Gothic Materialism

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Poe. *The beginning! But where is the beginning?*

Vankirk. *You know the beginning is GOD.* [This was said in a low, fluctuating tone, and with every sign of the most profound veneration.]

P. *What, then, is God?*

V. [Hesitating for many minutes] *I cannot tell.*

P. *Is not God spirit?*

V. *While I was awake I knew what you meant by 'spirit' but now it seems only a word — such, for instance, as truth, beauty — a quality, I mean.*

P. *Is not God immaterial?*

V. *There is no immateriality; it is a mere word. That which is not matter, is not at all — unless qualities are things.*

P. *Is God, then, material?*

V. *No.* [This reply startled me very much.]

P. *What, then, is he?*

V. [After a long pause, and mutteringly] *He is not spirit, for he exists. Nor is he matter, as you understand it. But there are gradations of matter of which man knows nothing; the grosser impelling the finer, the finer pervading the grosser. ... These gradations increase in rarity and fineness until we arrive at a matter unparticled — without particles — indivisible — One; and here, the law of impulsion and permeation is modified. The ultimate or unparticled matter not only permeates all things, but impels all things; and thus is all things within itself. This matter is God.* (Poe, 1982, 90-91)

To answer the question 'what is materialism?' you simply have to make contact with what the 'the bureaucrats of consciousness' administrating

the history of philosophy have screened out (Grant, 1998, 101). The disciplinary mechanisms of academic State philosophy have cast the materialist theorists — Spinoza, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Deleuze-Guattari, Foucault — out into the interzones and offworld colonies beyond and between the humanities: the God-forsaken no-man's land where the 'wind bites keenest ... where no-one lives, ... the desert where only the polar bear lives' (Nietzsche, 1983, 203). And this is entirely appropriate: the periphery and the in-between are the only possible (dis)locations for engagement with the freezerburn-core of abstract matter at zero-intensity, the 'K-matrix ... where cosmic reality constructs itself without presupposition' (Carver,1999).[1]

Why Gothic, why all these Horror stories? Because, as Nietzsche warns, to 'unlearn to pray and curse, unlearn man and god' is to subtract all certainty, to become a stranger to yourself — 'Here — you could not be at home' (Nietszche, 1982, 203). The journey to the unscreened Real is 'no longer a departure from matter in the direction of spirit or the Ideas where self will find its home, but a dismantling of the self within a machinic matrix: not disembodied but disorganized. An out to body experience' (Land, 1995, 192). Making contact with 'intensive or convergent real abstraction' is necessarily dread-ful, since 'plane of consistency, planomenon, ... plateau, ... substance, pure apperception' are also '"neuro-electronic void", death-drive, body-without-organs' (Land, 1998, 85), 'the limit-plane of continuous cessation or Unlife' (Carver 1999 http), or 'a[rtificial]-death' (Land, 1998, 85).

> This is why we fear decoded flows — the deluge; because once flows have been decoded, you can no longer subtract anything or break into them, no more than you detach segments from any code in order to dominate, orient or direct the flows. And the experience of one who has been operated on, of her body-without-organs, is that, on this body, there are literally noncodable flows which constitute a thing, an unnameable thing. (Deleuze, 1972)

It goes without saying that materialist theory is not only possible but ubiquitous — all activity presupposes abstract maps, diagrams and programs which it effectuates; however, it's not clear that such theory —

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[1] 'Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 25)

no matter how technically rigorous — could ever count as 'philosophy'. The currently dominant mode of State thought — phenomenology in all its various guises — actually concurs with Marx's notorious claim that a materialist philosophy is a contradiction in terms. For Marx, of course, this was because 'philosophy' — whether construed as an academic discipline or, more abstractly, as 'love of wisdom' — was inevitably compromised by its privileging of thought over practice. The very existence of 'philosophy' — the orderly contemplation of phenomena, even, perhaps especially, matter — entails — indeed constitutes — a commitment to idealism. But 'matter' is never of the order of the phenomenon. Since it is structurally incapable of grasping Marx's point, phenomenology, with its typical perverse innocence, confirms it, 'arguing' that all action presupposes as its ground an 'originary' realm of pre-predicative consciousness: '[phenomenology] operates with two "universals," the Whole as the final ground of being or all-encompassing horizon, and the Subject as the principle that converts being into being-for-us. *Imperium* and colony' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 379).

