windhover':

the gut & glug chicaning the pining

gullet as it smooths the throat's glovepurse, the glow in the mind

of this glyph refused, the regalia of it, the crystal tardis of the thing!

(McCabe, 2018: 29)

The point I want to draw attention to here is not the inter-textual links between poems, nor the connections with other poets (the question of collaboration will be taken up in Chapter Five) as much as much as the multiple sense that Hopkins (as one example) takes on through the collection. McCabe allows thought to consider Hopkins as both unasked for (and thus like cancer) *and* pined for. A slaker and smoother of throats, as much as a stirrer of minds away from "familiar groves". It is the rhythmical sense of Hopkins' verse that McCabe draws upon to effectuate cancer's mutational capacities within language and, in 'Pinthover', entirely independently of the state of affairs it denotes.

It is precisely this restless morphological impetus in McCabe's poetry that is the idea – the sense – that is produced. The attribute of the things *and* the expressed of the proposition; the idea in the thing *and* in the language. One can even zoom out to the whole book and treat it as one body whose contents of single word titles reads as a diagrammatic poem itself. Certain animals appear in their own poems and then again in others. As McCabe writes:

As much as the language makes us talk of cancer as 'other' – an invading body – those cells are ultimately us. The cancer patient feels divided but is completely and inseparably one organism. I aimed to write poems which exist in tension – often displayed through lines of alternating length – but are held together through the relationships between words, bound within their overall corpus.

(McCabe, 2019a)

William Carlos Williams said "no ideas but in things" but if McCabe is forcing us to think of cancer not as other but as us, then does not the problem shift from that of sense to that of the body? Specifically, the existential problematisation of the body's organisation caused by cancer's generative, mutational act of creation and destruction.

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Similarly, it is this requirement of a body that impels us to consider language's other side. Not what is outside of language but what is properly language's outside.

Following Deleuze, language is made possible in its structural distinction from bodies through the incorporeal production of sense. Yet sense is also what is said of bodies; it is produced as a result of the actions and passions of bodies but differs in nature from them (Deleuze, 2004b: 103). Mutations are not structural but they are endogenous. They introduce disequilibrium to a structure's organisation and in this respect they constitute an act of rebellion. In *Triumph of Cancer* this manifests through the invasion of different figures into multiple poems. In McCabe's 'Hedgehog' (2018: 39) the eponymous creature is described as "face of the sixties' bassist / back flecked starlike as a starling". Then the next poem, 'Starling' (McCabe, 2018: 41), begins with "Like a glam bass player ousted / by the kingfisher's cover shot". In 'Lungworm' (McCabe, 2018: 42) we encounter the line "You were our King's taster. When you died you grew / from the other end & the sparrow ate your head". Then in 'Pornography' (McCabe, 2018: 43) (a poem that articulates an uneasy voyeurism through juxtaposing pornographic images and with the cancerous flesh of "holes & growths" on cigarette packs) the advent of internet pornography is good news for "Albion's hedges" and "Sparrows are on the incline". Rather than structural, such mutational occurrences can be considered machinic in that they are shaped by a desire for abolition of fixity and signification, in favour of a mobile differentiation. As Guattari argues, the machine's emergence:

> …is doubled with breakdown, catastrophe – the menace of death. It possesses a supplement: a dimension of alterity which it develops in different forms. This alterity differentiates it from structure, which is based on a principle of homeomorphism.

(Guattari, 1995: 37)

Machines are relations of alterity that complement their creator but also other virtual or actual machines. In doing so they create a non-human enunciation, a proto-subjective diagram.

It is in poetry that one discovers the machine which haunts language's structure. In poetry the sense which preserves language's distinction from bodies breaks down, allowing words to become bodies again, and capable of affecting other bodies. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze illustrates this by comparing Lewis Carroll's logical sense effects on

the surface with the schizophrenic depth effects of Antonin Artaud. As McCabe's (2018: 31-33) poem on Alice suggests, the surface effects of sense indicate a joyous interplay of the body and language in a cosmic becoming, with Alice's own "body of text" becoming asterisks, or "little stars". For Alice, "it is wonderful to have a body / that is turned to stars thirty-six times in one / day" (McCabe, 2018: 33). For Artaud, in contrast, words become bodies that cut and wound. However, as Lapoujade (2017: 142-143) has argued, it is not so much the words that the schizophrenic cannot tolerate as it is their organisation and articulation through syntax: "the schizophrenic feels the effect of a principle of articulation threatening his body with fragmentation and his thought with dispossession". To this principle the schizophrenic opposes an intensive language of the body, inarticulable, "born in the depths of nonsense"(Ibid) - a body without organs; a body that not only rejects syntactical articulation but also the privatisation of its desires within the organs, striving instead for an intense smoothing of materiality. In *Logic of Sense* this conflict between an intensive bodily depth and a surface sense reaches an impasse due to Deleuze's wish to preserve sense as an organising principle for language. It is only with Guattari and the shift to a machinic philosophy that structural analysis is done away with and sense loses its primacy to be replaced with *function.* With the concept of the Body without Organs we discover a cartography of desire, "a topography of the transversal line, that is to say, the line that brings together disparate elements without actually joining them"; the semiotic force that grants desire the formal consistency it needs to join with experience (Buchanan, 2015: 41).

Machine or machinic? Or, open or closed systems?

In staging an encounter with Chris McCabe and his poetry, I have traced a line of flight from language's structure, through its serial production of sense effects on the surface, towards the machinic outside which haunts it, producing a diagram of its effects on bodies. The refrain of a machinic poetics that is being elaborated here is hopefully becoming clearer. Yet appeals to machines and functionality in poetry are not in and of themselves remarkable. For William Carlos Williams (1944), a poem was machine made of words because "there can be no part, as in any other machine, that is redundant" and this essential economy of poetry was, like any machine, "intrinsic, undulate, a physical more than literary character". Dworkin (2009: 167), on the other

hand, draws on Wittgenstein to show how symbolic references to machines tend to be made in order to emphasise a model of smooth efficient operation, involving a necessary distraction from "the friction and entropy of real machines". Dworkin (Ibid) is suggesting here that what one might commonly think of as 'malfunction' is "not an exception to the operation of machines but one of their fundamental aspects". Consequently, in any gesture towards a machinic poetics it is important to define what is actually at stake: efficient functionality, or necessary breakdown as function's limit point?

To take the opening provocation from the poet Don Paterson, the poem is "just a little machine for remembering itself; a poem makes a fetish of its memorability" (Paterson, 2004). How should one understand the use of the term 'machine' in this context? Can such a memory machine be understood in the Bergsonian sense of introducing a particular spatio-temporal dynamism, or is the action conceived of as entirely mechanical? Paterson (2018, 'Memory', para 2) claims that poetry is the one art form where "its memory and its acquisition are one and the same thing". He argues that the poem's insistence on memorialisation results in a fetishization of its mnemonic devices, which he identifies as brevity, patterning, and originality of speech. The compositional process of poetry thereby becomes one which exploits "language's underlying metrical and intonational regularity" as well as its "metaphoric engine" of revivification, and the "metonymic nature of all human naming" in which representation is causally related to utility or perceptual saliency (Paterson, 2018, 'Memory', para 7).

Paterson's argument rests on the connotative qualities of language. Language is synesthetic, with sound and sense overlapping through conative relations of iconicity:

> We hear, somehow, the roundness of moon, the ruminativeness of memory, the hiss of sea, the thinness of needle, the littleness of pin, the lumpiness of hump, the speed of quick , the warmth of mum

> (Paterson, 2018, 'Phonesthemes', para 18)

This ability of word sounds to resemble the quality of the things they name becomes for Paterson an indicator of a language's evolutionary fitness, or "phonosemantic felicity" (Paterson, 2018, 'Phonesthemes', para 23). Words survive to the extent that they adapt to

the prevailing sound rules, with particular phonemes clustering around particular phonesthemes.[7] For example, the sound cluster gl- occurs in a high number of words related to 'reflected light', 'sight' and 'slide-iness': glisten, glare, glow, glower, glint, gleam, glaze, gloss, glance, glitter, glide, glass, gliss (Paterson, 2018, 'Phonesthemes', para 17). Beyond this index of shared semantics in phonemes, Paterson contends that all words have their own gravitational pull, exerting an influence on other words with the same phonemes regardless of semantic distance. Words are thus active in a dynamic system replete with connotative harmonics that, when context is added into the mix, makes for an infinite array of meaning-making possibility. As Paterson says, "no sense can step into the same word twice" (Paterson, 2018, 'Phonesthemes', para 25). Poetry and poetic language, therefore, exploit and amplify the phonesthemic qualities of language. Indeed, Paterson goes even further, arguing that language is a poetic system that when subjected to "emotional heat and formal pressure" produces language that we call 'poetic'.

This elision of poetry and language allows Paterson (2018, 'Memory', para 8) to place the poet-in-composition as a central locus of agency, "trying to remember a poem they have forgotten". A poem originates (or is, analogically speaking, 'remembered'), so the account goes, first with the urgency of an inspirational impulse - intellectual or emotional - "in the mind of the poet" (2018, 'Memory', para 6). Secondly, but contemporaneously, that poem seeks out forms which "reflect and facilitate that urgency" (Ibid). It is the urgency in the mind which provokes the brevity of the poem as the basic formal strategy which then gives rise to the originality and patterning which, for Paterson, constitute, respectively, its literary virtue and identifying features. Whilst Paterson wishes to stress these tendencies are innate in "emotional language", they are also consciously achieved by the poet through tropes of contraction (brevity), comparison (originality) and form, metre and lyric (pattern). It is in this way that the poem 'remembers' itself into existence.

The problem with this account is that it posits a closed system then relies too heavily on the poet – an unexplained entity of unknown quality - for its conditions of operation. How does inspiration arrive in the poet's mind? What are the processes by which emotional heat and formal pressure are introduced? In a similar way, by getting

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[7] It becomes more difficult to agree with this if one adopts a Bergsonian approach to evolution, in which actualisation is guaranteed through dissociation rather than resemblance. In such a scenario, new words could only ever occur through some act of alienation from form (of content or of expression).

'under the bonnet' of language, Paterson's complex schema of phonesthemes and their *quale* certainly draw attention to the extra-linguistic components of language. Yet for all the richness of the *quale*, the account is oddly quiet about what exactly the extra-linguistic components are. If the poem *is* a machine, readers remain none the wiser as to its environmental conditions of operation.

Overall, Paterson's appeal to complexity through synesthetic harmonics of sound and sense in connotative poetic language places an emphasis on signification, identity and resemblance. Although complex, the system must remain closed so that any word is able to affect the whole system of language through its gravitational pull. Language, for Paterson, is fundamentally metonymic. New words are coined out of utility and the relations between existing words. Poetry codifies this fundamental quality of language through its tendency to oversignify. But it is not immediately clear why resemblance is posited as the force driving oversignification, rather than divergence.

The danger with a logocentric closed system such as Paterson's is twofold: Firstly, that it exerts a normative effect, ordering and categorising with the aim of producing a predictable and recognisable regularity. Secondly, such a system requires policing. This role seems to be conferred upon the poet. Language for Paterson is innately poetic, yet the poet's self-possessed creativity remains the locus of creativity. Such creativity does not even extend to the body and remains exclusively in the mind of the poet. With echoes of Shelley's (1906: 38) famous remarks that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world", Paterson asserts "the sum total of poetry's forms and tropes are no more or less than the natural tendencies of emotional language made manifest, and then codified" (2018, 'Memory', para 7). The poem, as a machine for remembering itself, is therefore essentially hylomorphic. Its form is predetermined (in the mind of the poet, through inspiration) and imposed (via the various tropes mentioned above) in an act of memorialisation upon the materiality of language, and in a manner entirely consistent with the latter's pre-existing natural tendencies.

Guattari's machinic thought, however, is altogether less neat and practical (though maybe all the more *practice-able* for it). As Roberts (Jellis et al., 2019: 47) notes, the impracticality of Guattari's thought "stems from the requirement that its users assume the role of experimental machinists forever cognisant of the fact that a machine can never simply be applied in the manner of a tool". The machine does not sit within a totalising structure such as language, like the little poem-machine. It is rather what must prompt a "radical ontological reconversion" (Guattari, 1995: 37) in which meaning

becomes less interesting than production and utility across heterogenous ontological domains installed in its place.

The creatures flitting between McCabe's poems resist signification to become expressive of an ontological heterogeneity. They express an autopoietic function within the collective assemblage *The Triumph of Cancer*, opening up the poems to one another in a smoothing of semiotic materials that continuously remakes its virtual cartographies. Meaning is still present but it is generated from one instance to the next 'diagrammatically'. Guattari uses the example of a lock and key to show how the machinic act of the functioning of the lock will only work to the extent that both lock and key belong to the deterritorialised diagram that establishes the parameters between the concrete forms (Guattari, 1995: 43-44). Can we not also think of the recurrence of figures in McCabe's working in a similar way? As McCabe pointed out to me:

> CM: Kenneth Koch really put it simply, he used to teach a lot of poetry and he'd explain poetry in a really straightforward way to people who were beginning to come into it first time which is: How do you know a poem is being a poem? Well if you walked across the room from one part to another but you stopped and you put your leg up, if you did it once you'd probably think, you know, cramp but if you carried on putting your leg up you'd probably think that person is doing a dance. And that's one of the key things with poetry is like, something that happens in language that seems really florid or exciting or abrupt - once you might think it's a typo or they'd just had a coffee or something, but if that language carries on doing it...

> OD: It's the return of it, isn't it?

> CM: Yeah it's the return, it marks itself out deliberately as just a different thing. Its intentions are different.

> (McCabe, 2019b)

The important point is understanding this recurrence less as a formal diktat than as an autopoietic machinic diagram that actively engages diverse registers of alterity to free up these components from their original structural moorings. This allows the components to form rhizomatic relations with other components that compose diverse

constellations of references. (Guattari, 1995: 44). Indeed, McCabe explicitly links cancer to the rhizome in his poem 'Cancer':

> but what is it, exactly, that I'm fighting? The doctor blinks.
> If he was a theorist, he would answer : cancer is rhizomatic, the
>   root stalk
> like the surface of a body of water, spreads towards all available
>   space, eroding what's in its way.

(McCabe, 2018: 23-24)

If the stakes in Paterson's *The Poem: lyric, sign, metre* can be described as juridical - delimiting a system of metonymic signification and individual artistic creation - *The Triumph of Cancer,* by contrast, often seems preoccupied with a scuttling of the borders between the human and the non-human, and between sound and sense. Alongside poems titled after animals sit elegies for 'anarchitect' Gordon Matta-Clark, David Bowie, and comedian Caroline Aherne. These poems in turn are refrained through explorations of the non-human and more-than-human in poems such as 'Hodgkin's' ("Hodgkin's is an architect : builder of lymph nodes in semi- / solid, gritted liquid... / With Hodgkin's you know who you were"); or the cosmic rebirth of 'Easter' ("We come from stars; for us to live stars must die. / Do we really need to look up to know complex matter?") (McCabe, 2018: 45-46, 48). Does not 'Easter's' cosmic life-cycle continue its refrain through the many life-phases of 'Bowie'?

> ZIGGY STARDUST had just one liver,
> ALADDIN SANE, the aspen white of the YOUNG AMERICAN
> had just one liver,
> THIN WHITE DUKE, THE GOBLIN KING, just one liver,

(McCabe, 2018: 82)

That Bowie, who died of liver cancer, was able to actualise such an expressive array of mutational subjectivities onto his body, despite being "just one liver", with "one life", gestures at the essence of McCabe's poetic project. Unceasingly crablike, *The Triumph of Cancer's* production of sense "spreads sideways out, like fingers" always with the attendant risk of courting its own destruction (McCabe, 2018: 15). The collection can be

seen as functioning, at least in part, out of a desire to put cancerous mutation into discursive poetic practice, to enact the production of a knowledge of cancer as an immortal, highly advanced, will to power – one that is simultaneously of the human and more-than-human.

In our conversation together, McCabe referenced a 'biography' of cancer, *The Emperor of All Maladies* (2011), by the physician Siddhartha Mukherjee as being influential on his thinking. In the book, Mukherjee argues,

> Mutations accumulate in these genes when DNA is damaged by carcinogens, but also by seemingly random errors in copying genes when cells divide. The former might be preventable, but the latter is endogenous. Cancer is a flaw in our growth, but this flaw is deeply entrenched in ourselves. We can rid ourselves of cancer, then, only as much as we can rid ourselves of the processes in our physiology that depend on growth– ageing, regeneration, healing, reproduction.

(Mukherjee, 2011: 'Atossas War', para 6)

In this conceptualisation of cancer, life and death, creation and destruction, structure and mutation are no longer oppositional binaries but become implicated in one another. Cancer, by rhizomatically occupying the space of the body, opposes the latter's pre-given organisation through a wild proliferation that ultimately threatens the body's very existence. This mirrors what Deleuze and Guattari see as the Body without Organs' desire for creative-becomings that result in an intensification of semiotic and affective flows, that nevertheless should not be seen as completely positive as they often present a danger of lapse into annihilation. As a strategy for containing this threat, Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) argue that the Body without Organs must be constituted at the level of desire (on the plane of consistency or immanence) rather than that of organic bodies (cancer, drug addiction, etc.) or social bodies (fascisms). Whenever there is a body, there is a Body without Organs adjacent to it that constitutes its "milieu of experimentation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) - a map of intensity rather than extension. However, it is only on the plane of consistency - that which for Deleuze and Guattari must replace a transcendent unconscious - that the Body without Organs gains a freedom to compose its desiring machines. No longer related back to a symbolic and transcendent unconscious, "experimentation replaces interpretation, now molecular, nonfigurative and nonsymbolic, the unconscious is given in microperceptions; desire

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directly invests the field of perception" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 284). Most importantly, the plane of immanence or consistency *must* be produced or constructed, rather than discovered. I think it is possible to view McCabe's collection as aiming for an analogous production of Cancer's powers of intensification on an aesthetic plane; a conjugation of cancerous desire that cannot be actualised at the level of the organism but might be achieved at the level of poetic language. Cancer's 'triumph' is no longer determined by its victory over the organism but becomes transformed through the operation of machinic refrains into "a being-for-the other which gives consistency to an existent beyond its strict delimitation, here and now" (Guattari, 1995: 52). In such a gesture, McCabe's collection draws a diagram of a mutant subjectivity that insists continually on being grasped in processual terms.

Grasping the poetic function

As I have sought to demonstrate, a machinic poetics concerns itself with the experimental interaction between dominant discursive structures and an a-signifying affective domain. Understanding poetics as machinic affirms the verbal arts as a displacement of desiring functions (of the mouth, for example) onto language that allows for a certain autonomy of those desiring machines (through poetry, for example) from the affective domain of bodies.[8] The displacement of desire onto language is not a liberating moment in and of itself but an imposition of transcendence through the constitution and organisation of the subject. Equally negative, however, a return to immanent desire leads to a breakdown of signification into unarticulated gasps and stutters: "Chaos and disorder reign when the desiring machines become autonomous, when they break free of the necessary constraints of the organism as a whole" (Buchanan, 2015: 38). All this is to say is that caution is paramount when constructing the modalities of the Body without Organs. It is therefore interesting to note, with Genosko (2018), that the tendency of affect theory to privilege movement over and

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[8] Buchanan gives a clear overview of Melanie Klein's object relations theory as it is refigured in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking through the concept of desiring machines. Buchanan argues that the Body without Organs acts as a defence mechanism against the ambivalence of desiring machines. Such partial objects - the breast and mouth, here - are both good and bad in that they constitute an effective relationship at a micro level through the mother child-bond, the delivery of growth and nourishment through milk etc., but also, at a molar level, they impose an organising principle onto the child as a subject. Pathologies such as anorexia develop when this machinic ordering breaks down or becomes intolerable (Buchanan, 2015: 25-41).

above structure and signification often results in a wholesale rejection of semiotic systems from participation in movement and flow. I agree with Genosko (2018: 172) when he says "it matters a good deal where language's alterity is situated", because it is at such sites where, according to Guattari, the machinic disruption of structure's stable categories brings about the mutual conditioning of affect and discourse towards the production of new subjectivities. A machinic poetics is necessarily bound up with such disruptions and detachments across social, mental and environmental domains, but it enacts these through an ethico-aesthetic gesture that steers a course through the pathological dangers outlined above whilst also releasing a partial freedom from discursive structures of signification and subjectification.

Drawing on the work of Bakhtin, Guattari asks by what process creative subjectivity becomes detached from its content and autonomised in poetry. Although sound and music, nuances of signification, verbal connections, and emotional appeals are all present, it is through a feeling of activity and movement - in the generation of signifying sound, the motor elements of articulation and of gesture and mime - that "the whole organism together with the activity and soul of the word are swept along in their concrete unity" (Guattari, 1995: 15). Such a cautious detaching of fragments from their signifying moorings in content will not be achieved through metonymic expediency or utility, but must be actively and precisely created: "each time this involves marking out a well-defined functional space" (Ibid).

In McCabe's poems, and his own explication of his poetics, generative movement and rhythm are very much a part of the refrain that runs through *The Triumph of Cancer*. As this refrain progresses, the discursive takes on a pathic quality to allow for the materialisation of the desiring function of the collection. It is the crab-like, sideways exits produced by the refrains that give this body its feeling of 'anarchitecture' – the "Voids, gaps & left-over spaces" (2018: 75) that McCabe's eulogy for Gordon Matta-Clark speaks of. *The Triumph of Cancer* is alert to the need for discursive fragments to depart from signifying interpretation and achieve an autonomous consistency. That the freest component in this machinic poetics should be cancer is of course the paradoxical tension at the heart of the work. That cancer should be endogenous to our own bodies, that it should be immortal and yet deadly seems to mirror the non-discursivity upon which discursivity rests, just as the Body without Organs can be said to be the structural necessity for our organic bodies. It therefore cannot be a case of doing away with discursivity or signifying semiologies. It is through

a pragmatic and cautious deployment of such semiologies, against mythical narrative (fighters & survivors; snow-globe poems; unacknowledged legislators etc.) that new intensive refrains capable of engendering mutant subjectivities may be produced.