In the humpty-dumpty world of dubious, joyless 'wisdom' that is the phenomenology-choked liberal-democratic academy, Marx's most crucial insights are thus inevitably regarded as embarrassments, to be condemned, in the language of the Roman master class, as 'vulgar'. Since it is entirely in the class interests of the State-funded academy to downplay or ignore questions of economic determinism and cultural privilege, the history of 'academic Marxism' has inevitably been an essay in tedious paradox.

With Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Freud, and all the other key breakouts from western philosophy, Marx advances a materialism based on two fundamental principles:

(1) There is only one type of stuff in the cosmos. Every kind of dualism and all appeals to the supersensible or the supernatural are illegitimate. The positing of such realms is a Master simulation, a way of both denying the Masters' own constitution as material entities whilst also concealing their dependence upon a social system that is based upon structural inequality.

(2) There is only one practice. Since, for Marx, all activity is practice, the important distinction is between (i) materialist theoretical practice, which emerges from and is oriented towards action, and (ii) idealist theoretical practice, which, in the name of universality, objectivity or disinterested contemplation, disavows its own role in expressing – and thereby shoring up — the formations of power from which it emerges.

Power, economics, matter: all become shadows projected from/onto

the gloomy interior of the Subject. On the other (Out)side — the unscreened Real, or matter-in-itself — everything is desire, everything is production, and all theory is practice, even when it functions as anti-productive static which blocks, dams up, and drains intensity. Deleuze credits Nietzsche with being the one who introduces the question, 'who is speaking?' into 'philosophy' but Marx had already encouraged us to distrust all claims to transcendence and universality and ask instead what mode of power was speaking in their name. All 'discourse' is in some sense practical. Yes, even the apparently irrelevant noodlings of our latter day phenomenologists have a role to play in maintaining social order (if only by gumming up the machines with sickly babble).

Deleuze-Guattari's 'transcendental materialism' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1984) is a fissile recombination of Marx and Kant, whose function is to provide the abstract engineering hyper-program for the dismantling of human security (= you, insofar as you are personal, identical, organismic). Gothic or transcendental materialism (= schizoanalysis = pop philosophy = rhizomatics = stratoanalysis = pragmatics = micropolitcs [cf. Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 23]) deploys the Kantian critical machine to interrogate what remains uncritiqued in Marx (the reification of already-constituted actualities like 'the social') whilst using Marx to re-insert Kant's subject into the hypermaterialist field of *Kapital*.

Kant's magic is much more subtle, much more disturbed, than our current screensavers would have us believe, and Deleuze-Guattari do not for a moment give any credence to the lie that Kant is a phenomenologist. They understand that the great innovation of the Kantian critical system is to demonstrate that the phenomenological and the empirical are one and the same: all human experience is a playing out of menu options provided by a (transcendental) operating system that is, for that reason, locked out in the unthinkable and unspeakable regions beyond possible experience. And transcendental idealism and transcendental materialism have more in common with each other than they do with any other brand of idealism or materialism. The transcendental is essentially machinic because it shifts attention away from the front-end simulations of private subjective reflection — 'private persons are ... simulacra' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1984, 264) — to the impersonal and unconscious mechanisms that produce the human reality studio. So, for all his sobriety, Kant never tries to persuade us that the cosmos is *sensible*.