In his 2004 TS Eliot lecture, Paterson (2004) remarks, with rhetorical flourish, that "there is a reason why poets enjoy the highest statistical incidence of mental illness among all the professions".[9] Guattari's ecosophy, however, articulates an ecological crisis in which mental ecologies are interwoven with the social and environmental domains in ways that suggest geographers working with art and creative practices can do better than settle for such mythologies, just as it is necessary to go further than accepting facile therapeutic models of well-being that cleave to dominant modes of capitalist subjectivation. In common with other artistic forms, the ethico-aesthetic force of poetry remains stymied as long as it is bounded entirely within systems of meaning-making that encourage its objectification or commodification. Of course, one does not wish to deny poetry its established place at weddings and funerals, nor the comfort many readers take from it in times of personal difficulty, but this misses the point. Such ritualised 'major' forms of poetic consumption tend towards a sedimentation of the established order of bodies. There is, to paraphrase Deleuze (2007: 124), another politics taking place elsewhere that poetry is alive to. In the poetic event, the machinic outside of language is harnessed to shift thought about invention and creativity away from established phenomenological and psychoanalytic accounts of the individual, towards a micropolitical field or assemblage of material and energetic components, in which the human is no longer the central anchor. It is not a question of calling for the writing of a more virtuous, fragmented, radical or superior poetry than currently exists. Rather, it is about grasping the poetic function differently, in terms of the creation of new refrains and new capacities for sense-making, as a vehicle for nascent forms of subjectivity, both collective and more-than-human.

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[9] As Paterson (2004) continues: "Incidentally, the systematic interrogation of the unconscious, which is part of the serious practice of poetry, is the worst form of self-help you could possibly devise. There is a reason why poets enjoy the highest statistical incidence of mental illness among all the professions. Your unconscious is your unconscious for an awfully good reason. If you want to help yourself, read a poem, but don't write one."

FIVE

The ecosophic act of feeling: Poetry, animism and speculative modes of thought

Aesthetic feeling

The aesthetic power of feeling, although equal in principle with the other powers of thinking philosophically, knowing scientifically, acting politically, seems on the verge of occupying a privileged position within the collective Assemblages of enunciation of our era.

(Guattari, 1995: 101)

Taking up Guattari's (1995: 20) call for a "new art of living in society", what might it mean to intensify events through aesthetic acts of feeling? In Chaosmosis (1995), Guattari identifies the emergence of a new aesthetic paradigm in western societies as a offering a range of techniques and practices that might counteract the dominance of capitalist modes of subjectivity. The privileged position Guattari (1995: 101) grants to "the aesthetic power of feeling" requires explanation if it is to avoid charges of an

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aestheticisation of politics.[10] In Guattari's analysis of late capitalist societies the production of subjectivity has itself become the dominant activity of capitalism and, as a result, the seeking out of novel techniques for subjectivation becomes a key focus for inventing the means of resisting such forms of domination at the level of individuals, groups and institutions.

In this chapter, I explore how ecosophic acts of feeling, when placed together with the Whiteheadian notion of creative prehension, offer promise for rethinking the relations between subjectivity and society. In particular to rethink processes of subjectivation along processual lines that remain open to modulations from each of the ecologies. Prehension – or 'feeling' as it relates to subjects – denotes the constitutive activity of entities as so many operations of capture among the purely relative positions of subject and object. Feeling, then, is inextricable from a subject's genesis and experience: "it is how *that* subject is feeling that objective datum" (Whitehead, 1978: 444).

Through prehension, notes Debaise (2017a: 48), Whitehead articulates a philosophy of possession rather than being, in which everything exists as the feeling of the entire past universe contracted to a singular point which is itself *of* that universe, making it again in *this* instant. Crucially, this contraction of feeling also carries with it the *material* scar of all the possibilities that were not actualised. Hence with all positive feeling, there exists "a constellation of feelings of avoidance and denial, and rejections of possibilities" that must be seen as determinants for the positive acts of feeling that were accomplished (Debaise, 2017a: 52). The actual cannot, therefore, be separated from the potential. The gesture of speculative philosophy is always towards this intensification of experience, where to intensify equates to an increase in the importance of experience.

An intensification of events is one thing when carried out through metaphysical abstraction, as with Whitehead, or as a philosophical method, as with Deleuze's dramatisation of concepts (Deleuze, 2004a: 94-116). With Guattari, however, ecosophic intensification becomes transformed from a question of conceptual abstraction into a

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[10] Benjamin (1968: 241) warns that the aestheticisation of politics leads inevitably to war becoming the apotheosis of beauty: "War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metallization of the human body.". Benjamin thus locates the conditions of a fascist aesthetics of politics as emerging from the need to secure the property structure against a growing proletariat, resulting in the organisation and diversion of the proletariat through a mechanised expressive production of ritual values (the expressive capture of mass-rallies only possible through the non-human eye of the camera, etc.).

multiplicity of pragmatic techniques that together constitute so many technologies of the self. This encourages a conceptualisation of subjectivity as multiple and heterogeneous in a way that shares an affinity with the Whiteheadian idea of the individual as a 'society' of feeling subjects and prehended objects. A kind of objective-subjectivity emerges which is capable of innumerable modifications, hesitations, affirmations, and denials in each passing moment and according to its relations with other subject-objects.

With this pragmatism in mind, I wish to situate this speculative enquiry in an encounter with the London-based artist and poet Sophie Herxheimer, whose work and practice I argue embodies an ecosophic mode of feeling (whilst, importantly, not being immediately aligned with prevailing notions of 'eco-poetry'). Drawing on interviews and artistic material, I explore how Herxheimer's work involves the development of techniques of self that, although they emerge from embodied experience, are exploded out from the individual self so that they might be put into relation with all manner of aesthetic personae, animated objects and virtual landscapes. Through the elaboration of various practical, situated techniques, Herxheimer draws new cartographies of becoming that resist the imposed logic of the same in favour of a restless exuberance of materiality differing from itself. An exuberance that spills forth in live ink drawings, poems and collages to affirm the experience of self as a collective, relational activity of encountering others and producing new blocks of becoming that can no longer be said to 'belong' to an individual self. This speaks not only to a Whiteheadian capture of novel intensity through prehension but also, on a different register, to the production of subjectivity under animist assemblages, as elaborated by Guattari, Lazzarato, and Viveiros de Castro (Viveiros de Castro, 2014, Guattari, 1995, Melitopoulos and Lazzarato, 2012).

Guattari's emphasis on new techniques of subjectivation are required to counter what Lazzarato (2008) identifies as a schizophrenic tension at work in capitalism. One that submits subjectivity to modes that are both futuristic and archaic. On the one hand, the existential territories which organise human beings around a feeling of "home" (security and access in housing, communities, health, work, education, natural spaces etc.; as well as shared languages, cultural practices, values, and so on) come under threat through movements of deterritorialisation (a global labour market, land accumulation, automation of labour, pandemics, enclosure of common lands, processes of intensive extraction, public/private space, loss of biodiversity and invasive species etc). On the other hand there is a "neo-archaic reterritorialisation" (Lazzarato, 2008:

174) along the lines of nationalist mythologies (for example notions of 'Britishness' and politically discursive formations such as 'hard-working families', but also more extremist forms of nativism found in the English Defence League and other neo-fascist or white supremacist groups.). Guattari's aesthetic paradigm, for Lazzarato (2008: 174), is about being able to conceive of escaping these simultaneously hyper-modern and reactionary reconversions of subjectivity through a resingularisation of the relation with a virtual 'chaosmos'.

Guattari's (2008) call for an *ecosophy* that attempts to think subjectivity, society and environment as mutually affecting and conditioning is inextricably bound up with this new aesthetic paradigm. If anthropogenic climate destruction indicates a detachment from the importance of home, it is a detachment that, for Guattari, is actively produced through capitalist modes of subjectivity operating across social and mental domains. Ecosophic acts, in so far as they seek a *sophos* or wisdom of the home that attaches importance to the ongoing creative production of that home, take on the complexion of a speculative gesture to bring to light everything that the production of events requires.

> The refoundation of politics will have to pass through the aesthetic and analytical dimensions implied in the three ecologies - the environment, the socius and the psyche. We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and global warming due to the greenhouse effect, or to the problem of population control, without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society.

(Guattari, 1995: 20)

A literal reinvention of the modes of life is what Guattari diagrams. As a crucial component of this resingularisation, I explore here how aesthetic feeling as a creative and inventive power, can be productively aligned with the speculative philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1958, 1978). A philosophy that Debaise (2017a: 77) defines by its function "the intensification of an experience to its maximal point". With Whitehead, creativity becomes the ultimate principle from which actual entities - the individualities that make up the final reality of existence - come into being. Actual entities are not necessarily individual forms or subjects. They exist by virtue of the relational actions they perform and their "individuality emerges according to the manner in which they act" (Debaise, 2017b: 37). This encourages an attention to the process of

individuation as the creative passage from virtual disjunction of many to actual conjunction in individuated entities.

The cartography that Guattari establishes in *Chaosmosis* between aesthetic acts of feeling and animist assemblages is important because it presents a direct challenge to a traditional western epistemology of objectification, whereby 'to know' is 'to objectify'. In inverse relation to western epistemology, Amerindian knowledge is theorised by Viveiros de Castro (2014) as an art of subjectivation. The multi-natural perspectivism that this operation effectuates is one in which many objects can be granted personhood. This is, I want to suggest, a productive proposition (though not without its tensions) when thought alongside aesthetic practices in contemporary western society. The emphasis it places on ontological ambiguity necessitates attending to the immanent affective charge of variation and difference in experience. In Herxheimer's work, for example, one can trace how the capture of virtual forces and affects present in European folklore and practical activity books from the mid-twentieth century serve to actualise new vectors of subjectivity, for both Herxheimer and for those who encounter her work.

What the turn to animism does is allow one to think transversal processes of subjectivation through their materialisation in contingent relations. Guattari (1995: 11, 117, 127) stressed the importance of thinking transversality not only as a speculative proposition, but as that without which the production of subjectivity becomes closed in on itself, consigned to 'personological' accounts of self that rely on identification, identity and a unified self. Transversal processes of subjectivation operate through a folding of the virtual and the actual. Aesthetic practices - which for Guattari exist today not just in art but in scientific, technological, and philosophical domains - function as 'machinic entities', exploded processes of individuation that are spatially and temporally heterogeneous in their being. By existing at the interface between existential territories of lived experience and infinite virtual universes of reference these aesthetic entities are capable of grasping new virtualities of thought and feeling that are 'trans-monadic', and indexing them to bodies to produce new cartographies of becoming (O'Sullivan, 2010). The production of subjectivity under the aesthetic paradigm is thus "animated by a mutant creationism, always to be re-invented, always about to be lost" (Guattari, 1995: 116). Animism shares this concern with subjectivity as something that is provisional, negotiated, open-ended and relational. What is ultimately at stake, therefore, in the turn to aesthetic acts of feeling, is the tracking of this experimental line

of flight and the redefining of politics and ethics around the re-singularisation of object-subject relations: "In the end, a politics and ethics of singularity, breaking with consensus, the infantile 'reassurance' distilled by dominant subjectivity" (Guattari, 1995: 117).

It is with these overlapping concerns of the aesthetic and animistic in mind that I now turn to the work of Sophie Herxheimer. By paying particular attention to moments of encounter and transformation in Herxheimer's artistic practice (by which I mean both the collection of aesthetic and embodied techniques, and the objects produced through those techniques) I shall spotlight transversal qualities that coincide with Guattari's work on the production of subjectivity under the aesthetic paradigm. At the same time, I want to consider these vectors of autopoietic subjectivation as a pragmatic accompaniment to the speculative philosophical method of Whitehead that understands the transversal as an *invented* relation between areas of experience (Debaise, 2017b: 12). This is what allows experience to be thought as a multiplicity of connected elements. Taking these two projects together allows for a drawing out of those elements that might be deemed animist in that they proceed by granting some idea of an objective-subjectivity or personhood to all manner of non-human or non-living entities. In Herxheimer's work the pragmatic and animistic come together through aesthetic feeling to form relations with impersonal affections that combine in processes of subjectivation. It orientates our attention to the movement by which aesthetic forces can produce a shift in emphasis from discrete units of being - an ontological principle of equivalence that separates humans from their environment - on to the manner of that being as it is engendered through its relations. As a prerequisite for ecosophic acts of feeling, attending to the aesthetic in encounters brings about a materialisation and intensification of experience that allows for new collective territories to emerge.

A fantastic materiality

Summertime in South London. Above the Brixton street of artist and poet, Sophie Herxheimer, the sun has ceded control of the skies and moisture drifts in clumps of grey, daring to combine in another downpour. For the time being, birdsong and a fresh breeze prevail as I knock on the door...

I enter into a live editorial session taking place around the kitchen table. Herxheimer and her editors from Henningham Family Press, husband and wife team David and Ping, are matching collage cut-outs to poems for Herxheimer's latest book *60 Lovers to Make and Do.* None of the tabletop is visible beneath the seemingly chaotic covering of paper silhouettes, magazine images, and fragments of text. What Herxheimer had told me on the phone would be a final editorial meeting to hand over the book looks to all intents and purposes like the book's creative birthing. As new combinations of word and image are experimented with, considered and discussed with her editors, Herxheimer cannot resist an urge to keep cutting out new options until Ping exclaims "Stop making new things right now!".

Sophie Herxheimer (2019c) describes *60 Lovers to Make and Do* as "a sequence of poems in which women characters create their own lovers from stuff they find lying about at home or at work. The women all have different jobs which give the poems their titles, and sometimes the lovers they manifest connect with these". There is much that can be described as ecosophic in this idea. It combines the environmental (home, work) the social (the need for the Other, for social connection more generally) and the mental (the idea of making lovers as a technique of the self - a fulfilment of desire) through a singular aesthetic that draws on Herxheimer's twin interest in fairy tales and mid-century activity books. The latter being the kind frequently aimed at girls and young women, and full of "dry yet perky instructions for practical creativity" (Herxheimer, 2019c). These duel interests combine in a manner that is typical of Herxheimer's (2019c) experimental and pragmatic approach to creation. I am here thinking of pragmatism in the Jamesian sense of the word. Not simply the domain of practical action but about constructing a perspective on the world from the point of view of its making. A pragmatism that is bound up with the problem of how to believe in one's actions as a consequence of *this* world. Lapoujade (2020) writes of James' pragmatism as a 'vague monism' in which pure experience is an immanent compositional materiality that is the in-between of mind and matter. To experience is to undergo a relational experiment with the event of pure experience, and to create new truths that can function to make one believe and act in the world.

Perhaps more than any other poet I met during my field research, Herxheimer's work embodies a practical, situated approach to doing and making that is, I sense, at some level about an intensification of experience. As Herxheimer explained to me:

I think my diet of fairy tales and activity books has also propelled me into this way of steering between a kind of resourcefulness – of course you can make dolls house furniture out of conkers – and a kind of logic-fighting position, which fairy tales can't help but do. You know, actually, the mountains aren't made of snow and rock and geological stuff, they're made out of glass. And the sky isn't made out of...the forest isn't made out of leaves or leaf-mould, it's made of copper, and the princess isn't any old princess she's a cardboard cut-out of a Princess. And there's a sort of fantastic materiality, turned on its head, that is to do with the collective unconscious. Yeah, and how the fairy tales are formed by, you know, rolling through our civilisations, collecting our unconscious patternings of materiality as a culture. So the European folk tales and fairy tales is like something was rolled about for millennia, added to and shaped and patted and, you know, like a snowball and it's going around collecting bits and pieces about, you know, saucepans and wolves and fish and...old witches and we can all kind of access it because it's like a – it is actually – a publicly held wealth of material.

(Herxheimer, 2019b)

The steering between a resourcefulness and utility, and absurdity in Herxheimer's practice is one of the ways her work refuses to settle for an approach that might be deemed representational in the sense of imitating a world 'out there'. Instead, the work takes on a wonderfully tangible materiality despite – or rather because – the mountains can be made of glass, the forest is copper and "people [are] wondering around made out of marzipan getting off with each other". In a radically empiricist manner, relations are external to the terms they relate.[11] The relation is the experience of 'glassing', 'coppering' or 'marzipanning' irrespective of the carrying out of that operation by a subject to an object. Such operations can be thought in a Jamesian sense as existing on a virtual plane of pure experience, prior to subject and object.

　　With Herxheimer there is always the sense that reality, if it is to be believed in, must be made and remade. Consequently, the experience of her work feels very much

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[11] As Lapoujade (2020: 12-13) has noted, "James's entire enterprise lies in tracing back to what falls short of epistemological dualisms, back to where relations are given in a pure state, when they are not yet divided into any categorical binary whatsoever (subject/object; matter/spirit; and so forth).". And here also : "Pure [experience] does not here mean nonempirical; on the contrary, it is empirical, nothing but empirical. It is the datum in its pure state. It is no one's datum. It is given in itself. It is not yet given for anyone; it is a world in which neither subject nor object has yet appeared. In this sense we may speak of radical empiricism. Experience is therefore to be expanded in a general sense: pure experience is the set of anything that is in relation with something else without consciousness of this relation necessarily being involved".

bound up with its making and the exchanges of material, energetic and semiotic fluxes this entails. I cannot help but be drawn to the sense of movement in the thousands of ink drawings that form one bedrock of Herxheimer's practice. Ink being one of the ways that gets Herxheimer (2019b) working on an unconscious level: "ink is so fluid it's actually faster than the mind, so I could outwit myself, come to thoughts that I didn't know I was having by drawing them before I unthought them". Similarly, her poems in 'Inklisch', written phonetically in the heavy German accent of her Grandmother, a Jewish immigrant to London in the 1930s, strike the ear like a spell, transporting the reader into a minor English language where they become the foreigner, straining to decipher the strange tone and timbre. As Herxheimer (2019d) herself has remarked "Poetry is magic, on the page and in the air, but the completion of the magic is in the reader, and how difficult it is not to catch or share that energy as it is cast into the collective space."

I got to know Herxheimer through our mutual involvement in the London poetry scene back in the 2010's. Already a trained and established artist when she began to pursue her writing more seriously, Herxheimer's exuberant expressivity made her a memorable presence in poetry workshops and at readings and events. Her output during that decade includes *Velkom to Inklandt* (Herxheimer, 2017), a collection of poems written in the voice of Herxheimer's German Jewish 'Grent Muzzer', Liesel, who emigrated to London in 1938; *The Listening Forest* (Herxheimer, 2015), a collection of poems alongside stories from members of the public collected via live ink drawings during a residency with Fermynwoods Contemporary Art at a remote cottage in the East Midlands; and the recently published *60 Lovers to Make and Do* (Herxheimer, 2019c). A further three publications see Herxheimer collaborate with poets both living and dead: *Ghost Hotel* (2013), a 'spirit collaboration' with Anna Akhmatova, Elizabeth Bishop and Rosemary Tonks in the form of a concertinaed art pamphlet; *The Practical Visionary* (2018), a collaged dialogue between Herxheimer and Chris McCabe, and their shared inspiration, William Blake; and *Your candle accompanies the sun : my homage to Emily Dickinson* (2017), a collection of collage poems by Herxheimer that imagine the inner life of Dickinson, alongside a selection of the latter's poems. Across this sizable output, art, text, and voice combine in surreal, funny though often quite serious ways. These qualities have made Herxheimer an artist-poet in demand, particularly, though not exclusively, among poetry organisations providing a mixture of education, public commissioning and live events, and artist development. Herxheimer

has also held numerous residencies at museums, as well as exhibiting at The Whitworth, Tate Modern, and The National Portrait Gallery. Before the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, Herxheimer frequently took her ongoing live ink drawing project to festivals, museums and literary events to collect stories from members of the public. Now she has taken it online, drawing live over Zoom whilst the individual narrates their story. Afterwards the individual gets a copy of the drawing. The move online has enabled Herxheimer to collect and draw the stories of people from all over the world.

A pragmatic intensity

Rather than attempt (and fail) to provide a comprehensive survey of Herxheimer's prolific output, I want to examine how the pragmatic and animistic come together in Herxheimer's practice in ways which intensify processes of subjectivation. It is through focusing on this particular aspect of Herxheimer's practice that I wish to relay the connection Guattari drew between animism's territorialised assemblages and the new aesthetic paradigm. This connection serves to spotlight individuation as a process 'exploded' out from the individual. The idea of a distributed unconscious implies a requirement for an immanent composition, and becomes the key insight into the problem presented in Guattari's analysis of late-capitalism. Namely, that of how to escape the homogenising and personological tendencies of capitalistic subjectivation and, at the same time, liberate previously stifled molecular populations of intensity to resingularise in new modes of thinking, feeling and living.

In thinking Herxheimer's practice alongside animist assemblages, the aim is not to claim to have 'discovered' an interpretive model that might supplant other ways of understanding that practice, such as those that draw on feminism or the experience of European Jews in the twentieth century. Alongside and with these valid modes of understanding what might be at stake Herxheimer's artistic practice, I want to suggest that animism, as theorised by Viveiros de Castro (2014), installs a set of critical tools for thinking subjectivity in ways that are multiple, differential and compositional. At the same time, a vigilance is necessary to avoid a simplistic take up of indigenous thought as though it were assimilable into a western ontological context (Bignall et al., 2016). The slippery problem posed by Guattari's new aesthetic paradigm lies in how to avoid simply replacing a dominant objectivist paradigm of science with a different qualification such that 'aesthetic' would stand in for a new image of (human) thought

centred on the feeling subject. Rather, as Stengers (Alliez and Goffey, 2011: 141) has argued, aesthetics should refer to a pragmatic operation of creation that "crucially depend[s] upon actually being put to work in cartographic operations, diagnosing new psycho-social types, experimenting with new tales and modes of intervention". By putting Herxheimer's work into contact with that of Viveiros de Castro, I therefore hope to install a generative tension that can aid in our grasping of these new cartographies of subjectivity.

The exploding gesture of individuation that I find in Herxheimer's work encourages the adoption of an ecological perspectivism that finds expression in Viveiros de Castro's (2014) work on Amerindian 'multinaturalism'. In an interview with Maurizio Lazzarato, Viveiros de Castro compares Guattari's de-centred subjectivity with those of animism:

> I very much enjoyed a passage in which Guattari speaks of a subject/object in such a way that subjectivity is just an object among objects and not in a position of transcendence above the world of objects. The subject, on the contrary, is the most common thing in the world. That is animism: the core of the real is the soul, but it is not an immaterial soul in opposition or in contradiction with matter. On the contrary, it is matter itself that is infused with soul. Subjectivity is not an exclusively human property, but the basis of the real and not an exceptional form that once arose in the history of the Cosmos.

(Melitopoulos and Lazzarato, 2012: 241)

In Western epistemology, to know tends towards objectification, producing a distinction between the intrinsic properties of the object and what belongs to the knowing subject who inevitably, yet illegitimately, projects onto the object: "To know is thus to desubjectify, to render explicit the part of the subject present in the object in order to reduce it to an ideal minimum" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 60). It is through this process of objectification that subjects, as well as objects, are produced, because the subject knows itself objectively when it is able to see itself as a thing. Anything that is not objectified is consequently abstract or unreal.

In Amerindian animism this principle is inverted. Epistemological claims are produced through a process of subjectivation. It is no longer a question of *what* should be known, but *whom* should be known. In the cosmologies of the Americas, personhood

is radically extended to all sorts of agents. Plants, animals, the dead, weather, and physical objects or artefacts all have an ontological potentiality to be people. The degree of an agent's personhood becomes determined by their capacity to occupy a particular point of view in relation to other people. Although not all animals are people, the potential to be a person is ontologically guaranteed through the materialisation of the quality of soul throughout real world. The category of human is not tied to one species but can be thought of as an immanent background condition, common to all agents, as well as a particular perspective on a relational world full of other agents. To be human is simply to perceive one's species as human and other animals as animals. However, other animals also regard *their* species as human and perceive humans as nonhuman. It follows from this that non-humans, perceiving as humans in their own domain, have the same categories and values as humans do. However, it also means that they see things differently from the way we see those very same things. Hence what is blood to a human is beer to a jaguar (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 57). What is a muddy puddle to us is perceived as a ceremonial bathing house by tapirs (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 62): "Different types of beings see different things in the same way" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 72).

While the human as a category is mostly derived from relative positions of predator-prey, the status of person, occupies a superior position and concerns "a centre of intentionality constituted by a difference of internal potential" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 58). Because of this distinction, personhood can be refused to humans (and often is to neighbouring tribes, even as it is extended to multiple non-human agents). Subjectivity is therefore produced by means of an epistemological and political operation. One must personify in order to know. Objects, meanwhile, are simply "insufficiently interpreted subjects" (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 62). Indeed, the very act of interpretation presupposes a subject and is thus already a relational encounter with a counter-interpretation. As Viveiros de Castro (2014: 69-70) explains,

> ...perspectivism affirms an intensive difference that places human/nonhuman difference
> within each existent. Each being finds itself separated from itself, and becomes similar
> to others only through both the double subtractive condition common to them all and a
> strict complementarity that obtains between any two of them; for if every mode of
> existent is human for itself, none of them are human to each other such that humanity is
> reciprocally reflexive (jaguars are human to other jaguars, peccaries see each other as

humans, etc.), even while it can never be mutual (as soon as the jaguar is human, the peccary ceases to be one and vice versa). Such is, in the last analysis, what "soul" means here. If everything and everyone has a soul, nothing and no one coincides with itself. If everything and everyone can be human, then nothing and no one is human in a clear and distinct fashion. This "background cosmic humanity" renders the humanity of form or figure problematic. The "ground" constantly threatens to swallow the figure.

(Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 69-70)

Perspectivism affirms a double condition of human/nonhuman. What this also means is that there cannot be a Thing-in-Itself that is perceived differently by different agents but is itself one thing. There is no final drink = X that is beer to jaguars and blood to humans. Instead there is only the couplet 'blood/beer' which designates the limit of communication and divergence within relational multiplicities. The couplet designates the embodied affections of the relation human/jaguar. The common humanity being that both humans and jaguars drink 'beer', which in turn allows for the differences between human and jaguar to be better perceived. Thus, meaning the same thing does not equate to referring to the same thing. The epistemological stays constant whilst the ontological varies. Multinaturalism is therefore an understanding of variation as nature (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 74). As such, one cannot expect to represent another's point of view, (and certainly not to co-opt it) but only to attend to the affective differences that a relation produces as manner of being in bodies. In such a perspectivist cosmology, artistry lies in an ability to produce one's mode of existence from or out of these differences of anexact ontological ambiguity

We can note already with Herxheimer a tendency towards varying the ontological through accessing the "unconscious patternings of materiality" captured in European folk tales. When a mountain can become made of glass it assumes a variable quality of being that is subjective. The idea of mountains as imposing, immovable, opaque expressions of geological time gets put into relation with notions of fragility, delicacy, translucence, and so on. This new set of qualities corresponds to a new perspective for those subjects/objects in relation with the mountain and therefore a different set of affective capacities. It becomes possible to think experience differently, according to these new relations and new capacities.

The poet Chris McCabe (see Chapter Four), who collaborated with Herxheimer on a book about William Blake, describes her style as 'maximalist'.[12] One look at her studio, which sits on the top of her house and it's not difficult to see why. The small room is crammed with thousands of ink drawings, paintings, notebooks, journals and collage materials. Although it is almost exactly how I imagined Herxheimer's studio would be, I am struck by the sense that I am entering a very personal space - an outward articulation of Herxheimer's experience of self. What becomes clear as we speak, however, is how this effusive, seemingly limitless creative energy emerges paradoxically from a certain closing down or delimiting process with regards to Herxheimer's lived experience. Herxheimer tells me how raising two children, one with a severe learning disability, meant that her art was consigned to the backseat for twenty years. The combination of intense stress and boredom at the restrictions placed on her art through her caring responsibilities contributed to a building sense of rage and led to Herxheimer being "catapulted into a kind of almost idiotic, imaginative state":

> I'd just go off into fantasies all the time, and my fantasies would get more and more sort of absurd and sometimes they'd just make me laugh because I was just having a little laugh to myself, like making up things in my head like: *She fashioned a lover out of marzipan*. Hahaha![laughs] you know, it's like things that just don't exist.

(Herxheimer, 2019b)

Through Herxheimer's prolific writing and drawing practice, these fantasies materialised - in notebooks, ink drawings and paintings. This process is one that Herxheimer (2019b) describes as establishing a logic-fighting position through a tuning into the unconscious "as a reality, because I've never really been fond of reality itself". Writing is credited by Herxheimer (2019b) for its therapeutic benefits: "writing for me

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[12] I am here gesturing to the definition of the maximalist novel as provided by Stefano Ercolino (Ercolino and Sbragia, 2014) who identifies ten common elements present across novels by Thomas Pynchon, Roberto Bolano, Zadie Smith, David Foster-Wallace, Don DeLillo : Length; Encyclopaedic mode; Dissonant chorality; Diegetic exuberance; Completeness; Narratorial omniscience; Paranoid imagination; Intersemioticity; Ethical commitment; and hybrid realism. Herxheimer is not a novelist, and I am not interested here in how her work fits or doesn't within Ercolino's project of synthesising the heterogeneous within a symbolic and formal maximalist genre. This aside, one can more lightly trace several of Ercolino's elements within various aspects of Herxheimer's work. Equally, however, the margin of theoretical irreducibility in a given text that Ercolino views as anathema to his systematisation of the maximal, could be said to correspond to the marginalia of life, where I suggest much of Herxheimer's work emerges from and returns for renewal.

is definitely a form of rescue, which I'm sure it is for most people who write". Hand in hand with this remedial, almost analgesic, function of writing, one can discern a more onto-genetic process being put to work through the establishment of relays to an unconscious that is best described as collective rather than personal.

Nevertheless, in our conversations Herxheimer tended to frame her 'material' as personal – relating to her lived experience as a woman and a mother – and in so doing implied that perhaps this was problematic.

> when I do any reading or put anything together, I'm always a bit surprised by how much kind of rage and....sort of I don't know, you know the explosiveness of probably having just been kept inside my biscuit tin doing this for a long time. Really, it's like, maybe that is my material, you know, maybe that just is my material and I should just accept that that is my material. I'm not going to be able to necessarily write in a more - in a less -personal way - I don't know. It's quite interesting to try to think about that.

(Herxheimer, 2019b)

Although there is value in the act of narrativising experience, it is not the only sense-making approach available. Following Ricœur (1984: 52), one might say that narrative modes allow for an articulation and experience of time as 'human' but this relies on preconceived notions of what it means to think and act as a human. Text and world, told and untold stories, narrative and experience, together constitute the binaries that form the hermeneutic circle of interpretation and assimilation. But can one feel sufficiently human when stood in a copper forest, or climbing a glass mountain? Or to put this another way, how does the human change in relation to encounters with an ontologically variable nature? If we think of copper forests as being granted some sense of subjectivity, how might they apprehend us? These operations - creative acts of writing and drawing existing across Herxheimer's practice - can be seen as affirmative, proliferating operations on experience that intensify and detach material blocks of partial subjectivity to allow them to function as a form of resistance or refusal of existing habits of being and thought.

Herxheimer (2019b) talked about the "junkyard of ideas" she had inherited from her mother and how these had fed into her understanding of her practice as a female artist and poet as an untangling of modes of thought that were quite doctrinaire and "tightly embedded". Poetry, said Herxheimer (2019b), was about "moving precisely

into poems to unhook and unlatch thought processes". This is not done only in order to then achieve a re-assimilation within a new linear narrative, but to 'explode' processes of subjectivity beyond an imposed 'personological theatre' of identities and identification (for example, housewife, mother, carer, etc).

Let's consider those instances in Herxheimer's work where objects take on subjectivity; an act of granting personhood. This aspect is particularly apparent in *60 Lovers...*, where each poem's protagonist fails or succeeds to varying degrees in the task of inventing a lover from whatever they find to hand. Born out of a certain practicality and isolation or loneliness, in these witty poems and collages Herxheimer affirms the human and the non-human as a double condition, elaborating the passage from an 'I' to a 'We' as a pragmatic folding and unfolding of the virtual. In each brief poem, lovers become animate through the conferring of a certain vital *potentia* upon two or three objects in the vicinity of their creators. Some examples are collected in the table in Figure 2.

Reading these poems, one is taken outside of the bounded human self and unconscious to consider that subjectivity and desire are formed through becomings with the territories one occupies. The externalisation (and, in this case, manifestation) of desire removes it from the personological modes and places it within a virtual ecology of affects. The objects that conjure the lovers may have direct or oblique relation to the occupation of their creator. Some of them are not objects in the straightforward sense, but are more like activities, in the same way that Whitehead's actual entities exist as an action or type of relation or manner, as with the politician's violent unrest and naked ambition. Other objects invite consideration of their pre-existing magical power (the actor's borrowed copy of Macbeth, for example). Others still, such as the vicar's gold sequins, indicate trajectories of desire; articulating lines of flight from everyday strictures.

Similarly, the verb used with the objects draws attention to the particular affective capacities of each creator and says something about the style – the expression of becoming – by which they conjugate their objects into a lover. In these acts a strange double movement occurs in which a certain persistence of a life is affirmed in its non-personal power of making, at the same time as it exposes that individual's life as a fragile combination of effects, prone to isolation and therefore collapse. The incantatory refrain functions across the collection to intensify its metamorphic, ritualistic qualities. Failure is a frequent outcome of these experimental rituals. For example the politician's

Occupation	Objects	Verb
Politician	Violent unrest; naked ambition; old 60 watt lightbulb	manifest
Archaeologist	Mud; fragment of smoky Roman glass	mould
Data Analyst	Rustic pickle; universally popular sauce; several customer responses	table
Actor	Borrowed copy of The Scottish Play; highlighter pen; sugar-free wheat-free granola	conjure
Pop Singer	Headphones; sugar mice; the patterned tights her cousin gave her for her birthday	blossom
Vicar	Twigs; handful of gold sequins	channel
Investment Banker	Two hundred euros; the smack of the lido on an icy morning	shuffle
Artist	Failure; scraps of coloured paper	create
Confectioner	Marzipan	sculpt

Figure 2. Recipes for the animation of lovers in 60 Lovers to Make and Do.

lover, manifested from "violent unrest / naked ambition and an old 60 watt lightbulb", fails as soon as he opens his mouth:

> *We really care*, he boomed
> sounding nothing like a human.
> Turned out he was harder to get rid of
> than a plastic nappy on a beach.

<div style="text-align: right">(Herxheimer, 2019a: 77)</div>

Making lovers is a dangerous practice that exposes one's vulnerabilities in unforeseen ways and without guarantees of success. A politician who may have mastered the art of sounding like a human, is ideally placed to determine if this trick has been achieved in their own lover but unmasks their own lack of humanity in the process. With the lightest of nods to the ongoing ecocide caused by human waste, Herxheimer here invites a consideration of what might actually be required to become human in a way that is equal to the reality that confronts this planet. Yet, even in those poems where the creator may be associated with questionable ethics, the very act of creation implies a desire for the bounded self to be compromised in favour of an encounter with the outside. A desire to put oneself at risk and to be ready to fail. Take, for example, 'Investment Banker' (Herxheimer, 2019a: 23):

> She shuffled a lover from two hundred euros
> and the smack of the lido on an icy morning,
> he rose glowing from the water
> with shoulders so wide it took her half an hour
> To scan the full breadth of his manliness
>   *You'll do*, she said, clicking her teeth.
>   *I have no papers*, he admitted,
>   *I'll sort that out*, she beamed,
> *I'm a genius at bureaucracy*
> *and also, I have access to funds*

<div style="text-align: right">(Herxheimer, 2019a: 23)</div>

The potential pathos invoked by a lonely investment banker might not be the greatest, but her beaming and her eager willingness to embezzle funds and obtain papers for her lover is somehow endearing! It still manages to elicit this response because, like all the other poems, it is about an appropriation of the elements in a given milieu which delimit, fix or imprison, in order to open up a new line of flight. It is a participation against that which prevents us from becoming-other.

The interpretation of poems is a thoroughly unsatisfactory occupation. There are always elements that stubbornly resist reductive critiques of judgement or fixed meanings. In *60 Lovers....* readers might attempt to pin the objects used to make the lovers back onto a fixed image of their creator, but this can only ever be general and indefinite. We are left to ponder, *why this and not that*? In contrast, a focus on the act of making speaks to an immanent attention, situated and experimental. Viewed in this way, *60 Lovers...* is an invitation to participate in the making of lovers as a vital practice of reactivating our trajectories of becoming. It affirms suffering as part of the assemblages of enunciation from which the self emerges and through which it might become other. There is nothing symbolic or metaphoric in this participation, it demands a careful, pragmatic experimentation with one's capacity to affect and to be affected and consequently is always a matter of techniques pertaining to ethics. As Stengers (2012) writes, practices become animist precisely when the transversal connections they produce resist reduction to general terms such as 'natural' or 'the symbolic'.

Encounter and transformation as novel operations of subjectivation feature prominently in other areas of Herxheimer's work, notably her collaborations with dead poets. This includes the dozens of portraits of poets undertaken for the Poetry Foundation's educational resources, but also several books and pamphlets that initiate creative correspondences with Dickinson, Blake, Bishop and others. Again, here one sees an animation of figures in seemingly impossible contexts. For example, Emily Dickinson going for a walk to the chemist (Figure 3). Herxheimer talks of all her collaborations with dead poets as if she is engaging another living person. This resonates with Viveiros de Castro's (2014: 40, 49, 60-62) description of Amerindian subjectivity as a political and epistemological operation. What is being granted personhood in the example shown is the collection of affects and forces that constitute the relation DICKINSON-HERXHEIMER. It is an animist practice in the sense that it grants being to such affects, and it is a pragmatic operation in the sense that it produces a capacity for a particular perspective on subjectivity.

Figure 3. Original collage from Your candle accompanies the sun: My homage to Emily Dickinson (2017), by Sophie Herxheimer. Image reproduced with the permission of the artist.

Herxheimer spoke about the difficulty of working with Dickinson who remained:

> ...oblique and mysterious...she won't let go of who she is and become who I am and vice versa. There's a sort of reserve that she has which is to do with her being a recluse.

<p style="text-align:right">(Herxheimer, 2019b)</p>

This problem was resolved when Herxheimer, who due to caring responsibilities was forced to stay indoors, found a book of duo tone alpine landscapes.

> I thought oooh collage gold what am I doing with this book? Why haven't I used this? And I thought oh, it's like the interior world of Emily Dickinson - huge scale - but in this tiny little lady, you know, so I thought oh, I'll have a lot of fun with that. I'll just use this and I'll make an Emily Dickinson collage and I just thought - I started with one or two and then, of course, they became a series like nearly everything I do turns into these long sequences, which I'd never have predicted because I'm very stupid and so slow at understanding how I work. I'm now beginning to realise this is what happens but...I made two collages, I'll maybe make another one....Oh God, you know what? I'll make another one. And it's a compulsion. And then with her I was reading her every night before I went to bed and then she would talk to me in the night and she would give me these brilliant lines in the night and when I'd wake up I'd write it all down and then I choose like a little section of it and make it into one of the collages.

<p style="text-align:right">(Herxheimer, 2019b)</p>

Herxheimer establishes a connection with Dickinson through their common position of being stuck indoors. Herxheimer's frustrations with her stressful family circumstances and not being able to do her work find in Dickinson someone whose own stuck-indoors-ness did not prevent her from writing thousands of poems. A relay is therefore established across a difference rather than a straight-forward identification. The alpine scenes work to establish an in-between space; an oscillating logic of scale (huge/tiny) and positionality (inside/outside) that works as a mechanism of transposition, fed also by the reading of Dickinson's poems before bed and the practice of writing one's dreams. Through this suite of techniques, a partial subjectivity is negotiated that is not Dickinson's but nonetheless carries the affective charge of her writing into the

production of Herxheimer's collages that imagine Dickinson the person. One can think of these collages as detached fragments of subjectivity, blocks of becoming that belong to neither individual, yet are produced through a complex relation of actual lived circumstances, virtual landscapes, and encounters with the affects and percepts of art and poetry.

In the collage shown in Figure 3, we encounter the impossible scene of Dickinson visiting the chemist. The line "you will never know the full extent of my fineness" expresses both Herxheimer's own frustrations with her trapped-ness and Dickinson's own slanted truths. This flicker of conversation combines with the images of the immovable boulders, and Dickinson looking out of the window, to set up a resonance that forces one to think. Herxheimer explains this as playing a game:

> ...so that the text is doing one thing and telling you one thing, and the picture is doing the opposite and between them you have to find out how you feel about that. Or...kind of almost laugh because you know, well, Emily's not out and about. Emily never was in this window looking out at those boulders. She didn't know Mrs. Fry at the Chemists, but *I* did. And...where are we? Where are we? Where are we? [Laughs] Which is something so complicated you can never do it unless you did it in a poem.

(Herxheimer, 2019b)

Herxheimer's practice of folding poetry, collage and dreams together resonates with Braidotti's writing on feminist transposition as a nomadic process of transformation of the self through the affirmation of negative passions. It is nomadic because it entails an open-ended perpetual displacement of molar forms of identification, identity and memory in favour of an embracing of collective assemblages that are multiple, impersonal, immanent, relational and negotiated. Braidotti explains further:

> In other words, one's affirmation of the life that one is shot through with is materially embodied and embedded in the singularity that is one's enfleshed self. But this singular entity is collectively defined, interrelational, and external: it is impersonal but highly singular because it is crossed over with all sorts of 'encounters' with others and with multiple cultural codes, bits, and pieces of the sticky social imaginary that constitutes the subject by literally gluing it together, for a while at least.

In the case of Herxheimer's art, Braidotti's call to think the subject as a collective assemblage finds its problem in how to affirm the embodied and singular materiality of the former's own life – the negative passions caused by her 'stucked-ness' and so on. Though the creative encounter with Dickinson, Herxheimer relocates the self within an impersonal landscape populated by new becomings. It is an understanding of a unified linear self that is precisely what must be left behind. Herxheimer and Dickinson, both stuck at home, begin their nomadic wanderings across an alpine landscape. This process involves a precise prehension of elements present in the assemblage - the weight of the boulders, their size, the breeziness of a conversation at the chemist, the impossibility of being outside, of not doing one's art etc - and their creative composition as a block of becoming in which one always speaks, feels and becomes with others. Endurance of the self, belief in *this self as* embodied and materially located, becomes, paradoxically, about the collective sharing of stories, passions and affects as an ethical act of transformation (Braidotti, 2011: 164). In this sense, Herxheimer's collages do not simply illustrate a self and its frustrations and desires, they are both a recognition of the impersonal nature of those forces that already compose the self, and an affirmative call for their active composition through intensive cartographies of becoming.