Transcendental materialism departs from transcendental idealism only in pursuing immanence further than Kant is willing to go. 'As Freud tells us, "skin" is the death necessary to ephemeral, larval consistency ... arising on this basis, the "I think" covers the extent of the skin, but warily

retreats before its limits — allegedly aprioristic, auto-singing "*nihil ulterius*" (Grant, 1998, 101). This interdiction is blatantly (anthro)political and not 'purely philosophical' at all; it derives from a libidinal, not a categorical, imperative: the Horror must be kept at bay.

And what is the Horror?

me unconscious = me outside = Me noumenon. (Grant, ibid.)

> Strip-out everything human, significant, subjective, or organic, and you approach raw K- Matrix, the limit-plane of continuous cessation or Unlife, where cosmic reality constructs itself without presupposition, in advance of any natural order, and exterior to established structures of time. On this plane you are impossible, and because it has no end you will find — will have ultimately always found — that you cannot be, except as a figment of terminal passage, an illusion of waiting to be changed for cthulhoid-continuum of destratified hypermatter at zero-intensity. (Carver, 1999)

Even though we know that — at some level — we are becoming It, we confront the Horror of 'cthuloid continuum' only through the 'black mirror'. It's like death, since wherever It is, we cannot be. We sense that It includes us, but we [know we] cannot know It, since to admit It is to become It and to become It is to cease to be who we are ...

No-one there. (Land, 1998, 85)

Fiction is one of the black mirrors through which It becomes us, and the Outside gets in. Philosophy has an affinity with literature, but is suspicious of fiction. 'Fiction is to be distrusted. It is associated with nonseriousness, and games' (Land, 1995, 198). Whereas literature — from Aristotlean drama to Heideggerean poetry — is constituted by the freezing of fiction into the masterpieces.[2] Fiction is much more demonically protean — a distributed practice of simulation rather than a concentrational form of representation. Especially as sponsored by our Heideggereans, philosophy and literature have enjoyed an ostensible

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[2] Cf. 'No More Masterpieces', in Artaud, (1999) 'We must finally do away with the idea of masterpieces reserved for a so-called elite but incomprehensible to the masses, since the mind has no red-light districts like those used for illicit sexual relations' (56).

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fraternal rivalry that has thinly concealed a parasitic interdependence — fiction ascends to the lofty pseudotranscendence of literature, i.e. it becomes the voice of Being, which has to be interpreted, needless to say, by the appropriately-initiated White Magician-Hermeneut, the Philosopher, or Philosopher-surrogate, the Literary Critic.

Outside this magico-hermeneutic circle is the spiralling hype[r]-vortex of a materialist sorcery that has only inadequately been labelled as 'theory-fiction'. It is no accident that the chief practitioners of hypernaturalist sorcery — Baudrillard and Deleuze-Guattari — do not so much comment on fiction as they become it. They are well aware that the relation between theory and fiction is asymmetrically biased in favour of fiction, since fiction can 'include' — but not 'contain' — any amount of theory.[3] There are 'fictitious plagues' (Artaud 9), just as — compare John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness* and Cronenberg's *Videodrome* — there are fiction plagues, abstract infection-vectors operating against identity, personality, and subjectivity.

Foucault shows that the 'incorporeal reality' of the 'modern soul' is produced by interlocking disciplinary systems that were engineered to deal with the plague. But, as Artaud also insists, the plague is not a specific medical problem, but an 'abstract disease' (Artaud, 1999, 15): disorder-in-itself, or absolute disorganisation (dissolution onto the body-without-organs). Plague, or abstract pestilence, Artaud maintains, 'makes its presence known in those places ... where human will-power, consciousness and thought are at hand or in a position to occur' (Artaud, 1999, 12).

According to Foucault, what we think of as 'our' soul is the production of factories, hospitals and prisons, which themselves are defined – negatively — by the dark, formless, undifferentiable mass of the plague body which they were designed to subdue and differentiate. 'The disease as a form, at once real and imaginary, of disorder had its medical and political correlative discipline. Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of "contagions",[4] of the plague, of rebellion, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear and live and die in disorder' (Foucault 198).[5] The plague

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[3] Lovecraft's Miskatonic University in his fictional system is of course an exemplary case of this implexing of theory 'within' fiction.

[4] As Deleuze-Guattari establish, contagion in the most abstract sense is the way in which Gothic avatars propagate. 'Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other. The vampire does not filiate, it infects' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 241-242).

[5] 'The plague is met by order; its function is to sort out every possible confusion: that

and the crowd become identified — the plague is a crowd, the crowd a plague. 'The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple individualities, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities' (Foucault, 1987, 201). The modern soul — the disciplined subject, or liberal 'person' — emerges only when the individual is extracted from the dangerously promiscuous body of 'compact, swarming, howling masses' (Foucault, 1987, 200). At the same time, a new, representational and identitarian form of simulation-surveillance emerges, defined in opposition to an entirely different plague-fiction:

> A whole literary fiction of the festival grew up around the plague: suspended laws, lifted prohibitions, the frenzy of passing time, bodies mingling together without respect, individuals unmasked, abandoning their statutory identity and the figure under which they had been recognized, allowing a quite different truth to appear. But before there was a political dream of the plague, which was exactly its reverse: not the collective festival, but strict divisions, not laws transgressed, but the penetration of regulation into even the smallest areas of everyday life ; not masks that were put on and off, but the assignment to each individual of his 'true' name, his 'true' place, his 'true' disease. (Foucault 1987, 198)

It's impossible not to read Poe's celebrated short story 'The Masque of the Red Death' as a meditation on all this. Poe — the Europhiliac New World New England Puritan — reconstructs Old Europe as a plague-ridden and class-divided kingdom in which the decadent Catholic master class — led by the hedonist-despot Prince Prospero — have built a fabulous pleasure-dome-fortress to keep the contagion — the plague and the howling masses — out.

'The Masque of the Red Death' confirms Artaud and Foucault's observation that plague is an 'abstract disease' which has an affinity with a depersonalised and non-representational fictionality (Artaud theatre-of-cruelty): 'we ought to consider the scourge as the immediate medium or

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of the disease, which is transmitted when bodies are mixed together; that of the evil, which is increased when fear and death overcome prohibitions. It lays down for each individual his place, his body, his disease and his death, his well-being, by means of an omnipresent and omniscient power that subdivides itself in a regular, uninterrupted way even to the ultimate determination of the individual, of what characterises him, of what belongs to him. Against the plague, which is a mixture, discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis.' (Foucault, 1987, 197)

materialisation of a thinking power in close contact with what we call fate' (Artaud, 1999, 9). Prospero's court doubles Plato's cave as an image of the plight of a duped humanity, yet as a Gothic materialist rather than a Greek idealist, Poe gives matter the last laugh. As in his poem, 'The Conqueror Worm', the 'hero' — the principal agent — of the 'tragedy "Man"' (Poe, 1982, 961) is not the 'mere puppets' who '[a]t bidding of vast formless things ... shift the scenery to and fro' but the 'crawling shape', the 'blood-red thing that writhes from out/ the scenic solitude' (Poe, 1982, 961). In Poe's desolate Puritan cosmos, there is no transcendent redemption in a 'republic of spirits' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 375). There is either vain illusion — the condition of humanity — or the plague — absolute disorder on the ultimate plane of reality, which is indifferent to everything human and personal. Phenomenological delusion and hedonistic sensuality are reciprocally-operating forms of bad faith, fantasies of an achieved or achievable insular interiority: 'The prince had provided all the applications of pleasure. There were buffoons, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security within. Without was the "Red Death"' (Poe, 1982, 269). But the outside is transcendentally, not empirically, exterior: it's already inside you — there is no inside, that's the Horror ...