Such becomings can only ever be thought of as provisional and open-ended. Their continual negotiation happens through creative practices that produce difference by means of repetition in series (of collages, ink drawings, poetry, etchings and so forth), thereby allowing for new vectors for subjectivity to crystallise. This, ultimately is the work of *a life*, impersonal, relational and multiple, but no less singular and unique for that. As Herxheimer puts it,

> There's an incredible amount of work I do, that's the frightening thing about me but I've done it on the side as I've said, you know, because of [X] and his needs and you know, I sort of paint myself as some sort of, you know, little housewife. Actually, all I've done is just work all the time.

Work, wrote Deleuze (2007: 6) in relation to art and philosophy, must be undertaken in absolute solitude but it is an extremely populous solitude. It is populated with

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encounters. Those encounters might be people you've never met or known, or with ideas, events or entities. The encounters have proper names that don't designate a person or subject but an effect that transpires between the two things. The encounter between Emily Dickinson and Sophie Herxheimer, itself born from solitude is therefore one single becoming, happening along a-parallel lines. It is impossible to know in advance the capacities that this encounter will open up for the self. What is important is the ethico-aesthetic gesture of actually encountering entities, ideas or people as a way of making and remaking the self.

The lure of the aesthetic

The promise of the aesthetic paradigm should not be thought of as intrinsically good or bad. The turn to aesthetic feeling is not about granting art some sort of vanguard status in relation to politics. Art will not save 'us', articulate an 'us', start a revolution or transform lives. Art and culture in capitalist societies are just as embedded in those processes of capitalist subjectivation that seek to standardise and neutralise diverse qualities along principles of general equivalence as any other social institution. Art is self-evidently implicated in the creation of markets, of patterns of consumption and the communication of universal values that contribute to the production and governance of norms. All this contributes to an effacement or striation of molecular intensities that works against the installation of transversal processes of subjectivation.

Why, then, turn to art at all, especially if the aesthetic paradigm is a designation that extends far beyond art's institutions and objects to concern science, technology and all areas of psycho-social life? In Guattari's writing there is at times an elision and at other times a tension between the categories of 'aesthetics' and 'art' (See, for example 1995: 130-133). There are several reasons for this, not least Guattari's interest in working outside or between different institutional structures, and his tendency towards thinking the 'minor' as a disruptive a-parallel force of thought, sensation and practice at work within and alongside major modes in multiple domains. However, Guattari's overriding concern remains how aesthetics and art might contribute to processes of subjectivation over and against their domination today by capitalist forces and modes of expression. Responding to this situation requires that we think about encounters with art as sites replete with a-signifying forces operating beneath signification and prior to the subject to engender new subjective processes. At the same time, aesthetics becomes

detached from pre-established signifying schemas in subject-object relations to become an autonomous manner of composition of lived space and time (See Zepke, 2011). This greatly expanded ontogenetic function for aesthetics affords it an ethico-political force by drawing attention to "dimension[s] of creation in a nascent state"(Guattari, 1995: 102) , before their capture in signification, representation and normative categories or critical frameworks.

There is, then, a sense that aesthetics becomes a tactical choice for Guattari. An anticipation that aesthetics allows for a different composition transversal to institutions, dominant structures and the three ecologies of the social, mental and environmental. Does it follow from this that contemporary encounters with art are reduced to a kind of exemplary sandbox for 'safe' experimentation with new nascent processes of aesthetic subjectivation that one might then apply mechanistically to other domains? This would be to diminish the importance of such encounters and to misunderstand the transversal gesture of the aesthetic paradigm. Any given work of art cannot stand as a model for other problems, rather it elaborates its own problematics which are subsequently transformed and mobilised through the encounter. The stakes are always immanent because art plugs directly into virtual ecologies that allow for new becomings and new collective productions of subjectivity to emerge. The aesthetic paradigm in this sense offers a support for thinking about the propagation of those re-singularised productions of subjectivity in art encounters, with the understanding that the singularity of their enunciations invokes an ethical responsibility to that creative instance.

Staying with this central preoccupation of the production of subjectivity, Guattari's thought enacts a shift from structure and meaning to production and utility across heterogeneous ontological domains. This effectively explodes the individuation of the subject and with it accounts of subjectivity that are 'personological' (e.g. oedipal, symbolic, phenomenological). Such personological discursive machines tend to dominate within capitalist assemblages. This leads to the erection of transcendent dualisms and binary oppositions around particular notions of truth, beauty, success, power and so on, that support an obedience to Capital as the ultimate principle of equivalence governing lived existence. However, the molecular intensities these machines aim to reduce and order assume a very different existence when put into contact with assemblages that Guattari describes as "animistic". As a way to think about processes of subjectivation 'before' capitalism, animistic assemblages produce space that Guattari (1995: 102-103) describes as "globally aestheticised"; the very rhythm of

time and space is collectively produced through "chants, dances, stories about ancestors and gods...Here there is no effort bearing down on material forms that does not bring forth immaterial entities".

The link Guattari (1995: 101) makes between the "proto-aesthetic" . qualities of animist society and the new aesthetic paradigm forces us to think about space and time as something that must be accomplished. Animistic ritual practices create collective existential territories out of transversal becomings with spirits, animals, plants and objects. To combat these forms of belonging, capitalist deterritorialised assemblages install transcendent ideals of truth, morality and aesthetic beauty. Now, with a return to the structure of archaic societies no longer possible nor desirable, art cannot survive through the folding of a mysterious and infinite soul into finite material bodies. It must diversify and 'heterogenise' to become capable of capturing all the points of singularity in the given situation. It is again a matter of pragmatic utility: "What is important is to know if a work leads effectively to a mutant production of subjectivity" (Guattari, 1995: 131).

Art becomes capable of producing new existential territories to the extent that what it 'says' works to support that which ruptures signification, through postures, spatial arrangements, rhythms of colour and texture - a whole range of a-signifying techniques. Emily Dickinson on a trip to the chemists is precisely such a rupture of sense. The extent of her fineness enters a becoming-alpine, a vast 'inner' life made external and immovable. This unframing of the historical Dickinson is done in order to grant her, the artist, and those who encounter the work, a geography made up of supple and rigid lines; trajectories of becoming that reconfigure the subject such that an encounter might "irreversibly date the course of an existence and generate fields of the possible 'far from the equilibria' of everyday life" (Guattari, 1995: 131). Referencing another collage where Dickinson's head is naturally formed by the shape of the mountains "so she's a god", Herxheimer articulated the importance of this transversal operation:

> ....to make her spinsterhood and her loneliness and her virginity into a kind of illumination felt like a really pleasing thing to do. And a radical thing to do for the female artist because, you know, for me a lot of what I make is about the female artist [00:37:55] and I was brought up to think that women couldn't be painters

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There is a joyful affirmation felt by Herxheimer in transforming Dickinson's material conditions because it plugs directly into the conditions of her own artistic production to open up new capacities. Similarly, Guattari's speculative provocation with the aesthetic paradigm is to consider art not from the starting point of its institutions or objects but instead as an emergent manner of experimentation with percepts and affects that exhibits a capacity for inventing "unprecedented, unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being" (Guattari, 1995: 106). It is, as Dewsbury (2019: 90) notes, a question of how to grasp the difference that is up for grabs in any becoming. A difference that must be grasped in its immanent happening. As Herxheimer put it, in art and poetry an unlatching process mobilises previously rigid structures of thought and through this, for example, Emily Dickinson becomes "a good friend in my stuck-ness". The ethico-aesthetic potential of art, therefore, lies in its exemplary aptitude for traversing this fragmented cartography, and in mobilising potentials within a particular creative instance. This involves leaving behind the historically individuated subject for the intensive geography of becoming. As Emily says from within another collage: "I'm outside all the time now. I packed in history and take geography in little drops" (Herxheimer and Dickinson, 2017). The ethico-aesthetic gesture is one that acts on the present to intensify its indeterminacy as a vital resistance to capitalist modes of subjectivation that would anticipate our futures for us. Just as our becomings fall back into the history of our individuated selves, art can become institutionalised, but this does not mean that the aesthetic force of its encounters are redundant (Hynes, 2013).

This understanding of ethico-aesthetics as emergent, immanent and experimental is my reason for bringing Guattari into relation with speculative modes of thought. For Whitehead, creativity is the ultimate principle of existence and experience, not something that requires explanation itself. The entire universe is a creative advance into novelty such that the world is "never the same twice" (Whitehead, 1978: 93). As an immanent tendency of thought, creativity cannot be derived from actual individual entities because it is generic to them. Creativity exists only in its actualisation, whilst nevertheless remaining indifferent to every such actualisation of existence. What requires explanation and construction is this very becoming of creative novelty through the production, out of disjunction, of convergence in actual entities - that is to say, the production of experience.

Feeling, understood as the subjective form of prehension, is the *how* of creativity. It is the immediate grasping of novelty that arises in the relation with another subject-object and that, in the act of grasping, sets off a transformative activity that folds elements into an interior. Feeling, then, is inextricable from a subject's genesis and experience. Everything about the subjective form is "enveloped in the immediacy of its immediate present", which is the constant, novel activity of feeling (Whitehead, 1978: 444). As we saw earlier, this feeling contains within it all the unactualised potential feelings that were warded off and therefore acted to determine the feeling that was felt.

To avoid creativity being reduced to a conformity to an immediate past, however, Whitehead must invent the concept of eternal objects. Having only a formal, abstract existence, rather than one localisable in space, eternal objects are solicited by actual entities in a manner or style of feeling that varies according to the constraints and possibilities of the world. How eternal objects 'ingress' into actual entities is what constitutes the manner of being of those subjects. The manner does not derive from either the subject nor the eternal object but is rather immanent to the local act of prehension, thereby forming the precise conditions for individuation and the production of novelty (Debaise, 2017a: 64-65). Speculative philosophy's function, Debaise (2017a: 77) has suggested, is to intensify experience to its maximal point. To intensify experience means to understand the ways in which each entity feels or grasps its particular perspective on the universe as constitutive of that universe and therefore important in the here and now.

At the risk of doing violence to Whitehead's wonderfully strange philosophy, it is at this juncture that I find Guattari's intervention to be most productive. For what is at stake in ethico-aesthetic acts is precisely the constraints and possibilities the world puts onto processes of subjectivation as they are lived and felt. Where Whitehead begins with an ultimate principle, Guattari attacks the problem from the ground up: the inherently messy and disarticulated production of subjectivity. This is the material that must be repurposed and resingularised in aesthetic productions of subjectivity. One is forced to begin in the middle of things and be prepared to get one's hands dirty. In place of Whitehead's abstract eternal entities, Guattari installs machinic entities, which distinguish themselves from their eternal namesakes by being capable of sitting astride heterogeneous components distributed across ontological thresholds in order to engender new spaces and times. It becomes a matter of composing the particular assemblages that allow the machine's heterogeneity to function. The difference in

emphasis that machinism can bring to speculative thought is therefore one which pushes for the continual renewal and composition of collective assemblages as an ethico-aesthetic act. The impulse is not towards an account of the importance of existence as it is, but always to existence as it might yet become.

With Herxheimer, the experience of frustration at being unable to do one's art is irreversibly altered as soon as a magazine of duo-tone alpine landscapes proves the final component in an assemblage with Emily Dickinson. Only then does a machine of aesthetic creation begin to function, not only because creativity is immanent to the feeling of being stuck, but because the aesthetic machine grasps the transversal support for those elements that the stuckedness denied existence. Guattari's machinic thought therefore acts as cartographic tool for mapping new intensities as a refusal of the status quo and its determination of what is important. Similarly, the appeal to the aesthetic paradigm is perhaps less of a philosophical principle than it is a lure to leave the territory of philosophy behind. One should expect nothing less from a non-philosopher like Guattari for whom being equal to the situation at hand requires an experimental suturing of practices and techniques with the sole principle of making it work for itself. Consequently, the speculative gesture under the aesthetic paradigm becomes transformed: one sends out probes, encounters others, affirms failures, enters into becoming-other, all the time mapping a new logic of intensities with which to feel the future into the present.

SIX

Sensation and bodily fluxes in the Atlantic North

Innadaeks and ootadaeks

Innadaeks and *ootadaeks* are words in Shaetlan, the local dialect of the Shetland Islands. They refer to being either within (*innadaeks*) or outwith (*ootadaeks*) the walls (*daeks*) of an enclosure or township. They also possess a more metaphorical resonance with being where one should be or, conversely being out of place (Watt, 2019b: 77, 78). As the native Shetlandic poet, Roseanne Watt (2019b: xi), writes in the introduction to her debut collection, Shaetlan has no standard orthography. The spelling of words is dependent on a speaker's preference which in turn can be dictated by the many variations in accent across the islands. On a sonic level, continues Watt,

> Shaetlan reflects its landscape; hard and open, yet with constant fluctuations of light. I like this wilderness inside it; the way it occupies a poem's heart.

(Watt, 2019b: xi-xii)

Word couplets such as *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* often hold intrigue. Their binary appearance works to efface whatever passes between their two poles; a liminal space of fluctuation and flows, of semiotic excess, and of affect. In this in-between space there

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are happenings, becomings, things ingressing and egressing. It is this site of liminality that I wish to pay attention to here as a way of thinking and writing on encounters – with landscapes, seascapes, places, people and art – and the processes of subjectivation that they propagate.

The central question that this chapter opens up, therefore, concerns the relation between an I and a milieu. By foregrounding this relation as an intensive process, I wish to highlight the tension between, on the one hand, the maintenance of a certain threshold of bodily integrity and, on the other hand, the ingression (perceived as both threat or desire) of those elements and forces on the outside. This tension – at turns foreboding and enticing – calls for the cultivation of geopoetic sensing techniques that remain alive to its provisional, collective and non-human aspects. In further encompassing the movement from sensing to expressing through language, this conception of geopoetics consists of what Jane Bennett (2020: xxiv) calls "overlapping waves of expressive effort, some mine, some yours, and some apersonal". It is through these efforts of expression, that processes of subjectivation might come to be taken up in resingularised trajectories – never fully acquired or achieved – but expressive of an ethico-aesthetic engagement with the sense of a milieu.

In the effortful task of staying with the 'and' of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*, this chapter traces a branching, proliferating line, one that begins with my own journey to Shetland, to meet the poet Jen Hadfield. I begin by briefly exploring how the relationship between Hadfield's poetry and Shetland has been taken by McKenzie (2013) as a disruption of utopian and pastoral representations of island life, The eco-cosmopolitanism that McKenzie locates in Hadfield also resonates with recent work by Latour on the Terrestrial. While recognising that one is never immune from the work such representations do, here I look to remain in the intensive domain of affect and virtual forces that the 'and' of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* designates. From this place of generative geopoetic potential, I undertake an examination of Watt's folk horror aesthetic, drawing on the work of Callois and Bennett in order to explore the darker side of the *ootadaeks* as a bodily desire for imperceptibility. From here I turn to Hadfield's poem 'The Ambition' a poem whose importance for this thesis was already established in Chapter Two. I explore the poem's links to Rabelaisian grotesque through the work of Bakhtin before moving away from the medieval ordered cosmos of the former to outline a Deleuzo-Guattarian chaosmos of rhythm. Drawing on the work of Berardi and Deleuze, I explore how rhythmical conjunctions play out intensively through the body,

producing an immanent definition of that body according to its affects. I argue that it is because a body is capable of contracting elements of the *ootadaeks*, rendering this outside expressive through its composition, that the distinction between *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* takes on consistency. It is through this geopoetic action of the contraction of sense, that one's milieu is actualised. The chapter closes with a return to the 'empirical' field of Shetland and my long-awaited conversation with Hadfield at the end of the trip. In this final section I look to enfold our conversation about Hadfield's poetics, the Shaetlan dialect, and island life with the more virtual registers of the chapter. The aim is not to achieve resolution but to gesture to the potential of geopoetics in opening up the empirical encounter to "critical shades of virtual presence and possibility" (Pandian, 2019: 16-17).

Although I couldn't name it then, a feeling of becoming *ootadaeks* began to take hold of my over-caffeinated body as the pilot of the small aircraft I was encased within suddenly banked sharply to begin the assent to Sumburgh Airport. I had already been travelling a full day by this point, staying overnight in Edinburgh before catching the morning flight north across 170km of Atlantic ocean to Shetland. The journey so far had been eventful. On the train from Bristol, I had bumped into the American poet Ryan Van Winkle whom I knew and who lived in Edinburgh. We met for food later that evening at The Forest Cafe - a local hub for artists and writers. I told Ryan about my research and the reason for my journey to Shetland: to talk with the poet Jen Hadfield. With arrangements for meeting Hadfield still somewhat fuzzy, I was apprehensive about whether the meeting would take place, or whether I had in fact embarked on a research budget-busting jaunt. It was therefore a relief to see a familiar face, especially as Ryan was well-connected within the Scottish poetry scene. It was Ryan who told me about Roseanne Watt – another poet from Shetland, unknown to me but a rising star – who would be interesting to speak with. I began to relax. What had started to feel like a risky overextension, was, to borrow a term from Hadfield (2014: 46), beginning to "metaflower" of its own accord. I began to consider how my own agency – the determination to embark on this journey – was becoming caught up in things, attracting other trajectories, circuits and bodies as if discovering a previously hidden range of harmonics. I was becoming alert to what Kathleen Stewart (2007: 86) had noted at work in agencies; that any action includes the potential to be acted on and "that the move to gather the self to act is also a move to lose the self". To become *ootadaeks*.

The semiotic harmonics of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* could perhaps only have acquired consistency on a small northern island archipelago such as Shetland, where boundaries must be impermeable to the extreme weather or else be overwhelmed. In his consideration of modern Scottish island poetry, Mackenzie (2013) writes of how islands are freighted with symbolic significance; their remoteness lends itself to utopian and pastoral narratives that have much to do with their sense of enclosure and their peripherality from mainland urban populations. Whilst all writing about rural Britain must contend to a greater or lesser extent with sentimental and romanticising narratives, for MacKenzie (2013: 202), island writing "lends itself as a microcosm for wider environmental and social concerns - whether these are utopian aspirations, biogeographical research, or arguments about pastoral constructs". Mackenzie suggests this dialectic of separation and interconnection often defines island writing but he identifies Hadfield as reversing familiar tropes of island pastoralism through the adoption of an "idiomatic mythology of the here-and-now" (Hadfield, quoted in MacKenzie, 2013: 205).

Through her vivid descriptions of working in the Shetland fish industry Hadfield is able to present an unsentimental picture of modern island work that refuses transcendent imagery through a constant insertion of everyday practices and objects. In these haiku poems, written on ten-minute breaks to give an immediacy to their depictions, we encounter the speaker fingering "the curious, quilted sphincter" of the fish; breading haddock, "I bury in the coarse, bright dunes the pale, wet children"; and lamenting "My friend the Cuckoo Wrasse, hauled from his dark holler, wilting on ice" (Hadfield, 2008: 43). In 'Daed-traa' Hadfield adopts what Mackenzie terms, after Terry Gifford, "post-pastoral tropes" to articulate a "sense of awe of the natural world, awareness of the complexity of ecological processes and of the ways in which the human imagination is influenced by our environment, as well as a refusal to ignore technological modernity" (MacKenzie, 2013: 206). *Daed-traa* is Shaetlan for 'the slack of the tide' and here we find the speaker observing a rockpool up close "to mind me what my poetry's for" (Hadfield, 2008: 35). Here Hadfield brings a certain anthropomorphism to the pool's ecology, noting "it has its ventricles, just like us - pumping brine, like bull's blood" as well as "plastered, feverish locks of hair" and "puddled, podgy cheeks and jaw" (2008: 35). Nature is accordingly read through culture with references to "beetling Lear", "billowing Monroe", and the Little Shop of Horrors, enacting a meditation on the relationship between people and place. At the same time,

through attending to the microcosm of the rockpool on the shore of an island that is itself in some sense a miniature system, Hadfield can be seen as constructing a role for poetry in articulating the complexities of those relationships between people and place. In this way, Hadfield's poetry is, for Mackenzie, exemplary in its avoidance of escapist depictions of landscape and environment through turning to an 'eco-cosmopolitan' identity that can balance out the global with the local by enlisting culture as a mediator.

Only operating on the register of identity construction through cultural mediation, however, maintains the very dialectic logic of global/local and separation/interconnection. What the couplet *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* gestures to is an affective zone – indiscernible and irruptive – that does not map neatly onto the aforementioned binaries but disturbs and threatens their coherence and, by implication, the eco-cosmopolitical ideal of a balance. In figuring the Scottish Islands as contested landscapes Mackenzie argues for poetry as a way of working against utopian discourses that would fix the islands as objects, and instead present the complex reality of their interconnection with global flows of movement and exchange at both the social and the environmental level. The limitation of such an argument is that it remains trapped by the very terms it seeks to escape. Poetry is figured as the mediator that produces the synthesis of global cosmopolitanism with a hyper-local attachment to place. In this rush towards reconciliation, there is insufficient interrogation of the terms one wishes to synthesise. More recently, Latour (2018) faced a similar problematic when he suggested the arrival of a third attractor - the Terrestrial, or Earth - was now operating as an actor to disrupt the progressive/archaic polarity of political ecology, corresponding to a global modernity and a local parochialism. With the advent of the Terrestrial, Latour argues, the Earth is now a political actor which, among other things, destabilises the modern ideology of 'nature' as an object, one that is necessarily deprived of the socio-political power to act in alliance with others (Latour, 2018: 64-70). This objectification of nature was necessary, argues Latour, to install the "illusion of the Global as the horizon of modernity" (Latour, 2018: 71). Latour's wider argument is that the Terrestrial signals the need to combine science's rationality with a materialism that is 'up close' rather than from an objective distance. Following this line of thought, poetry might be figured as a reminder that despite *being capable* of assuming a vantage point above the earth - to view it from space as one of many bodies in the universe - we moderns still *actually* have our feet firmly on the terrestrial ground, on the humus or in the rockpool. Poetry therefore reminds us that we are not outside of nature but in it and of it. Latour's

political ecology of the Terrestrial requires that we ('Terrestrials') grasp structures "as internal to the collectivities and sensitive to human actions, to which they react swiftly" (Latour, 2018: 67). In this vision of a new "*libido sciendi*" poetry *could* assume a role in effecting a "new distribution of metaphors and sensitivities that are essential to the recovery and reorientation of political affects" (Latour, 2018: 67). Poetry becomes a means to effect a resensitisation towards those intimate subjective 'feelings' about 'nature' that modernity defines as anathema to its progressive horizon of the Global.