Poe understood that, in the Master realm of idealism, everything is read as metaphor, signifier, symbol. Hence the vicious irony that the plague can come disguised as itself: 'the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death' (Poe, 1982, 272). It never occurs to Prince Prospero that security could be breached, that matter could interpose itself into the world of the ideal, so he assumes that the Red Death costume is simple impertinence. '"Who dares" — he demanded of the courtiers who stood near him — 'who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him ...' (Poe, 1982, 272). There is of course no true subject beneath the mask. The masque or fiction is the means by which the plague — abstract disorder, total disorganization — enters the frame, and destroys it. 'Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment and, seizing the mummer, whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask, which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form' (Poe, 1982, 273).

It's tempting to see both the Conqueror Worm and the Red Death as Poe's invocation of the medieval figure of Death the Reaper, revived to remind a nineteenth century becoming hooked on positivistic science and

its apparently limitless promethean possibilities about the inevitability of mortality. But Poe's little known story-simulation, 'Mesmeric Revelation', makes it clear that Poe is not primarily concerned with death conventionally understood. 'Mesmeric Revelation' doubles the more celebrated 'The Facts in the Case of M. Waldemar' in its meditation on 'k-coma' and its fall down Jacob's Ladder onto the trans-alive-dead nonorganic discontinuum of raw matter.

As Deleuze-Guattari establish, it is catatonia — simulated or artificial death — rather than death itself that is Poe's obsession: "Horror-story writers have understood, after Edgar Allan Poe, that death wasn't the model for schizophrenic catatonia, but that the contrary was true, and that the catatonic was one who made of his body a body-without-organs, a decoded body, and that on such a body there is a kind of nullification of the organs" (Deleuze, 1972). 'Mesmeric Revelation' is presented in the form of a simulated dialogue between 'Poe' and Vankirk, the victim of a terminal disease, who has, like Waldemar, allowed himself to be hypnotised. The 'mesmeric revelation' that the trans alive-dead Vankirk furnishes Poe with turns out to be a Spinozist disquisition on the nature of God and matter.

'Death', Vankirk tells 'Poe' in 'Mesmeric Revelation', is far from being the end, since 'There are two bodies — the rudimental and the complete ... what we call 'death' is but the painful metamorphosis.' ('Life is a lower form of matter' [Artaud, 1965, 216].) The passage from 'life' to 'death' is not a journey from Being to (phenomenologically-construed) Nothingness, but a movement from the organism to the desolated but populous body [without organs] of zero. In Vankirk-Poe's hypermaterialist metaphysics, the 'ultimate life' is 'unorganized' since 'organs are contrivances by which the individual is brought into sensible relations with particular classes and forms of matter, to the exclusion of other classes and forms' (Poe, 1982, 93). Either everything is alive, or nothing is. Either way, the distinction between living and nonliving, vital and mechanical is illegitimate and unworkable. 'To rudimental beings, organs are the cages necessary to confine them until fledged' (Poe, 1982, 93).

There are of course many fates worse than death, and one is being posthumously canonised as a 'genius' who is 'too sensitive to live' by the same class who made your life unliveable, the very intensity of your life serving as an alibi for the mediocrity and complacency of those who necrospectively pore over its minutiae. Stay inside, because if you let go and you end up like van Gogh, Nietzsche, all the madmen ... Such, of course, seemed to be the fate of Artaud, who wrote so corruscatingly

about how this process of disintensification-by-canonisation was happening to Van Gogh and who must have had some intuition that the same reterritorialization project was already underway in his own case.[6] It's via the Deleuze-Guattari Gothic materialist machine that Artaud can be sprung from his assigned (captured) role as a (new) Romantic tragic genius to assuming his materialist-efficient function as a neuro/mancer — an electro-nerve sorcerer, an abstract engineer who left behind diagrams, plans and maps for escaping the meat. 'Even if Artaud did not succeed for himself, it is certain that through him something has succeeded for us all' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 164).

As an example of how Artaud was seen from the interior, witness Anais Nin's disgustingly patronising description of her meetings with him — the securely fastened Inside confronting the Outside and recoiling, fascinated but appalled: 'He is the drugged, contracted being who always works alone, who is always producing plays which are like scenes of torture. His eyes are blue with languor, black with pain. He is all nerves ... I knew at that moment, by his eyes, that he was [mad], and that I loved his madness. I looked at his mouth, with its edges darkened by laudanum, a mouth I did not want to kiss. To be kissed by Artaud was to be drawn towards death, towards insanity' (quoted Esslin, 1976, 38). Towards schizophrenia, certainly, but away from death. Artaud knew that it was Nin's world, like that of Poe's revellers, which was filled with, and consecrated to, death — the intensive death that happens when you are slaved to the organs. 'The revolution will come soon. All this will be destroyed. The world must be destroyed. It is corrupt and full of ugliness. It is full of mummies, I tell you. Roman decadence. Death' (cited Esslin, 1976, 39).

The point is to get Out, to free up the body from its prison (the soul). In 'Shit to the Spirit', Artaud establishes that contempt for the meat is very far from being a craving for the spirit. The soul is dispossessed matter, matter resentful of his own material status, but matter nonetheless: Spirit with Organs. In his flight from the organs and their Masters, Artaud

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[6] 'Is it by chance that whenever a "thinker" shoots an arrow,' Deleuze-Guattari ask, 'there is a man of the State, that counsels and admonishes him, and wants to assign him a target or "aim." Jacques Riviere does not hesitate to respond to Artaud: work at it, keep on working, things will come out all right, you will succeed in finding a method and learning to express clearly what you think in essence (*cogitatio universalis*). ... But this is not the worst: the worst is the way the texts of Artaud ... have ended up becoming monuments, inspiring a model to be copied — a model far more insidious than others — for the artificial stammerings and innumerable tracings that claim to be their equal' (Deleuze-Guattari, 1988, 378).

is the original cyberpunk. Dissipated in the electro-bliss of k[ata]-coma, Artaud the hyper-body longs to get out of the meat for good, but is prevented from escaping, like Jacob in *Jacob's Ladder*, by teams of officials and bureaucrats:

> And I shall indeed never forget in any possible life the horrible passage of this sphincter of revulsion and asphyxia, through which the criminal mob of beings forces the patient in extremis before letting go of him. At the bedside of a dying man there are more than 10,000 beings, and I took note of this at that moment. There is a conscious unanimity among all these beings, who are unwilling to let the dead man come back to life before he has paid them by giving up his corpse totally and absolutely; for existence will not give even his inert body back to him, in fact especially his body.
>
> And what do you expect a dead man to do with his body in the grave?
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> At such a time, 'I am your consciousness and your consciousness is me', is what all the beings say: salesmen, druggists, grocers, subway conductors, sextons, knifegrinders, railroad gatekeepers, shopkeepers, bankers, priests, factory managers, educators, scientists, doctors, not one of them missing at the crucial moment. (Artaud, 1965, 184)

Esslin is thus comically in error when he says that 'Artaud was filled with horror and fear of the moment, when, on regaining consciousness, the patient is at first unaware of his whereabouts and indeed, his own identity' when what Artaud obviously loathed about electro-shock was the coming back to him/a self (Esslin, 1976, 56). Artaud's 'mistake' may have been his underestimating of society's commitment to stupidity, his still-too credulous belief that 'truth' will impress the priests and officials of the kingdom of lies and self-delusion that is the human social field. As inheritors and intensifiers of the escape-program Artaud had pioneered, the stealthier Foucault and Deleuze-Guattari realise that the outside needs masks in order to get in. Look at Foucault again from the perspective of Artaud's disorganized body in Rodez, and you find him a virtual presence everywhere in Foucault's 'history of the present': behind Foucault's sober interrogations of madness, psychiatry, and disciplinary institutions you begin to detect the echoes of Artaud's howlings. And Foucault's meticulous simulation of academic rigour becomes revealed as a practice that both is and is not a scholarly exercise, just as the Red Death's costume both is and is not a masquerade. Foucault's writings, like the Plague's Red Death, are a conduit for exteriority, which rigorously apply the security codes of the Interior in order to crack them.