In this figuration, however, there is still a risk that poetry's onto-genetic force remains downplayed, rendered as some sort of black-box that might allow us 'moderns' to invent a science that understands nature-as-process, with agency distributed among causal chains occupied by multiple actors. By redistributing the metaphors poetry facilitates a new order that might allow the moderns to finally "face-up to an enigma concerning the number and nature of agents at work" (Latour, 2018: 77). Latour is here referring to the need for a simultaneous broadening and limitation of the empirical sciences so that they focus on (all) those processes taking place within the Critical Zone - the few kilometres "between the atmosphere and bedrock" that in turn define his geo-social project of accounting for the Terrestrial (2018: 77). It is the same when one turns to the political side of this project: the Terrestrial places different conditions on human survival and this requires that humans engage in a redescription of their dwelling places, capable of "cultivating attachments" to the Terrestrial. As Latour explains:

> Terrestrials in fact have the very delicate problem of discovering how many other beings they need in order to subsist. It is by making this list that they sketch out their dwelling places[...]To track the terrestrials is to add conflicts of interpretation regarding what a given actor is, wants, desires, or can do, to conflicts about what other actors are, want, desire, or can do - and this applies to Wall Street executives as well as to bacteria in the soil, to forests as well as to animals. What do you want? What are you capable of? With whom are you prepared to cohabit? Who can threaten you? [...] We are not seeking agreement among those overlapping agents, but we are learning to be dependent on them. No reduction. No harmony.

(Latour, 2018: 87)

This materialist gesture towards engendering a distributed dependency between terrestrial agents both human and non-human is, in a sense, to render politics as

atmospheric.[13] Again, here one might intuit the utility of a poetry that itself engenders an understanding of such atmospheres. However, even this role is still too couched in the language of representation. The redescription of attachments (*innadaeks*) cannot be a one-time action, a kind of fatalistic acceptance of the limitations inherent in one's dependencies. Instead, atmospheric politics calls for an ethical orientation towards counter-actualisation (see Chapters Two and Four) that can experiment with the open plurality of sense those atmospherics propagate (their *ootadaeks*), thereby altering their lived relations (Roffe, 2020: 308-309). It is poetry's capacity for a more active, ethico-aesthetic engagement with this virtual reserve of sense, that I wish to take forward into the encounter with Watts' phantasms of Shetland's *ootadaeks*.

Influx and efflux

To explicate the counter-actualising power of poetry *qua* geopoetics further I turn now to the work of Jane Bennett who, in contrast to Latour's solution of representational list-making, pays attention to the in-between space of the passage of affects. This is important because Watt's poetry invokes the fear of indistinction from the ootadaeks in Shetland as loss of both physical and mental faculties. Running through several books (2001, 2010, 2020), Bennett's project is concerned with a similar problematic of the inside and outside, and of a distributed agency within a vital materiality. In particular her recent work on subjectivity in Influx & Efflux: Writing up with Walt Whitman (Bennett, 2020) holds promise for fleshing-out the process of engendering that Latour briefly sketches.

Through a practice of thinking with others, most notably Whitman and Thoreau, Bennett (2020: xi) inflects a conceptual vocabulary that stages the I as "a porous and susceptible shape that rides and imbibes waves of influx-and-efflux". This figuration of a human self, continually absorbing the ingresses of its (permeable) borders cannot be thought of as an individual, in the sense of something indivisible and bounded, but rather as 'dividual'. Dividuals intake heterogeneous materials from their milieu before expressing particles of their own substance to "add something to the mix" (Bennett, 2020: xiii). In drawing our attention to the distributed agency produced by lively bodies

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[13] "The subversion of scales and of temporal and spatial frontiers defines the Terrestrial. This power acts everywhere at once, but it is not unifying. It is political, yes; but it is not statist. It is, literally, atmospheric." (Latour, 2018: 93)

and forces that traverse organic and inorganic distinctions, Bennett is engaging in an onto-cartographic practice that draws its consistency from affections and sympathies, rather than from antagonism or agonism. These latter two modes being that which tends to characterise politics as conflictual, or at least a combination of consensual and conflictual. As Bennett continues:

> I am keen to explore, for example, the ways in which a (vague, protean, ahuman) tendency for bodies to lean, make connections, and form attachments can be harnessed on behalf of a more generous, egalitarian and ecological public culture. Neglect of such efforts has, I believe, made its own contribution to the rise of the neofascist, earth-destroying politics now threatening to become hegemonic.

(Bennett, 2020: xix-xx)

Like Latour, Bennett does not seek a reduction or harmony. Rather, there is an effort to define a politics that includes "all the affects and energies - affirmative and negative - with the potential for societal transformation" (Bennett, 2020: xx). However, whereas Latour's expansive polis still circumscribes a dependency on conflict between actors that is agonistic, Bennett's inclination is towards practices that are non-agonistic whilst also being apersonal. By giving nonhuman agencies their due as actants, Bennett seeks a more egalitarian and ecological politics to supplement the more agonistic practices that she nonetheless does not entirely disavow. In addition, by acknowledging a non-organic vitality "more protean and fizzy than things", Bennett draws our attention to matters of intensity located in "cosmic sympathies, literary influences, gravitational pressures, compost vapours" that are part of the I in so far as any I acts through the virtual that is "not I, not quite us, not quite anything" (Bennett, 2020: 116). As this list testifies, Bennett does not share Latour's conviction for an ecological or terrestrial politics that would dislocate itself entirely from the cosmos.

This virtual 'not quite anything' highlights the importance of the 'and' of influx-and-efflux as a poetic space of interval between the impression and its expression. Drawing on Thoreau but also Deleuze, Bennett defines poetry as "an array of words able to induce a stutter or lag, a delay before a vibratory *encounter* becomes translated into a bite-sized nugget of (human) *experience*" (2020: x). The poetic, we might say, marks the passage from the ingression of encounter to the egression of experience. The 'writing up' of these encounters, for Bennett and for poets and

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geographers alike, is concerned with how, in that in-between coming after the impression, those agencies and intensities find their expression. Bennett offers the following definition.

> By "writing up" I mean the arrangement of words that repeat, imperfectly and creatively, events that exceed those words but also find some expression in them. It is a writing up when it amplifies and elevates ethically whatever protogenerous potentials are already circulating. [...] What grammar, syntax, tropes, and tricks are most pertinent to a linguistic and ethical inflection of a process that includes ahuman, alinguistic influences? [...] Such a poetics would try to give these forces their due while placing them in a wordy, normative milieu that is not really their home.

> (Bennett, 2020: xx-xxi)

Writing up for Bennett is the process by which one returns to events and attempts to amplify their pre-existent energies and influences. In this sense, writing up becomes a continuation of the event by other means. While acknowledging the "normative milieu" of language, Bennett's call for the adoption of certain writerly practices and techniques suggests the usual demarcation between word and world is more porous than one might initially assume. Naming this collection of techniques as a poetics implies a commitment to creativity and invention as an ethical act relying less on direct intentional action by a subject (be it the poet or the researcher) than on using words as markers of a "cooperation of the many formative efforts of varieties of vibrant matter" (Bennett, 2020: 111). In particular, Bennett highlights the importance of middle-voiced verbs, (to partake, to inaugurate, to float, to animate, to promulge) as a way of giving voice to the virtual incipiencies that swirl in the interval. Not only in a passive sense of bringing them to light for observation, but also to add an inflection that induces a more pervasive infusion of causality into the assemblage "in the way that moonlight pervades a scene" (Bennett, 2020: 114). This commitment to assuming a middling voice from within a language (English) that tends to cleave intentional subject from inanimate object speaks to a reality in which the I always acts from within an ongoing process and in an iterative manner. The poetics of the interval therefore always implies an ethics of the encounter that is pre-cognitive and non-representational.

Bennett's call to search out the protogenerous potentials in an event so that one might amplify them is an ethico-aesthetic act that seems apposite for the ambitions of

this chapter, framed as it is within the coupling of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*. In 'writing up' my encounter – with the islands, and with Watt and Hadfield – my concern is with how to think with this multiplicity of bodies, trajectories, desires, affects and agencies as a singular process-orientated event co-generative of what McCormack (2008) calls 'thinking-space'. Distinct from the activity of *thinking about space*, which implies an "epistemological after-awareness of processuality", thinking-space is defined by McCormack as the "co-intensive sensing, in affective-dynamic terms, of the creative processuality of something in the world forcing us to think: that which, as Deleuze puts it, 'is fundamentally an object of encounter rather than recognition' (1994: 139)" (2008: 3). Instead of parsing the encounter with Shetland into pre-existing symbolic categories of utopian or pastoral, I attempt to think with the virtual potentials of the event as an ongoing experience of unfolding and refolding thought.

My decision to gather these virtual potentials around the coupling *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* is a technique for staying with the event and the thinking-space it generates. These are terms that emerged through the encounter, cropping up in poems by both Watt and Hadfield, and again in our conversations as reference points; boundary markers for different states of thinking, feeling and belonging. As already noted, their coupling suggests less a binary division than a shifting polarity, with that polarity liable to reversal depending on the terms it puts into relation. As Watt explained to me:

> ...*ootadaeks* is to be outwith the safe enclosure of the town. So that's like going out into the wilderness. It also has a metaphorical resonance; if you're *ootadaeks* then you're kind of out of your own mind in a sense. And *innadaeks* is to be within [the enclosure] - to be safe, well. [...] it definitely plays on that notion of being beyond and being within

(Watt, 2019a)

In describing the terms, Watt uses the preposition 'outwith' – Hadfield also used it in our conversations. Though the word is still commonly used in Scotland, it has an archaic ring to my Southern-English ear. I see words like outwith as another example of adopting a middling voice. Whereas in this context I would habitually select a word such as 'outside' or 'without', the plosive sound of these words reinforce the sense of hard distinctions between subject and object, in turn supporting signification. By reversing the conjunction, 'outwith' employs the gentler (and linguistically much rarer) fricative sound which also places a significatory emphasis on the 'with' to suggest the

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co-implication of inside and outside, and of thinking, feeling and belonging. Similarly, *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* might also be rendered not as binary opposites but as intensive limit-points that are co-constitutive of one another. The I is always located somewhere in the middle, neither fully *innadaeks* nor *ootadaeks* but continually engaged in an iterative process of either shoring up its defences or venturing beyond. By their very co-implication, therefore, the terms encourage the emergence of a middling voice that might attend to the pre-cognitive, a-signifying virtual potential in an encounter.

Watt went on to connect her interest in the words to the historical relationship of Shetlanders' to their surrounding landscape:

> I think romanticising a landscape is just as bad as not writing about it essentially because it's not true. It creates a false impression of place and that's, that's not a good thing to do. And I'm interested in how there is an absence of fear in a landscape which to me is so fearful, and so there's a reverence for it, but it's like a fearful kind of reverence. When I was reading about all of the old folklore and traditions in Shetland a lot of the rituals are kind of because it was so harsh. It's a harsh environment and you didn't know whether people were going to come back from the fishing. We didn't know if there was going to be crops that year.

> (Watt, 2019a)

Watt saw the loss of a fearful reverence for the environment as bound up with the arrival of the oil industry on the islands. The improvement in living standards made it "really easy to keep the wilderness outside of our houses", she said (Watt, 2019a). Watt also noted how the new-found oil wealth and improvements in material conditions had coincided with a certain myth-making that produced a partial and romanticised view of Shetland as a place of tradition, rather than the more complex and "hyper-industrial" reality (Watt, 2019a). In exploring this tension, many of Watt's poems and film poems draw on horror aesthetics as an ethico-aesthetic technique for (re)generating a fearful reverence of the outside.

> I think that horror films have always been good at representing anxieties about the age of the decades they were made in, and I'm fascinated as to why we're not seeing any climate change horror films at the moment. That's an issue which is being left to disaster films, which just create spectacle. That's not a good way to deal with that anxiety. I think horror is just crying out for that kind of subject to be examined and it's

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not. People like as we are doing right now, we're just continuing to ignore it and we don't allow [ourselves] to engage with it. I wonder why, essentially.

(Watt, 2019a)

Watt's (2019b: 9) poem 'Tattiebokey' (scarecrow) has the epigraph "*Innadaeks*". The speaker is a tattiebokey in a *krub*, a small, enclosed garden. The tattiebokey directly addresses the listener (who is also the reader) coming to the krub to "tread light upon the *skröf* of things" - skröf denoting the surface layer, or surface of the sea. This surface layer is as "thin as milk" and has no roots (there are few trees on Shetland). The tattiebokey warns the listener of the crows who will "want the gludderi fruit of your eyes, the perfect pips of your pupils". *Gludderi* is the Shaetlan word for watery and sunny and refers to the skies in certain weather. The tattiebokey wonders what would sprout from the eyes if they were planted in the thin soil:

> There's something in the seams of you
> suggesting   oat
>
> or even
> straw.
>
> Yes. You'd come up
> with your arms reksed out.
>
> For three whole seasons
> Your mouth would gru   like this.
>
> *reksed - raised or stretched
> *gru - to smile with a threatening aspect

(Watt, 2019b: 9)

In 'Tattiebokey' Watt takes up the already anthropomorphic figure of the scarecrow, and its mimetic function of protecting human sustenance from outside interference, giving it a sinister twist. We are *innadaeks*, but the situation is precarious with the soil in the krub thin and lacking in fertility. The tattiebokey, meanwhile, is not to be trusted in this role of protecting the krub. Their warning about the crows is immediately

followed by a rumination on what would happen if the crows pecked out the listener's eyes and planted them in the krub. By becoming corrupted by the very outside influence it is supposed to ward off, the tattiebokey preys on the anxiety that even when *innadaeks* – inside the walls – "the ground is not yours to take". The realisation that the tattiebokey may well have once been the gardener of the krub (and that a similar fate awaits 'us') becomes a manifestation of a more all-encompassing fear; that of the loss of all distinction between inside and outside entirely.

The fear of losing the distinction between *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* that Watt plays on in 'Tattiebokey' certainly gestures to a middling of the *I* as a process always-already underway. Yet Watt's spatial horror lyric seems at odds with the enriching pantheism of Walt Whitman's atmospherics that Bennett tends to lean towards. Alive to this more threatening model of influence, Bennett draws on the eclectic work of literary theorist Roger Caillois. Caillois speculates that homomorphy, the phenomena whereby organisms adopt particular elements of their environment, be it colours, shapes or movements, is less a matter of camouflage for survival than it is an act of mimesis. As Bennett (2020: 76) notes, for Caillois the outside acts with "lyrical force: it lures and infects the body before any mind has time to register the action or experience". Caillois sees this as a degenerative process of devitalisation; an "inertia of the elan vital" that exists as a tendency of the organism towards likeness, an argument that inflects Freud's death drive as well as Bergson's notion of creative evolution (see Chapter Three) as producing material forms that are actually evolutionary lacunae – inhibiting the flow of the *élan vital* (Bennett, 2020: 76-77). It is this darker influx of the outside, an "absorption of specificity into indistinction that is operative at the level of cell, psyche, society, and cosmos" that Watt exploits in 'Tattiebokey' (Bennett, 2020: 77). Watt (2019a) spoke about her love of ruined houses – a regular feature in the Shetland landscape – because the act of nature reclaiming a human space posed an inherent threat: "It's almost a repulsive thing to people when nature gets inside a human living space". Rather than reinforcing this prevailing repulsion towards the nonhuman – the *ootadaeks* – 'Tattiebokey' invokes an interdependence of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* in which a body is always simultaneously in both. A fearful reverence becomes a vital and enhancing receptive quality for bodies to remain distinct within a milieu that seeks their absorption.

As Lorimer (2013: 180) has shown, the scarecrow has a long history of rich symbolism that "demands our emotional response, coded as phantasmagorical,

allegorical, or plainly substantial". Certainly, one can read Watt's poem as lying squarely within this cannon of vernacular folk art, yet this largely representational register does not quite get at what is taking place in the 'and' of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* that 'Tattiebokey' highlights. For Watt's poem to attain its full force, the horror cannot have an object but must pervade the landscape through the language; it must instead be inferred from the *gru*, the *rekksed* arms, the *gludderi* eyes. The horror pervades as a haecceity ('thisness'), a being of sensation composed of pure affects and percepts that are incorporeal, existing independent of the lived affections and perceptions of the phenomenological subject. This ontological distinctiveness, realised through sensation, is what, for Deleuze and Guattari (1994), allows for a conceptualisation of art not through representation, signification or figuration, but (counter-intuitively) through the body. Sensation here does not reside in the human body but in the body of the artwork itself. "What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation", wrote Deleuze (2003: 27) of Cezanne, though it applies just as well to poetry where the sensations are sustained through the syntax and formal or linguistic techniques that run counter to normative strictures of language.

Sensation, then, is revealed through the living body but it is not itself corporeal. Rather the body becomes enveloped in sensation. As Grosz (2008: 74) puts it, "sensation draws us, living beings of all kinds, into the artwork in a strange becoming in which the living being empties itself of its interior to be filled with the sensation of that work alone". Sensation is thus what allows us to experience what is not *us*; to experience affects as nonhuman becomings and percepts as nonhuman landscapes of nature (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 169). Understanding art as compounds of sensation can help with thinking (in a more affirmative sense than Callois) about the kind of being as virtual potential that resides in the middle of the *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* highlighted by 'Tattiebokey' and, by extension, the importance of Watt's project to re-inject a fearful reverence back into Shetland's landscape. The horror arises from the language through the affects and percepts of a nonhuman landscape, emerging "thin as milk" on the skröf of things and in the scarecrow faces of our nonhuman becomings. If, to follow Callois and Bergson, it is the case that evolution produces a particular attunement to a milieu that draws a sharp perceptual distinction between inside and outside for the sake of the being's own continuation, art is the event where these relations of lived perceptions are redirected towards other means. As Grosz (2008: 78) writes:

Perceptions and affections, forces lived in everyday life, can only be wrenched from this (evolutionary) context to the extent that the natural and the lived are themselves transformed, the virtual in them explored, and strange connections – connections that have no clear point or value – elaborated with considerable effort and risk to the normalised narratives of the everyday and the assimilable. The materials of perception – the bodily relations between states of things and subjects – become the resources of the unliveable percept; the materials of affection – our sufferings, joys, horrors, our becomings, the events we undertake – become the expressions of our possibilities for inhuman transformations.

(Grosz, 2008: 78)

Suffusing ourselves within the landscape until we are imperceptible, to paraphrase Cézanne (via Deleuze), is a way of dissolving those regulatory habits that attune us to our environment through its simplification in favour of a proliferating experimentation with the forces of sensation. Cézanne is looked to by Deleuze (2003: 29-32) as giving unprecedented status to sensation, rendered sensible through the Figure, which acts immediately upon the nervous system (of the spectator, reader, etc.), which is the flesh, as opposed to abstract forms which proceed via the intermediary of the brain. Poetry possesses techniques of a similar efficacy, with Watt's figure of the Tattiebokey an expression of inhuman becomings through a suffusion of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*. Indeed, when Cezanne spoke of "Man absent from but entirely within the landscape", Deleuze and Guattari take this concept up in relation to the percepts of the novel, writing:

Characters can only exist, and the author can only create them, because they do not perceive but have passed into the landscape and are themselves part of the compound of sensations. Ahab really does have perceptions of the sea, but only because he has entered into a relationship with Moby Dick that makes him a becoming-whale and forms a compound of sensations that no longer needs anyone: ocean. It is Mrs. Dalloway who perceives the town - but because she has passed into the town like "a knife through everything" and becomes imperceptible herself.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 169)

The bodily desire for imperceptibility, figured as dark and foreboding by Callois, is affirmed by both Watt, and Deleuze and Guattari, as the way in which art allows us to reach inhuman, unliveable percepts and affects, paradoxically as a means to free life from its material and corporeal constraints and habits. Not, however, to attain some sort of transcendent sublime, but to embody the possibilities for life that sensation brings, in excess of the bounded organism and its organisation of organs, "for the organism is not life, it is what imprisons life" (Deleuze, 2003: 33).

When sensation becomes indexed to the body, when, for example, one's seams seep oat and straw like a tattiebokey, the body becomes intensive in a way that pushes our thinking beyond the "curious Fleshism" of phenomenological accounts of art ("a mixture of sensuality and religion, without which, perhaps, the flesh would slide down the bones as in Bacon's figures") and towards an understanding of flesh as a barometer of becoming; the later revealing sensation's capacity to contract vibration through the living body (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 178-179). By suffusing horror within the landscape, Watt's poetry becomes a site of experimentation with one's milieu where a body's hidden desires for imperceptibility might become palpable in the 'and' of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*.

The Ambition

In the intervening days between my serendipitous meeting with Watt and my long-anticipated meeting with Hadfield, I found myself re-reading the latter's last published collection, *Byssus* (2014), as I ventured *ootadaeks* around the isles. Watt's enlisting of folk horror in 'Tattiebokey' had me thinking about the ways in which a body might safely open itself up to the ethico-aesthetic potential of inhuman becomings. The poem in *Byssus* that I kept returning to was 'The Ambition', (2014: 11-12).

The epigraph of 'The Ambition' reads "after Rabelais", and primes the reader for what Mikhail Bakhtin (1968: 19) writing in 1965 called "the grotesque realism" that follows. Bakhtin's writings on the grotesque body in Rabelais shall prove an invaluable companion to the poem and I will return to these in due course, but first it becomes necessary to locate ourselves in 'The Ambition', which begins with the following brief prose account:

> The tide being out, I'd to traipse through dehydrated eelgrass
> and the chopped warm salad of the shallows, and then the

> Atlantic breached me part by part

(Hadfield, 2014: 11)

Hadfield's very deliberate and prosaic scene-setting acts as a dramatic lure for what follows. It pushes thought in subtle ways towards a contemplation of the boundaries between states of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks*. The tide, we learn, is out, leaving the eelgrass *ootadaeks* and, consequently, dehydrated. Though the speaker is traipsing through the eelgrass, suggesting a reluctance, or that little care or attention is being paid to what is underfoot, the use of the word 'dehydrated' pushes back against this to conjure what Bennett (2020: 27-29), following Whitman, might call a bodily sympathy with the plants; "a more-than-human atmospheric force" acting on bodies as a current of affection. It is as if the human and the eelgrass are travelling in opposite directions but both towards their own *ootadaeks* experiences; the eelgrass breached by land, the speaker by the Atlantic.

The poem that follows is in the form of a list of breaches, with almost every line beginning with "My..." or "If my/I..." ("My skin..."; "My thorax..."; "My blood.."; "My urine...", etc.). These breaches are a confrontation with a kind of chaos in which the poem calls the reader to participate in a radical disorganisation of the body's congruity through an intensive becoming with other materialities. The speaker's knees knocking together are "two flints striking"; her "skin shagreen", like the hide of a shark; her fingerprints become "finely-carved trilobites of the shore". Although marine themes dominate, as the poem continues the transfigurations of bodily parts spasmodically diverge to encompass land flora and the grotesquely bizarre:

> My nail-beds pale flukes: lemon soles or witches
> My blood a thick slow scrawl of crude
> If seals mobbed the shallows, it was for my liver
> If my kidneys complained, they were Bert and Ernie

(Hadfield, 2014: 11)

And later:

> My children a cloud of clumped alfabeti

My urine a strong, hot tisane

If my knuckles were cracked, it was for their chilled marrow

My lips and tongue seasoned by an infinite cruet

My sphincters the knots in a balloon poodle

My brain-pan a shovel of quenched ash

My cerebellum a bait-ball

(Hadfield, 2014: 11-12)

What is the reader to make of this bizarre bodily refrain? First one can note at work a separation of body parts and fluids which are normally either not experienced as separate or are internal to the functioning of the whole. This in itself would be disconcerting enough, but Hadfield associates these elements with foods and other organic matter, drawing the reader into a sensation of the body becoming devoured, or *devourable*. The appearance of the cloud of children can be taken as a reference to a woman's unfertilised eggs (hidden within the body), but it also brings to mind the eggs that fish carry around externally, in a clump. Fish eggs are often devoured by other creatures, including humans. Hadfield's reference to her children as tinned alphabet spaghetti therefore functions in an a-signifying sense to produce a kind of non-human vulnerability, one around which language might only cloud or clump with imprecision and infinite variability: "If I expressed myself well, it was liquids and vowels" (Hadfield, 2014: 11). Substances such as the "thick slow scrawl of crude" and the "quenched ash" place the body within the usually hidden temporality of the carbon cycle. And this shovel of ash is now the "brain-pan"; how might one defend against the mob of seals with this de-evolved brain and disarticulated set of independent body parts? The cerebellum is now only capable of coordinating a bait-ball (fish brains?), likely to attract more predators to the feast. It appears that in the strangely delicious world of 'The Ambition', everything rises, clumps, disperses, is strung-out, sponges, slackens, withers, seasons, cracks and crushes. Everything is in the process of forgetting what it was:

My plankton my inattention

My ghost pots my amnesia for names and faces

(Hadfield, 2014: 12)

As Bakhtin notes in his study of Rabelais, the grotesque image in its extreme never presents an individual body, but a newly conceived body of "orifices and convexities". The grotesque body, Bakhtin writes,

> ...is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world [...] This is why the essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it conceives a new, second body: the bowels and the phallus. These two areas play the leading role in the grotesque image, and it is precisely for this reason that they are predominantly subject to positive exaggeration, to hyperbolization; they can even detach themselves from the body and lead an independent life, for they hide the rest of the body, as something secondary.

(Bakhtin, 1968: 317)

With the grotesque body, then, influx and efflux, *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* merge into one display; an exploded diagram; a pop-up image. This is not the singular image of the one formal, bounded, and self-sufficient body of the individual that arguably dominates modern humanist thought, but the body defined by its singularities – its relations of affect with the world. The grotesque body in Rabelais, Bakhtin notes, is always doubled to include life and death in the same image, in order to emphasise the provisional and unfinished nature of being through the overcoming of bodily confines at their borders. Although grotesque images tend towards degradation, this is to effectuate a coming down to earth, in order to emphasise the elements that the body shares with the cosmos: "This body can merge with various natural phenomena, with mountains, rivers, seas, islands and continents. It can fill the entire universe" (Bakhtin, 1968: 317). For Bakhtin (1968: 321), the grotesque points to a parallel canon of folk-art, barely accounted for in modern literature, where sex, eating, drinking and defecation have been privatised and psychologised "torn away from the direct relation to life of society and to the cosmic whole". Similarly, events in the modern literary cannon can only have one meaning: all actions and events are interpreted at the level of the individual life, and those limits – of the body and of beginnings and ends – are absolute and can never meet (Bakhtin, 1968: 322). In the same way, 'The Ambition' stages a merging with the sea and with alien materialities, to bring the body into contact with the elements of cosmos.

For all the similarities 'The Ambition' shares with the Rabelaisian grotesque, I do not detect in Hadfield's body a desire for mastery over the cosmos. It is not the case, as Bakhtin claims with regards to Rabelais' grotesque realism, that the human body conquers the cosmos, organising its matter in an act that grants the human an historic character with dominion over nature.[14] On the contrary, Hadfield's body seems engaged not with an ordered medieval cosmic hierarchy but with a cosmos in which chaos abounds. This begs the question as to what unifies 'The Ambition'? I would argue the unifying force of the human figure is replaced in 'The Ambition' with rhythm. As can be seen from the excerpts above, Hadfield's language liberally deploys alliteration, sibilance and assonance as rhythmic enhancers, with each progressive breach raising the stakes of the body's becoming. Following Deleuze, it can be said that the rhythm of 'The Ambition' is what unifies each of the body parts (and the poem) in their strange becoming with sensation. Rhythm is what allows each of these levels or domains of bodily sense to refer to one another independent of the objects signified, such that:

> Between a colour, a taste, a touch, a smell, a noise, a weight, there would be an existential communication that would constitute the "pathic" (nonrepresentative) moment of the sensation... [Rhythm] is diastole-systole: the world that seizes me by closing in around me, the self that opens to the world and opens the world itself.

(Deleuze, 2003: 32)

Rhythm is not only related to the auditory elements of the poem, it also exists at a semiotic level. For example, the reader might wonder what to make of the description of nail-beds as witches. The previous line provides existential support for this when it says "My fine motor skills as good as any butterworts". Butterworts are a genus of carnivorous plants that utilise a sticky substance to catch insects. Not only does this create a semiotic rhyme with lemon soles, Bert, and urine (yellow); crude oil (sticky);

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[14] Bakhtin writes with regard to Renaissance philosophy of two tendencies: "First is the tendency to find in man the entire universe with all its elements and forces, with its higher and lower stratum; second is the tendency to think of the human body as drawing together the most remote phenomena and forces of the cosmos. This philosophy expressed in theoretical terms the new awareness of the cosmos as man's own home, holding no terror for him. It was reflected by Rabelais in the language of images and on the plane of laughter." However, Bakhtin also implies that Rabelais did not take such philosophies' magical or astrological leanings particularly seriously. Rather Rabelais was consistently materialistic, bodily and creative in his approach: "The material components of the universe disclose in the human body their true nature and highest potentialities; they become creative, constructive, are called to conquer the cosmos, to organize all cosmic matter. They acquire a historic character." (Bakhtin, 1968: 365-366)

and flukes (flatworm parasites, i.e. being eaten), but it also makes a slanted reference to *Tremella mesenterica*, commonly known as 'witches' butter'; a yellow parasitic fungus. Further on, fungus makes another appearance in the poem when the speaker's pigtail is described as a "withered stipe", while moles and freckles become "rising spores". Things that stick also recur in images like the "sympathetic remora" of the speaker's nose and ears. This practice of diagramming the rhythmical behaviour of signs and music in 'The Ambition' can be continued and elaborated in ever more complex conjunctions because this act of diagramming is itself a singularity that brings together semiotic flows, organic and inorganic, bodies, poet and reader to produce a cartography of becoming. Orientation becomes a matter of joining up with the autopoietic transformations already underway, operating independently of signification, through resonance, dissonance and rhythm, to directly impact the body. 'The Ambition' is therefore an excellent example of how poetry, by virtue of achieving a 'higher' unity through rhythm, emancipates the word from its referent and language from its normative exchange-based function.

In an intriguing study, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi (2015) links the linguistic revolution towards the emancipation of the sign – a transformation he originates with Symbolist poetry in the late 19th century – with the broader transformations of money and finance within what he terms "Semiocapitalism". Berardi's analogy is intriguing if for no other reason than it appears to run counter to the oft-repeated (especially among jobbing poets) quotation by Robert Graves (1965: 1), "If there's no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money".[15] For Berardi, poetry is language in excess of exchange, "the infinite return of hermeneutics, and the reactivation of the sensuous body of language...a hidden resource which enables us to shift to the suggestive dimension of language", in which the voice is reactivated as the "point of conjunction between flesh and meaning"(Berardi, 2015: 120-121). Berardi's thesis perhaps suffers from an overly phenomenological interpretation of art in which meaning and sense becomes located in

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[15] Interestingly, Graves' quote is usually truncated to "no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money", but the 'if' is important once one realises this was the opening of a speech titled 'Mammon' given at the London School of Economics in 1963, and in which Graves (1965:1) goes on to argue: "What we now call 'finance' is, I hold, an intellectual per-version of what began as warm human love. To be brief: money can be redeemed from the Biblical curse put on 'filthy lucre' only by reviving in it the lost sense of a love – a gift – which, of course, is most children's first introduction to money, when a kind uncle presses sixpence into their little palms. But, as I hope to show, this cannot be done except in a strictly anarchic context.". It would therefore seem that Graves did indeed hold that there was something poetic in money. From this one might reason that political economy can, given certain conditions, be conjoined with poetry's continuation of politics by other means.

the body – a version of the "curious Fleshism" of which Deleuze was so critical – at the expense of a certain autonomy of the affective forces of sensation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 178-179). Nevertheless, the emphasis on conjunction, which Berardi opposes to connection, is interesting. For Berardi the transition from Industrial capitalism to Semiocapitalism corresponds to a mutation from conjunction to connection as the dominant mode of social interaction. Connection is essential to Semiocapitalism, it depends upon a pre-determined design in which each element to be connected must be semiotically compatible, corresponding to an established code or format that acts as the standard bearer. This ushers in a "paradigm of exchange" between organisms expedited through, for example, "the insertion of electronic segments in the organic continuum, the proliferation of digital devices in the organic world of communication and in the body itself", thereby effectuating a "transformation of the relation between consciousness and sensibility, and the increasing desensitisation in the exchange of signs" (Berardi, 2015: 19).

By contrast, conjunction is defined by Berardi as "a concatenation of bodies and machines that can generate meaning without following a pre-ordained design, nor obeying any inner law or finality" (Berardi, 2015: 18). With conjunction, meaning is produced provisionally (rather than through a pre-existing syntactic code) through a singularisation of signs (words, images, memories etc) which do not on their own constitute discrete components of the final meaning but instead act in an a-signifying manner to allow for the emergence of previously inexistent meanings (Berardi, 2015: 18). With connective communication there can be no room for ambiguity; interaction between agents involves a prior acceptance that the contents of the exchange will be reduced to the format of the machine carrying their signs (Berardi, 2015: 134). Conjunctive communication, on the other hand, writes Berardi:

> ...can be compared to breathing together...as it implies the exchange and transmission of material substance (physical matter contained in the air we breathe, or semiotic matter conveyed by signs). The search for a common rhythm, the tentative interpretation of bodily and semiotic nuances, the non-verbal disambiguation of verbal signs are part of conjunctive communication.

(Berardi, 2015: 133)

Conjunctive communication, with its provisional ambiguities, entails an acceptance of uncertainty and the application of negotiation and pathic (affective, non-representative) capacities in aid of interpretation and understanding. Through its connective finality, the contemporary condition of semiocapitalism, to stretch Berardi's contention, is psychically suffocating, rewarding only exact recognition of and compliance with established meanings and conventions. This is why Berardi (2018: 20) holds that *only* poetry can reverse the financial sphere's grip upon language, insofar as it is "the act of experimenting with the world by reshuffling semiotic patterns" with little regard for existing conventions of linguistic relation between signifier and signified (beyond their potential for subversion). If what we conventionally call 'the world' is the semiotic organisation of prelinguistic space, time and matter, then poetry not only goes beyond the limits of language but also the limits of 'the world', towards a rhythmical conjunction with the cosmos. Thus for Berardi "only a phenomenology of poetical events can give us a map of poetical possibilities" and an escape from "this century of measure" towards where we might "breathe together" (Berardi, 2018: 21-22).

Berardi is susceptible to a critique of being too linguistically focused, over-reliant on metaphorical uses of breathing and poetry, and overtly concerned with a sensibility that continually returns to the living body. It is nonetheless important to point out that he seeks a phenomenology of poetical events, not of human experience. Apprehensions of such events necessarily entail the body confronting the influx of chaos - the *ootadaeks* of the ordered cosmos - beyond its (unsuccessful) confinement within conventional language.

'The Ambition', I argue, can be taken as just such a confrontation with chaos; a dismantling of the ordered and organised body as much as a dismantling of linguistic referents, in favour of conjunctive communication. In contrast to Watt's use of horror in 'Tattiebokey', however, Hadfield's images conjure the grotesque and often hilarious. Who could not help but laugh at the image of Bert and Ernie as complaining kidneys; or children as "a cloud of clumped alfabeti"; or one's sphincters as "the knots in a balloon poodle" (Hadfield, 2014: 11-12)? It is, for this reader at least, an involuntary response and this is perhaps because it reveals the excessive and ironic power of language to diverge from nature and representation, and therefore its ethical potential to recompose one's sense of order; to allow some chaos in and to produce a singularity out of seemingly disparate conjunctions. Indeed, for Deleuze, this is what a singularity is: the disparate. Singularities, in the precise sense that Deleuze uses the term, are held distinct

from the singular individual and always imply a differential relation, or distribution of potential. Individuals themselves are not singular but rather *individuate* through their attachment to a pre-individual half "which is not the impersonal within it so much as the reservoir of its singularities" such that individuation describes "the actualisation of a potential and the establishing of communication between disparates" (Deleuze, 1994: 246). Irony, notes Deleuze (1994: 246), is "the art of differential Ideas"; it uses an awareness of the pre-individual singularities distributed within the Idea to play intensively "upon the individual and individuating factors", as one can see playing out in the body of 'The Ambition'. In 'The Ambition' we therefore encounter "an immanent definition of the individual according to its affects rather than its form or separated figure", and from this the ethical import of its poetical act comes into focus:

> To what am I sensitive? By what am I affected? It is only by experimenting that I can come to know my own singularities.

(Zourabichvili, 2012: 117)

Contemplating at the ebb

The formulation of *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* that has guided this chapter's enquiry has seen Watt draw attention to the *ootadaeks* as a place demanding a certain reverence born out of fear; a place of cruel weather, and mythical and actual pasts. It is a place that, for all the *innadaeks* might seek to keep it at bay (whether through dry stone walls, or double glazing, thick wetsuits and SUV's), the *ootadaeks* will find ways to ingress. The metaphorical resonance of *ootadaeks* as being somehow out of one's mind, is given an affirmative sense by Watt in so far as it points to how the *innadaeks* is contracted from the *ootadaeks* – it is always a contemplation of the *ootadaeks* that ultimately assures the consistency, safety and continuity of the body and its sense of being *innadaeks*. This is why Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 320) assert that art begins not with the human but with the animal that creates a territory and builds a house; it is the creation of a territory (*innadaeks*) that allows perceptions to pass into pure percepts of sensation - for the *ootadaeks* to become expressive, and for the body to also become expressive through how it distinguishes and marks out its territory and home by way of ritual, adornment, song etc. Hadfield's poem, 'The Ambition', is the counterpoint of this

refrain; the encounter with cosmic forces and the call to be drawn from one's territory in an act of deframing that affirms the chaos of the cosmos as an equally important part of the compositional act of poetry as with all life, organic and inorganic.

In other words, what *innadaeks* and *ootadaeks* gesture to is the need to contemplate something else in order to contemplate ourselves. Contemplation here refers to the creative act through which a body contracts sensation. As Deleuze and Guattari explain:

> Sensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplation that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one originates. Contemplating is creating, the mystery of passive creation, sensation.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 212)

If, as I have argued alongside Deleuze and Guattari, art is the production of blocks of sensation, then one might be tempted to summarise the above as the following: **sensation = contemplation = art.** This definition from Deleuze and Guattari might seem, at first glance, counter-intuitive for its insular passivity. It is contemplation, however, when understood as the contraction of elements, that forms the thread linking Deleuze's concept of inorganic life (passive vitalism - see Chapter Three), to art's production of percepts and affects, and the production of subjectivity as a more-than-human, ethico-aesthetic act. It is not that there is first a subject who contemplates, but rather that the perception of a milieu presupposes a preliminary contraction of elements, even though the representation of that milieu subsequently conceals this prior action. Contraction is a conservation of forces in relation, that is to say, their successive vibrations become conserved and incorporated as a rhythmic inequality – a repetition of difference (Zourabichvili, 2012: 114-115). A plant, for example, contemplates through contracting light, carbon and salts in order to "fill itself with colours and odours that in each case qualify its variety, its composition: it is sensation itself" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 212). It is, continue Deleuze and Guattari, (1994: 212) "as if flowers smell themselves by smelling what composes them, first attempts of vision or of a sense of smell, before being perceived or even smelled by an agent with a nervous system and a brain". This rather beautiful image of flowers smelling themselves into existence

allows us to conceive of art, poetry and language as on the same plane of composition with all the varieties of life in the universe; of art as particular contemplations – contractions – of singularities, distinct from both actions and knowledge, but absolutely implicated in our sense of self. As Deleuze put it, "we must always first contemplate something else...in order to be filled with an image of ourselves" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 74-75). With this understanding, poetry becomes the contraction of rhythmical inequalities – singularities – that function as the other side of signification, capturing sensation in the body of the poem which allows it to be replayed or repeated by other bodies of the flesh, with which it enters into resonance or dissonance. The ethical task, then, becomes to experiment through art with new becomings; to be like the flower and fill ourselves with different contemplations as a means to compose ourselves and actualise our milieu. Conceiving of contemplation in this way means conceiving of art not so much in anthropomorphic terms but instead as a kind of geomorphism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 319).

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It is therefore interesting that, when I finally catch up with Jen Hadfield, I should find her living in a caravan on the Isle of Burra. The caravan, I learn, is tied down with three tonnes of breeze-blocks and sits on a piece of land by the ocean that Hadfield has acquired to build her own house on. Even on this mild September day the caravan rocks slightly precariously in the wind, and yet it also feels part of its surroundings, with sheep periodically coming along to scratch their backs on its underside, causing our conversation to pause. Sitting in the warmth of the caravan, heated by the burner, the conversation ranges freely, fuelled by cups of coffee, tea and soup, as well as books Hadfield pulls down from the shelf above her head. I think it would have turned out differently had I met with Hadfield on my first day in Shetland. As it is, I have by the penultimate day of my stay experienced to some extent its shifting influxes of wild and weather and I'm excited to share this with Hadfield and hear about her experiences as an incomer to the islands.

Early on our conversation drifts into politics, with Hadfield talking about the self-conscious strength of the dialect scene in Shetland, and the attempts to standardise the diverse spelling and pronunciation of dialect as a means of preservation and continuity. Hadfield (2019) acknowledged that people were "nervous about writing their

own language because they're not sure how to spell it, because there's an awareness that there might be a right and wrong way to do that". However, Hadfield implied that the drive to standardisation was in part responsible for this reticence and, more to the point, standardisation wasn't working "because people pronounce things differently in different places and the vowels change so much". Hadfield clearly delighted in these regional variances present in the dialect. I asked her how it was coming to the islands as someone with an interest in language and words:

> Lovely! It's been so lovely! [joyous laugh] It was difficult at first. I worked in a fish shop that you came past as well, just of the 'Scour' junction, and the folk that own and run that are from Walls [Waas - pronounced 'Wal-sa'], which is very strong Shetland and a very distinct Shetland. So folk in Shetland say they can't understand Waas folk - it's a bit of a joke - it sounds amazing, it's lovely, and I was really struggling just to understand what my jobs were for any particular moment. They were very patient with me. So I found that really embarrassing and stressful, because speaking's hard enough. But the richness of what they were saying was really beautiful...it's possible to be a 'south-mouther' here and only speak to other south-mouthers, or Shetlanders who are knapping to you, and to forget the richness of the dialect, [this] can happen really easily, I think.