Deleuze-Guattari and Foucault follow Artaud in recognising that language is nothing ethereal, but is totally material: a prison from which our bodies need to flee. Bodies don't 'speak'; they don't represent themselves in words. Rather, (order) words are judgements closing off and impeding the potentials teeming out of [the body of] zero. When phenomenology-corrupted theory talks of the body (as of course it does, endlessly, tediously), it doesn't even mean the organism. It refers rather to the organism's socially mediated phenomenologisation. For Gothic materialism, there is always *some* body, never *the* body, unless what is being designated is the body without organs (and here the definite article functions to designate the positively indefinite, i.e. the unnameable, the nameless). Gothic materialist bodies are defined abstractly and intensively — by the affects of which they are capable — not topologically or extensively, by the space they occupy. 'Everything is body and corporeal. Everything is a mixture of bodies, and inside the body, interlocking and penetration' (Deleuze, 1990, 87). So taking apart language is immediately a matter of disarticulating the body.

> *scream of my heartbeat*
> *truth is a feeling*
> *it's not a sound*
> *we don't need words*
> *[throw them away]*
> *words disobey me*
> *dis oooo bbbbbbbb*
> *bubbbbbbbbbbubbbbbbbbubbbbbbbbbbbbbbbb*

(*Thief of Fire*, The Pop Group, *Y*, 1979)

So how do you utter nullity?

Artaud doesn't invent a language. Not at all. He dismantles language in order to get to words, and then treats words as katasonic signals or anorganic klangs — asignifying rupture. This 'is less a question of recovering meanings than of destroying the word, of conjuring up the affect ...' (Deleuze, 1990, 88). Affect is a crash site, the trauma-event in itself. Trauma is a memory of the outside registered as rupture, but the trauma-event is raw contact with the Outside, ego-death on the plane of consistency; you can't experience it, but it happens. (But not so as you'd remember. You're left with only the wounds, semiotic signals of alien

contact.) The ethical — and materialist — point is to free up bodies from the linguistic coding that condemns them to endlessly re-re-enact desolate Freudo-Burroughsian repetition-compulsions (Spinozist sad passions): 'It is a question of transforming the word into an action by rendering it incapable of being decomposed and incapable of disintegrating: *language without articulation.* The cement here is a palatalized, an-organic principle, a sea-block or a sea-mass' (Deleuze, 1990, 89). If the standard linguistico-subjective regime entails 'vowel-consonant phonetic palette, rigidly intersegmented to repress stacatto-hiss continuous variation and its attendant becoming-animal', the way out is through 'stammerings, stutterings, vocal tics, extralingual phonetics and electrodigital voice synthesis' since 'they threaten to bypass the anthropostructural headsmash that establishes our identity as *logos*' (Barker, 1999, 7).

Thought may well depend on language, as both the analytics and the phenomenologists collude in insisting, but of what import thought, then? 'Thought is a meat thing, tied necessarily to the biodrome and its apparatuses. It is in this sense that the idea of 'thinking machines' is an error: as *Bladerunner* Deckard's offing Zhora so spectacularly demonstrates, machines do not think, they bleed' (Grant, 1998, 101). There are many other things that a mouth can do besides act as an outlet for what the brain thinks. As we viewers of horror films know very well, it can project vomit or spew bile, it can contaminate with a kiss, and it can issue screams. It is not a matter of speaking the unspeakable, but of vocalising the extra-linguistic or the non-verbal, and thereby letting the Outside in.

Admit it, count zero, get out.

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