(Hadfield, 2019)

Knapping is the dialect word for when Shetlanders speak in an affected manner; an attempt to speak 'proper' English (Watt, 2019b: 77). It is a common experience for 'incomers' to the island. Hadfield (2019) told me of someone who moved to Shetland and took to wearing a badge saying 'knapp' with a cross through it to indicate that they didn't want to be knapped to: "It's a really interesting political situation - so much of identity is tied up in it". Hadfield (Hadfield, 2019) continued:

> ...my experience of being here goes deeper and is richer if I'm encountering those words and ways of saying things. And just little turns of phrases as well. Like, my friend will say [...] if she's kind of agreeing that something could happen she would say, "We could we could easily do yun", but that 'easily' is always in there and it's just a kind of an agreement. There's so many just interesting little distinction things.

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From reflections on Shetland's micro-linguistics, the conversation turned to outside perceptions of Shetland as a remote, depopulated and barren place, something Hadfield described as a northern version of Orientalism. Such perceptions underpinned both cultural depictions, such as the BBC detective series, *Shetland*, and the imposition of centralised thinking that was driving the controversial plans for an on-shore wind farm. Hadfield wondered whether people in general had a need for some kind of concept of the remote that serves them some purpose. Speculating as to what purpose this served and what it might say about the rest of culture and the "impoverishment and collapse" caused by centralised ways of thinking, Hadfield (2019) suddenly shifted register, to describe the bodily experience of foraging on the shore:

> People belong to the ebb, to the shore, I think. I'm starting to think this [...] I do bit of foraging and... so when you're in Shetland the tide line is called the ebb, and if you were totally skint it's where you'd go to gather food, so it's not a place with positive associations for many Shetlanders because they can remember that. They would never gean tae the wealk ebb [Shaetlan phrase, transcribed from sound] as they would say, but for me gathering there, such weird things happened in my brain that I had to try and work out what was going on and I felt like it altered my perception in a really surprising way. I suppose it was a mindfulness experience, but it took a little while and I was standing in very, very cold water. So that has an impact. I think that the act of looking and finding I think meant that I forgot about the past and I forgot about the future and the small rock pools grew they did seem to get bigger and bigger and the creatures were very...I felt more able to see all their intricacies and I felt very much part of not just the shore here and the sea here, but all the interconnected seas and it was quite a... I was quite shocked [chuckles]. And then I had a feeling of eviction and then I got cold and I had to hike up the hill and all of that bliss. It was a bliss, but for me gathering there, such weird things happened in my brain that I had to try and work out what was going on, and I felt like it altered my perception in a really surprising way. I suppose it was a mindfulness experience, but it took a little while and I was standing in very, very cold water. So that has an impact.

I say to Hadfield how her experience in the rockpool reminds me of Latour's argument that the objectification of nature ends up treating all of its parts as the same, when it is actually the few miles between atmosphere and bedrock that (modern) humans must understand our dependency on and find ways to connect with. Hadfield (2019) responds by recalling a job she once had identifying bristle worms in a salmon farm, which relied on consulting exhaustive taxonomies of bristle worms; counting the bristles; zooming further and further in: "so, how can we possibly know where we are!?[Laughs][...]If that's what you look at to tell if a salmon farm is impacting on the environment, that blows my mind.".

I suggest to Hadfield that maybe 'remote' places like Shetland hold an attraction because one feels much more implicated in the critical-zone that Latour emphasises. I speak about how I've felt very different being here; how I've noticed that one's surroundings in Shetland are constantly changing. I recount how on my first day I would be driving and every time I glanced away from the road the landscape would appear utterly transformed – either the light would shift or the colours of the heather would be different from a few seconds before – such that I kept on having to pull over and gawp at what was unfolding, lest I drive off the road. It seemed, I tell her, as if I was much more implicated in a landscape that was in-process, rather than just something that surrounded me. I say how amazing and unusual this felt - both exhilarating and yet oddly becalming. Hadfield (2019) responds saying:

> It's really nice that you've had that experience so immediately because I've been trying to explain that to people. Maybe it's the explaining that's the problem! I run up against people when I'm south saying: Oh what is there to do there? Why Shetland?", and all that. Because it's always changing. It's - on every level - visually, yes, and every time the tide comes in and goes out and the weather's constantly changing.

(Hadfield, 2019)

For Hadfield (2019) the sense of a landscape in flux can be discerned in the "busy cobweb" of comings and goings of cruise ships, fishing boats, industrial ships, flights from Bergen, and migrating birds:

> This is the spot in the middle of the sea that you would make for because you can get what you need here, you know? [...] So for me it's busier and more fun and more social

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and more novel than anywhere I've ever lived. Continually refreshing itself, you know? And that feels great. Never gonna get bored because it's never gonna stay the same.

<div align="right">(Hadfield, 2019)</div>

Hadfield asks if I saw the scarecrow near Trondra, currently dressed as Boris Johnson and holding a kipper, but always dressed up as something topical. For Hadfield (2019), such occurrences seemed to set up a certain resonance, linked to one's perceptions of home and the habitual action of driving the same road back and forth:

> I feel like your neural - you must have a neural map - those neural pathways all strengthen for that [driving along the same road each day] so that you don't really have to think. But the impact of something like Boris on that road is.... it's really important. It's like it's more intimately in your brain or something, because it's.... I guess all things that we perceive are but, if that's another degree of richness, it feels like.

<div align="right">(Hadfield, 2019)</div>

Hadfield links the scarecrow event to the rising number of honesty boxes on the roadside in Shetland with offerings of cakes and eggs: "That's what we're talking about; it's keeping your eyes open to the opportunities along your way." (2019). Before long Hadfield (2019) has started to talk me through a series of exchanges "about place and connection and gift-giving". She recounts how, living in a caravan, she showers at friends' houses:

> My friend said - my friend's a plumber.... Alistair was away, I was using his shower and the shower stopped working. So I had to get my friend up to have a look at it. We couldn't fix it. But he said you need a shower and I said well, I've got all these friends I go to for showers, so it's all right, but then I did go down for a shower, but he was away and then to say thank you for the shower I took him down a loaf of bread. And then his daughter came up with – what was it? – two mackerel fillets to say thanks for the loaf of bread. So then I had to think: 'Oh what am I gonna give to say thanks for the mackerel fillets?' So then I asked if they ate garlic and they did eat garlic and I've grown a lot this year so took some garlic down. But then did I want some haddock in thanks for the garlic, and so it goes, but that, that's happening with all of my friends in this immediate area. My other friend came up yesterday with a strimmer because I don't own a strimmer, can't be arsed with it, but I do have to strim once a year [...]so I gave him an

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artichoke and a big handful of broad beans and a loaf of bread in thanks for the strimmer and it's just you can go days if not weeks on end without even... just borrowing stuff and still pretty much get what you need. Yeah, it's delicious [...] it's just so fun. It's just really fun.

(Hadfield, 2019)

Why go to lengths to recount these exchanges with Hadfield here? What might at first glance appear to be nothing more than a meandering conversation about the everyday experience of life in Shetland, I think allows for an ethico-political inflection of the theoretical and empirical recursions this chapter has taken.

To recap, I began with some illustrations of the richness of Shaetlan; Hadfield's experiences enlivened a sense of the existential stakes with dialect language in terms of a politics of identity, and of achieving acceptance as an outsider. What came through for me listening to Hadfield, was that, despite perhaps well-intentioned efforts towards standardisation, Shaetlan possessed in and of itself an irresistible urge towards variance. This is, in itself, a political gesture that draws attention to the materiality of the language itself as possessing its own heterogeneous agencies and trajectories – a proclivity towards new conjunctions, in Berardi's terms. This coincides with lively ongoing debates in world literary studies around the major/minor in literature, and the recent rise of the term *ultraminor* (Moberg and Damrosch, 2017) to reference literature that in some way complicates the perceived binary terms of major/minor, centre/periphery. However, I would suggest that framing the ultraminor as *only* a question of scale moves one some distance from the efficacy of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor which (despite its frequent take-up as a binary relating to a centre of power and its periphery) is more accurately understood as an "a-signifying intensive utilization of language"; language as deterritorialised, immanently political and always collective (1986: 22, 18). I maintain, for instance, that agreeing with Moberg and Damrosch's (2017: 135) assertion that the ultraminor can create or bolster a community's territorial integrity does not, in and of itself, mean that it cannot also correspond to a deterritorialisation, as deterritorialisations are accompanied by correlative reterritorialisations. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 54) point out repeatedly, "Deterritorialisation must be thought of as a perfectly positive power that has degrees and thresholds (epistrata), is always relative, and has reterritorialisation as its flipside or

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complement". Furthermore, reterritorialisation is not a return to an older territoriality, but "implies a set of artifices by which one element, itself deterritorialised, serves as a new territoriality for another, which has lost its territoriality as well" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 174). Paying attention to these complex relations of flux and exchange between minor and major language, implies a politics in which there is correlation between molar formations and molecular becomings, for it is the molar components (for example, the move towards standardisation of Shaetlan) that form "passages or perceptible landmarks for the imperceptible processes"; the richness of its variance as a creative ethico-political mode of survival (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 303). Shaetlan is, as Watt (2019b: xi) puts it "a form of Scots shaped by sea roads...a fraught coalition between English, Lowland Scots and old Norn: the extinct Scandinavian language of the Northern Isles". In this one can perhaps discern the deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation that gives it its singular ethico-political charge.

The singular richness at work in Shaetlan can therefore, I argue, be linked to the recurrent theme of richness that unpinned much of my conversation with Hadfield. Whether it was foraging on the ebb, the experience of standing in a rockpool, the honesty boxes producing a cartography of collective sustenance and their refrain in the serial reciprocity of gift-giving within the community, or even the intimacy of seeing a satirical scarecrow by the roadside; these events form a conjunctive communication – to use Berardi's phrase – speaking to a contemplation of one's milieu that draws its singularity out of its disparity, transforming the "inherent shortcomings" into survival strategies discernible through tracing "patterns of living, thinking, mapping, remembering and speaking" (Moberg and Damrosch, 2017: 134-135). It is perhaps in island communities such as Shetland where we can glimpse most clearly the kind of remaking of social practices *alongside* the capitalist market that Guattari saw as of prime importance:[16]

> ...We cannot expect this [world] market to miraculously regulate human exchange on this planet […] It is thus of primordial importance that, alongside the capitalist market, there appear territorialised markets that rely on the support of substantial formations, that affirm their modes of valorisation. Out of the capitalist chaos must come what I call "attractors" of values: values that are diverse, heterogeneous, dissensual.

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[16] Indeed, as I write this in the midst of a pandemic lockdown, such nascent practices can arguably be seen emerging in mainland society through localised community action groups, stepping in where capitalist flows of exchange have become disrupted.

To Guattari's list of values' qualities, I would also add 'intuitive' and 'immanent', to account for the tentative feeling-towards of the disparities held in a singularity, in order to direct its potential towards ethico-aesthetic ends.

Intuition is something that Hadfield and I spoke about in relation to the writing of poetry. Hadfield told me she liked to talk about working with poems in terms of energy: "The energy of a line, the energy of the first idea or the first voice that you began with, and how that can get lost sometimes in rewriting and you can maybe try and open things up for it to come back in again." (2019). This was, she told me, in part a negotiation with form, something that typing out poems and making them visual sometimes masks as it makes a poem look "very done...we sort of have a conception of what a poem should look like, but there's no energy" (Hadfield, 2019).Hadfield emphasised how there was sometimes a need to take oneself back and reconnect with the original impetus. Hadfield's approach – one that she termed 'intuitive form' – consisted of a set of techniques through which a poem might assume its full capacities and be allowed to take its own form: "it feels much more interesting and... kind to the poem – humane to the poem – to let it take its own form, and that's quite a rigorous process actually, it's not a lazy thing." (Hadfield, 2019).

This approach chimes with Berardi's call for a phenomenology of poetical events - something rooted in an enabling ethos rather than one of straightforward exchange through connection (as with most semiocapitalist processes and, arguably, present in an approach to poetry that is more formalistic). It is something that Hadfield (2019) links to her ability to "get really tangled with the natural world"; a "practical, grounded, earthly thing" that she likens to a shamanistic practice, referencing the writing of David Abrams.

> I feel like, not that I can hear rocks speaking to me, but that the likelihood of me being able to commune and communicate with other consciousnesses is much higher. I feel like I am touching other consciousnesses sometimes and...that's shamanism [chuckles] and people used to have Shamans as go-betweens to do very important tasks in the community [...] And the Shaman or so David Abrams says, as you remember, would be probably on the outskirts - in the *ootadaeks* places - to enable them to be that go-between.

Increasing the likelihood of communication with the *ootadaeks* also speaks to Bennett's project of the 'I' as porous, taking on heterogeneous materials and affects from one's milieu Although Hadfield emphasises that she is not only thinking about these capacities in terms of poetry, it is in the latter that she found articulating them easy and necessary; a way, perhaps, to "add something to the mix" (Bennett, 2020: xiii). This is to emphasise poetry as an ethico-aesthetic continuation of Latour's atmospheric politics. Atmospheric politics itself implies a cartography of poetical events that animate what is impossible to see from so-called objective views from above (whether looking at the earth from outer space or at bristle worms under a microscope). Hadfield's comment about people belonging to the ebb takes on a greater resonance when one thinks that it is only from this situated location that one can conduct a cartography of the life of the cliff face, something overhead map-making obscures completely. For Hadfield, our modern predicament is characterised by an eviction from the ebb, through the predominance of scientistic forms of knowledge, simultaneously relocating heaven to an inaccessible realm above, with a resultant loss of satisfaction and richness.

There is, arguably, something in my own brief experience of being in Shetland that resonates strongly with the iterative and processual nature of Hadfield's own articulations of heightened sensitivity, and her intuitive approach to poetry. This is not to romanticise Shetland, nor to efface its situated geopolitical context as it plays out in economic, cultural, and linguistic matters, but it is to acknowledge that these contestations and categories fail to completely grasp the rhythmical concatenation of molecular becomings that imperceptibly shape both place and subjectivity.

Cartographies of poetical events help to make sensible the micropolitical practices that can support a joyful contemplation of one's milieu that Guattari saw as necessary for an ecosophy to emerge. This is also perhaps the ambition that Hadfield speaks of in her poem; to somehow leave behind the individual through a collective encounter with chaos and the cosmos. It is late afternoon under the weakening September sun when, watching the arctic terns execute their geometric dives into the ocean, I finally pluck up the courage to enter the water myself. With cold shock I feel another world close in around me, a numbing fearful pain as *ootadaeks* becomes *innadaeks* and then, emerging from this a new rhythm; a tentative, breathing together, as my body opens to the world, opening the world itself.

SEVEN

Geopoetics and sense: a refrain

"You shall not enter," says the stone.

"You lack the sense of taking part.

No other sense can make up for your missing sense of

   taking part.

Even sight heightened to become all-seeing

will do you no good without a sense of taking part.

You shall not enter, you have only a sense of what that

    sense should be,

only its seed, imagination."

<div align="right">(Szymborska, 1995: 32)</div>

In Wisława Szymborska's (1995: 30-32) 'Conversation with a Stone' [1962], the stone refuses to let the poem's human speaker into "the great empty halls" of its insides because "you lack the sense of taking part / No other sense can make up for your missing sense of taking part". The speaker is in a hurry to know the inside of the stone, arguing "My mortality should touch you [...] I haven't got two thousand centuries", but the stone declares imagination a poor relation of the sense of taking part (Szymborska,

1995: 30-32). In this short excerpt, Szymborska brilliantly encapsulates the problem that this thesis has been pursuing through Guattari's ecosophy and poetry. The problem of taking part is a problem of sense. Yet, this sense of taking part is irreducible to human sense, even if it is precisely these human sense-making capacities which allow for the very sensing of this other sense. Wanting to "to enter your insides, / have a look around / breath my fill of you.", the speaker of the poem knocks "at the stone's front door" but the stone points out "I don't have a door" and "You can grind us to sand, / we still won't let you in." (Szymborska, 1995: 30-32) The problem, however, as the stone makes clear, is less one of how to gain access to a particular perspective on life, than it is one of participation in a perspectivism that might be defined as ecosophic. Szymborska's sense of taking part can therefore be read as an articulation of the geophilosophical problem, encountered in Chapter One, of how to think with the earth. A problem, furthermore, that implies a concomitant grasping of sense as geopoetic.

The notion of sense running through this thesis has been multivalent, depending on the particular register in which it has been encountered. At each turn, however, sense is envisioned as excessively mobile of the states of affairs it designates. When encountered from the perspective of duration, sense is understood as the insertion of a creative indetermination into matter; a properly inorganic and a-historical concept of life as irreducibly excessive of the forms it takes. Sense therefore accounts for the coming into relation of components without relying on those components for its explanation but rather by inserting an internal differentiating tendency immanent to those terms. By positing a virtual domain of sense as a coexistence of intensive forces that are onto-genetic – that is, productive of reality's lines of actualisation – Bergson points to the need to account for sense without grounding it in the thinking subject. However, one cannot simply do away with the thinking subject as a Cartesian error, because it is precisely this condition – that of the illusion of a subject who can conceive of itself as *either* determined or free from determination – that allows for the grasping of life's power *as* indetermination. The very illusion that one might explain the world through subject-object relations necessarily creates an external subject position, thereby demonstrating an unspecified capacity for sense in the world that exceeds those relations. For, as Colebrook (2010: 173) points out, any such subject position entails an infinite regress, requiring the positing of a further subject position to account for it and so on. The illusory image of 'our' distance from the world thereby "testifies to life's power to create the *sense* of distances" (Colebrook, 2010: 174). For both Bergson, and

for Deleuze and Guattari, it is the affective feeling of that variation, or indetermination that "allows something like an orientation or sense of the world to emerge" (Colebrook, 2010: 178). "Subject and object give a poor approximation of thought", begin Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 85) in their chapter on geophilosophy, and it is because life becomes represented in this dogmatic image of thought that representation itself is called into question through the excessiveness of sense.

Geophilosophy therefore gestures to the deterritorialisation of thought from this representational image of subject and object, onto the earth – or, more precisely, onto the relationship between the earth and the very possibility of such representational images of thought. It is this relationship of sense that leads to Deleuze's (1994) call for a new image of thought that does not require a thinking subject for its ground but rather affirms the power of a milieu. Allied to this call, both ecosophy and schizoanalytic cartographies seek to account for this 'machinic' production of sense as a relation between the earth and its territories (environmental, social and mental); both 'meta-models' become critical ways of accounting for the illusions that one is given to think from within, while simultaneously gesturing to the ethico-aesthetic project of resingularisation – creating new vectors and new orientations (cartographies) for thought. It is because geophilosophy seeks to affirm the power of a milieu in a doubling of history with becoming, that the ethico-aesthetic task becomes one of thinking with that milieu.

This thesis has sought to affirm the power of poetry as a unique milieu of sense that worries the ordering tendencies of language and the collective assemblages it operates through. This is largely against the grain of much non-representational scholarship in geography which, despite frequent appeals to poetics, often appears reluctant to consider such poetics within their habitual wordy milieu. There seems to be something of a blind-spot around the understanding of literary works and language as non-representational in and of themselves. One can appreciate the reticence; who wants a dead geography (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000)?[17] Far easier, then, to focus on the visual and performing arts as exemplars of the non-representational. Recent debates (Anderson, 2018: 1) in cultural geography suggest this pendulum might, "in the wake of various non-representational theories", be swinging back towards understandings of

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[17] Although clearly there is tension— metaphorical dramatics, perhaps — in the deployment of the categories dead vs living when considered alongside inorganic concepts of life qua passive vitalism.

representations-in-relation. I am inclined to see this as a disciplinary acceptance that the non-representational merits due consideration; Understanding the 'force' of representations *is* to consider the non-representational. The significant contribution that Guattari made to the field of semiotics was not to say that a given representation does not matter, but the understanding that such representations were *given*, functioned within collective assemblages, and might be given differently through their machinic renewal. Decentring structure and signification need not entail the wholesale rejection of semiotic systems from movement and flow because it is at those sites where the disruption of stable categories occurs, allowing affect and discourse to mutually condition one another towards the production of new subjectivities (Genosko, 2018). The importance of non-representational geographies, I argue, is therefore doubled; they gesture to the process by which representations come to be given and function within assemblages, whilst also taking care that the cartographies they elaborate – those emergent affective and intensive forces – do not themselves become representative. It is this radical commitment to thinking with and through a milieu as an event that heralds a becoming *of sense* (and never a model or blueprint), that marks geographical research and knowledge-making practices as non-representational.

This thesis has sought to demonstrate that poetry's efficacy lies in its high co-efficient of deterritorialisation; its ability to disclose the intensive variations of matter immanent to language. Furthermore, poetry's disclosure of these a-signifying variations frees words from their representational function (Zepke, 2011: 207-209). Poetry's disjunctive rupture therefore produces novel conjunctions between signs and deterritorialised material fluxes that, through their encounter, are expressive of singular becomings (Zepke, 2011: 207-209). Through language and the collective assemblage, poetry enacts movements of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation to alter collective assemblages and thereby inflect the production of subjectivity with its poetics. At a pragmatic level, thinking with assemblages means that the structure of language cannot be separated from the bodies it speaks of and to which it attributes incorporeal transformations. Outside of this double articulation of content (signs) and expression (bodily regimes), however, a *disarticulation* occurs through the deterritorialising cutting of the abstract machine to "put it in relation with the intensive powers of the Earth" (Lapoujade et al., 2017: 228). Consequently, one is always dealing with two different types of deterritorialisation: relative and absolute. The former concerns particular claims to the territory and space-time on the earth via the composition of refrains, played out at

the social, environmental and mental levels. The latter involves joining up with the movement of deterritorialisation of the earth itself. As Deleuze and Guattari write,

> It is as though an intense matter or a continuum of variation were freed, here in the internal tensors of language, there in the internal tensions of content. [....] We witness a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or flight from contours in favour of fluid forces, flows, air, light, and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point.

> (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 102)

One returns here to the idea of poetry as improvident or useless, but now this takes on the character of attracting language itself towards its limit – that which concerns it specifically: the "unsayable which nonetheless can only be said"(Lapoujade et al., 2017: 229-230). To be unsayable, disarticulated, and thus to actively disorganise bodies, becomes that which, at its limit point, concerns language specifically. It is in these conditions that a geopoetics of sense begins to take on a political charge.

The poetics and poetry that this thesis has pursued is no fetishised machine (Paterson, 2004), but instead a staging of the kind of thinking that takes place in-between structure and its alterity, spotlighting it as a site of creative disobedience. As seen in Chapter Four, with McCabe and *The Triumph of Cancer*, a machinic poetics is one in which sense and language are a co-emergent event. Through recourse to a-signifying refrains, machinic poetics enact a 'modalisation' of events, redefining and redistributing semiotic components along an abstract line. This would have only limited importance were it taking place within a homogeneous delimited linguistic domain. By situating language within collective assemblages of enunciation, machinic thought replaces structure with a unit that is defined by its "cutting edges of deterritorialisation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 88). The assemblage as a basic unit of thought is always only ever meta-stable, subject to both the relative deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations of the strata, and the absolute deterritorialisations of the plane of consistency (the virtual). The assemblage is thus superior to structure in so far as it is "at once a structure and the outside of that structure" (Lapoujade et al., 2017: 225).

Poetic sense, by working 'machinically' through the meta-stability of assemblages opens up a disordering from within language; effectuating a reorientation of bodies and the designation of states of affairs. Indeed, one of the main concerns of

this thesis has been to develop a conceptual grammar that might grasp this operation of poetic sense. Just as with the emergence of the thinking subject as necessary illusion, it only becomes possible for something like language to emerge because sense is an abstract line that the machine draws, taut across the surface of bodies and of the earth. Sense, as Deleuze (2004b: 25) puts it, "is exactly the boundary between propositions and things". It is because sense is an intensive variation that language emerges to impose particular orders upon bodies independent of any notion of 'truth'. Poetic language not only draws attention to this ordering that conceals its own production, but harnesses this power of the false to produce alternative incorporeal attributes. Poetic conceit can therefore be understood as an affective war machine; one that functions through its capacity for mutational productions of sense.[18] If the threat of breakdown and catastrophe is ever present it is because the poetic stretches for language's intensive limit, enacting a proto-subjective diagram in the process. It is this machinic doubling of function with breakdown that enables *The Triumph of Cancer* to articulate the inarticulable: cancer as an immortal, highly advanced will to power. This sense of cancer, while breaking down actual bodies, when constituted virtually produces a milieu of collective experimentation alongside the organised body that might, nonetheless, reinvest itself in the social field through a 'crablike' micropolitics of desire. As Chapter Four explores, the machinic detachment of subjective components is not without its risks, but when grasped through poetry it can allow for the cultivation of an ethico-aesthetic attention to the sense of taking part that avoids falling back onto tired myths of the individual.

An allied appeal to novel techniques of sense underpins the poetic cartography in Chapter Five. Here, the problem of sense is cast as a speculative intensification of experience, which, drawing initially on the metaphysical thought of Whitehead, becomes transformed under Guattari into a pragmatic suite of ethico-aesthetic techniques for producing subjectivity. The chapter also returns to the question of

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[18] Here I invoke Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the war machine as drawing a creative line of flight from the striation of the state. The war machine is a mobile, nomadic or 'rhizomatic' mode of thought that escapes capture by the state apparatus to compose and occupy a smooth space (See Patton, 2018: 206-208). Poetry, conceived in this way, becomes a weapon insofar as it discharges affect: "Affects are projectiles just like weapons" they enable a recomposition of bodies and subjectivity "as if the power and cultivation of the affect were the true goal of the assemblage, the weapon being only a provisory means. Learning to undo things, and to undo oneself, is proper to the war machine". (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 397).

subject-object relations, troubling this neat accord through both Amerindian perspectivism and a Whiteheadian objective-subjectivity. For Whitehead, objective-subjectivity denotes a philosophy of capture in which a subject *is* the contraction of objective datum, drawing attention to the inseparability of potential from its actual determinations. In a similar vein, Viveiros de Castro's (2014: 187) speculative approach of "treating indigenous ideas as concepts" is acknowledged by the author as a kind of fiction, but its aim is not to interpret or explain indigenous thought. Instead, it becomes a way of expressing possible worlds from within a western philosophical framework – a way of multiplying our world (Viveiros de Castro, 2014: 196). It is this commitment to an expansion and intensification of experience, realised through (im)practical and non-philosophical techniques, that also signals the unruly speculative nature of Guattari's writing.

The call for expansion, multiplication, and intensification that this thesis has articulated nevertheless operates from the precautionary principle that abstractions are only sought out and fabricated along a speculative line in accordance with the conditions of sense from which that thought has emerged. If, in the writing of both Guattari and Deleuze, one catches the refrains of speculative thinkers such as Whitehead and James it is because in the double articulation of content and expression, or in the couplets such as semiotic and machinic, the finite and the infinite, and the virtual and the actual, one doesn't encounter rigid dualisms but rather something like the *importance* that Whitehead attached to the bifurcation of nature between an 'objective' nature outside of us and an 'apparent' or subjective nature (Debaise and Stengers, 2018). The speculative philosophy of Whitehead is defined by Debaise (2017a: 77) as "the intensification of an experience to its maximal point". Not experience in general, but *an* experience. Similarly, for Deleuze and Guattari geophilosophy must consist in stretching out that which forces us to think; of employing dualisms as a means to challenge all models, in order to finally constitute thought's diagrammatic movements on the plane of immanence, such that the earth holds to the plane's surface. One confronts a virtual limit point whereby the outside of an utterance, gesture or thought becomes that which concerns it uniquely; that by which its sense persists through a protective warding-off, or else is destroyed. It is at this limit point that the forces of the earth, beyond territory, might be sensed as a new earth, to be believed in.

The limits of sense that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of geophilosophy targets are highlighted by Sauvagnargues in the correlation between the emergence of philosophy in Greece and that of capitalism:

> ...Deleuze and Guattari write that there is no universal history except that of capitalism. This does not mean that capitalism is inscribed in an all-encompassing, universal history, but, on the contrary, that it creates the conditions of possibility of such a history: there is no universal history without capitalism. There is no universal history of civilisations except that of capitalism, just as there is no universal history of Reason except that of philosophy.

<div align="right">(Sauvagnargues, 2016a: 37-38)</div>

In other words, the emergence of both philosophy and capitalism, as a result of certain contingencies of geography *constructs* the category of the universal, thereby retroactively unifying all prior attempts at both philosophy and capitalism within a teleological universal history, which Sauvagnargues refers to as capitalism "acting pragmatically as an instance of domination" (2016a: 38). This process of the retroactive production of prior history out of contingency leads Sauvagnargues (2016a: 38) to argue that "history must be theorised as a mixture of the aleatory and the necessary".

One might be inclined to see the evocation of the Anthropocene, and the 'extraordinary times' it calls us to respond to, as a speculative continuation of the same retroactive universal historicism. The speculative history of Universal Man's (that is, the white, European, capitalist subject) becomes coded into the earth's strata. Alternatively, as with Latour, the Anthropocene marks an epochal shift in political conditions. However, as with the Cartesian subject as an image of thought, the answer is that both positions are possible. The Anthropocene is both the product of a seismic shift in the culture of sense *and* a continuation of capitalism's universal history, but it is the very possibility of either/or that demonstrates a relationship between the conditions of sense and the movement of the earth. Hence the importance of creating concepts that might work within this relationship.

As discussed in Chapter Five, Guattari saw the production of subjectivity as the dominant activity in late capitalist societies. Lazzarato further identifies a schizophrenic tension between futuristic and archaic modes of subjectification at work in capitalism. Existential territories that organise humans around a feeling of 'home' through health,

employment, education, community, security etc., come under threat from multiple deterritorialisations due to climate crises, pandemics, intensive extraction of and competition for resources, enclosure of common lands, loss of biodiversity, and so on. Simultaneously, a "neo-archaic reterritorialisation"(Lazzarato, 2008: 174) happens whereby nationalist mythologies become politically mobilised in discursive formations (examples include Brexit, Donald Trump and white supremacism). This combination of hyper-modern and reactionary productions of subjectivity is also taken up in a polemical vein in Chapter Six, with Bruno Latour suggesting that a polarity defined by two political attractors – the global and the local (or modernity and parochialism) – is now subject to the destabilising force of the Earth or the Terrestrial as a political actor. In this analysis, Latour calls for a new cultural materialism and sensibility that understands humans as implicated in nature's Critical Zone, therefore requiring the cultivation of an awareness of dependency as a kind of atmospheric politics.

While Latour and Guattari/Lazzarato share some commonality in their initial diagnoses, and both can be said to be engaging geophilosophical thought to some degree, their respective analyses proceed in very distinct ways. Latour's approach is perhaps best characterised as geohistorical. For Latour (2018: 41-42), the *geo* is no longer an object but an actor that participates in history, such that *belonging* to a territory has now completely changed meaning to designate an agency of possession residing in the territory. Consequently, the earth offers no ground for human action because it actively participates in that action:

> Space has become an agitated history in which we are participants among others, reacting to other reactions. It seems that we are landing in the thick of geohistory.

(Latour, 2018: 42)

Latour's solution is a reorientation of political affects towards the Terrestrial as an actor rather than an exterior framing device. To grasp the co-implication of humans and other actors in the Terrestrial, for Latour, necessarily involves the bracketing of a scientific objectivism that would see planet earth as a Galilean object which, so the argument goes, obscures the Terrestrial by adopting a virtual extraterrestrial position (2018: 89). Latour is interested here in what matters to 'us' as Terrestrials inhabiting a Critical Zone, thereby essentially arguing that a 'view from nowhere' is a luxury in the political

stakes of the Anthropocene, which must now contend with the irrelevance of a nature/culture schema that deanimates the natural and overanimates the cultural. Latour's (2017) writings on Gaia and the New Climate Regime are pragmatically orientated towards a new political ecology equal to the multiple reversals, inversions and redistributions heralded by the Anthropocene. The replacement is of a universal history and universal humanity with that of geohistory and a redrawn cosmology. The task for science, politics, and aesthetics, becomes learning to participate the geohistory of the planet, and to engage in a composition with other agents.

Writing almost thirty years earlier, Guattari's ecosophy anticipates many aspects of the Anthropocene that Latour highlights. Leaving aside the multiplicity of divergences, connections and feedback loops between these two thinkers, where their respective projects find common ground is on the need for composition. Yet if Latour's focus in both the Gaia lectures and *Down to Earth* tends towards defining and narrativising the epochal epistemological shift underway, the question of how to reorientate "political affects" often feels underdeveloped (2018: 67). Latour's (2017: 140) politics reads like an accretion of representation which can only take place through a laborious process characterised by 'loops' which engender a "slow gradual fusion of cognitive, emotional and aesthetic virtues" and by which "we become *more sensitive* and *more reactive* to the fragile envelopes that we inhabit". A moderate, gradual attunement and adaptation, then, to a new political ecology which, for all Gaia's intrusion, is still figured as a human politics.

Guattari's composition, by contrast, is characterised by a certain transversal speed of thought; of proliferating experimentations and foldings of affective intensities with virtual references with the aim of rupturing existing schemas of subjectivity to engender mutant productions. To put it bluntly, I am uncertain that the Latourian cry that Gaia changes everything does *anything* to address the lack of orientation in political affects because it remains largely silent on the problem of affect and the non-representational, molecular micropolitics that it implies. As set out in Chapter Two, affect is a-historical; it gestures to fluctuations, intensive becomings, events and haecceities – the weather of subjectivity – "our true changes take place elsewhere – another politics, another time, another individuation" (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007: 124). For Guattari, the existence of affect calls for the continual reaccomplishment of existential territory through the composition of refrains. This is not a historicisation, but

a temporalisation, through which one's capacities for sense are constituted through the capture of forces in a milieu.

Sense comes to be understood not as sense of self, but as a participation in the sense of the world. In Chapter Five, Sophie Herxheimer composes an alpine refrain that literally animates the poetic persona of Emily Dickinson, transposing Dickinson from her historical conditions and opening up new becomings for Herxheimer in the process. This recomposes both Herxheimer's present conditions of 'stuck-ness' but also her historical conditioning of thinking women could not, or should not paint or write poetry. Affects, then, have nothing to do with a history and everything to do with an intensive geography; by mobilising incipient potentials for sense in a milieu, ethico-aesthetics attends to the task of becoming worthy of what happens to us (Deleuze, 2004b: 170). It is because this composition concerns sense as a contingent pre-individual field, excessive of sensing bodies and the sense of things, that geophilosophy entails an enfolding of geopoetics.

When Deleuze and Guattari affirm the power of a milieu as that of contingency - geographical rather than historical - they are seeking to undermine the grand universal narrative of history installed by both capitalism and philosophy. But what exactly is a contingency and how does it relate to a micropolitics of subjectivity? One can say that contingencies exist when they register an effect. In Chapter Five, the contingency is the book of Alpine landscapes and Herxheimer being stuck indoors, unable to work. The effect produced is the becoming of Dickinson and Herxheimer, the un-sticking of creative production, the formation of new subjectivities and so on. What is important to note here, though, is that these contingencies don't simply act forwards, but also exhibit a backwards causality that unlatches particular capacities for Herxheimer. These are capacities for creative composition that were specifically held at bay through the operation of discursive and affective formations: "I was brought up to think that women couldn't be painters", as Herxheimer (2019b) remarked to me in her studio, surrounded by decades of drawings, paintings and collages. As Sauvagnargues (2016b) argues in relation to Deleuze's reading of Foucault, the virtual diagram of forces a work produces requires history's milieu of actualisation in order to take form. This diagram belongs not to the history of the artist but to her becoming, yet its actualisation can nevertheless be historically dated. The diagram is what explains this power of rupture as that which doubles and recasts historical succession with a "jolted and non-linear continuity...a 'redistribution' of the continuous, according to a new dimension that produces

continuity from the contingent eruption of the fracture" (Sauvagnargues, 2016b: 182-183). And so, for all the ordering tendencies of language, its desire to designate states of affairs and regulate bodily conditions of existence, something always escapes. The stuff of a life is given but, through the understanding that there is a giving, it can be reworked, reappropriated, refrained: "Actually, all I've done is just work all the time" (Herxheimer, 2019b).

As I write this conclusion, the sense that the world is remaking itself can perhaps be felt more keenly than ever. As our milieus of sense become more volatile, the call to define our interests, identify our attachments – in short, the cry for representation – becomes more vociferous in inverse relation to its likely efficacy.[19] List-making is an ordering practice, exclusionary by definition. It aims to legislate. There will always be times when such a politics is practical and necessary, although of course, part of the persuasive internal logic of such a politics is to present itself as inevitable, provident, timely. Poetry is also fond of lists but under its aegis they begin to behave differently, call attention to themselves, proliferate and unwind. Take the list of bodily breaches encountered in Hadfield's (2014: 11-12) 'The Ambition': the Bert and Ernie liver; the alfabeti children; the brain-pan of quenched ash; this list disorders, expands and intensifies what a body can do. Its language clumps and clouds in an anexact expression of "liquids and vowels" (Hadfield, 2014: 11) designating exactly a becoming underway: "the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world" (Bakhtin, 1968: 317). An intensive body emerges, one that is defined by its affective relations, open to chaos and the cosmos, and always already underway to somewhere else. With poetic lists, it would seem that the political problem shifts from a ranking of dependencies and attachments to a manner of experimentation: "To what am I sensitive? By what am I affected? (Zourabichvili, 2012: 117).

Another politics, then, that would draw one away from one's territory. This is the politics that Emily Dickinson gestures to from the milieu of Herxheimer's collage when declaring:

I'm outside all the time now. I packed in history and take geography in little drops.

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[19] "As a terrestrial, what do you care most about? With whom can you live? Who depends on you for subsistence? Against whom are you going to have to fight? How can the importance of all these agents be ranked?...we ought to give priority to resuming the work of description on the part of all animate beings." (Latour, 2018: 96-98)

Taking geography in little drops means getting out of personological accounts of the subject, of contemplating something other than ourselves and our existential territories. To contemplate the *ootadaeks*, at the ebb of a shore, or through any multiplicity of influxes one might encounter, is to contract a sense of ourselves both as bounded and discreet entities, and as part of an intensive ecology of sense. That such contemplations must be taken in "little drops" implies an art of caution; a microdosing of micropolitics. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, "dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage", and that this process has much in common with dismantling significance and subjectification and should never involve "wildly destratifying" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 160). Instead:

> This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times.

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 161)

This cautious, iterative approach to experimentation is often overlooked in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, but I have sought throughout the thesis to give it its due weight. One way I have tried to do this is by not valorising a particular type of poetry, be that eco-poetry as the only valid poetic response to crises of climate, nor a self-proclaimed avant-garde of poetry that would define itself dialectically against a 'mainstream' and therefore virtuous by default. Instead, I have worked from the middle of each poetic milieu and produced singular cartographies from its midst by experimenting with the opportunities it offers.

Whether it is out of ignorance, lack of exposure or perceived difficulty, it is a fact that most people think little of or about poetry. It has not been my primary task here to change their minds, although to anyone that decides to give poetry a go as a result of reading this, I would congratulate them on a decision that will enrich their affective capacities. The four main poets I have focused on do not naturally align with a

'Deleuzean' approach and can just as well be read through Derrida, Wittgenstein, Timothy Morton, Freud, or any number of philosophies. To point this out is simply to say that life expresses itself in a multiplicity of ways. Philosophy, poetry and geography alike are never zero-sum games. To the questions of why poetry, or why Deleuze and Guattari, I would point to the words of Foucault (1980: 64) who, in response to a question about his apparent silence on matters of geography, replied that undertaking work with political meaning and utility was only possible if one had some kind of stake in the struggles taking place in the area in question. Foucault continued:

> It's up to you, who are directly involved with what goes on in geography, faced with all the conflicts of power which traverse it, to confront them and construct the instruments which will enable you to fight on that terrain. And what you should basically be saying to me is, "You haven't occupied yourself with this matter which isn't particularly your affair anyway and which you don't know much about". And I would say in reply, "If one or two of these 'gadgets' of approach or method that I've tried to employ with psychiatry, the penal system or natural history can be of service to you, then I shall be delighted. If you find the need to transform my tools or use others then show me what they are, because it may be of benefit to me".

(Foucault and Gordon, 1980: 65)

There is a wonderful eloquence in how Foucault's response both critiques the assumptions that underpin the question while also invoking a generosity of spirit towards the production of knowledge that invites the questioner to rejoin him. Like Foucault with psychiatry, I have had some involvement in poetry. An involvement that has, in many respects, shaped the course of my life. I also have the discipline of geography to thank for introducing me to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, whose thought has given me the ability to occupy its disciplinary territory through poetry and poetics. Through this process of staking out a contingent and singular claim I have arrived at a conceptualisation of how geopoetics composes a sense of taking part in the earth, and therefore another politics. As I hope to have made clear, I think that *this* politics has value, regardless of how extraordinary or ordinary the times are proclaimed to be. At any rate, I have endeavoured to show that it is taking place all the same, at all times, with or without our sense of it. What use the general academic reader makes of this is not predicated on their predisposition to poetry but rather on their willingness to

follow an experimental line of thought, to consider other political compositions, and the importance they attach to articulating the problems that one faces, rather than adopting an instrumental approach that seeks solutions for those problems that are ready-made.

Climate change, as Herxheimer (2019b) wryly observed, is what, culturally speaking, "we're being given to think about and look at". This is not to deny it but to query what thought might not be being given to think with. As the novelist and poet Margaret Atwood (2015) pointed out, "it's not climate change, it's everything change". Ecosophy is explicit about the need for the ongoing composition of mental, social and environmental ecologies together and, therefore, Guattari's call for a new art of living in society cannot be mistaken as a prescription for a model of living. Instead, it calls for a reorientation towards the activation of qualitative change. Reorientation requires that:

> it's sometimes necessary to jump at the opportunity, to approve, to run the risk of being wrong, to give it a go, to say, 'yes, perhaps this experience is important.' Respond to the event as the potential bearer of new constellations of Universes of reference.

> (Guattari, 1995: 18)

It was because of its promotion of "processual ruptures within semiotically structured, significational and denotative networks" that Guattari saw poetry as having "more to teach us than economic science, the human sciences and psychoanalysis combined" (Guattari, 1995: 19, 21). The poetic cartographies that this thesis activates, in each of their singular ways, attend to the importance of an experience as a manner of speculative intensification. In this they seize poetry as a journey along supple and abstract lines, populated by molecular becomings in which one might, for example, become capable of laughing like the stone who declares "I am bursting with laughter, yes, vast laughter / although I don't know how to laugh" (Szymborska, 1995: 32). It is at this a-signifying limit of sense – maybe a stone full of laughter but who cannot laugh (though it can talk) – that one might begin renewing one's attachment to an earth that is not there for 'us', nor for the territories or claims that are made upon its surface.

This is why the movement of deterritorialisation – in language, and in social, mental and environmental assemblages – is so important: the act of leaving one's territory "merges with the movement" of the earth's own ceaseless deterritorialisation as an ongoing act of creation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 85). As I hope to have shown, each singular expression of a poetics is ultimately an articulation of a geopoetics in

which the capacities to sense the earth's own forces are duly sharpened or dulled. Out of this strange, untimely politics, lacking a ground or even a people, poetry invents its cartographies with the challenge: "are we taking up the first language / or must we coin / a new one?" (Hadfield, 2014: 43). The answer that echoes, through every event and every sense, is "yes".

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